2009 PRESS RELEASES

Mammoth project almost 70 years in the making goes online

11 November 2009: Today sees the dawning of a new era, following the launch by the National Library of Ireland of a free on -line research service designed to save researchers having to plough through numerous bulky printed catalogues comprising 17,000 pages of records in order to find out where research materials of Irish interest are located.

By logging on to '**Sources'**, the National Library of Ireland's new digital directory of Irish studies (http://sources .nli.ie), people can now retrieve any one of up to 196,574 records of materials housed in the National Library of Ireland or in universities and research institutions around the world. Subjects covered in the materials range from art, architecture and archaeology through economics and genealogy to history, politics, literature, science and zoology.

As a result of being able to source this information on line, the initial research period is now reduced from at least several days to just a few minutes.

'Sources' will be launched later today (Wednesday 11 November, 2009) by Dr Martin Mansergh, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism at a reception held in the Library.

The '**Sources**' digital directory pinpoints exactly what Irish interest material is held where – information which previously could only be accessed by consulting the bulky printed catalogues in either the National Library of Ireland in Dublin or one of a limited number of university libraries or major research institutions holding the complete set of printed records. With the click of a mouse anyone can now access the Sources database via a PC and can start the process of researching what material exists on a particular topic, and in what library or institution around the world that material is held.

For the first time, it will be possible to search the manuscript and periodicals records together. As a result, someone doing research on their local area might find information about manuscript maps, estate papers and business records for local shopkeepers, as well as details for articles in local history journals. Once the records are found, the information can be easily emailed or shared to bookmarking and social networking sites such as Delicious and Twitter. Other features of 'Sources' include an interactive map showing the location of all the archives and libraries around the world where the Irish material listed is stored. Full contact details for each outlet are also provided.

The current process of digitising the original 'Hayes Sources' data represents an investment of several years' work by the National Library of Ireland. Commenting on the launch, Aongus Ó hAonghusa, Director, National Library of Ireland noted:

"For decades, the original *Manuscripts Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation*, or 'Hayes Sources' as it is more commonly known, proved to be a tried and trusted resource for researchers in any and all fields of study relating to Ireland and its people, at home and abroad.

"Now, it has been given a new life, and a slightly less unwieldy name, in an

online arena. The unprecedented opportunity it will provide for current and future generations of researchers worldwide to find Irish source material from their desktops, wherever they may be, would surely have pleased Richard Hayes and his dedicated team who first embarked on this mammoth indexing task almost 70 years ago."

Note for editors

(1) The launch of the project comes almost 70 years after Dr Richard J Hayes, Director of the National Library of Ireland from 1940 to 1967, initiated a project and led a team of researchers who produced almost 200,000 indexed references to some of the most important manuscripts and journals of Irish interest. The project resulted in two major publications: *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation* and *Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation: Articles in Irish Periodicals*. The original hard copy of Manuscript Sources was contained in 11 volumes produced in 1965, with a further three volumes produced in a supplement in 1975. That project created a portal to a vast amount of manuscripts housed in repositories in Ireland and elsewhere. *Periodicals Sources* was published in nine volumes in 1970 and includes bibliographic references to articles appearing in some 157 publications, the earliest of these commencing in 1785.

(2) 'Sources' is just one strand of the National Library of Ireland's emerging digital library programme. Earlier this year, in a move aimed at transforming access by the public to its collections, it introduced another free online service whereby 20,000 photographs from the Lawrence, Poole and Independent Newspapers collections can be viewed on the Library's website www.nli.ie/digital- photographs.aspx.

For further information, please contact Katherine McSharry, Assistant Keeper Tel: 01-603 0281

Big Names Tog-Out for National Library's Sports Programme

5 October 2009: Sports writer and broadcaster **Eamon Dunphy**, one of the world's most successful trainers **Dermot Weld** and four-times-winner of the *Sports Writer of the Year* Award in Ireland and the UK **David Walsh** are included in the starting line-up for the forthcoming series of Library Late events on the theme of sport and sports writing at the National Library of Ireland from October to December 2009. The series which will include interviews, debate and discussion on all aspects of sport from national hunt racing to Gaelic games will also take the opportunity to debate the effects of increased commercial interest in sport, the role of the sports writer in protecting the traditional and intrinsic values of sport and the historic and other factors which influenced the pattern of sports culture throughout Ireland. Library Late also highlights the Library's collection of sports related material which includes a vast newspaper archive of regional and national papers, the Irish Independent Collection of some 300,000 images recording many aspects of 20th century Irish life, and is particularly strong in its coverage of sport in Ireland and the Maunsell Collection: a magnificent collection of some 2,000 volumes on sport and games and a great number of newscuttings and photographs from the period 1889-1947.

