



Annual Review 2017

Leabharlann
Náisiúnta
na hÉireann

National Library
of Ireland



NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

Annual Review 2017

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Cover image of 140th Birthday Party: Mark Stedman

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Chairman's Remarks



Throughout a very busy 2017, the National Library of Ireland made great progress under each of our five strategic pillars – collect, protect, connect, innovate and collaborate.

In July, details of 'Reimagining the National Library,' the major redevelopment of the Library's main building on Kildare Street, were announced. The Library is carrying out extensive work on the Published Collections and Prints & Drawing Collections to prepare them for their relocation during the building project. We look forward to creating the storage and preservation conditions necessary to keep the national collections safe for the long-term, working together with the Office of Public Works and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

This redevelopment will allow the NLI to develop further as a venue for research, culture, learning and tourism, and will transform the visitor experience for the next 100 years. It will also greatly enhance the national collections.

Significant progress was made in 2017 on the NLI's landmark Seamus Heaney exhibition which is due to open in Summer 2018 in the iconic Bank of Ireland buildings on College Green, Dublin. Plans also advanced with our partner University College Dublin on the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI) due to open in Spring 2019 in Newman House, Dublin.

I would like to thank Josepha Madigan T.D., Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and also Minister Heather Humphreys T.D., for their strong support and the great interest they have shown in the Library.

Finally on behalf of the Board and myself, I am pleased to thank Dr Sandra Collins and the Library team for their continued hard work and dedication.



H. Paul Shovlin

Director's Foreword



During 2017 we celebrated 140 years since our foundation with a special birthday party in August. It was a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge our long tradition of collecting and sharing the story of Ireland. It was my privilege to welcome some of the Library's youngest visitors, loyal readers, researchers and partners from across the country.

Throughout the year, we reached out to communities in Ireland and around the world with international talks, loans of material, digitised collections, travelling exhibitions and the launch of our biannual diaspora newsletter.

During 2017, we continued to build the national collections. A highlight of 2017 was the acquisition of very significant collections relating to WB Yeats to add to the largest Yeats collection in the world, and in September we celebrated renowned Yeats scholar, Professor Roy Foster at an event in his honour.

Our web archiving programme goes from strength to strength. In 2017, we archived over 300,000 Irish websites, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to collecting the story of contemporary Ireland.

In December, we welcomed Sir Bob Geldof to the NLI to announce the donation of the Band Aid archive by the Band Aid Trust. We will preserve and make available this extensive archive of contemporary social and civic memory.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the enormous generosity of our many donors who enable us to enrich the national collections.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chairman and Board of the National Library and all the fantastic staff of this wonderful institution as we look together to the future.



Dr Sandra Collins

2017 at a glance



NEARLY **200,000** VISITS



RESEARCH VISITS



MORE THAN

14,000

NEW BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS & PERIODICALS

OVER **300,000**

WEBSITES COLLECTED AND PRESERVED



48,000
FOLLOWERS



READING ROOMS CLOSED ON MONDAYS, ENABLING

60,000 BOOKS
TO BE RENUMBERED



COMBINED ONLINE INTERACTIONS

24,000 PEOPLE



ATTENDED **391**

TOURS, TALKS, WORKSHOPS & PERFORMANCES



WITH MORE THAN
140,000
VISITORS



ONE **140th**
BIRTHDAY PARTY



1. COLLECT

The National Library's mission is to collect, protect and make available the recorded memory of Ireland. We care for more than ten million items, including a copy of every book, periodical and newspaper published in Ireland under what is known as legal deposit. The Library's Special Collections include an extraordinary wealth of manuscripts, prints and drawings, ephemera, photographs, music and maps. All our collections are permanent and accessible to everyone.

2017 acquisitions



**8,958 newspapers
and 3,117 serials**



**More than 140 Special
Collections acquisitions***



2,052 books acquired

*(this includes individual items and collections)



The Band Aid Archives were donated to the National Library in December by Sir Bob Geldof on behalf of the Band Aid Trust. The archives include letters, publicity materials, details of the Trust's activities, and photographs. Josepha Madigan T.D. (pictured), Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, also announced a commitment of €245,000 in digitisation funds to help us develop the archive.



The National Library's Yeats Collection is the largest and most significant in the world. It was further enhanced with new treasures in 2017. In February we acquired letters between WB Yeats and James Joyce which illuminate a long-standing literary friendship. At the same time, we also acquired the 'Dream Diary' of Yeats' wife George and the Yeats family library.

