

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

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Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Message from the Chairman of the Board of the National Museum of Ireland

The Board of the National Museum of Ireland met on eight occasions throughout 2011: 2nd February; 24th February, 14th April, 26th May, 14th July, 8th September, 3rd November and 8th December.

The Working Committees of the Board being the GPAC, Audit Committee and the Development and Corporate Committee were put in place and each of the Committees have performed their functions with great effect from the outset. I compliment the Chairpersons and members of all the Committees for their work and commitment.

The most significant issues and challenges that faced the NMI throughout 2011 were those posed by the budgetary constraints. Those matters were faced with skill and determination by Dr Wallace and his team and thankfully the adverse impact caused by the same was managed and controlled to commendable effect.

The total allocation to the NMI was reduced to €14,240,000 for the year in 2011. On the face of it and in reality this posed huge challenges across the entire range of the Museum's activities. The public service moratorium had and is having a significant impact, particularly in key areas of specialist skills within the Museum. The Budget allocation for 2012 has been reduced to €12,585,000 which constitutes an even more significant challenge.

Finance will obviously be of critical importance to the efficient operation of all divisions of the Museum in 2012, in particular it will be important to ensure that the NMI pay bill and capital projects do not suffer if at all possible and that appropriate ways and means are devised to ensure that the core functions, duties, obligations, and everyday operational activities of the Museum are conducted to the best possible standard in the context of the budgetary constraints. The allocation for 2012 breaks down as follows: €1million to capital, €4,648,000 in non-pay and €6,937,000 in pay. The shortfall to the pay bill is €1.25 million. The aforesaid figures demonstrate the real challenges on the financial front for 2012.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding best efforts, some adverse impacts are more or less unavoidable. This will include exhibitions to be mounted in 2012. This said, one has to place on record that a number of very successful exhibitions took place in 2011. In particular, mention has to be made of the extremely successful Treasury exhibition which was officially opened by Minister Jimmy Deenihan on 7th June 2011. Unfortunately, the *Asgard* exhibition which it was hoped to mount near the end of 2011 has had to be deferred to 2012 notwithstanding great efforts made to advance the project. Regrettably, the funding for this project has suffered and challenges remain to bring this iconic gun-running yacht to exhibition. There are significant challenges also in terms of mounting the Ib Jorgenson, Ronnie Delaney and Church of Ireland/Kildare St Place exhibitions in 2012. Members have kindly agreed to explore sponsorship possibilities in this regard.

One of the key areas of activity in the Museum during 2011 was the organisation and utilisation of the Collections Resource Centre in Swords. Steady progress is being achieved in relation to the use of this facility. This space affords the NMI the storage space that was so pressingly required given the unsatisfactory condition of several storage sites which the NMI uses. The storage conditions and standards at these sites were the subject matter of criticism from the Comptroller and Auditor General's office arising out of the audit carried out in 2008 and which was the subject matter of a Public Accounts Committee hearing in July 2008. The CRC at Swords will have an important role to

play in the Collections Management at the NMI. This is particularly important given the proliferation of excavation material over the past two decades.

Another important task that is currently underway and has been since 2009 is the inventory project. This is proceeding at a satisfactory pace and its progress to date has met most of its deadlines. The project is an important one and it is good to note that it appears that it will be brought to completion in a timely manner. However, the project has encountered some definite challenges, particularly in Natural History and Art and Industry because of staff number reductions and some other logistical issues.

It is also appropriate to note that the Digital Strategy in the Museum is proceeding well. A ten-year plan for digitisation and the NMI digital agenda is currently being put in place.

Clearly one of the key priorities for the NMI going forward, in light of the budgetary constraints, will be that of Human Resources. In this regard, a restructuring review was carried out in the context of the Employment Control Framework (ECF). This process had the assistance of a Strategic Management/HR Consultant. The aim of the review was to identify the structures required to meet the NMI's needs over the next five years in light of the prevailing financial environment. It appears from a Table detailing the NMI's ECF up to the end of 2014, as announced by Minister Deenihan in October 2011, that if the figures in the Table are applied the Museum will be faced with losing 29 permanent members of staff between now and 2014. If this arises it could have a significant negative impact on key functions within the Museum. Accordingly, all that can possibly be done to avert or minimise the aforesaid must be done so that the standard performance of key functions in the Museum does not suffer.

One of the very significant challenges facing the Museum at the present time is the initiative in seeking to develop a new Strategic Staffing Plan in response to the Government's Employment Control Framework (ECF). This task will have to be faced in light of the prevailing financial constraints. Staff at all levels within the Museum are concerned about the architecture and content of the Plan, and management will be faced with delivering a Plan in as efficient, constructive, and sensitive a manner as possible. The process will demand the application of great skill before it is brought to a point for agreement by the Board.

Risk Management continues to warrant careful focus and attention. It is important that responsibility for this function resides in most competent hands, in clearly defined terms. It is hoped that a clear definition of this critical function will be achieved in early course.

It is pleasing to note that the question of VAT liability was comprehensively and satisfactorily addressed in 2011.

Finance will obviously constitute a matter of ongoing concern for the NMI in the prevailing economic climate.

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht expressed its wish that the NMI would investigate the possibility of raising sponsorship to assist with the development of future projects in light of the fact that it is very possible that budget allocations may continue to be cut in the coming years. The Statement of Intent received by the Board from the Development and Corporate Committee was approved by the Board at its meeting of 3rd November 2011. The Board is very keen that every possible realistic effort should be made in furtherance of this objective. The matter

should be kept in sharp focus and hopefully transformed into positive action as soon as this can possibly be achieved.

The Board will decide on a revision of delegated expenditure caps at its meeting of 9th February 2012.

