2012 PRESS RELEASES

Dr John Bowman, broadcaster and historian, to give lecture this Wednesday evening at National Library of Ireland

Dr John Bowman, broadcaster and historian, will give an illustrated lecture about the challenges of writing his recent history of RTE televisions first fifty years this **Wednesday evening 25 January** at 7.30pm in the National Library of Ireland.

John Bowman will be available to sign copies of his book *Window and Mirror: RTE Television 1961-2011* following the lecture.

For further information call Brenda O'Hanlon on 087 258 3292

Matrimonial Map acquired by National Library offers guidance in advance of Valentine's Day

7 February, 2012: With Valentine's Day in the offing, adventurous souls embarking on a journey in search of romance might be well-advised to consult the very rare early 19th century matrimonial map in the collections of the National Library of Ireland.

Printed by Cork lithographers Callaghan Bros, the map delineates the delights but also outlines the possible pitfalls facing those embarking on a voyage across The Great Ocean of Love!

Intrepid travellers are provided with a compass indicating the routes to hope and love, but also to despair and hatred.

Must-see sights include the Settlement Isles that nestle in the Bay of Delight. Travellers may wish to venture inland to pay a visit to the Temple of Hymen, though the unwary should be warned that this trip often includes a lengthy stay at Cradle Point. A short distance away is the Dead Lake of Indifference, and jaded tourists who linger here can enjoy fabulous views over Callous Bay to nearby Divorce Island.

For those who find it difficult to navigate amorous areas using maps alone, the forthright descriptive text surrounding the Matrimonial Map should prove very useful, especially to those travelling independently. For example, the unwary may not realise that the River Amour "is dangerous and in some parts not fordable" or that the Rocks of Jealousy "are a dangerous group, on which ships have been frequently dashed to pieces".

This Matrimonial Map was acquired by the National Library of Ireland in 2009. It is in very good condition, and almost 200 years after its creation, continues to be an excellent guide for those in search of adventure on The Great Ocean of Love.

For further information call Brenda O'Hanlon on 087 258 3292 or Honora Faul, Curator, Prints and Drawings, National Library of Ireland on 603 0225

Collection of World War One memorabilia across Ireland for pan-European event similar to the 'BBC Antiques Roadshow'; digitisation of photographs, letters, keepsakes and private memorabilia in preparation for the 100th anniversary of outbreak of the war in 1914

15 March, 2012: Do you have a box hidden deep in the attic or under the bed that holds your great-grandfather's diaries? Maybe a letter from the front line? Or a photo taken at the time? Is there a special story behind it?

If so, the National Library of Ireland wants to see it.

The Library in conjunction with Oxford University and Europeana (Europe's digital library, museum and archive) is building the first ever online European archive of private stories and documents from World War One in time for the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the war in 1914 – and it is looking for your help in order to achieve this.

On Wednesday 21 March, the Library will be holding a World War One Family History Roadshow in Kildare Street, Dublin. On that day, between 10am and 7pm, people across Ireland will be invited to bring in photographs, letters, postcards, medals, coins, keepsakes, diaries, sketches, army discharge papers, diaries, rosary beads, recordings and other memorabilia belonging to family and friends who took part in World War One, and to tell their stories. Can't make it on the day? It's still very easy to get your material into the archive. Just scan or digitally photograph your items, and upload them to www.europeana1914-1918.eu, where you'll also find a step-by-step guide to the process.

Announcing details of the project at a press conference in the National Library today, Director Fiona Ross said that as the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War approaches, it is vital that we preserve precious documents and other memorabilia in digital format for future generations of historians, genealogists, schools and cultural organisations in remembrance of the war and its effect on people's lives.

"We want ordinary families to tell us about their keepsakes, who they belonged to and why they are so important to them – and we will save those memories in our archive www.europeana1914-1918.eu. Digitisation will ensure that World War One-related materials are not destroyed or thrown away. It will also allow the information in those materials to be incorporated into apps for smartphones and tablets that will bring history alive for people in contemporary ways", Ms Ross added.

