

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

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## FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR, BOARD OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

The success, or otherwise, of cultural institutions is often measured by footfall. In 2021, that crude barometer had to be set aside for a second, consecutive year as public health guidelines required sector-wide closures in the interest of public health.

But, as has been the case for the National Museum of Ireland since the start of the pandemic, work continued, and the museum challenged itself to engage with audiences, beyond traditional in-person transaction. Moreover, when doors did reopen, a rich programme of new exhibitions was put in place to compliment permanent exhibitions and online programming.

Of note, the stand-out, new exhibitions, in my view, all centred around collaborations. *Inform* was an exhibition of work by craft and design students in which the students' reimaged elements of the museum's collection. It was an exercise in exploring a usable past through the skill and imagination of future creators, trained and inspired in Ireland. The initiative came about through a partnership with the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland and the museum.

The *Our Irish Chair* exhibition, which continued into 2022 at the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life was a collaboration with GMIT Letterfrack. In this instance, second-year furniture design students took inspiration from the traditional, three-legged chair, associated with Sligo and Galway.

A third collaboration was that with the Hugh Lane Gallery. In *Studio and State, The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty*, comprising portraits of those behind the negotiations leading to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, were exhibited alongside artefacts and records relating to the Treaty.

Such collaborations lead to rich and engaging exhibitions, offering deeper meanings and ranges of perspectives. Moreover, collaborations demonstrate that cultural institutions are places for education, craft, creativity as well as places of reflection. The spirit of collaboration continues to grow and flourish at the museum and is something – I hope – it can be measured by for its impact.

As a significant year in the Decade of Centenaries, the Museum was not alone pleased to host the *Studio and State* exhibition, but it was an honour to play host to the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin; Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar; and Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin, T.D who used the backdrop of the National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks to announce details of the remaining elements of the centenary programme. This included a funding commitment for the museum's planned 20th century History of Ireland Galleries. The museum remains grateful to the Government, and especially Minister Martin and her Department for this funding commitment, as well as ongoing support.

At the level of the board, a period of preparing for significant transition, with many members ending their five-year term, was followed by a period of induction of new members. I would like to especially pay tribute to those members who came off the board in

2021: serving as volunteers on the board of a large, complex organisation is demanding, and at times, board members have had to dig deep and make additional commitments to help steer the museum.

It was my honour to be appointed by Minister Catherine Martin for a further two-year term as chair of the board. I look forward to continued work with the board, and the executive – under the sterling leadership of Lynn Scarff – to completing the priorities in our current strategy and planning for a post-pandemic museum.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Catherine Heaney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Catherine Heaney  
Chair

## INTRODUCTION BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

If 2020 was a year where the National Museum of Ireland demonstrated its resilience following the emergence of a global pandemic, 2021 was where we sowed the seeds of recovery. Nine exhibitions across all our curatorial areas opened in 2021 and while we were still operating under limited capacity visitors began to return to our museums and engage with our collection again. The impact of the pandemic did not completely abate but we started to pick out the learnings from the challenges we faced in 2020 by growing elements of online programming and our online shop and thinking about how this way of working could become a permanent feature of engagement in the NMI. As part of Earth Day in April 2021, over 27,000 primary school students from all over Ireland engaged with the NMI online – a number that would never be possible with onsite visits.

A huge achievement of 2021 was the successful submission of our application for MSPi accreditation to the Heritage Council for three of our sites – NMI Decorative Arts and History - Collins Barracks, NMI Country Life – Turlough Park and the Collections Resource Centre – Swords. The work in developing and updating policies and procedures to enable this application was unprecedented and involved all the team in some capacity.

Our capital programmes progressed, and one of the most memorable aspects of 2021 was watching a menagerie of specimens from our Natural History Museum being winched out the window to make their way to the safety of our Collections Resource Centre and enable the installation of a crash deck for the commencement of roof works to the building. While these developments mean our visitors cannot access the building, the opportunity to address the chronically bad condition of the building and provide a world class visitor experience in the future will make it worthwhile. It is also an opportunity to develop new exhibitions from the Natural History collection on other museum sites. *Down to Earth* which opened in the Riding School at NMI-Decorative Arts and History in Collins Barracks is an example of new ways of interpreting the collection in a different space and was delivered in collaboration with colleagues in the Geological Survey of Ireland.

At the heart of all our work is the collection and making it accessible to visitors and researchers alike. Following a period where research access had been limited, it was wonderful to begin welcoming researchers back on site and 2021 saw the publication of research related to many areas of our collection including two wonderful publications on the Fadden More Psalter published in XXX and Medieval Bells published in XXX.

Progress was also made in addressing our permanent exhibitions offer through the confirmation of funding support from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media for the 20<sup>th</sup> Century History of Ireland Galleries at NMI – Decorative Arts and History. The initiation of the project was marked by Narrating the Nation, a two-day conference delivered in partnership with colleagues in the National College of Art and Design.

While the opportunities of online engagement were apparent, the impact of being in the Museum, particularly for young audiences can never be underestimated. A focus on longer

term engagements with our local communities continues to be at the heart of the work of our museums and the Little Houses project and exhibition which featured the work of young people in the Stoneybatter Youth Project is a notable example of the power of giving young voices a platform to tell their stories in our spaces.

There are many more successes to be celebrated and challenges we have learned from outlined in this report. All this work is made real by the incredible team at the National Museum of Ireland made up of the staff and Board. I would like to thank them for their unwavering commitment and ambition to grow the impact of our museums to become more accessible, inclusive, and relevant places with each new year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lynn Scarff', written in a cursive style.

Lynn Scarff

Director

## **ART AND INDUSTRY**

The Art and Industrial Division (AID) is responsible for approximately 530,000 artefacts reflecting Irish economic, cultural, social, industrial, political and military history over the last four centuries. Staff in the division also care for collections of Irish, European and Asian decorative arts.

### **Staffing**

Sanction was received for a two-year acting-up promotion to Assistant Keeper I. Brenda Malone was the successful candidate.

### **Exhibitions**

*InForm*, a collaborative exhibition project with Design and Crafts Council Ireland showcasing new work inspired by Museum objects by DCCI jewellery and ceramic students, which had been postponed from 2020 due to Covid 19, was launched on the 24<sup>th</sup> May by Minister Catherine Martin. An accompanying catalogue was also produced. The exhibition was dismantled in September to make way for *Studio & State: The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty*, which was opened on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov. by the Tanaiste and Lord Mayor of Dublin in the same exhibition space. *Studio & State*, a co-curated exhibition with Hugh Lane Gallery, displays Sir John Lavery's paintings of the Treaty signatories next to contemporary relevant artefacts from the Museum's collection. Paintings were also lent for the exhibition by the National Gallery of Ireland and the Ulster Museum. The accompanying catalogue contains essays by a number of leading historians of Irish history. The exhibition and catalogue mark the centenary of the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921 and are part of the Museum's ongoing contributions to the Decade of Centenaries. The *20<sup>th</sup> Century History of Ireland Galleries* project was officially launched on 27<sup>th</sup> April with the Taoiseach, Tanaiste, and Minister as part of the Government programming for the Decade of Centenaries. A core project team was put in place, with exhibition designers and a project manager appointed. The galleries will open in 2024

### **Collections**

The Art and Industrial staff working with colleagues in the Conservation Dept facilitated the continued roll-out of the LED lighting project and the majority of galleries in Collins Barracks was complete by year end. The division contributed towards the application for MSPI for the Collins Barracks site. As part of that application regular documented checks were put in place for galleries and stores around the Collins Barracks site.

Plans for the long term storage of the framed flag collection came to fruition with the installation of the required storage furniture in Block 14 and the transfer of framed flags to it. A move of collections (objects from the Eileen Gray and musical instruments collection) from a temporary home in the north block back to their original locations in the east block was completed in November. This was to facilitate surveys to be carried out by the OPW on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the north block. During the lockdown in early 2021 staff of the division temporarily moved a large number of objects from a number of display cases in the Irish Silver galleries to facilitate work on the case alarms to be carried out. Curators worked with colleagues in Natural History on objects for their geological exhibition *Down To Earth*.

### **Loans**

The division facilitated a number of loan requests and the return of loan objects during 2021. There were incoming loan objects from other institutions/organisations for the exhibitions *InForm* and *Studio & State* and a number of wooden objects were returned to the Franciscan Order following the dismantling of the exhibition, *The Faith of the Franciscans: Sacred Art in Ireland*. Capt. Robert Halpin's telescope and associated affidavit, which had been on display in *Soldiers and Chiefs*, were returned to the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire. A Richardson Auxiliary uniform was lent to the Cork Public Museum. A small collection of Iranian objects were prepared for loan to the exhibition, *Meeting in Isfahan. Vision and Exchange in Safavid Iran* in the Chester Beatty. Objects on loan to Dublin Castle and the Ulster Museum were returned. Two loan requests, from the Ulster Museum and Warsaw Museum of Modern Art, were quite advanced with conservation work well progressed before being withdrawn by the prospective borrowing institutions. Inward loans for *InForm* were returned at the end of the year.

