

# **2010 in the National Library of Ireland**

## **Our Mission**

*To collect, preserve, promote and make accessible the documentary and intellectual record of the life of Ireland and to contribute to the provision of access to the larger universe of recorded knowledge.*

*Report of the Board of the National Library of Ireland*

*For the year ended 31 December 2010*

*To the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht pursuant to section 36 of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997.*

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## Director's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report of the Board of the National Library of Ireland for 2010. This report contains a summary of the main activities of the Library during the year.

2010 marked my own appointment as Director of the Library as well as the appointment of a new board chaired by David Harvey; it was also a year of quite dramatic change. Nowhere was this change felt more than in funding and staffing levels with our funding falling by some 22% from 2008 levels during 2010 and core staffing falling from 106 to 96 over the same period.

These developments have added considerably to the scale of the challenge faced by the Library as it seeks to deliver on its mission of collecting, preserving, promoting and making accessible the documentary and intellectual record of the life of Ireland. And in that sense, 2010 can be seen as a year of considerable achievement for the Library and its staff.

Indeed, it would be fair to say that the year marked the beginning of a transformation process at the Library which will see the creation of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cultural Institution which is capable of supporting the needs of both its existing users and future generations born of the emerging smart economy.

Despite the financial and other resource constraints 2010 was a record year for the Library in terms of visitor numbers and website use. Total visits increased to 183,973 in 2010, growth of more than 45,000 or 32% over the previous year. Of particular note was the success of the Discover Exhibition which attracted 37,797 visitors during the year. The National Photographic Archive was also extremely successful with an increase of almost 22,000 visitors to 55,278 in 2010.

The ongoing development of the Library's website was reflected in an increase in hits to 672,931 from 444,783 in 2009 – representing annualised growth of more than 50%.

Acquisitions activity remained strong during the year with highlights including a very rare 17th century shipping document signed by King James II and Samuel Pepys; the personal papers of the late Professor FX Martin; and a first edition of *Mosada* by WB Yeats.

Our Conservation Department carries out vitally important work on the preservation of our collections and it was responsible for the very significant Clean Sweep project during 2010 which involved the sweeping clean and boxing of more than 50,000 rare books thereby improving the collection's condition, preventing further damage and identifying priorities for future conservation.

Another highly significant development during 2010 was the initiation of discussions with UCD and TCD on the possibility of developing a shared state-of-the-art offsite storage facility for the collections held by the three institutions which would form the basis of a national facility or Cultural Treasury. This could have far reaching consequences for the preservation of Ireland's priceless cultural and intellectual heritage and would offer a far more cost effective solution to the taxpayer than the current situation and facilitate much improved access to the collections for the public, the education system, the research community and knowledge based industry.

Making our collections accessible is a key element of our mission and it is vitally important for the future that we reach out to the widest possible audience using all channels and platforms available to us. This will require us to mount more traditional exhibitions on the lines of Discover Exhibition, actively pursuing the goal of digitising and making available online the vast bulk of our collections, and reaching out to the public and the education and research communities through events beyond the walls of the Library itself.

The challenge will be to do all of this and more with less funding and fewer resources. But it is a challenge which the Board and staff of the National Library of Ireland relish. On that note I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the great contribution made to the Library by my predecessor Aongus Ó hAonghusa and the previous board chaired by Gerry Danaher. I would also like to pay tribute to all of the staff of the Library who worked so assiduously during 2010 as we welcomed record numbers of visitors through our doors and continued to deliver on our mission to the nation.

Fiona Ross  
Director

## Our Collections

The National Library aims to collect materials on or relating to Ireland and to provide an accurate record of Ireland's output in manuscript, print and other media for present and future users. The Library acquires this material through a combination of legal deposit, donation, and purchase.

Legal deposit is a statutory provision which obliges publishers to deposit copies of their publications in certain libraries, including the National Library. We also receive valuable donations to our collections while the Library's acquisitions budget is used to further develop the collections.