At the 21 March Roadshow, the National Library will have historians and experts on hand to talk to visitors about the significance of their finds. The

material will be scanned on the spot by Library staff and people will then be free to take their precious memorabilia home with them. Once scanned, the material will be uploaded to the Europeana 1914-1918 website.

Attending today's conference were

Tom Burke MBE, Chair of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, which has a large archive of World War One memorabilia in the Dublin City Archive, Pearse Street, focusing on the personal stories of those who fought and died

Paddy Reid, maternal grandson of Patrick O'Neill, who fought in the Battle of Passchendaele, with his grandfather's army discharge paper reading "surplus to requirements", plus a large-scale photograph of his grandfather

Sr Isabelle Smyth, Director of Communications for the Medical Missionaries of Mary, whose founder Marie Martin was a volunteer nurse known as a VAD during WWI. Marie Martin nursed the wounded all through the terrible battle of the Somme in France in 1916, after her brotherCharlie's death on the Salonika front in December 1915. Their story is told through their mother's diary, kept throughout 1916 in Dublin

National Library archivist Avice-Claire McGovern with a photograph of her cousin Jack Jenkinson in uniform. Jack joined the Cavalry at the Curragh at the age of 14, was in reluctant action against the insurgents in the 1916 Rising, subsequently volunteered to go to France in 1917 and died of gunshot wounds during the British advance at Cambrai in November of that year. He was just 19 years old.

Jon Purday, Europeana Head of Communications

Reenactors in period army and medical uniforms brought history to life, against a backdrop of recruiting posters and other images in the National Library collections, displayed beside letters, diaries and other items telling the story of those who served, fought and died.

The National Library roadshow is one of the first in a series that is being rolled out in the UK, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Denmark, Belgium and Ireland this year to create a unique pan-European virtual archive of World War One that is available to everyone. The project has already proved hugely successful in Germany and in the UK, where it was led by Oxford University. The University continues to lead the project in terms of digital training and cataloguing expertise for Europeana roadshow events across Europe. The Library will be organising other roadshows in a number of other cities around Ireland in the coming months.

In 2011, more than 25,000 digital images were recorded from nine family history roadshows held in major cities across Germany. Among the images scanned and digitised were unpublished diaries, hand-drawn maps, portraits, sketches and photographs recording life under fire and on the home front.

Katherine McSharry, Head of Services, National Library of Ireland said: “We are hoping people will bring in anything from the 1914-1918 period, be it a family photo, a love letter, some sort of document or object. It doesn’t matter if people don’t know the background behind it. Once the material is online then it’s likely that researchers and other individuals will be able to fill in some of those information gaps.

“The Europeana 1914-1918 project will give universities, colleges, museums, galleries, archives, libraries, the creative industries and schools the opportunity to work together with the public to create new and exciting ways of considering the historical, political and social legacy of the World War One through innovative digital technologies”, Ms McSharry added.

For further information, or to request images of National Library of Ireland World War One memorabilia, please contact: Brenda O’Hanlon on 087-258 3292.

Top social media award for National Library of Ireland 26 April, 2012

The National Library of Ireland has been declared outright winner of the Ireland eGovernment Social Media Award for its work on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr Commons and mixed content Flickr stream, as well as for its blog content.

Among the other organisations shortlisted in the award’s Social Media category were The Defence Forces; Bord Gáis Energy Book Club Social Media Support Campaign – Bord Gáis Energy; Give Blood Awardness – Irish Blood Transfusion Service; the Road Safety Authority.

Among the criteria used to judge the National Library’s performance were an evaluation of its use of innovative social media platforms and networks to promote or communicate government services; the way in which the National Library utilized social media to meet the organisation’s goals and objectives; how it used social media to deliver efficiencies and savings and, in particular, how its use of social media improved overall National Library services and communications, based on specific goals.

The Ireland eGovernment Awards, now in their 11th year, are run jointly by the Public Sector Times newspaper and web usage and web strategy experts Elucidate.

For further information call Brenda O'Hanlon on 087 258 3292 or Carol Maddock on 6030 308 or 086 829 0980

Senator David Norris to host one of several free Bloomsday public events at National Library of Ireland on Saturday 16 June

Senator David Norris is to give a free talk titled 'Joyce in Bloom' at 2pm on Saturday next as part of the National Library of Ireland's Bloomsday celebrations taking place at 2 Kildare Street, Dublin.