### **Acquisitions**

There were a number of objects acquired during the year for the A&I collections. Items purchased include a copy of the 1993 Joint Declaration (Downing Street Declaration) signed by Albert Reynolds, and John Major; a collection of papers related to Patrick Pearse; 'The Meeting', a stained glass panel by Harry Clarke, (formerly a loan object); and a number of items purchased at the Howth Castle sale. Amongst the objects donated were, two glass pieces by Donna Coogan, a framed wax model/impression of a George III Royal Seal dating to the Act of Union, a collection of garments by the designer Clodagh, the flak jacket worn by Kerry native Donie O'Sullivan as a CNN reporter at the United States Capitol attack on 6 January 2021; a silver Tailteann Games Trophy 1928/32 won by Eleanor Sterling; a Vera Klute bronze bust of Eileen Gray and a model of an E-1027 occasional table. Items collected for the Contemporary Ireland Collection included Covid-sceptic and anti-vaccine ephemera. Black vessel by Liam Flynn was purchased under the NMI/DCCI joint purchase fund for contemporary Irish craft; and 'Spoon Garden' by Annemarie Reinhold, the NMI/DCCI jointly commissioned (by competition in 2020) piece of work created in response to the Covid-19 pandemic was completed and delivered.

### **Talks/lectures/interviews**

Staff provided talks and lectures to a range of audiences both in person and online via webinars, lectures, etc. *Narrating the Nation*, a two-day international conference jointly co-convened with NCAD, took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> October and the 5<sup>th</sup> November. Media interviews were given about new exhibitions and other topics relating to the collections.



## IRISH ANTIQUITIES

The Irish Antiquities Division (IAD) is responsible for the archaeological, ethnographical, classical and Egyptian collections. The Division is also responsible for the administration of various statutory functions such as the acquisition of archaeological objects claimed as the property of the State and the regulation of licences to export and alter archaeological objects.

### Licensing

The Division carried out duties relating to the NMI's statutory functions under the National Monuments Acts. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, IAD staff continued to carry out all aspects of these statutory functions. A total of 1470 various licence applications were commented upon or processed and site inspections were carried out in relation to a number of these archaeological works:

Licence to excavate/monitor/detect/dive	878
Ministerial Consents and Directions	70
Licence to alter an archaeological object	291
Licence to export an archaeological object	231

IAD staff liaised regularly with the National Monuments Service (NMS). Staff assisted many consultant archaeological companies nationwide in relation to the care and deposition of excavated collections. A comprehensive upgrading of storage of excavated collections in the CRC was carried out by IAD staff. Staff undertook a detailed survey of undocumented excavated assemblages and worked on a framework tender to process this material to make it accessible to researchers.

### Fieldwork

Fieldwork relating to archaeological discoveries was undertaken in 21 counties; Clare, Cork, Derry, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath and Wicklow.

### Acquisitions

Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the discovery and reporting of archaeological objects continued and accordingly, fieldwork was carried out by IAD staff. Two early Bronze Age cist graves were excavated at Kilderry, Co. Kilkenny which contained decorated ceramic vessels and staff also excavated a slab-lined cist at Carrowgarry, Co. Sligo dated to the fifth to sixth centuries AD. Staff registered 163 artefacts from 20 counties. These included a range of objects such as lithics, ceramics, metals and organic material. Notable among these acquisitions were a late bronze age wooden club, a hoard of Viking Age hacksilver, a gilt bronze decorated mount of eighth/ninth century date and a medieval seal matrix. The Great Sword of Howth, an important late Medieval iron sword, was purchased at auction.

### Legal Matters

Owing to the nature of the Museum's statutory functions under the National Monuments Act, regular liaison with NMS took place. IAD staff liaised frequently with An Garda Síochána

on the issue of unlicensed metal detecting. Staff dealt with forty separate reports of the use of metal detecting devices and took part in Operation Pandora 3, a Europol investigation targeting illicit trafficking of antiquities. Staff also liaised closely with colleagues in the Dept. of Tourism, Culture, Arts, the Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, regarding changes to export licensing to the UK resulting from Brexit. Staff liaised with the Chief State Solicitor's Office on a number of different issues.

### **Exhibitions and Loans**

Both national and international loans form a significant part of the Division's exhibition work each year.

#### **Ireland**

In December, a major exhibition entitled *Colmcille: Sacred Objects of a Saint* was opened in Kildare Street, to mark 1500 years since the birth of St. Columba. IAD staff continued to improve conditions for objects on exhibition and in the reserve collection across four sites. IAD worked with contractors to create a 3D tour of the Medieval Ireland gallery.

#### **Local Museums**

As part of IAD's remit to work with local and regional museums in Ireland, staff liaised and consulted with museum colleagues all over Ireland. Staff inspected loans at the Medieval Mile Museum, Kilkenny, King John's Castle, Limerick, North Down Museum, Bangor, Down County Museum, Downpatrick, Tower Museum, Derry, and de-installed some material on loan to Galway City Museum; staff also carried out remedial work to loan objects in Clare County Museum.

#### **International**

Throughout the year staff prepared collections for loan in early 2022 to the British Museum, to the World of Stonehenge exhibition.

#### **Research visits**

IAD actively encourages and supports researchers to use the divisional archive and collections and this work forms a major part of the divisional work each year. In spite of Covid-19 restrictions, staff facilitated 174 visits to the archive and 30 research visits to the reserve collections. Throughout the year, because of Covid-19 restrictions, staff carried out searches of the database on behalf of researchers.

#### **Research/Projects**

Samples of recently-acquired organic objects were submitted for radiocarbon dating. Staff contributed to an AHRC/IRC project 'Project Radiocarbon' and supported an application to the Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research fund which would involve research on IAD collections. Work continued on the Bog Bodies Project.

#### **Representation**

Staff represented the NMI on the following external bodies: Board of Directors of the Discovery Programme; Royal Irish Academy Standing Committee for Archaeology; Council of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland; Steering Group for Dublin GIS Archaeology Project; Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Committee; Editorial Board, Journal of Irish

Archaeology; Designated Museums Liaison Group; Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's Climate Change Advisory Group; Staff liaised with the State services and An Garda Síochána on issues concerning protection of portable heritage. Internally, staff represented the Division on a range of policy committees including the Health and Safety Committee.

### **Public Engagement**

IAD staff delivered many public lectures to a wide variety of local and national bodies on archaeological and museological topics both within the Museum and across the country though this was curtailed because of public health restrictions. Staff represented the NMI on RTE's *DriveTime*. Staff lectured/presented to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in UCC, UCD and NUI Galway.

## IRISH FOLKLIFE

The Irish Folklife Division manages the national collection of objects reflective of Irish traditional life, understanding that traditions change and evolve and seeking to reflect that in our collecting. The Division continues to work with communities and explore themes for contemporary collecting. The Division is based at National Museum of Ireland – Country Life, Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. The majority of the Irish Folklife collections are housed at Turlough Park.

### Acquisitions

There were 134 objects acquired during the year. These related to Covid-19, Sisters of Mercy in Connacht, a selection of telephone cards, electric objects purchased for Kitchen Power, creamery material, turf boat watercolour (Dónal Mac Pólin), agricultural leaflets, a model Galway hooker, model Canadian salmon fishing boat (boat builder Jimmy Furey, RIP) as well as travel permits.

### Exhibitions

*Paul Strzelecki*. This exhibition celebrating the life and achievements of Paul Strzelecki – a forgotten Polish hero of the Great Irish Famine. This was a panel based exhibition on loan from the Polish Embassy. This exhibition closed in September 2021 and is now available online on [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)

*Świdermajer Architecture*. This was curated by the NGO, Bardzo Ladnie Foundation, the exhibition is on display as part of a nationwide campaign called *Integration Through Culture*. It consists of photographs of Świdermajer villas by Tomasz Brzostek and information panels about the style. It continues until March 2022.

*Polish Folk Art – Beliefs, Colour and Symbols*. This exhibition opened in December 2020 and continues into 2022.

*Séamus Mag Uidhir Mayo Folklorist*. This exhibition opened in January 2020. A panel based exhibition celebrating this Irish writer and folk collector, from Doohoma, Co. Mayo. This ended in October 2021.

*Making a currach - Michael Conneely*. *Making a currach* online exhibition opened in April 2021.

*Our Irish Chair Tradition Revisited*. Rosa Meehan curated this exhibition which opened in October 2021. It was a collaboration with students from GMIT, Letterfrack, and the 'You Are Here': Tuam chair public art project from 2016.

*Tales of the Titanic*. The *Addergoole 14* story is a universal story of emigration, hope and of shared tragedy. It is also a story of remembrance and commemoration as only three of the fourteen passengers from this small Mayo town survived. This was on display until October 2021.