The Museum had the honour of Taoiseach Enda Kenny attending the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life's 10th birthday at Turlough Park House, Castlebar in September 2011, and thanks must be expressed to Dr Wallace and his staff and the Board members who attended and assisted at this celebration.

Congratulations go to Dr Wallace and his staff on the great work done over the past twelve months, including the outstanding visitor numbers which well exceeded one million visitors in 2011.

The Board's Secretary, Aoife Mc Bride will be on maternity leave from January 2012 until summer 2012. Congratulations to Aoife on the birth of her baby son on 1st February. The Board looks forward to assistance from Ms Eileen Shields, Dr Wallace's Secretary during Aoife's absence on maternity leave.

The news has just been announced that Dr Wallace, our Director, has decided to opt for retirement on 29th February 2012. Dr Wallace's tenure as Director of the National Museum of Ireland over the past twenty-four years and as a member of staff of the Museum before that has been a career of the highest distinction. His reputation as an outstanding leader of the National Museum is renowned across the nation and beyond. He gave a dedicated and distinguished service of historic proportions. The profoundest gratitude of the Board must go to Dr Wallace, and the Board wishes him every success in the next phase of what has been a glittering career to date. His reputation will feature most highly in the annals of the Museum and in our national culture at large. The Board will be marking Dr Wallace's retirement in an appropriate manner in the near future.

ART & INDUSTRY

The Art and Industrial Division is responsible for over a quarter of a million artefacts reflecting Irish economic, social, industrial, political and military history over the last four centuries. In addition, staff care for collections of Irish, European and Asian decorative arts. There were a number of highly significant acquisitions during the year, three exhibitions were opened, existing exhibitions were revamped, a monograph on the Albert Bender publication was published, and a considerable amount of assistance was provided for second and third level students.

Preparation work continued on a number of planned exhibitions, including exhibitions devoted to the Irish fashion designer Ib Jorgensen fashion and on the gun-running vessel, *Asgard*.

The core work of cataloguing and documenting the collections, in cooperation with the Registration Department, continued. The Division provided a wide range of talks and lectures at home and abroad. The Division also worked with the Education Department on several projects and provided a large number of talks, gallery tours and lectures, for interest groups (e.g. Friends of the Metropolitan Museum, New York), specialist researchers, diplomatic staff and the general public. Seminars and conferences, most noticeably that in November on World War One, were facilitated and staff members made contributions to several conferences in Ireland and abroad including the World Crafts Congress, Dublin and National Army Museum, London. Students, particularly from TCD, UCD, NUIM and NCAD, were assisted and advised with their theses and assignments, especially in the areas of decorative arts and design history. In addition, members of the Division contributed to a number of open days and events such as the Curators' Talks series, Heritage Week, and Year of Craft lectures. They sat on specialist committees and judging panels and provided interviews and information for the media – television, radio and print. Loans included, the Roger Casement sword and hat from the Metropolitan Police and a collection relating to the post-1916 imprisonment of Edward McCabe. Assistance and jurying duties for external exhibitions included that on Theobald Wolfe Tone for Sallins Culture Night and 'Engaging with Glass: Irish Contemporary Glass Art' at the Solstice Arts Centre, Navan.

Significant donations received during the year included: Mary Boydell contemporary Irish and international studio glass collection; sets of slides illustrating 1970s Belleek porcelain and Simon Pearce glassblowing production; Catriona MacLeod (former curator, Art & Industrial Division) slide collection; Dublin Fire Brigade objects from the Emergency period; objects belonging to Army Chaplain Fr. Willie Doyle S.J. who died during WWI; Carlow Militia powder horn used in the 1798 Rebellion; Royal Munster Fusiliers officer's uniform from WWI used by same man when serving as a Black & Tan officer; a number of Ib Jorgensen garments donated by the designer on behalf of former clients; a 1962 evening dress of pleated linen and white crochet by Sybil Connolly; two complete outfits by Aideen Bodkin and Deborah Veale, worn by President Mary McAleese on the day of her second inauguration in 2004; stainless steel metallic chair by John White; 'Sub Rosa' wall hanging by Liz Nilsson; 'Crock of Gold' Irish oak work by Emmet Kane; turned bowl by Liam O'Neill; electronic archive of Countess Markievicz's photography by Tadeusz and Elizbieta Malkievicz; autograph book and documents relating to James Kane.

Significant purchases made during the year included a significant collection of over 170 pieces of 18th and 19th century Irish glass from the collector Kenneth Tughan; ceramic works by Alison Kay, Frances Lambe, Sarah Mooney Wiegersma, Helena Brennan and Marcus O'Mahony, glass by Catherine Keenan and Róisín De Buitléar; 18th century Dublin delftware bough pot; a contemporary wool rug made by Ceadógan Rugs to an original design by the artist Mainie Jellett; vessels by contemporary Irish woodturners Roger Bennet and Emmet Kane; satinwood writing cabinet by James Hicks; wardrobe, dressing table, and stool by Brendan Dunne dating from the 1950s; the 'Koi' table by Michael Bell and Susan Zelouf; poster with Rules and Regulations for the British Army in Irish, 1st November 1806; 'Tintown' autograph book, 1923, and gold medal presented to the informer Thomas Reynolds (purchased with the generous assistance of the Friends of the National Collections)

IRISH ANTIQUITIES

The Division is responsible for the archaeological heritage of Ireland. In addition to managing substantial collections of Ethnographical, Classical and Egyptian material, the staff control and manage over two million archaeological objects.

Fieldwork was conducted in every county in the State apart from Waterford and Monaghan. This included investigating and excavating finds and burials and inspecting excavations.

Some 942 applications were processed in 2011 for Excavation/Dive/Detection (544); Consents (76); Directions (1); Licences to Export (149) and Licences to Alter (172).

