2008 PRESS RELEASES

A Bird's Eye View of Ireland

Tuesday 18 November 2008: *A Bird's Eye View of Ireland* is the title of the National Photographic Archive's latest exhibition of aerial photographs which provide a unique perspective on the landscape and development of twentieth century Ireland as well as a record of several significant environmental, archaeological, social and industrial events in the nation's history.

The exhibition will be opened today (Tuesday 18 November) at 6pm by Olivia Mitchell TD, Fine Gael Spokesperson on Arts, Sport and Tourism, at the National Photographic Archive, Temple Bar in Dublin.

Among the images featured are photographs of the Hill of Tara in County Meath; the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare; Croagh Patrick in County Mayo; the Guinness Brewery in Dublin; Powerscourt House in Enniskerry, County Wicklow after it had been gutted by fire; the Fiat Ireland plant in Dublin; Áras an Uachtaráin, the President of Ireland's residence in the Phoenix Park, and Mondello Park, the Irish motor racing venue in Country Kildare. Also included are German aerial reconnaissance photographs of Dublin and its environs taken in December 1940. Among the areas identified are strategically important military barracks, power plants and airports.

The work featured in the current exhibition is drawn from three NPA collections – the Morgan collection, the Rex Roberts collection and the Independent Newspapers (Ireland) Limited collection. The first of these collections comprises almost 3,000 photographs taken by former Royal Artillery reconnaissance pilot **Alexander 'Monkey' Morgan** who became a commercial photographer after the Second World War. His work encompassed a wide range of subject matter covering almost all counties in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Some of the photographs in the collection were first published in an *Irish Independent* weekly series entitled 'Views from the air'. The year after they were published, Morgan (then aged just 38) died tragically when his twin-engine Piper Apache aircraft crashed near Shannon Airport.

The second collection featured in the exhibition comprises photographs taken by **Rex Roberts**, who ran a commercial studio in Dublin between 1961 and 2005. In addition to his everyday work which involved covering weddings, doing portrait photography and carrying out promotional assignments, he was also commissioned to carry out aerial photography assignments for companies and organisations such as Aer Lingus, Roadstone, Bord na Móna and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA). Included in the NPA's collection of 50,000 images by Roberts are 9,000 aerial shots with a particular focus on areas of Dublin and the surrounding counties.

The third strand of the exhibition features images drawn from the **Independent Newspapers (Ireland) Limited** collection which was donated to the Library in November 2004. The 300,000 images in this collection are of immense historical value and provide an excellent record of almost every aspect of twentieth century Irish life. Since the material first became available on the Library's website in February 2005, it

has consistently attracted a great deal of interest from researchers and members of the public.

The exhibition continues at the National Photographic Archive until February 2009. Admission is free.

Rare opportunity to see two of Yeats' finest plays which have been performed on just two previous occasions since 1927

17 October 2008: *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, which are among WB Yeats' finest dramatic works, have rarely been performed in Ireland. The previous occasions were in 1973, and before that in 1927-28, when they were performed at Dublin's Abbey Theatre for the very first time.

Between Monday 3 November and Thursday 6 November 2008, Dublin Lyric Player will present four performances of the two plays in the National Library of Ireland's Seminar Room in Kildare Street.

Regarded as two of Yeats' most challenging dramatic works, these versions of Sophocles' plays relate the great story from Ancient Greek Mythology of Oedipus, King of Thebes, who unknowingly kills his father, marries his mother and begets four children by her. The story is about how the Gods and his own actions bring about his downfall. In Yeats' version, the focus is on Oedipus's relentless and doomed search for the truth, on his catastrophic reaction to the knowledge of his incest and on his humanity.

While Yeats' versions of *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus* both incorporate splendid choral sequences (regarded as the finest created by any poet), they are mainly written in a superbly spare prose which makes them readily accessible to a wide audience.

