

NEWS

Number 27: Spring 2007

National Library of Ireland
NUAIGHT Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann



Images of daily life on the islands surrounding Ireland's coastline are the subject of a new exhibition at the National Photographic Archive (NPA) entitled ***Island life – the islands of Ireland***.

The exhibition features a number of different locations, but concentrates predominantly on Achill Island, the Aran Islands, Valentia and the Blasket islands. A small number of inland lake islands such as Station Island on Lough Derg are also included.

The images are drawn from the Lawrence, Eason, Casement, Diggin and Morgan collections, and also from the Tomás Ó Muircheartaigh Collection and the Colman Doyle Collection – all dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Tomás Ó Muircheartaigh Collection, acquired by the Library in 2005, comprises a large body of photographs taken by Tomás Ó Muircheartaigh, an amateur photographer and former President of Conradh na Gaeilge. Ó Muircheartaigh had an enormous affection for the south west of Ireland. The landscapes and the people of this area – all photographed between the 1930s and the 1950s – figure most prominently in the Library's collection of his work. While the collection (comprising approximately 2,000 negatives and two albums of prints) has not as yet been catalogued, a selection of photographs has been included in the exhibition to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his death.

In 2006, the Library acquired the entire photographic collection of Colman Doyle, widely acknowledged one of the most important Irish photographers of the 20th century. The current National Photographic Archive exhibition features a small number of photographs from the Colman Doyle Collection including character portraits of inhabitants of the Blasket Islands taken before the Great Blasket Island was evacuated in 1953. The NPA's summer exhibition will feature a more comprehensive selection of Doyle's work comprising 25,000 images and representing almost 60 years of his career as a photographer.

Island life – the islands of Ireland continues at the National Photographic Archive, Temple Bar until 11 June.

National Library Events

Library Late

The featured writers for the November, December and January 'Library Late' public interviews were Claire Kilroy, Bernard Mac Laverty and Roddy Doyle; they were interviewed by *Irish Times* theatre critic Fintan O'Toole and RTÉ presenter and producer Kay Sheehy.



Pictured at the November 'Library Late' were from left Kay Sheehy, Claire Kilroy and Niall MacMonagle, a member of the Board of the National Library of Ireland.



Bernard Mac Laverty being interviewed by Fintan O'Toole at the December event.



Roddy Doyle answering questions from the audience at the January event.

John J O'Meara Memorial Lecture

The Latin factor: a chapter of autobiography was the title of the second John J O'Meara Memorial Lecture which took place in the Library's Seminar Room on 31 January. This year's Lecture, which was organised by the National Library of Ireland Society, was given by Professor Denis Donoghue of New York University.



Professor Donoghue (second left) is pictured here with Professor John J O'Meara's daughter Odile (left); his widow Mrs Odile O'Meara, and his son Professor Dominic O'Meara.

'If I were a Blackbird' exhibition

On 11 January, the Ceann Comhairle, Dr Rory O'Hanlon TD opened an exhibition entitled *If I were a Blackbird*, which celebrates the lives of the late Dr TJ Kiernan, Ireland's first Ambassador to Australia and Dr Kiernan's wife Delia Murphy, the renowned singing star. (A version of this exhibition also went on display in the National Museum of Australia in Canberra in February.) The Library's exhibition in the Main Hall continues until 30 March.

The exhibition opening was attended by members of the Kiernan family. They included Dr TJ Kiernan and Delia Murphy's daughter, Dr Orfhlaith Browne; the couple's grand-daughter Carol Kiernan, who spoke at the event, and their great-grandchildren Brendan Hawke and Madeleine Hawke, who performed some of the traditional songs made famous by Delia Murphy – *If I were a Blackbird*, the *Connemara Cradle Song*, and *The Spinning Wheel*.



Pictured at the exhibition opening are from left: Aidan O'Hara (biographer of Delia Murphy), Brendan Hawke and Madeleine Hawke.



Carmen Cullen, a niece of Dr TJ Kiernan and Delia Murphy; Dr Orfhlaith Browne, daughter of Dr TJ Kiernan and Delia Murphy, and Deirdre Carrick, a cousin of Delia Murphy pictured at the reception following the opening of the *If I were a Blackbird* exhibition in the Library's Main Hall.

Educational events at the Library

The Library offers a wide range of formal and informal learning opportunities for people of all abilities and all ages – from primary and post-primary school pupils to students of the University of the Third Age and lifelong learners.

