The Ireland at Work exhibition, which is currently showing at the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar, focuses on traditional late 19th and early 20th century work practices and occupations, and provides interesting insights into the ways in which the majority of the Irish population earned their living during this period.

While it covers a range of occupations, it is particularly focused on three industries – farming, fishing and textiles manufacturing. Each of these has been extremely important to the Irish economy and each has undergone huge changes.

In addition, the exhibition features lacemaking, farriery and cooperage – old skills that are now in sharp decline – as well as a number of occupations that are still very much in existence today.

Also figuring is the work of Irwin Dermer, an American photographer who recorded images of declining crafts in various European countries during the 1960s. The featured artisans are James Brennan, a wheelwright from Kilkenny, and Robert Kennedy, a farrier from Belfast. Dermer’s work, entitled The Old Trades, is housed in the permanent collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and in the National Museum of American History in Washington DC.

Ireland at Work continues at the National Photographic Archive until 21 February 2004. Admission is free.
Recent National Library Events

The papers of Deirdre O’Connell and of the Focus Theatre were formally presented to the National Library by Frank McDonald, a founder member of the Stanislavski Studio at a reception held on 22 September. The event commemorated the founding in Dublin of the Stanislavski Studio 40 years ago by Deirdre O’Connell. An exhibition based on the collection and illustrating the history of the Focus Theatre also opened in the National Library on 22 September. Pictured at the reception to mark the occasion were from left Dr Tony Scott, Chairman, Trustees of the National Library of Ireland; Geraldine O’Connell Cusack, Board member, Focus Theatre; Breifne O’Connell Cusack, Co-ordinator, Friends of Focus, and Frank McDonald.

The Society of Australian Genealogists paid a formal visit to the National Library of Ireland on 3 October. They are photographed here with Acting Director, National Library of Ireland, Aongus Ó hAonghusa and Assistant Keeper, Colette O’Flaherty.

Peter Cassells, Executive Chairperson of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance launched Ireland at Work, an exhibition of images of traditional 19th and 20th century work practices and occupations at the National Photographic Archive, Temple Bar on 6 November. He is photographed here with Aongus Ó hAonghusa, Acting Director, National Library of Ireland; Sara Smyth, Curator, National Photographic Archive, and photographer Irwin Dermer, whose work also figures in the exhibition.

A reception to mark the retirement of Brendan O’Donoghue as Director of the National Library was held on 12 September. The reception was attended by more than 150 guests including National Library staff members and Trustees, senior officials from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, heads of national cultural institutions and organisations and well-wishers. Mr O’Donoghue is photographed here with Eimear Nelson, who presented him with a number of gifts of behalf of the Library staff.

The Council of Trustees of the National Library of Ireland is pleased to announce the appointment of Aongus Ó hAonghusa as Acting Director.

Mr Ó hAonghusa took up his appointment in September 2003 following the retirement of Brendan O’Donoghue who served as Director of the Library from 1997.

He joined the National Library in 2000 from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, where he was an Assistant Principal. During his tenure there he held the post of Head of Internal Audit, and he was also involved in areas such as heritage policy and Gaeltacht/Irish language policy.

In his role as Keeper (Administration) in the Library, he acted as Secretary to the Council of Trustees, the Management Committee and the Partnership Committee; he supported the Director in the management of the HR function for the Library’s 108 staff and he also held responsibility for dealing with organisational and financial matters. Among the areas in which he has played a key role are the Library’s building and development programme and the logistical and financial arrangements relating to the James Joyce manuscripts acquisitions in 2000 and in 2002 respectively.

He is a graduate of University College Galway, from which he holds a B.Sc. in Zoology, and he also holds a Masters in Public Administration from University College Dublin.
2004 sees an important centenary – that of the first production at the Abbey Theatre.

Formed by the merger of the Irish Literary Theatre (founded by W B Yeats, Edward Martyn and Lady Gregory) and W G Fay’s Irish National Dramatic Society, the Abbey’s first play was performed on 27 December 1904.

