

2007 in the National Library of Ireland

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Chairman's Statement

As Chairman of the Board of the National Library of Ireland it gives me great pleasure to present the Board's third annual report. 2007 was an extremely busy and successful year for the Library, with almost €13 million expended on Library activities including a significant capital investment covering acquisitions, digitisation and IT-related infrastructure initiatives. The Library was active on a number of fronts. Events were well attended and several new initiatives were launched.

A number of key milestones were achieved. These included the completion of the Board's first Strategic Plan, work on which had commenced in 2006. The new plan covers the period 2008 to 2010 and sets out a long-term vision for the Library, which is to transform it into a world-class institution providing access to information in all formats. A key element of the strategy is to position the Library in the digital environment. Work began in 2007 on delivering this strategic goal, with the preparation of a digital policy and the commencement of a number of digitisation projects.

The Board is particularly pleased that, in May, planning permission for the proposed storage facility to be developed on the Library's Kildare Street campus was approved by An Bord Pleanála. The project was also included among the infrastructural projects listed in the National Development Plan 2007–2013 which was launched by the Government in January 2007. I have in previous reports expressed the Board's concerns regarding the poor quality of the storage facilities for the Library's priceless collections of material. It is essential that work commences on the construction of the storage facility as a matter of the greatest urgency. The state of the Library's buildings generally is such that the collections in the Board's care are at considerable risk, and the possibility of a loss of significant elements of the collections cannot be ruled out.

Considerable progress was achieved in relation to services development during the year. New facilities such as direct self-service copying were introduced, additional space was provided for the reading of microfilms, and earlier opening times for the reading rooms were introduced. A new Library website was launched: this will provide a platform for the delivery of new and expanded services, and will support the Library's digitisation projects.

Public events continued to attract increasing numbers of visitors to the Library. In December 2007 an additional exhibition space was opened in the space previously occupied by the Heraldic Museum in 2/3 Kildare Street. A start was made on extending the opening times of exhibitions mounted by the Library. Record visitor numbers were achieved in the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar.

Finally, the Library's active programme of acquisitions continued in 2007. Highlights of the acquisitions programme included the purchase of the literary papers of the poet Paul Durcan and the generous donation by Senator David Norris of his personal archive of material dealing with his involvement as a gay rights campaigner, politician and Joycean scholar.

The year saw the sad death of Senator Mícheál Yeats who was for many decades a great friend and supporter of the Library. Senator Yeats continued his family's tradition of donating important material to the Library and was extremely supportive of the Library's current exhibition which commemorates his father William Butler Yeats. Tragically, the year also saw the death of Míchaél's daughter Síle after a short illness. On behalf of the Board and staff of the Library I would like to extend our sincere and deep condolences to Gráinne and the Yeats family.

The year 2007 also saw the conclusion of the term of office as Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism of Mr John O'Donoghue TD. I would like to record the Board's appreciation of the enormous support it received from Mr O'Donoghue and we wish him well in his new responsibilities as Ceann Comhairle.

Mr. Séamus Brennan TD was appointed Minister in June 2007. He took an active interest in the work of the National Library and paid a number of visits to the Library during his term of office which ended in May 2008. Sadly he died some months later. On behalf of the Board I would like to express our condolences to his wife and family.

The Library is also grateful to the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism for all its support and encouragement throughout the year.

Finally, on behalf of the Board I would like to express our appreciation to the Director, Aongus Ó hAonghusa, and to the staff of the Library for all of their hard work during the year.

Director's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report of the Board of the National Library of Ireland for 2007. This report documents the work of the organisation during the year across an increasingly broad range of activities.

A particularly important and exciting development during 2007 was the completion of the Board's Strategic Plan 2008–2010: this document charts the strategic direction of the Library over the next three years and identifies a range of policy issues that will need to be addressed during that period. The plan is challenging and ambitious, but it is an essential step if the Library is to fulfil its aim of being a world-class institution in terms of collections, services and facilities. Key elements of that plan are already being implemented – particularly in the area of digital policy and digitisation.

Further improvements in services took place during 2007: opening hours in the Kildare Street reading rooms were extended by 30 minutes Monday to Saturday. New facilities were introduced, including self-service printing from microfilm readers. Additional microfilm reading space was made available during the year and a new website which conforms to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) was launched. Towards the end of the year, an order was placed for a new electronic library system which, when implemented in 2008, will provide an appropriate platform for the delivery of a range of library services and will support the Library's digital developments.

2007 marked the commencement of the Library's first major digitisation project. The basis for this work was set out in the Library's Digitisation policy which was completed early in the year. This policy identifies the key issues that will need to be addressed if the Library is to become a major digital library. Further planning work was undertaken and, towards the end of the year, work commenced on a major in-house project to digitise the Library's photographic glass plate collection. In addition, a contract was awarded to digitise *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilization and Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation: Articles in Irish Periodicals* which, when completed, will add significantly to the electronic resources available to researchers. Associated with its development as a digital library, the Library became a partner in the European Digital Library project – an initiative of The European Library (the internet portal of the Conference of European National Librarians).

The Library's flagship exhibition *Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats* continued to attract significant visitor numbers. Particular emphasis was placed on providing appropriate formal and informal learning opportunities for people of all ages, and a summer programme specifically aimed at children proved very popular. A month-long programme of activities focused on Yeats' creativity and legacy was held in June. The programme included a series of lunchtime readings of Yeats' poetry by well-known personalities. The highlight of the month was an evening devoted entirely to Yeats' poetry on 13 June, with readings by celebrity guests. The 'Library Late' series of interviews with prominent writers continued to attract the public, while the highly

successful 'POETRY ALOUD' competition was run again in April/May. A second exhibition *Strangers to Citizens: the Irish in Europe* opened in the Library's new exhibition space in 2/3 Kildare Street in December.