During the past year, the Library has developed a comprehensive education programme to complement its award-winning exhibition, ***Yeats: the life and works of WB Yeats***.

Since its launch in May of last year, the exhibition has attracted some 35,000 visitors – a great many of them students from primary and post-primary schools. In addition to a guided tour of the exhibition, many schools' groups have also taken part in complementary literary and creative workshops: primary school classes have created imaginative artwork in response to Yeats's poetry while post-primary school students, inspired by Yeats's work, have composed some wonderful haikus.

The Library's schools programme continues to grow – a trail of the exhibition for visiting primary school groups will be available shortly and additional resources for post-primary school history students and teachers are currently in development. In May the Library, in association with Poetry Ireland, will host its second annual **POETRY ALOUD** poetry speaking competition for post-primary school pupils.

The Library's programme of educational events for lifelong learners (which features lunchtime talks on aspects of Yeats's life and work given by exhibition staff) has proven to be of great interest to visitors of all ages. This series of talks is about to be followed by two additional events – an eight-week course entitled 'WB Yeats at the National Library' which is being run in conjunction with UCD and begins in late April, and a celebration of creativity for older people as part of the Bealtaine Festival which takes place in May.

Many of our educational activities have been designed especially for families. Last year's summer programme of children's events was hugely popular with parents and children alike and we will be welcoming back some of our guest storytellers and poets in April, May and June for another series of Saturday morning storytelling for children aged 5+. We will also be offering creative workshops for the over-eights, with three three-day workshops scheduled for this age group during July and August.

Families can of course enjoy the ***Yeats: the life and works of WB Yeats*** exhibition all year round. In association with the PCSP (Primary Curriculum Support Programme), members of the education staff have devised 'My Yeats', a comprehensive but highly accessible guide to help parents and children explore the exhibition together. The guide is suitable for children aged 7+ and is available free of charge at the exhibition area.

Finally, as part of its wider education programme, the Library is developing a number of outreach initiatives. This summer, for example, we will be working in partnership with a group of adults with intellectual disabilities from the St John of God Carmona service in Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin to explore the range of possibilities that the Yeats exhibition might offer to similar groups elsewhere.



Exhibition tours and workshops may be arranged by appointment. To reserve a place, or to find out more about our other educational events, see the Library website www.nli.ie/yeats. Alternatively, contact a member of the exhibition staff on 01-603 0346 or 603 0277.

Places for the 'WB Yeats at the National Library' course may be reserved through the Adult Education Centre in University College Dublin. Telephone 01-716 7123.

Times, dates and other booking details relating to the Library's summer programme of children's events will be publicised in the Summer edition of *NLI News*.



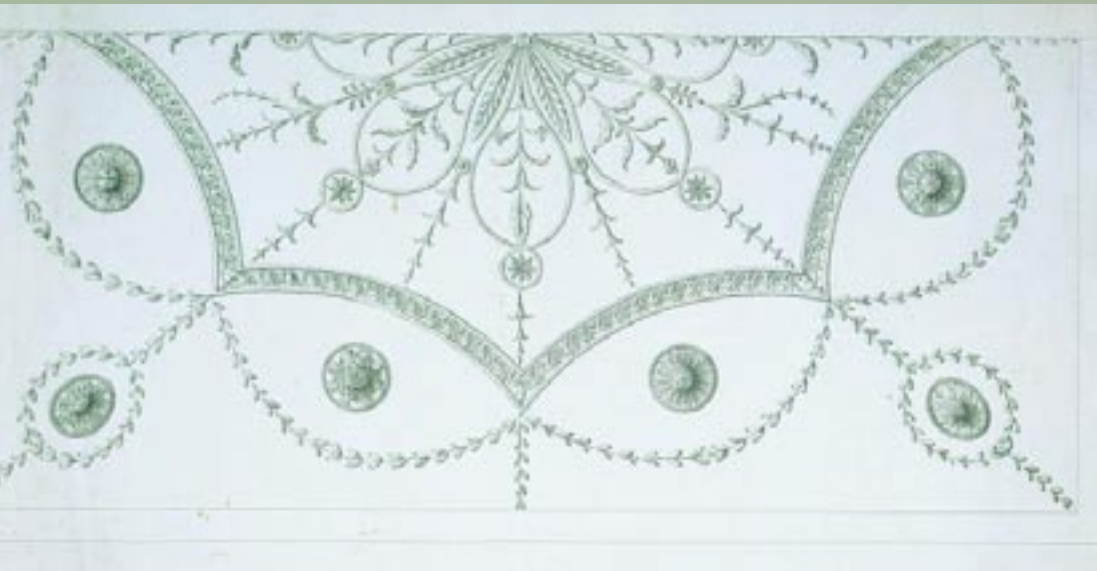
Michael Stapleton and the Irish neoclassical interior

This March will see the publication of *The Stapleton Collection; Designs for the Irish neoclassical interior* by Conor Lucey.

