

**Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann  
National Library of Ireland**

**Collection List No. 10**

**Sir Hugh Lane: Additional Papers**

(MSS 27,736-27,793)

(Accession No. 4136)

A collection of letters mainly addressed to Sir Hugh Lane and his sister Mrs Ruth Shine,  
with some additional printed items, 1902-32.

*Compiled by Catherine Fahy*

## INTRODUCTION

### Personal History

Hugh Lane was born in 1875 at Ballybrack House, county Cork, the third son of the Rev. James William Lane, rector of Ballybrack by his wife, Frances Adelaide Persse. Having learned the technique of picture-dealing with Messers. Colnaghi, whose firm he entered in 1893, he set up his own art dealing business in 1898. Lane was possessed of a gift for recognising the work of any painter, and this, coupled with an instinct for beauty, quickly brought him a fortune which enabled him to make generous donations. Lane had no special interest in Ireland until, at the house of his aunt, Lady August Gregory, he met and befriended W.B. Yeats and other members of the Irish Literary revival. He proposed to found a gallery of modern art in Dublin, and began by commissioning John Butler Yeats to paint a series of portraits of distinguished Irishmen. In 1903 he secured for exhibition in Dublin about one hundred of the best paintings in the Staats Forbes collection, and several of these were purchased to form the nucleus of a gallery. Lane also donated many painting himself and encouraged artists to do the same. When Dublin Corporation opened a Municipal Gallery temporarily at premises in Harcourt St. in 1908, he organised a Franco-Irish exhibition for it. In 1909 he was knighted for his services to art.

Lane had a vision for a gallery of modern art linked with the National Gallery of Ireland and spanning the Liffey. But there was a great deal of controversy over the site and Sir Edwin Lutyen's plan for the building was rejected by Dublin Corporation. In disgust Lane took back the collection of Impressionists he had donated and lent them to the English National Gallery, to which he bequeathed them in 1913. In 1914 he was appointed director of the Irish National Gallery and greatly improved it in the short time he was there. Before travelling to the United States in February 1915, he made a codicil to his will making a gift of the French paintings to the Harcourt St. collection. However the codicil was unwitnessed and when he died aboard the ill-fated Lusitania on his return a few weeks later, the English National Gallery refused to return the art works, although he had expressed this wish to several persons. Bitter litigation between the National Gallery of Ireland and the National Gallery, London over the future of the Lane collection was finally ended in 1959 when a compromise solution of shared ownership was accepted by both parties.

### The Papers

This small collection of Sir Hugh Lane papers (Accession no. 4136) was acquired by the National Library in June 1984 from Mrs C.F.D.A. Thistlewaite. It contains mostly letters to Hugh Lane and Ruth Shine although there are several printed items and some newsclippings. Most of the letters refer to the various undertakings of Lane in his quest to establish a gallery of modern art in Dublin.

### Bibliographical References

The Library has received a number of accessions of the papers of Sir Hugh Lane, some of which are listed in *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation*, vol. 3, ed. Richard J. Hayes (1965), p. 15, *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation-First Supplement 1965-1975*, vol. 1, ed. Richard J. Hayes (1979), p. 403 and in the card catalogue index in the Manuscripts Reading Room. Further sources for the study of Sir Hugh Lane are listed in Collection List No. 58, Sir Hugh Lane and Mrs Ruth Shine Papers.

### I. Letters to Hugh Lane and his sister, Mrs Ruth Shine

- Ms. 27,736 George Moore. Note inviting Lane to dine.  
[c. 1900]
- Ms. 27,737 Arthur Tibaldi. Note accepting Lane's invitation to tea.  
[c. 1900]
- Ms. 27,738 Hugh Lane (Circular) letter to press enclosing a 'press view' card for the Winter Exhibition – Old Masters at the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts and explaining the Academy's need for finance and new buildings.  
8 December 1902
- Ms. 27,739 John Butler Yeats Five letters mainly discussing his sittings with Sir Anthony MacDonnell, Under Secretary for Ireland, whose portrait he was painting.  
December 1903 - February 1904
- Ms. 27,740 John Lavery 18 letters and three newsclippings, mainly concerning the proposed Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Irish artists, artists, including Whistler, who would donate paintings to a Dublin gallery, the National Gallery, and loans of paintings for exhibitions.  
June 1903 - May 1914
- Ms. 27,741 Miscellaneous letters from artists and owners of paintings mainly in reply to Hugh Lane's requests for donations to a gallery of modern art in Dublin, c.40 items.  
June 1903-1912
- (1) 'S.A.'  
N. Aronson  
Paul N. Bartett  
H. Harris Brown
- (2) Giorgio Caproucci Del Jaille  
Wynford Dewhurst  
J.H.M. Furse and Katharine Furse, pro C.W. Furse
- (3) John M'Lure Hamilton  
Alexander Harrison  
Bernard Harrison  
John Hughes  
W.O. Crawford for Holman Hunt  
E.H. Runt for Holman Hunt

