

PRESS RELEASE

Monday, 8th December 2014

National Library of Ireland Welcomes Additional Funding Allocation from Government

The [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#) has welcomed the announcement that €2 million in additional funding will be made available for national cultural institutions under the Revised Estimates, which are due to be published later this month.

Ahead of the announcement of Budget 2015 in October, the NLI had sought an increase of €1 million in funding to enable it to maintain its basic services. However, the Budget did not provide for any increase in funding for the NLI, which has threatened the operation of its services.

Commenting today (08.12.14), Catherine Fahy, Acting Director of the NLI, said: "We are very pleased and relieved that the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has indicated that there will be additional funding available for the national cultural institutions, including the National Library of Ireland, in the coming weeks.

"We are hopeful that this funding will enable us to keep our doors open across all the services we currently provide. We also hope it will enable us to play our full part in the 1916 commemorations and the Decade of Commemorations overall.

"We have worked closely with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in recent months to look at how best to resolve the funding challenges we currently face. This announcement of additional funding is the outcome of our work, and is a very positive result. We look forward to receiving more detail about the additional funding in the coming weeks."

ENDS

Contact: Martina Quinn / Catherine Heaney, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-6522033 / 087-2309835

Notes to Editors:

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 for material not otherwise available through the public library service or an academic library. The Genealogical Office, the Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street, and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are all part of the National Library. Further information: www.nli.ie. Twitter: @NLIreland.

PRESS RELEASE

Monday, 1st December 2014

National Library of Ireland Announces its Most Significant Ever Digitisation Project for Irish Genealogy

– Project will make almost 400,000 images of Catholic parish register microfilms available online for free –

The [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#) has today (01.12.14) unveiled details of its most ambitious digitisation project to date. The project will see the Library's entire collection of Catholic parish register microfilms made available online – for free – by summer 2015.

The records are considered the single most important source of information on Irish family history prior to the 1901 Census. Dating from the 1740s to the 1880s, they cover 1,091 parishes throughout Ireland, and consist primarily of baptismal and marriage records.

Commenting today, Colette O'Flaherty, Head of Special Collections of the NLI, said: "This is the most ambitious digitisation project in the history of the NLI, and our most significant ever genealogy project. We believe it will of huge assistance to those who wish to research their family history. At this stage, we have converted the microfilm reels on which the registers are recorded into approximately 390,000 digital images. We will be making all these images available, for free, on a dedicated website, which will be launched in summer 2015.

"Anyone tracing Irish family history will be able to access this site – from anywhere in the world – and search for the parish in which they are interested. They will be able to see a list of registers for that parish, and will be able to click on whichever registers they like to browse through the images contained within.

"The information in the registers varies from parish to parish but, typically, includes the dates of the baptisms or marriages, and the names of the key people involved, including godparents or witnesses. Obviously, such information is extremely valuable for both amateur genealogists and professional researchers.

"The microfilms have been available to visitors to the NLI since the 1970s. However, this project means that, for the first time, anyone who likes will be able to access these registers without having to travel to Dublin."

Contribution of the Catholic Church

Ms. O'Flaherty said the registers are one of the greatest legacies of the Catholic Church to Ireland.

"The role of the Catholic Church in creating and maintaining these records during some of the most turbulent times in Irish history must be acknowledged and praised," she said. "Most census records from this period were destroyed in the Custom House fire of 1922, so these parish registers are the most comprehensive surviving source of information on Irish families in the 1700s and 1800s.

"The NLI has worked with the Catholic Church to preserve these registers since the 1950s, when we were initially invited to make microfilm copies. Now, in the 21st Century – and in keeping with our aim of enhancing accessibility through making our collections available online – we are delighted to embark on this major digitisation project."

What Type of Information Will be Available?

The 390,000 digital images due to be published by the NLI will be searchable by parish location only. They will not be transcribed or indexed by the NLI, and the images will be of the microfilms of the original registers, which – in some cases – were in poor condition when the microfilming took place. The images will be in black and white.

"Anyone who has traced their family history knows it can sometimes be frustrating due to illegible handwriting on original records or poor-quality reproductions or transcriptions," said Colette O'Flaherty. "Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to transcribe or index the images we are making available.

