LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES: 'GUARDIANS OF THE WORD HOARD'

By Siobhán Fitzpatrick and Mary O'Dowd

At the Royal Irish Academy, we champion research and promote awareness of how science enriches our lives and benefits society. We bring academia, government and industry together to address issues of mutual interest, and in doing so, we contribute to public debate and policy formation.

The Royal Irish Academy's Culture and Heritage Working Group acts as a facilitator for discussion of opinions and ideas on contemporary Irish cultural and heritage policy and practice. It works in partnership with other cultural and heritage bodies and groups. Recent activities include a forum on future heritage policy and a series of discussion papers exploring aspects of creativity in the sciences, music, and the Gaeltacht, the Irish language, folklore and the vernacular.

Siobhan Fitzpatrick is the former Royal Irish Academy Librarian and **Mary O'Dowd** is Professor Emeritus at Queen's University Belfast and Secretary for Polite Literature and Antiquities in the RIA.

Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

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The Forge

As if he had been poured
in tar, he lies
on a pillow of turf
and seems to weep

Heaney "The Grauballe Man", North, 1975

The squelch and
slap of soggy peat

A poet lost in one view
Near a viewing of the
river ...... there is
the mysterious of growing.

turf - holy ground - peat
black butter - bog - mud
opened ground - turf-face
moss - mulch - river-veins
gravelly ground - sod

As his head goes light with
light, his wasting hand
Gropes desperately and finds
the phantom limb
Of an ash plant in his grasp,
which steadies him.

Heaney "The Ash Plant", Seeing Things, 1991

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Commit to medium- and long-term increases in staffing of the National Library and the National Archives in order to bring these within range of their peers in European states with similar populations. This would:

    a. facilitate clearing of backlogs by prioritising cataloguing of archives and other documentation for the purposes of security of state assets, access and digitisation;

    b. enable the institutions to scale up and proactively plan digital and other projects for wider access, especially remotely;

    c. enable greater investigation of resources for exhibitions and other activities that play a significant role in cultural tourism.

2. Support digitisation at national level. The imperative for this has been laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has up-ended 'normal' library and archive access and is driving an already accelerating demand for digital access to resources. Institutions are on the back foot in terms of availability of dedicated digital teams and equipment. Investment in this resource will be enabling and will support heritage conservation, preservation and access.

3. All heritage-related projects, not least digital ones, should have sustainability embedded from point of concept through development, and they should be future-proofed. Evidence of adherence to internationally accepted standards for digitisation, inclusion of metadata, operability across platforms and long-term sustainability should be a condition of funding.

4. The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation should consider how Horizon Europe could assist with job creation in the library and archive sector, as well as with the Global Ireland programme, to grow international access to the rich literary and historical heritage of the island. Horizon Europe will emphasise collaboration between universities and cultural institutions, including libraries and archives. This is already being anticipated by many cultural institutions in Europe who seek to implement the FAIR principles,[1] created with research data in mind, into their cultural heritage sharing practices.[2] Guidance for this kind of collaboration can be found in the 2019 report

[1] Mark D. Wilkinson, Michel Dumontier *et al.*, 'The FAIR guiding principles for scientific data management and stewardship', *Scientific Data* **3**, 160018 (2016), 15 March 2016; available online at: https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18 (20 November 2020).
[2] See also Natalie Harrower, Maciej Maryl, Beat Immenhauser and Timea Biro (eds), *Sustainable and FAIR data sharing in the humanities: recommendations of the ALLEA E-Humanities Working Group* (Berlin, February 2020); available online at: https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.tq582c863 (20 November 2020).

Opposite: Viewing the Seamus Heaney: 'Listen now again' exhibition at the Bank of Ireland Cultural & Heritage Centre, Dublin. By kind permission of the National Library of Ireland.

from DARIAH Europe on cooperation between researchers and cultural heritage organisations, which features a number of examples from Ireland.[3]

5. All archival and library services and policies should take the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity into account – including in relation to collecting policies. We also recommend collaboration across regions and sectors for storage and collecting policies in order to build upon regional strengths, ensure comprehensive national coverage and that there are collections of last resort where the only extant copy of a publication is preserved to guarantee future availability.

6. Review and widen the scope of the National Archives Act (1986) to include coverage of bodies established since 1986 and to allow for the inclusion of bodies created in the future under the act. **The state is in serious danger of losing critical data for the record and for historical enquiry**. Records of the HSE, Tusla and Uisce, amongst others, need to be brought under the act's remit.

7. We recommend continued support for the 2018 public library strategy document, *Our public libraries 2022—Inspiring, connecting and empowering communities*, and further cross-departmental work to integrate the public libraries in the heritage agenda.

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[3] Georgia Angelaki *et al.*, *How to facilitate cooperation between humanities researchers and cultural heritage institutions*, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2587480 (20 November 2020).

HERITAGE IRELAND 2030 AND IRELAND'S DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

The Royal Irish Academy's Culture and Heritage Working Group warmly welcomed *Heritage Ireland 2030: a vision for Ireland's heritage,*[4] celebrating the past in our monuments, landscapes and environment, and providing opportunities for exploration, learning, economic and cultural activities and investment.

The plan's three central themes (Communities and heritage; Leadership and Heritage; and Heritage Partnerships) encourage actions under a broad range of objectives, which encompass the role of libraries and archives as custodians of the documentary heritage, their contributions to the cultural heritage agenda, and their enormous potential for the future.[5]

This paper originated from a forum of invited leaders in the library and archive sector—'guardians of the word-hoard'[6]—held in the Royal Irish Academy in May 2019. At the meeting, participants explored ways in which the sector could support the *Heritage Ireland 2030* agenda. The forum identified issues that should be addressed if vital records held at state, institutional and community level are to be preserved, and, in a democratic, multicultural society, made accessible. Subsequent to the forum, the RIA consulted with a range of archivists and librarians at local and national level. We are grateful to them and to the participants at the forum for their advice and contributions to the content of the paper, which broadly addresses *Heritage Ireland 2030*'s three themes.

