

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, 1st October 2015

Top Irish footballer Stephanie Roche finds her Wicklow ancestors

– National Library of Ireland's Parish Registers website reveals family history of famous footballer –

The [National Library of Ireland](#) (NLI) recently commissioned research in line with the launch of the [Parish Registers website](#), revealing that the ancestors of Irish football star Stephanie Roche hailed from Co. Wicklow.

The Dublin-born striker, currently playing for Sunderland Ladies and the Republic of Ireland women's national football team, discovered through research undertaken by a member of Accredited Genealogists Ireland, that her grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather were all born in Co. Wicklow.

It was discovered that Stephanie Roche's grandfather, was born in Ballynerrin, a townland in the civil parish of Rathnew – the same civil parish in which Wicklow Town is located. Stephanie's great-grandfather and his father before him, were both baptised in Avoca in 1887 and 1858 respectively. At the time of the censuses in 1901 and 1911, the Roche family was residing in the townland of Templeraíne in the civil parish of Kilbride (Arklow).

The Parish Registers website was launched by the NLI in July and presents a digital repository of parish records, dating from the 1740s to the 1880s. The NLI's holding of parish registers is considered to be the single most important source of information of Irish family history prior to the 1901 Census.

Up until July 2015, parish records were only accessible on microfilm and, as such, those interested in accessing the records had to travel to the National Library of Ireland. This new web resource provides unlimited access to all members of the public to records covering 1,086 parishes from throughout the island of Ireland. The website does not contain any transcripts or indexes, so for a search to be successful, some known facts about a person's life are necessary.

Commenting on the research into her family history, Stephanie Roche said: "I am delighted to have discovered these fascinating details about my family history which I wasn't aware of before now. I didn't know when or where my great-great-grandfather was born, and I didn't know the name of his parents or godparents.

"Finding out about my ancestors and seeing their details hand-written on the records from the parishes where they were born way back in the 19th century has really affected me. This experience has piqued my interest in tracing my family tree – and now so many people can do this from the comfort of their own home thanks to the NLI's Parish Registers website. I feel very lucky to know about my family history, as I'm very proud to be Irish and think it's so important to know about your heritage and where you come from."

Speaking about the new website, Ciara Kerrigan, Parish Registers Project Manager, said: "The Library's holding of parish records are considered to be the single most important source of information on Irish family history prior to the 1901 Census. Up to now, they have only been accessible on microfilm and, as such, those interested in accessing the records had to visit the National Library. This new web resource provides unlimited access to all members of the public to records covering 1,086 parishes from throughout the island of Ireland.

"This access to the parish records will be transformative for genealogy services, in particular as they will allow those based overseas to consult the records without any barriers. Effectively, the digitisation of the records is an investment in community, heritage and in our diaspora-engagement".

Online access to the website is free of charge. For more information, visit: registers.nli.ie.

ENDS

Contact: Sebastian Enke / Louise Archbold, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-3239496 / 087-2601145.

Notes to Editors:

- The attached image is a copy of Patrick Roche's baptismal record from the Roman Catholic parish of Avoca. It is the last entry on the left hand page.
- The dedicated hashtag for this new online resource is #ancestorsonline.
- Since its launch, the parish register website has had over 4.7 million page views and 275,844 unique users.

About the Parish Registers Website:

The parish registers website contains approximately 373,000 high-quality, digital images from the NLI's collection of Catholic parish register microfilm reels. The registers contain records of baptisms and marriages from the majority of Catholic parishes in Ireland and Northern Ireland from the 1740s to the 1880s. The National Library microfilmed the parish records in the 1950s and 1960s. Some additional filming of registers from a small number of Dublin parishes took place during the late 1990s.

As a result of this work, the NLI holds microfilm copies of more than 3,550 registers from the vast majority of Catholic parishes in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The website does not contain any transcripts or indexes, so for a search to be successful, some known facts about a person's life will be necessary. Those who access the new online resource will be able to cross-reference the information they uncover, and identify wider links and connections to their ancestral community by also liaising with local genealogical services or family history resources. For more information, visit: registers.nli.ie.

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. 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, @NLIreland.

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 15th December 2015

National Photographic Archive receives Irish civil rights activist's photographic collection

The Christopher Robson Photographic Collection was presented to the [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#)'s National Photographic Archive today (15.12.15) by Bill Foley, Christopher Robson's civil partner, and the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), in the presence of President Michael D Higgins.

The collection was willed to the National Photographic Archive and comprises some 2,000 slides taken by Christopher Robson. The majority of the images were taken at LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) Pride events in Ireland between 1992 and 2007.

Christopher Robson was a founding member of GLEN and a well-known civil rights activist who died following a short illness in 2013. He was involved in many campaigns for equality and civil liberty and served as a long-standing board member of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the Ana Liffey Drug Project.

Speaking at today's ceremony to mark the donation, Elizabeth Kirwan, Curator of the NLI's National Photographic Archive, said: "We are strongly committed to collecting and sharing the record of contemporary Ireland and are very grateful to receive this important donation of the Christopher Robson Photographic Collection today. We would like to express our gratitude to Chris's partner Bill Foley and GLEN for their generosity and we are delighted to be able to receive this collection, both to preserve and to make it accessible to the wider public.

"Here in the National Library, we also house the Irish Queer Archive which contains the most comprehensive collection of material in Ireland relating to homosexuality, LGBT literature and general Queer studies. The photographs contained within the Christopher Robson collection offer an important insight into recent Irish LGBT history and will contribute hugely to the National Library's collections."

Kieran Rose, Co-Chair of GLEN, and founder of GLEN with Christopher, added: "I am delighted that, together with Bill, GLEN is presenting this important photographic collection to the NLI's National Photographic Archive. Chris was an extremely passionate and committed activist whose work had an enormous impact on social progress and human rights in Ireland.

"Chris's photographic and campaigning work went hand in hand, and spanned a 25 year period of remarkable and transformative change for LGBT people in Ireland. His calm leadership through GLEN was instrumental in achieving this progress and has laid the foundations for the next phase of change to ensure that LGBT people can participate fully and equally in all aspects of Irish life. I am very pleased that this work will today be included in the National Photographic Archive and therefore will become publicly available for all to enjoy."

