



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **National Library of Ireland launches 2016 Programme and 1916 Digital Collections**

*Over 20,000 items related to the seven signatories of the Proclamation will be available online by April 2016*

The [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#) has today (07.12.15) launched its 2016 programme, including the release of a unique digital repository of personal papers and photographs that tell the story of the momentous events of 1916. To mark the launch of the programme by Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, TD, as part of Ireland 2016, a special event presented by Dr John Bowman was held this evening in the Library's iconic premises on Kildare Street.

Paul Shovlin, Chair of the National Library's Board said: "In 1916, the National Library was an intellectual and social hub at the heart of Ireland and is proud to take its place in the centenary events 100 years later, through a programme built around our unparalleled collections. We are delighted to contribute to the commemorations by cataloguing and digitising materials that tell the story of 1916, commencing with the seven signatories of the Proclamation."

Dr Sandra Collins, Director of the National Library, added "At the heart of the National Library's plans for 2016 is our core mission: collecting and making available Irish memory and heritage for people everywhere. Our 1916 programme is ambitious and includes digitisation, exhibitions and events, and I am delighted that we will be adding to our archive of the Irish internet by capturing websites related to the commemorations for people to explore as a record of this momentous year."

#### **1916 Digital Collections**

In addition to the 70,000 digital images already available through the NLI's online catalogue, the digitised personal papers and photographs of the seven signatories of the 1916 Proclamation - Eamonn Ceannt; James Connolly; Tom Clarke; Sean MacDiarmada; Thomas MacDonagh; Padraig Pearse; and Joseph Plunkett - will be added in the coming months.

The 1916 Digital Collections is a culmination of months of intensive work by the NLI team, and more than 20,000 items will be available online by April 2016. At today's event, the full collection of Ceannt's papers was launched and is now available online to the public, free of charge at [catalogue.nli.ie](http://catalogue.nli.ie).

The digitised papers include diaries, postcards and photographs that tell the stories of the family and working lives of each signatory, alongside dramatic records of their activities during Easter Week 1916.

Speaking at the launch, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, TD, said: "The National Library plays such a fundamental role in helping us to connect and remember our past. The release of the 1916 Digital Collections by the National Library is sure to be a great resource to individuals and groups across the State and beyond who want to mark 1916, or to simply reflect on it. The breadth of material that has been digitised and will be made available online is astounding and represents a hugely valuable record of events leading up to and including the Easter Rising.

"I would like to congratulate the Library on a wonderful and thoughtful 2016 programme of events – which I'm sure will engage and enrich all of those who take part in it, including schools, community organisations, academics and researchers, the culturally curious and lifelong learners of all ages. As one of our nation's key cultural institutions, the National Library of Ireland - in its physical buildings and online – will be a hub of activity as we mark the centenary of 1916."

#### **Highlights of the NLI's 2016 Programme**

Katherine McSharry, Head of Outreach and the person responsible for the 1916 programme at the National Library noted: "A rich treasury of papers and documents relating to the historic events of 1916 are held in the collections at the National Library. These documents reveal to us the immediacy of history and we are delighted to make this fascinating repository available – online and

free of charge – to people in Ireland and around the world. At the same time as making these historic documents available, throughout 2016 we will be archiving the websites that tell the story of Ireland today.”

In January 2016, the NLI will issue the material related to Tom Clarke and James Connolly papers; followed by Seán MacDiarmada and Thomas MacDonagh in February, concluding with the papers of Patrick Pearse and Joseph Plunkett in March 2016.

The NLI will hold a series of free events and activities throughout 2016 to mark the centenary commemorations of the Easter Rising. According to Katherine McSharry, there is “something for everyone” and highlights of the NLI’s 2016 programme include:

- ‘Inspiration Proclamation’: a series of public interviews with major figures on themes of the Proclamation and their relevance for Ireland in 2016 and beyond;
- ‘Readings from the Rising’, a series of performances of literary work accompanied by music and staged throughout our historic buildings;
- School workshops and talks to help visitors trace their ancestors in this period.

The NLI will also offer a series of curated perspectives on 1916, onsite at the National Library’s buildings on Kildare Street, in Temple Bar, and online, including;

- ‘Rising’: a flagship photographic exhibition in the National Photographic Archive;
- ‘Signatories’: an exhibition in the NLI’s Kildare Street building, which will present selected documents related to the seven signatories; and much more.

Details of the NLI’s full 2016 programme of events, from exhibitions and public events to major digitisation projects and archiving the web, is available on the NLI’s website [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie).

A selection of papers and photographs relating to Éamonn Ceannt and his family is available online here: <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000243484>.

The Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme, led by Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, TD, is a year-long programme of activity to commemorate the events of the 1916 Rising, to reflect on our achievements over the last 100 years and to look towards Ireland’s future. For more information, visit [www.ireland.ie](http://www.ireland.ie). #ireland2016

For more information visit [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)

**ENDS**

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#### **Note to Editors**

- Interviews available on request.
- Photographer Marc O’Sullivan has been commissioned to cover this event and will issue photos to picture desks promptly at 6pm.
- Details of items on display at the launch event are listed below. This selection is also available for review here: <http://bit.ly/1O38ln3>
  - Letter from Éamonn Ceannt to Áine Ceannt from Kilmainham Gaol, advising that his trial has ended and that he expects to be sentenced to death. He intends “to die like a man for Ireland’s sake” but regrets that he will not see her again to show her how much she has meant to him. [5th May 1916]
  - Letter from Tom Clarke to his son John Daly Clarke, who was staying in Limerick with his mother, Kathleen, and her Daly relatives after he had been unwell. Clarke writes: “How many cows have you seen, and did they all have ears and tails? Did you see the one that jumped over the moon at all, he must be a great fellow.” [1905]
  - Photograph of Thomas MacDonagh on a beach holding his son, Donagh, in his arms as the child gazes out to sea, at Greystones, County Wicklow. [1915]
  - Order issued by James Connolly, Commandant-General, Dublin Division, Army of the Irish Republic, to “Officer in Charge [Frank Henderson], Henry Street” informing him to erect barricades in Henry Street and occupy the first and top floors of houses in the street. [25th April 1916]
  - Letter from Seán Mac Diarmada to Joseph McGarrity regarding his own health, his doubts about Jim Larkin’s nationalism, and plans for a Wolfe Tone Memorial. [12th December 1913]
  - Draft, signed by Patrick Pearse, of the decision by the Republican forces to enter negotiations with the British, written on cardboard picture-mount, and found in 16 Moore St, Dublin. [29th April 1916]
  - Letter from Lady Alice Wimborne, Vice Regal Lodge, to her mother Baroness Ebury, giving an account of the Easter Rising in Dublin, and its aftermath.

- Note from Joseph Mary Plunkett to his family, stating that he and his brothers George and Jack have been arrested following the 1916 Rising and are imprisoned in Richmond Barracks. [30th April 1916]
- The dedicated hashtag for the NLI's programme of events to mark 1916 is #MyNLI1916
- The mission of the National Library of Ireland is to collect, preserve, promote and make accessible the documentary and intellectual record of the life of Ireland and to contribute to the provision of access to the larger universe of recorded knowledge. It is open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult the collections. The Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are both part of the National Library. Further information is available at [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie), @NLIreland.