Over the past three years, the Dublin Lyric Players have presented nine plays by WB Yeats, including *The Cuchulain Cycle, The Words Upon the Window Pane*, *The King's Threshold, The Hour Glass, Purgatory* and *The Dreaming of the Bones*.

The *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus* productions will be directed by Conor O'Malley who, over the past 30 years, has directed numerous plays by WB Yeats as well as poetic drama by Ibsen, Brecht, Joyce and O'Casey. The productions coincide with the Library's acclaimed exhibition ***Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats***. The performance of *Oedipus Rex* will start at 5.30pm each evening and will be followed by *Oedipus at Colonus* at 7pm on 3, 4, 5 and 6 November. Tickets cost €10 and may be purchased at the door or reserved by calling 01-603 0277.

The Dublin Lyric Players derives its name from the Lyric Players Theatre in Belfast, whose foundation stone was laid by the poet Austin Clarke. During the first thirty years of its existence, the Belfast-based Lyric Players championed the cause of Yeats's plays, putting on many of his works including the *Cuchulain Cycle*, which they performed at the official opening of the purpose-built Poets' Theatre in 1968.

POETRY ALOUD spoken poetry competition 2008 seeks to celebrate the joy of speaking and listening to poetry

15 September 2008: Would-be competitors have less than two weeks to submit their entry forms for the 2008 POETRY ALOUD competition which is being organised jointly by Poetry Ireland and the National Library of Ireland.

The closing date for entries is **Tuesday 30 September**.

This is the third year of the competition which attracted more than 700 entries from all over Ireland in 2007.

In this year's competition, which is open to any pupil attending a second-level school in Ireland or Northern Ireland, first-round entrants must speak by heart two poems – a named poem by Thomas Kinsella and a chosen work from a set list of poems by a number of different poets.

Thomas Kinsella, who celebrates his 80th birthday this year, has been selected as the prescribed poet in the first round of the competition. To coincide with the Library's award-winning exhibition, ***Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats***, which continues through 2007, Yeats will feature as the prescribed poet in the semi-final and final.

In order to facilitate and encourage schools to take part, regional heats will be held in seven locations throughout the island between 13 and 24 October. Regional winners will go forward to the semi-final, to be held in Dublin on 28 November. The final will take place later the same evening.

The final competition judges are the poet Joseph Woods, storyteller Liz Weir and actor George McMahon.

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 by Thomas Kinsella 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 by Thomas Kinsella. The runner up in each category will receive a book token.

Entry forms and competition details have been sent to all second-level schools in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Entry forms may also be downloaded from the National Library of Ireland website www.nli.ie or from the Poetry Ireland website www.poetryireland.ie/education.

Biography & Politics take centre stage this autumn at the National Library

10 September 2008: The National Library's rich collection of autobiography, biography and memoir is the inspiration for the forthcoming series of *Library Late*, a series of free public interviews with writers. The evening events which take place each month from September to December will feature four of the most prominent personalities writing within this genre giving unique historical and contemporary perspectives on Ireland.

Stella Tillyard, author of *Citizen Lord: Edward Fitzgerald 1763-1798* (1997), *A Royal Affair: George III and his Troublesome Siblings* (2006) and the award-winning *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox, 1740-1832* (1994) will be the Library's guest on Thursday, September 18, 2008 at 8pm in an interview with Myles Dungan of RTÉ.

Irish journalist, broadcaster and historian **Tim Pat Coogan** will be the Library's guest on Thursday, October 16, 2008 at 8pm in an interview with Kay Sheehy of RTÉ. Editor of the *Irish Press* between 1968 and 1987, his best selling biographies include Eamon de Valera (1993) and Michael Collins (1990). His long awaited memoir (to be published this autumn) will reveal both the public and private lives of one of Ireland's most influential historical writers.

Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair's chief negotiator in the Northern Ireland peace talks will make a special appearance at the Library on Thursday, November 20 at 8pm. In conversation with Tom McGurk of RTÉ, Jonathan will talk about his book *Great Hatred, Little Room: making peace in Northern Ireland* which provides a unique inside account into the Northern Ireland peace process.