In September we bought more than 500 letters between WB Yeats and George written throughout the years of their marriage. Both of these acquisitions were made possible by funding from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. We also acquired family papers and artefacts as part of a Section 1003 donation by the Yeats family.

The NLI also purchased a number of items by the poet's artist father John Butler Yeats at auction. These included a watercolour self-portrait; portraits of the artist's daughters Susan Mary 'Lily' Yeats and Elizabeth Corbet 'Lolly' Yeats as adults, and pencil sketches of George and WB Yeats.

These letters and objects are the latest treasures in a series of remarkable WB Yeats material acquired by the NLI from the Yeats family over almost 80 years, since George Yeats donated original manuscripts of the poems 'Oisín' and the 'Wanderings of Usheen' in 1939. Donations over that time are valued at an estimated €8.4m, while purchases total €1.56m.



Other significant acquisitions throughout the year included: "Irish Eyes", a painting by Danish artist Claus Havemann; the Peter O'Brien Theatre Collection, a collection of drawings of costume designs for Brian Friel's adaptation of 'A Month in the Country'; the Anthony Jordan collection; 400 original cartoons by Martin Turner; the papers of Conor Cruise O'Brien; and the archives of Irish language publishing house Sáirséal agus Dill, under Section 1003 (Heritage Donations) of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997.

2. PROTECT

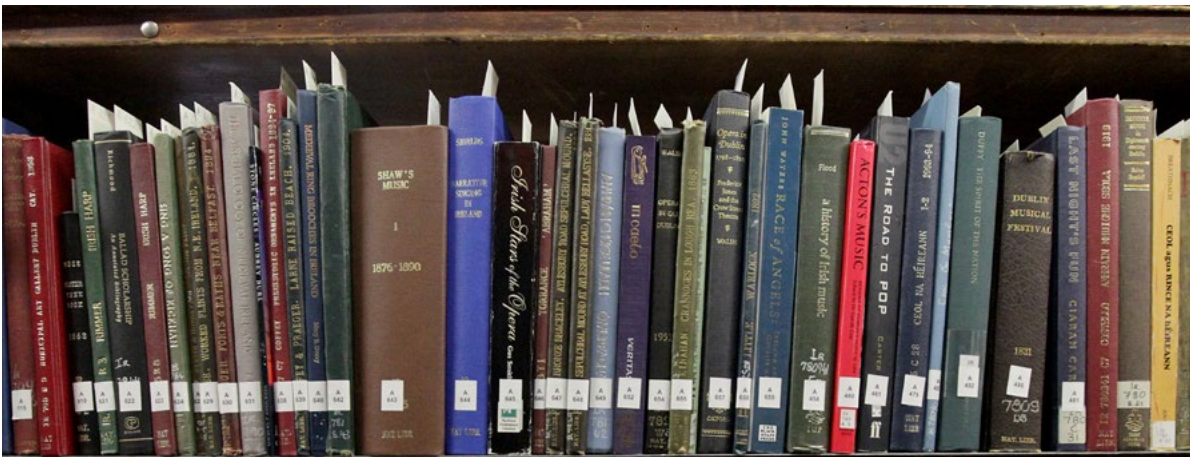
Collection care is a core function of the National Library. The collections we look after range from fragile glass photographic plates and 14th century Gaelic manuscripts, to 25kms of books and the archive of Irish websites. We are working to meet modern standards for our physical and digital infrastructure, and to provide the best possible experience for our users.

Building Programme

A redevelopment of our main building on Kildare Street is underway. This 12 million euro project, lead by Head of Estates Breda Callan, is a partnership with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and is funded by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Over the next four years, we will be creating a new high density book store and high quality storage for our Prints and Drawings collections in line with recommended standards for libraries. New public spaces and universal access will enhance the National Library as a welcoming destination for everybody.

Pictured here at the launch of the building programme in July 2017 are Kevin "Boxer" Moran TD, Minister for the OPW and Flood Relief, OPW Commissioner John McMahon, National Library Director Dr Sandra Collins, OPW Principal Architect John Cahill, then Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Heather Humphreys TD, OPW Chairman Maurice Buckley and NLI Board Chairman Paul Shovlin.





