

Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann
National Museum of Ireland

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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Foreword by the Chair, Board of the NMI

It has been an enormous pleasure to begin my term as Chair of the National Museum of Ireland in 2024, taking over from the outstanding leadership provided by Catherine Heaney. 2024 marked a significant movement in the trajectory of the Museum in terms of its strategy, in relation to impact and connection. We were reminded in the past year, why museums matter. Not just as cultural spaces, but as quietly impactful civic spaces that shape how we understand ourselves, each other, our communities, and how we navigate our place in the world; to be a place of sanctuary and surprise, a key value of the Museum's current strategic plan.

As a museum and national cultural institution, we preserve and conserve artefacts of our nation's past and help us to draw lessons from the experiences in which these artefacts were created and reflect on our cultural heritage. This impact is often intangible, but also tangible as over 1.3 million visitors came to our museum in 2024, both as domestic visitors but also as a key resource to attract tourists and to showcase to them our heritage. This demonstrates a significant socio-economic impact of the Museum. Our cultural intuitions contribute directly to the economy through tourism, education, research and indirectly through social mobility and inclusion. Also, our influence is felt abroad at large-scale expos, in classrooms, in universities, in communities, and in public discourse. All for free.

Culture is not a soft add-on; it is essential for a resilient society and economy and for a stable future. Increasingly, we are seeing how culture can both divide, but also unite. As a nation we try to be on the side of unity, understanding and compassion. As a museum, we echo these values and serve to support our country in this mission. This task is not always easy. We work hard to make an impact, but we are in a process of trying to maximise the impact of our national cultural institutions to make them better understood (and valued) more widely. Countries are nothing without their unique culture, their traditions, their stories, their history, and indeed the objects that represent these. The Museum is working towards realising its ambition through its Strategic Plan, part of which recognises the need for us to grow and diversify our income models working closely with Government and our parent Department to bring more funding into the sector.

Our search for a permanent, future-proof home for our national collection remains unresolved. And while our ambitions grow, our resources have not. Our funding while increased since 2017, has not grown sufficiently to absorb inflation and increased

operational costs. As an institution our ambition to engage with researchers, partners and communities is significant but our capacity limited. Despite the constraints, the work carried out by the team has been incredible. Their creativity, care, and commitment to 'walking the walk' for culture has kept the Museum not just operational but impactful. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank them sincerely.

We extend our thanks to the former Minister of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media, Catherine Martin, T.D., and her team for their support and advocacy. We look forward to working with Minister Patrick O'Donovan and his team at the Department of Culture, Communications & Sport throughout 2025 and beyond. I would also like to thank my fellow Board members who give such significant amounts of their time and expertise voluntarily and in doing so contribute to the achievement and success of the National Museum of Ireland.



Professor Cathal O'Donoghue

Chair

Introduction by the Director of the NMI

2024 was the first full operational year of the Museum's new strategy, *Increasing Accessibility, Engaging Community* and as such saw the commencement of a range of new initiatives, programmes and activities under the headings of our Strategy lenses – Community, Planet and Shared Knowledge.

At the core of the vision of the Museum's strategy is creating a space of sanctuary and surprise by consistently providing our audience access to the exquisite and intriguing objects and specimens of our National Collection but also ensuring that the Museum advances new and surprising avenues of engagement. Through collaboration with marginalised communities and the exploration of previously hidden stories, in 2024 the Museum has engaged in opportunities for new ways of working that respond to our contemporary concerns and global situation.

A key focus of this work was developing and strengthening the role of Inclusive Curators. While many of our existing curators and education team have long been advocates for, and involved in processes of co-curation and inclusive practice, our inclusive histories curators are focused on collections that exist and may remain outside of the Museum. Through this work they are developing new ways of engaging, collecting and curatorial practice particularly in the recording of oral histories that will have a wide impact on the diversity and culture of staff and collections in the National Museum of Ireland. In 2024, our Inclusive Histories Curator in Traveller Culture, collaborated with activist Martin Warde as well as 10 interviewees from the Mincéirí community across Ireland to produce the Mincéirí Archives, Ireland's first peer led collection of lived experience, told by the Irish Traveller Community Elders themselves - [The Mincéirí Archives](#). This important archive is accompanied by a Teachers resource and discussion guide to support Primary School activities.

Alongside this, the National Museum of Ireland with the National Archives of Ireland began the important work of developing the National Centre for Record and Remembrance on Sean McDermott St in Dublin 1. This Government led initiative will combine an archive for the records from Magdalene Laundries, Industrial Schools,

Mother and Baby Homes and other institutions of forced incarceration and family separation with a museum space to be developed and co-curated with survivors and affected people. An initial series of engagement events were held in partnership with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration and Youth, the Special Advocate's Office and the National Archives across Ireland in 2024 with a series of commitments to survivors and affected people developed out of the process that will be published in 2025.

As the Museum builds towards the opening of a number of exhibitions of scale in 2025, including the new *Changing Ireland Galleries* at Collins Barracks and *Words of the Wave* at Kildare St., our team has continued to develop new temporary exhibitions that offer unique insights into the collection. *The Murmur of Bees*, an exhibition which brought together our Folklife, Natural History and Arts and Industry collections to explore the influence and expression of Irish bees on our culture and environment opened in February 2024. This exhibition demonstrated opportunities to engage a diversity of visitors through the exploration of multiple collections in one theme and resonated strongly with our intention of a greater focus on cross departmental collaboration within the Museum.