Further organisational improvements took place during the year. Additional key staff appointments were made; these included internal promotions and a significant programme of external recruitment. A comprehensive training needs analysis was undertaken and this led to the drafting of a training plan. Health and safety consultants were engaged to review and update the Library's procedures and practices in this area. Following a tendering process, a firm was appointed to provide an internal audit service, and a number of audits were completed in the second half of the year.

A number of projects were undertaken on Library buildings. This included remedial work on the decorative cornice in the Main Reading Room, the installation of a replacement lift in the East Wing, and the refurbishment of the space occupied by the former Heraldic Museum. A project to re-cable 2/3 Kildare Street was well underway at year end.

The Library continued its active acquisitions programme during 2007. Our collections were particularly enriched by a number of signal acquisitions including:

- The purchase of the literary papers of the distinguished contemporary poet **Paul Durcan**.
- The donation by **Senator David Norris** of his personal archive, including material relating to his work as a gay rights activist, as a Joycean scholar, and as a politician.
- The donation of material relating to the late Ria Mooney, the distinguished actress who became the first woman to hold the position of producer at the Abbey Theatre.
- The purchase at auction of important correspondence between Charles Stewart Parnell and Cecil Rhodes.

In conclusion, I wish to record my gratitude and appreciation to the Library staff for yet another year of excellent service and achievement. My particular thanks are due to the Chairman of the Library Board, Mr Gerry Danaher SC, and all Board members for their support throughout the year.

Developing our collections

During 2007, we acquired some outstanding collections covering a wide range of social, cultural, historical and literary topics, some of which are described below. We are confident that these new collections add significantly to the national documentary heritage, and that along with our routine purchases and the material that we receive under legal deposit, they will provide research and learning resources for use by present and future generations.

Correspondence of Charles Stewart Parnell and Cecil Rhodes

This correspondence between Charles Stewart Parnell and Cecil Rhodes (the British-born South African businessman, mining magnate, politician and coloniser of the state of Rhodesia, which was named after him) includes a letter written by Rhodes dealing with his reaction to Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill. In it, he states that he believes that Irish representation at Westminster should continue, as it has the potential to become the blueprint for a federation of African colonies, and facilitate the granting of home rule to those of southern Africa. By way of demonstrating his support for Home Rule, Rhodes offered £10,000 to the Irish Parliamentary Party and sent Parnell a first instalment of £5,000.

Paul Durcan papers

The archive acquired by the Library from Paul Durcan, the distinguished contemporary poet, writer and broadcaster, comprises manuscripts, typescripts and proofs of his poetry, prose writings and diaries as well as correspondence with writers, editors and publishers, translators, broadcasters, politicians, friends, art dealers, scholars and fans. Also included are drafts of a play 'Balthus', which Brian Friel encouraged Paul Durcan to write, but which was never performed.

Godfrey Graham photographs

The Godfrey Graham Collection is made up of some 1,000 photographs taken between 1954 and 2000. Mr Graham was a cameraman with RTE from the early days of the station until his retirement. The majority of the photographs are of leading personalities in the literary and entertainment worlds, but images of important religious and political figures are also included. In addition to the portraiture, there is a set of 20 very engaging photographs taken in the early 1950s on Grafton Street and in St Stephen's Green.

Hogan/Wilson photographs

The Hogan/Wilson collection of 167 photographs taken during the Civil War was compiled by Capt Rev Denis J Wilson, Chaplain to the National Army Forces. The photographs were mainly taken by WD Hogan, and this collection will greatly complement the existing Hogan Collection, and indeed enhance the photographic record of the War of Independence and the Civil War. The images predominantly show Cork city and the Passage West area of County Cork; they also feature many of the major personalities involved in the conflict including some particularly interesting photographs of Michael Collins.

Ria Mooney donation

Ria Mooney was a distinguished actress who became the first woman to hold the position of producer at the Abbey Theatre in 1948. During her distinguished theatrical career, she toured America and she also acted and directed with the Eva La Gallienne Civic Repertory Company in New York. The materials acquired by the Library consist of a large body of correspondence, some photographs, and approximately 220 books from her library. Together, they form a unique archive of primary source material for research on her life and work and the important role that she played in Irish cultural life.

David Norris donation

Senator David Norris's donation of his personal archive was marked by an official handing-over ceremony on 17 December which was attended by Mrs Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former legal advisor to Senator Norris. The papers cover Senator Norris' life as a politician, Irish civil rights campaigner, human rights activist, gay rights activist and leading Joycean scholar. They include Senator Norris' original Seanad Electoral Nomination Form in 1981; the press release issued from the International Gay Rights Congress in Edinburgh, December 1974, and a typescript copy of his Gold Medal award-winning essay 'James Joyce – the Art of Chaos'.

Mary 'Paul' Pollard bequest

We were pleased to receive Miss Mary 'Paul' Pollard's bequest of a collection of printed books and pamphlets relating to Irish education. The collection (mainly 18th and 19th century publications) includes many editions of Maria and Richard Lovell Edgeworth's *Practical Education*, various official reports, and approximately 50 pamphlets, some of great rarity.

Miss Pollard, described by Maurice Craig as 'the most distinguished Irish bibliographer of the past half-century', joined the staff of Trinity College Library in 1957, retiring as Keeper of Early Printed Books and Special Collections in 1983. She also served as assistant librarian at Marsh's Library from 1957 to 1967. Her major publications are *Dublin's trade in books 1550–1800* (1989) and *A dictionary of members of the Dublin book trade 1550–1800* (2000). A good friend of the National Library of Ireland, she died in 2005.

2007 General Election ephemera material

In 2007, the Library organised a collaborative collecting project with colleagues in County and City libraries around the country with a view to collecting General Election 2007 ephemera including posters, leaflets, badges, etc. This successful joint project resulted in the acquisition by the Library of its largest ever collection of such material.

