National Library of Ireland

TOWARDS 2016
Progress Report

APRIL-OCTOBER 2006

OVERVIEW

1. Acquisitions, collections

The NLI continued to add to its collections with some extremely important acquisitions in the period under review including the Colman Doyle collection, Thomas Clarke 1916 material and the Yeats/Edwards collection.

2. Yeats Exhibition

NLI opened an exhibition on the poet W.B. Yeats on 25 May 2006, following the closure of the Joyce exhibition in March 2006. The exhibition reached a very high standard and has received a 2006 Interpret Britain and Ireland Award, with one of the highest marks ever awarded (to be announced on 30 November 2006) from the Association of Heritage Interpretation. The judges' citation includes the following remarks: '… Especially impressive is the information technology that enables one to scrutinise manuscripts that are behind and under glass more closely via accompanying screens…The public were clearly absorbed and delighted with this technology. We were particularly pleased to hear from one visitor in a motorised wheel chair that she felt completely enfranchised by the exhibition's concern for physically disabled visitors… The staff the judges encountered were very friendly, knowledgeable, clear and enthusiastic. The whole entry is totally outstanding and an unmissable experience for any visitor to Dublin interested in Irish history and culture'.

Visitor numbers to the Yeats exhibition from 25 May- 31 October 2006 were 29,033. As a comparator visitor numbers to the Joyce exhibition in its opening year 2004 from 14 June-25 October were 24,895. In the peak summer months June to August the daily average number of visitors to the Joyce exhibition in 2004 was 283, the daily average number of visitors to the Yeats exhibition in its opening year 2006 was 297. During these summer months the opening hours of the Yeats exhibition were increased to include Saturday afternoons.

Yeats events 2006:

- Opening event – 25 May
  Afternoon programme of events in the Library and guided tours of the exhibition for over 300 guests. The exhibition opening was widely covered in the media.

- Yeats Aloud 2006 – Final 12 May
  In cooperation with Poetry Ireland, a national poetry-speaking competition for post-primary school pupils which attracted some 700 entries from all over the country. Regional heats for Dublin held in NLI

over two days; six regional centres held heats, with semi-finals and final in NLI on 12 May. Plans for Poetry Aloud 2007 are well underway.

- Yeats Birthday lecture – 13 June
  Special lecture by Professor Roy Foster. With reception beforehand for invited guests.

- Children's events
  Beginning Saturday 17 July, Seven Summer Saturdays of Storytelling (ages 5+) and Creative Workshops (ages 8+)

- UCD Adult Education course – in cooperation with UCD
  Course, designed around the Library's exhibition, which will run three times during the 2006-2007 academic year. The course has a capacity of 40 and was fully subscribed for its first term.

- Special tours/evening events:
  Among visiting groups for whom special visits (including receptions, tours, etc) were arranged: Business2Arts; NLI Society; Friends of the National Gallery of Ireland; Council members of the RDS

3. General Exhibitions, Education and Outreach activities 2006

LIBRARY LATE 2006
Featured writers included:

April:	Colum McCann interviewed by Fintan O'Toole
May:	Anne Enright interviewed by Hugh Linehan
June:	Eavan Boland interviewed by Kay Sheehy
July:	Joseph O'Connor interviewed by Kay Sheehy
September:	John Connolly interviewed by Kay Sheehy
October:	John Boyne interviewed by Myles Dungan
November:	Claire Kilroy interviewed by Kay Sheehy
December:	Bernard Mac Laverty will be interviewed by Fintan O'Toole

Library Late has been one of the most successful events initiatives of the past few years. The public response is hugely positive and the writers involved have been immensely generous with their time and really pleased to be asked to participate in an NLI event.

1916 ONLINE EXHIBITION
The NLI's award-winning contribution to events marking the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Rising was launched in the Library by Minister O'Donoghue on 12 April.