As interest grows globally in museum collections that have a colonial context, the exhibition *We Make Our own Histories* asked, '*What does Irish culture and identity look like one hundred years after the formation of the state?*' resulting from the two year artist in residence of Anthony Haughey at the Museum working with our Education team, the exhibition opened in Collins Barracks in February 2024. Curated by Maoiliosa Boyle and Jonathan Cummins, the exhibition included a number of artworks that aimed to challenge and engage visitors. Featuring the outputs of an all island Youth Assembly, the exhibition also included a film work, *Remember to Forget the Past*. This film produced with Leina Ibnouf, Lauretta Igbofonu and Rita Petlane in collaboration with our World Culture curator tells the story of these three women as they view and choose historical artefacts that had special meaning to them in relation to their personal histories. Filmed in the World Culture collection stores at Collins Barracks the narrators from Sudan, South Africa and Nigeria explored how the shadow of nineteenth and twentieth century colonialism has shaped their lives.

Many new projects and initiatives commenced and continued under the lens of Shared Knowledge. In particular, our Irish Communities Archive Network, a National Museum of Ireland and Heritage Council collaboration, that improves the collection of, and access to local history and heritage by helping communities share their collections online has gone from strength to strength. In October 2024, the exhibition *Mary Anne Fanning, from 1880 to 1964, - 'Mary Anne Fanning: Remembering our Community Midwives'* launched in the National Museum of Ireland, Turlough Park. This exhibition, which was co-curated by Emma Laffey, a member of iCAN and the Museum team, celebrates the contributions of community midwives and nurses to maternity care in Ireland, particularly in the early 20th century. It features the stories of midwives and nurses researched by 22 iCAN groups across Ireland. This is the first time that an iCAN

project has been the central focus of an exhibition of the National Museum of Ireland and demonstrates the rich opportunities for institutions to co-curate or collaborate with communities to tell the previously hidden stories of remarkable women. Projects like these illustrate the opportunities that exist for collaborative research and co curation that will be a significant feature in the Museum, particularly as we develop the objectives of our Research Strategy which is currently in development.

The National Museum of Ireland is privileged to occupy some of the most beautiful and well positioned historic buildings in Ireland. However, many of these buildings are in significant need of refurbishment and redevelopment to bring them to a standard expected of a contemporary national cultural institution. The capital investment presented by the current National Development Plan to invest in these buildings has been very welcome. In 2024, the Natural History Museum on Merrion St closed to enable the next phase of the refurbishment plan – the investigative works that will inform the final design of the Museum. To enable the required scope of investigative works to be carried out a full decant of the building is required. This work commenced in 2024 and will continue through 2025. Our Natural History Museum is an incredibly popular visitor destination, especially among young families, to ensure our visitors still get to engage with their favourite specimens we will open the Dead Zoo Lab at the Riding school in Collins Barracks in Summer 2025. This space will also be important in offering opportunities for the Natural History team to test out new modes of interpretation and exhibition of the collection as we prepare and scope the designs for the refurbishment.

A key aspect of our strategy and 2024 Business plan was to revisit our overall brand and identity and work to resolve many longstanding issues related to how we communicate what we do. Following a competitive procurement process, the Museum secured Zero-G to work on the refresh in collaboration with a steering group of Museum staff and a series of workshops across the Museum sites. The Brand and Identity refresh will go live with the launch of the 2025 Programme and presents a subtle revision of our overall look and feel to align better with the current requirements of digital and print media. We also considered the naming of each of the four Museum sites introducing new approaches that focused on the Museum location and thereby providing an opportunity for multiple expressions of different elements of the collection as unique descriptors of the visitor experience at each site. This speaks to a value of greater conversation and collaboration between collections and teams at each of our Museum sites as outlined in our strategy.

2024 also saw the commencement of a series of development workshops and programmes with our teams. Through initiatives such as *Agenda from the Floor* which focused on our front of house teams linking that work to the continued leadership training and professional development of our management team. These programmes ensure that valuable insights and experience are communicated throughout the organisation enabling a whole of team approach to change.

Finally, while limited by the nature of our historic buildings, the Museum made significant strides through 2024 in achieving the key objectives of its Climate Action Road Map, securing an award from SEAI for the development of an innovative Internet of Things (IoT) based Energy Monitoring System, which transformed our approach to energy management. This work enabled us to identify over 100 energy-saving opportunities with minimal capital investment. To meet future targets we will need significant capital investment in our buildings and we look forward to future engagement with the Office of Public Works to advance these initiatives.

With over 1.3 million visitors across all our sites, our biggest success of 2024 was the day to day operation of our institution spanning multiple Museum and collection sites. Our teams' dedication to visitor experience, collections care, curatorial and education experiences remains the greatest asset and enabler of the work of the Museum and is outlined further for each department in this annual report. There are many challenges ahead for the Museum from securing a permanent new location for our Collections Resource Centre to diversifying and growing investment to ensure we meet the ambition of our strategic plan. This annual report outlines how our dedicated team continue to deliver and achieve within ongoing constraints. I would like to celebrate and acknowledge their achievements and hard work over the last twelve months as well as the leadership and support of our Board, our Chair and key stakeholders.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Lynn Scarff', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lynn Scarff
Director

COLLECTIONS & ACCESS

ART & INDUSTRY

The division is responsible for the curation of the Museum's Art and Industry collections. Comprising over 530,000 artefacts, this national collection encompasses Ireland's artistic, social, industrial, military, political and social heritage, over the last four centuries. This includes decorative and applied arts; musical and scientific instruments; numismatics and philately; vehicles; arms and armour; manuscripts and artworks; the Eileen Gray collection; and Asian artefacts, notably the Albert Bender collection. Art and Industry curators research, develop and share the collection with the public at Collins Barracks and online.