Friends of the National Collections of Ireland

Three items were donated to the Library's existing collections of ephemera and prints and drawings by the Friends of the National Collections of Ireland. They include a proclamation on martial law regulations in Dublin (issued on the Wednesday of Easter Week 1916); a rare handbill from the same period entitled 'Prevention of Epidemic', which requests members of the public to inform the authorities if they discover dead

bodies, and an original 1913 cartoon of John Redmond by Thomas Reginald Cleaver entitled 'The Ulster Crisis'.

Other acquisitions

In addition to these acquisitions, we acquired a range of printed and manuscript collections including, amongst others, papers of the artist and poet Dorothy Molloy Carpenter; papers of Mervyn Taylor, Labour Party politician and former government minister; the Coffey Trench papers relating to the artist Cesca Trench, as well as items as varied as letters of King James II, and an autograph book from Ballykinlar Internment Camp.

We received a further gift of books from Mr Stephen Griffin, as part of his ongoing donation of books dealing with the presence of the Irish in America from the eighteenth century to the present day. We wish to express our gratitude to Mr Griffin for this gift, which has strengthened the Library's holdings in this important area. Many of the items are of an ephemeral nature, and would not easily be found through the antiquarian booktrade.

Statistics regarding material acquired under legal deposit and other acquisitions are given in Appendix 4.

Processing and caring for our collections

The Manuscripts Department completed collection lists of the Monteagle Papers, the Hugh Leonard Papers, the Powerscourt Papers, the Considine Papers, the Mayo Papers, the Larcom Papers, the Fowler and Rawdon of Rathmolyon Papers, and the Lismore Castle Papers (Collection Lists 122-129). These lists can be found on the Library's website, and the manuscripts can be consulted in the Library's Manuscript Reading Room.

Statistics regarding other cataloguing and processing activities are given in Appendix 4.

Taking good care of our collections is one of our key missions. For this reason a restructuring was carried out during the year; this resulted in the addition of a new conservator and a conservation assistant in our Conservation Department. We were also delighted to welcome a conservation intern under a programme organised by the Heritage Council.

We continued to contribute to the work of the UK-based National Preservation Office (NPO) and to work on compiling a major preservation assessment survey of the Library's holdings under the guidance of the NPO. We also devised an interim disaster plan pending the development of a full disaster prevention and response strategy.

Towards Strategy 2008–2010

During the year, discussions took place with a view to formalising a collection development policy covering all appropriate formats, and planning for a phased extension of the *National Cultural Institutions Act 1997*, and the new legal deposit provisions in the *Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000* in line with the Library's projected strategy for 2008–2010.

The preservation assessment survey (see above), which will be completed in 2008, will contribute to our strategic aim of developing a comprehensive preservation policy. We started the process of procuring consultants to carry out a thorough revision and updating of our disaster prevention and response plans in 2008.

Delivering a quality service to our users

2007 was another remarkable year for the Library in terms of service provision. Signal developments included the launch of an extensive range of new and improved reading room and front-of-house services, and the launch of new digital projects, in line with our long-term strategic aims.

Serving our users better

In April we extended our opening hours by opening the Main Reading Room and Manuscripts Reading Room at 9.30am instead of 10am. We opened all Library services to the public on the Tuesday after Easter and we opened our exhibitions to the public for three and a half days during the Christmas/New Year holiday period.

We opened an additional microfilm reading room, refurbished the existing room and equipped it with new microfilm readers which are located in the main building complex in Kildare Street. In addition, we introduced self-service microfilm reader printers which are proving very popular with Library users; the self-service printing from online resources is also proving very popular. We also acquired new equipment which will allow us to introduce self-service copying from books in 2008.

We reviewed Front Hall services so as to ensure that visitors and readers receive an efficient level of service. We ordered self-service lockers, and we planned refurbishment works to facilitate their introduction.

We drafted an Irish language scheme and submitted it for approval under section 11 of the Official Languages Act, 2003.

On 14 November we held a readers' forum aimed at providing users with an opportunity to raise issues of concern which we will assess and redress. We intend to continue reviewing on an ongoing basis all our public services in consultation with our readers and our other users and customers, in a move designed to improve accessibility and provide a quality service.

Serving our users in the digital world

We redesigned our website in 2007 so that it is now much more comprehensive and user-friendly. It contains new sections such as 'ask a librarian' and 360° virtual tours of the main Library building and the National Photographic Archive. It also features a members' area and an online shop, and it conforms to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

We improved facilities for accessing online information services from the Reading Rooms and we added new services including *The Irish Times Digital Archive*.

We commissioned a one-off crawl of Irish websites from the Internet Archive, San Francisco, partly as a preliminary step towards looking at the various issues relating to internet archiving, but also for its intrinsic worth as a snapshot of Irish life on the web in 2007.

We augmented the staff resources available in the Library for digital initiatives by appointing the Library's first professional IT Manager; by redeploying an Assistant Keeper and a Digital Systems Officer from other departments in the Library, and by taking on project staff. We procured a new Library Management System, digital equipment and infrastructure, including upgraded cabling in parts of the Library's buildings, and a storage area network.

Digitising Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation

We embarked on a major outsourced project to digitise two of the Library's best-known bibliographical resources, *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation*, and *Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation: Articles in Irish Periodicals*. These compendiums were initiated in the 1960s by a former Director of the Library, Dr Richard Hayes, a man who in many ways was ahead of his time. The manuscript volumes contain not only catalogue entries for the Library's own manuscript collections, but also entries for manuscripts of Irish interest held in libraries around the world. The periodical volumes are complete indexes of periodicals which are core to Irish studies, and have long been used as an essential resource by students of Irish history and culture. The completion of this project will mean that two of the Library's most important catalogues and bibliographical resources will be available for consultation on our website.