Since March 2020 the global pandemic of COVID-19 has changed the context in which all cultural institutions function. Closures, restricted attendance numbers and the necessity to make material available in a digitised format have all presented considerable challenges for staff. As this paper makes clear, these difficulties compounded the existing problems in the libraries and archives sector. By international standards, the two main national institutions—
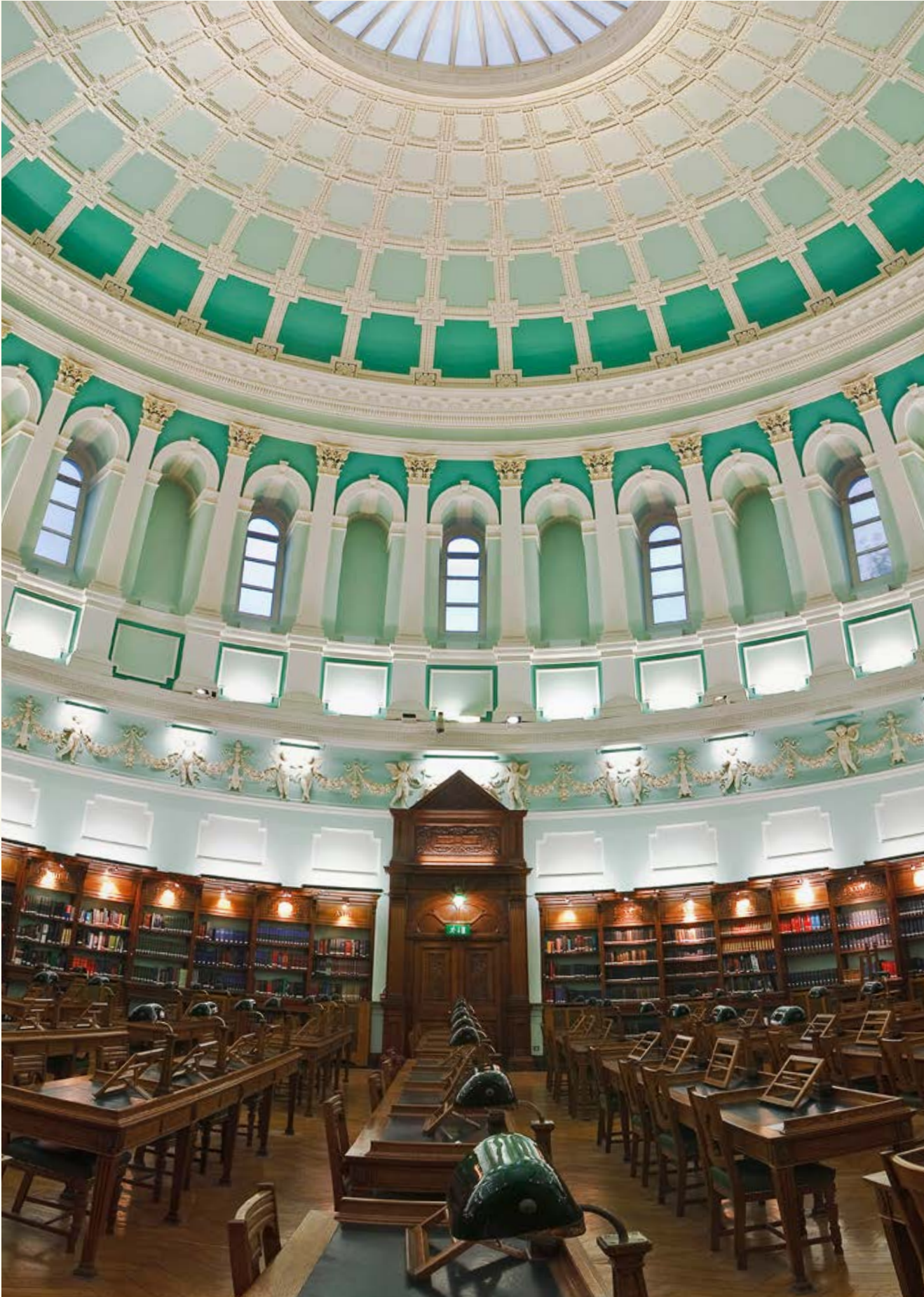
The iconic National Library Reading Room. By kind permission of the National Library of Ireland.

the National Library of Ireland (pictured, left; henceforth National Library) and the National Archives of Ireland (henceforth National Archives)—are chronically under-staffed. Quite simply, they do not have the staffing resources to implement the ambitious digital programmes that the pandemic has highlighted as essential for the reading public.

On a more positive note, COVID-19 has drawn the attention of government and the public to the vital contribution that cultural institutions make to society. Libraries and archival repositories are the guardians of the records of a people or rather, of multiple groups—ethnic, political, faith and otherwise—over generations and often over millennia. Their collections encompass and connect the personal, the local, the national and the international. They connect Ireland to the global intellectual world and the 'larger universe of recorded knowledge'.[7] As the poet Seamus Heaney noted, libraries are also essential institutions in a modern society:

> Libraries … are central to the common weal, the general well being of the country and the culture. They function now as they have functioned in all civilizations as guarantors of literacy and learning and cultivated leisure, but today they are equally important as sponsors of an ever more empowered, egalitarian, democratic world.[8]

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[7] See the mission statement of the National Library of Ireland; available at: https://www.nli.ie/en/intro/about-the-library.aspx (20 November 2020).
[8] Seamus Heaney, 'In praise of libraries and librarians', 8.

NATIONAL REPOSITORIES

The National Library of Ireland and the National Archives of Ireland are the state's primary custodians of our printed and archival resources. The National Library's mission 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. The National Library houses the papers of some of the world's best-known writers, such as Maria Edgeworth, Seamus Heaney and W.B. Yeats, which feed long-term exhibitions and also attract research activity. It is also the repository of large collections of historical and family papers that inform the exploration of our past from many different perspectives.

The National Library's manuscript collections are consulted by scholars from all over the world, but their potential for cultural tourism could be more effectively exploited. The exhibitions hosted by the National Library on the papers of W.B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney have attracted large attendances: over 700,000 visitors to the Yeats exhibition and in excess of 100,000 visitors to the Heaney exhibition in its first year of operation. The genealogical services offered in the National Library and the National Archives are also extensively used by members of the Irish diaspora as well as by Irish-born citizens tracing their family history. International scholars who come to Dublin to use the resources of the National Library frequently combine their visit with a longer holiday. Many relish the opportunity to study in the library referred to in Joyce's *Ulysses* and welcome its proximity to other well-known libraries such as Archbishop Marsh's Library, Trinity College Dublin Library and the Royal Irish Academy. Tapping into scholars' experiences as cultural tourists and to the city's UNESCO City of Literature status could boost Dublin as a cultural tourism site.