To mark the publication of his first book 'Vintage Crop: Against the Odds' (Gill and McMillan), **Dermot Weld** will be the Library's guest on Tuesday, October 13th at 8pm. Rightfully acclaimed as one of the best trainers in the world, he will look back at a career which produced nineteen Classic winners including the English 2000 Guineas and the Epsom Oaks in an interview with **Tracy Piggott**, broadcaster and sports person.

Give Us Back our Sport is the topic for debate on Monday, November 2nd, 2009 at 8pm with broadcaster **Eamon Dunphy**, sports writer **David Walsh** and anchor for RTE Sport's Rugby coverage **Tom McGurk**. How long will sport survive under the pressures of increased commercial and other interests and who now owns the people's sport? These and other related issues will be hotly debated. On Monday, November 23rd, 2009 at 8pm Alan English, editor *Limerick Leader*, former MD and editor of the *Longford Leader* **Eugene McGee** and rugby analyst, broadcaster and author **George Hook** will look at sport and regional/local identity in Ireland in a discussion entitled *Sport & Place*.

The series will conclude on Monday, December 14th, 2009 at 8pm with Tyrone Senior Football manager **Mickey Harte**. In an interview **Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh**, who celebrates 60 years as a GAA broadcaster this year, Harte will discuss his long-awaited autobiography *Harte* to be published this autumn (Poolbeg Press).

Library Late Autumn/Winter 09, National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Events are free. For information see www.nli.ie or telephone 01 603 0317 for bookings.

Evocative images of 1950s and 1960s Dublin in National Photographic Archive exhibition

9 July 2009: *If ever you go to Dublin town*, an exhibition of evocative photographs by **Elinor Wiltshire** chronicling Dubliners as they worked, played, shopped and prayed during the 1950s and 1960s, opens at the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar, Dublin on Monday 6 July for a three-month run.

The exhibition title *If ever you go to Dublin town* takes its name from a poem of the same name by Patrick Kavanagh, who, along with other literary figures, including Flann O'Brien, was a friend and neighbour of **Elinor Wiltshire**.

Born in Limerick, Elinor Wiltshire (nee O'Brien) founded the Green Studios on St Stephen's Green, Dublin, with her husband Reginald Wiltshire in the 1950s. Over a period of about fifteen years, using a Rolleiflex camera which she acquired in 1955, Elinor Wiltshire captured images of a changing city and its people. The Rolleiflex camera was held at waist level and the scenes or images to be captured were viewed through a 6x6cm ground-glass screen. As a result, many of those featured in the portraits in the exhibition were completely unaware that a camera was trained on them – hence the natural and uninhibited manner in which they are depicted.

Elinor Wiltshire has written that it was *'a pleasure to go round Dublin in those days, recording with affection various features of human and historic interest, some at the suggestion of Patrick Kavanagh or Desmond Guinness'.*

The near perfect composition in many of her photographs reveals an artist's eye for the beauty that exists in everyday life – shoppers in Cumberland Street's busy second-hand market; summer outings on Sandymount Strand; exuberant scenes of All Ireland Football Finals fans at railway stations; Corpus Christi processions through the city of Dublin. Also chronicled are significant social changes in the Inner City, as reflected in the anxiety shown on the faces of residents facing eviction and relocation from tenement buildings in York Street, off St Stephen's Green, to new areas such as Ballymun.

Among the images featured are photographs of a Pattern Day in Rathfarnham, an annual event which was commonplace into the early decades of the 1900s. By the mid-1950s, however, the tradition was in decline and this is why the poet Patrick Kavanagh encouraged Elinor Wiltshire to record it for posterity.

Also featured in the exhibition are some of Wiltshire's iconic and most frequently reproduced photographs such as those taken on 16 June 1954, when **Patrick Kavanagh, Anthony Cronin and Brian O'Nolan (Flann O'Brien)** were among the leading literary participants in celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the first 'Bloomsday'.

Elinor Wiltshire also photographed Dublin's architectural heritage. That this was under great threat in the 1960s is evident in a number of the images which feature in the exhibition. Included are images such as the destruction of Georgian buildings in Lower Fitzwilliam Street and Charlotte Street.