Phase 1 of the Building Programme got underway during the year. Programme planning and preparatory works continued including documenting library features, and getting ready for the move of all the books in the existing and inadequate West Wing storage. Reading Rooms closed on Mondays, to allow Published Collections staff to stock check the collection volume by volume, re-shelving every item by size and creating new item numbers, to make the most efficient use of the new storage. Items were identified and errors on catalogue records were corrected. The first phase was completed in December 2017, with more than 60,000 items re-numbered, and over 8,000 catalogue records corrected or created. At the same time, sorting, rehousing, labelling, cataloguing and digitising of the Prints and Drawings and Ephemera collections was carried out, and a high quality storage solution for these collections was identified at the Kildare Street complex.

Conservation & Preservation

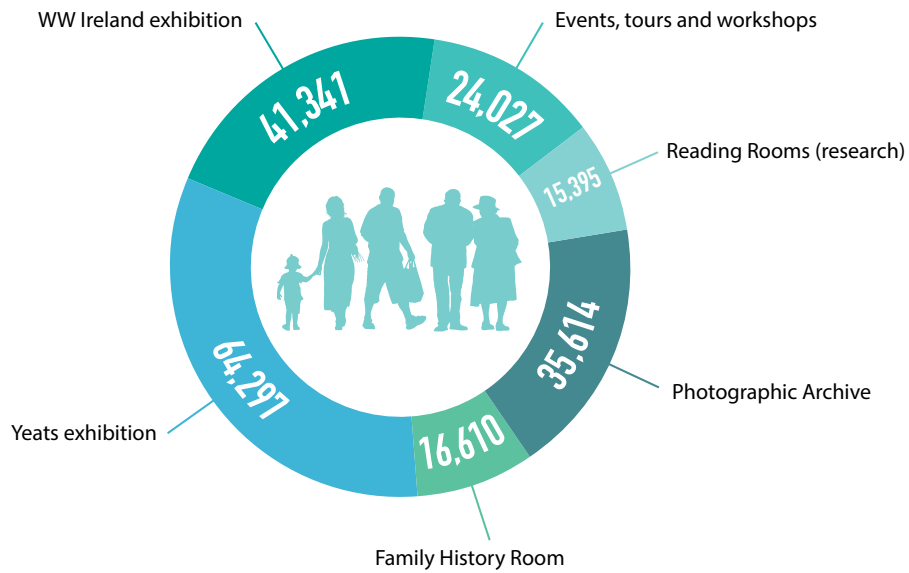
Our conservation team are heavily involved with the building programme, but this is just one part of their work to preserve and conserve the national collections. Conservators advise on how to handle objects safely, assess the condition of material and rehouse it, give advice to members of the public at events and regularly offer workshops on collection care. They also prepare items for exhibitions and digitisation. Here you can see Claire Dantin working on a damaged sketchbook ahead of digitisation, during her conservation internship jointly funded by the NLI and the Heritage Council.



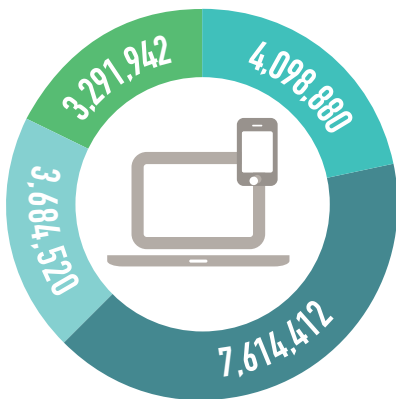
3. CONNECT

The National Library celebrated its 140th birthday in 2017. We have been connecting people with the story of Ireland since 1877, and through the year aimed to inspire all our users, and to grow and further strengthen our connections nationally and internationally.

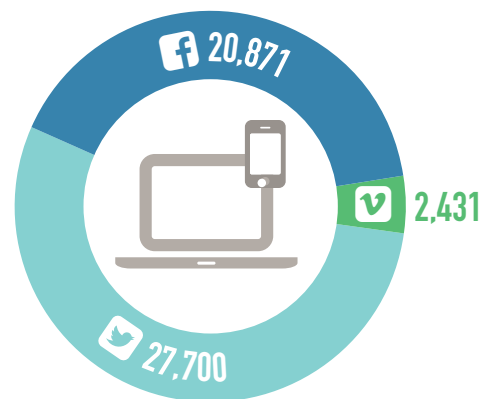
Visitor numbers



Online engagement



- Twitter Impressions
- Registers views
- NLI website views
- Flickr views



- Twitter followers
- Vimeo video plays
- Facebook followers

Top Facebook Posts

National Library of Ireland
 Published by Louise Archibald · 15 December 2017

Cuala Industries was run by W.B. Yeats' sisters, Susan and Elizabeth Yeats (more commonly known as Lily and Lolly) and was based in Churchtown. This image might be just what you need to get in the spirit for Christmas shopping this weekend!



