

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 15th December 2015

National Photographic Archive receives Irish civil rights activist's photographic collection

The Christopher Robson Photographic Collection was presented to the [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#)'s National Photographic Archive today (15.12.15) by Bill Foley, Christopher Robson's civil partner, and the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), in the presence of President Michael D Higgins.

The collection was willed to the National Photographic Archive and comprises some 2,000 slides taken by Christopher Robson. The majority of the images were taken at LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) Pride events in Ireland between 1992 and 2007.

Christopher Robson was a founding member of GLEN and a well-known civil rights activist who died following a short illness in 2013. He was involved in many campaigns for equality and civil liberty and served as a long-standing board member of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the Ana Liffey Drug Project.

Speaking at today's ceremony to mark the donation, Elizabeth Kirwan, Curator of the NLI's National Photographic Archive, said: "We are strongly committed to collecting and sharing the record of contemporary Ireland and are very grateful to receive this important donation of the Christopher Robson Photographic Collection today. We would like to express our gratitude to Chris's partner Bill Foley and GLEN for their generosity and we are delighted to be able to receive this collection, both to preserve and to make it accessible to the wider public.

"Here in the National Library, we also house the Irish Queer Archive which contains the most comprehensive collection of material in Ireland relating to homosexuality, LGBT literature and general Queer studies. The photographs contained within the Christopher Robson collection offer an important insight into recent Irish LGBT history and will contribute hugely to the National Library's collections."

Kieran Rose, Co-Chair of GLEN, and founder of GLEN with Christopher, added: "I am delighted that, together with Bill, GLEN is presenting this important photographic collection to the NLI's National Photographic Archive. Chris was an extremely passionate and committed activist whose work had an enormous impact on social progress and human rights in Ireland.

"Chris's photographic and campaigning work went hand in hand, and spanned a 25 year period of remarkable and transformative change for LGBT people in Ireland. His calm leadership through GLEN was instrumental in achieving this progress and has laid the foundations for the next phase of change to ensure that LGBT people can participate fully and equally in all aspects of Irish life. I am very pleased that this work will today be included in the National Photographic Archive and therefore will become publicly available for all to enjoy."

For more information on the NLI's photographic collections and exhibitions, visit: www.nli.ie.

ENDS

Contact: Sarah Harte / Sebastian Enke, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-9858259 / 087-3239496

Notes to Editors

- Interviews available on request.
- Photographer Marc O'Sullivan has been commissioned to cover this event and will issue photos to picture desks promptly at 6.30pm.

About the NLI

The mission of the National Library of Ireland is to collect, preserve, promote and make accessible the documentary and intellectual record of the life of Ireland and to contribute to the provision of access to the larger universe of recorded knowledge. It is open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult the collections. The Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are both part of the National Library. Further information is available at www.nli.ie, @NLIreland.