Also as part of the Bloomsday celebrations, the Library will host over five hours of live music in the Main Hall, where the public will be entertained by musicians Ellen Cranitch (flute); Denise Kelly McDonnell (harp) and Jane Hughes (cello). Their programme, 'The Music of Joyce's World', begins at 1.30pm and continues until 7pm.

In the Library's Reading Room, actors Mark Lambert and Barbara Brennan will give a series of short readings. Their performances of 'A Taste of Ulysses' will take place at 1.30pm, 3pm, 4pm, 5pm, 6pm, and 7pm.

The Library's Joly Café and exhibitions will also open throughout the day.

Taoiseach presents top social media award to National Library of Ireland at Public Service Excellence Awards 2012 ceremony; second major social media programme award win for the National Library since April of this year

22 June 2012: The National Library of Ireland has won a Public Service Excellence Award for its "Social Media Programme".

The award was presented by the Taoiseach to the National Library's social media programme coordinator and National Library of Ireland Board member, Carol Maddock.

Since 2009, the National Library has been developing a programme using Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and the NLI blog to:

actively engage online with individuals, organisations and other cultural, tourist and educational institutions around Ireland and around the world;

to raise the profile of the National Library of Ireland nationally and internationally;

to harness user knowledge to enhance its collections

to reach previously untapped audiences, and to make them aware of the National Library's mission, collection and services

The Public Service Excellence Awards are held every two years to recognise innovation and best practice in public service administration and service delivery, and to share ideas across public service organisations and sectors. Approximately 190 applications were received and assessed by an Awards Selection Committee.

This latest award marks the second occasion in just over three months that the National Library has won a major accolade for its social media programme. In April 2012, it was the outright winner of the Ireland eGovernment Social Media Award for its work on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr Commons and mixed content Flickr stream, as well as for its blog content.

For further information call Brenda O'Hanlon on 087 258 3292 or Carol Maddock on 6030 308 or 086 829 0980

14, September 2012

MEDIA RELEASE - A delicious Autumn ahead at the National Library of Ireland ('NLI'), as we launch our new events programme

- Did you know that celebrity chefs were around long before television? Our 'Kitchen Archives' event series will delve into peoples' relationship with food, recipes and culinary skills through the centuries. Join us to hear Darina Allen in conversation, to learn about recipes from the archives from food historian Dorothy Cashman, or for a lively panel discussion featuring some of Ireland's top food bloggers.

- Our 'BiblioFiles' lecture series showcases writers and academics who have carried out research at the NLI. The topics covered will be diverse, ranging from the Irish Famine of 1845-52 to women in Irish politics in the 1970s and 1980's. We are also delighted to continue our hugely popular 'Hedge School' series with History Ireland, which will reflect on the crisis of 1912 'The Ulster Covenant 1912: an exercise in mass- democracy or reaction?' Another debate will examine Home Rule 'Home Rule: Lost opportunity or sell-out?'

- From early October, 'Taking Stock' celebrates 14 years of National Photographic Archive exhibits from when the archive first opened. The exhibition will offer evocative glimpses of Ireland between the 1840s and the late 20th century.

- Autumn 2012 will also see adult education courses - 'Reading in the National Library' and 'Uncovering 1916' - hosted by the NLI in conjunction with UCD Adult Education Centre. We're also offering a one- day immersion course for anyone who ever vowed to get to grip with James Joyce's *Ulysses*, to celebrate our expanded online catalogue, which features a wide variety of digitized James Joyce manuscripts.

And there's lots more to keep you informed, entertained and inspired! Poetry Aloud, the annual poetry speaking competition for students, Culture Night celebrations, creative writing classes in our café, children's events, specialist advice for family history researchers…download our Autumn Newsletter for all the details. Visit us on Flickr , Facebook, Twitter, Flickr Commons

For more details on the events, contact Learning & Outreach 01 603 0259 or info@nli.ie
For media enquiries, please contact Brenda O'Hanlon 01 295 2194 or 087 2583 292 or brenda@ohanlonmedia.com

MEDIA RELEASE

National Library shows how on YouTube

17 October 2012: Hot on the heels of two major egovernment social media award wins for its work on Twitter, Facebook and Flickr, as well as for its blog content, the National Library of Ireland (NLI) is now using YouTube to promote its services.