Among the key acquisitions during 2010 were:

- a significant archive relating to the stained glass artist and book illustrator Harry Clarke;
- an extremely rare 17th century shipping document signed by King James II and English diarist Samuel Pepys;
- the personal papers of the late Professor FX Martin, historian, leader of the Save Wood Quay campaign, member of the Augustinian Order in Ireland and one of the most prominent figures in Irish academic and cultural life from the early 1960s to the late 1980s;
- a first edition of *Mosada* by WB Yeats, published in Dublin in 1886;
- a collection of original journals and trial papers of the Young Irelander, William Smith O'Brien;
- a rare first edition of the novel *Knocknagow*, by Charles Kickham, published in Dublin by A.M. Sullivan, [1873];
- a collection of original cartoons created George O'Callaghan who contributed a topical cartoon to the *Evening Press* newspaper under the name 'Till', almost daily for 35 years; and
- original drawings and printer's proofs relating to the Irish Sweepstakes advertising campaigns in the 1960s and '70s,

Further significant additions during 2010 by collection area are set out below.

### Department of Manuscripts

The literary archive of the novelist Francis MacManus was donated by his son Patrick. The visitors' book of the Cuala Industries and Press, established by Elizabeth and Lily Yeats, covering the period 1908 to 1928, and including the signatures of WB Yeats and Maud Gonne, as Jack B Yeats, George Russell, and George Bernard Shaw, was acquired at auction. Also purchased at auction was a letter penned by renowned architect James Gandon and a collection of diaries kept by Thomas Patrick Fox (1872-1908), a young journalist who wrote for the *Freeman's Journal* and the *United Irishman*.

Valuable additions to the Library's cartographic collections were a seventeenth century map of Dublin; the estate atlas for the County Waterford lands of Sir John Kennedy Bart; and the

demesne map of Killmurry House, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, signed and dated by Peter Patsuil, 1757.

## **Department of Printed and Visual Collections**

- **Printed Books**

Mr. Stephen Griffin continues to donate material relating to Irish Americans dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day while the Irish Literature Exchange continued to donate monographs by Irish authors, translated into various European languages. A particularly fine copy of the *Antiquities of Ireland* by Frances Grose, was donated by the family of the late Ciarán McAnally.

- **Prints and Drawings**

Significant acquisitions during the year included a satirical drawing, 'The Booksellers Work Shop' by Marianne-Caroline Hamilton (1777-1861); a sketchbook by Alfred Nicholson (1788-1840); a watercolour drawing by WF Wakeman (1822-1900) of The Market Place, Navan; and a pair of pencil sketches of the Pigeon House inscribed and dated 1837, by SF Brocas.

- **Ephemera**

Liam and Suzanne Shanahan donated two rare lottery tickets from 1766 and 1778 while significant purchases in 2010 included a poster designed by Grace Gifford Plunkett 'We Owe England Nothing'; a proclamation prohibiting the holding of meetings 'within the police district of Dublin Metropolis', between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March 1918; and a poster advertising a public meeting of the Irish Anti-Partition Association at Killeagh, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1949.

- **Maps**

A rare set of ten-foot maps of Celbridge, Co. Kildare, which were surveyed in 1872-3 and zincographed in 1874 at the Ordnance Survey Office, Phoenix Park, Dublin were acquired during the year.

- **Periodicals and Newspapers**

Among the many significant additions to the Library's collections of newspapers and periodicals in 2010 was the *Ennis Chronicle*, spanning the years 1785-1818.

- **Photographs**

Donations of photographic material during 2010 included 27 colour prints by Ivo Hadjimishev of *Oileáin Árann*; 200 carte-de-visite portraits donated by Mr Michael Kelly, and a collection of prints, slides and negatives by photographer Patrick Monaghan donated by his sister Ms Una Sundberg.

- **Born Digital Collections**

The mandate for the Born Digital programme can be found in the Strategic Plan 2008-2010. A member of staff was assigned to this area in October 2010 and has carried out a number of scoping activities in relation to designing a programme of work for this area. This has included research on the Library's role in a digital information landscape and a preliminary examination of the relevant legal issues, with particular reference to the extension of Legal Deposit provision.

## **Conservation**

The Conservation Department is charged with preserving and conserving the collections of the National Library of Ireland. Preservation measures are not generally aimed at improving the condition of an object, but to slow down degradation and prevent damage by passive methods. By contrast, conservation aims to prolong the life and accessibility of collections through a range of specialised treatments which improve the physical, chemical and often visual condition of an object.

A major focus of this work during 2010 was the preparation of materials in advance of removal to offsite commercial storage. This arose from the need to empty the Library's premises at No 5 Kildare Street, to allow it to be reshelved and refurbished.