As the official repository for government records, the National Archives plays an essential role in the maintenance of a democratic society. It is responsible for preserving and providing public access to the records of the Irish state—those of government departments, state agencies (although coverage is not comprehensive) and the courts service. This facilitates accountability and transparency of the government and the civil service.

In 2010 the UNESCO Declaration on Archives recognised that:

CAMPAIGN AGAINST WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

(Under the Auspices of the
National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage.)

A MEETING

WILL BE HELD IN THE

MANSION HOUSE,

DUBLIN,

Wednesday, December 6th, 1911.

Speakers:

Mr. FRANK FOX

Of Australia.

Mr. ORMSBY SCOTT,

Chief Agent National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage.

Chair to be taken at 8.30 p.m., by

MR. ALBERT E. MURRAY, R.H.A.

ADMISSION FREE.

Come and hear an Australian on Woman and the Vote.

GERRARD BROTHERS, DUBLIN.

Poster for meeting in Dublin in 1911 of the Campaign Against Women Suffrage. By kind permission of the National Library of Ireland.

Archives are a unique and irreplaceable heritage passed from one generation to another. Archives are managed from creation to preserve their value and meaning. They are authoritative sources of information underpinning accountable and transparent administrative actions. They play an essential role in the development of societies by safeguarding and contributing to individual and community memory. Open access to archives enriches our knowledge of human society, promotes democracy, protects citizens' rights and enhances the quality of life.[9]

[9] UNESCO and the ICA (International Council on Archives), *Universal declaration on archives* (Paris, 2011).

By kind permission of the National Archives of Ireland.

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1911.

Two Examples of the mode of filling up this Table are given on the other side.

FORM A.

No. on Form B. 3

RETURN of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 2nd of APRIL, 1911.

Number.	NAME AND SURNAME.		RELATION to Head of Family.	RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX.		RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION.	PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE.				WHERE BORN.	IRISH LANGUAGE.	If Deaf and Dumb; Blind; Imbecile or Idiot; or Lunatic.
	Christian Name.	Surname.				Ages of Males.	Ages of Females.		Whether "Married," "Widower," "Widow," or "Single."	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted.	Total Children born alive.	Children still living.			
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
1	Patrick	Gray	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	42		Caretaker Warehouse	Married	8	4	3	Co. Cork	—	—
2	Rosanna	Gray	Wife	Do Do	Do " Do		38		"	"			City Dublin	—	—
3	Thomas	Gray	Son	Do Do	Do " Do	7		Scholar	Single				" "	—	—
4	Patrick	Gray	Son	Do Do	Cannot Read	3		—	"				" "	—	—
5	Denis	Gray	Son	Do Do	Do Do	1		—	"				" "	—	—
6	Rosanna	Hackett	Step Daughter	Do Do	Read & Write		14	Packer in Paper Stores	Single				" "	—	—
7	Christina	Hackett	Step Daughter	Do Do	Do Do		16	—	"				" "	—	—
8	James	Dunne	Boarder	Do Do	Do Do	32		Licensed Carman	"				" "	—	—
9															
10															
11															
12															
13															
14															
15															

I hereby certify, as required by the Act 10 Edw. VII., and 1 Geo. V., cap. 11, that the foregoing Return is correct, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Christopher Butler Signature of Enumerator.

I believe the foregoing to be a true Return.

Patrick Gray Signature of Head of Family.

A man holding the charred remains of manuscript in front of the bombed building of the Public Record Office of Ireland in 1922. This is possibly Herbert Wood, Deputy Keeper of the Record Office (UCD Archives P80/PH/33 Desmond FitzGerald Photographs). By kind permission of UCD Archives.

The records preserved in the National Archives also constitute a primary resource for historians, political researchers, statisticians and journalists researching the history of recent administrations and the decision-making processes underpinning government policy. Government recognition of the role of the National Archives in a democratic society is important in a world in which records—past and current—of immense cultural and national importance have routinely been targeted in war and civil strife.[10]

Decades of subsistence funding post 1922, with the notable exception of the move of the National Archives to its Bishop Street premises, placed both it and the National Library on