The poster shown here, which advertises the bill for the opening night, forms part of the extensive Joseph Holloway Collection, and was donated by Joseph Holloway (1861-1944) to the National Library towards the end of his life.

Holloway, who was reputed to have attended the opening night of every play staged in Dublin from the mid-1880s to his death in 1944, amassed a vast collection of memorabilia ranging from theatre programmes, posters and playbills to original drawings and cartoons of well-known literary and theatrical figures such as sisters Sara Allgood and Máire O’Neill (Molly Allgood), Arthur Sinclair (husband of Maire) and William G Fay.

The Holloway diaries, which are held by the Library’s Department of Manuscripts, cover all aspects of theatre life in Dublin and comprise 221 volumes, extracts from which were published under the titles Joseph Holloway’s Abbey Theatre (1967) and Joseph Holloway’s Irish Theatre (1968).

Also represented in the collections of the Department of Manuscripts are the literary papers of figures associated with the Abbey Theatre including those of George Moore, J M Synge, Sean O’Casey and W B Yeats.

In late 2004 the Library will mark the centenary of the Abbey Theatre with an exhibition in the National Photographic Archive, Temple Bar. The exhibition will provide an opportunity to further promote the many existing links and associations between the National Library of Ireland and the National Theatre of Ireland.

Material from several departments will be on display and visitors will have an opportunity to examine the extent and depth of the Library’s holdings relating to Ireland’s most distinguished theatre. Among the items featured will be original drawings and cartoons of Abbey actors as well as posters, programmes and playbills covering a 100-year period.

Images from the Library’s Abbey Theatre Photographic Collection featuring numerous Abbey actors and plays, particularly from the 1940s, will also be on display.
The cataloguing of the Wicklow Papers, which were purchased by the National Library in 1998, is now complete.

Historians and genealogists may now access this vast collection, which primarily relates to the Howard family of Shelton Abbey, but is also an invaluable source of materials relating to the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in Counties Wicklow and Donegal over a period of more than three hundred years.

Among the items considered to be highlights of this collection are material from the Siege of Derry; detailed correspondence between the Howard family and associated families covering a period from the early 18th century to the early 19th century; journals of a late 18th century European Grand Tour by Robert Howard (2nd Earl); records relating to the Howard family art collection held at Shelton Abbey; an impressive collection of 19th and early 20th century photographs; correspondence from the Great War, and a fine collection of estate papers.

Throughout the 18th century the Howards acquired additional lands, mainly through advantageous marriage alliances. The enrichment of their estates enabled them to build a power base, which by the 1780s delivered them ennoblement — a process that was facilitated by the family’s control of several seats in Parliament from the 1760s to the 1790s.
Ralph Howard, 1st Baron Clonmore, married Alice Forward in 1755. The only daughter of William Forward, MP for County Donegal, she brought to the marriage 6,000 acres of land in Donegal and a seat in Parliament. A formidable woman, she was confirmed Countess of Wicklow in her own right in 1793. Up until the end of the 19th century, the Howard family controlled 20,000 acres mainly in Wicklow and Donegal. Although the 18th and 20th centuries are well represented in the collection, there is a lacuna in the papers for most of the 19th century. There is much personal correspondence from the end of the Victorian and Edwardian periods as well as poignant material from the Great War.

William Howard, the last Earl of Wicklow, was a close friend of Evelyn Waugh. In the 1920s, while studying at Cambridge University, he converted to Catholicism. Late in life he married Eleanor Butler, a Senator in the first inter-party government. When the last Earl died without issue in 1978, the title became extinct.

The listing of the Wicklow Papers was carried out by Dr Niall Keogh. A graduate of UCC, he was awarded the National Library's Research Studentship in Irish History in 2002/2003, during which period he carried out this work.
The emergence of various photographic technologies and processes during the 1840s attracted huge interest in Ireland. Of particular interest was the patented calotype negative process, which was invented by Henry Fox Talbot, an English gentleman who had a keen interest in both art and science.