The first five in a series of "how to" videos are now online at http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalLibraryNLI?feature=watch

These short and simple videos are specifically designed to help users who are accessing the NLI from home to carry out a range of functions, including how to locate some of the 487,683 searchable items quickly; how to register for a reader's ticket, place online orders for material, search the Library's photographic collections, and find newspapers.

The videos give clear, concise easy to follow instructions with visual demonstrations accompanied by step□by□step narration and notes. "Having a voice explain how to do something as it happens on the screen has a more personal quality, which we hope will make it easier for online visitors to navigate their way through the NLI's collections and quickly find what they need", notes Caroline Montgomery, who produced and narrated all five videos.

Since 2009 –
when it first began using social media to engage with its users at home and abroad, to raise its profile, and to crowdsource user knowledge so as to enhance its national photographic collection –
the NLI has welcomed seven times more online visitors than in□person visitors.

The NLI now has a 21st century digital infrastructure in place and its collections and services are being promoted through multiple communications channels including Flickr, Twitter, Facebook, video□sharing site Vimeo and YouTube. All National Library event videos are available on Vimeo at http://vimeo.com/nlieventarchive.

The NLI uses these channels to:

actively engage online with individuals, organisations and other cultural, touris t and educational institutions around Ireland and around the world;

to raise the profile of the National Library of Ireland nationally and internationa lly; to harness user knowledge to enhance its collections

to reach previously untapped audiences, and to make them aware of the Nati onal Library's mission, collection and services

In June, the NLI received a Public Service Excellence Award for its social med ia programme. In April, it was the outright winner of the Ireland eGovernment Social Media Award for its work on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr Commons and m ixed content Flickr stream, as well as for its blog content.

For further information call Brenda O'Hanlon on 087 258 3292

MEDIA RELEASE Monday 29 October 2012

Hunt Museum and National Library join forces to collect World War One memorabilia in Limerick on Monday 5 November. Roadshow will be attended by Minister Jimmy Deenihan. Digitisation of photographs, letters, keepsakes and private memorabilia in preparation for the 100th anniversary of outbreak of the war in 1914.

On Wednesday 21 March last, over 600 people attended the World War One Family History Roadshow at the National Library in Kildare Street, Dublin. They brought memorabilia belonging to family and friends who took part in World War One, and told their stories, such as that of James Burke, whose life was saved by a crucifix and the kindness of German solider (http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/3626), of Limerick postman Michael Murphy (http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/el/contributions/3433) and of Joseph Heapes, who found love as a prisoner of war (http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/3497).

Everyone who attended the 21 March event was helping to build the first ever online European archive of private stories and documents from World War One, a project led by Oxford University and Europeana (Europe's digital library, museum and archive). All items brought to the National Library were digitally photographed on the spot, so that visitors could take their precious memorabilia home with them. The material can now be viewed by everyone on the Europeana 1914-1918 website, at: http://www.europeana19141918.eu/en/explore/collection_day/DU18

Following the interest in the March Roadshow the National Library is now partnering with the Hunt Museum in Rutland Street, Limerick for the first of a number of roadshows around the country in the run-up to 2014. On Monday, 5

November 2012, we are inviting people to bring their WWI memorabilia (anything from diaries to helmets and from medals to postcards) to the Hunt Museum, where it will be digitised and added to the online archive, along with the stories that bring these objects to life. We are delighted that we will be joined on the day by Mr Jimmy Deenihan, TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, whose Department has made the Irish roadshow days possible. There will also be historians and experts on hand to talk to visitors about the significance of their finds.