*1845: Memento Mori by Paula Stokes.* This art installation of 1845 hand-blown glass potatoes remembering the Great Irish Famine, opened in Turlough Park House in November 2021.

*An Gorta Mór – 175.* Research commenced on this exhibition for NMI - Decorative Arts & History for opening in early 2022.

*FOLK 21.* Planning for this exhibition commenced and photography was completed. 21 St. Brigid's Crosses/21 Butterprints/21 Penal Crosses/21 Vessels.

### **Collaboration & Outreach**

The Mincéir project was initiated and the grant application was awarded during the year and the National Online portal of Traveller Culture material was developed.

Galway- Mayo Institute of Technology Furniture Students worked with the Irish Folklife Division to create chairs as part of the Our Irish Chair – Tradition revisited.

Collaboration continued with *Fáilte Ireland* in relation to Halloween. Numerous art projects and artists were facilitated to access the collection and outreach via tours and lectures.

### **Research & Engagement**

Engagement continued with boat building experts and local authorities as part of the Development of the Boat Gallery. Fieldwork was carried out in counties Clare, Cork, Galway and Mayo. Age & Opportunity collaborated with the NMI on a Bealtaine online

**Remembering our West of Ireland Boats** event.

The Irish Fly Fishing and Game Shooting Museum visited during the year and engagement continued with the Currach Association of Ireland, Currachaí na Sceirí (Inishkea boat building project). The maritime archaeologist Darina Tully, Irish Islands Marine Research Organisation, South and Mid Kerry Rowing Club met with staff to discuss the development of the Boat gallery.

*Nationwide* conducted an interview on Inis Oírr in relation to Mikey Conneely exhibition. The 'Traditional Boats of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way' blog continued to draw the public's interest and is used as a forum to share information with the NMI. Staff contributed to the Online collections project and the Irish Folklife Acquisition Strategy was published in 2021.

Filming was completed for the museum website of baskets in the Collection and objects associated with Halloween. Scanning project of Lough Derravarragh turf boat in Daingean agreed with scanning company.

### **Courtyard Gallery exhibitions**

A programme of exhibitions continued in the Courtyard gallery.

*Fieldwork*; September – November 2021.

A series of platinum and archival pigment photographic prints by Betsy Stirrat showing places in Ireland's west that are notable for their form, history and natural beauty.

**One day – 40 Sunrises; November 2021 – April 2022.**

An exhibition/project by artist Ian Wieczorek, comprising 40 small oil paintings. These images followed sunrise around the world on a randomly chosen day (15th July 2020) based on live webcam feeds accessed via the internet. Originally created as an online project from the Arts Council Covid Response Award 2020.

**On Sight 2020**

*Straw Sister* by Maria McKinney.

Installed December 2020. This was an innovative and thought-provoking sculptural work that explored the Strawboy tradition in Ireland and the agricultural process of artificial insemination (AI) in cattle breeding.

**In The Open/Faoin Spéir**

This was an Arts Council funded programme developed in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This was a curated programme of multi-disciplinary, inclusive arts activities in community outdoor spaces. This project was in conjunction with Mayo County Council Arts Office, The Linenhall Arts Centre and Mayo Artsquad. The programme for this project took its inspiration from the Irish Folklife Collection, the natural beauty of Turlough Park and the Great Western Greenway. Outputs from this project to be realised between January and late April 2022.

## **NATURAL HISTORY**

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

### **Natural History Decant**

The Natural History Museum remained closed to the public throughout 2021 while the Office of Public Works (OPW) installed scaffolding through all floor levels, and prepared to carry out works on the roof of this 1856 structure. To accommodate this work, there was a significant effort by staff and contractors to remove exhibits and specimens in storage. Approximately 22,000 specimens were safely transferred from the museum. This decant project commenced in 2020 and had a high profile on radio, television and print media. It was documented by a television crew who have produced an hour-long programme which is due for broadcast by RTÉ in 2022.

The first major step in 2021 was to winch the large skull of the fin whale out of the building through an opening made by removing a first-floor window. As and when pandemic restrictions allowed, staff and various contractors spent the first half of the year packing exhibits from balcony levels that were all brought through insect pest quarantine measures and into safe storage off site. The public followed the project on social media at #DeadZooDiary. In addition to the large taxidermy exhibits, display cases also had to be dismantled and removed off site.

In addition to the roof works, which are funded by the OPW, museum staff worked with experts to develop a Business Case to detail the steps required for the full conservation of the building and the provision of lift access, as required under the Public Spending Code. This was completed and submitted to the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

### **Exhibitions**

While the main museum building remained closed to the public, staff worked in partnership with Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) on a major exhibition *Down to Earth – Exploring Ireland's Geology*, that opened in September at Collins Barracks. The exhibition uses scientific collections of the Royal Dublin Society, National Museum of Ireland and GSI to chart the development of geology since the 1790s. It shows the ongoing work of Irish earth scientists in addressing natural resources, climate action, and such geohazards as radon gas from bedrock, and flooding in karst landscapes.

### **Collections**

These major developments occupied most of the staff time during the year, but the care of the two million scientific specimens continued. Improvements in conditions were achieved for animals stored in alcohol included making space for a major acquisition from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. These comprise some very early examples of preservation techniques and important specimens.

### **Acquisitions**

Insect collections were rearranged and old collections integrated into cabinets. Significant gifts of gemstones and gemmology equipment from Gabriel O'Grady and Lovell Parker were integrated into the mineral collections. A major acquisition of geological specimens from University College Dublin was also received.

### **Research and Engagement**

While the public did not visit the museum, they continued to approach us with enquiries, including the first specimen of an Asian hornet to be found in Ireland. Species new to Ireland included wasps, annelids, bryozoans, flies, bees, moths, and a mammal. The number of samples in the Irish Cetacean Genetic Tissue Bank reached 1,000 from a project commenced in 2007. Staff gave a number of virtual talks and both attended and hosted training courses and seminars online.

### **Collaboration and Outreach**

Staff continued to serve with other organisations including the National Biodiversity Data Centre, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, The Irish Naturalists' Journal, The Royal Entomological Society, and the Natural Sciences Collections Association. In addition to their own publications they worked on the editing and production of *The Irish Naturalists' Journal*. A significant book by Dr Sherra Murphy '*The first National Museum, Dublin's Natural History Museum in the mid-nineteenth century*' was published during the year, based on a PhD project that examined the development of the museum.



## **CONSERVATION**

The Conservation Department has predominant responsibility for maintaining standards of collection care and conservation for the extensive NMI collections it holds in trust for the Nation. The main areas of focus of the Conservation Department is to determine and enact the preventative, remedial and investigative care needs of the NMI's Collection.

### **Preventive Conservation and upgrade of collections**

The major project was the provision of a new environmental monitoring system which entailed new software and the installation of c.160 additional data loggers in Collins Barracks, Kildare St, Museum of Country Life, CRC, Daingean and Beggars Bush. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) continued across all sites by mapping locations of pest traps. Moth infestations occurred in CB and KS which entailed packing and loading four runs of the large freezer in Conservation. Artefacts on loan to the Butter Museum, Cork were also frozen to eradicate pests and material from outside institutions such as IMMA, was also taken in and frozen. There was continued assistance to complete the NH Decant program. The Low RH room in KS was fitted out and a dehumidifier installed. Gallery cleaning by conservation and curatorial staff took place in the Egyptian exhibition, KS and the Albert Bender exhibition. Lighting in all CB and Kildare St Galleries was upgraded by contractors to LEDs along with the installation of semiautomatic-opening doors. Installation of Plan chests for flag storage in Block 14 commenced. There were numerous meetings and production of policy documents for our three site application for MSPI assessment. Extensive collections from commercial archaeological companies were repacked and stored in CRC. All water de-ionisers in the Conservation Department were replaced.

### **Remedial Conservation**

Treatment was undertaken on objects for exhibition and loans, improved storage, publication and research as well as first aid measures for freshly excavated artefacts material from the River Shannon. Treatment was undertaken on objects for exhibition and loans such as *the World of Stonehenge*, *Tuam Chairs*, *Etex/Down to Earth*, *InForm*, *Hugh Lane/Treaty* and loans to Dublinia. Conservation was also carried out on core collections - the Schlagintweit life masks, weaponry from the Armoury, four cannons on display, Armada gun carriage wheel, the Lough Kinale book shrine and game heads and whale skeletons associated with the Natural History decant project. A waterlogged wood freeze-drying program was progressed in CRC.

### **Exhibitions and loans**

Conservation staff were involved in all aspects of the *Tuam Chairs*, *Irish Wars*, *Etex/Down to Earth*, *InForm*, *Hugh Lane/Treaty*, *Colmcille: sacred relics of a saint* exhibitions, as well as loans to the British Museum (*World of Stonehenge*), Medieval Mile museum, Kilkenny, Cork Public Museum, Chester Beatty Library *Isfahan*, Dublin Castle/OPW and Dublinia. Planning meetings commenced on the History of Ireland Galleries.