Acquisitions

Art and Industry acquired the following in 2024:

- *Green Fields* (2020) by Cara Murphy, silver
- *Wave* (2024) by Caitlin Murphy, silver and steel
- *Cut first, ask questions later* by Sam Gleeson, Carbon steel, vintage micarta, cow horn, oak
- *Críoch Tús* (2022) by Michelle Ryan, glass
- Ceramics by John ffrench
- Fenian sash (c.1867)

The NMI acquired the 1958 Fender Stratocaster owned by Rory Gallagher (1948-1995) through donation via Section 1003 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. , The guitar was part of an auction at Bonhams of a number of Rory Gallagher's instruments at which NMI was successful in acquiring Rory Gallagher's 'back up strat'. The Fender will feature in the upcoming Changing Ireland exhibition due to open in October 2025. A collection of 18th and 19th century Irish Silver by various Irish makers including provincial Irish silver was also acquired through Section 1003 in 2024.

The following were donated to the Art and Industry collections in 2024:

- Cocktail dress (2009-10) by Paul Costelloe, satin
- Cocktail dress (1960) by Irene Gilbert, Carrickmacross lace, silk crepe, chiffon
- Shell bouquet made for a Quaker wedding in Waterford in 1877
- Collection of personal letters, leaflets, pamphlets, periodicals and photographs of William McGregor
- Webley revolver presented in a case to Mr Harrington, Lord Mayor of Dublin, as a gift from Charles Stewart Parnell.

Collection Displays and Exhibitions

Changing Ireland is a major project for the Museum funded through the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media which will open in 2025 and will be the largest expansion of the Museum's public galleries in two decades.

Asgard

The Asgard exhibition closed in August to address ongoing issues. Following assessments the gallery was repainted and fitted with new lighting. The gallery was reopened to the public in November.

Soldiers and Chiefs

Galleries 19-23 were closed in 2024 due to a building fabric issue. These issues were addressed by the OPW and the galleries were cleaned and reopened to the public in the summer.

Re-Imagining Japanese Wood Block Prints in the Albert Bender collection

This new display opened in September and explores material culture represented in Japanese woodblock prints.

Harry Clarke: Stained Glass

This new exhibition showcases six of Harry Clarke's stained-glass panels, including some of his earliest known works on loan from the Crawford Gallery, Cork. The exhibition opened in December and will run for at least two years, when the Crawford Art Gallery is anticipated to reopen following its refurbishment and development works.

Cuisine

This new display featured twenty pieces of contemporary metalwork created by NCAD students inspired by the historic silver collections.

IRISH ANTIQUITIES

The Irish Antiquities Division (IAD) is responsible for the archaeological, ethnographical, classical, and Egyptian collections and associated archives, along with the administration of various statutory functions such as the regulation of licences to export and alter archaeological objects.

Licensing

IAD has responsibility for the collections of finds from archaeological excavations in line with the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, which provides that all material found during excavations is owned by the State and automatically comes under the care of the NMI. The IAD is also responsible for Archaeological Licensing and the IAD team work in close partnership with the National Monuments Service (NMS) in this regard. The NMS is the State body with responsibility for archaeological issues arising at National Monuments in State care, and has a statutory responsibility for issuing a range of archaeological licenses and consents. The NMS is required by law to consult the Director of the NMI on such license applications, and therefore the NMI and the NMS have a statutory relationship with regard to the processing of licensing applications under the Act. There was an increase in license applications in 2024 with a total of 1094 licence applications were processed, and a number of site inspections and inspections of excavated assemblages were carried out in relation to these archaeological works as follows:

Licence to excavate/monitor/detect/dive	617
Ministerial Consents and Directions	99
Licence to alter an archaeological object	222
Licence to export an archaeological object	156

In 2024, IAD team liaised regularly with the National Monuments Service (NMS) and advised many commercial archaeologists on the care and treatment of excavated assemblages. In July, staff completed a major project to process a legacy collection of excavated material in SCRC. This project, which was supported by the NMS, will ensure appropriate care and future accessibility of material from more than 200 archaeological sites.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork relating to archaeological discoveries was undertaken in 22 counties; Carlow, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick,

Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath and Wicklow.

Acquisitions

A total of 244 annual acquisitions were registered in 2024, including some very significant objects. Notable acquisitions include a spectacular Neolithic porcellanite axehead from Ballywillin, Co. Longford, a Bronze Age dirk from Abbert Demesne, Co. Galway, a lead figurine of possible Roman date from Kilpatrick, Co. Cork, a zoomorphic penannular brooch from Tullycartron, Co. Roscommon and a silver seal bearing the inscription 'the seal of Brian Mac Tadhg O Briain' **S' Brien *Mac Tayg *Y Brieyn* dating to the 14th/ early 15th century. Two early Bronze Age axeheads were received anonymously in the post and necessitated a public campaign to ascertain the find circumstances. This resulted in a successful engagement with the finder and allowed staff to record the correct provenance of these important artefacts. The appeal generated significant publicity in the National and International media and resulted in a number of unrelated finds being reported.

Legal Matters

Owing to the nature of the NMI's statutory functions under the National Monuments Acts, frequent liaison with An Garda Síochána and NMS, particularly on the issue of unlicensed metal detecting, took place. Staff dealt with 20 separate reports relating to unlicensed metal detecting. Staff liaised with colleagues in the Dept. of Tourism, Culture, Arts, the Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (D/TCAGSM), and with the National Monuments Service in relation to the commencement of the new Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2024, which will replace the National Monuments Act 1930 - 2014. The commencement of the new Act will bring additional responsibilities to the IAD team and require additional resources to support this work, particularly in the coming 12 – 18 months. Staff sought advice from the Chief State Solicitor's Office on a number of different issues during the year and attended Dundalk Court of Appeal in relation to a case taken under offences under the National Monuments Act 1930 to 2014.