“We are fortunate, though, that the network of local family history centres throughout the country holds indexes and transcripts of parish registers for their local areas. We would envisage direct access to the digitised registers will complement the work of these local centres by enabling researchers to cross-reference the information they uncover, and assisting them in uncovering wider links and connections to their ancestral community.”

Further details of this digitisation project will be announced by the NLI in the coming months.

ENDS

Contact: Martina Quinn, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-6522033

Notes to Editors:

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 for material not otherwise available through the public library service or an academic library. The Genealogical Office, the Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street, and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are all part of the National Library.

PRESS RELEASE

Friday, 5th December 2014

National Winners Announced at Eighth Annual Poetry Aloud Competition

The winners of the eighth annual Poetry Aloud competition, organised by the [National Library of Ireland](#) and [Poetry Ireland](#), were announced today (05.12.14) at the final round of the competition, held at the National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Poetry Aloud, an annual poetry speaking competition for post-primary school students across the island of Ireland, was launched in 2006. Since then, it has grown enormously from just a few hundred entries to over 1,700 this year alone.

Speaking at the final, Bríd O'Sullivan, of Learning and Outreach at the National Library of Ireland (NLI), said: "We are delighted to welcome the Poetry Aloud participants to the NLI once again this year to celebrate the joy of speaking poetry. This year saw many schools entering Poetry Aloud for the first time, with the competition truly representing the rich cultural diversity of post-primary schools in all parts of Ireland today.

"It is a wonderful achievement to reach the final, especially considering the huge number of entries received, and we would like to give a hearty congratulations to all involved. We truly hope the finalists have thoroughly enjoyed their experience."

National Winners of 2014 Poetry Aloud

The Poetry Aloud competition comprises three stages: the regionals; the semi-finals; and the final. This year, over 118 schools took part in the competition at 18 regional heats in venues across the country. Today's finalists were then chosen at two semi-finals involving 149 participants.

There are three participant categories: Junior, Intermediate and Senior. A national winner is chosen from each category by a panel of esteemed judges and receives a prize of €300. The 2014 judging panel included poet, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill; Director of the Abbey Theatre, Fiach Mac Conghail; and Director of Poetry Ireland, Maureen Kennelly.

The 2014 Poetry Aloud national winners are:

- Junior category: Megan Nar, from St Louis Secondary School in Monaghan;
- Intermediate category: Scion Flanagan from Mary Immaculate Secondary School in Clare;
- Senior category: Cian Siggins, from Coláiste Éinde in Galway.

From the three national category winners, an overall winner is chosen each year, and awarded the Seamus Heaney Poetry Aloud Award. This year, Megan Nar was awarded the Seamus Heaney Poetry Aloud Award and presented with the trophy by judge Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill. The overall winner receives a prize of €500, and the perpetual trophy designed by Meath-based sculptor, Fiona Smith-Darragh.

This year's Poetry Aloud runners up are:

- Junior category: Luke MacGiolla Chomhaill from Coláiste Oiriall in Monaghan;
- Intermediate category: Jodie Milne, from St Michael's Holy Faith in Dublin;
- Senior category: Conor Potts from Wesley College in Dublin.

Book tokens to the value of €300 are also presented to a teacher from each winning school to contribute towards adding new stock to the school library.

The late Seamus Heaney was a significant supporter of Poetry Aloud. In 2009, he was presented by the British Library with the David Cohen Prize for Literature. In addition to the main award, the winner each year nominates the recipient of a subsidiary prize, In nominating Poetry Aloud for the award, Seamus Heaney cited the extraordinary way in which the competition seeks to celebrate the joy of speaking and listening to poetry as well as the fact that there is a strong North / South dimension to the competition.

This year, Poetry Aloud is partnering with *The Works*, RTÉ Television's flagship arts show, and RTÉ Radio One's *The John Murray Show* on RTÉ, A Poem for Ireland, The Best-Loved Irish Poem of the Last 100 Years. Finalists and winners from this year's competition will appear on *The Works* reading a selection of Ireland's best-loved poems.