NORWEGIAN STATE VISIT TO IRELAND - SEPTEMBER

- Haakon Gullvaag exhibition and visit of HM Queen Sonja to NLI/Yeats exhibition
- Exhibition of Ibsen material from the Library's collections
- Writers in conversation (Myles Dungan interviewing Norwegian novelist Lars Saabye Christensen)
- Lunchtime readings

The visit of HM Queen Sonja of Norway to the NLI marked the first time that the Library has been on the official programme of a State visit. The Department of Foreign Affairs along with their counterparts in the Norwegian Ministry were very pleased with the programme arranged by the Library.

RI BEST MEMORIAL LECTURE 2006 - 20 SEPTEMBER

Vigdis Moe Skarstein, National Librarian of Norway. With reception beforehand for invited guests.

ONE CITY, ONE BOOK LECTURE – 7 June

Lecture (by Peter Costello, biographer of Flann O'Brien) organised by the NLI as our contribution to Dublin City Council's One City, One Book programme of events which focussed on Flann O'Brien's *At-Swim-Two-Birds*.

HERITAGE WEEK – BEGINNING 26 AUGUST

The Library actively participated in Heritage Week 2006 by arranging the following:

- *Heritage Week lunchtime tours*
  On Monday, Wednesday and Friday lunchtimes, a special guided tour of the Yeats exhibition celebrating Irish natural heritage as depicted in the work of WB Yeats, from the 'hollow lands and hilly lands' of Sligo, past 'flapping herons' to 'lake waters lapping with low sounds by the shore'.

CULTURE NIGHT 2006 – FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

The Library participated in Dublin's first ever Culture Night by ensuring the Yeats exhibition (along with the NPA exhibition) remained open late on the night in question.

CRÉ NA GAEILGE LECTURE SERIES – NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

In cooperation with Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, the Library has facilitated a series of four evening lecture and receptions to mark the centenary of Máirtín Ó Cadhain. This the Library's first Irish-language events programme and we hope it marks the beginning of similar cooperative events.

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE (NPA)

The NPA spring 2006 exhibition was *Centenary Shadows*, part of the Samuel Beckett Centenary Celebrations. As usual the NPA hosted the DIT Photography School Graduate exhibition in June 2006. The very popular *Poole's Photographic Stores* was on show from July – Oct 2006 and *Images*

of Tourism, held in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, has just opened and will run until March 2007.

NPA continued the policy of sending out its photographic exhibition to other venues in Ireland in order to improve access to our collections: A Century of News Photography in South County Dublin Libraries during Summer 2007, moving on to South Tipperary County Museum December 2006 – March 2007 (maybe leave this for next report?); *Trainspotting* was on show in Skerries Mills in June 2006; Mayo County Libraries hosted the *Regeneration* exhibition during the summer.

A new development this year was that the NPA traveling exhibitions went abroad for the first time. *Dubliners* was on show in Bulgaria to mark the opening of the Irish Embassy in Sofia in the spring and was on show for the autumn in Athens. Both exhibitions were organized in conjunction with the Irish embassies.

4. Organisational Development

The Library continued the process of moving to independent status with a particular focus in 2006 on developing a new strategic framework.
The process of drafting the Library's Strategic Plan 2007-2009, the core strategic aims and objectives of which were agreed by the Board in November 2006, involved a very extensive process of consultation both within and outside the organization over a two month period, June-July 2006, facilitated by a consultant appointed, following a tender process, to assist with the preparation of the Plan. A newspaper advertisement elicited a healthy response from the public and interested organizations and bilateral meetings with key stakeholders were also arranged. While not directly focused on the Strategic Plan, the Library hosted a lunch-time Readers forum, attended by some 20 members of the public, during the strategic planning process to identify service issues in particular and to supplement the Readers survey which was also carried out around that time and which attracted some 90 responses. In all 678 suggestions were received and recorded. The Library is now moving into the business planning stage and it is intended that the Strategic Plan, in its final form, and the business plans will be completed and ready for publication early in 2007.