In Ireland, the stuccodor Michael Stapleton's name has become synonymous with the elegant ornamental plasterwork of the late eighteenth century Dublin townhouse. Since academic interest in this branch of Irish decorative arts was revived at the beginning of the twentieth century, Stapleton (1747–1801) has emerged as the most skilled stuccodor working in the neoclassical or 'Adam' style that dominated interior decoration to 1800. Although many of his interiors are recorded in the extensive literature on Georgian Dublin, the Stapleton Collection of decorative designs will be less familiar. Purchased in 1940 by the Friends of the National Collections of Ireland, and presented to the National Library of Ireland, it represents the sole portfolio of its kind from an Irish craftsman of the period.

Working outside of the established guilds, by virtue of his Catholic faith, Michael Stapleton created one of the most successful decorating and house-building practices in Dublin of the period. The Stapleton collection includes finely executed designs in ink and watercolour, together with working drawings and sketches in pencil. Almost half of the drawings are compositions for ceilings, with the remainder devoted to designs for friezes, cornices, room schemes, doorcases, townhouses and villas. Related sketches and finished drawings reveal the design process at work, while others include evocative marginalia that afford a glimpse into the day-to-day workings of a plasterer's workshop of the period.

The majority of the designs in the collection date from the last three decades of the eighteenth century, and correspond to the decorative plasterwork in a number of Georgian Dublin's most notable



Rectangular ceiling design in half-plan form. Ink and grey wash, AD 2220.



Doorcase design with Adamesque fanlight. Ink with grey and Indian ink washes, AD 2367.

Michael Stapleton agus inmheánach nuachlasaiceach na hÉireann

Foilseofar *Bailiúchán Stapleton; Dearaí d'inmheánach nuachlasaiceach na hÉireann* le Conor Lucey an Márta seo chugainn.

In Éirinn, tá ainm Michael Stapleton éirithe comhchiallach le pláistéireacht ornáideach ealaíonta theach cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath ó dheireadh na hochtú aoise déag. Toisc go ndearnadh suim acadúil sa chuid seo d'ealaíona maisiúla na hÉireann a athbheochan i dtús na fiche haoise, tá ainm Stapleton (1747–1801) tagtha chun cinn mar an stucódóir is saoihiúla ag obair sa stíl nuachlasaiceach nó 'Adam' a bhí chomh mór sin i maisiú inmheánach go dtí 1800. Cé go bhfuil a lán dá chuid inmheánach taifeadta sa litríocht fhairsing ar Bhaile Átha Cliath Seoirseach, ní bheidh Bailiúchán Stapleton ar dhearaí maisiúla chomh aitheanta sin. Ceannaithe i 1940 ag Gasra Chairde na hÉireann, agus tugtha do Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann, léiríonn sé an t-aon phunann dá chineál ó cheardaí Éireannach sa tréimhse sin.

Ag obair lasmuigh de na cuallachtaí bunaithe, as los a chreidimh Chaitlicigh, chruthaigh Michael Stapleton ceann de na cleachtas mhaisithe agus tógála tithe is rathúla i mBaile Átha Cliath na ré. Cuimsíonn Bailiúchán Stapleton dearaí snoite go mín i ndúch agus uiscedhath, in éineacht le líníochtaí agus sceitsí i bpeann luaidhe. Is éard atá i mbeagnach leath de na dearaí ná déantúis do shíleálacha agus is líníochtaí le haghaidh dearaí d'fhriósanna, coirnisí, scéimeanna seomraí, cásanna dorais, tithe cathrach agus bailtíní atá sa chuid eile. Taispeánann sceitsí gaolmhara agus líníochtaí críochnaithe an proiséas dearaidh á dhéanamh, agus cuimsíonn cinn eile nótaí imill a thugann spleachadh ar ghnáthobair lae cheardlann pláistéara na ré sin.