### **Investigative Conservation**

Examination, investigation and scientific analysis of the collections routinely formed a part of conservation processes in 2021. Unfortunately, the X-ray unit failed and sanction was granted for a new unit since the NMI conservation staff also supply vital x-ray facilities to the Irish archaeological and conservation sectors. Research was carried out into the selection and eventual tendering for a new unit while complying with all relevant legislation and liaising with our RPA and the EPA. The new machine (Titan Neo) is now up and running successfully and the backlog of artefacts requiring radiography cleared. Radiographs of a painting for the NGI were also provided. Routine XRF analysis was undertaken to determine composition and authenticity of new and potential acquisitions as well as ongoing research projects and forthcoming publications. This included the Tullydonnell LBA gold hoard, all NMI chain mail holdings, the Drumanagh assemblage, Iron-age spear-butts, the Fiacail Padraig shrine and artefacts destined for loan to CBL. In addition, Conservation undertook sampling of artefacts such as spear shafts, axe handles, vessels and human remains for C14 dating and wood identification.

### **Fieldwork**

This mainly concerned with the inspection or recovery of archaeological material from a variety of contexts in particular numerous medieval artefacts recovered from the River Shannon by divers. Conservation staff were also active in inspecting local museums and commercial archaeological premises and facilities.

### **Research, Collaboration, Engagement & Outreach**

Conservation Education was again significant with the continued delivery in the face of ongoing restrictions a number of modules to the UCC Masters in Museum Studies. Conservation staff actively participated in numerous online training courses, conferences and seminars (e.g. 'Nanocellulose and its uses for paper conservation', 'The magic of Black Inks', 'Gels: Thickeners, aqueous gels and hydrogels', 'After the Book of Kells: Insular Art in Scotland and Ireland 900-1900'). Conservation also assisted in the preparation of Michael Collin's slippers and tunic for media - RTE's Claire Byrne Live and the Late Late Show. Demonstrations of trial 3-D printing of artefacts was organised and took place in Conservation. Staff also participated in a number of NMI committees: Health and Safety, Staff Forum, Diversity and Equality, Contemporary Collecting and externally with the CNCI Conservation Working group and Cardiff University Conservation Research. Staff also provided advice and attended meetings with OPW concerning architectural and archaeological projects (Dublin City wall conservation project, redisplay of the Turoe Stone)

## **REGISTRATION**

The Registration department focus on maintaining standards of collections management to ensure the integrity of collections information by prioritising location control, collection logistics, loans, exhibition support, store management, providing access to information for researchers, behind-the-scenes tours, object and archive digitisation, preparing priority collections to catalogue level and systematically tidying of data in the various collections management databases. The Registration Department is also responsible for the management of the Museum's Collections Resource Centre, leading NMI's Loans Committee, Standards Group, Terminology Groups and Strategic Storage project which was ongoing in 2020.

The Registration Department was headed up by Judith Finlay, Registrar, who went on a career break in October and has been replaced in an acting capacity by Emer Ní Cheallaigh, former NMI Archivist/Records Manager. Ms. Ní Cheallaigh also holds the position of Manager of NMI's Collections Resource Centre. Dr Kevin Forkan was appointed as Documentation Officer for the Decorative Art and History Collections, he has since moved sideways into a newly created position of Collections Management Systems Administrator.

### **Inventory**

Phase 2 of NMI's Collections Inventory Project continued through 2021 with a team of 6 external contractors who carried out a physical inventory of NMI's numismatic and philately collections. Delivery of the project will ensure that all museum collections are catalogued to inventory level in line with SPECTRUM standards. In addition to the physical inventory of objects from the Decorative Arts and History Collections, the team carried out data inputting of original registers from the Irish Folklife and Natural History Collections, ensuring essential collections data is centralised and available to researchers. Planning also took place for the physical inventory of the Irish Antiquities collection which will commence in 2022.

### **Natural History Decant**

Phase 1 of the Natural History decant to the Collections Resource Centre took place from December 2020- June 2021. All collections movement, transport, location control, freezer and quarantine management, rehousing and shelving were carried out by staff of Registration. Planning for the design and fit out of a space in the CRC to accommodate phase 2 of the decant also took place and was led by Registration.

### **Collections Management Systems (CMS)**

The Collections Management Systems Administration, supported by the Registrar, set out a work plan for the newly established department that included developing data standards for a number of thesauri, delivering a projects to enhance the functionality of the CMS to manage images, supporting NMI's Online Collections Project, delivering a training programme to ensure that the CMS is producing quality and consistent data to manage collections and to support research.

### **Exhibitions and Loans**

The Registration Team, managed incoming and outgoing loans including a major loan to the British Museum and for *Kitchen Power, Memento Mori and Café Art* exhibitions. Registration also supported exhibitions across NMI including *Our Irish Chair, Down to Earth and Studio and State*. Historic and legacy loans were analysed and a proposal to create and manage loans in Adlib was created to ensure intellectual control over all loans.

### **Library**

The Librarian continued to provide a service to internal and external library users. The Librarian, with assistance from Conservation began the process of preparing the George Eogan Library for processing and carried out a project in the Irish Antiquities Division (IAD) Library to treat and improve storage of the IAD library collection in Kildare Street.

### **Archives**

Until her promotion in August 2021, the Archivist continued to deliver a research service to internal and external researchers. She produced a draft Records Management Policy and managed cataloguing projects to process the archives of the Directorate and Natural History Division both of which are ongoing. Sanction was received in November 2021 and the post was advertised in December 2021 to recruit a new archivist in line with NMIs status as a place of Deposit under the National Archives Act, 1986.

### **Collections Research Centre**

The Acting Registrar also manages the Collections Resource and supported by the Head of Facilities and Security carried out all on-site facilities management at the CRC. She has carried out inspections, monitoring, digitisation of requested files onsite to ensure the protection of NMI's reserve collections during OCVID 19 lockdowns. The Acting Registrar also led centralised procurement for archaeological processing services and led the application process for interim accreditation as part of the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland at the CRC. A major upgrade of collections storage continues to support capital development projects in the Natural History and Irish Antiquities museums and included an extension to an existing Human Remains Store and planning for a new wood store and Low Humidity Store at the Collections Resource Centre.

### **Service Delivery**

Staff of the Registration Department led NMI's Loans Committee, Strategic Storage Committee, Standards Group and CMS Technical groups and produced a number of key pieces of guidance and legal analysis for use in NMI. Essential to the running of the NMI, these policies and standards are key to ensuring that NMI collections are managed to the highest level, according to international best practice. Registration staff also provided talks at a range of conference, university and other cultural institution events, provided training, workshops and attended training on a range of subjects, to ensure continuous professional development of the team.

## EDUCATION AND LEARNING

### Audience and event/resources data

Data below relates to online resources, online and onsite events organised by the Education team in 2021. Attendance at onsite events was determined by public health guidelines and maximum numbers permitted at each site. Closure of Natural History affected data.

	Online Events	Onsite events	Online resources
Total number of events	147	152	
Total number of people at events	51,901	4203	
Total number of new learning resources created by Education team in 2021			72

### Data related to the Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) project:

17 network meetings and 65 training sessions organised; 70, 000 postcards produced and distributed as part of *Daoine Agus Áit project*; 14 videos produced for Heritage Week and 15 digital resources created; 693,300 page views of archive sites by 256, 921 visitors.

### Formal Education

Schools at all levels engaged in the schools' programme, including DEIS schools, and events reflected themes from biodiversity and climate change to space exploration. The reach was phenomenal where, for example, a record 27,000 pupils from over 1000 primary schools attended the online Earth Day event entitled *Cool Fossils & Hot (Climate) Facts!*, organised by NH Education and Rediscovery Centre, Ballymun. Work also continued on the *Architects in Schools Exhibition* where transition year students and teachers from 70 schools around Ireland worked with 40 architects in response to the themes of Home, Community and Sustainability. This initiative forms part of the MOU between NMI and the Irish Architecture Foundation. For third level students a number of online presentations were given to third level groups on themes related to museum education including UCD Collections and Curating Seminar, BA Education at Marino College of Education and students of the MPhil Public History and Cultural Heritage, TCD.

### Online resources

The Education team created 72 new online resources for different audiences in 2021. In particular the *Glendalough – Artefacts & Archaeology* resource, designed for Junior Cert students, proved very popular while the Viking video resource for primary schools explored museums, archaeology and role of science in archaeology and was created in collaboration with the Midlands Science and the Heritage Offices at Laois, Westmeath, Longford and Offaly. Other videos and activity sheets were created on the Ice Age Ireland, fossils, extinction and climate change for primary schools and resources for families and adults including short pre-recorded demonstrations, talks, and workshops.