Exhibitions and Loans

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

National

IAD team members continued to develop a major exhibition of manuscripts from St Gallen and objects from the Museum collection. Opening in May 2025, *Words on the Wave* will be a groundbreaking exhibition of international standard and all staff supported this effort by taking on extra duties and support roles over its development. This year, one staff member worked full -time on exhibition research and preparation, alongside a Curatorial Researcher. In addition, staff worked on preparing the display of three fifteenth century medieval bronze bells which once hung in the bellcote at St Mary's Abbey Church, Howth, Co. Dublin. They were donated by the Gaisford St Lawrence family to the Museum and this process involved engagement with the donors and local heritage stakeholders in Howth. IAD team members engaged with OPW colleagues to upgrade lighting and update labels (following new research on the Dunfiirth hoard) in the *Ór* exhibition. Throughout the year team members continued the cleaning of the exhibitions with the Viking Ireland exhibition, which involved the decant and cleaning of cases internally. A display of ceramics in *Prehistoric Ireland* was also decanted to facilitate OPW works. The IAD Ethnographer worked on a future collaborative exhibition with NCAD and Art and Industry colleagues.

Local Museums

As part of IAD's remit to work with local and regional museums in Ireland, team members consulted with museum colleagues all over Ireland. Inspection of loans took place in counties Antrim, Cavan, Down, Meath and Wicklow. Assistance was provided to colleagues in Carlow, Cork, Cavan and Monaghan regarding collections issues, existing and proposed loans. A cross slab from Mason Island, Co. Galway was installed for a '*Silver and Stones*' exhibition in Galway City Museum, an exhibition launched by NMI Director, Lynn Scarff.

International

Further afield, team members travelled to courier IAD loans to the Captain Cook Memorial Museum in Whitby and to Freising, to the Haus der Bayerische Geschichte, Germany, where the Aghaboe plaque went on loan from February to November. Team members attended the Pacific Arts Conference in Berlin.

Research Visits

A major part of IAD's work each year is to actively encourage and support researcher access to the divisional archive and its collections. Over 220 visits to the archive and 66 visits to the reserve collections were facilitated including a visit by two curatorial colleagues from the National Museums of Scotland as part of their Galloway Hoard Project. The Director of the Swiss National Museum and Head of Collections were also welcomed to the Museum to discuss possible collaboration on the St Gallen exhibition.

Research/Projects

Several research projects and publications of recent acquisitions were developed. Additionally numerous research projects (e.g. research on medieval silver brooches, on bog butter, and on the Clonoura shield) were supported through access to collections or archives or the provision of advice. Research progressed on bog butter, early medieval vessels and on recently-excavated burials, among other topics. Curatorial support was provided to phase II of the inventory project. In October, staff commenced a major collections care project on the IAD stores which involved a decant and re-pack of approximately 6,500 objects, this work necessitated a four-month pause in researcher access. IAD staff provided support and information to colleagues in National Museums Northern Ireland on range of issues. In addition, a total of 703 entries were written for the Online Collections Project by a digital curator (who joined NMI on a six-month contract during the year) bringing the total number of completed entries for IAD collections to 1680.

Representation

IAD staff represented the NMI on the following external bodies: Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Committee; Designated Museums Liaison Group; Board of

Directors of the Discovery Programme; Royal Irish Academy Standing Committee for Archaeology; Council of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland; Editorial Board, Journal of Irish Archaeology; Government's Advisory Committee and Working Group on Climate Change Adaptation; Lusitania Working Group; Dive Training Grant Scheme; National Strategy for Underwater Archaeology; Tii Adare Bypass Seminar. Internally, staff represented the Division on a wide range of policy committees including the Health and Safety Committee.

Public Engagement

IAD team members delivered public lectures and tours of the Museum exhibitions and collections to a wide variety of audiences on archaeological and museological topics both within the NMI, across the country and abroad. The Irish Antiquities team facilitate a stand at the National Ploughing Championships and engaged with many visitors over the three days. Public lectures were delivered to the Clare County Museum; to the conference *The Artist and the Museum* and to the conference *1588 Armada: Ireland and Spain – a shared Underwater Cultural Heritage*. Staff lectured to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in UCD, UoG and UCC, including the UCC Museum Studies MA course. Team members met with Dept of Foreign Affairs colleagues to discuss African collections at NMI, as well as participating in specialist tours of the exhibitions for dignitaries and specialists and appearing in numerous media reports and facilitated requests for interviews for tv news, documentaries, podcasts and other broadcasts relating to the collections.

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 Capital Project

NHD focused on all elements of development and planning for the Natural History Refurbishment Project including planning with Fitzgerald Kavanagh and Partners (FKP) and members of the integrated design team, alongside other NMI teams and project partners in the Office of Public Works (OPW). Following a successful recruitment and procurement process the NMI project team (comprising staff from NHD, Registration and Conservation) with assistance from natural history conservation specialists and furniture conservation specialists, successfully undertook the decant of 96% of the collections from Merrion Street. Plans were also developed for the *Dead Zoo Lab*, which will be based in the Riding School at Collins Barracks and engage visitors in dialogue as well as experimenting with new approaches to interpretation and issues of accessibility. This work will inform elements of the redisplay of the Natural History Collection once the Museum in Merrion Street is re-opened.

Exhibitions

The Merrion Street exhibition building was restricted to Ground Floor-only opening during the first eight months of the year and was fully closed to the public on 2nd September to enable the complete removal of collections from the building in preparation for capital works. In the limited period of opening in 2024, Natural History received over 290,000 visitors, with weekends and school holidays being particularly busy.

NHD team members worked with IFD colleagues on a co-curated exhibition on Irish bees *The Murmur of Bees*, which opened at NMI – Turlough Park in February 2024 to positive coverage in the national press including RTÉ News and a dedicated episode on Nationwide.