Divisional staff gave over thirty talks to local societies, colleges, seminars and conferences as well as talks to visiting groups. A range of journalistic queries were dealt with for national and local press, radio and TV.

There were 179 research visits to the Archives and 85 to the Reserve Collections. Sixteen interns received training (13 Irish, 1 German, 1 English and 1 Swedish) and twenty four Transition Year students received placements.

Progress was made on a number of major research projects including the Irish Bog Bodies Project; Iron Spearheads Project; Prehistoric Gold Research Project; Viking Graves Project. Work on Unpublished Burials resulted in the publication of the monograph *Breaking Ground - Finding Graves*.

Significant acquisitions included a hoard of Viking silver ring money from Co. Donegal; Iron Age bronze horn and a penannular brooch (both purchased in Britain); shell necklace from a burial at Truska, Co. Galway; a bog body from Cashel, Co. Laois. Other ancient human remains (with accompanying pottery) were also acquired as were a range of prehistoric stone tools, bronze and iron weapons and tools, dress pins, quern stones, and bog finds including bog butter (with associated vessels), leather shoes, a wooden deer trap and a wooden fork. Maritime finds included a decorated stone mortar from the Irish Sea.

Liaison with local museums concerning archaeological finds and exhibits included: The County Museum, Dundalk; Donegal County Museum; Galway City Museum; Limerick City Museum; Cork Public Museum; Carlow County Museum; Kerry County Museum; Ulster Museum, Waterford County Museum, Dungarvan; Cork Butter Museum; Dublinia; Solstice Arts Centre, Navan; Charles Fort, Cork; Peat Museum, Co Kildare; Cruachain Aí Centre, Co. Roscommon.

There was liaison with the Underwater Archaeology Unit, (National Monuments Service) on proposals to exhibit anchors from the *Aud* in Cobh and Fenit.

The Designated Museums Liaison Group met. Guided tours of the Exhibitions and Reserve Collections were given to the Northern Ireland Museums Council.

Staff liaised with Receivers of Wreck, National Monuments Service, Bord na Móna, National Roads Authority, Railway Procurement Agency, Iarnród Éireann, Eirgrid, commercial archaeological companies and post-excavation specialists.

Liaison and cooperation with An Garda Síochána concerning metal detecting, sales of antiquities, theft of antiquities and destruction of monuments continued, as did contact and

liaison with Environmental Crime Unit, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Belfast in relation to mutual heritage protection and heritage crime. Ongoing liaison continued with Chief State Solicitor's Office concerning disputed antiquities. Liaison continued with Receivers of Wreck on archaeological finds and historic shipwrecks.

Staff contributed to the work of various NMI committees including Management Committee, Health & Safety; Child Protection; Visitor Services and Volunteer Policy. Staff served on several external committees including Royal Irish Academy Committee for Archaeology, South Dublin County Heritage Forum, the Discovery Programme Directorate and the Excavation Licence Interview Board.

IRISH FOLKLIFE

The Folklife Division manages the national collections of objects representing Irish traditional life in the period principally between the Great Famine and the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The Division is based in NMI - Country Life at Turlough Park House, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

2011 was the tenth anniversary year of NMI - Country Life and this was celebrated in September when Taoiseach Enda Kenny honoured us with his presence; Mayo County Council provided an Irish Oak tree for the occasion, which the Taoiseach planted. 108,785 people visited the Museum in 2011 and there were a total of 1,145,583 visitors to the Museum since it opened in September 2001.

The Division commenced a review of the Irish Folklife Collections this year. Initial attention has focused on those parts of the collection still stored in Daingean, Co. Offaly. As part of the review, a number of larger agricultural items were identified as being suitable for de-accessioning and the Board of the Museum approved this at its September meeting. This is an on-going and long-term process in line with best international museological practice, and NMI - Country Life is piloting the process within the National Museum.

Improvements in the care of the Folklife Collection were made at the Division's store in Daingean, where one of the Division's curators is currently based; amongst these was the making of bespoke support stands for the transport collection as well as holders for several detached wheels. Significant progress has been made on the inventory of the collections in both Turlough Park and Daingean. The transfer of Folklife objects from Daingean to the Collections Resource Centre in Swords commenced in August and continued through to December. It is a process that will take a number of years to complete.

Substantial progress on a catalogue of a major element of the collections – those made from straw, hay and rushes – was made in 2011 while work also commenced on a catalogue of the currachs. It is hoped to complete these in 2012. Research on the hair hurling balls in the collection has shown several of them are much older than originally thought, with two dating to the thirteenth century. In order to accommodate the loan exhibition *The Art of History- Images of Irish town life in the 1820s* by Sampson Towgood Roch (1757-1847) and the *Straw, Hay and Rushes* exhibition was re-located to the smaller gallery on Level B; this was overseen by Anne O'Dowd.

Two members of staff in the Division delivered papers at international conferences: one, on the vernacular architecture of the British Isles in the Isle of Man (Rosa Meehan); the other was the annual conference of the International Committee for Museums of Ethnography (ICME – ICOM) in Germany (Tony Candon). Clodagh Doyle delivered a paper to a conference on post-medieval archaeology. Séamas Mac Philib delivered a series of lectures as part of NUIG's outreach programme, while Anne O'Dowd lectured at UCD. Staff also took part in both television and radio programmes on various matters relating to their specialties throughout the year.

A small number of objects were added to the Museum's collections this year, including some items of furniture and a wooden penal cross.

NATURAL HISTORY

The Division cares for the Museum collections in the disciplines of zoology and geology, which number approximately two million specimens.