Digitising photographs

We initiated a project to digitise over 100,000 photographic glass plate negatives held by the Library in the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar. The glass plate collections were considered a priority due to the physical fragility of the originals, the importance of improving access, and due to high user demand. The project is both a major preservation initiative and a means of transforming access.

European Digital Library

We participated in the new European Digital Library project, which will result in the National Library of Ireland's entire online catalogue and digital images being fully searchable from The European Library website (www.theeuropeanlibrary.org), thus making Ireland's collections easily accessible to an ever-increasing virtual audience. The digital library project is funded by the EU, was initiated by The European Library, the internet portal of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL), and went live as an online service in March 2005. It currently delivers access to 150 million catalogue entries across Europe. When the European Digital Library project goes live in 2008, a further 60 to 100 new collections from eight national libraries, including the National Library of Ireland, will be brought into the European Library network.

Towards Strategy 2008–2010

We took an initial step towards achieving our projected strategic aim ‘to improve accessibility to the Library’s catalogues and listings by creating one online catalogue and converting any remaining paper-based catalogues and finding aids to online formats’ by compiling a report on manual catalogues in the Library. The next step will be to undertake a study of the procedures and resources required to convert these to online formats.

Our strategic aim of preparing and implementing both a digital policy and an ICT policy got off to a good start when, in May, the Board of the Library approved a digital policy document. We made considerable progress during the year, putting in place the management framework necessary to support the aim of developing the Library as a major digital Library, and also initiating a number of important digital projects. We established a Digital Steering Group, with staff representation drawn from each department in the Library. The purpose of the Group is to both contribute to, and implement, digital policies and ensure that the most appropriate digitisation projects for the institution as a whole are prioritised and delivered effectively.

Developing and promoting heraldic collections

Following public concerns about the legal basis of the Board’s heraldic functions, the exercise of these functions was suspended in January 2007, pending receipt of advice from the Attorney General. That advice was to the effect that, on a proper construction of the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997*, the Board can exercise the heraldic powers provided for in the Act. In the light of this advice, the Board was satisfied that it could exercise the heraldic powers conferred on it by the 1997 Act and, accordingly, in October it lifted its temporary suspension. There were 20 applications for grants of arms in 2007. However, no client fees were accepted prior to October, owing to the suspension of the Chief Herald’s functions. The legal advice referred to above noted that doubts existed as to the statutory basis for the exercise of heraldic functions prior to the coming into effect in 2005 of the relevant provisions of the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997*. As this issue relates to matters that predate the establishment of the Board, the advice was brought to the attention of the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism.

The ‘back register’ project

The ‘back register’ project concerns the creation of new hardcopy artwork from the black and white and text entries by which Registers of Arms between the 1930s and 1980s were maintained. The new full-colour material will be made available online as it is completed and digitised, thus providing a valuable resource for both Office staff and public alike. Throughout 2007 a further 105 paintings were completed and, by the end of the year, 132 were online.

Presentation vellum for former Chief Herald of Canada

The Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland was invited to submit a presentation piece in appreciation of Mr Robert Watt who retired as Chief Herald of Canada in June. Mr Watt was renowned for his enthusiasm and dedication to heraldry both in Canada and worldwide, and in particular for his support and kindness to his colleagues in Ireland. A vellum document was painted, inscribed, illuminated and gilded; it was then signed by Office staff and was very warmly received by Mr Watt and the staff in our sister office in Ottawa.

Visit to Argentina

On the invitation of the Irish Ambassador to Argentina and the Cullen Family Society, the Chief Herald, Mr Fergus Gillespie visited Argentina in March/April. During his visit, he gave a series of lectures to Irish-Argentine groups on Irish heraldry, including the heraldry of the Wild Geese in Latin America. He attended Irish cultural functions, gave interviews to newspapers, including the Irish-Argentine newspaper, *The Southern Cross*, and visited the National Library of Argentina where he met the Director and his staff.

Flight of the Earls

In May and October, the Chief Herald participated in a series of conferences held in Rathmullan, Co Donegal to commemorate the Flight of the Earls. As part of the programme for these events, he delivered a number of talks, chaired lectures and launched a book entitled *O'Donnell Histories: Donegal and the Annals of the Four Masters* by Dr Bernadette Cunningham.

Welcoming visitors

We are delighted to note that visitors continue to flock to the Library's various exhibitions and events. Indeed, 2007 saw the highest visitor attendance numbers ever (32,593) at the National Photographic Archive (NPA) in Temple Bar. In recognition of this public interest, two of the Library's exhibitions *Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats* and *Strangers to Citizens: the Irish in Europe, 1600–1800*, remained open to the public over the Christmas holiday period for the first time.

For a number of years, exhibitions have been the principal means by which we bring the collections of the Library to the general public. 2007 was no exception, with a wide variety of exhibitions on show in both the Kildare Street and Temple Bar premises, and travelling exhibitions on show in various venues in Ireland and abroad.

If I were a blackbird... a very popular exhibition on the singer Delia Murphy and her husband, the diplomat Thomas J McKiernan, opened in the Library on 11 January. In February, the exhibition went on show in Canberra at the National Museum of Australia. Later in the year, it travelled to various venues in County Mayo, Delia Murphy's native county.

March saw the publication of *The Stapleton Collection: Designs for the Irish neoclassical interior* by Conor Lucey. This book presents for the first time the remarkable Stapleton collection of designs for the interiors of Georgian Dublin houses. Michael Stapleton was the leading designer of stucco work in the last decades of the eighteenth century and his drawings are preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings of the Library.

The Stapleton Collection was generously funded by Churchill House Press, and was published by Churchill House Press in association with the National Library of Ireland.

To mark the publication, an exhibition, *Decorating the Georgian Interior, Selected drawings from the Stapleton Collection*, was put on display at the Irish Architectural Archive, from 14th March to 8th June 2007.