Her photographs were not just about Dublin city, however. Some of the most important images record the life of Traveller families at a time of great change in Ireland. Her photographs of an encampment in County Cork, as families prepared for the Cahirmee Horse Fair, are remarkable, as are those she took of the Sheridan/O'Brien campsite in Loughrea, Co Galway.

Her husband Reginald's death in 1968 led to the sale of the business and brought an end to her series of Dublin photographs. Following a visit to Ethiopia in 1971, she moved to London, where she now works as a botanist and researcher at the Natural History Museum.

In total the Wiltshire Photographic Collection numbers some 1,000 negatives and 300 prints. It was acquired by the National Library of Ireland in 1994 and images from the collection were first exhibited by the Archive in 1999.

For further information, please contact Frances Clarke, National Photographic Archive. Tel: 60 30 371

Stellar line-up for Yeats Celebration at the National Library of Ireland this month

9 June 2009: Bob Geldof KBE, Neil Jordan, Professor Roy Foster, Edna O'Brien, Fiona Shaw CBE, **Mike Scott** and **Steve Wickham** of **The Waterboys** are just some of the individuals who will participate in readings, reflections and performances at the National Library of Ireland this month. *Summer's Wreath 09,* a four-week programme of free public events will mark the 70th anniversary of Yeats' death by particularly highlighting the work of his final period and by celebrating the intense creative energy of his later life.

Humanitarian, pop star, broadcaster and businessman, **Bob Geldof** will reflect on his love of Yeats and will read a personal selection of Yeats's work on Friday June 19th at 7.30PM. Writer and multi-award winning film maker and Director, **Neil Jordan**, will participate in a lunchtime reading and reflection on June 23rd. Described by Pulitzer Prize winning American novelist Philip Roth as "the most gifted woman now writing in English", **Edna O'Brien**, novelist, short story writer and playwright will present some readings of Yeats' poems and reflections on his work in conversation with **Vincent Woods** presenter of The Arts Programme on Tuesday, June 23rd at 8.00pm. This event will be broadcast live on RTÉ Radio 1. Yeats' biographer, **Professor Roy Foster**, and one of Ireland's leading classical actresses, **Fiona Shaw**, will present a unique evening event on Wednesday 17th June at 7.30PM involving a talk and performance focusing on Yeats' creativity in his later life. The programme will culminate on Tuesday, June 30th at 7.30pm with a special performance by **Mike Scott** and **Steve Wickham** of the British/Irish band **The Waterboys** who have set the poetry of Yeats to music many times in the past: their version of ***The Stolen Child*** being one of the best known contemporary musical adaptations of William Butler Yeats' poetry.

Martin Cullen TD, Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism welcomed the imaginative and compelling programme saying: "This Yeats celebration places the National Library at the heart of Ireland's cultural tourism programme for summer 2009, and the broad compass of the programme will interest a huge variety of tastes and age groups."

Other participants in *Summer's Wreath 09* include the highly acclaimed stage, screen and television actors **Lorcan Cranitch** and **Adrian Dunbar**, writer **Jennifer Johnston**, playwright **Marina Carr**, prominent visual artists **Robert Ballagh** and **Nick Miller** and author and journalist **Robert O'Byrne**. A one-day immersion course for amateurs and lovers of poetry will also be held at the Library on Monday, June 22nd and two special preproduction performances of The Tower starring **Bosco Hogan** and **Tom Hickey**, before it opens at the Pavillion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, will take place on Thursday and Friday, June 11th and 12th at 1pm.

Born on 13th June 1865, William Butler Yeats became one of the greatest Irish figures in world literature, this year is the 70th anniversary of death. ***Summer's Wreath 09*** from Tuesday, June 9th – Tuesday, June 30th, 2009 is kindly supported by The Merrion. Admission is free with the exception of lunchtime performances of *The Tower* but some events must be booked in advance. For further information, see **www.nli.ie** or telephone 01 603 0277 for a brochure.

Press: Bernadette O'Neill (087) 777 4936 or email Bernadette.oneill123@gmail.com

New selection of 20,000 photographic images of Ireland 1870-1954 now available on National Library of Ireland website

8 June 2009: In a move aimed at transforming access by the public to the National Photographic Archive's collections, the National Library of Ireland has today introduced a new online service whereby 20,000 photographs from the Lawrence, Poole and Independent Newspapers collections can now be viewed

on the Library's website **www.nli.ie/digital-photographs.aspx**

The initiative is part of an ongoing digitisation project designed to increase online access to the National Photographic Archive's extensive collection of glass plate negatives. These are part of the National Library's photographic collection, the largest collection in the world of photographs relating to Ireland.