[10] Examples in the past thirty years include the bombing on 25/6 August 1992 of the National Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo, with the loss of one life, three million books and hundreds of unique documents (80 per cent of its contents) relating to Bosnia's multicultural identity; the targeting in 2013 of the Ahmed Baba Library in Timbuktu by Malian militants; the complete destruction of Mosul's (Iraq) university library by ISIS (2014–16) with the loss of well over one million books and rare materials as well as electronic content.
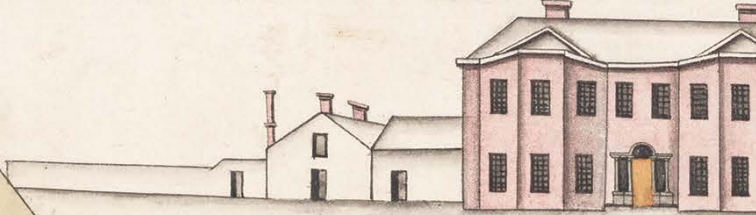
Libraries and Archives: 'Guardians of the word hoard'.
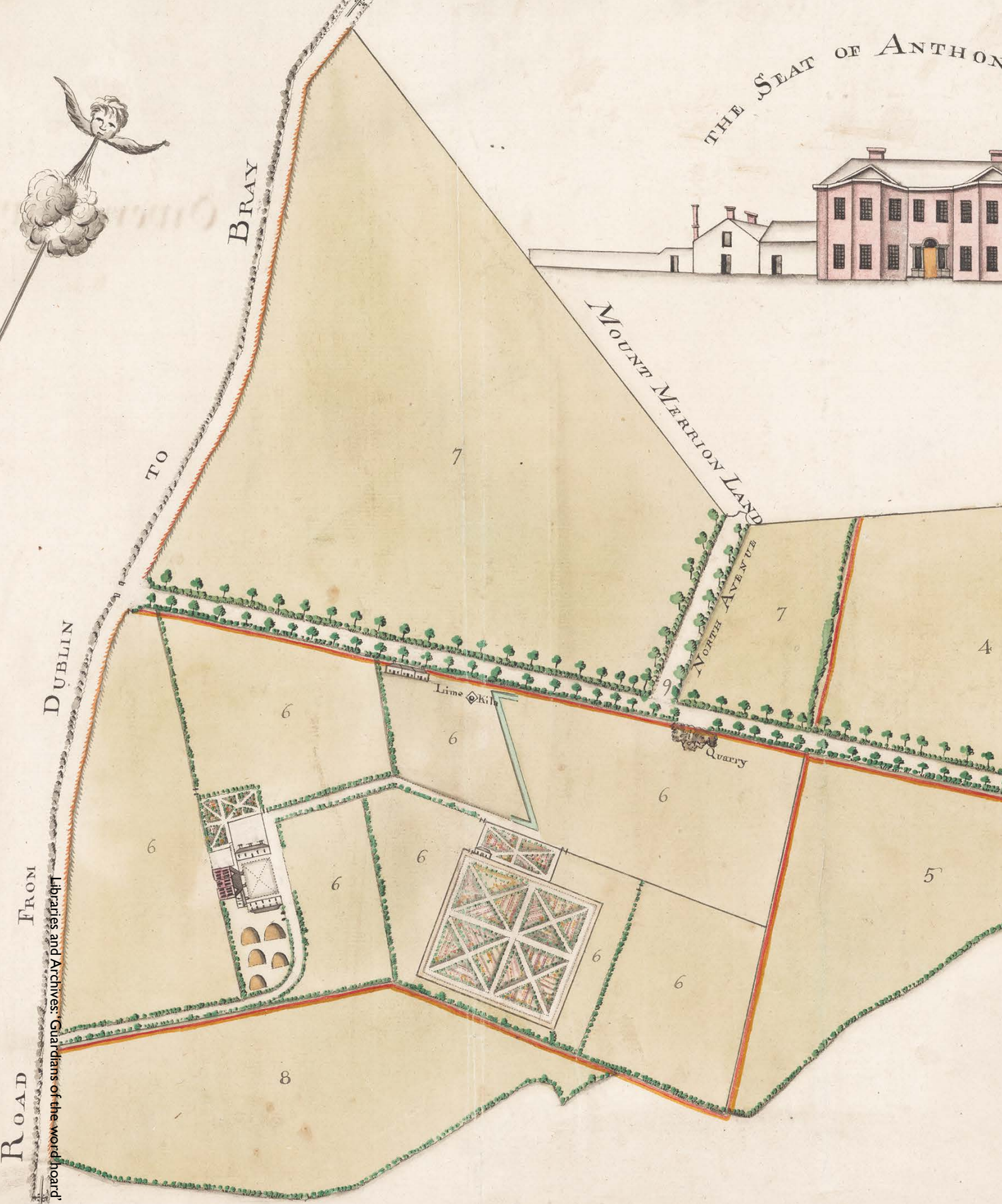
a deficit footing. Therefore, the significant capital funding provided under Project Ireland 2040 for the physical expansion of the National Archives and the extension of the National Library's in-house storage facility is very welcome. The new building programmes will considerably extend the public facilities and storage capacity of the two institutions. This will in turn enhance the state's cultural capital and infrastructure.

Whilst acknowledging the capital funding for extra storage facilities at the National Archives and the refurbishment of the National Library, it is important to point out that these improvements need to be consolidated by additional staffing resources. The recent increase in departmental recruitment of archivists for the National Archives is a step in the right direction. It must be acknowledged, however, that staffing levels in both the National Library and the National Archives remain far below those of equivalent international institutions. Comparison with analogous institutions in other countries confirms that the National Library and the National Archives are **seriously under-staffed**. The National Library, for example, employs 96 full-time staff, while equivalent institutions have multiples of that number:

Pembroke Estate Papers, a map of Owenstown Land (detail), Jonathan Barker, Surveyor 1762 (NAI PRIV /2011/2/2/1).
By kind permission of the National Archives of Ireland.

Comparative Personnel Data[11]

National Library of Ireland	96
National Library of Scotland	300
National Library of Finland	220
National Library of Norway	470
National Library of the Czech Republic	500
National Archives of Ireland	54.8
Public Records Office, Northern Ireland	76
National Records of Scotland	267
Rigsarkivet (Danish National Archives)	226

It is not an exaggeration to say that the staffing in both Irish institutions is not fit for purpose. Low staff numbers have seriously curtailed the essential public services offered by both institutions:

- Before the arrival of COVID-19, the National Library was obliged to introduce restricted consultation times. The current ordering system for manuscripts, also necessitated by staff shortages, is very restrictive, particularly for rural-based and international researchers.
- Shortage of staff has curtailed the ability of both institutions to catalogue and list extensive back-logs of manuscript material.
- Since the 1970s, the National Archives has collected thousands of business records of small and large companies and significant collections of solicitors' records from all over Ireland. The records tell the story of Ireland's economic development, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They include, for example, the papers of the Dublin Stock Exchange, the Dublin Port and Docks Board, the Coombe Hospital, Irish Cinemas Ltd, P.J. Carroll & Co., Dundalk, tobacco and cigarette manufacturers, and many more. A large part of the business records in the

[11] The archives' figures are based on those cited in Creative Cultures, *National Archives Ireland: a comparative management survey* (Skipton, 2019); available online at: https://www.forsa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Forsa-NAI-final-2.pdf (20 November 2020). Courtesy of Fórsa.

National Archives remain uncatalogued, hence invisible and inaccessible to readers. There is a role for a permanent Business Records Officer and for an ongoing programme of listing.

Recommendations

1. The capital investment in the National Library and the National Archives should be followed up with funding for the appointment of new staff, who can help to develop both institutions as leading cultural institutions and important sites for cultural tourism and to bring them up to par with peer institutions internationally. The expansion of the digitisation programmes for both institutions can not take place without additional staff.

2. The National Library studentships developed in the 1990s should be expanded and introduced in other institutions, particularly the National Archives. Cataloguing is essential, for the security of collections, as well as to enable visibility and access. Down through the years, two graduate students were funded to spend a year in the National Library undertaking archival work; holders of the studentships have produced excellent catalogues and transcripts of family and other papers, which are now available online through the library's website. Many of the holders of these studentships have also gone on to hold archival and university posts in Ireland and elsewhere.