Previous Winners

In 2013, the overall winner was Niall Ó hAnnagáin from Coláiste Ailigh in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, who was presented with the perpetual trophy, the Seamus Heaney Poetry Aloud Award. In April 2014, Niall Ó hAnnagáin joined poets and musicians including Paul Muldoon and Paul Simon on stage at the National Concert Hall in a special tribute to Seamus Heaney. Fifteen-year-old Niall, who was the youngest person on stage, spoke *Mid-Term Break* to great acclaim.

For further information, visit www.nli.ie

ENDS

Contact: Sarah Harte / Sebastian Enke, DHR Communications 01-4200580 / 087-9858259 / 087-3239496

Notes to Editors:

Photography

Lar Boland will issue photographs to the photo desks after 4pm.

About the National Library of Ireland

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 for material not otherwise available through the public library service or an academic library. The Genealogical Office, the Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street, and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are all part of the National Library.

About Poetry Ireland

Poetry Ireland connects people and poetry. As the national organisation for poetry in Ireland, we serve all 32 counties and receive support from The Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and The Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Through our publications, readings, educational programmes and resource services, we are committed to achieving excellence in the reading, writing and performance of poetry throughout the island of Ireland.

Photo Captions:

1 and 2: Luke O'Sullivan, aged 10, from Dublin, enjoying a Coat of Arms workshop at the NLI.
3: Sisters Lucy and Megan Lloyd, ages 8 and 12, enjoying an event at the NLI last summer.

PRESS RELEASE

Friday, 4th July 2014

National Library Announces Programme of Events for Children this Summer

The [National Library of Ireland](#) (NLI) announced its programme of child-focused events for summer 2014 today (04.07.14). With the summer holidays now in full swing, the NLI has developed a programme of free activities for children aged from five upwards, focusing on family history, storytelling and art.

Highlights will include:

- On Thursday, 3rd July from 11.30am to 1pm, children aged seven to 12 can learn about the ancient art of heraldry, look at the ways coats of arms are used today and design their own imaginary coats of arms in a fun workshop.
- On Thursday, 10th July from 2.30pm to 4pm, children aged eight to 12 years can join Debbie Thomas, author of popular children's book, 'Monkie Business', for an afternoon of reading followed by a fun treasure hunt.

Both of these events require booking at learning@nli.ie or phone (01) 6030259.

- On Thursday, 17th July from 2.30pm to 4pm, children aged five to eight years can enjoy some tall tales at the NLI. Ireland is a country of stories and storytellers and over the years these stories have been written down and have made their home in the National Library. Come on a journey through some magical stories of legends and heroes, and create your own tall tales through art. Booking is not required for this event.
- On Saturday, 26th July from 1pm to 2pm, children of all ages are welcome to join storyteller Niall de Burca for a fun-filled hour of high-energy storytelling. As one of Ireland's finest storytellers, Niall de Burca has featured in theatre, radio and at many festivals at home and abroad, including The National Children's Book Festival.

Commenting on the NLI's summer programme for children, Bríd O'Sullivan, Head of Learning and Outreach with the NLI, said: "The NLI is a hugely significant national cultural institution, and one of our aims is to be open and accessible to all. That includes people of all ages.

"We love the energy that our younger visitors bring to the Library, and we are delighted to be able to provide such a fun-filled programme for summer 2014. As we welcome many school visits during the year, the summer programme provides the opportunity more informal visits! So we would strongly encourage them to give the NLI a try!"

For more information, visit www.nli.ie

ENDS

Contact: Martina Quinn / Emma Walker, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-6522033 / 085-7279039

About the National Library of Ireland

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 for material not otherwise available through the public library service or an academic library. The Genealogical Office, the Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street, and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are all part of the National Library.

The World War 1 Roadshow at Trinity College Dublin

'Europe Goes to War, Ireland's Part'

Details: 9.30am-5.30pm, Saturday, July 12th, Trinity College Dublin

Historical photographic imagery is available. See contact details further below.

Dublin, July 3rd, 2014 – The World War 1 Roadshow www.rte.ie/worldwar1 and <http://www.tcd.ie/decade-commemoration/events/world-war-one-roadshow/> will be hosted by Trinity College Dublin in partnership with RTÉ Radio 1 and the National Library of Ireland on Saturday July 12th where Ireland's part in the war will be explored with a series of events taking place throughout the Trinity campus.