The selected Lawrence Collection images now available online will be of particular interest to local and family historians as well as the general research community. The images in that collection, taken between 1870 and 1914, capture town and country scenes of the period throughout Ireland.

The Poole Collection material will appeal to those interested in the South East of Ireland in general and Waterford city and county in particular. The subject matter of this collection ranges from studio portraits to social and political events and images of architecture and industry. The photographs were taken by the Waterford-based commercial photographers AH Poole during the period 1884 to 1954.

The selected Independent Newspapers (Ireland) material covers the period 1912 to 1936. These images are part of the Library's 300,000-item Independent Newspapers Collection, which provides an excellent record of almost every aspect of 20th century Irish life, and is particularly strong on the coverage of politics and sport.

The images from these collections are displayed online at a low resolution through an interim digital photograph database; they are accompanied by basic information such as title, date and location (where available). The database provides an easy means of searching the information about all 20,000 digitised photographs, including the option to search by keywords such as "eviction", "election", "women", or "market".

Copies of high-resolution versions of these images can be ordered from the Library, and further work is planned to maximise the full potential of the digitised images. The Library is working towards building a complete digital resource to offer seamless access to all of its digital content, and will make more information about this available at the earliest possible opportunity.

For further information, contact Gráinne MacLochlainn, National Library of Ireland. Tel: 01 603 0211, or Sandra McDermott 603 0227

National Library of Ireland unveils commissioned bust of the late Senator Michael Yeats

21 May 2009: Mrs Gráinne Yeats, widow of Michael Yeats, will be the guest of honour at a ceremony held in the National Library of Ireland this afternoon to unveil a bronze bust of the former Senator, member of the European Parliament and son of the poet William Butler Yeats.

The bust was commissioned by the Library in 2008 to mark its appreciation for the generous support shown to the Library by Senator Yeats and his family over many years in donating and lending several collections of William Butler Yeats materials including drafts of his poems and plays, notebooks, personal

papers, diaries and family correspondence, paintings, photographs, artefacts and precious family treasures. The donation and loan of these collections, comprising thousands of individual items, have enabled the Library to mount its award-winning exhibition ***Yeats: the life and work of William Butler Yeats***.

The exhibition uses a variety of means of displaying Yeats' life and work. Yeats' own voice and the voices of well-known artists such as Yeats' fellow Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney, the singer Sinead O'Connor, the poet Theo Dorgan and others read Yeats' best-known poems accompanied by beautiful images on screen. Short films deal with aspects of his life and include rare footage of Yeats in late middle age. Artefacts such as the carved lapis lazuli stone that gave rise to his famous poem *Lapis Lazuli*, manuscripts, first drafts, letters, paintings and photographs, many given or lent by the Yeats family, are on display in showcases and can be examined in detail on touchscreens.

The bust was made by John Coll, one of Ireland's best known figurative sculptors, whose many public works include the monument to Patrick Kavanagh on the Grand Canal at Baggot Street, Dublin and his celebration in bronze of Brendan Behan on the Royal Canal in Drumcondra, Dublin.

For further information, contact Orla Sweeney, Director's Office, National Library of Ireland. Tel: 01 603 0244

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Confirmation of arms to Limerick City Council

9 May 2009: Limerick City Council recently became aware that the coat of arms which has been used since at least the seventeenth century was unregistered and so unprotected from unofficial use. Lord Mayor John Gilligan therefore applied on behalf of the Council to the Chief Herald of Ireland to Confirm the Council in its right to arms on the basis of long use.

The Letters Patent, a document addressed to all who read it, vesting rights to the use of the arms in Limerick City Council, will be presented by the Chief Herald to Councillor Gilligan on the 28th of May at a civic reception in City Hall.

The Office of the Chief Herald traces its origins back to 1552. The functions of the Chief Herald are to devise coats of arms, grant them by means by means of letters patent and record them in the Register of Arms in his office.

Occasionally cases of long used coats of arms not appearing in the Chief Herald's records come to his notice: in such a case he is empowered to confirm arms on the production of proof of use.

As well as granting to civic bodies, educational establishments, learned societies and clubs, the Chief Herald also grants arms to individuals 'and their descendants forever'.

The Office of the Chief Herald continues a tradition of painting and drawing unbroken for more than four and a half centuries and is known internationally for the high standard of heraldry produced and for its outstanding document design.