In April, the photographic exhibition *Island Life – the islands of Ireland* opened in the NPA. It focused on images of Achill Island, the Aran Islands, Valentia and the Blaskets, as well as a small number of inland lake islands such as Station Island on Lough Derg. This exhibition was followed from July to November by *Eyewitness: Ireland through the lens of Colman Doyle*. Colman Doyle is widely acknowledged as one of the most important Irish photographers of the 20th century and was also probably Ireland's first documentary-style photographer, acclaimed for his iconic portraits of political leaders and literary figures, as well as for his photographs of ordinary people.

We acted as host to a variety of visiting exhibitions including *In search of Ireland 1913*, an exhibition of photographs from the Musée Albert Kahn in Paris which opened in the

NPA in November, and *Leabhar Mór na Gaidhlig (The Great Book of Gaelic)*, a celebration of the work of more than 200 visual artists, poets and calligraphers from Scotland and Ireland, organised by Eigse Eireann/Poetry Ireland in May.

Our travelling photographic collections from the NPA were shown in the Waterford Treasures Museum, Wexford County Libraries, Cavan County Museum and the Museum of Country Life in Castlebar. The exhibition *A Century of News Photography* travelled to Bulgaria under the auspices of the Irish Embassy and was shown in Sofia, Valrico, Blagoevrad and Russe.

The *Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats* exhibition continued to attract strong public interest. The book that accompanies the exhibition *WB Yeats: Works & Days* received the ‘Best Overall Production Award’ and ‘Book of the Year 2006’ at the 2007 CLÉ – Irish Book Publishers’ Association Book Industry Awards ceremony in February.

In June we organised *Summer’s Wreath*, a month-long programme of activities celebrating William Butler Yeats’ creativity and legacy. The programme centred around Yeats’ birthday (13 June) and included a series of lunchtime readings of Yeats’ poetry by leading figures in Irish public life including lawyer Ivana Bacik, composer Michéal Ó Súilleabháin, poet Theo Dorgan, writer Colm Tóibín, senator and academic David Norris and many others. The events were well attended and we could have filled the seats for the Yeats birthday event ten times over, such was the popularity of the evening devoted entirely to Yeats’ poems, as read by Jeremy Irons, Sinéad Cusack and Bono. The event was hosted by the London-based writer Josephine Hart, who set the poems in the context of Yeats’ life, and introduced each of the readers.

Other events in association with the exhibition included several productions of various Yeats plays – *The King’s Threshold*, *The Dreaming of the Bones*, *Words upon a Window Pane* – by Dublin Lyric Players, and a series of eight-week courses entitled ‘WB Yeats at the National Library’ in conjunction with the University College Dublin adult education programme.

The year closed with the launch in December of *Strangers to Citizens – the Irish in Europe 1600–1800* by Mr Séamus Brennan TD, Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism. This exhibition, located in the refurbished exhibition space at 2-3 Kildare Street, presents the story of Irish political, economic and religious refugees in Europe – and further afield – in earlier centuries, and shows how they integrated with their host societies.

Learning and enjoying

Outreach and events programmes during the year were well attended and provided both formal and informal opportunities for learning and cultural engagement by people from a wide range of backgrounds and interests.

We continued the popular 'Library Late' series of monthly public interviews with critically acclaimed writers, which this year featured Roddy Doyle, Hugo Hamilton, MJ Hyland, Alistair MacLeod, Colm Tóibín, Jennifer Johnston, Carlo Gebler, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and Eoin Colfer.

In April and May, 713 pupils from secondary schools throughout Ireland took part in 'POETRY ALOUD', a spoken poetry competition for post-primary school students organised by the Library in conjunction with Poetry Ireland. This year's competition was a celebration of Irish poetry, with entrants choosing poems from a given list of Irish poets. The judges for the final, held on 11 May, were Professor Brendan Kennelly, poet and teacher; Thomas McCarthy, poet, critic and board member of Poetry Ireland, and Dr Pat Donlon, former Director of the Library and now Director of the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in County Monaghan. The competition winners, announced on 11 May, were John King, Belvedere College, Dublin (Junior: first and second year), Sarah Giffen, St Michael's Grammar School, Armagh (Intermediate: third and fourth year), and Niamh Kenneally, Ursuline College, Sligo (Senior: fifth and sixth year), who was also the overall winner. Congratulations to them all on their wonderful performances.

We scheduled programmes of children's events for school holidays and mid-term breaks. They included creative and story-telling workshops, 'coats of arms' workshops, and mask-making workshops, and proved hugely popular with parents and children alike.

We continued to make progress with the Library's outreach programme, part of which involves working in partnership with a group of adults with intellectual disabilities from St John of God Carmona Services in Dún Laoghaire, Co Dublin.

We worked with the acclaimed pianist Una Hunt to put on a series of five autumn concerts devoted to Irish composers and historic musical figures under the umbrella title 'Musical Reflections'. The concerts featured rarely performed Irish works, along with a better-known repertoire, and included pieces drawn from the Library's music collections. A number of the performances were recorded by RTÉ Lyric fm for future broadcast.

Towards Strategy 2008-2010

We continued work on developing the Library's strategic aims in relation to outreach, collaboration and synergy for 2008-2010. Tenders were prepared and issued for consultancy services to help the Library in developing public relations, marketing and outreach and education policies, and an initial survey of collaborative activities was carried out.

Developing the Organisation

Corporatisation

Further significant steps were taken during 2007 to support the Library as it completed the transition to an autonomous national cultural institution with a separate corporate identity; this followed the appointment of an independent board in 2005. Among the steps taken in this regard were the filling of several staff vacancies, including the position of IT Manager. In addition, two important programmes for staff were put in place – an occupational health programme and an employee assistance programme. Considerable work was undertaken in relation to the management of superannuation and pensions for employees, and an internal audit programme also got underway.