27,520 Reach | 277 Likes | 212 Shares

National Library of Ireland
 Published by Sebasian Enko · 29 March 2017

A very familiar image to many Irish people of a certain age! Peig Sayers, born #onthistday in 1873 #Poig #LeavingCort



13,345 Reach | 242 Likes | 47 Shares

National Library of Ireland
 Published by Louise Archibald · 25 April 2017

The show that didn't go on: acts scheduled for the Coliseum Theatre, Dublin, this week in 1916



13,187 Reach | 9 Likes | 0 Shares

Top Tweets

Nat Library Ireland
 @NLireland

On the #Bloomsday that's in it - we've found Mr Joyce appearing all over the National Library...



10:08 AM · 16 Jun 2017

Impressions 39,624 | Likes 314 | Retweets 147

Nat Library Ireland
 @NLireland

We are delighted to announce details of a number of major new Yeats acquisitions. Full details: bit.ly/2hz8Hjz



Impressions 27,741 | Likes 271 | Retweets 137

Nat Library Ireland
 @NLireland

#OnthisDay 95 years ago, Michael Collins, Commander-In-Chief of the National Army, is killed in an ambush in Béal na Bláth, Co.Cork.



10:25 AM · 22 Aug 2017

Impressions 27,350 | Likes 176 | Retweets 136

Visit & Event Highlights

Throughout 2017, we welcomed visitors to our buildings to enjoy music and performances, lectures and panel discussions, tours and knowledge-sharing. Members of the National Library team also availed of opportunities to share our story nationally and internationally.

Library Matters

The National Library's popular 'Library Matters' series of lunchtime talks continued through 2017. It featured librarians from across Ireland and Europe talking about new perspectives and strategies for libraries, and included insights from Bodley's Librarian Richard Ovenden (pictured), Trinity Librarian Helen Shenton, Maynooth University Librarian Cathal McCauley, and Head of the National Library of Denmark, Pernille Drost (also pictured.)



Families & Young People

Throughout the year we engaged with schools and family groups, through tours, workshops, storytelling and competitions, including workshops delivered in local venues around the country. In July, we invited families to enjoy free trails and stories with our Drop-in Thursdays, and to workshops where they could discover maps, create birds, draw newspaper cartoons or produce their own book cover. We also worked with the Nerve Centre from Derry to offer our two day camp "Hands-on History" for post primary students. 2017 saw the 10th anniversary of Poetry Aloud, the verse speaking competition for students from all over the island of Ireland, which we run in partnership with Poetry Ireland. It was won by Brendan MacDomhnaill.



Tours, Talks, Seminars & Courses

We offered guided tours of our ongoing exhibitions throughout 2017, as well as our popular “History and Heritage” tour and introductory research workshops each month. There were several “Hedge Schools” as part of our continuing partnership with History Ireland, as well as lectures on topics from Christmas in the National Library’s collections to conscription in World War I, and from John Donne’s poetry to the development of hurling. We continued to host courses offered as part of UCD’s Adult Education programme, as well as offering 8-week Introduction to Genealogy courses. In September, we celebrated the career of historian Roy Foster with a day of reflections on his work for an invited audience.



Music & Performance

On June 16th, Bloomsday, “Joyce at the Opera” proved hugely popular. The event was organised in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Culture, the “Associazione Triestina Amici della Lirica G. Viozzi” and the Trieste Joyce School (University of Trieste). Later in the year we also welcomed poet Moya Cannon and musicians Kathleen Loughnane, Cormac Cannon and Catriona Cannon for Harp, Poetry and Pipes: An evening of poetry and music.