3. The National Archives Act (1986) should be reviewed, with a view to making it more current and open-ended in scope. It is out of date and does not cover the records of state bodies established since the legislation was passed. It was also conceived without the challenges of born-digital records or digitisation in mind. The records of Uisce-Irish Water, the Health Services Executive (HSE), Tusla, the Freedom of Information Commissioner's Office, the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner and the records of cross-border and other recent bodies, as well as those of future agencies, must be included in the act's coverage. In addition, hospitals under the HSE remit are not covered and have no obligation to transfer records to the National Archives, nor do voluntary hospitals. The value of HSE records will accumulate in the future, when historians review Ireland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the HSE's roles at so many levels.

OTHER REPOSITORIES WITH NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

In addition to the National Library and National Archives, our cultural institutions include other libraries, such as the Chester Beatty, renowned globally for its Islamic, Christian and Asian art and manuscript collections. The nine university libraries in the state, as well as the two universities in Northern Ireland and other research libraries such as that of the Royal Irish Academy, all contain very significant collections of books, manuscripts and other documents relating to Ireland and beyond. Most of the university libraries receive Irish-published items through legal deposit, while Trinity College Library has been the recipient of UK legal deposit since 1801 and more recently of non-print legal deposit, that is, e-books, journals and other materials. The 2019 forum noted the storage problems encountered by many libraries. We note a measure of support for collaborative efforts to resolve the issue at a small scale/regional level.

The majority of third-level and other academic libraries endeavour to facilitate not only their own constituencies but also the needs of others who would benefit from access to their resources. Most of these libraries engage in various forms of collaboration with other institutions and libraries. Many also work with schools and use digitisation as a means of providing large-scale access to their holdings. The role of the Digital Repository of Ireland, a newer entrant to public archiving in Ireland, is growing and should be exploited by smaller institutions.

Ireland is almost unique in Europe in not producing an annual record of publications (including electronic and web publications), many of which are issued in small print runs and quickly disappear. A comprehensive national bibliography is an essential resource as it captures a country's published output in all formats. A national bibliography could also contribute to the Global Ireland project, highlighting online the literary, historical and other works published on the island.

Recommendations

1. Establish an Irish national bibliography.
2. Develop collaborative library storage on a small scale/regional level. We would also encourage investigation of more long-term, secure, environmentally controlled storage facilities to meet the needs of repositories across the island of Ireland.

Opposite: Handscroll of birds and flowers with ink and colours on silk, made by an unknown artist *c.* 1800 in China (detail). By kind permission of the Chester Beatty Library. © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

HERITAGE IS INTERNATIONAL

The Chester Beatty is a National Cultural Institution and an example of a private library that is now a public museum that holds collections of international repute. The collection of Qur'ans is of major importance to Islamic scholars, whilst the early Christian Greek and Syriac fragments are amongst the earliest examples of biblical texts. The collection is especially rich in Middle Eastern and Asian literature and art. It is an immense resource, not only for society in Ireland but for the many visitors to the capital who can explore the current exhibitions, and for international scholars for whom it provides a primary resource in the fields of Islamic, Asian and early Christian studies. The Chester Beatty collections are available online.

www.chesterbeatty.ie

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

'A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert'—Andrew Carnegie, steel magnate and philanthropist; founder of the Andrew Carnegie Foundation.

Local libraries and archives are key institutions in the cultural landscape of Ireland.

- They preserve and provide access to the documentary evidence that underpins the burgeoning popularity of family history research.
- They encourage awareness of local history and heritage, as libraries provide the facilities that are key to the success of the Creative Ireland and Decade of Centenary initiatives.
- As trusted agents, they serve as cultural hubs in increasingly diverse local communities, enabling newcomers to learn about where they live and challenging everyone to engage with the culture and heritage of the many ethnicities who contribute to our society today.

Established under the Public Libraries (Ireland) Act (1855), public libraries are open to all for free via 330 library branches and a mobile library fleet. We now have 31 local authority library services across 26 counties; 17.3 million visits were recorded in 2016.

In his preface to the strategy document *Our public libraries 2022–Inspiring, connecting and empowering communities*, Michael Ring, minister for Rural and Community Development (2017–20), acknowledged the local library as 'an essential community service'.[12] The public library network is committed to enhancing its role in the community. The values that inform our public libraries are similar to those underpinning the National Library and the National Archives: they all aim to serve and enable the citizen and the wider community.

The strategic priorities outlined in *Our public libraries 2022* underline the central requirements of libraries in a democratic society: more systematic support for literacy programmes; support for lifelong learning; development of the library as a 'go-to-place' for reliable, authoritative information; and consolidating the library as a focal point for community and cultural development. A strategic priority is to help people realise their potential, providing 'opportunities for people to develop as literate and informed individuals'. These objectives embrace the concepts of social inclusion in every sense.

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[12] Government of Ireland, *Our public libraries 2022–Inspiring, connecting and empowering communities* (Dublin, 2018), 3; available online at: https://assets.gov.ie/4278/111218115931-79413828933647aaa21ce9157ee170ba.pdf (9 December 2020).

Research Room, Dublin City Library and Archive, Pearse Street. By kind permission of Dublin City Libraries.

The promotion of digital literacy for all citizens, from children through to seniors, is another important area in which our public libraries are playing a key role. Government policy has identified media literacy training as an essential element in the creation of an informed, savvy citizenry, capable of discriminating truth from fake 'facts'. Local libraries are essential for the work of the 'Be Media Smart' initiative developed by Media Literacy Ireland.[13] This policy has acquired a new urgency in the context of COVID-19.
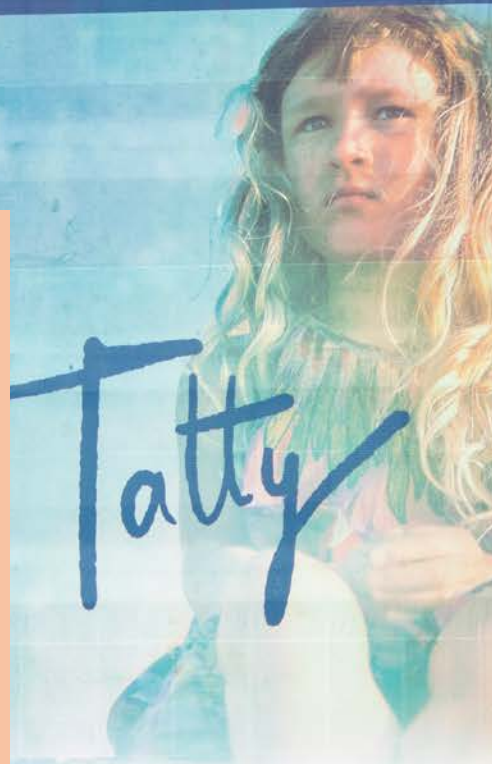
COVID-19 has also sharpened our awareness of the inequalities in society in relation to access to digital resources. Many databases, e-books and online newspapers have high subscription fees, which large sections of society can not afford to access privately. Libraries should be assisted in their endeavours to provide free access to such resources. In this regard, we welcome the Department of Rural and Community Development's supplementary funding of €400,000 towards the purchase of e-books in order to meet increased demand on the online BorrowBox service during the pandemic, as well as further funding to the tune of €3 million to facilitate building adaptation necessitated by COVID-19.