For more information on the NLI's photographic collections and exhibitions, visit: www.nli.ie.

ENDS

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

Notes 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 6.30pm.

About the NLI

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, @NLIreland.

PLEASE NOTE: MARC O'SULLIVAN WILL ISSUE PHOTOS TO PICTURE DESKS

PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, 7th October 2015

Landmark international Heaney exhibition announced for Bank of Ireland, College Green

-Minister Humphreys announces details of exhibition for new Cultural and Heritage Centre, opening in 2017-

A major international exhibition celebrating the life and work of Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney is planned for display at the new Cultural and Heritage Centre within Bank of Ireland's College Green complex, it was announced today (07.10.15).

The inaugural exhibition in the new space, announced by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys TD and Chief Executive of Bank of Ireland, Richie Boucher, is planned for 2017. Curated by the [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#), it will celebrate the life and work of Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney (1939-2013), who was also a distinguished essayist, playwright, translator, professor, and literary critic. The exhibition will draw on the writer's extensive literary archive, which was donated to the NLI in 2011, and on archives held by Emory University. It will feature Heaney's original manuscripts as well as letters, unpublished works, diary entries, photographs, broadsides and multi-media recordings.

The Heaney exhibition will be the first exhibition to be housed in the new Cultural Centre, and is expected to run for several years. The free, public exhibition will be curated for the NLI by Professor Geraldine Higgins, director of Irish Studies at Emory University, who also curated Emory's highly praised exhibition, 'Seamus Heaney: The Music of What Happens' in 2014.

Bank of Ireland announced in February 2014 that it would make public exhibition space available to the State for a period of ten years. Recognised as important heritage buildings which have played a significant role in the history of Ireland, the new Cultural and Heritage Centre based in the College Green buildings will be utilised for the staging of exhibitions and other cultural events that will be open to the public.

Welcoming the announcement of the Heaney exhibition at Bank of Ireland's new Cultural and Heritage centre, **Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys TD**, commented: "The development of this new Cultural and Heritage Centre by Bank of Ireland for use by my Department will deliver an exciting new visitor experience in the historic and cultural heart of Dublin. A section of the iconic building at College Green will be transformed and opened to the public, and will be a fantastic addition to the city's cultural infrastructure.

"I am delighted that the first exhibition to be housed in the new centre will focus on the life and work of Seamus Heaney, who was arguably the greatest poet of his generation. It will offer an unparalleled opportunity to remember and honour the Nobel Prize winning poet. The Exhibition will showcase the best of the Seamus Heaney donation to the National Library, together with materials held by Emory University in Atlanta. I would also like to pay tribute to my colleague Jimmy Deenihan for his vision in instigating this project."

Speaking at the announcement today, **Dr Sandra Collins, Director of the NLI**, said: "We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with the Seamus Heaney archive, donated to the Library by the writer and his family, to create a landmark international exhibition. We are also thrilled to have the chance to house the exhibition in the iconic heritage buildings of College Green, which have played a significant role in Irish history. This new exhibition represents the realisation of a major aspiration for the Library, and is a fitting tribute to the significance and generosity of Seamus Heaney."

"The NLI has a distinguished record in producing exhibitions built on literary collections, and we are excited to welcome Professor Geraldine Higgins to continue this tradition. The exhibition will show that from his first publication, *Death of a Naturalist* in 1966, to his last volume, *Human Chain* in 2010, Heaney's words speak directly to us, revealing a world that is familiar yet strange, rooted yet transcendent. Visitors will have the chance to experience the writer at work behind the scenes, transforming the everyday into the marvellous."

Richie Boucher, Chief Executive, Bank of Ireland said: "I am delighted that this project can now move forward, and that the inaugural exhibition in the College Green Cultural and Heritage Centre will be one of such significance. Bank of Ireland has been part of the fabric of Irish life since 1783, has been operating from College Green for more than 200 years, and today is the largest lender to the Irish economy. Our College Green buildings form a very important part of Ireland's history and heritage, and it is fitting that they will host an inaugural exhibition of such national and international significance."

Speaking on behalf of the family, **Seamus Heaney's son Mick** said: "I'm delighted at the news that the National Library is organising an exhibition on my father's work and life and that it will be the inaugural show at this new cultural space in one of Dublin's most famous buildings. He was extremely happy that his papers found a home at the National Library and our family is honoured at the prospect of this exhibition and the opportunity for a wider audience to enjoy and engage with his archive."

Visitors will access the new Cultural and Heritage Centre at College Green via a separate entrance on Westmoreland Street. When the refurbishment of the new space has been completed, the exhibitions staged at the Cultural and Heritage Centre will be the responsibility of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in conjunction with Bank of Ireland.

ENDS

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Note to Editors

- **About the project:** In February 2014 an agreement was reached on a ten-year partnership between the State and Bank of Ireland to create a new Cultural and Heritage Centre at Parliament Buildings, College Green. Bank of Ireland will make the space available to the State for a ten-year period and will cover the costs of refurbishment and contribute to the ongoing costs of operation of the space. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht - in partnership with Bank of Ireland - will manage and operate the space for this period. The centre will be a venue for a range of important exhibitions over the ten-year period. When open for use the Cultural and Heritage Centre will be accessed by the public via the Gandon designed entrance to the College Green Buildings on Westmoreland Street. Planning permission to convert the space (currently in use as offices) to a cultural and heritage centre was granted by Dublin City Council earlier this year. It is anticipated that the Centre will open in 2017. The main exhibition space is approximately 350 sqm in size, with an additional Audio Visual facility and ancillary services at the location.
- **Photographer Marc O'Sullivan** will issue photos to picture desks this afternoon.
- Minister Humphreys, Richie Boucher, Sandra Collins and Mick Heaney viewed the following items from the NLI's collection today on a visit to BOI College Green:
 1. Belfast Group Sheet containing a typescript draft of 'Blackberry Picking'.
 2. Photograph from 'Vogue' article on Belfast by Heaney's sister-in-law Polly Devlin. It shows Heaney in 1962, when he was teaching at St. Thomas's Secondary School, in Ballymurphy. Photograph: Condé Nast Publications
 3. A notebook which was a Christmas gift from Heaney's son with the inscription, "From Christopher to Daddy Happy Christmas Daddy."
 4. The earliest notebook in the NLI collection dates from January 1966 and contains multiple early drafts, unpublished poems, reviews and a single diary entry recording a visit to Gallarus Oratory on 19th August, 1966.
 5. Death of a Naturalist. Faber & Faber, 1966.
 6. North. Faber & Faber, 1975.
- More information on the Seamus Heaney Literary Papers donation to the NLI can be found here: <http://www.nli.ie/blog/index.php/2013/04/18/the-seamus-heaney-literary-papers/>
- The dedicated hashtag for the exhibition announcement is #heaneynli
- **About the NLI:** 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, @NLIreland.