Our conservators developed safe enclosures for the protection of the substantial numbers of manuscripts and newspaper volumes (c.3,000 volumes) which were transferred to offsite commercial storage. They also monitored the moves and trained the commercial contractors in handling library materials.

A conservation referral system for damaged items requested by readers continued, and as a result over 150 rare and frequently accessed items received attention. The system was expanded to the Prints and Drawings department where 84 items have been highlighted for conservation attention.

### **The Clean Sweep Project**

Among the most significant conservation programmes initiated in 2010 was the Clean Sweep project. It involves the cleaning and boxing of our more than 50,000 rare books in preparation for safe transit to an upgraded and refurbished on-site store. This wonderful collection represents a journey from the earliest printed books in the Irish language to collectors' editions of contemporary Irish authors.

The current condition of the Rare Book Collection indicates environmental factors combined with usage as the primary causes of deterioration. By cleaning, boxing and recording damage we are improving the Collection's condition, preventing further damage and identifying priorities for in-depth conservation.

Our four project staff works in two teams cleaning and surveying more than 200 books each day. Whilst cleaning future conservation treatment priorities are identified. In all, during 2010 some 4,747 volumes were cleaned, surveyed and boxed.

### **Preserving Ireland's Cultural Treasury**

During 2010 discussions were initiated with UCD and TCD on the possibility of developing a shared state-of-the-art offsite storage facility for the collections held by the three institutions which would form the basis of a national facility or Cultural Treasury. This could have far reaching consequences for the preservation of Ireland's priceless cultural and intellectual heritage.

The accumulated documentary record of this heritage amounts to tens of millions of items ranging from genealogical records to artworks, historical photographs to illuminated manuscripts, to newspapers, books and research papers. Every year this heritage attracts tens of thousands of culture-seeking tourists to visit the country.

This record can be described as Ireland's Cultural Treasury. It is vast, priceless and in imminent danger of destruction. It faces threats posed by inadequate and insecure storage facilities and poor preservation practices.

At present the Cultural Treasury is dispersed across hundreds of institutions throughout the country. These institutions range from the National Library of Ireland, which alone has more than 8 million items in its collections, to the smallest local museum and includes schools, third level colleges, public libraries and other cultural bodies.

There are no reliable estimates of the total number of items held but when it is considered that the National Library, Trinity College Dublin (TCD), and University College Dublin (UCD) hold more than 30 million items, between them the total in the national Cultural Treasury could be well over 100 million.

The sheer volume of the existing collections coupled with their ongoing growth is putting enormous pressure on the Cultural Treasury and its custodians. These pressures are being experienced principally in two areas – preservation and access.

Inadequate and outdated storage facilities hamper preservation efforts and are also preventing the full exploitation of the true value of our Cultural Treasury.

The solution being considered by the National Library, UCD and TCD is the establishment of a new world class facility shared between the maximum possible number of institutions. Such a facility would offer a far more cost effective solution to the taxpayer than the current situation; provide growth space for the institutions' collections into the future; and facilitate much improved access to the collections for the public, the education system, the research community and knowledge based industry.

## Make accessible

A key part of the Library's mission is to make accessible the documentary and intellectual record of the life of Ireland. We seek to deliver on this mission through all available channels and formats.

The National Library is open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult the collections for material not otherwise available through the public library service or an academic library.

The Library does not lend books and reading is done in our reading rooms. There is also a copying service and it is possible to get photocopies, photographs, slides, or microfilm of most items in the collections.

2010 was a particularly satisfactory year in terms of visitor numbers. Total visits to the National Library increased to 183,973 in 2010, growth of more than 45,000 or 32% over the previous year. While the Main Reading Room and the Yeats Exhibition showed relatively modest increases much of the growth witnessed in 2010 can be attributed to the success of the Discover Exhibition which, on its own, attracted 37,797 visitors during the year.

The National Photographic Archive continues to grow in popularity with 55,278 visitors in 2010 as opposed to 33,331 the previous year.

The growth in importance of the online access was emphasised with hits to the website at [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie) increasing from 444,783 in 2009 to 672,931 in 2010. This represented year on year growth of more than 50% and is a reflection of the enhanced resources available online.

### Online access

As part of our efforts to make resources digitally available to the widest possible audience a representative selection of images from our visual collections is already available on our online catalogue. During 2010 we continued a major project to digitise over 33,000 historic photographs and these are now accessible through our online catalogue. We launched our new OpenSource, mobile-enabled catalogue in June 2010, and our *Sources* database, an online catalogue of records for Irish-interest manuscripts and periodical articles, was awarded a Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Award in July. Our online Flickr, Twitter and Facebook followers grew significantly throughout 2010, with the launch of a blog planned in 2011.