One of its main events, the Family History Collections Day of World War 1 memorabilia invites members of the public to bring in family items, letters and mementos related to the war for digitisation and archiving by a team of experts. The World War 1 Roadshow will also feature a series of pop up talks and lectures on the Great War, and Trinity College Dublin's own unique history during this period. There will be a range of other activities including history tours of the campus related to the Great War and the 'Last Cricket Match of Peace'. The day will conclude with the final Bugle call of the 'Last Post'.

Commenting on its significance for Trinity, Professor James Wickham said:

"The World War One Roadshow forms part of Trinity College Dublin's engagement with the Decade of Commemorations. With its programme of talks and lectures it will showcase research being conducted in Ireland on this period; it will also remember the over 450 Trinity College graduates who died in the Great War. We want it to be an informative and thought provoking day concerning Ireland's part in World War One. We want people to come away from it with a greater understanding of Ireland's role in what was one of the bloodiest conflicts of our time."

As part of the Family History Collections Day of World War 1 people from all over Ireland will be invited to bring their precious items and memories related to World War One to be catalogued, digitised, and uploaded to an online European archive. This archive is being developed by Europeana (Europe's digital library, museum and archive), in conjunction with Oxford University and with national partners across Europe, such as the National Library of Ireland, in time for the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the war in 1914. It will be the first ever online European archive of private stories and documents from World War 1. Experts from the National Library of Ireland and Trinity College Dublin will evaluate and digitise the memorabilia presented on the day for the purpose of the archive.

Commenting in advance, Katherine McSharry, Head of Services with the National Library of Ireland, said:

"The huge interest in the forthcoming 100-year anniversary of the outbreak of World War One reminds us how important it is to ensure physical memorabilia of key historical events, brought to life with people's stories and memories, are recorded for posterity. The National Library of Ireland will manage a team of cataloguers from TCD and NUIG, supported by NLI staff, for the World War One Roadshow, who will work to record and digitise the stories and items brought in by members of the public. We have been involved in similar events in the past, which have generated huge levels of interest. We know the Irish

public has a wealth of items and stories to share in relation to World War 1, and we look forward to discovering more fascinating material during this event.”

RTÉ Radio 1 is delighted to partner with The National Library of Ireland and Trinity College Dublin for this day of events. The Public Theatre will have soundproof booths where RTÉ Radio 1 will be recording family testimonies for broadcast in August. Pop up talks will take place every 15 minutes throughout the day in the Trinity Long Room Hub, Fellows’ Square covering different aspects of WW1. Over in the Edmund Burke Theatre, Arts Building there will be a special recording of *Sunday Miscellany* with new writing about WW1 for broadcast on Sunday 3rd August at 9am. ‘*Echoes From the Front*’ is a sequence of performed readings with musical interludes, charting various scenarios from WW1 and will take place in the Trinity College Chapel. Four actors will read from accounts, diary entries and love letters capturing a glimpse of the human side of battle as part of this unique event.

Lorelei Harris, RTÉ Radio 1 Editor of Arts, Factual & Drama said:

“RTÉ is honoured to be involved in this major cultural partnership which aims to bring World War 1 to the position of centrality in the Irish public imagination it so rightly merits. We are proud to present a range of talks, live programming, drama and literature in the beautiful setting of Trinity College Dublin, so closely associated with the huge loss of young Irish life that took place during the Great War.”

--Ends--

For all details of the programme click on : <http://www.rte.ie/worldwar1> or www.tcd.ie/decade-commemoration/events/world-war-one-roadshow/

For media queries for Trinity College Dublin and for images contact:

Yolanda Kennedy, Press Officer, Trinity College Dublin, tel:+353-1-8963551; yokenned@tcd.ie

Sandra Byrne, RTÉ Radio Senior Press Officer, 01-208 2506/087-249 3048, sandra.byrne@rte.ie

For National Library of Ireland, Martina Quinn, Executive Director DHR Communications

Tel: 01-4200580/ 087-6522033 Email: martina@dhr.ie