Brian Keenan, who became headline news when he was captured and held hostage for four and a half years in Beirut in 1986, will be the Library's December guest. In conversation with Fintan O'Toole of The Irish Times on Wednesday, December 10 at 8pm, Brian will talk about his award winning books including his biography *An Evil Cradling*, *Between Extremes* which he co-wrote with fellow hostage John McCarthy and his forthcoming memoir *I'll Tell My Ma* which will be published next year.

Library Late September – December 2008, National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Events are free. For information see www.nli.ie or telephone 01 603 0317 for bookings.

Dr Garret FitzGerald to launch *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* photographic exhibition

26 June 2008: The National Photographic Archive has chosen transport in twentieth century Ireland as the theme for its next exhibition, ***Planes, Trains and Automobiles*** to be launched today, Thursday 26 June, by Dr Garret FitzGerald.

Transport – always a topical subject – is a theme that is referenced in many of the National Photographic Archive's collections, including the Lawrence Collection, the Morgan Collection, the Independent Newspapers (Ireland) Collection, the Poole Collection, the O'Dea Collection and recently acquired Justin Nelson Collection.

The 'trains' section of the forthcoming National Photographic Archive exhibition features images of early steam trains, including a Lawrence collection photograph taken on Ballydehob Viaduct around 1910. Also included is a photograph of a crash at Harcourt Street Station in Dublin on St Valentine's Day, February 1900 showing the steam train embedded in the station wall; the last train leaving Harcourt Street Station in 1958; **the launch of the DART in 1984 by the then Taoiseach Dr Garret FitzGerald**, and various photographs

of trains and drivers on long-since closed sections of railway lines in Counties Meath, Louth, Dublin and Kildare.

Featuring among the images in the 'planes' section is an historic photograph of Amelia Earhart, the first woman aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic from west to east; it shows her standing beside her plane just after she landed in Derry in May 1932. Other arresting images include a photograph of the first flight taking off from Baldonnell airfield in September 1927; the *Padraig*, an Aerlínte Eireann aircraft, at Dublin Airport in 1958; a photograph of the first plane landing at Cork Airport in 1961, and images of seaplanes at the Foynes seaplane terminal County Limerick in 1938.

Among the images included in the 'automobiles' section of the exhibition are photographs of competitors taking part in the 1930 Irish International Grand Prix in the Phoenix Park; the launch of the Ford Anglia motor car in 1959, and images of early motoring tourists in Ireland.

The exhibition, which takes place at the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar, continues until 6 October. Admission is free.

Irish Queer Archive Donated to National Library of Ireland

Monday 16 June 2008: The Irish Queer Archive – a vast collection of material which provides interesting and valuable insights into the social history of lesbians and gay men in an Irish and international context over a thirty-year period – is being presented to the National Library following a decision to donate it by the National Lesbian and Gay Federation.

The official hand-over of the Archive takes place later today at a reception at which Colm Tóibín, one of Ireland's most internationally acclaimed contemporary writers, will be the guest speaker.

The Archive contains the most comprehensive collection of material relating to the study of homosexuality in Ireland. Included are more than 250,000 press cuttings, almost 300 copies of international lesbian and gay magazines dating from 1951, and a complete set of every lesbian and gay magazine published on the island of Ireland since 1974.

Among the thousands of items to be donated to the Library are telephone call log books and research reports (including the earliest survey on Irish gay lifestyles); personal journals and diaries (including those of the late Dan Treston, former RTE playwright); minutes of meetings; correspondence; administrative files and financial records relating to the Federation's monthly magazine *Gay Community News*; audiovisual material such as slides, photographs, video tapes and DVDs; reference books, and a wide range of ephemera including flyers, posters, badges, flags and T-shirts.