Limerick City Council's document is engrossed on calf vellum, and the conditions of the grant appear in both the Irish and English languages. A painting of the arms also appears on the document, as well as being shown in the form of a banner, which when flown will proclaim the presence of the Council.

For further information, please contact: Fergus Gillespie, Chief Herald of Ireland, Office of the Chief Herald, National Library of Ireland
01 6030305 / fgillespie@nli.ie

National Library of Ireland acquires prison memoir of Pierse McCan, Irish Volunteer

27 April 2009: The National Library of Ireland is delighted to announce that it has acquired by donation a handwritten memoir of Pierse McCan, of Ballyowen House, Dualla, Cashel, county Tipperary, the Irish Volunteer and elected member of the First Dáil.

Entitled 'Three Months in England's Prisons' the memoir tells of McCan's experiences in Arbour Hill, Kilmainham Gaol and Richmond Barracks where he was interned for three months after the 1916 Rising.

He writes of the harsh conditions in Arbour Hill, 'My supper…consisted in a piece of dry bread & porridge…I lay down on the floor just as I was, with my handkerchief for a pillow & slept as best I could'. McCan also tells of the horrific realisation of the fate of the Rising leaders, 'one day we were all brought out…into a very gloomy yard with trees on either side. At one end there was a huge trench dug…[in] this huge grave…lay the corpses of Pearse, MacDermott, & the rest of the patriots that had been shot'. McCan was later moved to Kilmainham Gaol where he spent three months and after that to Richmond Barracks.

Conditions were better in Kilmainham Gaol and prisoners were allowed to receive visitors and could receive and write letters. Mrs Eoin MacNeill, whose husband was among those interned in Kilmainham sent in parcels of food and clothing to be distributed among the prisoners. McCan became friendly with Eoin MacNeill and spent part of the night before MacNeill's trial with him. He was shocked and disgusted when the verdict on MacNeill was passed – penal servitude for life. After a short spell in Richmond Barracks McCan was transferred to England and there the memoir ends.

The memoir was generously donated by Frank McCan and the McCan family.

Note to editors: Pierse McCan was born in county Wexford in 1882. He joined the Irish Volunteers in 1914. He was arrested in May 1916 and spent three months in Kilmainham Gaol before being transferred to Reading Gaol. McCan was selected as a Sinn Féin candidate for the Tipperary East constituency in the forthcoming 1918 general election. He was arrested for a second time in May 1918 and although elected as a Sinn Féin MP never took his seat in Westminster. He died in Gloucester prison in 1919 of pneumonia.

For further information, contact Ciara Kerrigan, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts, National Library of Ireland. Tel: 01 603 0302

Political Campaigning a Popular Theme for the National Library this Summer

17 April 2009: Politics, campaigns and communication is the timely theme for the forthcoming series of Library Late interviews at the National Library of Ireland from April to June 2009. **Professor Steven Knowlton**, **Dr. Garret FitzGerald** and **Stephen Collins** are three guests uniquely qualified to provide both contemporary and historical perspectives on the subject. The series also highlights the Political Ephemera Collection of the Library, an indispensable resource for the study of Irish politics, history and propaganda that documents the shift in political sentiment and party politics over the years.

Steven Knowlton, Professor of Journalism at Dublin City University, will be the Library's guest on Wednesday, April 29th at 8pm in an interview with Karen Coleman, journalist and broadcaster. A journalism educator for twenty years, he has been a frequent contributor to Irish newspapers and broadcast outlets on a number of subjects, particularly American politics and the U.S. presidential

campaign of 2008.

Former Taoiseach and Minister for Foreign Affairs **Dr. Garret FitzGerald** will be the Library's guest on Tuesday, May 26th at 8pm in an interview with Dr. John Bowman, historian and broadcaster. Son of politician Desmond FitzGerald, one of the founders of the Irish Free State, Dr. FitzGerald is one of the foremost Europeans of his generation. Among other things, he is currently a Member of the Council of State; President of the Institute of International and European Affairs and as Foreign Minister led the first Irish Presidency of the European Council of Ministers. He is also weekly columnist with *The Irish Times* on economic, political and social affairs.

The series will conclude on Wednesday, June 24th at 8pm with **Stephen Collins**, Political Editor of *The Irish Times* and author of a number of books on Irish politics including *The Power Game: Ireland under Fianna Fáil* (2001) and *People Politics and Power: from O'Connell to Ahern* (2007) in conversation with broadcaster Bryan Dobson.