Recommendations

1. Continued support for the strategy outlined in *Our public libraries 2022–Inspiring, connecting and empowering communities*.
2. Continued support for libraries to develop new IT and digital resources strategies in a post-pandemic society.

[13] Information on the Be Media Smart initiative can be accessed at: https://www.bemediasmart.ie/ (10 december 2020).

CELEBRATING LITERATURE AND READING

Dublin UNESCO City of Literature initiatives are coordinated by Dublin City Libraries in partnership with a wide range of literary agencies across the city. The Dublin Literary Award for the promotion of excellence in literature, sponsored by Dublin City Council and managed by the library service, is one of the most prestigious international awards for literature and is a good example of engagement at local level— nominations are submitted by library systems in major cities throughout the world. Literature has featured as a very significant element of our heritage over a millennium.
en.unesco.org

LET'S READ!
DUBLIN ONE CITY
ONE BOOK

Tatty

RISTINE DWYER HICKEY

ublinonecityonebook.ie

Liberty Hall Theatre

DIGITISATION

The RIA forum identified digitisation and digital access as a priority and explored the different ways in which the digital revolution has impacted on the work of archives and libraries.

Large-scale digitisation projects fulfil the mandate of publicly funded institutions to provide greater access to their resources. Irish libraries and archives have created some excellent online material. The digitisation of the 1901 and 1911 census records by the National Archives has transformed genealogical research and contributed significantly to publications on Irish social and economic history. The rich online archive of the Bureau of Military History and the Military Service Pensions Collection is also widely used by members of the general public searching for family members who participated in the struggle for independence and the civil war.

The creation of an online resource facilitates wider access to original documents, but it also creates an opportunity to provide readers with transcripts and translations of difficult-to-read manuscripts. An excellent example is the 1641 Depositions project based in Trinity College Dublin. The team at TCD in collaboration with the Irish Manuscripts Commission is also developing an exciting project linking the seventeenth-century Down Survey maps with the earliest surviving Irish land survey, recorded in the Books of Survey and Distribution. Similarly, Transport Infrastructure Ireland has made freely available, through the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI), a massive collection of archaeological excavation reports, commissioned by the National Roads Authority during Ireland's infrastructure building programme 2001–16.[14] These are major projects often funded through joint research funding bids and based on institutional collaboration.

The digitisation of the 1926 census is the logical follow-up to the creation of the online versions of the 1901 and 1911 censi. Making the 1926 census available online would be hugely welcomed by the genealogical and family history community. It would also enhance the global reach of Ireland, as millions of people in the Irish diaspora trace their family's emigration to the early decades of the twentieth century. Access to the 1926 census would enable them to identify their family members, and the location and size of households on the eve of their departure. The opening of the census data to historical researchers would also contribute significantly to the historical analysis of the foundation years of the Irish Free State.

[14] Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 'TII digital collections launch', Press release, 19 June 2017; available online at: https://www.tii.ie/news/archaeology/tii-digital-heritage-coll/ (20 November 2020).

Opposite: Dublin One City One Book is a Dublin City Council initiative, led by Dublin UNESCO City of LIterature, Dublin City Libraries. By kind permission of Dublin City Libraries.

Shelled General Post Office from T.J. Westropp's photo album 'The destruction of Dublin'. Images accessible at www.dri.ie. By kind permission of the Royal Irish Academy Library.

Less dramatic but of equal importance are the smaller digital projects undertaken by all libraries and archives. The provision of online catalogues and lists of documentary material is now a routine part of the tasks of archivists and librarians. It is a prerequisite for the discoverability of a country's documentary resource. If resource aids are not visible on the web there is a danger that the resources themselves will remain unused or unseen by users. Over the last decade, the National Library has digitised more than 117,000 items, incorporating over 660,000 individual images, from the national collections—photographs, manuscripts, maps, drawings and much more—and made these freely available online.

Most local and private libraries have strong digital policies and programmes. Many libraries also aim to go beyond the provision of a catalogue or list through uploading digital images of the source and, staff and time permitting, a modern transcript. A good example is the digital library of Queen's University Belfast, which includes the correspondence of the

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PROGRESS: AMPLIFYING CHANGE: A HISTORY OF THE ATLANTIC PHILANTHROPIES ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND

Over a period of 30 years, the Atlantic Philanthropies invested over $1.8 billion in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to fund initiatives in higher education, research, human rights, the peace process, and building communities. Launched in 2020 as Atlantic Philanthropies was closing its doors, the new Amplifying Change archive, by the Digital Repository of Ireland, combines the records of this grantmaking with newly collected oral histories, shedding light on the incredible range of activities undertaken to support universities and social justice actions across the island. The digital exhibitions are freely available, and sustainably preserved for the long term in Ireland's certified national digital repository.

www.dri.ie/atlanticphilanthropies

writers Edith Somerville and Violet Martin (Ross). University College Dublin's Digital Library includes the UCD Irish Dialect Archive, recordings and other data from the National Folklore Collection, and a plethora of social and historical documents as well as hard research data. The Royal Irish Academy Library has also digitised its important collection of Irish dialect recordings commissioned by the early Free State government; this PRTLI-IV-funded project includes Gaelic speakers recorded across the island between 1928 and 1931, and transcripts, translations, folklore notes and biographical data are accessible online along with the recordings.