Sharing our Story

In July we were delighted to welcome Scottish Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop to the National Library as part of an OPW visit, and through the year we briefed members of the Oireachtas on the National Library’s Strategy. Several staff members delivered presentations at conferences including the CONUL Library conference, and at the 2017 IIPC/RESAW International Conference in London. Our Director spoke at a number of events, including the annual Douglas Hyde conference in Bal-laghaderreen. Our Head of Outreach travelled to Boston and Edinburgh to raise awareness of our exhibition on Seamus Heaney coming in 2018.

Exhibitions

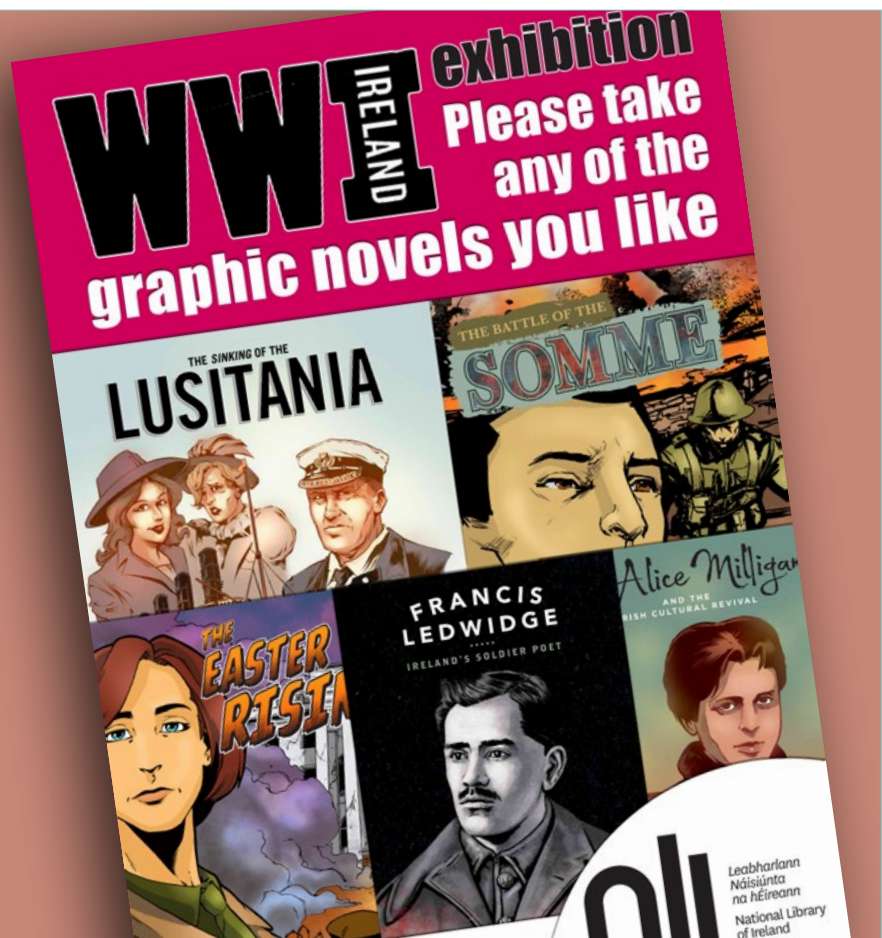
Yeats exhibition: The Life and Work of William Butler Yeats

The National Library holds the largest and most significant collection of Yeats material worldwide. Drawing on this collection, this award-winning, permanent, multimedia exhibition delves into the life of one of the great poets of the twentieth century and his many fascinating interests including literature, folklore, theatre, politics and the occult.



World War Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience

"World War Ireland" opened in November 2014, with support from the British Embassy in Ireland. The exhibition explores the Irish experience during WWI through collections of letters, diaries, recruiting posters, newspaper reports, cartoons, and leaflets. First hand personal accounts and eyewitness testimony give visitors a unique insight into what life was like for Irish people both overseas and at home during World War I. As part of our ongoing partnership with the Nerve Centre in Derry, we stock and help create graphic novels on historic themes which are freely available to visitors to the exhibition.





Beyond Leaving

From November 2016 to March 2017, 'Beyond Leaving', an exhibition by Dublin-based photographer David Monahan, (pictured here with Sarah Maria Griffin), exploring the most recent wave of emigration from Ireland, was on display at the National Photographic Archive. The exhibition focussed on the lives of a small group of those who left Ireland during the downturn. It featured more than 20 large scale photographic works shot on location in Toronto, Ohio, Chicago, Surrey, Dublin and Wicklow and used video recordings, interviews and artefacts to bring these emigrants and their stories to life.