Baineann formhór na ndearaí leis na tríocha bliain dheireanacha den ochtú haois déag, agus comhfhreagraíonn siad leis an bpláistéireacht mhaisithe sna tithe cathrach is suaitheanta i mBaile Átha Cliath Seoirseach, lena n-áirítear, Teach Chúirt an Phaoraigh, Sráid Liam Theas, agus Teach Belvedere, Sráid

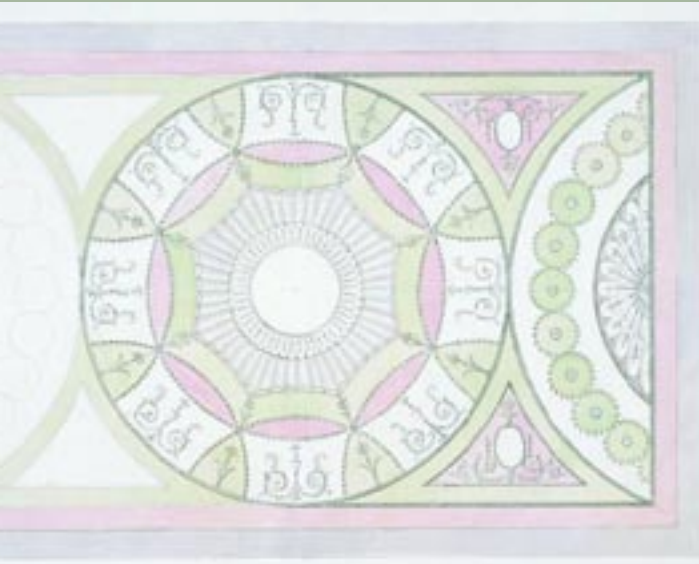
townhouses, including Powerscourt House, South William Street, and Belvedere House, Great Denmark Street. A smaller number of drawings relate to early nineteenth century buildings, confirming the continuation of Michael Stapleton's successful practice by his son George (1777–1841). Among these are designs by the prominent Irish architects Francis Johnston and Richard Morrison for projects such as St George's Church, Hardwicke Place and Borris House, Co Carlow.

The Stapleton Collection is generously funded by Churchill House Press, and will be published by Churchill House Press in association with the National Library of Ireland. It presents new research drawn from a broad range of sources and examines the Library's collection of Stapleton designs and drawings within the broader context of neoclassical stuccowork in Dublin, considering it as evidence for the late eighteenth century plastering trade in general.

To mark the publication of *The Stapleton Collection; Designs for the Irish neoclassical interior*, a selection of the drawings focusing on various aspects of Stapleton's practice will be on display at the Irish Architectural Archive, 45 Merrion Square, Dublin from 14 March to 1 June 2007. For further information see www.iarc.ie. Open Tues-Fri 10am-5pm.

On Wednesday 25 April next, Conor Lucey will give a lecture on the Stapleton Collection to the National Library of Ireland Society.

Conor Lucey is Doctoral Scholar in the School of Art History and Cultural Policy at University College Dublin, researching the neoclassical interior in Dublin 1770–1800.



Ceiling design. Ink and coloured washes, AD 2355.



Design for an Ionic capital. Ink with black and grey washes, AD 2359.

na Danmhairge Mhór. Baineann roinnt bheag de líníochtaí le foirgnimh go luath sa naoú haois déag, a dhearbhaíonn gur lean a mhac George (1777–1841) ar aghaidh le cleachtas rathúil Michael Stapleton.

Ina measc seo tá dearáí le hailtírí suntasacha na hÉireann Francis Johnston agus Richard Morrison do thionscadail cosúil le Séipéal Naomh Seoirse, Plás Hardwicke agus Teach na Buiríse, Co. Cheatharlach.

Faigheann *Bailiúchán Stapleton* maoiniú flaithiúil ó Churchill House Press, agus foilseoidh Churchill House Press é i gcomhpháirtíocht leis an Leabharlann Náisiúnta. Cuireann sé taighde úr i láthair a thagann as raon leathan foinsí agus scrúdaíonn sé bailiúchán na Leabharlainne ar dhearáí agus líníochtaí Stapleton laistigh de chomhthéacs níos leithne maidir le hobair stucó nuachlasaiceach i mBaile Átha Cliath, ag breathnú air mar fhianaise den trádáil plháistéireachta san ochtú haois déag go ginearálta.