Welcoming the donation, Aongus Ó hAonghusa, Director of the National Library of Ireland said that the Archive represents a very important addition to the Library's existing collections of papers relating to various cultural, political and non-governmental organisations.

"It documents one of the most significant movements for social change in modern Ireland and, when opened up to researchers, it will provide a major resource for scholars of the period."

Among the other organisations that have donated their archives to the Library are the Irish Countrywomen's Association, the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, Irish Transport and General Workers Union, the Abbey Theatre, the Project Arts Centre and the Feis Ceoil.

"We would actively encourage others to follow the lead of these organisations", Mr Ó hAonghusa said. "The Library can provide a secure home for archival material, thus ensuring that papers are accessible to future generations of scholars and researchers."

Leading Actor to take part in Yeats Celebration at the National Library of Ireland

12 June 2008: Irish actress **Fiona Shaw**, regarded as one of the finest classical actresses of her generation will make a notable appearance at the National Library of Ireland this month in **Summer's Wreath 08**, a two-week programme of events celebrating the universal greatness of the Nobel Prize- winning poet WB Yeats and held in conjunction with the award-winning exhibition *Yeats: the Life and Works of William Butler Yeats.* Shaw, whose film appearances include *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *The Taming of the Shrew, Happy Days and* T.S. Elliot's *The Waste Land, The Butcher Boy, My Left Foot* and a number of *Harry Potter* films, will read Yeats' poetry at a special lunchtime event on Wednesday, June 18, 2008 at 1pm.

Hollywood actor **Patrick Bergin**, novelist **John Banville**, film-maker and theatre director **Alan Gilsenan**, journalist **Mary Kenny** and distinguished Irish actor **Barry McGovern** are just some of the other names included in the programme of lunchtime readings and reflections. English poet **Ian Duhig**, described in the Guardian 'as the most original poet of his generation', American poet and critic **Carrie Etter** and Irish poet **Matthew Sweeney**, whose most recent poetry collection *Black Moon* was shortlisted for the 2007 T S Eliot Prize will discuss the impact Yeats has made on contemporary poets and on 20th century literature in a panel discussion hosted by **Vincent Woods** presenter of The Arts Programme (Tuesday, June 24 at 8pm). This event will be broadcast on RTÉ Radio 1. A one-day immersion course for amateurs and lovers of poetry will also be held at the Library on Thursday, June 26 and family events including tours, trails and stories for children are also programmed.

Born on 13 June 1865, William Butler Yeats became one of the greatest Irish figures in world literature. ***Summer's Wreath 08*** from Tuesday, June 17th – Saturday, June 28th, 2008 (inclusive). Admission is free. Some events must be booked in advance. See www.nli.ie or telephone 01 603 0277 for a brochure.

Travel sets the tone for the Library Late Summer Series

May 14 2008: Travel writing has always been popular but it would appear to be enjoying a renaissance of interest at present. In addition, most of our newspapers now have travel sections, and dozens of magazines are devoted to travel. Included in the National Library's collections are unique records of travels to, from and within Ireland. Recorded both in the written or printed word, through photographs, maps, prints or drawings, these personal journeys and quests for discovery give us insights into cultural and social history, architecture, art, landscape and natural history among other things.

It is therefore very appropriate that travel is the chosen theme for the forthcoming summer season of Library Late which will include **Dervla Murphy,** the internationally renowned and award-winning travel writer, who has been publishing accounts of her journeys – by bicycle and on foot — in the remoter areas of four continents since 1965. In an interview with Kay Sheehy on Thursday, July 24th, 2008, Murphy will discuss her long career as one of the best-loved travel writers and her latest book *Silverland* charting her extraordinary expedition through the snowscapes of far Eastern Russia.