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, 30th April 2015

New Module Added to World War I Exhibition at National Library of Ireland

– World War I talks to feature in NLI Bealtaine Programme –

A new module entitled 'Desperate Times, Desperate Measures', which examines Ireland's ongoing experience of World War I during 1915, has been added to the exhibition 'World War Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience' at the [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](http://www.nli.ie).

The update includes engaging graphics, original objects and film, which tell the story of a year in which extreme means were employed in an effort to break the stalemate and bring the war to an end. The focus is on two major events which impacted on Irish lives overseas and at home: the Gallipoli Campaign and the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

Commenting on these events, Nikki Ralston, exhibition curator for the NLI, said: "Men from all over Ireland served in Gallipoli, with thousands of Irish lives lost. The torpedo attack by a German U-boat on the *Lusitania*, off the coast of Cork, resulted in the loss of almost 1,200 lives of 19 different nationalities, and provoked an international outrage, which would contribute to America's entry to WWI.

"We are delighted to now have on display the Cunard Line's official record of those who died and their burial locations, a vital document for bereaved families attempting to trace loved ones. Other original material in the exhibition includes newly discovered photographic images which depict the events which followed the sinking of the *Lusitania*."

The exhibition 'World War Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience' was launched in November 2014 by Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys TD; and the British Ambassador to Ireland, Dominick Chilcott. Since then, nearly 18,000 visitors have explored the exhibition's letters, diaries, newspapers, photographs, leaflets and posters from the NLI's collections.

A short but powerful documentary which accompanies the new module can be viewed at www.nli.ie/wwi, building a year by year picture of events available to view in homes and classrooms across Ireland.

Bealtaine Events

The National Library takes part each year in Age and Opportunity's [Bealtaine Festival](http://www.ageandopportunity.ie). The festival takes place in May and celebrates creativity in older people. This year, the NLI will host the following Bealtaine events throughout the month of May.

The '**World War Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience' lunchtime speaker series** will take place at the NLI at 1.05pm on Wednesday, 6th; Wednesday, 13th; Thursday, 21st, and Thursday, 28th May. In this series, Mark Leslie will speak about Norman Leslie; exhibition curator Nikki Ralston will introduce Michael O'Leary; Isabelle Smyth will present the Martin family's involvement in World War 1; and Emma Lyons will discuss the war effort of women at home.

The Bird Song project, a traditional song project devised and produced by artists Aileen Lambert and Michael Fortune for Bealtaine 2015, will take place at the NLI at 7.30pm on Wednesday, 6th May and Wednesday, 13th May. The event is commissioned by Age and Opportunity / Bealtaine 2015, and supported by the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) and the NLI. This research and performance project is based around the collection and performance of songs, from within the Irish tradition, which reference birds or birdsong.

A **public lecture** by artist Pamela de Brí entitled '**A Fortunate Woman**', will take place at the National Photographic Archive (NPA) at 7pm on Tuesday, 12th May. This illustrated lecture will outline the artist's journey taken as a mature artist following her passion for art after 30 years in teaching.

A guided tour of 'Yeats: The Life and Works of William Butler Yeats' followed by afternoon tea in the Café Joly will take place at 2.30pm on Tuesday, 19th May. To book a place call 01-6030259 or email learning@nli.ie.

Finally, the public talk 'Publishing Values? Women's Magazines and Everyday Life in 1960s Ireland' will take place at the NLI at 7pm on Wednesday, 20th May. In this talk, historian Ciara Meehan will explore the representation and expectations of Irishwomen in the 1960s, through the pages of women's magazines in the NLI's collections.

For more information, visit www.nli.ie.

ENDS

Contact: Martina Quinn / Sebastian Enke, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-6522033 / 087-3239496

Notes to Editors:

- 'Desperate Times, Desperate Measures' is part of 'World War Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience', a free exhibition at the National Library of Ireland supported by the British Embassy in Ireland, which examines unique aspects of Ireland's WWI experience. The exhibition is open to the public, free of charge, at the following times:
 - Mon-Wed: 9.30am to 7.45pm
 - Thu-Sat: 9.30am to 4.45pm
 - Sun: 1pm to 4.45pm
- Twitter: @NLIreland, #NLIWWI

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, 4th December 2015

National Library of Ireland acquires earliest draft of *Juno and the Paycock*

Landmark acquisition funded by Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the NLI Trust

The [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](http://www.nli.ie) has today (04.12.15) announced the acquisition of the first draft of Sean O'Casey's '*Juno and the Paycock*', regarded as one of the most significant works of Irish literature. The acquisition, which was secured for the sum of €175,000, was supported by special allocation funding from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and the NLI Trust.

The handwritten draft of Acts I and II of '*Juno and the Paycock*', fragments of Act III, listings of characters, notes and a synopsis of the play was auctioned earlier today in a rare books auction at Sotheby's in Manhattan. The autographed 62-page manuscript is in a school notebook, with the title '*Juno and the Peacock*' on the front cover, and differs substantially from the published version. The manuscript was owned by the late Robert S Pirie, an American lawyer and one of the world's leading book collectors, who died in January 2015.

The collections relating to modern Irish theatre and drama are among the great treasures of the NLI's collections, and today's auction represented an opportunity for the NLI to acquire one of the masterpieces of Irish theatre, by one of its leading playwrights. First produced in the Abbey in 1924, '*Juno and the Paycock*' is considered one of the great plays of the twentieth century.