The Natural History Museum continued to see high visitor attendances in the second year of re-opening. The second and third floor balconies unfortunately remain closed, awaiting implementation of a works programme that would provide fire exits direct from these upper levels. Such works, when funded would also ensure lift access to all floors. Major work is required on the roof, and the tiles of the ground floor need to be re-laid. The National Museum of Ireland recognises these limitations and continues to press for the funding to resolve these issues on behalf of our visiting public.

In the first full year of operations since reopening in April 2010, the Museum saw a very large number of visitors, over 289,000 people. This is more than twice the annual average seen in the building before closure in 2007. The museum also proved popular for artists, photographers, poets and television programme makers. Projects included promotion for a rock band, book launches, fashion shoots, and launches for education and outreach projects. The Keeper appeared on the children's television show *Elev8* on RTÉ for seven episodes, with specimens from the collections. Publicity included the outcomes of research projects such as that based on museum collections of bear bones that demonstrated that all polar bears carry some ice age Irish brown bear DNA. The Museum features online in tourist promotional products at www.dublinculturetrail.ie and at www.storymap.ie

Detailed planning was carried out in relation to future accommodation for the collection of animals stored in alcohol. Work on collections included a continuation of the cleaning and restoration of taxidermy from exhibition areas. This project came to an end in 2011 as budgets expired but over 250 bird exhibits have now been fully restored. Visiting researchers studied projects as diverse as DNA of the critically endangered Hainan gibbon and skeletal anatomy of the giant ice age deer *Megaloceros*. Staff despatched samples of tissues for research to a number of overseas institutions. They also continue monitoring for insect pests that can be harmful to collections and presented a paper at a specialist conference on this in London. Rhino horn was removed from display for security reasons. This follows a pattern of thefts from displays throughout Europe.

Active curation of the insect collections and expert identification of pests came to an end following the retirement of the Museum entomologist at the end of 2010 and enquiries

are now handled by other staff. In addition to their scientific publications, the four scientific staff contributed to the production and management of the *Bulletin of the Irish Biogeographical Society*, *Earth Science Ireland*, *The Geological Curator*, *Irish Journal of Earth Sciences*, *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, *Irish Speleology*, *Journal and Newsletter of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland*, *Museum Ireland* also the website of the Irish Museums Association. Staff also gave a number of public talks, tours and assisted with organisations including the National Biodiversity Data Centre. Work by volunteers increased in importance as staff retired and were not replaced, ten adult volunteers and twenty transition year students were accommodated. Volunteers worked on identification of human bone remains prior to transfer to other museum departments. A listing of library books was completed. A project to list and research the donors to the collections was commenced.

Exhibitions at other venues were supported with specimens and cases; including The Ark's *Crafted Creatures* and the Science Gallery's *Human+*.

Specimens acquired during the year included samples of the meteorite that fell in Dundrum, Co. Tipperary in 1865; a mounted specimen of a loggerhead turtle; a Greenland falcon and examples of reptiles found in the pet trade. A collection of skeletons of various Irish mammal species was purchased as reference collections. They include invasive species such as chipmunk that appear to be living wild in Ireland.

CONSERVATION

The work programme for the Conservation Department for 2011 was largely based on a core of major projects – The preparation of the Faddan More Psalter and objects in the Treasury for display as well as work on *Asgard* for exhibition in 2012. Towards the end of the year, the transfer of objects to the new Collections Resource Centre in Swords began - a process that had a significant input from the Conservation Department.

Remedial conservation for 2011 was largely the usual mixture of the preparation of objects for exhibition, coupled with the treatment of backlog archaeological material. The most significant projects for the year were the continuing conservation of the Faddan More Psalter and work on *Asgard*.

The conservation of the Faddan More Psalter was completed, and extensive work was carried out to relocate identifiable fragments to their correct original positions. When this work was complete and the individual bifolia housed, a replica of the psalter as it would originally have been was made using authentic materials. The Psalter was displayed in a dedicated gallery in Kildare Street together with other supporting material including substantial portions of the conserved Lough Kinale Book Shrine. The Treasury was also redisplayed and involved a huge body of work for members of the Conservation Department. The opening of Phase II of the new Period Furniture Gallery involved conservation of pieces from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century. Other exhibition-related work carried out during the course of the year included the completion of the conservation of the remainder of the 21 Bender Thangkas, to enable their rotation on display.

Work on *Asgard* continued in the early part of the year, with the completion of all the structural work to the vessel. The gym was then cleared in order to facilitate the building work required to turn the building into an exhibition space, though some work continued in a nearby workshop.

The programme to systematically upgrade specimens from the displays of the Natural History Museum carried on, with further large quantities of material being sent for conservation in the private sector and the programme of stabilisation of the Blaschka glass models in Natural History was completed.

Substantial progress continued to be made in clearing the 60-year backlog of waterlogged wood conservation with the facility at Lanesborough, and the transfer began of conserved wooden archaeological objects to the Collections Resource Centre at Swords.

Work on the conservation of material from the Dublin Excavations continued with particular emphasis on the metalwork, textiles and waterlogged wood.

Other work included the preparation of a number of major loans including large amounts of material that went to Louth County Museum and Galway City Museum.

The most significant preventive conservation project for the NMI in 2011 was the continuing development of the new Collections Resource Centre in Swords. Major input was made into the setting up of the centre, including the environmental monitoring system, object processing and quarantine areas, laboratories etc. In the latter part of the year, the transfer of collections into the centre began from Lanesborough, Daingean and Collins Barracks.

Projects to upgrade the state of entire collections in the NMI carried on, with work particularly concentrating on the glass and ceramics collections. The upgrade of the glass collection was completed. The programme of freezing objects from around the Museum to treat suspected insect infestation continued, as did continuous environmental monitoring which took place on all NMI sites where collections are housed.

The regular programme of public tours of the department continued.