### Public Programme

A blended programme of online and onsite events was developed for a wide range of audiences. Online programming consisted of pre-recorded and livestreamed events and archived content was viewed by many. Whenever possible, onsite events were organised. Highlights include an online lecture series at NMI - Archaeology entitled *Climate Change &*

*Archaeology* involving archaeologists and conservation architects from the National Monument Service, OPW and the University of Lincoln. At CL the first ever storytelling initiative *What's the Scéal* was organised in collaboration with Poetry Ireland which included a symposium on storytelling in museums and the future of storytelling in Ireland. At DAH the *OUTing the Past Festival 2021* saw LGBTQI+ history and the Museum collaborate with NGI and Kilmainham Gaol on a packed programme which included live and online talks.

### **Community Engagement**

The public consultation process was completed as part of the development of the Community Engagement Strategy. Anthony Haughey was selected as Artist in Residence at NMI until 2023. The residency, led by Education, is funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 Programme. In 2021 Anthony engaged in a series of workshops on and off-site with a range of community groups and schools including 'A Dress for Akunma', a project involving Irish/Nigerian Global Migration Collective and Women's Textile group. At DAH the *Little Houses project* culminated in an exhibition which featured work from young people living in Stoneybatter which reflected their experience of living through the pandemic. Also at DAH the team continued to collaborate with DCCCC on the Culture Club programme.

The iCAN project continued to support 22 community groups across Clare, Galway, Mayo and Wicklow with their community archiving activities, through training, guidance and network meetings. The *Daoine agus Áit: Connecting Our Communities* project saw the groups collaborate on a Heritage Postcard Collection. To date, over 70,000 free postcards have been distributed across Ireland and around the world. Skehana Heritage Group received the County Galway Heritage Week Award for their postcard project. A number of National Schools engaged in a Postcard Pen Pal exchange furthering the aims of this project to 'Connect Our Communities'. The Heritage Council and NMI jointly commissioned a review of the iCAN programme which is expected to be complete in early 2022.

### **Developmental Initiatives**

Education staff developed systems to record and analyse audience based qualitative and quantitative data in order to track and evaluate the most efficient way of gathering and analyzing the data. Bookings staff responded to the ever-changing COVID situation, adapting systems and information as required and responding to queries and requests for information from the public. At Arch work started on creating a panel of guides and at DAH and CL guides from the panels provided onsite tours and contributed to film content

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

While greatly curtailed by COVID-19 restrictions, new photography on-site took place when possible within guidelines, and included photography of collections and exhibitions. With remote working in place for the Digital Imaging Officer, management of NMI's Digital Asset Management System and the Digital Photographic Image Archive was successfully maintained, along with meeting increased demand for image preparation and distribution for internal and external worldwide requests.

### **New Photography:**

Photography was undertaken for exhibitions, publications and research in 2021. The Contract Photographers and the Digital Imaging Officer were responsible for the creation of over 1600 new images in 2021:

- Irish Antiquities – over 400 images including Mesolithic objects, weavers swords, fairy darts, St Berach's crosier, Ballydavis hoard, gold lunulae, objects relating to St Colmcille, inscribed slates, loan objects.
- Decorative Arts & History – over 500 images including the Pearse Collection, Charlie Bird Collection, the Arthur Sutton album, Downing Street Declaration, slippers worn by Michael Collins, swords, loan objects.
- Irish Folklife – over 400 images including the Rothery Collection, Lusk survey, Brigid's crosses, Penal crosses, baskets, butterprints, hurleys, GAA objects.
- Natural History – over 50 minerals and objects for the 'Down to Earth' exhibition.
- Photography of exhibition galleries included 'Colmcille: Sacred Objects of a Saint', 'InForm', 'Studio & State', 'The Irish Wars', 'Down to Earth'.

### **Image requests and distribution:**

The Digital Imaging Officer fulfilled 540 requests for images, with over 5600 images prepared and distributed. 50% of these requests (and 30% of the image count) were in association with Rights and Reproductions.

### ***Digital Asset Management System (DAMS)***

An updated version of the Digital Asset Management System was installed.

### **Online Collections:**

The Digital Imaging Officer contributed to NMI Online Collections, IAD register digitisation project, CMS technical group, CNCI cataloguing and digitisation subcommittee.

## **DESIGN**

The Design Department provides a quality design service across all four sites of the National Museum of Ireland, including exhibition support, design for print and screen, archaeological illustration, 3D Illustration, maps, and archaeological site plans.

In 2021 the design studio was completely refurbished, taking advantage of design staff working from home. The ICT department equipped the work spaces with new computer hardware, and a rewiring of the cabling system.

### **Exhibitions**

The department carried out the design, graphics & promotional design and signage at all NMI sites for *Studio & State: The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty*. This was a collaboration between the National Museum of Ireland and the Hugh Lane Gallery, and it was the major design project which the Design Department engaged and contributed as part of the 'Decade of Commemorations'.

Exhibition support was provided for a number of exhibitions for which the graphic design element was sourced externally. These included: *St. Colmcille - Sacred objects of a Saint - 1500 years of devotion*, *Onsight & Our Irish Chair*, *Glendalough: Power, Prayer and Pilgrimage* as well as a Video Resource Pack for the Junior Cycle.

### **Publications**

As part of the Monograph series the Department provided advice and support on the the Fadden More Psalter publication. It also provided design and layout for the *Studio & State: The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty* – catalogue publication.

### **Print and Web design**

A number of Leaderboards and MPU digital graphic were produced for a digital campaign on the *Glendalough: Power, Prayer and Pilgrimage* exhibition as part of the Education Department's educational resources at NMI Archaeology.

Digital Advertisements were produced for a number of outlets including: Irish Independent, Totally Dublin, Irish Times, History Ireland & Archaeology Ireland.

The Museum Staff Handbook was designed and a fully interactive PDF is now in use for all NMI staff. This was produced in collaboration with HR & Corporate Affairs.

### **Signage**

The Design Department designed and produced numerous internal and external signage including safety, directional, and public information.

### **Archaeological Plans, maps and site drawings**

Archaeological Plans, maps and site drawings were completed for Tullydonnell, Co. Donegal (maps provided) and Deerpark, Co. Wexford (maps provided).



Initial research on a series of maps for the forthcoming ethnographic publication was completed. A number of external requests for archived plans and drawings were dealt with throughout the year. Original survey plans from several archaeological sites were retrieved from the archive and returned to Irish Antiquities Division.

A large number of imagers were scanned for divisional records and the Design Department's drawing and digital archive was maintained throughout the year.

### **NMI Staff Organisation chart**

The NMI's staff organisation chart was updated and maintained throughout the year to support museum records.

### **Illustrations**

Spear Illustrations: (sketches, preliminary drawings and print ready illustrations, digital ink) were completed for the Irish Antiquities Division. Extra drawings were completed for the Tullydonnell gold hoard. 3D illustrations were completed for *Our Irish Chair* exhibition (sketches, series of preliminary drawings. Various 3D applications used). Also, video editing software was used for final artwork.

Ogham inscription on weft beater handle (sketches, preliminary drawings and print ready illustrations, digital ink) were completed for the Irish Antiquities Division.

### **Procurement**

The procurement for external Design and Print Services commenced in March 2021, it is hoped this will be completed in 2022.

### **Training**

A number of conferences, training, webinars and professional development courses were completed pertaining to staff development as outlined in PMDS.

## FINANCE

The 2021 allocation received from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media was as follows:

	€
o Pay & pensions	9,343,000
o Non-Pay	4,527,000
o Capital	1,308,000
Total	<u>€15,178,000</u>

During 2021 the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media also awarded amounts totalling €1,779,339 in relation to grants for specific purposes. Fixed asset expenditure of €310,254 was capitalised.

The Finance Unit continued to provide assistance and support to the Board's Audit and Risk Committee in carrying out its audit functions.

### Financial Statements 2021

The Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2021 and the accompanying audit file in early 2022. The C&AG audit of the Financial Statements for 2021 took place during April 2022. NMI's accounts in respect of the year ending 31 December 2021 were prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 35 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 and are included in this report. The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland. The 2021 Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the reporting requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

### Procurement

The Unit is responsible for the management of the procurement process of all National and EU procurements. To this end, NMI is building internal expertise in the area of procurement and structured procedures and policies were reviewed and updated in 2021.

The Unit is continually seeking to streamline operations, taking advantage of new technologies where budget constraints permit and implementing recommendations from the C&AG and Internal Auditor, to ensure the integrity of the Unit and its function.

On an annual basis, business plans are developed and implemented and regular monitoring of all income and costs is carried out during the year.