Chun foilsiú *Bailiúchán Stapleton; Dearáí d'inmheánach nuachlasaiceach na hÉireann* a cheiliúradh, beidh roghnú de na líníochtaí a dhíríonn ar ghnéithe éagsúla de chleachtas Stapleton ar taispeánt i gCartlann Ailtireachta na hÉireann, 45 Cearnóg Mhuirfean, Baile Átha Cliath ón 14 Márta go dtí 1 Meitheamh 2007. Tuilleadh eolais www.iarc.ie. Uaireanta Oscalte: Mairt-Aoine 10am-5pm.

Ar an gCéadaoin, 25 Aibreán tabharfaidh Conor Lucey léacht ar Bhailiúchán Stapleton do Leabharlann Náisiúnta na Sochaí.

Is Scoláire Dochtúireachta é Conor Lucey i Scoil Stair na hEalaíne agus Polasaí Cultúrtha sa Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, ag déanamh taighde ar an inmheánach nuachlasaiceach i mBaile Átha Cliath 1770–1800.

Michael Yeats 1921-2007 – an appreciation

The Funeral Service for Michael Yeats was held at St Patrick's Church, Dalkey, on 8 January 2007. The following is the address given by Gerard Danaher, SC, Chairperson of the Board of the National Library of Ireland on that occasion.

In the first line of his book *Cast a Cold Eye*, Michael Yeats said that the question 'what is it like to be the son of a great poet?' was one he had often been asked.

Asked far too often, one suspects.

He drolly observed that he might as well have asked his interlocutors what it was like for them to be the offspring of a teacher or a farmer or whatever else.

Yet his choice of that question to start his book and indeed the book's subtitle *Memories of a poet's son and politician* straightaway addressed that issue of identity which would always exist for him.

By the time Michael was born in 1921, his father was an established poet and man of letters. He was already well on his way to achieving that enormous status in world literature which was even acknowledged in his own lifetime.

Had he chosen, Michael Yeats could have devoted himself solely and successfully to the role of being the great poet's son.

Instead, while he always discharged the responsibility that came with that role, he went on to play his own distinct and significant part in the public life of this country.

It was clear from the outset that he was his own man.

That he should have had a nationalist outlook tells us little.

That, coming from the background he did, he became at 14 what he himself described as a committed De Valera Republican tells us a lot.

Michael's life spanned the entire existence of the independent Irish State. However, the Ireland he was born into was a very different one to that which he leaves behind.

Back in 1921, Ireland was inching towards sovereignty and lurching into civil war. She was divided as much by external pressure as internal disagreement. The country was poor and its prospects poorer.

Today, we live in a country where perhaps the greatest threat to our undoubted prosperity is our short memory of our former poverty.

Today, we live in a country the future governance of which is a matter essentially for the Irish people themselves.

Today, we live in a country united at least in membership of the European Union and our rejection of violence.

Many people are rightly credited for their roles in bringing this about.

Michael Yeats played his own significant part in the creation of this new Ireland. He did so without or, indeed, partly because of the low key, modest and selfless way in which he did it.

During a crucial part of our history, Michael was a member of the Oireachtas and Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann. As a senator he was a parliamentarian in the best sense of the word. As a cathaoirleach, he was fair, which surprised no one, but he was also firm, which may have surprised a few.

Throughout his career in politics he was a source of sound advice and uncommon insight for the holders of higher office than he held himself.

On Northern Ireland, he was able to bring to bear a perspective which was rare, if not unique, for a member of Fianna Fáil or indeed any other southern political party.

To put this in context, there cannot for example have been anyone else who, notwithstanding their completely different views on the "national question", had enjoyed a close friendship with the late Brian Faulkner.

It is interesting that, by the time he died, Brian Faulkner's views on at least some issues were no longer so far removed from those of Michael Yeats as they had been back in the 1930s.

As regards his influence, particularly in Fianna Fáil, it has to be remembered that, despite his civility, Michael Yeats was no dilettante when it came to the rough and tumble of party politics.

He had worked in Fianna Fáil headquarters. He was centrally involved in numerous election campaigns. He served on the Committee of 15 of Fianna Fáil.

He did so in tough times when politics really was a tough business.

But it was in promoting our participation in Europe that Michael made his greatest political mark.

He was one of the first politicians in Ireland to see that a full-blooded Irish involvement in Europe represented our best, if not our only, way forward economically and socially.

He also saw that, in Europe, we could achieve a degree of political clout that would never be open to a small, protectionist State isolated largely from the rest of the world-isolated except, of course, from Britain to which we were still linked through sterling.

Michael was passionately committed to Europe.

He played a major part in developing the connections between this country and the European institutions which have contributed so enormously to our success in Europe.