The NLI has substantial holdings of O'Casey papers and also his personal library, writing desk and other artefacts. The acquisition of this manuscript, and the accompanying typescript, represents a significant addition to the NLI's O'Casey collections. The manuscript was acquired today by a phone bid placed for the NLI in the Sotheby's auction.

Speaking at the announcement of the acquisition, Dr Sandra Collins, Director of the National Library of Ireland commented: "This acquisition is a wonderful treasure for the collections of the National Library. This would not have been possible without the special funding from Minister Humphreys and matched funds from the NLI Trust. With their support, we were able us to secure this iconic manuscript for safekeeping in perpetuity for the nation. We look forward to preserving this precious piece of Irish history and literature and exhibiting it in the Library for all to enjoy."

Chair of the NLI Board, Paul Shovlin stated: "Minister Humphreys' support for the National Library is enabling us to move forward into the leading role that the country expects of its National Library, and despite a challenging backdrop of cuts in the last decade we can at last see a path to recovery. This investment allows the Library to fulfil its role in acquiring collections of significant cultural and heritage importance."

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, TD, said: "The National Library plays such a fundamental role in preserving our country's story and memory. It preserves and protects material of national and international significance, and I am delighted that this Seán O'Casey manuscript will now be added to its collection."

"This acquisition comes at a time when we are preparing to spend €10 million on upgrading the Library's historic buildings on Kildare Street. Today's announcement marks another important investment by this Government in our National Cultural Institutions, and I am delighted that the Library's bid for this draft of O'Casey's extraordinary play '*Juno and the Paycock*' has been successful."

For more information about the National Library of Ireland, visit www.nli.ie

ENDS

Contact: Sarah Harte, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-9858259

Note to Editors

- Interviews available on request.

About the Library: The mission of the National Library of Ireland (NLI) 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. Follow the NLI on Twitter [@NLIreland](https://twitter.com/NLIreland), Facebook [National Library of Ireland](https://www.facebook.com/NationalLibraryofIreland), [Flickr on the Commons](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nli/) and [Vimeo](https://www.vimeo.com/nli).

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, 23rd April 2015

NLI Announces Marriage Equality Referendum Web Archiving Project

– Intrinsic cultural value of digital materials to be recognised and preserved for future generations –

The National Library of Ireland (NLI) has today (23.04.15) announced that it is archiving websites related to the upcoming marriage equality referendum.

The NLI has been carrying out selective and thematic web archiving since 2011, aimed at ensuring a permanent record is kept of websites of cultural and historical importance.

Commenting today, Joanna Finegan, Assistant Keeper at the NLI's Digital Library, said: "Referendum campaigns and elections can, in hindsight, prove to be seminal moments in history. Yet, since so much information is now shared online, it has become difficult to ensure permanent records are kept of referendum and election materials. Relevant websites can quite literally disappear in the aftermath of a vote.

"Here in the NLI, our holdings constitute the most comprehensive collection of Irish documentary material in the world. In order to offer a broad representation of our history and heritage, it is crucial that our collections include not just hard-copy printed materials, but digital collections as well."

The process of identifying and selecting websites to be included in the NLI's Marriage Equality Referendum 2015 collection is currently underway. The collection will include sites documenting both sides of the debate; official sites like that of the Referendum Commission; commentary sites and political party websites. These sites are selected in order to provide as complete a picture as possible of how the referendum has been documented in the online space, for future research and to complement the NLI's existing newspaper and ephemera collections.

According to Joanna Finegan: "The purpose of web archiving is to preserve the records of today, a sample of our world, for future generations. As our daily lives increasingly occur in the digital space, we must preserve and ensure permanent access to material that originated online to have a record of human society in the 21st Century."

NLI's Web Archiving Process

Once the web site identification and selection process has been completed, the NLI contacts the website owners directly to let them know of our interest in archiving their website. Working with its web-archiving partner, the Internet Memory Foundation, the NLI arranges the technical details around collecting a snapshot of the relevant website.

"With limited full-time technical resources and restricted budgets, our web-archiving projects would not be possible without collaborating with partners like the Internet Memory Foundation, an international non-profit that supports the preservation of internet content for heritage and cultural purposes," said Joanna Finegan.

Unlike other National Libraries of a similar size we are not yet in a position to carry out full domain .ie crawls at regular intervals, but with the right resources in place, this is something we hope to get involved with in the future. In the short term, however, in addition to the referendum web-archiving project, the NLI will be creating an archive collection around the 100-year commemoration of the 1916 Rising next year. Previous websites archived by the NLI have included:

- **Proposal to Abolish Seanad Éireann, Referendum 2013:** The live website of the organisation that campaigned for a 'No' vote in this referendum, Democracy Matters, no longer exists (<http://www.democracymatters.ie/>). The site was archived by the NLI twice in October 2013, before and after the referendum.
- **Tall Ships Races, Dublin 2012:** Dublin was the final port of call for the 2012 Tall Ships Race. To coincide with this, a four-day quayside festival took place from 23rd to 26th August 2012, and was the largest event to take place in Ireland that year. The live website for the event (<http://www.dublintallships.ie/>) no longer exists; however, the site was archived by the NLI in September 2012 and twice in October 2012.
- **General Election 2011, New Vision:** New Vision was an alliance of independent candidates formed to contest the 2011 General Election and committed to voting en bloc on four key issues. The live website, <http://newvision.ie/wordpress/>, no longer exists. The site was archived by the NLI in February and March 2011.

In addition to once-off archiving, the NLI also takes regular snapshots of particular sites to capture how the content evolves over time.

For more information, visit www.nli.ie.

ENDS

Contact: Sarah Harte, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-9858259

Notes to Editors:

Joanna Finegan, Assistant Keeper, Digital Library, NLI is available for interview and comment.

The National Library of Ireland collects and makes available the shared memory of the Irish nation at home and abroad, caring for more than 10 million items, including books, newspapers, manuscripts, prints, drawings, ephemera, photographs and, increasingly, digital media.