REGISTRATION

The Registration Department is responsible for the documentation, transfer and location management of the NMI's collections. It controls and maintains the Museum's Collection management database and also manages the Museum's archives and central library and administers museum loans.

Following the leasing and fit-out of the Collections Resource Centre at Swords, Co. Dublin, the Registration Department assumed responsibility for its overall management. A manager was appointed in August 2010 and at year's end plans were in place for the transfer of material. The priorities agreed were the transport collection, Irish Folklife division, currently in the former St. Conleth's Reformatory, Daingean, Co Offaly, the Natural History collection, currently in Beggar's Bush, Dublin 4, the archaeological material currently in Lanesborough, Co Roscommon and the finds from archaeological excavations currently held by private contractors. The transfer of this material commenced in September 2011.

Elements of the Museum's Documentation Plan which is compliant with SPECTRUM, the UK Museum Documentation Standard, and which includes a five-year Inventory Project, were implemented throughout the year. A review of the plan was completed internally and it is intended to have this review audited externally, the results of which will inform the implementation of the remainder of the Plan. The Inventory Project continued in the four curatorial divisions. A total of 68,459 records were validated this year. The total number of validated records since the Project began is 280,000 and the number of records by divisions is as follows: Art and Industrial Division 36,000; Irish Antiquities 145,000; Irish Folklife Division 19,500 and Natural History Division 79,500. Two audits of the project were carried during the year recording an average of 97.2% accuracy over the four sites.

In 2011 thirty-five loans were renewed, while one loan was converted to a donation to the NMI. Two loans were returned to the Museum while nine loans to the Museum were returned to their respective owners. Twenty-two new loans were administered including loans to the NMI of a Victoria Cross awarded to Irishman Luke O'Connor and three medieval manuscripts from Trinity College Dublin. A collection of historical artefacts including the William Smith O'Brien Cup and an original copy of the 1916 Proclamation were lent to the National Museum of Australia, as well as the temporary loan to the Office of Public Works of the Cashel Crozier to coincide with the visit of Queen Elisabeth II to Cashel. Loans were made to the County Museum, Dundalk, Galway City Museum, Solstice Arts Centre, Navan and the National Museum of Australia, Canberra. Loans were returned

from UCD Classical Museum, Clare County Museum and Limerick City Museum. Over the course of 2011 a total 69 loans were administered.

The retrospective cataloguing of the library collections of the Art and Industrial, Irish Antiquities and Irish Folklife divisions continued until June when the contracts of the external cataloguers were not renewed. This was as a result of a decision by management to develop a more strategic and cohesive approach and go to tender to catalogue the backlog. The tender documentation was prepared but as yet has not been proceeded with because of cut backs in budgets. It is now only possible to catalogue current acquisitions. At year's end there were 35,018 titles on the Adlib library management system.

Throughout the year the Librarian dealt with 238 queries from both internal and external users. Following a flood in 2010 the Library was renovated and the library collection of the Art and Industrial division is now being re-instated in Block 10.

In 2011, much of the work of the Archivist centred on improving the storage conditions of records and archives currently stored in the central archive, Collins Barracks. The archive room was re-arranged, all files and archives were re-housed and the shelving system was serviced and repaired. The Archivist worked with colleagues in the Director's Office and the Dublin Excavations Project on improving the long-term storage conditions of both the Directors' Archive and the Archive of *Dublin Excavations*. The box-listing programme to the Art and Industrial Archive is on-going and a collection of *Esmonde Family Papers* was acquired and accessioned.

EXHIBITIONS

Kildare St

The Treasury: Celtic and Early Christian Ireland

This permanent exhibition, which opened in June, explores fifteen centuries of artistic achievement. From pagan cult objects to Christian chalices, the period from 300BC to 1200AD witnessed outstanding artistic achievements which have never been surpassed. The wealth of the church and of secular powers is seen in objects of gold and silver, decorated with exotic materials. These include the Ardagh Chalice, Tara Brooch, Derrynaflan Hoard and the Cross of Cong. Curated by Eamonn Kelly and Maeve Sikora.

The exhibition also includes the Faddan More Psalter, a decorated manuscript of c.800AD which was found in a bog in 20006 and conserved in the National Museum.

The exhibition is accompanied by a guide-catalogue and an audio-guide in an MP3-Album format free to download from the Museum's website.

Turlough Park

Through a Swedish Lens – Images of early twentieth century Irish Life

An exhibition of photographs on loan from the Irish Folklife Department, UCD, taken by Swedish ethnographers in Ireland in the 1920s and 1930s. Curated by Clodagh Doyle, January – April.

The Cross of Cong

The Cross of Cong is one of Ireland's greatest treasures. It was made in 1123 to encase a fragment of the True Cross that was brought to Ireland and displayed in different places. Curated by Tony Candon, January – May.

The Art of History: Images of Irish town life in the 1820s by Sampson Towgood Roch (1757-1847),

This loan exhibition from the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum is centred around a collection of watercolour drawings dating from c.1824 which relate to everyday life in Waterford City and Dungarvan, County Waterford, and to a lesser degree, Dublin and England. Curated by Séamas Mac Philib, June – November.

Safe Secrets – The Coggalbeg Hoard

Three Bronze Age gold objects – a lunula and two discs – on loan from the Museum of Archaeology, Kildare Street. They are unique in having been found together in the 1940s. Stored and half-forgotten in the safe of a pharmacist in Strokestown, Co. Roscommon for decades, they were recovered following the theft of the safe in 2010. Curated by Tony Candon and Mary Cahill, October – December.

Collins Barracks

Reconstructed Rooms: Four Centuries of Furnishings

Phase II of the re-display of the Museum's period furniture collections opened in November. It encompasses furniture of the 17th, 18th and 19th century displayed in period settings. Curated by Jennifer Goff.