He resigned as Cathaoirleach of the Seanad in order to serve as a member of the European Parliament. He was the first Irish MEP to address that assembly. He was the first Irish person to become a vice-President of the Parliament.

He also had many other interests.

He had a keen interest in the Irish language. He was a music critic in his time. He loved music, especially classical music and – I am told – some quite abstruse folk music from around the world. Well, I suppose no one can be perfect!

He was also an early proponent and supporter of equality for women when that was still an issue. In all honesty, given the gender balance in his own home, he can hardly have had much choice in that regard.

However, what was truly astounding about Michael Yeats was his ability to be a public man, to hold high public office and yet to remain an intensely private family man.

When I mentioned this to one of his family, she said, that in one way, this had not been difficult for him as his family were his greatest friends.

Anyone whoever saw Michael with Gráinne and his family will know how true this was. However, that having been said, if a man's real wealth can be measured by the number of his friends then Michael was truly a very wealthy man.

Throughout his life he attracted and merited the friendship of those he met. I honestly doubt if he had an enemy in the world. That may seem strange given that he spent his entire life in politics. But it is not really that strange at all when we remember the sense of charm, modesty and old-fashioned decency that emanated from him on even the briefest encounter.

While I have concentrated on Michael Yeats the politician, the public figure and the family man, I cannot forget Michael Yeats, the poet's son.

William Butler Yeats is a great figure in great world literature.

His manuscripts, his papers, his correspondence and his working library would have been welcomed and treasured in foundations, in universities and in libraries throughout the world.

But, in Ireland, William Butler Yeats has a special position in our history and culture, widely recognised as he is as our national poet.

It is truly wonderful that so many of his manuscripts and materials and so much of the physical legacy of the national poet is now national property in the National Library of Ireland.

That the National Library has by far and away the foremost literary collection relating to William Butler Yeats is due to the generosity of the Yeats family but primarily that of Michael Yeats. Much of this legacy was Michael's own legacy but, thanks to him, it is now the legacy of the Irish people.

As the title for his book, Michael did choose his father's famous line, 'Cast a Cold Eye'.

But there was nothing about Michael to merit the casting of a cold eye.

A more appropriate line today from William Butler Yeats is a line you will not find in any anthology. Nevertheless it was one of a few lines written by the poet to mark Michael's birth:

'Bid a strong ghost stand at the head that my Michael
may sleep sound.'

Michael himself hated that poem. His fellow boarders at St Columba's teased him unmercifully about it. He said it was a verse of "maudlin sentimentality". He offered the advice to other poets that, if they felt they really had to write poems about their children, they should not publish them until their unfortunate children would at least have left school.

I hope that Michael does not return as a ghost, strong or otherwise, to wreak vengeance on me for my resurrecting those lines.

But, Michael, may you sleep sound.

And to you, Gráinne, Caitríona, Siobhán, Síle and Pádraig and the other members of your family, please accept our deepest sympathy.



Library acquires extensive collection of Beckett material

The Library has recently acquired a collection of some 800 printed and ephemeral items by and about Samuel Beckett, including more than 200 items personally inscribed by the writer.

Such is the nature of the collection and the extensive number of items contained in it – some of which have been described by experts as very rare – that it now makes the Library an important centre for Beckett studies.

The material was assembled over a 50-year period by the late Alan Clodd (1918-2002), the Dublin-born book collector, dealer, publisher and founder of the Enitharmon Press, one of the most distinctive private presses in England, which published work by an impressive range of writers including Beckett himself, Jorge Luis Borges, David Gascoyne, Federico Garcia Lorca and Harold Pinter. Alan Clodd enjoyed a cordial acquaintance with Samuel Beckett and many of the items in the National Library's recently acquired collection are inscribed by Beckett for Clodd, who frequently visited Paris with books for his fellow Dubliner to sign.