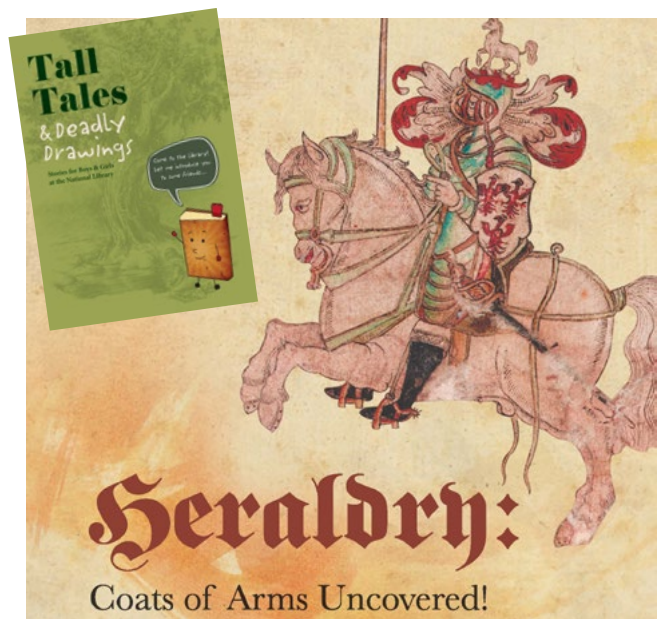
HP40: The Hot Press Covers Exhibition

From April to August 2017, the National Photographic Archive played host to an exhibition celebrating forty years of Hot Press magazine. It featured a selection of iconic Hot Press covers, signed by the cover stars, which told a compelling story of Ireland over the last four decades. The NLI has been collecting Hot Press since its first edition and it is the only place where people can freely consult the full run of the magazine.



Photo Detectives

Sabina Higgins opened "Photo Detectives" at the National Photographic Archive in September 2017. The exhibition celebrates the NLI's rich photographic collections and highlights the work of the global Flickr community who investigate them. It features 26 striking images and stories dating from 1871 to 1970 that reveal almost a century of changing Irish lives.



Travelling Exhibitions

Our travelling exhibitions explore heraldry, children's literature, World War I, Joyce and Ulysses, maps and newspapers. All exhibitions are available to borrow nationally and internationally. In 2017, the exhibitions travelled to schools, libraries and visitor centres around Ireland, including to Dublin, Donegal, Kerry, Kilkenny, Mayo and Westmeath.