The Library's **Newspaper & Periodicals** e-resources were greatly enhanced during 2010 by the acquisition of two full text searchable online archives, the Irish Newspaper Archives (containing over 20 Irish newspapers) and the JSTOR Ireland Periodical collection. (containing more than 75 key Irish journals from the 18th century to the present day).

## Learning, Exhibitions and Events

The Library has an ongoing programme of exhibitions. A significant new addition in 2010 was *Discover Your National Library: Explore, Reflect, Connect* at 2/3 Kildare Street. This multimedia exhibition and some of the technologies used were a case study for the Smart Economy in Action: Ireland in Transformation conference organised by Microsoft Ireland in April. The *Discover* exhibition includes a rotating series of smaller exhibitions focusing on how the Library's collections are used. In November 2010, the exhibition *Alice Milligan and the Irish Cultural Revival*, curated for the National Library by Dr Catherine Morris, was launched in the *Discover* space by actress Fiona Shaw.

In the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar, *Power and Privilege: photographs of the Big House in Ireland 1858-1922* was launched by Minister Mary Hanafin in August; extremely popular with visitors, it will travel to the Museum of Country Life in late 2011. The Irish Countrywomen's Association was the subject of an exhibition in May, while an exhibition celebrating the National Library of Ireland's 120 years in its Kildare Street buildings was on display from August. *Tall Tales and Deadly Drawings* which features material from the Library's collections of children's literature was opened in the front hall of the main library in late December.

The Library continued its regular free programme of evening and other events throughout the year, including its ongoing *Library Late* series, and the annual *Summer's Wreath* festival, a month-long public programme of events run in conjunction with the Yeats exhibition. We participated once again in the annual *One City One Book* festival in April, and as part of Bealtaine in May hosted the events 'I'll Live 'til I die', a celebration of talk, story and song focused on the renowned signing star Delia Murphy, and "The Stories of Mary Lavin...a personal choice" at which the actor and storyteller Nuala Hayes, writer Doireann Ní Bhriain and members of Mary Lavin's family read their favourite stories by the author. In the autumn, a number of public events inspired by the themes of *Power and Privilege* and exploring the idea of "Memoir" attracted large audiences. Other events hosted by the Library as part of its commitment to reach out to the widest possible audience included the launch by Jedward of *Write up my Street*, a powerful and inspiring collection of short stories based around community life in Ireland today.

Our learning activities developed throughout the year, including events for Library Ireland Week, Heritage Week, and Culture Night. With the voluntary help of a number of Library staff, the buildings remained open on Culture Night until 11pm, attracting over 500 visitors. Learning staff designed and delivered a number of hands-on workshops with St John of God's clients on Library collections, in addition to their regular provision of tours and workshops to school and other groups. Tours of our Yeats exhibition were offered throughout the year, and monthly Saturday tours of the Reading Room were introduced in the autumn. Also in the autumn, we successfully continued our collaboration with Poetry Ireland on the poetry speaking competition for schools, Poetry Aloud, which attracted a record 1200 participants from all over the country. Other collaborations included the successful continuation of our partnership with UCD Adult Education, who offer programmes drawing on Library collections, and with older users through the Bealtaine research project.

2010 also saw the publication of the official history of the National Library of Ireland Society. *Friends of the National Library: Forty Years of the National Library of Ireland Society* was written by Dónall Ó Luanaigh, who retired from the staff of the Library in June

2006 after 43 years' service.

## **Other Library Services**

### **Office of the Chief Herald**

The Office of Chief Herald of Ireland researches and, grants or confirms Coats of Arms and other armorial insignia. Fergus Gillespie retired from the post of Chief Herald of Ireland at the end of 2009. Colette Byrne, Keeper of Administration, was appointed Chief Herald in February 2010 until June 2010 when Colette O'Flaherty was appointed to the post.

During 2010, six Patents of Arms, granting, confirming or certifying armorial bearings, were completed. Amongst the personal arms confirmed were those to John Aidan K'Eogh, a descendant of Daniel Molyneux, Ulster King of Arms between 1597 and 1632. Corporate grants and confirmations in 2010 included that to the Diocese of Down and Connor.