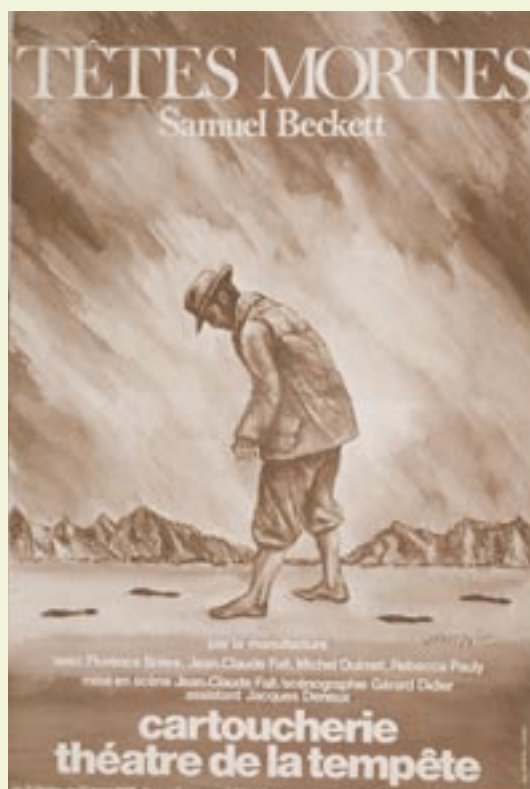
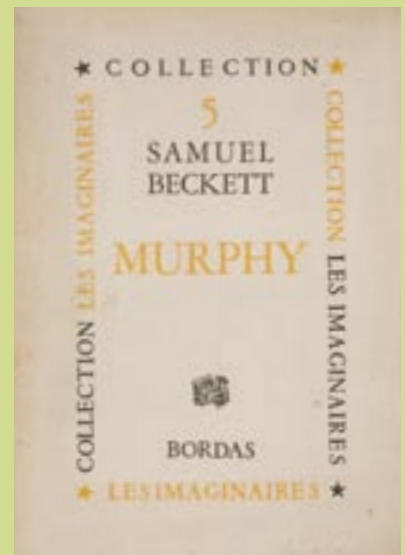
As well as printed books and periodicals, the collection includes proof copies, galley proofs and production scripts for Beckett plays. These production scripts show another facet of his many achievements: Beckett as theatre director. Four of these very rare items are signed by Beckett for Alan Clodd.

The material acquired by the Library also includes photographs, some correspondence (largely of a bibliographical nature), posters and ephemeral items such as theatrical programmes, which are rarely found in library collections. These include programmes for the first productions of *En Attendant Godot* and *Waiting for Godot*.

The acquisition of the Beckett/Clodd collection is a major boost for Irish scholars and for the Library. It was particularly appropriate that the National Library should have made this acquisition in 2006 – the centenary of the dramatist's birth.

This is an integral collection, representing a significant amount of the output of a major Irish writer, put together by a major, though as yet little-known, Irish collector. The comprehensive nature of the collection – which also contains a substantial number of translations, as well as critical, bibliographical and biographical material – will enable researchers to further appreciate the contribution of this illustrious Dublin writer and Nobel Prize winner to world literature.

The collection was acquired from the London-based booksellers, Maggs Bros, acting on behalf of the Clodd Estate.



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.

The final event in the Society's 2006 programme took place on 13 December, when Society members were given a private tour of the Library's award-winning exhibition *Yeats: The Life and Work of William Butler Yeats* by Sarah Shiel and Sarah O'Connor. This was followed by a wine reception in the Main Hall.

The Society's 2007 programme got off to a successful start on 31 January when Professor Denis Donoghue of New York University gave a lecture entitled *The Latin factor: a chapter of autobiography*. This was the second event in the annual John J O'Meara Memorial Lecture series; the series has been made possible by an endowment from Professor O'Meara's family.

On 28 February, Dr Rolf Loeber and Dr Magda Loeber delivered a lecture on their recently published book *A Guide to Irish Fiction 1650-1900*.

The Society's Spring/Summer programme begins on 28 March with a lecture on fine-art printmaking by Brian Lalor entitled 'Take in your ink-stained hands my own hands stained with ink', *Graphic Studio Dublin and the origins of fine-art printmaking in Ireland*.

On 25 April Conor Lucey, Doctoral Scholar in the School of Art History and Cultural Policy at University College Dublin will deliver a lecture on the Michael Stapleton collection of architectural drawings in the Library.

The Society's AGM takes place at 6pm on 23 May. This will be followed at 7pm by a lecture entitled *Language Wars: English versus Irish* given by Professor Terry Dolan of the Department of English and Drama, University College Dublin.

Lectures and other events begin at 7pm and take place in the Library's Seminar Room.

The Society's annual outing will take place in June.

Details of upcoming Society events may be found on the Library website www.nli.ie.

Lectures and other events begin at 7pm and take place in the Library's Seminar Room.

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)	

Members of the Society are entitled to a 10% discount in the Joly Café and in the Library shop.