NHD team members collaborated with Ukrainian charity UAnimals on a contemporary art installation in Merrion Street titled *Nest of War*, which addressed the topic of ecocide resulting from the Russian conflict in Ukraine. NHD also supported the National Gallery of Ireland exhibition *Mildred Anne Butler: At Home in Nature* with the loan of specimens.

Collections

Ongoing collections work occurred throughout the year as part of core activity, including maintenance of collections, improvements in storage, and addressing issues of health and safety, particularly around radioactive minerals. Acquisitions continued at a steady rate, with in the region of 9,000 new specimens including globally, scientifically significant specimens and species new to Ireland. The archives also received a significant acquisition via auction, in the form of the Farnham manuscript. These journals contain original descriptions and notes on objects held in the NMI collections, providing data to support and expand upon their use.

Research and Collaborations

NHD staff responded to 729 new public enquiries during the year. Some notable research collaborations included:

- Working in partnership with SIGNIFY, a project seeking to gather data on the baseline biodiversity of Singapore by digitising collections from Singapore dispersed around the globe through colonial activity. A publication arose from this partnership in 2024 identifying key objects in our collections and the people who collected them.
- Hosting post graduate humanities researcher, Adriana Ballinger, who is working on a project exploring the context of objects in the NMINH collections, and

collaborating with the iCAN project to identify opportunities for community curated objects to be included in the *Dead Zoo Lab*.

- Our ongoing collaboration with the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group to manage the Irish Cetacean Genetic Tissue Bank, a citizen science project that enables researchers to better understand the species conservation needs of whale and dolphin species found in Irish waters by using skin samples of stranded whales collected by volunteers. Capacity to continue this project was enabled this year by the acquisition of a new laboratory refrigerator.
- Involvement in the NetVec Ireland project that monitors blood feeding insects that act as vectors of disease, which are becoming a greater threat to health in Ireland due to the warming climate.
- Staff maintained ongoing collaborations with other government agencies and related bodies (including National Parks and Wildlife Service, Revenue Commissioners, National Biodiversity Data Centre, etc.) by assisting with verification of species identifications for biological recording, managing voucher specimens of new records to Ireland, delivery of actions identified in the National Biodiversity Action Plan, and supporting the assessment of natural materials seized for wildlife legislation enforcement purposes.
- NHD also contributed to a variety of loans to facilitate research. This included hundreds of minerals for use in a hyperspectral scanning project by the GSI, mollusc Type specimens for use in the John Ellerman Foundation's funded Mollusca Types in Britain & Ireland project, insects and other invertebrates for use in taxonomic studies at a variety of international research centres.

Public Engagement

Staff engaged with the public on social media, contributed to television, radio and news items, gave a large number of virtual and in-person talks, attended and hosted training courses and seminars online and in person. Lectures and tours were supported for a variety of third level institutions (including TCD, UCD, ATU, UCC, Maynooth University, Leicester University) and staff variously supported student projects. Members of the NHD team also supported outreach activities at the Native Species Festival at Dublin

Zoo and played a key role in the coordination of the European Mineralogical Conference.

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 policy. The Division continues to work with communities and explore themes for contemporary collecting. The Division is based at the National Museum of Ireland– Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

Acquisitions

There were over 118 acquisitions made to the collection in 2024. Acquisitions illustrate some of the traditional areas where additions were made but also where opportunities arose to add more contemporary objects. Some highlights were: God-in-a-bottles, báinín jacket, a Dresser associated with Letterfrack Industrial School, A dog collar and bowl that belonged to President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins' dog, Bród, and film equipment from the mid-1900s. 46 offers of donations were declined including tools (various), textiles/clothing, newspapers, furniture, wagon & cart, cooker, weighing scales, school desk etc. Offers of donations are declined in scenarios where there is already an object in the collection that is similar or covers the same themes, topic or period or of the condition of the object is such that it could not be stabilised in Museum conditions.

Exhibitions

Crónán na mBeach/The Murmur of Bees

This exhibition launched in February 2024. It is a cross – collection exhibition that explores our relationship with bees and their role in the natural world. This included Harry Clarke’s cartoon for the St Gobnait window in the Honan Chapel, Cork, the Bee Dress by Alice Maher and a number of specimens from our Natural History collection and Arts and Industrial division collection.

The Murray Documents

In 2024, the Irish Folklife Division acquired a donation of 40 documents belonging to the Murray family that lived in rural County Sligo. The well-preserved documents span 150 years from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century and give a snapshot of the lives of a typical farming family. A selection of these documents is now available to view as an online exhibition. The exhibition is complemented by a series of three online talks.

Mary Anne Fanning – Remembering our Community Midwives

The Folklife division team worked closely with the curator Emma Laffey and Director of Collections and Access and the iCAN team to provide curatorial assistance with iCAN exhibition, Mary Anne Fanning – Remembering our Community Midwives, which opened in October 2024. The exhibition was curated by Emma in collaboration with a community of families and individuals who had connections to community midwives in Ireland.

Collaboration & Outreach

A total of 46 researchers and artists were facilitated with access to the collection and outreach via tours and lectures. The textiles, boats, basketry, furniture and vernacular architecture drawings were of particular interest.

Staff gave talks both online and in person on exhibitions as well as the trades and crafts collection. Staff engaged with an ongoing project with School of Celtic Studies and Folklore at UCD on the use of willow and objects in the collection made from this

material. Clodagh Doyle and Tiernan Gaffney were elected council members for the Society for Folklife Studies and attended the annual conference in Caernarfon, Wales. The National Museum of Ireland is set to host the 2026 conference at our Turlough Park site.