Other organizational developments in the period under review included:

- Board met on 9 occasions between January and November 2006 dealing with a wide range of issues including acquisitions, services, storage, finances, *Towards 2016* draft Action Plan for NLI etc. The Board's two statutory committees – Readers Advisory Committee and Committee on Genealogy - also met and reported/made recommendations to the Board on issues relevant to their areas of work. The Board Audit Committee is also now operating with a

particular focus on putting in place an internal audit function, tenders for which are currently being evaluated;

- Corporate Governance and Code of Conduct document adopted on a section by section basis by the Board over 2005/2006 with adoption of completed document by the Board in October 2006;

- Planning permission for new storage facility (Repository) obtained and appeal (one appeal received) process now underway;

- Small works building project in main library completed which will allow for improved Reader services including a new micro-film Reading room and self-services facilities;

- NLI has been working with Oireachtas Library on potential to maximize co-operation between the two bodies;

- Policies on child protection and (revised) bullying and harassment have been put in place;

- A tender for a Training Needs Analysis and Training Plan issued in October 2006 and it is expected that consultants will be appointed very shortly;

- Consultants were employed following a tender process to ensure Library compliance with new Accounting standard – FRS 17 – regarding pension liabilities and the information compiled by the consultants has now been included in the NLI's 2005 statutory accounts;

- The first C&AG audit of the NLI's accounts has been completed in respect of 2005 and the 2005 statutory accounts are now ready;

- A competition for an IT Manager for the NLI has taken place and an appointment is imminent;

- Other staff promotion/recruitment processes underway and being managed by the NLI include Keeper promotion and recruitment for AK11s; LA11s; and staff for NLI HR Unit;

- NLI Partnership Committee (met on 5 occasions April-November 2006) and subgroups (communications, customer service and Irish language) are very active and meet regularly;

- Progress on internal communications welcomed by staff including extension of email access to all staff;

- Other cross-functional groups also operating in NLI e.g. group to oversee preservation assessment survey; cataloguing standards group;

- PMDS re-launched March 2006 with refresher sessions for staff for role profile and review stages. 2006 PMDS cycle will be completed shortly;

- Interviewer and interviewee skills training provided for staff;

- Staff attendance at INULS facilitated;

- Merit Award Scheme agreed through Partnership in 2005 will operate again for 2006 as agreed by Partnership Committee;

- NLI Joint Conciliation Council established and has met twice in June and September 2006;

- The Library is proactive in the management of health and safety in the workplace. Initiatives in the past twelve months include:

    - First aid training for staff;
    - Manual handling training;
    - Fire drills;
    - Sprinkler training;
    - Quarterly (approx) meetings of Library's Health and Safety Committee;
    - Subsidised flu vaccine for staff;
    - Subsidised health screening service for staff;
    - Servicing of equipment (e.g. recent testing of safety bolts used by window cleaners);
    - VDU risk assessment for each individual staff member;
    - Health and Safety standing item on quarterly Joint Conciliation Council with Unions and also a standing item at MAC and at Partnership Committee meetings;
    - Training for staff centrally involved in health and safety including commencement in September 2006 of attendance at UCD Diploma Course, in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work by Keeper Administration, with a view to having a "competent" staff member within the meaning of 2005 Act;
    - At its November 2006 meeting, the Board agreed that health and safety would be a Board agenda item every quarter at minimum and that the NLI should go to tender before end 2006 for a safety audit, to ensure that the Library's Safety Statement provides an appropriate basis for the management of health and safety of employees in the workplace, taking account of the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

5. Services

The restructured services team has been very active working with staff, the Board Readers Advisory Committee, the customer service subgroup of Partnership Committee and eliciting views of Readers/customers. Specific actions in the period under review include:

- Issuing of Request for Tender for Genealogical Advisory Service, a contract for which is now reaching a conclusion;
- Issuing Request for Tender for re-development of NLI website a project which is now underway;
- Drafting, with subgroup of Partnership Committee, an Irish Language Scheme for NLI;
- Drafting, with subgroup of Partnership Committee, a revised Customer Charter and monitoring plan;
- Carrying our a Reader survey (June 2006) and hosting a lunch-time Readers forum (July 2006);
- Visiting other National Libraries to establish best practice in service delivery;
- Organising a digital day for Library staff (July 2006) facilitated by NLI digital consultant to consider digital policy and priorities for NLI.