Contacting us

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

Address for correspondence: Sandra McDermott, Hon Secretary,
 National Library of Ireland Society, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.
 Tel: 01-603 0227. Email: smcdermott@nli.ie

Library Late

The 'Library Late' series of public interviews with critically acclaimed writers is designed to stimulate a greater interest in, and understanding of, contemporary Irish and international writing. The series which has been running since late 2005 has featured writers including John Banville, Patrick McCabe, Frank McGuinness, Andrew O'Hagan, Colum McCann, Anne Enright, Eavan Boland, Joe O'Connor, John Connolly, John Boyne, Claire Kilroy and Bernard McLaverty.

Featured writers in the coming months will include Hugo Hamilton, MJ Hyland and Alistair MacLeod.

On Wednesday, 14 March, *Irish Times* theatre critic Fintan O'Toole will interview Hugo Hamilton, acclaimed author of five novels as well as a collection of short stories. His memoir *The Speckled People* was chosen by *The New York Times* as one of the most notable books of the year in 2003. Translated into ten languages, it has become an international bestseller and recently won the prestigious Prix Fémina étranger in France, as well as the Berto Prize in Italy.

His second memoir *The Sailor in the wardrobe* was published in February 2006 (Fourth Estate). He is a member of Aosdána.

On Monday, 23 April, RTÉ presenter and producer Kay Sheehy will interview MJ Hyland, whose first novel *How the Light Gets In* (2004) was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. She has also won the *Sydney Morning Herald* Award for Best Australian Novelist (2004). Her latest novel *Carry Me Down* was shortlisted for the 2006 Man Booker Prize. She currently lives and works in Manchester. MJ Hyland was born in London to Irish parents in June 1968. She spent her early childhood in Dublin and when she was eleven the family relocated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. Hyland worked as a lawyer for six years after completing an arts/law degree at the University of Melbourne in 1996.

The interviewee for our May 'Library Late' will be the Canadian writer Alistair MacLeod. He has published two internationally acclaimed collections of short stories: *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* (1976) and *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun* (1986). In 2000, these two books, accompanied by two new stories, were published in a single-volume edition entitled *Island: The Collected Stories of Alistair MacLeod*. In 1999, his first novel, *No Great Mischief*, was published to great critical acclaim, and was on national bestseller lists for more than a year. The novel won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, the Dartmouth Book Award for Fiction, the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award, the Trillium Award for Fiction, and the CAA-MOSAID Technologies Inc Award for Fiction. At the Canadian Booksellers Association Libris Awards, MacLeod won the Fiction Book of the Year award and Author of the Year. *No Great Mischief* was also a finalist for the Pearson Canada Reader's Choice Award at The Word on the Street.

Themed tours for Yeats exhibition

The Library's major exhibition *Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats* continues through 2007.

During the months of March, April and May we will be offering a series of themed exhibition tours as follows:

Monday 26 March	<i>Annunciation: Leda and the swan</i>
Wednesday 11 April	<i>Easter 1916: WB Yeats and the Rising</i>
Thursday 3 May	<i>WB Yeats and Japan</i>

Tours will take place at 1.10pm and will last for approximately 20 minutes. For further information email yeats@nli.ie or telephone 01-603 0277.

New appointment

Colette O'Flaherty has recently been promoted to the post of Keeper within the National Library of Ireland.

In her new post, Ms O'Flaherty will have responsibility for all aspects of printed and visual collections in the Library. Among her key duties will be the coordination of collection development policy including planning for the extension of legal deposit legislation to new media.

Ms O'Flaherty holds a BA in History from UCD and Diploma in Archival Studies, also from UCD. Since joining the Library in 1994, she has worked in the services areas where initially she was one of a team working towards the establishment of a Genealogy Advisory Service. In recent years her main focus has been on education, outreach and marketing. In carrying out this role, she has been centrally involved in many important initiatives, including the Library's award-winning online 1916 exhibition and events around the visit of Queen Sonja of Norway in 2006 which coincided with the Library's commemoration of the centenary of the death of Henrik Ibsen.

She is an active member of the Standing Committee of the Genealogy and Local History Section of IFLA (the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions); she is also a member of a number of other professional bodies including the Society of Archivists, Ireland and the Library Association of Ireland.

Comments and suggestions on *NLI News* should be addressed to Ciara McDonnell. Email: cmcdonnell@nli.ie



Hugo Hamilton



MJ Hyland



Alistair MacLeod.
 Photograph courtesy of Ted Rhodes..