In conjunction with Library Late, Mary Broderick, curator of the National Library's Ephemera Collection, will give a special talk entitled *Proclamations, Posters, Politics & Power : 400 Years of Word on the Street.* This will focus on the Library's collection of political ephemera and take place on Thursday, June 18th at 1pm (no booking required). The National Library of Ireland relies on the support of people willing to donate political and campaign materials to their collection. To donate, please contact curator Mary Broderick: mbroderick@nli.ie or telephone 01 6030 332.

Library Late Spring/Summer 09, National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Events are free. For information see www.nli.ie or telephone 01 603 0317 for bookings.

All-island POETRY ALOUD schools competition honoured at gala ceremony held in the British Library, London, this evening, at which Irish poet Seamus Heaney was presented with the Arts Council England-administered £40,000 *David Cohen Prize for Literature*

18 March 2009: This evening, at a gala ceremony in London hosted by the British Library, the £40,000 Arts Council England-administered David Cohen Prize for Literature 2009 was presented to the Irish poet Seamus Heaney for a lifetime's achievement in literature.

At the same ceremony and in an unprecedented move, the POETRY ALOUD competition, organised jointly by Poetry Ireland and the National Library of Ireland, was also honoured with a £12,500 award. This award is called the Clarissa Luard Award and is a subsidiary award chosen by the recipient of the David Cohen Prize.

The awards were presented by Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion.

The decision to choose the POETRY ALOUD competition for the subsidiary £12,500 award was made by the poet Seamus Heaney. He cited the extraordinary way in which the competition seeks to celebrate the joy of speaking and listening to poetry together with the fact that Poetry Aloud is

particularly focused on school students and has a strong North/South dimension as the reason for the reason making his unusual choice.

POETRY ALOUD is now in its fourth year. Last year's event attracted almost 900 entries from post-primary schools in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Speaking following the presentation ceremony in London, Aongus Ó hAonghusa, Director, National Library of Ireland, and Jane O'Hanlon, Poetry Ireland, said they were delighted that Seamus Heaney had decided to highlight the POETRY ALOUD competition in such a public manner. They said his unswerving belief in the power of the event to foster a love of poetry in young people on the island of Ireland gave everyone involved great heart and a huge determination to make future competitions even more successful.

They ended their joint statement with a quote from the poet Brendan Kennelly:

'When a voice reads a poem it loves, something unique happens. The voice brings the heart and mind, indeed the very soul of the listener into the complete act and art of listening, and a certain illuminating intensity electrifies the words in such a way that the poem's rhythm and music, meaning and movement, come together in a passionate oneness that is truly mesmeric and memorable."

The finals of the 2009 POETRY ALOUD competition will take place in November. Entry forms will be posted on the National Library of Ireland website www.nli.ie and on the Poetry Ireland website www.poetryireland.ie/education in September.

As in previous years, there will be three winning categories – Junior, Intermediate and Senior. One Overall Winner will be chosen from among the winners of the three categories. Each category winner will receive €300, a signed book of poetry and a shelf of poetry books for the winner's school library. The Overall Winner will receive a further €200, a specially designed trophy and a signed book of poetry. The runner up in each category will receive a book token.

Note to editors: The David Cohen Prize for Literature is a biennial prize, funded by the John S Cohen Foundation and administered by Arts Council England. It honours a living writer from the UK and Ireland for a lifetime's achievement in literature.

The prize money is made up of £40,000 for the winning author, provided by the John S Cohen Foundation, and £12,500 contributed by Arts Council England for the Clarissa Luard Award. This is awarded to an individual or organisation, chosen by the winner, to encourage writers under the age of 35. Clarissa Luard, who worked in the Literature Department of Arts Council England, died in November 1999. She had previously worked at the literary agency AP Watt & Co, and was a firm supporter of young writers.

Seamus Heaney now joins a pantheon of winners including VS Naipaul (1993), Harold Pinter (1995), Muriel Spark (1997), William Trevor (1999), Doris Lessing (2001), Beryl Bainbridge and Thom Gunn (joint winners, 2003), Michael Holroyd (2005), and Derek Mahon (2007).

For further information, please contact Aongus Ó hAonghusa, Director, National Library of Ireland Tel: 086-811 6658 or Jane O'Hanlon, Poetry Ireland Tel: 087-987 7872. Email: janeohanlon@poetryireland.ie

Robert Schmuhl, Professor of American Studies and Journalism at the University of Notre Dame, to give the R.I. Best Memorial Lecture entitled *Easter 1916 and America: a provisional appraisal.*

13 March 2009: Since 1967, the National Library of Ireland has held a biannual commemorative lecture in honour of Richard Irvine Best, who was the Library's fourth director and was also a distinguished scholar.