Digitised material requires digital preservation—an ongoing process of monitoring and intervention in order to ensure that the material is accessible for the long term. It is not sufficient for libraries and archives to digitise collections—they must also have a strategy for sustained accessibility. Archival/historical databases created fifteen or twenty years ago now have access problems because the software on which they were based is out of date and resources have not been provided to maintain them. More recently, the Digital Repository of Ireland, hosted by the Royal Irish Academy, has provided an essential service in preserving data digitised by a range of smaller archives and libraries for the long term. The DRI not only preserves the data for future users, it also makes the material accessible free of charge through its online portal.[15]

Born-digital The digital revolution has also produced new challenges for the collecting policies of libraries and archives. The collection of electronic data is challenging and raises serious questions about the authenticity of records, compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; EU 2016/679), and the sustainability of electronic resources. This is particularly a problem for the National Archives, charged with collecting public records and making them accessible. There are challenges associated with accessing and maintaining servers of data deposited by government departments, as well as with authenticating emails and other records held on servers since the early days of digital archive deposit. The National Archives currently lacks the capacity to ingest, preserve and make available electronic or 'born-digital' materials; putting a solution in place requires planning and the integration of new technologies into workflows, as well as sustained additional resources for staff to manage these processes.

The National Library's web capture project is another aspect of the new imperatives for archival institutions posed by the digital revolution. Unlike the paper document, digital information is often temporary and replaced on a regular basis. It will not survive for future

[15] Information on the work of the Digital Repository of Ireland and the resources that can be accessed via the repository is available at: https://www.dri.ie/ (20 November 2020).

IRISH SCRIPT ON SCREEN (ISOS)

A collaboration with multiple libraries in Ireland and internationally to digitise Irish-language manuscripts in order to:

- provide visability on the internet for a vital part of Ireland's cultural heritage;
- place these primary materials at the disposal of scholars and students;
- contribute to the conservation of these valuable books and documents by creating images of high-resolution detail that will reduce the need to handle the artefacts themselves.

The site contains 400 manuscripts, many with multiple texts, from libraries and private collections in Ireland, the UK, Australia and most recently from the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR). This resource has enabled advances in research on Irish collections on a hitherto unimagined scale; outputs include editions of texts, commentaries, seminar and conference papers. The resource has created a new dynamic in Irish Studies globally and has *c.* 5 million accesses annually.

www.isos.dias.ie

Anne Marie O'Brien, Director, ISOS, digitizing a manuscript. By kind permission of Irish Script on Screen, DIAS, School of Celtic Studies.

RESTORING LOST COLLECTIONS: BEYOND 2022

An international collaboration, led from Trinity College Dublin, and involving as its core partners the National Archives of Ireland, the National Archives (UK), the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the Irish Manuscripts Commission, as well as over twenty other libraries and archives in Ireland, the UK and North America. The objective is the reconstitution of the lost 1922 Four Courts records, using transcripts and copies located in Irish and international archives. Over 800 years of heritage were destroyed as a result of the Four Courts bombing and subsequent fire. Beyond 2022 reminds us of the fragility of the accepted status quo and the constant need for vigilance of collections, regardless of format. Libraries and archives need to build in risk and response measures to their planning. Beyond 2022 itself will need to build in sustainability to the resource that will provide innovative ways of restoring and engaging with the reconstituted records, and offer new opportunities for research and knowledge building.

www.beyond2022.ie

generations unless new policies are developed to retain it. Since 2011, the National Library has been archiving a selection of websites on an annual permissions basis. The library now has a collection of more than 1,600 websites that focuses on 'every election and referendum in the last 8 years, together with other topics that tell the story of contemporary Ireland— including the 2016 commemorations, key social issues, festivals, popular culture and sporting events'. Many of the sites captured in this way have disappeared from the world wide web and the National Library now preserves the only record of their existence. The library is also piloting other ways of collecting born-digital content through working directly with authors and organisations.

Unlike similar institutions in 60% of EU countries, however, the National Library cannot undertake large-scale archiving of Irish websites due to a lack of appropriate legislation. The library is actively liaising with the relevant government departments to try to address this major issue.

Digitisation in all its forms facilitates easy access by the general public as well as by academic researchers to original documents and manuscripts. It is important to appreciate, however, that digitisation requires considerable input from librarians and archivists. Preparation of documentary material for uploading in a searchable and dynamic online format is a time-consuming activity and demands a dedicated team of librarians, archivists and specialists in digital resources. In order to be of real value to the user, digital imaging should be accompanied by appropriate catalogue records and metadata, together with searchable transcripts and ancillary explanatory apparatus. The staffing crisis in the National Archives and the National Library makes it difficult to devise ambitious long-term digitisation strategies.

Recommendations

1. The National Archives and the National Library should be given the resources to develop ambitious digitisation and digital preservation programmes. The National Library currently has a digitisation team of five; the National Archives nominally has three people who can work on digital projects, but one post is vacant and the remaining staffing resource is not dedicated to developing digital resources, thus 35% of their time is spent on clerical work.
2. The significant resourcing needs of all libraries to create digital programmes should be acknowledged, and the relevant department might restore funding to existing agencies. In this context we welcome the Heritage Council's inclusion of grants for the care of heritage resources held by local libraries and archives, under the Community Heritage Grant Scheme: Rebuilding Heritage, COVID-19 Stimulus Fund (2020).

Opposite: The only photograph of the PROI Search Room (1914) becomes the basis for Beyond 2022's virtual reality model. From the National Archives of Ireland (Mills Album). By kind permission of the NAI and Beyond 2022.

BOLSTERING HERITAGE THROUGH COLLABORATION

Collaborative projects are a positive, enabling development for libraries and archives in all sectors. Pooling of resources can also be economically advantageous. Some current collaborative projects include:

- the Beyond 2022 project based in Trinity College Dublin; (p. 28)
- the National Library–UCD collaboration on MoLI (Museum of Literature Ireland), a new resource for researchers in the UNESCO City of Literature;
- The Irish Script on Screen project, now in its twenty-first year, managed by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, School of Celtic Studies; (p.27)
- The JISC–JSTOR collaboration via the library of Queen's University Belfast, developing JSTOR's online 'Irish Collection' of almost 50 journal titles. A notable feature of this project is that the JSTOR 'Irish Collection' is available free in libraries and archives on the island of Ireland.
- The Grangegorman Histories project, the result of a collaboration between the Grangegorman Development Agency, the National Archives of Ireland and the Royal Irish Academy. (opposite)

The Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK has developed a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme that provides funding for doctoral studentships on research projects which bring together university researchers and curatorial staff in museums, libraries, archives or heritage organisations. The student works on a research topic that draws on the archives or objects deposited in a library, archive or museum. Queen's University Belfast and the Ulster Museum have collaborated on a number of projects under this scheme. One of the current studies draws on the museum's archival collections of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs. The Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme is a model that has great potential for jointly-managed projects between Irish universities and libraries, archives and museums.[16]

The division of responsibility for cultural heritage across different government departments (and different units within departments) can lead to inertia, fragmentation and a lack of oversight. This can also lead to missed opportunities for cultural tourism and educational engagement. A key theme at the May 2019 workshop was the lack of coordination between different government agencies on matters relating to cultural heritage. The absence of an oversight group compounds this problem.