21st Century Irish Craft

This exhibition was opened in June to mark the meeting in Dublin of the World Crafts Congress. It contains a selection of the Museum's collections of contemporary crafts in silver, glass, jewellery, accessories, ceramics, metalwork, furniture and wood-turning. Curated by Audrey Whitty.

Dickie Bird

In May, this exhibition devoted to a horse that served in the Crimean war of 1854. The horse's skeleton, uncovered during archaeological excavations at Clancy Barracks, Islandbridge, Dublin, is accompanied by other material associated. Curated by Lar Joy.

EDUCATION

2011 was a successful year for the Education Department, in spite of ongoing financial and staffing challenges. We invested in quality activities across the Museum, online and in the community.

Approximately 60,000 visitors used Education services.

Key to our work was the redesign of the crucial Explore and Learn section of the Museum website, emphasising accessibility, inclusivity and audience expectations.

We continued development and implementation of crucial Volunteer and Child Protection policies; and worked with the Access Committee to deliver the Museum's Access Policy.

We enhanced the Museum's dedicated learning spaces. Our redesigned Learning Resources Room at the Museum of Archaeology was launched by the Minister for Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht in October, and has since proved popular with the public.

We emphasised interactivity in our exhibitions:

- The Reconstructed Rooms at the Museum of Decorative Arts and History included an interactive space dedicated to an exploration of national and international chair design.
- The Treasury at the Museum of Archaeology invited visitors to create their own designs, using detail from the Cross of Cong and other iconic objects.

We shared resources and expertise with other organisations:

- Dublin City of Science funding was received to assist projects at three Dublin sites.
- NAPD Creative Engagement funding was received to assist work with post primary schools in Dublin and Mayo.
- Crafted Creatures initiative with the Ark won LUAS sponsorship and was shortlisted for the Business2Arts Award.

The theme of partnership characterised our relationships with local communities:

- Our 'Moving Statues' project brought together Larkin Community College, National College of Art and Design and Lourdes Day Care Centre.
- We were proactive in organising the BT Young Scientist Exhibition.
- Outreach continued to a range of libraries, schools and colleges.
- Launch of Community Archive Project celebrated partnership between communities at Oughterard, Ballinrobe, Clarinbridge, Louisburg and Killeen and NMI - Country Life.
- Forged partnerships with Linen Hall Arts Centre and Connacht Textile Crafters in preparation for two community exhibitions in 2012.

We provided a range of activities for families, adults and young people – including tailoring for specific audiences:

- Babies on Board tours offered a valuable social space to the parents / minders of our youngest visitors.
- Inspectorium workshops at the Museum of Natural History enabled visitors to handle bones and fossils!

NMI - Archaeology

- 8960 visitors used Education services.
- 210 teachers attended pre-service courses.
- Public programming – from harp recital to storytelling, Gallery Talks to My Museum and Bealtaine events – in high demand.
- 900 people engaged with re-enactment events.

NMI - Country Life

- 17,485 visitors used Education services.
- Launch of Our Irish Heritage, an archive of online local histories.
- Successful ‘Meet the Craftsperson’ initiative.
- Continued work on Discover Primary Science initiative, including Year 3 Garden Project.

NMI- Decorative Arts and History

- 24,853 visitors used Education services.
- Popular events focusing on World War One and American Civil War.
- Overhaul of teachers’ resources.
- Community project with Carmona Services, supporting citizens with intellectual disabilities.

NMI- Natural History

- 8712 visitors used Education services.
- Popular Twitter feed.
- Outreach to The Ark, Kildare Public Libraries, Waterford Institute of Technology, Dublin Zoo’s Native Species Weekend.
- Adult courses and Science / Heritage Week programmes booked out.

MARKETING AND PR

The total visitor numbers for 2011 was **1,096,027**, which is a 10% increase on 2010 but also the highest figure since 2002. The key reasons for this increase were not only the public programming and events, the exhibitions and galleries but also **Free Admission** which given the current economic climate, is resulting in people visiting museum sites on more than one occasion in the year. In addition, tourists visiting Ireland increased by 7%, in 2011.

Visitor Numbers	Annual Comparison		
Site	2010	2011	% Change
Kildare Street	366,201	402,582	+10%
Merrion Street	253,597	289,172	+14%
Collins Barracks	258,812	295,488	+14%
<i>Military History</i>	<i>99,253</i>	<i>118,855</i>	<i>+20%</i>
<i>Riding School</i>	<i>100,809</i>	<i>93,400</i>	<i>-7%</i>
Turlough Park	114,343	108,785	-5%
Total	992,953	1,096,027	+10%

The National Museum of Ireland gained a considerable amount of PR both regionally and nationally on TV, Radio and Press. The re-launch of *The Treasury: Celtic and Early Christian Ireland* exhibition, Kildare Street in June was a key marketing project and gained significant national and international PR, both online and offline. Other points of interest were the launch of *Reconstructed Rooms – Four Centuries of Furnishings*, Collins Barracks and the launch of the *Art of History- Images of Irish town life in the 1820s by Sampson Towgood Roch (1757-1847)*, and *Safe Secrets – Coggalbeg Hoard* exhibitions in Turlough Park. The seventh annual Féile na Tuaithe took place at Turlough Park in May and attracted approximately 15,000 people. In addition, Turlough Park celebrated its 10th anniversary formally in September, gaining prominent national PR coverage.

The Marketing Department engaged regularly with key Trade Partners e.g. *Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Dublin Tourism* and other tourism operators throughout the country. Building awareness of the NMI is critical and advertising plays an important role through Radio and Press (nationally and regionally) as well Outdoor campaigns. Social Media has also developed as key strategy within the overall marketing mix and plays a significant role for

future marketing. A more focused digital marketing communication plan has been developed through a *Fáilte Ireland* led initiative.