From 14th century Gaelic manuscripts to 21st century websites, from the papers of Yeats and Joyce to the works of contemporary Irish writers, the NLI is the repository of Ireland's national written heritage. It is also the guardian of personal histories in the form of vast archives of letters, photographs and diaries, and family history sources such as the Roman Catholic parish registers.

The Office of the Chief Herald and the National Photographic Archive are also part of the National Library.

- Visit our website: www.nli.ie.
- Find us on: Twitter: [@NLIreland](https://twitter.com/NLIreland), Facebook: [NationalLibraryofIreland](https://www.facebook.com/NationalLibraryofIreland), Flickr: [NLIreland](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nliireland/), and Vimeo: [NLeventarchive](https://vimeo.com/nleventarchive).

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 19th May 2015

NLI Celebrates 150th Anniversary of W. B. Yeats's Birth with Series of Events

Throughout his lifetime, W.B. Yeats was a regular visitor to the [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#), even crediting one of the librarians with helping him improve some of his earliest creative work. Now, as part of the national Yeats2015 programme, the NLI is celebrating the 150th anniversary of W.B. Yeats's birth with a series of events in June, which will focus on the life and works of the Nobel Prize-winning poet.

Events during the month will include lunchtime talks, lectures and a panel discussion; music and theatre performances; poetry readings; and public tours of the award-winning exhibition 'Yeats: The Life and Works of William Butler Yeats'.

Commenting on the programme of events, Katherine McSharry, Head of Outreach at the NLI, said: "Yeats had a great personal connection with the NLI. It's where he conducted his first research into Elizabethan poetry as a very young man in the early 1880s; where he encountered James Joyce, in 1902; and where Thomas William Lyster, the NLI's head librarian for many years, helped the young Yeats with his early writings.

"The Yeats family donation of the WBY's papers also forms the heart of our award-winning exhibition on the poet. Given these close links between Yeats and the NLI, we are delighted to offer a programme of events this June that is dedicated to this great poet, 150 years after his birth in Dublin. To celebrate and highlight Yeats as an enduring inspiration in Irish life, we have put together a programme that offers something for everyone, gathering musicians and actors as well as Yeats lovers and scholars under the roof of the National Library."

The first event at the NLI – a lunchtime talk entitled 'A Chinese Immortality? W.B. Yeats's 'Lapis Lazuli' – will take place from 1pm to 2pm on Wednesday, 3rd June. It will be given by Professor Jerusha McCormack, who will decode the poem 'Lapis Lazuli', examining how it moves from Western versions of immortality to the more elusive Chinese vision as inscribed in the carvings on this precious blue stone. The carved piece of lapis lazuli was a gift to Yeats on his 70th birthday, and can be viewed in the exhibition.

On Thursday, 4th June at 2pm, the first of four public tours of the NLI's exhibition 'Yeats: The Life and Works of William Butler Yeats' will take place. Additional tours will take place every Thursday throughout the month of June (11th, 18th and 25th), and for this the commemorative exhibition booklet is available to all visitors in multiple languages, including Irish, English, French, Spanish, German and Polish.

The annual Joseph Hassett Yeats Lecture will take place on Thursday, 11th June at 7pm. This year's lecture 'Players and Painted Stage: The Drama of Yeats's Life' will be given by Roy Foster, Carroll Professor of Irish History at the University of Oxford. For this event, booking is required at: <http://yeatslecturenli.eventbrite.com>.

As part of the *History Ireland Hedge School* series, editor Tommy Graham will host a panel discussion on 'Yeats 150' on Friday, 12th June at 7pm. Besides Tommy Graham, the panel will comprise Catriona Crowe, Head of Special Projects at the National Archives of Ireland; P.J. Mathews, lecturer in the School of English, Drama and Film at UCD; Roy Foster, Carroll Professor of Irish History at the University of Oxford; and poet and writer Theo Dorgan.

Yeats' birthday, Saturday, 13th June, will be celebrated from 2pm to 4pm with a free programme of live flute, harp and cello music in the Library's beautiful front hall; a selection of Yeats' poems read by students from the Poetry Aloud competition; and a Yeats trail, highlighting places in the Library that are associated with Yeats. At 4pm, Katherine McSharry of the NLI will give a short talk exploring Yeats' links with the National Library. In addition, the Main Reading Room and the Yeats exhibition will be open all day, and Café Joly will serve a special Yeats birthday cake.

On Friday, 19th June at 1pm, Curlew Theatre Company will present *The Muse and Mister Yeats*. The play sketches a portrait of Yeats in love, presenting his muses as the inspiration for some of his best-known poems. Admission for this event is €5 and booking is not required.

Finally, on Wednesday, 24th June 2015 at 7pm Artistic Director of the City Theatre Dublin, Michael Scott, will present his new song cycle exploring the poetry of W.B. Yeats, focusing on the development of the Irish State and his unrequited love for Maud Gonne. Deirdre Donnelly and Des Cave will read a selection of poetry and singers Kathleen Tynan and Anthony Norton will sing the new musical setting of selected poems in an operatic and classical style with a traditional Irish 'orchestra'. Tickets for this event are €20; booking required at: https://civictheatre.ticketsolve.com/shows/873533945/events?show_id=873533945.

For more information, visit www.nli.ie.

ENDS

Contact: Sebastian Enke, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-3239496

Notes to Editors:

- Yeats was a regular visitor to the NLI throughout his lifetime from his first research into Elizabethan poetry as a very young man in the early 1880s, and credited the librarians with helping him improve some of his earliest creative work.
- He had a special status in the National Library, and in 1898 he wrote a letter to Lady Gregory from the National Library, saying: *"My only time of leisure is when I come here where I am now writing and go to a table away among the private passages of the National Library. The librarian lets me go and read where I like and so I escape draughts and noise."*
- It was also outside the National Library that Yeats first met James Joyce, in 1902. When Thomas William Lyster, the head librarian of the National Library for many years, died in 1922, it was Yeats who wrote the text of his memorial plaque, which is at the entrance to the reading room to this day. Lyster was the librarian who had helped the young Yeats with his first poetry, Yeats remembering that *"When a young man writes his first poems, there will often be a good line followed by a bad line, and he should always go to a scholar to be advised; and Mr Lyster did that for me."*

About the NLI

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 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

Thursday, 9th April 2014

NLI Celebrates 'One City, One Book': Roddy Doyle's 'The Barrytown Trilogy'

The [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](http://www.nli.ie) is playing host to three events this April that will focus on Roddy Doyle's 'The Barrytown Trilogy' as part of the Dublin City Council initiative, 'Dublin: One City, One Book'.