The 2009 lecture, which takes place on the evening of Wednesday 25 March in the Library's Seminar Room, is entitled ***Easter 1916 and America: a provisional appraisal***.

It will be given by Robert Schmuhl, who is the Walter H Annenberg-Edmund P Joyce Professor of American Studies and Journalism at the University of Notre Dame and currently the Visiting Research Fellow at the UCD John Hume Institute for Global Irish Studies.

Professor Schmuhl is working on a book about America's role and involvement in the Easter Rising and its aftermath. In his lecture, he will discuss US influence on key participants and the varying reactions to the events both in the American press and among American Irish.

He will also explain the dramatic change in US public opinion following the Rising and what impact that had on American foreign policy.

The respondent to Professor Schmuhl's lecture will be Dr Bernadette Whelan, Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Limerick.

Note to editors: Bibliographer and Gaelic scholar Richard Irvine Best was Director of the National Library of Ireland from 1924 to 1940. As a young man, he mixed in a literary circle that included John Millington Synge and Stephen MacKenna. He was portrayed in George Moore's *Hail and Fairwell* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Lectures in Best's memory were established over thirty years ago, as a result of a gift by the American scholar, Dr Vernam Hull to the Library's Council of Trustees. Previous RI Best Memorial Lecture guest speakers have included Professor Roy Foster, Michael Holroyd, Dr Seamus Heaney and Dr Julia Neuberger.

For further information, please contact Joanna Finegan, Tel: 01- 603 0207 Email: jfinegan@nli.ie

National Library of Ireland acquires substantial archive of literary works of John Montague, one of Ireland's foremost contemporary poets, who celebrates his 80th birthday on 28 February 2009

25 February 2009: The National Library of Ireland has acquired, through a

private sale assisted by Sotheby's*, a substantial archive of literary papers by John Montague who is acknowledged as one of Ireland's foremost contemporary poets. Montague, who celebrates his 80th birthday on 28 February 2009, continues to maintain a prolific output of work.

While the archive acquired by the Library dates mainly from 1987 onwards, it also includes a significant amount of pre-1987 Montague material, including drafts and working copies of some of his earliest poems. Among these early works are his 'New World Odyssey' poems about Brooklyn (1953-54), a printed copy (with the poet's holograph alterations and notes) of *Forms of Exile* (1958), and drafts and typescripts of poems from *Poisoned Lands* (1961), *The Great Cloak* (1978) and other volumes. It also includes the comprehensive working archive for more recent publications, such as *Mount Eagle* (1988), *Time in Armagh* (1993), *Smashing the piano* (1999) and *Drunken sailor* (2004).

Also included is an extensive collection of correspondence with publishers, editors, co-editors, academics and artists, as well as a wide range of Irish, British, American and French literati. Correspondents include Samuel Beckett, Seamus Heaney, Saul Bellow, Ted Hughes and many others. Their letters include much critical commentary and news about fellow writers and poets.

A particularly noteworthy feature of the archive acquired by the Library is the poet's extensive working library, which provides a vital, separate supplement to his working papers. When drafting his poems, Montague frequently uses blank end-leaves and spaces at the bottom of printed pages in books by other writers. The books also contain his often extensive reading and teaching notes, as well as pasted-in letters.

The archive, which was acquired by the Library in late 2008, will provide an enormously significant resource for scholars and researchers, not only in relation to the life and work of John Montague, but to Irish literary studies in general.

Pre-1987 Montague material, for the most part, is held in Buffalo University, New York.

Note to editors: John Montague was born in New York in 1929, raised in Tyrone, and studied History at University College Dublin. While pursuing postgraduate studies at Yale University and elsewhere in the US, he met a cross-section of American poets and writers, including John Crowe Ransom, Richard Wilbur and Robert Penn Warren. In California he became friends with many poets of the 'Beat' generation. Later, while living in Paris, he became a friend of Samuel Beckett and the French poet, Claude Esteban, whose work he translated.
Acknowledged as one of the outstanding post-Second World War Irish poets, he continues to maintain a prolific output. Over the space of 50 years he has published poetry, essays, stories, memoirs and translations of several French writers. He has compiled and edited an anthology of recent Irish poetry; has contributed prefaces and introductions to works by other writers, and has written numerous reviews. Through both his writing and teaching work he has been a significant influence on a generation of younger Irish poets, and he has a strong international following, particularly in America. In 1998 he became the

first occupant of the Ireland Chair of Poetry. A selection of his poems is included in the Leaving Certificate syllabus.