The Museum's cafes and shops continue to provide the visiting public with a quality service which adds to the overall visitor experience. The range and variety of shop products are continuously being assessed and altered – where appropriate to both match with new exhibitions and to meet the needs of the public.

In the retail area, turnover increased in the shops for 2011 however overall there was a net loss. Limited staff resources resulted in lunchtime closures in the Collins Barracks shop for at least two days during the week. All sites saw an upturn in the average spend per customer, with Kildare Street in particular benefitting from the increased number of cruise ships visiting the city. The online shop continues to perform extremely well with an increase of over 70% compared to 2010. The Christmas period saw a 7% increase in sales due to a successful advertising campaign.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Photographic Department provided an extensive photographic service both internally and externally throughout 2011.

The Department comprises of one fulltime Senior Photographer with two contract Photographers working on a limited basis on a multi-operator framework. The procurement of a contractor for Digital Archiving Services and Digital Imaging Services took place during the year.

Extensive photography was undertaken of the treasures for *The Treasury: Celtic and Early Christian Ireland* exhibition along with photography of the restored mosaic floor in the exhibition. The Department photographed furniture for the *Reconstructed Rooms-Four Centuries of Furnishings* exhibition, the *Asgard* and garments for the *Ib Jorgensen* exhibition.

The Treasury and *Reconstructed Rooms-Four Centuries of Furnishings* exhibitions and exhibition galleries in the Natural History Museum were all photographed.

Detailed photography of the Ardagh Chalice and additional photography of various Bog Bodies and Straw for forthcoming publications was undertaken. A broad range of other objects were also photographed throughout the year.

Great progress was made on the managed digital archive project. Archiving of new images and existing digital images continued throughout the year while retrieving, cleaning, optimizing and outputting images on a daily basis to staff and the external market as well as dealing with numerous photographic queries continued.

DESIGN

The Design Department provides a quality design service to all Departments/divisions of the National Museum. This includes exhibition support, design for print and screen, archaeological illustration, maps, and archaeological site plans.

2011 was a busy year with exhibition support provided for the second phase of the Period Furniture galleries in Collins Barracks and also for the Treasury in Kildare Street. The Department designed the exhibition *Safe Secrets – Coggalbeg Hoard* at the NMI - Country Life.

Work continued on the Dublin Excavations Project and various maps, plans and illustrations were completed to publication standard for forthcoming volumes in the Series. Supervisory work was provided for scanning of a large number of site plans and for the installation of specialized storage solutions for this project.

Quarterly editions of the Calendar of Events were produced for both print and web. The Schools Calendar for both Primary and Post Primary schools was designed by the department, working closely with the Education and Outreach Department. An interactive version for the web was also produced.

The Department designed the following publication, *The Albert Bender Collection of Asian Art in the National Museum of Ireland* as part of the Monograph Series. This was the first publication of this Series to be undertaken by the studio. As part of the Director's publication for a forthcoming Yale University Press publication, a large number of images were sourced and formatted for pre-press.

Various invitations for book launches and other events were produced including the Education Resource Room at Kildare Street.

Transition year students were facilitated throughout the year including two students from Germany.

Training on various computer packages continued and the studio upgraded to the latest version of Adobe CS5 software.

FACILITIES (ACCOMMODATION AND SECURITY)

The Facilities Department falls under the remit of the Services Division of the National Museum of Ireland. NMI vacated the Museum Storage Facility on Jamestown Road, reducing our Museum Building's holding from eight sites, to four public buildings with four reserve collection sites. We were grateful for the assistance the Office of Public Works who provide on-going maintenance for all the buildings.

With the high cost of Utilities we are working with OPW to introduce energy saving initiatives to both reduce our operational costs while at the same time reduce our CO2 emissions. As another cost saving measure we are developing in house training specifically in the area of manual handling which has proven very successful.

One of the highlights for the Department was the reopening of the *Treasury* at the NMI-Archaeology and exposing the magnificent mosaic floor. While at NMI – Decorative Arts & History welcomed a revamped Period Furniture Gallery.

The Mechanical and Electrical Division of OPW provided ergonomically designed security rooms in both Collins Barracks and Kildare Street to provide, an easier managed CCTV network as well as intruder alarm detection equipment.

The moratorium on staff recruitment continues to place challenges on the Department however it is responding admirably to the new challenging environment

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Division is responsible for the overall administration of the Museum and, in particular, for Financial Management, Human Resources Management and Information Communications Technology. A report on each of key areas is given below.

Financial Management

The 2011 allocations received from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism are as follows:

	€
○ Pay	8,036,000
○ Non Pay	4,204,000
○ Capital	2,000,000
Total	<u><u>€14,240,000</u></u>

As part of the annual business planning process, the capital and non-pay allocations from the Department were allocated to the Museum's internal budgets for expenditure. Due to underfunding in pay it was necessary to receive sanction to allow for a transfer of €442,000 from current non pay to current pay.

The Finance Unit provided assistance and support to the Board's Audit Committee in carrying out its audit functions. This included working with the Internal Auditors.

The Finance Unit is continually seeking to streamline operations, taking advantage of new technologies where budget restraints permit and by implementing recommendations from the C&AG and internal auditor, to ensure the integrity of the finance unit and its function.

The Finance Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2011 and accompanying audit file in early 2012. The C&AG audit of the 2011 Financial Statements took place in April 2012. The Museum's accounts in respect of the year ending 31st December 2011 were prepared in accordance with the requirements of section 35 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997, are included in this report. The Board of the Museum did not adopt the provisions of FRS 30 Heritage Assets as these assets are the property of the state.