The Library now has direct responsibility for the management and development of all aspects of its human resources and finance functions. Key developments in these areas in 2007 included:

Finance

- The statutory accounts in respect of 2006 were prepared and audited and met the deadline for submission to both the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism.
- Following a tendering process, the Library appointed Helm Ltd to provide an outsourced internal audit function. On foot of an audit needs assessment, Helm commenced a programme of internal audit of certain areas/activities; this resulted in the completion of seven internal audits by end 2007. The internal audit work represents a significant development in terms of enabling the Board to ensure that an appropriate control framework is in place.
- Also following a tendering process, consultants were engaged to assist with the preparation of the Library's superannuation and pension scheme.

Human Resources

- 13 external recruitment campaigns took place, with 30 new staff joining the Library in 2007. Internal promotion competitions also took place.
- Following completion of a training needs analysis, the National Library of Ireland Training and Development Plan 2008–2010 was drawn up to support delivery of the Library's business objectives.
- A revised anti-bullying policy was agreed and implemented.
- External providers were contracted to provide both an occupational health programme and an employee assistance programme; this replaces services which were previously available to the Library and its staff through the Civil Service.

These new services and programmes are already proving to be of major benefit to the Library and its staff.

- A code of ethics for Library staff and an internet and email usage policy for staff were adopted through the Library's partnership process.

Public Service modernisation

In March 2007 we reached agreement with all Library unions on the implementation of our Action Plan under the terms of the social partnership agreement *Towards 2016*. As the year progressed, we made significant progress on the achievement of one particular Action Plan objective – that of ensuring the delivery of a modern, efficient and flexible library service. Among the range of measures introduced with the support of our staff were a number of important services initiatives in relation to Library opening hours.

Strategic Plan

During 2007, work was largely completed on the Library's Strategic Plan covering the period 2008–2010. A draft of the Plan was submitted to the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in May. It received the approval of the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism in November. In order to support the Plan, we prepared a detailed operational plan.

Director's Remuneration

The Board is disappointed that the Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Service, in its Report No 42 published in October, recommended that there should be no revision in the salary payable to the Director. The Review Body's recommendation was accepted by the Government. In response to an invitation from the Review Body, the Board had, in 2006, made a written submission seeking to raise the level of remuneration to reflect both the significant level of responsibility and accountability associated with the position of Director and the increasingly challenging operating environment facing large research libraries. The Board remains of the view that the current salary scale does not represent an adequate level of remuneration for the Director and believes that it may be faced with significant difficulties in attracting suitably qualified and experienced individuals when the position next falls to be filled.

The salary scale for the Director is the Civil Service scale for Principal Officer Higher Grade. No additional remuneration is paid to the Director.

Buildings

The Board is pleased to note that during the year progress was made in addressing the Library's chronic storage situation. While Dublin City Council granted planning permission for the proposed storage facility on the Kildare Street site in October 2006, that permission was appealed to An Bord Pleanála by a third party. An Bord Pleanála upheld the granting of planning permission in May 2007. The Board is pleased to note that the project was included in the Government's cultural investment proposals which are to be funded under the National Development Plan 2007–2013. The Board has in previous reports commented on the storage difficulties faced by the Library. Not only is the existing storage space full to capacity, but existing conditions fall far short of the standards relating to the storage of library and archival material. While the Board

welcomes the developments noted above, it must also emphasise the need to proceed with the construction of the proposed storage facility without further delay. Any delay in relation to the project will require the Board to review existing storage arrangements and to see how it can best meet the statutory requirements laid down for it in terms of safeguarding the collections in its care.

During 2007 the Office of Public Works undertook a number of projects on Library buildings. Remedial work on the decorative cornice in the Main Reading Room which was carried out in February/March necessitated the temporary closure of the Reading Room: alternative arrangements were made for the continuity of services to readers. A replacement lift was installed in the East Wing of the main Library building, and the space occupied by the former Heraldic Museum in 2/3 Kildare Street was refurbished. A project to replace obsolete computer cabling in 2/3 Kildare Street was well underway at year end. Work was undertaken to strengthen staircase supports in the main Library building, while the project to restore the external stone facade of the main Library building, which was begun in 2005, is still ongoing. The Board appreciates the support provided by the Office of Public Works for the maintenance and development of the Library's buildings.

Partnership

The Library's Partnership Committee met on four occasions during 2007. As well as using the partnership process as an opportunity for briefing staff on areas of general interest such as building projects and health and safety matters, the Committee discussed a wide range of topics including progress reports on the Library's Action Plan under *Towards 2016*, services issues, strategic planning, the performance management and development system, training, staff policies in the areas of anti-bullying, ethics, communications, child protection and internet and email usage.

Joint Conciliation Council

The Library's Joint Conciliation Council – the industrial relations forum within the Library – met on four occasions in 2007 and considered a range of issues. These included the vacancy for a staff member representative on the Library's Board, the Library's Action Plan under the terms of the *Towards 2016* agreement, health and safety issues, the performance management and development system, the Library's disciplinary policy and various trade union claims.

Health and Safety

The Library continues to take measures to protect the health and safety of staff and visitors to its premises – measures which are consistent with the requirements of the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. The Library's Health and Safety Committee met on two occasions in 2007. Health and safety initiatives, which continued in 2007, included manual handling training, sprinkler system training and the provision of a subsidised flu vaccine for staff. A revised anti-bullying policy was agreed and implemented, and staff training and information sessions were provided, with 96% of Library staff attending this training. A total of 12 contact persons were also given training in specific areas designed to support the Library's health and safety policy.

The major health and safety project carried out during the year involved the preparation of a revised Safety Statement for the Library. In mid-2007, we issued tenders for the preparation of a revised Statement. The request for tenders required that the Statement would meet best practice in addressing all relevant issues; that it would comply with all legal requirements, in particular the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, and that it would be based on the identification of all hazards in the Library, and an assessment of the associated risks.