Following the relaxation of his patent, photography became increasingly popular, and by the early 1850s, a number of photographers who used to meet regularly at William Allen’s apothecary shop in Henry Street, Dublin decided to set up a formal group to discuss technical issues and ideas. On 8 November 1854, the Dublin Photographic Society was established in Leinster House, which at that time was owned by the Royal Dublin Society.

The Society met on a monthly basis to discuss new advances in the field of photography; to listen to short talks by members, and to attend lectures given by visiting experts on topics such as new processes and instruments. The education of members on such matters was important because during the early years of the Society’s existence, many photographers were amateur scientists, preparing their own chemicals and treating their photographic paper themselves.

In 1858 the organisation changed its name to the Photographic Society of Ireland (PSI). Almost 150 years on, it is still very much in existence today.

The Photographic Society of Ireland collection, which contains many important examples of mid-19th century photography, complements the National Library of Ireland’s collection of the same period. Along with modern prints, it contains examples of cased photographs, salt prints, albumen prints, glass plates and lantern slides. Of particular importance are two albums of salted

Photographic Society of Ireland celebrates 150th anniversary
paper prints by John Shaw Smith, an amateur photographer who took the photographs while travelling in Egypt and Palestine between 1850 and 1852.

Also of interest are twelve portrait and allegorical photographs taken between 1860 and 1870 by Julia Margaret Cameron, who both then and now was regarded as an important and influential English photographer. While it appears that the prints held by the National Photographic Archive are not unique to this collection, they are nonetheless very valuable examples of early photographic processes.

The two most unusual items in the collection are Alfred Werner’s mammoth portrait of Maud Gonne and its corresponding glass plate negative. The contact platinum print, which measures 5 ft 6 ins x 3 ft 2 ins, was created by contact printing from the glass plate negative, and was carried out by Werner in 1893. Later that year he won a gold medal for his work on the portrait at the Chicago World Fair.

It should be noted that access to the Photographic Society of Ireland collection is not yet available to researchers and members of the public. Indeed, when it does become available, access will be on restricted basis due to the extremely delicate nature of many of the older items.

The collection will be processed and catalogued during the coming year. In November 2004, a short exhibition will be held in the National Photographic Archive to mark the 150th anniversary of the Society's foundation.

The National Library of Ireland is very grateful to the Photographic Society of Ireland for its generous donation of this collection to the National Photographic Archive.
At a reception held on 12 September to mark the retirement of Brendan O Donoghue, Director of the National Library and Chief Herald, Dónall Ó Luanaigh, the Library's Keeper of Collections, paid a warm and fitting tribute to him, and to what he referred to as “the splendid work of our Director during a period of six short years.”

Dónal has kindly permitted us to reproduce an edited version of the address he made on that occasion. It sums up most succinctly the progress made during those six years, describing the ways in which, as Director, Brendan O Donoghue made a major contribution not only to the welfare of the National Library but also to Irish culture in general. This fact, he noted, has already been recognised by Brendan’s election to membership of the Royal Irish Academy.

“Under the heading of collection development, these six years have seen the acquisition of the two headline-grabbing collections of Joyce manuscripts, a further gift of Yeats papers, together with the literary archive of Brian Friel, and substantial collections of Austin Clarke and Sean O’Casey papers. Important collections of estate and family papers such as those of the Earls of Sligo and the Leslie family of Glaslough have been added to the Library’s treasures. A number of illustrious Gaelic manuscripts have also been acquired (the Nugent Poem Book, the Book of O’Hara and the Book of the O’Neill’s of Co Armagh).

“Vast improvements in staffing and career development have occurred during the last few years, including the appointment of extra librarians and archivists, library assistant staff, conservators, heraldic consultants and painters in the Office of Arms.

“A multi-million euro building development plan is in progress in association with the Office of Public Works.

“All of these improvements have one thing in common – they are efforts to provide a better service to the public. It is significant that one of Brendan’s first acts on being appointed Director was to restore longer opening hours in the Reading Rooms. This was soon followed by the further development of the genealogical consultancy service and the establishment of a retail outlet for the Library’s publications.