The Finance Manager is responsible for the management of the procurement process of all National and EU procurements. To this end, the Museum is building internal expertise in the area of procurement. Structured procedures and policies are in place and are complemented with a filing system for procurement.

With the reduction in funding, the area of Accounts Receivable is becoming ever more important. During 2011 further developments in systems and procedures and user skills have been made which will be crucial to the Museum in coming years.

On an annual basis, business plans are developed and implemented. These business plans encompass Risk Management and staff PMDS together with budgetary requirements.

Human Resource Management

Human Resources (HR) continued to work closely with Divisional Heads on various issues. Despite increased pressure on staff resulting from the moratorium and continued emphasis on cost cutting measures, the hard work and commitment from all Museum staff, augmented by the welcome efforts of volunteers, enabled the Museum to continue to deliver a high standard of quality service to the public with little disruption.

Training

The Museum continued to implement and develop its staff performance management development system (PMDS) in 2011. The training budget was severely restricted due to a reduced allocation. Every effort was, however, made to obtain value for money by organising in-house courses where appropriate. Training provided included Dignity at Work, Writing for the Web, Project Management, PMDS for management & staff, Customer Service, First Aid, Payroll, and Manual Handling/Safety Awareness courses. Onsite IT classes were successfully conducted in Microsoft Office, Outlook, Excel and Word (beginners to advanced level).

A support group of six contact people for the Museum's anti-bullying and harassment policy, "A Positive Working Environment", received refresher training for their role in June to ensure they were competent in providing the advice and support required for the role.

Throughout the academic year 2010/2011, seven staff members undertook approved third level courses of education in their own time and availed of the Percentage Refund of Fees Scheme in accordance with the Department of Finance guidelines.

Specialised training days and conferences were attended by staff members from various departments across the Museum relating to Access, VAT, Adlib, Archaeology, Pest Odyssey, Wood, Paper and specialised courses organised by the Irish Museums Association.

Ethics in Public Office

Staff in designated positions of employment and all Museum Board members complied with the Ethics in Public Office Acts of 1995 and 2001.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

HR coordinated four requests under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.

Industrial Relations

Negotiations continued with the CPSU in connection with a number of issues around the Labour Court recommendations; incremental credit, attendance patterns and night time security. The Museum also held discussions with IMPACT in connection with weekend duty and the Head and Senior Attendants Claim.

Employment Control Framework (ECF)

The Museum was notified in January by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, that its Employment Control Framework (ECF) number for 2011 is 154 a reduction from 171. The options to reduce staff numbers are by means of retirements, expiry of fixed-term contracts and natural wastage. The Director sought volunteers for redeployment under the terms Circular 08/2010: Redeployment Scheme. A number of staff applied for redeployment. The Museum continued to work towards reducing staff numbers in line with the ECF.

Volunteers

The Museum increased its intake of volunteers during 2011 and by year-end there were twenty volunteers carrying out various assignments in most Museum departments. The Museum recognises that volunteers are a valuable asset and the Museum's Volunteer Committee ensures that best practice is being followed and approved Government initiatives such as the Job Bridge programme are introduced in the Museum.

Occupational Health

Corporate Health Ireland continued as the Museum's provider of occupational health

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Alongside operations of helpdesk, asset management, risk management, bandwidth optimisation, back-up and maintenance of office and gallery information systems, and despite a reduced budget, much progress was achieved during 2011 in ICT strategic projects.

The ICT team responsibilities were extended to fixed and mobile phone systems. Projects included upgrading of phone exchanges to VOIP-enabled PBXs, enabling phones in the Collections Resource Centre (CRC), and introducing smartphones with e-mail for managers where relevant.

Infrastructure improvements included the extension of the Museum's network to and in the CRC, the creation of a demilitarised zone on the Museum's network, and the implementation of dedicated storage for archival material. All office PCs were upgraded to Windows 7 and Office 2010. An important number of legacy MS Access database and front-ends were upgraded to Access 2010 and associated data migrated to MS SQL Server. SCCM was introduced, centralising software deployments.

Website improvements were led by analysing online survey results, website access statistics, and activities in galleries. The *Visit Us* section, relaunched early 2011 as a user-centric, practical information ensemble, has become one of the most visited sections of the Museum's website. Department-specific content was improved, through the re-launch of the *Explore & Learn* section, and through many additional pages.

The content improvements, together with foreign officials visits to Ireland, led to a general annual increase of +30% of the number of online visits, +50% traffic increase from the US, Canada and the UK, while most visitors to www.museum.ie come from internet-access matured markets.

Gallery activities included improvements in interactives and AVs to existing galleries (*Kingship and Sacrifice*, *Albert Bender* and in *Blaze Away*), but mostly centred on *The Treasury* exhibition:

- Large touchscreen kiosks to present an illustrated glossary with high-definition photographs;
- Audio-guides, funded under the technology fund from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, were completed in six languages and delivered in three ways:
 - Classic for the visually-impaired or non-technology-savvy members of the public;
 - Downloadable MP3 album with one photograph per track;
 - WIFI streaming to visitor's smartphone or tablet.
- Automation of *Faddan More Psalter* film (geometric correction to cater for a curved wall projection).

Finally, the ICT team enabled department-specific projects:

- Conservation: deployment of environmental controls in the CRC, Procurement;
- Education: tour booking system, Calendar of Events multiple format publications, education rooms (interactive whiteboard, PCs, VLAN);
- Registration: WIFI in Museum stores, collection management centralisation;
- Irish Antiquities: real time read-only databases for external researchers, CAD workstation;
- Photography: cabling of systems to Museum's network;
- Finance: asset stock-taking, budget reports, client-machine reconfiguration following changes to outsourced systems in Financial Shared Services.

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