Lectures were delivered at the 2024 Dublin Gastronomy Symposium, IMPAG, the IMMA annual conference, the Galway City Heritage conference and the Folklore of Ireland Society. Curator talks were also provided to universities, online, onsite and in other museums e.g. Galway City Museum and Clare County Museum. Also, radio interviews throughout the year in both English and Irish.

Staff assisted Belturbet Heritage Railway Museum with agricultural machinery identification and display panel wording. The Folklife team members worked with a number of groups on potential exhibitions including the Aleen Cust Memorial Society, Dublin City Council Culture Company and the South East Technological University. Lectures were given at the iCAN Winter Evening Talk Series and the *The Big House in the West: Past, Present and Future* seminar in the ATU Mayo. A prerecorded talk was delivered for World Maritime Day. The Museum featured in two *Nationwide* television programmes in 2024.

Research & Engagement

Research groups were accommodated throughout the year from universities such as DCU and ATU along with many artists and craft groups such as Connemara Textile crafters and Eoin Reardon (traditional carpenter / influencer). Other groups that were engaged with over the year include The Irish Patchwork Society, Hispanic Studies in TCD, Fáilte Ireland and community groups locally, Turlough Heritage Group and local and international artists e.g. Anthony Haughey and craftspeople, e.g. Basketmaker, Joe Hogan. The Folklife team members carried out fieldwork in communities in Roscommon and Offaly where the Irish Film Institute were showing Irish Folklife Division films.

The Folklife team members assisted research for a range of TV productions including Wall to Wall Media for *Who Do You Think You Are?* and novelist Deborah Grimes on her research of island evacuations. Research assistance to individuals was related mainly to boat building. As part of the boat gallery staff attended *Seine Boats - A Celebration of its Intangible Cultural Heritage Status* in Kerry and published engagement with communities, experts, third level institutions and international colleagues on the traditional boats blog.

Projects

The Courtyard Gallery at Turlough Park had the following art exhibitions -

Breda Mayock – *Who Brings the Light*, Rural Irish Artists – *Rural Life in Ireland* and Karen

Cox – *Women of the Thar Desert*.

OnSight 24/25: Silent Objects/Spoken Lives

A joint initiative between the National Museum of Ireland, Mayo County Council Arts Service and Poetry Ireland, *Silent Objects/ Spoken Lives* was commenced in 2024 for the launch on National Poetry Day, May 1st 2025. Three poets were asked to explore objects from the Irish Folklife Collection at Turlough Park and informed by the language of the catalogue, to bring out under-explored aspects of the objects' stories.

CONSERVATION

The Conservation Department applies its expertise to the delivery and maintenance of collection care and conservation of the Museum collection working with colleagues across the institution. The principal focus of the Conservation Department is to determine and enact the preventative, remedial and investigative care needs of the Museum's Collection. Together the team addressed the conservation needs across all curatorial divisions and eight museum sites. Staff also provided conservation advice and responded to queries from cultural institutions, researchers and the public.

Housekeeping and upgrade of collections

Preventive conservation provided support and advice on exhibitions across all sites for 2024 including *Murmur of Bees*, *Changing Ireland* and *Mary Anne Fanning: Remembering Our Community Midwives*. Support was also provided to the Natural

History decant project prior to the recruitment of staff for the Natural History Refurbishment project . This included assistance in a survey of the condition of the collections in Natural History. All pest traps were changed and reviewed in Collins Barracks and Kildare Street. An external contractor was appointed to the Collections Research Centre (CRC) to change pest traps on a trial basis for a year. The calibration of the MEACO environmental monitors was completed across all sites. An additional 60 MEACO monitors were purchased at the beginning of the year and rolled out across the Collins Barracks site to increase coverage in collection areas and zones not previously monitored. The Low RH room in Kildare Street is still awaiting commissioning and the BMS system is causing environmental issues across the Collins Barracks site due to notable temperature and relative humidity fluctuations. These fluctuations have led to significant issues for the collections including mould outbreaks. Once identified these have required immediate action and the supplementation of resources to engage mould elimination and storage upgrades, for example a three month project was carried out in the crypt in Kildare St following a mould outbreak.

Preventive conservation additionally provides support to the Education department in freezing their handling collections. Gallery and case cleaning by conservation and curatorial staff took place in the *Viking Ireland, Kingship and Sacrifice, Ór, Soldiers and Chiefs, Ib Jorgensen* and *The Way we Wore* exhibitions. The Paper Conservator implemented a first round of Japanese print object rotation in the *Albert Bender* gallery with the Keeper of Asian Collections as part of a project to run over next 2.5 years. Stocks of hazardous Cellulose Nitrate film were identified in the collections and after curatorial assessment were placed in safe storage and destined for disposal. Following identification of radioactive hazards within the geological samples of the Natural History collection a risk assessment was carried out and mitigating actions were taken.

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 archaeological material such as bog-butters and medieval bronzes. The principal focus of remedial conservation was on objects destined for exhibition in the *Changing Ireland, Words on the Wave* and *Murmur of Bees* exhibitions. Conservation was also carried out

on core collections and projects such as the Drogheda Boat timbers in CRC, the Armada cannon and gun-carriage wheel, and the Howth bells for display in Kildare St. A display of silver and ceramic to mark the centenary of The Friends of the National Collections of Ireland was also conserved.

Investigative Conservation

Examination, investigation and scientific analysis of the collections routinely formed a part of conservation processes. Radiography of core collections continued along with the service to private archaeological conservators. Routine xrf analysis of new and potential acquisitions in IAD was undertaken to determine composition and authenticity. Research projects for forthcoming publications and theses were continued: Drumanagh Iron-age copper alloys, early medieval vessels and medieval cheek pieces. Analysis was also carried out on artefacts selected for the *Words on the Wave* exhibition.