Work on this project got underway in the latter part of 2007. It will be completed in 2008, when a new Safety Statement will be finalised.

Freedom of Information

The Library complies with the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.

During 2007, the Library received seven requests under the Acts. All requests were granted in whole or in part.

Towards Strategy 2008–2010

Work commenced on the implementation of key actions to progress the Library's strategic aims in relation to improving the physical infrastructure of various Library buildings, developing staff and developing the organisation. Planning permission for the Repository was secured, on appeal, in 2007; work on the preparation of a new Safety Statement for the Library got underway; a tender for consultancy services to assist with the preparation of a Human Resource Strategy for the Library was issued in the latter part of 2007; a Training and Development Plan 2008–2010 was finalised, and a programme of internal audits also got underway.

National Library of Ireland Trust

The National Library of Ireland Trust provides a mechanism whereby people may support the Library by donation or bequest. The Trust is an *approved body* within the meaning of section 848a of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997. Tax-efficient donations can be made by private individuals and corporate bodies alike. Donations lodged to the credit of the Trust in 2007 amounted to €10,284.65.

Board and Board Committees

2007 proved to be a busy year for the Board. Areas of particular focus included the completion of the strategic planning process; the finalisation of a policy in relation to digitisation; agreement on issues such as governance, financial management and audits; agreement on priorities in relation to buildings and storage facilities for our collections – particularly the Repository project – coupled with a range of other modernisation and services issues.

The Board's three committees (statutory and non-statutory) continued to play an important role in assisting and advising the Board on matters relating to their areas of responsibility. A fourth committee, the Acquisitions Policy Advisory Committee, was also established during the year.

The primary role of the Board is to decide matters of strategy, policy, finance and procedure, to analyse and review the various activities of the Library and the Executive, and to consider recommendations from Committees.

The Board is composed of 12 members and is chaired by Mr J Gerard Danaher SC. It includes two representatives from the Royal Dublin Society, Mrs Ida Delamer and Mr Patrick F Clyne, who were appointed by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism under section 19(9) of the 1997 Act. In October 2007 Mr Gerard Long (Assistant Keeper) was appointed under section 19(8) of the Act; as staff member representative on the Board, he replaces Ms Margaret Toomey who retired from the Library staff in December 2006.

The Board held a total of 13 meetings during 2007. The members of the Board and their attendance at meetings are as follows:

J Gerard Danaher (Chairman)	13
Patrick F Clyne	8
Bob Collins	8
Ida Delamer	11
Breda Kelly	11
Gerard Long (from October 2007)	3
Susan McGrath	13
Máire Mac Conghail	13
Niall Mac Monagle	11
Brendan O Donoghue	13
James O'Shea	0
Noreen Whelan	13

Statutory Committees 2007

Genealogy and Heraldry Committee

Advises the Board on matters arising from the Board's statutory powers and functions in the areas of genealogy and heraldry.

Patrick F Clyne (Chair)
Ciara Breathnach
Shane English
Paul Gorry
Máire Mac Conghail
Niall Mac Monagle
Brendan O Donoghue

Aongus Ó hAonghusa – *ex-officio*
Fergus Gillespie – *ex-officio*

Readers Advisory Committee

The role of the Readers Advisory Committee is to advise the Board in relation to matters pertaining to the provision of a library and information service to members of the public; this includes the dissemination of literature relating to the Library's collections. As part of their remit, four members of the Readers Advisory Committee visited the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) from 23 to 26 January 2007, during which time they visited the BNF's two sites in Paris, at Tolbiac and Rue Richelieu; they were also received by Her Excellency, Ms Anne Anderson, Irish Ambassador to France, at the Irish Embassy in Paris. The Committee would like to express their warmest thanks to their various hosts at the BNF who devoted a considerable amount of their time by meeting with them and ensuring that the visit proved worthwhile.

The members of the Readers Advisory Committee are:

Noreen Whelan (Chair)
Marie Coleman
J Anthony Gaughan
Angie Kinnane
Seamus Leahy
Marie Reddan

Non-Statutory Committees

Audit Committee

As part of the ongoing systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures within the Library, the role of the Audit Committee is to oversee the Internal

Audit function and advise the Board in relation to the operation and development of that function.

The members of the Audit Committee are:

Breda Kelly (Chair)
Bob Collins
Ida Delamer
John O'Callaghan

Acquisitions Policy Advisory Committee

The Acquisitions Policy Advisory Committee was established by the Board during 2007. The Committee's principal role is to advise the Board in relation to its statutory functions of acquiring library material of different kinds to enlarge the Library's collections, and also to advise and assist the Board in the development of its acquisitions policy.

Brendan O Donoghue (Chair)
Niall Mac Monagle
Ita Daly
Frank Callanan SC
Conor Brady
Gerard Lyne (representing the Library's Director)
Colette O'Flaherty (also representing the Director)

Appendix 1: Constitution and Functions

The National Library of Ireland was established by the Dublin Science and Art Museum Act, 1877, which provided that, with certain exceptions, the collections then in the possession of the Royal Dublin Society, including the Joly Library and the Society's Library, should be vested in the Department of Science and Art for the benefit of the public and of the Society. An Agreement drawn up in 1881 provided that the Library should operate under the superintendence of a Council of twelve Trustees, eight of whom were to be appointed by the Society and four by the Government; this Agreement also conferred on the Trustees the duty of appointing the officers of the Library.

The provisions of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997, which provide for the establishment of a new Board for the National Library of Ireland, came into effect on 3 May 2005. The Council of Trustees ceased to exist on that date.