About Sotheby's: Sotheby's is a global company that engages in art auctions, private sales and art-related financing activities. The Company operates in 41 countries, with principal salesrooms located in New York, London, Hong Kong and Paris. The Company also regularly conducts auctions in six other salesrooms around the world. Sotheby's is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol BID.

For further information, contact Gerry Lyne, Keeper of Manuscripts, National Library of Ireland. Tel: 603 0308

National Library of Ireland to host unique memoir-writing workshop

19 February 2009: Details of a unique workshop to be tutored by Irene Graham, founder of *The Creative Writer's Workshop* and author of *The Memoir Writing Workbook,* and hosted by the National Library of Ireland, have just been announced.

The event, which is expected to attract huge public interest, is the first workshop of its kind to be held in Ireland.

It will take place in April, is applicable for both new and established writers, and is specifically aimed at people who are interested in forming a memoir writing club in their local area.

Irene Graham has been tutoring creative writers in fiction writing and memoir writing for almost 20 years. During the three-day workshop, she will show participants how to think like a writer, how to use right-brain/left-brain learning techniques to tap into creativity and draw upon the myriad of incidents that make up a life story and path; how to explore theme and its associated meaning; how to focus on narrative structure including character development, setting, plot and conflict. Throughout, participants will use *The Memoir Writing Workbook* to help them create and start their own memoir.

There is no fee for the event, but each participant will be required to purchase a copy of *The Memoir Writing Workbook* (€35) which will be used throughout the workshop. All other materials will be supplied by Irene Graham and the Library.

The event is strictly limited to a total of 15 participants.

Interested applicants should send a submission (no longer than 300 words) stating why they should be offered a place by email to: memoir@nli.ie or by post to: 'Memories into Memoir', National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2 Applications must be received no later than Monday 9 March.

The writing workshop; *Memories into Memoir* will take place from 11am to 4pm on Monday and Tuesday 27 and 28 April, and from 10am to 1pm on Wednesday 29 April in the Library's Seminar Room in Kildare Street, Dublin.

For further information, contact: Brid O'Sullivan, Education and Outreach Department, National Library of Ireland. Tel: 01-603 0259

National Library of Ireland Yeats' exhibition website shortlisted for the 2009 eGovernment Awards

22 January 2009: The website for the National Library of Ireland's current exhibition ***Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats*** has been shortlisted for the 2009 eGovernment Awards in the Education Ireland category.

The announcement comes almost 70 years after the death of William Butler Yeats on 28 January 1939.

The online, interactive version of the exhibition features audio recordings and video as well as thousands of images of manuscripts, books, letters, cartoons, paintings and photographs – either drawn from the Library's own collections or loaned to the Library by members of the Yeats family.

The website (www.nli.ie/yeats), which was launched in May 2008, has already attracted over 43,000 visitors from all over the world.

The winners of the eGovernment Awards will be announced on 19 February at a ceremony in Dublin.

The Library has already received three other awards for the Yeats exhibition and related projects. In January 2008, it won the 'Best Business to Consumer Innovation Award' for the use of multi-media touch screens in an exhibition at the **Irish Digital Media Awards**.

In February 2007, the book written to accompany the exhibition, ***WB Yeats: Works and Days*** won 'Best Overall Production Award' as well as 'Book of the Year 2006' at the 2007 Irish Book Publishers' Association Book Industry Awards.

In November 2006, the Library won a major award from the UK-based Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI) for the outstanding way in which it informs and involves the public. In their citation, the judges singled out the Yeats exhibition as a magnificent example of the way in which the Library interacts with the public. The **Interpret Britain and Ireland Award** was presented on behalf of the Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI) to the Director of the National Library of Ireland, Aongus Ó hAonghusa by TV personality and heritage campaigner Loyd Grossman at a ceremony held in Bristol.

The Association for Heritage Interpretation Awards recognise the very best examples of interpretation – the art of sharing the stories and significance of natural and cultural heritage. Winners had to score high marks against a range of rigorous criteria including imagination and innovation, good interpretive planning and a clear commitment to accessibility, training and maintenance.

The exhibition uses a variety of means of displaying Yeats' life and work – screens showing the text against his own or actors' voices reading some of his best known poems, artefacts such as the carved lapis lazuli stone that gave rise to the famous late poem.

For further information contact Joanna Finegan, Tel: (01) 603 0207 / jfinegan@nli.ie