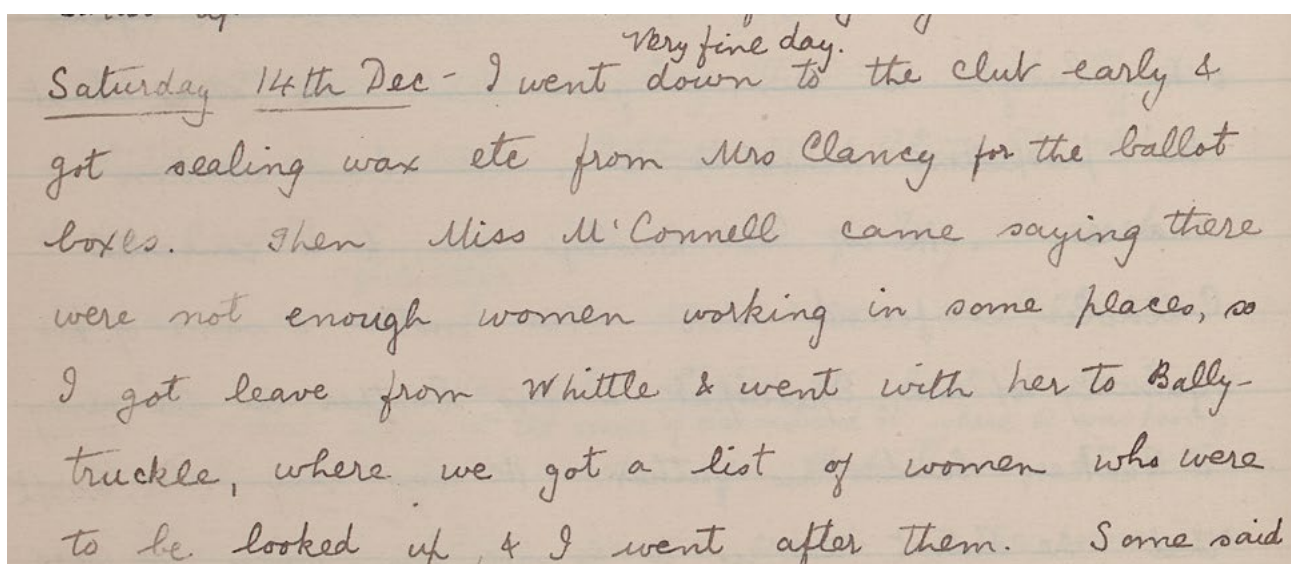


Digital content is growing at an unprecedented rate, creating challenges in collecting, preserving and providing access to information in new and innovative ways. The National Library of Ireland's goal is to continue providing high-quality information with provenance that users can trust, through the growing digitisation of our collections, and our born-digital collections.

Our openly available web archive dates from 2011, preserving Irish-content websites. This born-digital collection already includes websites which have since disappeared online and we now maintain the only record of their existence.

Digitisation and web-archiving highlights

The NLI web archive reached 13 TB in size by the end of 2017, while digitisation allowed us to make our content available freely worldwide. Digitisation is an increasingly important tool in the democratisation of access to the national collections.



We created nearly 14,000 digital images through our digitisation programme in 2017, including 920 manuscripts. Shown here is an extract from the diary of Rosamond Jacob, describing the election of 1918 (the first general election in Ireland where women over 30 could vote.)



We digitised 6,245 of our prints and drawings, such as this drawing of Blarney Castle by James Stark Fleming.



The Tynan collection of photographs of Donegal were amongst 3,840 photographs digitised.

Through our permissions-based web archiving, we now have more than 13TB of data freely searchable through our website – with over 200 sites on topics from Brexit to Hurricane Ophelia captured during 2017. A complete crawl of the Irish top level (.ie) domain was also carried out in 2017. This crawl focused on all .ie domains, other domains hosted in Ireland and Irish language websites that were identified using language detection software. A particular focus was placed on government, state bodies and higher education websites.



5. COLLABORATE

The National Library works with partners to achieve more together than we ever could alone. This tradition of partnership underpins some of our most significant and valued achievements.

Seamus Heaney: Listen Now Again

Since Seamus Heaney donated his writer's archive to the National Library in 2011, we have been planning a major exhibition to celebrate and explore his writing. Throughout 2017, the NLI worked with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Bank of Ireland, curator Geraldine Higgins, exhibition designers Ralph Appelbaum Associates and the Heaney family on Seamus Heaney: Listen Now Again. Details of the exhibition, which will open at the new Bank of Ireland Cultural and Heritage Centre on College Green, Dublin, in Summer 2018, were announced at a launch event in December 2017. The Heaney exhibition will complement and link with the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI) project, a partnership with UCD which will open in 2019.



Open Research Data in Ireland

In September 2017, we worked the Research Data Alliance, the Digital Repository of Ireland and Open Research Ireland to host the "National Approach to Open Research Data in Ireland" workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to collectively develop proposed national principles for Open Research Data in Ireland. The output of the workshop will inform the continuing work of the National Open Research Forum (NORF). Topics addressed included: skills & training, infrastructure, incentives & rewards, priorities, policy & practice, communicating & engaging with the research community.