Announcing details of the partnership, Dr Hugh Maguire, Director of the Hunt Museum, said:
"The Museum is delighted and honoured to be associated with the National Library on such a project. Although a small organisation, the Museum works closely with colleagues locally and nationally. Recently, we have worked very fruitfully with Limerick City Archives and we have ongoing projects with the University of Limerick and Limerick School of Art & Design along with Limerick's many cultural and educational institutions. Our remit is national too and along with museum and gallery colleagues elsewhere we wish to encourage greater awareness and preservation of Ireland's material culture."

National Library Director Fiona Ross said that digitisation is preserving memories that might otherwise be lost. "The Europeana1914-1918 archive captures personal history from families all over Europe, while allowing that information to be available to everyone and to bring history alive for people in contemporary ways", Ms Ross added.

Places for the Roadshow are limited. Anyone wishing to attend and share their stories and keepsakes, between 10am and 5pm on Monday 5 November at the Hunt Museum, should make an advance booking by calling the National Library at 01-603 0346, or by emailing: europeana1914-1918@nli.ie

More about the project

The Hunt Museum/National Library Roadshow is one of many being rolled out in the UK, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Denmark, Belgium and in other locations across Europe this year to create a unique pan-European virtual archive of World War One that is available to everyone. The project has already proved hugely successful in Germany and in the UK, where it was led by Oxford University. The University continues to lead the project in terms of digital training and cataloguing expertise for Europeana Roadshow events across Europe. The National Library will be organising other roadshows in a number of other cities around Ireland up to 1914.

In 2011, more than 25,000 digital images were recorded from nine family history roadshows held in major cities across Germany. Among the images scanned and digitised were unpublished diaries, hand-drawn maps, portraits, sketches and photographs recording life under fire and on the home front.

Europeana is Europe's digital library, archive and museum and is based in The Hague in the national library of the Netherlands. It launched its 1914-

1918 family history project in Germany in 2011 to collect memorabilia and family stories from combat and the home front. The project is being rolled out across 10 countries in Europe to create a unique pan-European virtual archive of World War One. www.europeana1914-1918.eu

In the UK Oxford University began the initiative in 2006 when it asked people across Britain to bring family letters, photographs and keepsakes from the war to be digitised. The success of the initiative – which became the Great War Archive – encouraged Europeana 1914-1918 to roll out the scheme across Europe. Oxford University continues to lead the project in terms of digital training and cataloguing expertise during roadshow events across Europe. http://www.thegreatwararchive.blogspot.com/

For further information, or to request images of National Library of Ireland World War One memorabilia, please contact: Dr Hugh Maguire on 087 968 3754 or Brenda O'Hanlon on 087-258 3292

Winners of all-island POETRY ALOUD poetry-speaking competition (which drew 1,600 entries from schools on the island of Ireland) announced

7 December 2012: When it was launched six years ago, the annual POETRY ALOUD all-island poetry speaking competition for post-primary school pupils organised by the National Library of Ireland in association with Poetry Ireland, attracted just a few hundred entries. Since 2006, interest has grown enormously, with this year's competition drawing 1,600 entries from schools north and south.
Today, Friday 7 December, 33 finalists competed in a day-long event judged by Gerard Smith, Chair of Poetry Ireland, former journalist and poetry critic with The Irish Times; Dr Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Irish novelist and short story writer, playwright, author of children's books and co-curator of the NLI exhibition on William Butler Yeats; Mark O'Halloran, scriptwriter and actor who has written award-winning screenplays for the films Adam and Paul and Garage.

The Overall Winner was Shauna Hession, St Michael's Holy Faith, Dublin.

The three category winners were:

Emily Guiney, Notre Dame, Churchtown, Dublin (Junior Category)
Cian Siggins, Coláiste Einde, Salthill, Galway (Intermediate Category)
Shauna Hession, St Michael's Holy Faith, Finglas, Dublin (Senior Category)

The Overall Winner received a cheque for €200 and a perpetual trophy designed by Meath-based sculptor, Fiona Smith-Darragh (the Seamus Heaney Poetry Aloud Award). The winners of each of the other award categories received €300 and a book token for their school.

The three runners-up were: Danny O Treasaigh, Coláiste Oiriall, Monaghan (Junior Category); Orla Nolan, Ursuline College Sligo (Intermediate Category) and Emmanuela Pomah, St Michael's Holy Faith, Finglas, Dublin (Senior Category).