The series opens on Thursday, May 28th, 2008 with a panel discussion to include **Paul Clements**, former BBC Journalist, travel writer, tutor and author of travel book *The Height of Nonsens*e, **Dr. Joachim Fischer**, University of Limerick, whose research interests include Travel Literature and **Manchán Magan**, writer and travel documentary maker whose work includes *The Big Adventure* on RTÉ Radio One and travel books *Angels & Rabies* and Manchán's Travels: *a journey through India.* The discussion, which will be chaired by Myles Dungan, RTÉ, will focus on the origins of travel writing; the leading contemporary writers of this genre and how one becomes a good travel writer. On Wednesday, June 25th, 2008 **Peter Somerville-Large,** prolific writer and author of books including *The Coast of West Cork*, *The Grand Irish Tour* and *To the Navel of The World* describing a journey in western Tibet will be the Library's guest.

Library Late has steadily grown in popularity since its inaugural event with John Banville in November 2006 and has now included interviews with Anne Enright, Roddy Doyle, Eoin Colfer, Patrick McCabe, MJ Hyland, Alistair MacLeod, Bernard MacLaverty, Andrew O'Hagan and Edna O'Brien among others. Admission is free and seats may be booked in advance. National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. For further information see www.nli.ie or telephone 01 603 0317.

National Library of Ireland acquires Roddy Doyle literary papers

29 April 2008: The National Library of Ireland is delighted to announce that it has acquired the literary papers of the distinguished writer and winner of the 1993 Man Booker Prize, Roddy Doyle.

Although best known as a novelist, he is also a short story writer, dramatist, screenplay writer, and the author of a number of works for children including several books and one play. His work has fundamentally changed the possibilities open to any fictional representation of Ireland in the late twentieth century and early twenty first century.

His novels include ***The Commitments*** *(*which was published in 1987*)*, ***The Snapper***, ***The Van***, ***Paddy Clarke, Ha Ha Ha***, ***The Woman Who Walked Into Doors***, ***A Star Called Henry***, ***Oh, Play that Thing***, and ***Paula Spencer***. His short stories are published in a collection entitled ***The Deportees***. His drama includes ***Brownbread***, ***War***, ***Guess Who's Coming to the Dinner***, and a new version of ***The Playboy of the Western World***. He has written a series for BBC Television entitled ***The Family.*** He has also written the scripts for films based on his novels ***The Commitments***, ***The Snapper*** and ***The Van***, and an original screenplay, ***When Brendan Met Trudy***. His books for children include ***The Giggler Treatment***, ***Rover Saves Christmas***, ***The Meanwhile Adventure*** and ***Wilderness***. His play for children is entitled ***No Messin' With The Monkeys!***

Welcoming the very generous and significant donation, the Director of the National Library Mr Aongus Ó hAonghusa said that Roddy Doyle was one of Ireland's most internationally acclaimed contemporary writers, 'This remarkable donation', he added, 'will be an invaluable source for researchers and others interested in Irish writing in the latter decade of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century in particular'.

The Roddy Doyle Archive consists of drafts and research material, ranging from his earliest published fiction work, ***The Commitments***, to his latest ***Paula Spencer***, winner of the Kerry Group 2007 Irish Fiction Prize. The material covers all of the author's best known work including ***The Barrytown Trilogy***, ***The Woman Who Walked Into Doors***, ***A Star Called Henry*** and ***Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha***, which won the 1993 Man Booker Prize. Doyle's writing for stage and screen is also covered with drafts of adaptations of his novels, as well as original pieces, including ***Guess who is coming to the dinner*** and the screenplay ***When Brendan Met Trudy***.

As well as his work for adults the collection also covers Doyle's works for children; ***Rover Saves Christmas***, ***The Giggler Treatment*** and ***The Meanwhile Adventures***. There are manuscripts, some with draft illustrations, of his three works for young children, as well as his novel for teenagers, ***The Wilderness***, winner of the Dublin Airport Authority 2008 Irish Children's Book of the Year (senior category).