“Under Brendan’s stewardship, successful schemes of co-operation were initiated or continued with public bodies and private individuals including the British Library (NEWSPLAN), the Northern Ireland Publications Resource Board, the Archives Department and the Department of Library and Information Studies in UCD, and the National Committee for History. Co-operation with commercial publishers allowed the further development of the Library’s publishing programme.

Finally, Dónall concluded his much appreciated tribute on a more personal and philosophical note:

“Besides all of his achievements outlined above, what is Brendan’s enduring legacy to the staff of our Library? He has taught us to ‘do noble things, not dream them all day long’ - to abhor complacency and indolence and, above all, not to be what Kerry people used to call ‘dubhrónach’ (feeling sorry for ourselves).

‘Monsieur le Directeur, vous avez bien mérité de la patrie!’ or, more informally, but no less sincerely, ‘Go raibh mile maith agat, agus beannacht leat!’
The National Library of Ireland Society

The National Library of Ireland Society is a voluntary organisation 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 provides an opportunity for interested persons to support the Library at a crucial phase in its development.

The Society arranges an annual series of lectures and arranges an annual outing to historic houses and other venues. The first lecture of the 2004 season will be delivered on 26 February by Dr Ian d’Alton, author of Protestant society and politics in Cork, 1812-1844 (Cork University Press, 1980). The topic of his lecture will be ‘Cork Protestant survival and adaptation in the 19th and 20th centuries’. On 25 March, Dr Finola Kennedy, author of Cottage to Crèche: Family Change in Ireland (Institute of Public Administration, 2001) will lecture on ‘Family change in 20th century Ireland’. Lectures commence at 7 p.m. and the venue is Buswell’s Hotel.

Membership Rates

Ordinary Membership €25 p.a.
OAP Membership €15 p.a.
Student Membership €10 p.a.
Corporate Membership €1,000 p.a. (by invitation only)

For further information on the NLI Society, please contact:
The Secretary, NLI Society, Kildare Street, Dublin 2
Email: nlisociety@nli.ie

Studentships

In addition to the three existing annual NLI studentships, we are pleased to announce a fourth studentship for 2003-2004, which is awarded jointly by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) with the objective of identifying and publishing primary source material to assist in the teaching of the new Leaving Certificate History syllabus. The recipient is Dr Brian Kirby, a graduate of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The holder of this year’s Research Studentship in Irish History is Dr Diarmuid Whelan. A graduate of University College Cork, he will be working on the Sheehy Skeffington collection in the Department of Manuscripts. The Library Studentship has been awarded to Mary Broderick, BA, a graduate in History and History of Art from University College Dublin, and the Archives Studentship has been awarded to Paul Moran, MA, a graduate in Anthropology from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

Building and Development Programme

Work began recently on another key phase of the Library’s building and development programme – the enabling works to facilitate the use of the former NCAD building as a public exhibition space.

This exciting project will create a permanent link between the main Library and the former NCAD building. Due for completion Spring 2004, it includes significant alterations to the East Wing of the main Library to enable the link to be made, as well as other ancillary works such as the installation of a lift.

The exhibition space in the former NCAD building will be the venue for the Library’s planned exhibition on James Joyce and Ulysses, which is timed to coincide with the centenary of Bloomsday in June 2004.

James Joyce Research Fellow

The Library is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Luca Crispi as James Joyce Research Fellow. During his appointment, which is for a 15-month period, Dr Crispi will provide specialist advice and support and contribute to the Library’s programme of activities to commemorate the centenary of Bloomsday and in particular in relation to the major exhibition James Joyce and Ulysses in the National Library opening June 2004.

Prior to taking up his appointment, Dr Crispi spent six years as James Joyce Scholar in Residence at the Poetry/Rare Books Collection, State University of New York at Buffalo, where he was engaged in revising and completing a descriptive bibliography of the James Joyce Collection at Buffalo. He has also played a leading role in the development of the ongoing ‘Digital Ulysses’: A Manuscript Archive and Annotated Hypertext.”