Each of the three runners-up in the Finals received a book token.

For further information call Brenda O'Hanlon on 087 258 3292

Cache of newly released letters written by one of the most controversial figures in Irish history, Roger Casement, released online by National Library of Ireland

20 December 2012: The National Library of Ireland (NLI) has marked the closing days of its 135th year of operation with the release to the public of a number of letters written by Roger Casement while awaiting execution for treason at Pentonville Prison in 1916.

Casement, one of the most controversial figures in Irish history, was a British diplomat by profession and was also well known as a poet, human rights campaigner and Irish nationalist.

Included in this extraordinarily moving group of materials are his final letter to his family, written on the eve of his execution; the annotated hymn and prayer book given to him by an Irish friend during his incarceration in Pentonville; a number of letters that he wrote to his family in the weeks before his execution; the notice from the Court of Criminal Appeal advising of the dismissal of his appeal on which Casement notes his observations on the case against him; documents relating to the 'degradation' of his knighthood, and other honours, with Casement's notes on this; photographs; his cousin Gertrude's admission card to the Court of Criminal Appeal to attend the trial; and a number of memorial cards and letters of condolence.

The papers, housed in a small box labelled 'Not for Consultation', were identified as being suitable for release by NLI staff during a review of 'Not for Consultation' material. The review was being carried out to determine collection cataloguing priorities for 2013 and beyond. 'Not for Consultation' restrictions are commonplace, with donors often stipulating that certain items, for example letters or diaries, be withheld from access until such time as all parties cited in the documents are deceased; alternatively, donors sometimes request a defined period of closure for material for other privacy-related reasons.

All of the recently released Casement material has been catalogued, and key items can be viewed online today through the NLI's catalogue, at: http://bit.ly/Tut6Ud

Among the most interesting items are:

Letters on prison-regulated paper from Casement to his cousins about his imprisonment and impending death, thanking them for their “brave, faithful, loving hearts to me in these last horrible days”

A letter to his cousins outlining his final wishes, including his hopes for Ireland.

His final letter to his cousins Gertrude and Elizabeth Bannister on the eve of his execution, in which Casement writes: “And if I die, as I think is fated, tomorrow
morning, I shall die with my sins forgiven …If it be said I shed tears – remember tears come not from cowardice, but from sorrow.”

Envelope with the inscription: “This little book was used by Roger Casement at the hour of his death and was brought by me that morning by the priest who attended him on the scaffold.” (Casement was received into the Catholic Church while awaiting execution.)

The Notice of Result of Final Appeal, dated 20 July 1916, with Roger Casement’s handwritten observations on his trial and the judgment handed down.

Typed copies of official papers and the Royal Ordinance stripping Casement of his knighthood and other honours. Casement’s handwritten notes on these papers include the comment: “These Letters Patent are Letters of Nobility in the peerage of Ireland! They are further Letters of Proof of British Falsehood and Hypocrisy.”

Roger Casement was born in Dublin in 1864, was baptised a Catholic at the age of three, and was later raised by Protestant relatives in Ballymena following the death of his parents. A British consul by profession, he became famous for his reports and activities against human rights abuses in the Congo and Peru. His investigations into atrocities in the Congo led him to develop anti-Imperialist opinions and, ultimately, a pro-Irish Republican stance. Returning from Germany shortly before the Easter Rising in 1916, he was arrested on arrival in Ireland and charged with treason. He was subsequently convicted, and was hanged in Pentonville Prison on 3 August 1916. He was 51 years old. In 1965, his body was repatriated to Ireland. During the five days while he lay in state at Arbour Hill, an estimated 500,000 people filed past his coffin. He was buried with full military honours in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin. President Éamon de Valera, then in his mid-eighties and the last surviving leader of the Easter Rising, defied the advice of his doctors and attended the ceremony, along with an estimated 30,000 Irish citizens.

The NLI has extensive collections of Casement papers, acquired by either donation or purchase over many years.