One of the most interesting aspects of the collection is a variety of early and unpublished works. This includes Roddy Doyle's first and unpublished novel ***Your Granny is a Hungerstriker*** as well as unpublished short stories. There are also as yet un-produced screenplays *of* ***A Star Called Henry*** and an adaptation of ***Famine*** by Liam O'Flaherty. In addition there are also example of Doyle's earliest works, including his contributions to student publication at UCD, and his first plays; a spoof of ***Wuthering Heights*** for schools, and two play for the Passion Machine Theatre Company Dublin**,** ***Brownbread*** and ***War***. This early material complements Doyle's later better known works and shows his development as a writer.

Special screenings of actor Patrick Bergin's Yeats' films to be held in the National Library of Ireland's Seminar Room

Wednesday 12 March 2008: Film actor Patrick Bergin will be in Dublin this week for a special screening of films produced by his company, Amergin Productions.

The films, ***The Cat and the Moon***, ***Calvary*** and ***The Countess Cathleen*** are adapted from the original WB Yeats plays of the same name.

The screenings will take place in the National Library of Ireland's Seminar Room in Kildare Street from 1.10pm to 3pm on:

- Friday 14 March
- Tuesday 18 March
- Wednesday 19 March
- Thursday 20 March
- Tuesday 25 March
- Wednesday 26 March
- Thursday 27 March
- Friday 28 March

The public are welcome to attend, and admission is free.

Patrick Bergin has acted in a number of highly acclaimed films including *Mountains of the Moon, Sleeping with the Enemy, Robin Hood*, and *Patriot Games.* As his personal tribute (see overleaf) indicates, Patrick Bergin has a long-standing interest in the works of WB Yeats, dating back to his early school days in Drimnagh, Dublin.

The National Library of Ireland is particularly delighted to provide a venue for the screening of Patrick Bergin's Yeats' films, as they complement the Library's award-winning exhibition ***Yeats: the Life and Works of WB Yeats***. It continues to attract significant numbers of visitors to the Library's Kildare Street exhibition centre every day.

Patrick Bergin's personal observations on WB Yeats

Ever since reading *The Stolen Child* as a boy at school, WB Yeats has had a magic hold over me.

Years later, the first play that I appeared in, in London, was *The Cat and the Moon*. I played the role of the blind man in that production. I decided to begin this trilogy of films in 1991 by directing that extraordinary piece, which I believe was the forerunner of *Waiting for Godot*. It took me over five years to complete the trilogy.

Next, my beautiful wife Paula directed *Calvary*, also part of Yeats' NOH plays. Here, it is given a modern setting, but we have remained 100% faithful to the texts.
The questions posed by Lazarus and Judas in *Calvary* are profound and remind me of Yeats' own question: "What did the cross mean or symbolize before Christ?"

Yeats appeals both to the escapist in all of us, and to that part of us that rigorously pursues the truth. As well as that of course, we all know that Yeats' poetry is a great companion for a young man: many a girl's heart has been made flutter by the use of a strategic line from Yeats!

The Countess Cathleen, also directed by Paula, is in a more traditional theatrical form. In its day, it also caused controversy: Why was her soul so valuable? How could the Countess go to heaven if she had sold her soul to the Devil? These are deep spiritual explorations.

I call the trilogy that we are screening in the National Library of Ireland *Some Other Place* because I believe that Yeats' plays take you there.

I hope that everyone who sees these films will also be taken to 'some other place' and will enjoy the experience.

I would like to thank all the cast and crew for their work on these films. I am also grateful for the support received from James Hickey, from the Yeats Estate and from the Irish Government – all of which helped us to bring this project to fruition. Finally, I would like to thank Aongus Ó hAonghusa and the staff in the National Library of Ireland for helping us to make these films available to a wider public.

The DVD of *Some Other Place* is available at the National Library of Ireland's shop in Kildare Street. All proceeds from sales will go to the Ben Smyth Memorial Fund, a charity which enables young students from the Tallaght area to take up higher education courses.