## **HR AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS**

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Human Resources Unit provides the full range of HR services including recruitment, administration of staff pay and other terms and conditions, employee relations services and pension services. In addition HR is responsible for developing HR policies, people management initiatives, and learning and development which creates a framework for supporting staff and managers to work together to deliver on the overall mission and ongoing strategic development of NMI. Throughout 2021 the HR Unit continued to roll out these functions across NMI working closely with the NMI's Divisional Heads on various HR and Corporate responsibilities and initiatives.

Over the last couple of years, the pandemic brought about sudden and seismic changes in the working arrangements for people. Despite the challenges, staff in NMI adapted swiftly and with great success to a new working environment which involved a combination of working remotely and onsite. In doing so, their efforts have helped to ensure continuity in the provision of key services to care for and curate the national collections.

Valuable lessons have been learned around how combining remote and onsite working can be applied in practice. HR activities included the need to support staff adapting to new ways of working, and being mindful of the impacts of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of staff.

#### **Recruitment**

Recruitment and retention of high calibre staff remained a key priority for HR, with some notable shifts in patterns of staff turnover due to staff making different lifestyle choices, changing attitudes towards travel etc. beginning to emerge.

The HR Unit managed 19 recruitment competitions throughout the year to fill positions in Education, Finance, Natural History, Marketing, Commercial Development, Facilities, Registration, Conservation, Antiquities and ICT.

#### **Learning & Development**

The landscape for staff learning and development altered significantly over the course of the pandemic, with the eradication of onsite learning and large scale events and growth of online learning and development.

Working closely with all staff, to meet the learning and development needs of the Museum, the unit delivered 18 training events. These events included Procurement, First Aid, GDPR Awareness Training, Autism Awareness Training, Designated Child Protection Training and Plain English for the Public Sector. Training around the implementation of the Recruitment & Selection Policy and Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults Policy training was also provided. Two staff members availed of the Refund of Fees Scheme in accordance with Department of Finance guidelines.

#### **Health and Well-Being.**

Established in 2019, the objectives of the NMI's Health and Well-being working group is to raise awareness and promote the importance of health and well-being for all staff. Over the past year, it was essential to continue to support staff and to help alleviate the stresses of

COVID-19 and the sudden changes to working arrangements. Wellness events included a six-part online webinar series 'Stress Control' that was offered to all staff in conjunction with the HSE and a Resilience Webinar which provided advice to live a well, balanced and resilient life.

### **Staff Forum and Museum Council**

Constructive work continued with the Museum Council, a forum for industrial and employee relations matters to be raised and discussed under the direction of an Independent Chair. The Council met six times over the period of the year.

Relationships were further developed throughout the year, working through issues with Fórsa Trade Union, such as policy development and work life balance initiatives.

### **HR Policies and Procedures**

The HR Unit has a programme of policies and procedures to update/develop and work continued on this. In 2021 a new College Placement policy was approved in order to facilitate specialist academic learning for the advancement of college students. Further policies continued to be developed including Remote Working, Volunteer Policy as well as the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults policy that was at an advanced stage by year end.

2021 was a challenging year for all places of employment, with an entire year of pandemic effects being fully experienced by the workforce. It was a great testament to managers and staff of NMI to persevere, create and reinvent ways to sustain services and support each other through personal and professional challenges

### **CORPORATE AFFAIRS**

The Corporate Affairs Unit works closely with Director's Office, the Audit and Risk subcommittee of the Board, HR, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media and other internal and external stakeholders to ensure the NMI is fully compliant with all legislative responsibilities and obligations as a public sector body.

### **Corporate Governance**

A review of NMI's governance obligations was completed and a number of relevant policy and procedural documents were updated and circulated to new Board members who were appointed in 2021.

### **Ethics in Public Office**

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

### **Risk Management**

The NMI's new Risk Management framework continued to be implemented. Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020, the NMI introduced a COVID risk register which was reviewed and updated for the duration of 2021. This risk register dealt with specific risks facing NMI during this time. With staff working remotely, museum sites closed to the public and the museum's public programming moved to an online format there were many new

challenges to address. Towards the end of 2021, the NMI reverted to operating its corporate risk register. This was possible due to the easing of the remaining pandemic restrictions. The Senior Risk Team continued with quarterly risk management meetings throughout the year to ensure any new risks were recorded and mitigated against and regular updates were provided to the Audit and Risk Committee.

### **Internal Audit**

Internal Audit continued with its programme of work throughout 2021. Its function is to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the internal controls, governance processes, risk management and performance systems employed. Throughout the year the mandatory review of the Systems of Internal Control was completed as well as a review of collections management. The implementation of the recommendations of these reviews continued in 2021 and into 2022.

### **GDPR**

As part of the internal audit work programme an assessment of the Museum's GDPR compliancy was completed. Data Protection policies were reviewed and updated and data protection training was delivered to all staff.

### **Freedom of Information**

Under Freedom of Information Act 2014, 10 FOI requests were responded to during the year.

### **Parliamentary Questions (PQ's)**

A total number of 19 PQ's were received from the Houses of the Oireachtas during the year. The PQ's all related to queries right across NMI in both Operations and Collections areas.

## **INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

The Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Department is responsible for the development and management of all telecommunication, audio-visual and information systems as well as supporting and enhancing the mission of the NMI across all its functions and geographical sites.

### **Infrastructure**

During 2021 a major update for all network was completed across all sites and all remaining legacy network equipment was removed. The new network infrastructure underpins and enables a number of other major infrastructure upgrades.

The second significant major upgrade was implementing a new VoIP phone system across all sites, decommissioning and removing end-of-life and out of support PBX systems. The modern phone system means that for the first time, all phones are controlled through a single portal and all costs are consolidated to a single service provider. The new system enables remote work as integration with Microsoft Teams allows staff members to make and receive landline phone calls on their laptop or mobile phones whenever they are away from the office.

WiFi rollout was completed in Kildare Street, providing staff and visitors with high-speed access across all the exhibition and storage areas. The design phase for the implementation of WiFi in exhibition areas in Collins Barracks has been completed.

Other projects include continuing removal and replacement of legacy systems and significant improvements in backup and disaster recovery strategies.

### **Applications and Online**

In response to the continued challenges posed by Covid-19 a remodel of the main museum web page was undertaken to reflect the different mix of online and in person events and content in NMI. ICT continued to support video streaming and production for online content throughout the year. Prerequisite work to enable migration of certain business functions to cloud providers was also completed.

During 2021, the only significant staffing change is that Gavin Woodruff was appointed as Users and Content Group Team Leader.

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Visitor Numbers	Year – Jan. – Dec.		
	2020	2021	% Change
Kildare Street	91,347	90,430	-1%
Merrion Street	97,839	9,416	-90%
Collins Barracks	83,447	101,165	21%
Turlough Park	36,489	37,465	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>309,122</b>	<b>238,476</b>	<b>-23%</b>

The closures during the pandemic at the start of the year clearly had an impact on visitor numbers. The Marketing Dept. continued to promote much of the museum’s programming online. In addition, the resources of the Department moved into planning for re-opening, as well as planning for new launches – many of which had been postponed due to the closures.

### Fáilte Ireland

The Department continued to cultivate close ties with Fáilte Ireland – which resulted in securing funding as well as providing them with content to promote the museum on all their platforms – both online and offline. We engaged with Fáilte Ireland’s “*Digital that Delivers*” programme, which funded research into the development of a digital offering for visitors.

### Website

The homepage of the website was refreshed to give greater prominence to the online retail offering and to video content. Features within Google Analytics were organised to give us greater information on demographic data, and monthly reports were introduced to monitor performance and identify trends. The Museum gift shop opened online in January and the Marketing Dept. implemented various marketing campaigns across our digital platforms that delivered significant growth. The Marketing Dept. continued the development of the Museum Newsletter, which resulted in strong growth in subscriptions and engagement.

### Audience Research

Visitor research was carried out by Martha Fanning & Associates on both Decorative Arts & History and Country Life. The findings of this research helped to inform our communications plans.

### Exhibitions

When the museum was open to the public, the following launches took place across three sites:

- 25<sup>th</sup> March – *Making a Currach – Michael Conneely*.
- 24<sup>th</sup> May Launch - *Inform*, - Decorative Arts & History in partnership with Design & Crafts Council of Ireland.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> September Launch - *Making and Momentum* – Decorative Arts & History (provided the venue for this three-week exhibition which was curated by the fashion designer, Richard Malone and was opened by HRH Prince Albert of Monaco).
- 27<sup>th</sup> September Launch – *Down to Earth - Exploring Ireland's Geology* in association with the Geological Survey of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History.

- 7<sup>th</sup> October Launch - *Our Irish Chair – Tradition Revisited* - Country Life.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> November Launch – *Little Houses* in collaboration with the Stoneybatter Youth Service - Decorative Arts & History.
- 13<sup>th</sup> November Launch - '*1845: Memento Mori*' by Paula Stokes – Country Life.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> November Launch – *Studio & State: The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty* in conjunction with the Hugh Lane Gallery – Decorative Arts & History.
- Photo call – 7<sup>th</sup> December - *Colmcille: Sacred objects of a Saint - 1500 years of devotion* – Archaeology.
- We also announced the funding of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century History of Ireland Gallery.