- (4) M. Hunter  
C.H. Bland for Edward Guinness, 1st Earl of Iveagh  
Francis E. James  
W. Gosombe John  
Alfred Jones  
Lilla Varston for M. Lantere  
Ed. Lauten
- (5) J.B.S. MacIllwaine  
Ethel Melville  
W. Mesdag  
S. Never-du Mont  
Standish O'Grady  
Bertram Priestman
- (6) W. Reynolds - Stephens  
Briton Riviere  
Alexander Roche  
R. Savage  
William Strang  
Annie L. Swynnerton  
Grosvenor Thomas  
[Hugh Thomson?]  
Phoebe A. Traquair  
Sydney Curnow Vosper  
Terrick Williams

- Ms. 27,742 R.H. Sankey Refers to a plan to get Sir John Lavery to paint the King and Queen.  
13 November 1903
- Ms. 27,743 W.B. Yeats 23 letters, some to Mrs. Shine, arranging appointments and concerning fund raising for the Municipal Gallery.  
c.1904-1916
- Ms. 27,744 Dermot O'Brien Ten letters, some to Mrs. Ruth Shine, mainly concerning obtaining pictures for exhibitions.  
29 January 1904-1908  
2 February 1915-1922
- Ms. 27,745 Lucius H. O'Brien In reply to Lane's request for a loan of portraits for the St. Louis Exhibition.  
9 February 1904
- Ms. 27,746 Charles Stewart, 6<sup>th</sup> Marquess of In reply to Lane's request for a loan of portraits for the St. Louis Exhibition.

	Londonderry	11 February 1904
Ms. 27,747	Sir Horace Plunkett	Four letters, mainly in reply to Lane's queries concerning pictures. 12 March 1904 - June 1905
Ms. 27,748	E.M. Lane-Browne (cousin of Hugh Lane)	One letter sending good wishes for the Irish Art Exhibition in the Guildhall. 24 April 1904.
Ms. 27,749	John Sargent	16 letters. Concerning work in progress, exhibiting pictures, some business and personal matters. 24 April 1904, 1908-13
Ms. 27,750	John Masfield	4 letters. Concerning writing an article on Lane's gallery and giving names of likely donors. 22 November 1904-1908
Ms. 27, 751 (1-2)	William Orpen	17 letters, one to Mrs. Ruth Shine. Concerning newspaper art controversies, Orpen's paintings and financial situation, Lane's attempts to establish an art gallery in Dublin, a memorial for J.M. Synge, and inviting Lane to be godfather to their daughter. c. 1905-1917
Ms. 27,752	George Russell	Two letters. Concerning evidence for Congested Districts and [Art Education in Dublin] Commissions and picture purchases. c.1905-07
Ms. 27,753	Mathew Maris	One letter. Mainly concerning painter Monticelli. 16 January 1905
Ms. 27,754	Michael Davitt	Two letters, concerning sittings for his portrait. 30 March & 3 April 1905
Ms. 27,755	William O'Brien (1852-1928)	Two letters, agreeing to have his portrait done. 31 March & 4 April 1905

Ms. 27,756 (1-5)	Lady Augusta Gregory	31 letters, including 21 to Mrs. Ruth Shine. Concerning Lane's attempts to establish a gallery of modern art in Dublin, the Lane bequest controversy, and family matters. 4 April 1905-1924
Ms. 27,757	David Lindsay, 27th Earl of Crawford	Three letters. Concerning acquisition of a Velasquez for a national collection. 24 November - December 1905
Ms. 27,758	Augustus E. John	Four letters. Concerning work in progress, sale of his paintings etc. [c.1906-10]
Ms. 27,759	Sarah Purser.	One letter. Congratulatory note. [c. 1906]
Ms. 27,760	John Redmond	One letter apologising for not attending meeting. 12 February 1906
Ms. 27,761	R. Caulfield Orpen	Five letters. Mainly concerning campaign to establish gallery in Dublin. 16 March - May 1906, 1908, 1914
Ms. 27,762	Bernard Forbes 8th Earl of Granard	Five letters. Concerning repairs to a picture and having a portrait painted, of himself and the Countess October-November 1906, c. 1910
Ms. 27,763	Stephen Gwynn	Two letters. Asking Lane to inspect a supposed portrait of Daniel O'Connell. 6-7 April [c. 1907]
Ms. 27,764	Antonio Mancini Antonio Sciortino [A. Schlesinger]	Six letters. Concerning Mancini's work in progress 29 April 1907-09
Ms. 27,765	J. Gordon Browne	One letter. Invitation to lunch. 14 May 1907
Ms. 27,766	Gerald Kelly Festus Kelly (Gerald's father) Blanche Kelly (his mother?)	32 letters. Mainly concerning work in progress and business  8 November 1907-1915.