The staff of the Chief Herald's Office, and all in the Library, were deeply shocked and saddened by the sudden death in January of the Office's Clerical Officer, Noreen Canavan. Ms Canavan had worked in the Office for nine years and had contributed greatly to administration and record-keeping.

### **Irish ISSN Centre**

The Irish ISSN Centre is responsible for allocating ISSNs (International Standard Serial Numbers) to all serials published in the Republic of Ireland, managing requests for ISSNs, and transmitting the data to the international ISSN database.

In 2010, 85 new ISSNs were assigned, six records were transferred to the UK Centre, and 207 records were entered or amended.

# **Governance, Human Resource Management and Development**

2010 was an eventful year for the National Library of Ireland in terms of management and governance. Aongus Ó hAonghusa, who served as Director of the Library from 2005 to 2010, left in January 2010 after completing his five year term of office. He was succeeded by Fiona Ross who took up her position in March 2010. An expert in the field of leadership and governance, Ms Ross has lectured in University College Dublin and at the Irish Management Institute (IMI) and is a member of the Business Research Programme in UCD.

Fergus Gillespie, Chief Herald and Keeper in the National Library's Genealogical Office, retired from the Library in November 2009 after 38 years of distinguished service. Colette Byrne, Keeper of Administration, was appointed Chief Herald in February 2010 until June 2010 when Colette O'Flaherty was appointed to the post and to the position of Keeper of Manuscripts, vacant since the retirement in 2009 of Gerard Lyne.

In September 2010, a new Board of Directors for the National Library of Ireland was appointed. The Board, chaired by David Harvey and is composed of representatives from the following sectors:

## **Business and communications**

**David Harvey**

**Brian Halpin**, former Deputy Director General and Secretary of the Central Bank of Ireland

**Paul Rellis**, Managing Director, Microsoft Ireland

**H. Paul Shovlin**, company director; business consultant; Council Member, Royal Dublin Society

## **Education**

**Professor Diarmaid Ferriter**, author, historian and university lecturer; Professor of Modern Irish History at University College Dublin

**Dr Marian Fitzgibbon**, Head of the School of Humanities, Athlone Institute of Technology

**Des Marnane**, historian, writer and teacher; Hon Secretary, Tipperary Historical Society

**Susan Phillips**, lecturer involved in community and rural affairs; Council Member, Royal Dublin Society

**Pat Quinn**, secondary school teacher of English and History, Dominican College Sion Hill, Dublin

**Professor Robert Spoo**, member of the faculty at the University of Tulsa, College of Law; international expert in copyright, trademark and intellectual property

## **Libraries**

**Patrick McMahan**, Galway City and County Librarian; former President, Library Association of Ireland

**Carol Maddock**, Information Systems, National Library of Ireland

## **Human Resource Management and Development**

The Library faced many challenges in 2010 from a human resources perspective. The ongoing moratorium on recruitment in the public service coupled with reducing budgets saw staff numbers fall to 97.4\* by year end.

As well as normal retirements a number of Library staff availed of the public service early retirement scheme.

Through the development of its studentship and volunteers programmes, the Library was able to provide students and other seeking work experience from both Ireland and abroad the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the institution, benefitting both the Library and the people concerned. The Library had a total of 50 unpaid placements in the course of 2010 and this included 12 FAS Work Placement trainees.

The Library continued to implement and develop its staff performance management development system (PMDS) in 2010.

The Library's Training and Development Plan 2008-2010 continued to be given priority in 2010. Support was also provided for staff attending relevant specialised training courses and seminars including technical training in terms of supporting staff to keep abreast of emerging technologies.

The Library continues to place a strong emphasis on good attendance. The Library's sick leave was 945.1 days and 3.5% of working hours in 2010.

Draft superannuation schemes for the Library are with the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism for approval in accordance with Section 33 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997.

\*whole time equivalent

## **Progress towards the Library's 2008–2010 Strategic Aims and Objectives**

2010 was the final year of the Library's 2008-2010 Strategic Plan. While much progress was made in terms of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the Strategic Plan the dramatically changed economic and fiscal landscape required a refocusing of our efforts. 2010 therefore saw work begin on the development of the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan for the Library. This plan supersedes its forerunner and reflects the new economic background and the requirement for the Library, in common with other national cultural institutions, to do more with less in future and seek new and innovative ways to deliver on our mission.