[16] See https://www.ahrc-cdp.org/ (26 January 2021).

RECOVERING LOST HISTORIES: GRANGEGORMAN HISTORIES

In the past 250 years, Grangegorman has been the site of a workhouse, a hospital and a prison, and now it is to be integrated into Dublin city as a health and education campus. The buildings of Grangegorman stand as architectural monuments to that past and its complex histories. The Grangegorman Histories' diverse programme of events, publications and learning opportunities is helping to uncover the history of the site and surrounding communities. The project includes the cataloguing and listing of the extensive archive of the institution. The records contain the personal details of the men and women who spent time in the hospital. They are a vital source for the social history of Dublin and beyond. The Grangegorman Histories project involves collaboration between the Grangegorman Development Agency, the National Archives of Ireland and the Royal Irish Academy.

www.ria.ie

Archives and libraries are measured as contributors to the economy but they are also net contributors to education and cultural developments. The fragmented nature of their funding, owing to their diverse parent bodies, automatically makes for siloed responses to initiatives, often at the expense of core activities. More joined-up approaches would encourage collaborative opportunities, which could enable greater and more sustainable outputs.

The transfer of 'Heritage' to the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government following the reorganisation of government departments in the wake of the 2020 general election has the potential to compound the division of responsibility. On the other hand, the appointment of a separate Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform may bring a new energy to the implementation of heritage policies and strategies.

At an international level, we welcome Ireland's ratification (2018) of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and of the Irish Army for the objectives of the Irish National Committee of the Blue Shield. The latter organisation promotes awareness of built, environmental and documentary heritages and their protection in times of disaster or strife at home or abroad. [17] As a result of Blue Shield-awareness training, Irish army personnel working on UN peacekeeping assignments have learnt of the importance of monuments, libraries and archives and the responsibility to protect them.

Recommendations

1. Introduction of a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme similar to that of the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK. This could be funded through the Irish Research Council or as a special north–south initiative.
2. Encouragement of collaboration between cultural and research institutions in terms of collecting policies, regional requirements and the creation and maintenance of collections of last resort.
3. The government should consider how the Horizon Europe research framework could assist with the Global Ireland programme in making Irish manuscripts, literary and other historical material available online. This new EU programme for research funding will place emphasis on collaboration: between universities and cultural institutions, including libraries and archives, and co-funded projects between member states and the EU Commission.
4. We advocate cross-departmental strategies and meaningful, adequately funded engagement with the sustainability issues relating to cultural heritage.

[17] www.theblueshield.org

FUTURE PROOFING

The 'national' memory of the future will be very different from that envisaged a hundred years ago. Libraries and archives charged with responsibility for collecting on behalf of the nation, or of specific constituencies, are already challenging themselves to reassess their collections policies for past biases and exclusions—

> The National Library has always been committed to equality. Our doors are open to all, and it is in this tradition that we now challenge ourselves to ensure that we reflect the change and diversity in what it means to be Irish. How we collect today will shape the story of Ireland in the future. How we engage with and present the national collections influences how people connect with their unique and living culture and heritage. The National Library has an important role to play in remembering our past and capturing our present.[18]

Many are aware of the gender blindness inherent in past collection strategies. The development of policies around diversity includes but is not limited to issues around gender representation. The National Library's current diversity and inclusion policy aims to 'create a more diverse and inclusive story of Ireland, so that new voices are collected and shared with the world'.[19] The National Library holds, for example, the most comprehensive archive relating to LGBT history in Ireland.

The increasing diversity of Irish society means that libraries and archives must develop policies to encourage the collection of material related to the new Irish as well as the increased use of their resources by people whose first language is not English. The National Library has already initiated a programme to encourage different ethnic groups to collect

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18 National Library of Ireland, *Diversity and inclusion policy 2018–2021*, (Dublin, 2018), [1]. Available online at: https://www.nli.ie/en/Policy.aspx (20 November 2020).
19 National Library, *Diversity and inclusion policy*, [1].

documentary and other material that could be subsequently deposited in the library. The Digital Repository of Ireland is in its third year of running a Community Archives scheme, which actively seeks to diversify collections included in the national repository for social and cultural data. These are developments that could be followed by other archival institutions.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that parent departments and funders should emphasise the need for EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity), not just in terms of access but in terms of collection policies, educational resources and educational programmes.
2. All libraries and archives and their parent bodies and departments should subscribe to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.[20]

CONCLUSION

Libraries and archives preserve and support research, enquiry and access to our country's records and documentary resources. These institutions have a vested interest in heritage, as both holders of heritage materials and providers of access to Ireland's heritages. To enable our libraries and archives to engage deeply and support the objectives of Heritage Ireland 2030, these repositories need to be adequately resourced so that they may promote and preserve their holdings, which are the patrimony of all our people.

[20] Information on the Sustainable development Goals is available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/sustainable/44-countries-presents-hlpf-2017.html (20 November 2020).

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Royal Irish Academy Working Group on Culture and Heritage

Diane Negra, MRIA (Chair)

Luke Drury, MRIA

Angela Bourke, MRIA

George Sevastopulo, MRIA

Michael Ryan, MRIA

Mary O'Dowd, MRIA

Gabriel Cooney, MRIA

Christine Casey, MRIA

Dr Eibhear Walshe

Ms Barbara McCormack, Academy Librarian

Ms Sinéad Riordan, Head of Policy and International Relations, Royal Irish Academy

Mr Craig Skerritt, Policy and International Programmes Manager, Royal Irish Academy