Exhibitions and loans

Conservation staff from Textiles, Paper, Furniture and Applied Arts were involved in the exhibition development and object selection and mounting for the *Changing Ireland* exhibition. The *Murmur of Bees* included an important loan from the Corning Museum of Glass, USA: the Harry Clarke St Gobnait cartoon and the Alice Maher Bee dress on loan from the Ulster Museum. The *Airgead* exhibition was upgraded and remounted. Other activities included the loan out of silver and gold freedom boxes for *The metal stamp'd by honest fame*, Dublin Castle and the loan out and return of Ethnographical artefacts, Captain Cook Memorial Museum, Whitby.

Fieldwork

This mainly concerned the recovery of archaeological material and minor excavations from a variety of contexts in particular bog butters, wooden artefacts, medieval bronzes and block-lifted human remains. Conservation staff were involved in visits to archaeological companies, local and county museums, heritage centres and European institutions to assess and inspect artefacts, environmental conditions and buildings. Loan inspections also took place in the Royal Armouries, Leeds; St Gall Abbey Library,

Switzerland and the Captain Cook Museum, Whitby, where a long-term loan was returned.

Natural History Capital Project

Extensive contributions were made into the development and roll out of the Natural History Capital Project by the Head of Conservation and the NMI Preventive Conservator throughout 2024. This included preparation and delivery of a week of training specifically developed for the incoming NH project team (with staff members recruited to three departments – Natural History, Registration and Conservation). From mid-year the Conservation team was joined by an additional five staff members, comprising a preventive conservator and four conservation collection assistants, solely dedicated to the NH Capital project. Together their work significantly contributed to the successful decant of the first floor of the Natural History Museum to offsite storage and began the process of the decant of the ground floor in 2024.

Research, Collaboration, Engagement & Outreach

Conservation staff delivered modules (Introduction to collection care and conservation, disaster preparedness, Light, Pollution, Investigative Conservation, Handling and Packing), workshops and tours to the UCC Museum Studies MA students. As well as serving on several NMI sub-committees (Health and Safety, Staff Forum, Diversity and Equality) staff also provided tours of the Conservation labs for the Public, Transition Year student programmes and other cultural and research institutions.

Conservation staff also participated in workshops to discuss and develop the 'Collections Care and Conservation Strategy' and Risk Management templates. A staff member attended several meetings and arranged relevant tours in collaboration with the National Monuments Underwater unit to formulate an Underwater Cultural Heritage strategy. Conservation staff actively participated in numerous online CPD training courses, conferences and seminars. The Head of Conservation participated in the CNCI (Council for the National Collections of Ireland) – Collection care and Conservation group while our Paper Conservator sits on board of ICRI (The Institute of Conservator-Restorers in Ireland) and organised online training in polymer science with

Dr. Rebecca Ploeger, pigment identification with Dr. Tracey Chaplin and in person media training for conservators. A research project to 3D scan all the components of the Lough Kinale shrine commenced in partnership with the Discovery Program.

REGISTRATION

The NMI Registration department is responsible for developing and maintaining standards of collections management to ensure the integrity of collections information. The team prioritises the development of procedures, ensuring location control, coordination of collection logistics and upgrades to museum storage.

Registration co-ordinates NMI's loans programme and provides exhibition support and access to collections information and data for researchers through outreach initiatives, online publication, behind the scenes tours, onsite research appointments and via the management of the object, library and archive catalogues, where collections are catalogued and data is systematically enhanced. Productivity has been high throughout 2024, as the team collaborated to support colleagues and researchers to deliver a service to internal and external service users.

In 2024, the Registration Department worked on preparation for upcoming capital development projects in Natural History Museum, Beggar's Bush, Collins Barracks, Daingean and the CRC. Members of the Registration Team worked with colleagues in Natural History and Conservation to decant objects from the Merrion Street site to the CRC. The CRC Project Manager carried out a re-organisation of the CRC's large object store, using the RE:ORG toolkit to ensure safe storage and increased capacity for traditional boats, in support of the Traditional Boats Gallery opening in 2026. This year saw the Registration Team continue a number of projects including the management of an inventory of collections stored in the crypt in Kildare Street and an inventory of the UCD Mineral Collection at the CRC and Beggar's Bush.

The Registration Team led on the production of a new framework agreement for collections storage, art handling and logistics services working alongside colleagues in Finance and Procurement. A procurement process was also carried out to develop a strategic planning project for the Registration Department in 2025.

The Registrar was appointed as co-ordinator of MSPI's maintenance of accreditation application which will see formal applications on behalf of Collins Barracks, Turlough Park and Collections Resource Centre sites submitted in October 2025. The Registrar was also appointed as Manager of Daingean and is working with colleagues on prioritising storage upgrades of collections, increasing storage capacity and on supporting a programme of deaccessioning.