Ms. 27,767	Lily Yeats	One letter. Asking for return of portrait of W.B. Yeats. 6 October 1908.
Ms. 27,768	Francois Monod M. Guiffrey	Two letters. Asking for catalogue of exhibition of Irish Art 1908 and introducing M. Guiffrey of the Louvre. 26 August 1908 – 18 July 191?
Ms. 27,769	Nathaniel Hone	One letter. Concerning disposal of some of his pictures. 4 October 1908
Ms. 27,771	Anne Moore, 9 <sup>th</sup> Countess of Drogheda	Two letters, one to Mrs. Ruth Shine. 23 July 1909 20 July 1918
Ms. 27,772	Lionel Phillips.	Concerning contract with Augustus John. 5 November 1909
Ms. 27,773	Francis Derwent Wood	One letter regarding baldness. [c. 1910]
Ms. 27,774	Herbert Trench	One letter asking for introduction to Lord Ardilaun. 16 February 1910
Ms. 27,775	Otto Beit	Five letters concerning purchases of pictures etc with references to Orpen. 21 April 1910-1913
Ms. 27,776	Louise Margaret, Duchess of Connaught [Margaret Victoria, wife of Gustavus Adolphus Crown Prince of Sweden (her daughter)?] Malcolm Murray (Controller of Household)	Ten letters. Invitations, picture arranging, sales, and an exhibition of Swedish pictures.  [c. 1911] -1913
Ms. 27,777	Henry Scott Tuke	One letter of thanks. [c.1911]
Ms. 27,778	John Redmond	Five items. To Lady Drogheda [Anne



	Walter Lough A[ugustine] Birrell	Moore, 9 <sup>th</sup> Countess] and Miss S.C. Harrison concerning campaign to establish a Municipal Art Gallery in Dublin. With some circulars. 10 April 1911-12
Ms. 27,779	Max Michaelis	One letter concerning payment for some Dutch paintings. 1 Nov. 1912
Ms. 27,780	Lady Florence Phillips (Wife of Lionel Phillips)	Five letters concerning housing Michaelis art collection in Old Town House, Capetown 23 April - December 1913
Ms. 27,781	J.M. Solomon	Ten letters concerning the establishment of an art gallery in the Old Town House, Capetown. 18 May 1913-1914
Ms. 27,782	George Nathaniel Curzon (1 <sup>st</sup> Marquess Curzon of Kedletston)	Three letters. Repudiating a suggestion that he had persuaded Lane to lend pictures to the National Gallery. 12 March 1913-1914
Ms. 27,783	F. Cadogan Cowper	One letter inviting Sir Hugh to a viewing of his pictures. 2 April 1913
Ms. 27,784	37 letters and telegrams of congratulations to Hugh Lane on the occasion of his appointment as Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, including longer letters from Francis E. James, May Murray née Falkiner and Geraldine Bourke, 7 <sup>th</sup> Countess of Mayo. February - December 1914	
Ms. 27,785	Wilbraham F. Trench	One letter of condolence to Lady Augusta Gregory on the death of Hugh Lane. 21 May 1915
Ms. 27,786	Charles [H. Brady]	One letter of condolence to Mrs. Ruth Shine describing his meetings with Hugh Lane in New York before he set sail on the Lusitania. 28 May 1915

## II. Printed material and press cuttings

- Ms. 27,770 Press cuttings concerning Hugh Lane, c.25 items.  
1909, 1914-15
- Ms. 27,787 Miscellaneous lists [of subscribers, donors, purchasers etc.].  
(c.1915)
- Ms. 27,788 Typescript transcription of the words on a memorial stone to Sir Hugh Lane. Endorsed 'Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens by Miss S.C. Harrison'.  
c.1915
- Ms. 27,789 Typescripts of two articles by Selwyn Brinton entitled 'The Late Sir Hugh Lane's collection' written for the Connoisseur, with associated correspondence, 6 items.  
October-Dec.ember 1915
- Ms. 27,790 Pamphlets concerning the controversy over the Lane bequest, 5 items.  
1917-32.
- Ms. 27,791 Sale catalogues of pictures, furniture, jewels, etc. belonging to Sir Hugh Lane, sold June-July 1917, 4 items.  
June-July 1917
- Ms. 27,792 Sale catalogue of Sir Hugh Lane's books, auctioned by Christies 26 November 1917. With names of purchasers written in.  
1917
- Ms. 27,793 Newsclippings concerning Sir Hugh Lane, 6 items.  
c.1920