These events were provided with strong PR support to inform the public that the NMI was now open to visitors. Two radio campaigns were also developed for *Down to Earth* and *Our Irish Chair* through the help of the RTE Supporting the Arts Scheme.

### **Culture Night**

The NMI - Archaeology, Decorative Arts & History and Country Life remained open until 9pm to mark Culture Night which took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021 . It was streamed live and posted on YouTube. Culture Night content was also online due to the pandemic.

### **National Museum of Ireland – Country Life**

The National Museum of Ireland - Country Life achieved good national and regional print and broadcast media coverage throughout 2021. NMI – Country Life was marketed strongly over the summer period and experienced some level of recovery in terms of visitor numbers for July, August and September when domestic travel reopened.

### **Digital Marketing**

The second year of the pandemic saw events, exhibitions and programming remain online. Significant advancements were made in the presentation and promotion of all communications digitally, from the relaunch of the website, development of video content, presentation of live events to the establishment and availability of a key educational resources online.

NMI maintained a strong presence across all digital platforms (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram and YouTube). 2021 also saw continued development of the National Museum of Ireland's Newsletter and one targeted at the education sector. The latter has been very successful in filling all NMI education programmes. Areas of continued developments in Digital Marketing include Digital Display (Irish Times, The Connaught Telegraph, NewsGroup.ie, Rollercoaster.ie, Military History Matters, Crafts magazine), SEO via Google Ads / web content and Facebook Ad targeting.

### **Social Media Followers/Subscriber Growth 2021**

	January '21	December '21	Growth
Facebook	50,672	56,310	11%
Twitter	44,428	47,900	8%



<b>Instagram</b>	<b>12,709</b>	<b>17,300</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>YouTube</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>475%</b>
<b>General Newsletter</b>	<b>2,504</b>	<b>5,767</b>	<b>130%</b>
<b>Schools Newsletter</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,285</b>	

A new **Social Media Series** that highlights objects from the collections of all four sites was launched in August. This has proved to be a very successful marketing initiative.

**Facebook Reach** in 2020 was nearly 3.5m with nearly 235k engagements. Facebook Reach in 2021 was nearly 5.3m with just over 211k engagements. The Social Media series contributed greatly to growth. Over the five months it ran for in 2021 it generated a Reach of 1.25m from 92 posts.

**Instagram Reach** was nearly 800k in 2020 with engagements of just over 45k. In 2021 Reach approached 1.5m with engagements of over 58k. The Social Media Series contributed nearly 511k in Reach over a 5-month period with 20,400 engagements.

**Twitter Impressions** in 2020 amounted to 4.85m and engagement was nearly 115k. Twitter impressions increased to 6.025m and engagement approached 142k in 2021. The Social Media series contributed 530k impressions and nearly 23.5k engagements over the period August to December.

**Radio interviews** promoting the work of the museum and the launching of new exhibitions are now recorded and made available on our YouTube channel.

## **COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RETAIL**

Planning our recovery from COVID-19 dominated our departments work for 2021. The NMI event spaces continued to face considerable uncertainty throughout 2021, given the challenging hospitality environment and a high number of events cancelled due to COVID closures. During this period, we focused on updating all our event policies and procedures. We completed much-needed refurbishments to our venue spaces, including repainting of the Palatine Room and replacement of the acoustic wall panels. Where possible, we adapted our spaces for use in alternative ways in order to support the NMI core activities and raise awareness, including an Eileen Gray related Exhibition Making & Momentum which was visited by Prince Albert of Monaco. We also supported a hybrid international Curatorial conference Narrating the Nation in collaboration with NCAD.

### **Events and Café Services**

The Commercial Development Department's vision for events is a suite of unique, historical meeting and event spaces of professional standard and quality, correctly positioned and valued in the Irish Corporate, Educational and Government markets.

The event landscape has changed since COVID 19 and event organisers now expect events spaces that support hybrid events. NMI will have to invest in our corporate facilities to reach these expectations. This will allow us to maximise audiences, improve income generation and to build strategic and sustainable working relationships with key audiences and markets.

A number of large scale events had to be postponed throughout the year, including the Mother Pride New Year's Eve Concert, however we were thrilled to host the Mother Block Party in September.

In 2021, we underwent a tendering process to appoint new Museum contract caterers. An extensive and much needed refurbishment of the café is currently being undertaken with our partners in The Office of Public Works, with the goal of opening in Autumn 2022. In the interim, we oversaw a temporary pop up outdoor catering offering.

### **Development**

We applied for the first stage of the Digital That Delivers initiative funded by Fáilte Ireland. Commercial Development formed an interdepartmental working group to work towards a digital tour pilot that uses technology to address a number of issues we have across our sites including a visitor route, added content, foreign language provision and a product that will allow us to engage with the existing digital distribution sites. If successful, the tour will be rolled out across the NMI campuses. NMI successfully received €23,000 to complete an assessment of our existing digital infrastructure and how it engages with our visitors. This report made a number of suggestions. In 2022 we will be going forward for funding for the next stage and hope to launch our first digital tour in 2022.

### **Rights, Reproductions and New Photography**

The distribution of over 1623 images from over 276 requests from staff and the external market were administered remotely throughout 2021. New Photography projects, approx. 145, were coordinated for key Museum pieces.

### **Retail Sites**

Our sites remained closed throughout most of the first half of the year, reopening on May 17th 2021. Reopening for the summer gave us an opportunity to reengage with our visitors. The cap on the numbers of visitors per site remained in place, as did restrictions on domestic and international travel, and this continued to impact revenue. In order to facilitate the rotunda works in Kildare Street, we relocated the shop from the rotunda into the previous café space, which was designated as the temporary entrance/exit. As Natural History remained closed for the year, we had no retail shop at that location. We did, however, grow sales from the low of 2020 by almost 40% to achieve 28% of pre pandemic sales.

### **Ticketing**

Online ticketing continued for the year and was expanded to include all 3 open museum sites. Retail worked closely with our colleagues in IT to implement the back end expansion and with our colleagues in Facilities to transfer the front house ticketing function to them across the sites.

### **Online Shop / Products**

We launched an online shop in late January starting with a soft launch and providing access to a curated selection of products. Working with our colleagues in Marketing, we introduced a social media calendar to promote the site across our various platforms culminating in a very successful Christmas campaign. We also worked on a specific range of products based on specific Museum images, starting with the wolf image, which we will look to roll out in 2022 in time for Michael Collins' anniversary.

### **Donations**

Work began on the development of an overarching donations policy, which will be completed in 2022. This will provide a foundation for the introduction of dual cash and contactless donation boxes, alongside an online donations portal.

## **FACILITIES (ACOMMODATION AND SECURITY)**

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact on the work of the Facilities Department significantly during 2021. Despite the many challenges which were encountered, 2021 ended up being an immensely positive year for the department.

On 10 May 2021 our Visitor Service teams opened our doors and welcomed visitors back to the Museum following a four month period of closure. A significant body of work was required to ensure that the buildings were safe to reopen and in compliance with the required protocols and procedures. Throughout the year, the Facilities Teams played a leading role in ensuring that all of our visitors, staff and collections remained safe and secure, and that our premises were maintained in a condition befitting of the Nation's premier cultural institution. In the face of many evolving challenges their dedication and adaptableness was remarkable.

The Facilities department worked closely with our colleagues in the Office of Public Works on a number of key capital projects. These included significant CCTV and security system upgrades, the construction of a new geology exhibition in Collins Barracks and the refurbishment of public toilets and staff facilities in Kildare Street. A major project to conduct roof repairs within the historic rotunda in Kildare Street commenced in late 2021. This necessitated the relocation of the reception and retail spaces to a temporary space to allow the erection of a substantial scaffolding structure within the old main entrance. In the Museum of Country Life, construction works commenced on the refurbishment of the public entrance which when completed will improve access and facilities for our visitors. The local BMS sections within the OPW carried out hundreds of individual tasks across NMI sites in 2021. The Museum appreciates greatly the ongoing support from the OPW which is indispensable in keeping the premises functioning for our needs.

2021 was a busy year for the department with regard to health and safety management. As expected, the management of the pandemic required significant resources. Covid-19 Lead Worker Representative training took place, as did bi-weekly meetings. Online training for first-aid and safe pass took place during the year. A review and audit of the Museum's safety policies and procedures was carried out by an independent contractor, and a programme of works to improve elements of the Museum's Safety Management Systems was implemented.

2021 also saw some significant procurement works within the Facilities department. In April, a contract was awarded for car parking services in Collins Barracks. June saw the awarding of contracts for staff uniforms, health and safety consultancy, and contract cleaning services across all sites. Additionally, in September 2021, a contract was awarded to a new supplier for the provision of contract security services across a number of Museum sites. This involved significant mobilisation efforts and was carried out efficiently and without any disruption in services.