Patrick Bergin
March 2008

Beyond the Pale opens at the National Photographic Archive

Wednesday 27 February 2008: Mairead McGuinness MEP today launched ***Beyond the Pale***, an exhibition of photographs which focuses on Irish cities outside the Pale – specifically Waterford, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Derry and Belfast – during the period 1880 to 1915.

The exhibition, which features photographs from the William Lawrence Collection, provides a revealing social commentary about the ways people lived, worked, shopped and enjoyed their leisure time in cities during that period.

The exhibition runs at the National Photographic Archive, Temple Bar until 31st May 2008. Admission is free.

The origins of the William Lawrence Photographic Collection date back to the production of postcards of scenic views of Irish tourist spots and urban views. Many of the ***Beyond the Pale*** exhibition photographs feature topographical views; they also feature portraits of people and activities, placing them in the context of those views. Notable city landmarks featured in the exhibition include Eyre Square in Galway, the Guildhall in Derry, Kilkenny Castle, Belfast City Hall and the Cork Opera House.

Among the more striking images of daily life in these cities 'Beyond the Pale' are photographs of a family outside their house overlooking the Corrib in Galway; children paddling in the River Shannon in the shadow of Thomond Bridge, Limerick; Ship Quay Gate in Derry, Ennis Road in Limerick and street scenes in Kilkenny.

Particularly noteworthy are the contrasting images of a scattering of fish sellers on Galway's quiet quays and the frenetic activity of ships coming and going in Belfast and Waterford ports in the early 1900s.

The Lawrence collection contains 40,000 glass plates and is one of the National Library of Ireland's most popular photographic collections. A major project is underway to digitise all the glass plate collections, including the Lawrence images. The National Library project has digitised 9,000 plates since October 2007 and will ultimately make the entire glass plate collection available online.

Theatre Revival at the National Library of Ireland

4 February 2008: *Deirdre's Sorrows: Two Versions* by W.B Yeats and Ulick O'Connor will open at the National Library of Ireland on Wednesday, February 13th, 2008 for a series of seven evening performances. This unique production directed by Caroline FitzGerald, with a distinguished cast to include Geraldine Plunkett, Janet Moran and Brian McGrath, will set Yeats' finest play *Deirdre* alongside the play of the same name written by Ulick O'Connor in the Japanese Noh form, using mask, music and dance. For the first time, audiences can experience both plays side by side and it is particularly special that they will be staged at the Library, once the meeting place for Yeats, Shaw and Joyce among others.

Yeats had a significant influence on the history of world theatre in the 20th century, principally because he incorporated into his later plays, theatre techniques from the Japanese Noh to create a minimalist "theatre of the mind." Many theatre artists, including Bertolt Brecht and Samuel Beckett, are in his debt. Yeats' version of *Deirdre* was a huge success when the leading role was played by Mrs. Patrick Campbell in a presentation at the Abbey in 1909. It was however three years later that, under the influence of Ezra Pound, Yeats began to work in the Japanese Noh form in the presentation of his plays.

Ulick O'Connor has been particularly interested in the Noh form. His Noh play *Deirdre* was first performed in the Dublin International Theatre Festival in 1980, then at the Abbey and later in New York at the Theatre of the Open Eye. The director of the Japanese National Noh Theatre Hideo Kanze has stated that 'O'Connor's *Deirdre* is the nearest to the Japanese Noh written in English'.

The Library's exhibition *Yeats: the Life & Works of William Butler Yeats*, which includes an interesting section on Yeats and the theatre, continues through 2008. *Deirdre's Sorrows: Two Versions* by W.B Yeats and Ulick O'Connor will open on Wednesday, February 13th (preview on Tuesday, February 12th) with performances on Thursday, February 14th and from Monday February 18th – Thursday, February 21st, inclusive. The performance commences at 7pm. Tickets €15 (€10 concession). For bookings call 01 603 0277.