Functions of the Library

The functions of the National Library of Ireland are set out in section 12 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997. Section 12(1) provides that:

“The principal functions of the Board of the Library shall be to conserve, restore, maintain and enlarge the library material in the collection of the Library for the benefit of the public and to establish and maintain a record of library material (including material relating to the Irish language) in relation to Ireland and to contribute to the provision of access by members of the public to material relating to other countries.”

Section 12(2 a-t) enumerates a number of the Board's powers including powers in relation to genealogical research, the granting and confirming of coats of arms, the provision of library and information services etc.

Appendix 2: Thanks to our sponsors and donors

The National Library of Ireland would like to thank all of those who have given their support including:

Sponsors:

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DR O'Connor Lysaght
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Mervyn Taylor

University of Nebraska Press

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Declan Walsh
Wexford County Council Public Library Services
James C. Wilder
P Wiles

Appendix 3: National Library of Ireland Society

The National Library of Ireland Society is a voluntary support group which aims “to assist and support the National Library in the maintenance and expansion of its services and the improvement and protection of its status as the National Library of Ireland.” It arranges an annual programme of lectures on topics of Irish interest in a variety of subject areas including history, literature and current affairs; it organises an annual outing to historic houses and other venues, and it provides an opportunity for interested persons to support the Library at a crucial phase in its development.

Annual membership costs €25 (reduced to €10 in the case of students and €15 for persons aged 65 and over). Corporate membership, which is by invitation only, costs €1,000 per annum.

The following lectures were delivered to the Society during the year:

Rolf Loeber and Magda Loeber

Irish Fiction in the English language, 1650–1900

Respondent: Dr Muriel McCarthy

Brian Lalor

‘Take in your ink-stained hands my own hands stained with ink’, Graphic Studio Dublin and the origins of fine-art printmaking in Ireland.

Respondent: Dr Nicola Gordon Bowe

Conor Lucey

The Stapleton Collection of Drawings in the National Library of Ireland.

Respondent: John O’Connell

Maurice Harmon

Richard Murphy: a poet in good form

Respondent: Seamus Cashman

Reading by Patrick Semple

Marie Coleman

Advertising Irish Sweepstakes

Declan Downey

Within the Strategic Elites: Irish nobility integration in Brussels, Madrid and Vienna

Respondent: Professor Jane Ohlmeyer

The AGM held in June was followed by a lecture entitled *Language Wars: English versus Irish* given by Professor Terence P Dolan.

The Society's Annual Outing took place on 30 June. Members visited St Patrick's Cathedral, Downpatrick, with guided tour given by Gordon Wheeler, Castleward; this was followed by a visit to the Bronte Homeland Interpretative centre.

The Society's Christmas evening on December 12 began with a seasonal reception and was followed by guided tours of the Library's exhibition *Strangers to Citizens: the Irish in Europe 1600–1800*.

Librarians, Poets and Scholars: A Festschrift for Dónall Ó Luanaigh was published in autumn 2007 by Four Courts Press in association with the National Library Society. The *Festschrift* marks Mr Ó Luanaigh's retirement in June 2006 as the Library's Keeper of Collections, after 43 years' service in various departments in the Library. A founder member of the National Library Society, he was its Hon Secretary for eight years. The *Festschrift* is an acknowledgement by the Society of the contribution that he has made both to the Library and to the Society. It also represents a welcome opportunity to assemble the work of many who have lectured to the Society in recent years. Felix M Larkin, Vice-Chair of the Society, edited the *Festschrift*, which was formally launched in the Library on 8 November 2007 by James McGuire, editor of the forthcoming *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. The *Festschrift* has been very favourably reviewed in the national press.

The officers of the Society for 2006-2007 were as follows:

Chair: Rev Fr J Anthony Gaughan
Vice-Chair: Dr Muriel McCarthy/Felix M Larkin
Secretary: Sandra McDermott/Ciara McDonnell
Treasurer: Felix M Larkin/Dr Ian D'Alton

Appendix 4: Statistics

Number of visitors: 102,731

These figures may be broken down as follows:

¹ Main Reading Room	20,565
Mon-Fri: 9.30am to	17,134
Mon-Wed: 5pm to 9p	1,895
Saturdays 9.30am to 1pm	1,536
² Manuscripts Reading Room	3,707
Family History Room:	5,831
National Photographic Archive	32,593
Yeats exhibition	33,219
³ Heraldic Museum	657
Education and Outreach events	6,159
⁴ Prints & Drawings and Ephemera	133

Acquisitions:

⁵ Legal Deposit books:	2,130
Legal Deposit newspaper issues:	18,648 (280 titles)
New books:	1,948
Antiquarian books:	829
Periodicals (single issues):	10,996
Photographs	2,000
Prints and Drawings gifts	4
Prints and Drawings purchases	348
Ephemera	459
Manuscript gifts:	34
Manuscript purchases:	284

Processing:

Books catalogued:	1,738
Periodicals catalogued/records amended:	161
International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSNs):	145 assigned; 302 entered/amended 1,645 contacts with publishers
Books/periodicals flush-bound:	847

¹ The Main Reading Room was closed to the public for a number of weeks for repair to the cornice. Alternative accommodation was provided in rooms adjacent to the Front Hall.

² The Manuscripts Reading Room was closed to the public for a number of weeks for re-cabing. Alternative accommodation was provided in the Boardroom.

³ The Heraldic Museum was closed for several months to allow for the installation of a new exhibition.

⁴ This number represents the number of appointments to view material in the collections.

⁵ Lists of books received under the Legal Deposit provisions of Section 56 of the Copyright Act, 1963 are listed in PDF format on the Library's website.

Boxes of loose manuscripts catalogued:	585
Manuscript volumes catalogued:	438
MARC records created for manuscript:	
Single items and small collections:	423
OS maps supplied to the Ordnance Survey:	3,325
Prints and drawings material catalogued:	177
Ephemera material catalogued:	234
Photographic material catalogued:	129