During the month, there will be a unique opportunity at the NLI to view related manuscripts, attend a public reading and learn about the translation of a work so rooted in Dublin into Italian.

The first special event at the NLI will take place from 1pm to 2pm next Thursday, 16th April. It will be hosted by Garrett Fagan, who has taught at universities in Dublin, including DCU and UCD, and at Warwick University in the UK. He will introduce the trilogy, followed by a curated viewing and discussion of a selection of Roddy Doyle manuscripts in the Manuscripts Reading Room. This event will be repeated the following day at the same time (Friday, 17th April, from 1pm to 2pm). Booking is required for both events.

Ger Ryan, one of Ireland's best known actresses and star of a number of screen adaptations of Roddy Doyle's work, will host a public lunchtime reading from 'The Snapper' at 1pm on Tuesday, 21st April. Ryan has worked extensively in theatre, television and film, and featured in 'The Commitments' in 1991 and 'The Van' in 1996.

'Barrytown Speaks Italian' will be the final 'Dublin: One City, One Book' event at the NLI, and will take place at 6.30pm on Monday, 27th April. Giuliana Zeuli, the Italian translator of Roddy Doyle's books, will bring the audience through her journey of translating 'The Barrytown Trilogy' into Italian.

Commenting today (09.04.15), Catherine Fahy, Acting Director of the NLI, said: "We are delighted to host three fantastic events in relation to this year's 'Dublin: One City, One Book' choice – 'The Barrytown Trilogy' – at the National Library of Ireland this month.

"The publication of Doyle's three novels announced the arrival of a new, contemporary and distinctive Dublin voice and we welcome this great initiative which shines a light on Dublin's rich and varied literary heritage."

'The Barrytown Trilogy', published by Vintage, brings Roddy Doyle's three acclaimed novels featuring the unforgettable Rabbitte family together in one volume. 'The Commitments' (1987) charts the rise (and even more rapid fall) of Jimmy Rabbitte's soul band and their bid for stardom in 1980s Dublin. 'The Snapper' (1990) centres on the speculation around Sharon Rabbitte's pregnancy; and 'The Van' (1991) follows Jimmy Rabbitte Senior and his pal Bimbo as they attempt to cash in on Ireland's legendary adventures at the 1990 World Cup.

'Dublin: One City One Book' is an award-winning Dublin City Council initiative, led by Dublin City Libraries, which encourages everyone to read a particular book connected with the capital during the month of April. The initiative started in 2006 as part of Dublin's UNESCO City of Literature designation and is supported by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

For more information, visit www.nli.ie.

ENDS

Contact: Sebastian Enke, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-3239496



PRESS RELEASE

Monday, 7th September 2015

National Library of Ireland launches 2014 Annual Review

Review contrasts National Library of Ireland with European counterparts

The [National Library of Ireland](#) has made significant achievements in increasing access of collections to the public, services for researchers, high quality exhibitions, outreach activity and an ambitious digitisation programme, despite their limited resources both from a staff and financial perspective. That's according to the NLI's Annual Review 2014, which was launched at an event today (07.09.15).

The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, TD, officiated at today's launch to mark its publication, which is the second year the NLI has published the Annual Review.

Speaking at the launch of the NLI's 2014 Annual Review today, Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, said, "I am hugely impressed by the level and breadth of activity that the NLI has engaged in over the past year. Visitor numbers have steadily increased, with online visitors increasing by an impressive 115% in 2014. This is a clear indication of the quality and popularity of the Library's significant digitisation programme, which is making the Library's fascinating material available all over the world.

"The Library's successes are a testament to the professionalism and dedication of its staff and the quality of the services and exhibitions they provide. The National Library is an essential part of Ireland's cultural infrastructure. I see the Library moving into a new phase as we put the difficult years of cutbacks behind us, and of course the NLI will play an important role in the 2016 commemorations next year. I look forward to working closely with the NLI over the coming year, and I welcome the newly appointed Director Dr Sandra Collins, particularly as we work on the development of the Ireland's first national cultural policy, Culture 2025."

Speaking at the event, the recently appointed Director of the NLI, Dr Sandra Collins, said: "2014 was a year of significant achievements, encompassing our digitisation work for the Decade of Commemorations, securing remarkable archives and presenting wonderful exhibitions on aspects of Irish life and identity for all to enjoy.

"In presenting these achievements, we must acknowledge that the Library has had to be very resilient in the face of scarce resources. As highlighted in the review, comparatively when set against our European counterparts, the NLI is significantly less resourced in terms of workforce and capacity. This is not just a trend that has emerged from the economic downturn, it is a legacy issue. The Library has always worked from a low-base in terms of resources.

"We are now moving into a new phase. The opportunity of the first national cultural policy is very significant and we are delighted the Minister is leading this initiative, and the Library will be contributing to the consultation of this policy. Our National Library should be at the heart of Ireland's culture and of a national cultural policy; it is the keeper of our country's story and memory; it is the repository for collections of national and international importance; it is a place of record and reference for future generations. The Library's collections inform our understanding of history, culture and heritage. We believe a strong Library must be a foundation stone of our cultural life and policy, more than ever in this Decade of Commemorations."

Key highlights from the 2014 review include:

- Over a quarter of a million visitors to the NLI in 2014. This represented a 5 per cent increase on the previous year, and a 90 per cent increase since 2009.
- Online visitors to www.nli.ie continued to grow in 2014, with 15.7 million interactions across NLI's website and Flickr Commons profile, a 115 per cent increase on the previous year. Over 27,000 followers were reached on Facebook and Twitter, a 35 per cent increase on 2013.
- Almost 20,000 books, newspapers and periodicals were bought or received under legal deposit, including rare items and newly published material.
- A total of 21,500 catalogue records for manuscripts and photographs were created in 2014. Particular highlights included the Christy Brown archive and the majority of the Decade of Commemorations cataloguing project.
- Seven major exhibitions were staged during 2014, attracting 176,189 visitors.