Commenting on today's announcement, Fiona Ross, Director, National Library of Ireland said:
"As of today, citizens of Ireland as well as citizens of the world can read some of Roger Casement's final letters online and form their own views on one of the most controversial figures in Irish history as he faced execution.

"The newly released Casement material will be of great interest to historians and others researching the life of a remarkable Irishman. The material casts new light on the depth of his religious beliefs and his spirituality in the days leading up to his death, and the strength that he and his friends and family drew from each other in their letters and other messages of support.

"The material also casts further light on his political thinking and his views on what he perceived as the hypocrisy of the British establishment."

Highlights 2012 National Library of Ireland programme of activities

By mid-December 2012, National Library of Ireland visitor numbers (virtual and personal) reached 1.5 million. Through the dedication of staff and support of donors and others, and despite a difficult operating environment, development work continued in fulfilment of the NLI's mission to collect, preserve and make material accessible to the public.

2012 marked another busy year of digital library activity, highlighting the potential of technology to reach out to wider audiences:

In May 2012, the NLI rolled out its digital repository to store and manage its digital content.

The NLI continued work on the rapid integration of its records into the online catalogue (http://catalogue.nli.ie) including records for 50,000 photographs and 15,000 pieces of Irish sheet music. Work on the conversion of the NLI's core catalogue is nearing completion; once this is done, the number of items in the catalogue will have increased by approximately 33%, giving users access to records for all of the NLI's printed material.

Throughout 2012, over 10,000 new items were digitised, and are now being made available through the digital repository. These include major holdings of Joyce material (drafts of works and letters), high-resolution versions of which were made available in June, using using opensource image-viewing software implemented and enhanced by the NLI team enabling researchers to zoom into the tiniest details of the manuscripts. This offers all researchers the same level of access as those undertaking a personal visit to view the manuscripts at the NLI Reading Room in Dublin.

The NLI web archiving programme continued through 2012, capturing the record of contemporary Ireland. Amongst the websites archived were those relating to the Fiscal Treaty and Children's referendums, to sporting events such as the Olympics and the European football championships, and to a broad spectrum of Irish culture and society including sites known to be in danger of disappearing such An Fear Rua. Also archived were websites recommended by County Librarians, each of whom were invited to suggest two key sites for their respective counties.

Other important developments for the NLI during the year included:

Major collections donated, catalogued and conserved:

The Labour Party donated its archive to the NLI during the year, and funded an archivist to catalogue the collection

The Seamus Heaney collection, donated at the end of 2011, was catalogued by NLI staff and is now available to researchers.

The "Elmes" collection of historic portrait prints and drawings of Irish people provides a rich visual resource for Irish studies from the 17th through the 20th centuries. Prints & Drawings and Conservation staff have been conserving prints in poor condition and safeguarding them for the future through digitisation, with all 3,500 prints and drawings due to go online in 2013

Europeana/World War One Family History Roadshow
: Major partnership with Europeana (Europe's digital library, museum and archive) and Oxford University to offer a series of "roadshow" collecting days for privately held material related to
World War One. Over 700 people attended two roadshows, one at the NLI on 21 March 2012 (the most successful of all such events held throughout Europe) and a second event hosted by the Hunt Museum in Limerick in November. Content collected can be viewed at www.europeana1914-1918.eu

POETRY ALOUD Competition This all-island poetry-speaking competition for post-primary schools, run by the NLI in association with Poetry Ireland, grew from 946 participants in 2009 to 1,600 in 2012.

Award-winning social media: The NLI won two prestigious awards for its digital activities in 2012. In April, it was declared outright winner of the Ireland e-government Social Media Awards for its work on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr Commons, as well as for its blog content. In June, the Taoiseach

presented the Library with a Public Service Excellence Award for its social media programme.

Taking Stock at the National Photographic Archive: A comprehensive survey of the NLI's photographic holdings in 2012 revealed an estimated 5.2m photographs, the largest photographic collection relating to Ireland in the world. Alongside the survey, a retrospective display of photographs from the NPA's exhibitions was mounted; entitled Taking Stock, it runs until June 2013

For further information, contact Brenda O'Hanlon, O'Hanlon Media, on 087 258 3292