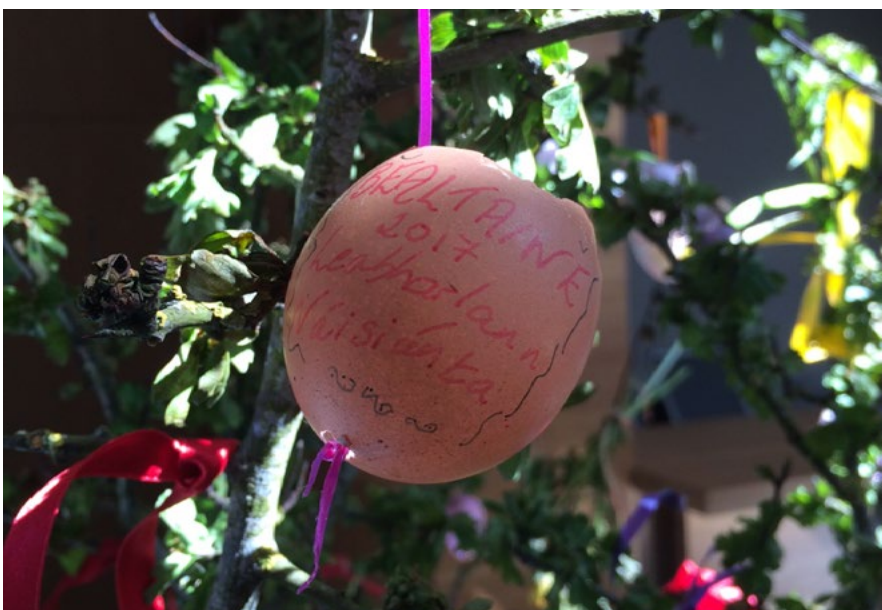


140 Years Working Together

We marked our 140th birthday with a party to celebrate all we have achieved collaboratively. Current and former staff, partners, stakeholders, researchers and visitors joined us together with Laureate na nÓg PJ Lynch, whose work as an illustrator is captured in our Prints and Drawings Collections.

Philanthropy and Giving

Donating funds to the National Library allows us to make purchases such as these portraits of Lily and Lolly Yeats. The portraits were acquired at auction in 2017 with funding from the Normanby Charitable Trust and Constantine Phipps. Giving also supports programming, such as the annual Joseph Hassett Yeats lecture, which takes place each year on WB Yeats' birthday. In 2017 the lecture was delivered by Bernard O'Donoghue.



Festivals & Events

Participating in local and national festivals and events allows the NLI to contribute to a larger programme, and to reach new audiences. In 2017, we were delighted to work with Heritage Week, the Bealtaine Festival, the Dublin Book Festival, Culture Night, Open House and Cruinniú na Cásca amongst others.

Donors 2017

The NLI gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our donors in 2017.

Baker, Jennifer
Barnwell, David
Beresford, Marcus
Berry, Fiona
Berwick, Mary
Brady, Dr Luke
British Records Association
Byrne, Gerard
Cambridge University Press
Channells, Geoffrey
Costelloe, Peter
Cullen, Paul
Davis, Richard
Dillon, Maureen
Dillon, Paul
Donaghmore Historical Society
Donnelly, Patrick
Dowdall, Deirdre
Doyle, Ita
Emain Publications
Ernest Walker, Lynda
Evans, J.R.
Fanoni, Marcello
Flanagan, Patrick
Fleming, Brian
Franey, Ros
Fundacja Kultury Irlandzkiej
Galligan, Colm
Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
Griffin, Stephen
Guinness, Catherine
Hassett, Joseph
Havelin, Harry
Heaton, Carol
Hipgrave, Brian
Inman, Keith
Jordan, Anthony
Jordan, Neil
Kelly, James
Kenny, Colum
Keogh, Ann
Kostick, Conor
Kuch, Peter
Lacey, Brian
Lecale Historical Society
Lydon, Perry
MacDonald, Paddy
MacGabhann, Peadar
Mackenzie, Erik
McCormack, Bill
McIntyre, Perry
Medlycott, Elinor
Mitrani, Ida
Morrison, George
Nangle, John
Nightingale, Marie P.
Normanby Charitable Trust
O'Brien, Peter
O'Neill, Emer
Orr, Charles J.W.
Paine, Gary
Pernot-Deschamps, Maggie
Phipps, Constantine
Reynolds, Julian
Schramm, Krzysztof
Semple, Patrick
Smith, Deirdre
Smyth, Ann
Special Collections, Information Services, Queen's University Belfast
Stocks Powell, John
Stoney Road Press
Strabane Historical Society
The Reading Room Press
Tuffley, M. J.
Turner, Martyn
Wark, Anne
Watts, Cedric
Wild Apple Press
Yeats, Caitriona
Yeats Family



The National Library of Ireland (NLI) is the library of record for Ireland. Established in 1877, we share the story of Ireland with the world through our unique collections. We care for more than ten million items, including books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, prints, maps, drawings, ephemera, music and digital media. The Library is open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult the collections.

The five strategic priorities for the National Library for 2016 – 2021 are to collect, protect, connect, innovate and collaborate. Further information is available at www.nli.ie.

Follow the NLI on    