Speaking on behalf of the outgoing Board of the National Library of Ireland, Paul Shovlin commented, "The importance of the digitisation programme which took place throughout 2014, particularly the Catholic Parish Registers project, cannot be overstated. Making these records freely accessible to the public online, and increasing ease of access to our services, is critical to the NLI's role in Irish society. As the Board's term of office concludes, we regard the Parish Registers project as one of the most ambitious and substantive projects in the Library's history.

"We are extremely grateful to our donors, without whom we simply would not have been able to acquire a significant number of important papers, archives and materials. We remain concerned about under-resourcing also from a staff perspective and we continue to operate in a building not fit for purpose, which has limited us in acquiring collections of significant cultural and heritage importance. Nevertheless, the Library continues to grow public awareness, with visitor numbers and online interactions rapidly increasing – a clear indicator of our success in public engagement. However the NLI needs the staffing, financial resources and a fit-for-purpose building if it is to operate effectively in the 21st century."

Further information about the NLI is available at: www.nli.ie.

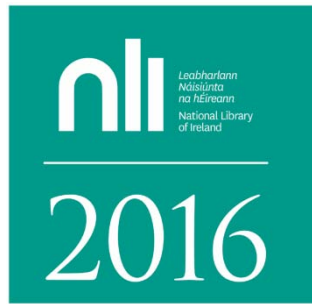
ENDS

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

Notes to Editors:

- Dr Sandra Collins, Director, NLI is available for interview and comment.
- PDF of Annual Review 2014 and Infographics are available here:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/07x2d22kpdedsib/AACp_kspYRX6PEDyVoMzvCYFa?dl=0

About the Library: The mission of the National Library of Ireland (NLI) 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. Follow the NLI on Twitter [@NLIreland](https://twitter.com/NLIreland), Facebook [National Library of Ireland](https://www.facebook.com/NationalLibraryofIreland), [Flickr on the Commons](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nliireland/) and [Vimeo](https://www.vimeo.com/nliireland).



PRESS RELEASE

Monday, 7th December 2015

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.

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.

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. #ireland2016

For more information visit www.nli.ie

ENDS

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

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/1O38In3>
 - 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, @NLIreland.



PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, 8th July 2015

National Library of Ireland Launches Parish Records Website

The [National Library of Ireland](#) (NLI) has said that the digitisation of its holding of parish records should transform and greatly enhance genealogy services in Ireland. The NLI today (08.07.15) officially launched a new web-repository of parish records, dating from the 1740s to the 1880s.

Speaking at the launch of the new site, the Acting Director of the National Library, Catherine Fahy said: “The Library’s holding of parish records are considered to be the single most important source of information on Irish family history prior to the 1901 Census. Up to now, they have only been accessible on microfilm and, as such, those interested in accessing the records had to visit the National Library. This new web resource provides unlimited access to all members of the public to records covering 1,086 parishes from throughout the island of Ireland.

“This access to the parish records will be transformative for genealogy services, in particular as they will allow those based overseas to consult the records without any barriers. Effectively, the digitisation of the records is an investment in community, heritage and in our diaspora-engagement,” said Ms Fahy.

The [parish registers website](#) will contain more than 370,000 high-quality, digital images of microfilm reels.

The National Library microfilmed the parish records in the 1950s and 1960s. Some additional filming of registers from a small number of Dublin parishes took place during the late 1990s.

As a result of this work, the NLI holds microfilm copies of more than 3,550 registers from the vast majority of Catholic parishes in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The start date of the registers varies from the 1740/50s in some city parishes in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Waterford and Limerick, to the 1780/90s in counties such as Kildare, Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny. Registers for parishes along the western seaboard generally do not begin until the 1850/1860s.

Catherine Fahy said: “Apart from this being the Library’s most significant genealogy project, this project is our most ambitious digitisation programme to date. The website builds on and extends the NLI’s existing digital library infrastructure, leveraging many open-source technologies. It has been designed to be fully responsive, working across mobile, tablet and desktop devices.”

“In using the website for family or community searches, we would recommend that members of the public consult with their local family history resource to help them refine their search. The website does not contain any transcripts or indexes, so for a search to be successful, some known facts about a person’s life will be necessary. Effectively, those who access the new online resource will be able to cross-reference the information they uncover, and identify wider links and connections to their ancestral community by also liaising with local genealogical services or family history resources.”

Speaking at today’s launch An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD, said: “I would like to congratulate the National Library on their project to make the Catholic parish registers available online. Given the devastating fire in the Four Courts in 1922, in which so many records were lost, these registers are considered the single most important record of Irish life prior to the 1901 census.

“They will be of great value to experts in the areas of history and genealogy, but also of tremendous interest to people here in Ireland and the Irish diaspora around the world. No doubt the registers will contribute to the number of genealogical tourists to Ireland, as people of Irish descent access these records online and decide to visit their ancestral home place.”

Minister Heather Humphreys said: “This new digital resource will help people at home and abroad who are interested in tracing their ancestry. The website provides access to church records dating back up to 270 years and includes details like the dates of baptisms and marriages, and the names of the key people involved. The records feature the baptisms of some very well-known historical figures, such as the 1916 Leaders Padraig Pearse and Thomas MacDonagh.

“Making this kind of material available online should help to boost genealogy tourism, and will complement the work of local historical centres in communities around the country. As we approach the centenary of the 1916 Rising next year, I am keen to make as much historical material as possible available online, so we can encourage people around the world to reconnect with their Irish roots.”

Online access to the new website is free of charge.

For more information, visit <http://registers.nli.ie/>.

ENDS

Contact: Joanne Ahern / Sebastian Enke, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-9881837 / 087-3239496.

Note to Editors

- A bank of images of parish registers is available to media via the following Dropbox link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vwd02kv1jabznwv/AAAM83aGep4nDX-xYjhCg5gQa?dl=0>. The images include details on the baptisms of Padraig Pearse, Peig Sayers and Thomas MacDonagh as well as the marriage record of Anne Devlin.
- The dedicated hashtag for this new online resource is **#ancestorsonline**.
- 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, @NLIreland.

PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, 22nd July 2015

'Portraits of the Invisible' Exhibition Reveals Images of the Irish Involved in WWI

– Exhibits include portrait photographs of Irish men and women involved in the First World War –

The [National Library of Ireland](#) (NLI)'s National Photographic Archive has today (22.07.15) officially launched 'Portraits of the Invisible', an exhibition of portrait photographs of Irish men and women involved in World War I.

The exhibition, held in partnership with the British Embassy, features a selection of the photographs collected and catalogued during a series of World War I roadshows since 2012. The NLI managed a number of roadshows with partners including Trinity College Dublin, RTE, and the Hunt Museum in Limerick. Some of the portraits featured in the exhibition were also collected at a roadshow organised by Wexford County Library, with support and advice provided by the NLI. The events were held as part of [Europeana 1914-1918](#), an initiative that encouraged people across Europe to bring family letters, photographs and keepsakes from WWI to be catalogued and digitised.

'Portraits of the Invisible' features a selection of images of soldiers and medics, nurses and stretcher bearers, drivers and cyclists, sailors and pilots, accompanied by the stories their families have treasured for generations. In addition, audio recordings bring the words written by the participants in the war in their letters, postcards and diaries, to life.

Commenting today, exhibition curator Sara Smyth from the NLI, said: "Through our involvement with the Europeana World War I Project, we have been able to unearth and make publicly available an amazing body of material portraying the Irish experience of World War I.

"It has been a great privilege to meet Irish people whose families are in some way or other connected to the events that shook Europe between 1914 and 1918 and to hear their stories. For many of the contributors, the roadshows were their first opportunity to speak publicly about a relative's involvement in WWI, others had only found out recently that family members had been involved, when a chance discovery in the attic revealed a piece of family history.

"This exhibition, in partnership with the British Embassy, shines a light on the Irish men and women of World War I, who made up a significant part of the British Armed Forces and volunteered at battlefronts across Europe and North Africa. The portrait photographs on display are by no means in pristine archival condition. Some are worn and battered having been carried around as a memento for decades; others show signs of prolonged exposure to light and some are in surprisingly good condition. However, they are an authentic representation of the memories of many Irish families and their involvement in WWI, documenting the unique Irish experience and preserving historical memory for generations to come."

Among the Irish people whose portrait photographs are featured in the exhibition are:

- Frank Meyer from Bray, Co Wicklow, who took a circuitous route to the Western Front. He worked in Australia and New Zealand before emigrating to Canada in 1910. When the war broke out he was called up and was taken as prisoner of war by the Germans at the Battle of Julien in 1915. He made two attempts to escape, once getting within ten miles of the Dutch border before being recaptured. Frank was finally released in November 1918 and eventually returned to Canada but was always traumatised by his war-time experiences.
- Charles Budd from Dublin served in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps before the war, training in farriery, or how to shoe horses, at the Curragh Camp and Arbour Hill Barracks. In 1914, he became chief instructor of farriery at the Army Veterinary School in Aldershot. Charles made a major contribution to the care of army horses when he invented a training apparatus which allowed trainee farriers to shoe a horse without needing a live horse to train on. He received an MBE in 1919 for his invention.

- Malachy Moore, a Tipperary tailor, enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps to serve as a stretcher bearer. Gallipoli was Malachy's first combat posting before serving in Egypt and Salonika, and during his hospital work a Serbian soldier gave him a Balkans War Medal, still treasured by his family. He became a patient himself when he contracted malaria and finished the war in a hospital bed. He returned to tailoring after the war and rarely spoke about this experiences. He did, however, write about his time at the front in a detailed poem entitled 'Dog Biscuits and Bully'.
- Louisa Greany from Co Kerry trained as a nurse in Dublin and by 1914 was a private nurse in London. Volunteering for the British Red Cross Society, she was sent first to the Duchess of Westminster's Hospital in Le Touquet and also nursed in Dinard's Grand Casino, which served as a war-time hospital. Louise later transferred to Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve as a Sister and served in Alexandria and Jerusalem. In 1917, she was made an Associate of the Royal Red Cross for exceptional services in military nursing.

Ambassador Dominick Chilcott and the British Embassy in Ireland

Speaking at the exhibition launch, British Ambassador Dominick Chilcott said: "The contribution of ordinary Irish men and women did not feature much in accounts of the great battles or indeed of the overall war effort 100 years ago. This exhibition aims to correct that and bring the 'common people' out of the shadows of history."

This exhibition is part of the NLI's work for the Decade of Centenaries. It offers a special insight into the experiences of individuals whose stories were previously only known to them and perhaps their families. This exhibition will add a very human dimension to our understanding of World War I and the Irish experience of it. It fits very well with the NLI's earlier exhibition 'World War Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience', which was launched at the NLI last November and will run for the next three years.

I am delighted that the British government has been able to make its contribution to both these NLI exhibitions."

'Portraits of the Invisible' is free to visit, and is open seven days weekly: Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm and 12noon to 5pm on Sundays. The exhibition runs in the NPA until January 2016.

For more information on the NLI's photographic collections and exhibitions, visit: www.nli.ie.

ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

- Family members of the case studies included above are available for comment and interview on request.
- Exhibition curator Sara Smyth, NLI, is available for interview on request.
- Photographer Mark Stedman has been commissioned to cover the launch and will issue photographs to photo desks this afternoon.
- A bank of images displayed at 'Portraits of the Invisible' is available to media via the following Dropbox link:
- <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wjdx6566bbixfv/AAC3k5E7YBa5v5XI-OdDIWPea?dl=0>
- The digital archive of all items catalogued and digitised following the WWI roadshows can be accessed here: <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/>.

About Europeana 1914-1918

Europeana 1914-1918 brings together resources from three major European projects each dealing with different types of First World War material. The result is an archive that allows the national collections of libraries to sit beside personal stories and treasures and important film archives. Together, this creates a unique perspective of the First World War, showing it from every side of the battle lines and with insights from every point of view. Further information is available at <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en>.

About the NLI

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, @NLIreland.