In 2021, the Facilities Teams worked closely with their colleagues throughout the Museum and contributed their time and expertise to a number of large-scale projects. In the Natural History Museum, Facilities staff supported the decant project to remove 20,000 Collection

items from the building in advance of the major capital works which are scheduled for 2022. Facilities staff also supported the return of large-scale events to the Museum in 2021, assisting with the ever popular and successful Mother Block Party in September.

The ongoing training and development of Facilities staff remains a priority for the Museum. Unfortunately, opportunities for training and development were greatly reduced in 2021 due to the pandemic. Despite these challenges, a number of staff were promoted within the Department in 2021, with Alan Scully, Patrick Fallon and Derek Flynn progressing from Visitor Service Officer to Deputy Facilities Officer.

## Publications

**Andrees, E.** (Contributor and Co-editor) 'Introducing Studio & State: The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty at the National Museum of Ireland', in *Studio & State: The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty*, National Museum of Ireland/Wordwell, Dublin 2021, pp.1-8

**Andrees, E.** (Editor) *InForm. Reflecting the National Museum of Ireland's collections through new designs*, (exhibition catalogue), National Museum of Ireland, Dublin 2021.

**Gerard T. Barrett, Evelyn Keaveney, Paula J. Reimer, Niamh O'Neill-Munro, Marie-Therese Barrett, Paul Mullarkey, Matthew Seaver,** 'Ramped pyrooxidation radiocarbon dating of a preservative contaminated early medieval wooden bowl', *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, Vol. 50, 2021, Pages 150–162.

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**Fitzpatrick, O.** *Lost Ireland*, London: Pavilion Press, 2021.

**Fitzpatrick, O.** 'From Cavan to Kansas: A Photographic Album of Family Migration from Ireland to North America,' in *Contact Zones: Photography, Migration and Cultural Encounters in the United States*, edited by Sigrid Lien and Justin Carville, Leuven University Press, 2021, 57-79.

**Goff, J.** 'Eileen Gray and E-1027', *RIAI Annual Review*, 2021

**Goff, J.** 'Glass talented awarded', *Glass Ireland*, October 2021, p.6

**Goff, J.** 'Dunleavy Bespoke', *Irish Arts Review*, Autumn – Winter, Vol.38, No. 3, 2021

**Goff, J.** 'Eileen Gray' review of Caroline Constant, *Oxford Bibliographies in Architecture, Planning and Preservation*, June 2021

**Malone, B.** 'From Visitor to Participant', *Museum Ireland*, Vol.26, 2019, pp.42 - 45

**Monaghan, N.T.** 'The two suspended whale skeletons in the National Museum of Ireland', *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, **37**, 142-150.

**Monaghan, N.T.** 'Breathing life into the Dead Zoo', *Museum Ireland*, **27**, 57-61.

**McKeever, Ellen.** 'Conservation treatment of a pocket globe', *InForm, Reflecting the National Museum of Ireland's collections through new designs*, [Exhibition Catalogue] pp 32-33.

**P. Mullarkey** (contributing author) 'Ramped Pyrooxidation Radiocarbon Dating of a Preservative Contaminated Early Medieval Wooden Bowl', *Journal of Cultural Heritage* Volume 50, July–August 2021, pp 150-162.

**O’Hanlon, A.** and Goodwin, J. ‘*Monodontomerus obscurus* Westwood, 1833, a genus and species of torymid wasp (Hymenoptera: Chalcidoidea) new to Ireland from Co. Wexford’, *Irish Naturalists’ Journal*, **38**, 70-72.

**O’Hanlon, A.** and O’Connor, J.P. ‘The spider-hunting wasps of Ireland (Hymenoptera: Pompilidae). A review of the species, their natural history and recorded distribution’, *Biology & Environment: Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, **121B**, 61-82.

**Parkes, M.A.** ‘George Victor Du Noyer’s large format paintings: Nineteenth-century lecture slides’, in Clary, R.M., Rosenberg, G.D., and Evans, D.C. (eds) ‘*The evolution of paleontological art*’. Geological Society of America Memoir, **218**, 1–8, [https://doi.org/10.1130/2021.1218\(12\)](https://doi.org/10.1130/2021.1218(12)).

**Parkes, M.A.**, Gatley, S. and Gallagher, V. ‘Old volcanic stories –bringing ancient volcanoes to life in Ireland’s geological heritage sites’, *Geosciences*, **11**, 52. <https://doi.org/10.3390/geosciences11020052>

**Power, Hannah.** ‘Clutching at Straws – the repair of a straw box’, *InForm, Reflecting the National Museum of Ireland’s collections through new designs*, [Exhibition Catalogue] pp 30 – 31.

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**Warren, G., McDermott, C., Seaver, M., Corns, A., Devlin, G. and Shaw, R.** ‘Heritage Guide No. 94: Temple-na-Skellig and St Kevin’s Bed, Glendalough’, *Archaeology Ireland*, Wordwell, Bray

**Warren, G. and Seaver, M.** ‘Artefacts Underfoot, Mountain Log’, Spring 2021, *Mountaineering Ireland*, Dublin., p. 22–23.

## **Board of the National Museum of Ireland**

### **December 2021**

- Catherine Heaney (Chair)
- John Bowen
- Dr Linda King
- Dr Claudia Kinmonth
- Ambrose Loughlin
- Declan Nelson
- Dr Barra Ó Donnabhain
- Professor Cathal O'Donoghue
- Dr Andrew Power
- Dr Susan Rogers
- Helen Shenton
- Prof Geraldine Sheridan
- Paolo Viscardi

(term ended in July 2021)

- Prof Ingrid Hook
- Mary Crotty
- Judith McCarthy
- Denise Moroney
- Professor Mary O Dowd
- Prof Kathleen James-Chakraborty



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(as of 31 December 2021)

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Lynn Scarff

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Jade Dillon

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Dr Audrey Whitty (Acting)

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#### **Assistant Keeper Grade I**

Brenda Malone

#### **Assistant Keeper Grade II**

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Dr Jennifer Goff

Sandra Heise

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Sarah Nolan

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#### **Clerical Officer**

Vacancy

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#### **Finance Officer**

Joan McGrath

#### **Executive Officer**

Elke

#### **Clerical Officer**

Jack Roche

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#### **Network and Systems Administrator**

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### **Assistant Keeper Grade II**

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Niamh Curtin

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### **Assistant Keeper Grade II**

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### **Clerical Officer**

Liam Doherty

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### **Corporate Affairs Officer**

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### **Clerical Officer**

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### **Marketing Executive**

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Brian Houlahan

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Terri McInerney

### **Commercial Development Executive**

Vacancy

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Dr Aidan O’Hanlon

Paolo Viscardi

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**Archivist**

Emer Ní Cheallaigh

**Documentation Officer**

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Eimear Ashe

Joanne Hamilton

Kevin Forkin

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Emma Crosbie

Catherine Moriarty

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Diarmuid Hough

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Nicola Lavin

Jean O’Boyle

Celestina Sassu

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### **Graphic Artist**

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Darko Vuksic

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Patricia Ryan

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Aisling Dunne

Sheila Stenson

Emma Murphy

Caragh May O'Mahony

Diarmuid Bolger

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Suzannah Vaughan

### **Service Attendant**

Patrick Moore

Elecerio Abijay

### **Cleaner**

Martina Connolly

Catherine Finnegan

Louise Hanlon

### **Caretaker**

Michael Byrne

### **Visitor Services Officer**

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Sean Brady

Peter Byrne

Conor Carlisle

Laura Casey

Ramona Chereji

Ciaran Dowdall

Andrew Gallen

Brion Gilmore

Enda Greenan

Chris Keenan

Hannah Kerrigan

Brendan Lynch

Majella Lynch

Keith MacDonald

Emmet McNamara

John Mulrooney

Thomas Murphy

Simon Ó Donnobháin,

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**Assistant Keeper I**

Dr Paul Mullarkey

**Assistant Keepers Grade II**

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Carol Smith

Nieves Fernandez

Hannah Power

Silvia Da Rocha

Ellen McKeever

Lorna Rowley

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Greg Stevenson

Dominic Swaine

Linda Switzer

Luke Sweeney

Lisa McAuley

Joseph Brennan

Eric Breslin

Martin Byrne

Leigh Coughlan

William Doyle

Patrick Fallon

Paul Fennell

Martin Fitzmaurice

Padraig Fleming

Derek Flynn

Eoin Foley

Henry Hackett

Dylan Hctor

Mandy Johnston

Fergal Leahy

Daragh Magee

Conor Marshall

Mark McDonnell

Alan McKeever

Eamonn Reel

Alan Scully

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Lillian Walsh

Neil Walsh

Sean Young

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James Reynolds

Noreen Ward