Beyond decants and inventory, documentation of all NMI collections continued. As part of the core work of the Registration Department, Art and Industry Documentation focused on reviewing and updating loans with several historical loans and temporary

numbers resolved. A post move locations audit of the North Block Decant was carried out alongside colleagues in AID and Conservation resulting in new shelving and plans for a full cataloguing project of the Scientific Instruments. New shelving is also planned for the North Block space and Visible Storage. Staff worked on projects to resolve temporary numbers and to build a unique thesaurus in Axiell. Staff co-ordinated the publication of 11 *Registration Corner* blog articles on behalf of the department. In addition to managing the inventory in Irish Antiquities, staff worked with curatorial and conservation colleagues on planning for the *Words on the Wave: Ireland and St Gallen in Early Medieval Europe* exhibition, managing the return of a loan from Capital Cook Memorial Museum and on the processing of a number of depositions into the CRC. 2024 was an extremely busy year with regards to incoming and outgoing, national and international loans:

Loans processed in 2024:

NMI Division	Ireland	International (incl. Northern Ireland)
Art & Industry	28	4
Irish Antiquities	47	23
Irish Folklife	6	1
Natural History	1	1

The Archivist and Librarian provided a research service for NMI staff including book orders, archive and library acquisitions. The Librarian renewed journal subscriptions/ memberships, Inter-library loans and continued to build the library collection and library spaces. The George Eogan library was catalogued and the librarian worked with colleagues in the Irish Antiquities Division and Design & Photography to design a bookplate for the collection. The Archivist established a programme of transfer and accession and has cleared a non-current record backlog from Collins Barracks. The Archivist catalogued the Ann Scrupe papers and has input into NMI's Oral History

Working Group. Both the Archivist and Librarian worked on decanting collections from the attic spaces in Turlough Park House and Beggars Bush to support a capital development of spaces in the house. These collections have been rehoused and listed on Axiell collections management software.

The Registration team provided Axiell training and support for colleagues across departments and online training workshops were provided by staff. Registration delivered a module on NMI's Transition Year Programme and to students engaged in an MA in Museum Studies in UCC. 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 areas including but not limited to European Registrars Conference, Disaster Management, Axiell, Oracle, Moving Collections, Green Museum Summit, ICOM and NEMO storage and sustainability training events.

The Registration Team were delighted to contribute to the re-establishment of the Irish Registrars Group (IRG).

The team continue to participate in and contribute to various societies and associations.

DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY

The Design & Photography Department provide creative design and photographic services across all four sites of the National Museum. Work carried out by the department includes exhibition support, design for print and digital, archaeological illustration, maps, new photography of collections and exhibitions, image preparation and distribution as well as management of the Digital Asset Management System and Digital Photographic Image Archive.

Exhibitions

Design & Photography provided substantial exhibition support for a number of current and forthcoming exhibitions. This included design procurement, advice on branding, exhibition layout design and exhibition marketing collateral, including: an update to the *Albert Bender* Asian Art Gallery, *Mary Anne Fanning: Remembering Our Community* *Midwives* and *Words on the Wave: Ireland and St. Gallen in Early Medieval Europe*.

Design for Print and Web

The following design work was undertaken:

Education Activity booklets

Friends of the National Collections of Ireland display graphic

St Patrick's Festival poster, leaflet and digital screen design

Wood Quay anniversary promotional designs

Tailteann games promotional designs

Education monthly events digital and print design

Stone Age to Medieval timeline graphic

Museum Changemakers clue cards design

Exhibition graphics for the Museum stand at the National Ploughing Championships

Nest of War exhibit labels for Natural History

Museum branded outdoor banners

Harry Clarke merchandise design

Presentation designs for internal Museum departments

Brand and Identity Refresh Project

The Design & Photography Department collaborated closely with brand design company Zero-G on the project to refresh the Museum's brand and visual identity. Acting as a vital link between the designers and the Museum, the department supported the design process by supplying essential information, design and photographic content, and guidance as needed. A significant milestone in the project's development was the launch of the refreshed brand and visual identity to Museum staff in September 2024.

Publications

Design work was produced for the publication *Easter Week 1916: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Stories*. Support was also provided to a number of publications in development including Irish Art Pottery, a publication on the Ardagh Chalice, and the ethnographic publication *Entangled Histories*.

Archaeological Illustrations, Plans, Maps and Site drawings

Requests for imagery from the archive were supplied for publications. Imagery was scanned for divisional records and future exhibitions. Illustrations of the Freestone Hill coin and the Ballyspellan brooch were produced for exhibition interpretative graphics. Illustration work was produced for an upcoming publication on the Ardagh Chalice. Maps were produced for the *Entangled Histories* publication.

Equipment Procurement

New photographic equipment was procured with a view to extending the range of the photographic service to the various Departments/Divisions within the Museum.

Photography

Photography had another busy year, with over 100 photography sessions taking place including those by our in-house photographer and also through photography services procured from our current photographer framework. These included requests to photograph in Co. Cork and Co. Kerry. This resulted in 900 items photographed and over 3000 photographs delivered.

Photography projects were undertaken for internal and external exhibitions as well for internal collections work. These included photography for *Changing Ireland*, *Words on the Wave: Ireland and St Gallen in Early Medieval Europe*, *Mary Anne Fanning: Remembering our Community Midwives*, Ethnographic collection, Education handling collections. Objects photographed for An Post stamps, Stained Glass, Honan Chapel Co. Cork and for SIGNIFY Natural History, Hong Kong.

Image Requests, Distribution, and Digital Image Archiving

From the photographic sessions which took place in 2024, 2,786 images were archived and are available in DAMS. There was a 32% increase in images optimised, prepared and outputted in 2024, a total of 11,170 images from 616 requests. Highlights include photography for the *Mary Anne Fanning: Remembering our Community Midwives* exhibition, the *Words on the Wave: Ireland and St Gallen in Early Medieval Europe* exhibition and corresponding publication, the *Changing Ireland* exhibition and the *Harry Clarke* exhibition.

Other projects worked on included contributing to the Museum's online collection project and developing a new system for the digital capture of glass-mounted lantern slides. Training was provided for six new users on the fundamentals of DAMS software and the organisation of the digital photographic archive.

Transition Year Programme

Design & Photography staff came together to participate in the Museum's week-long transition year programme in February 2024. Sessions were held in both the design and photographic studios in Collins Barracks. Students were given an insight into how design is used to create compelling museum experiences and the various creative disciplines used by museums to showcase their collections to suit a broad audience base. The students also had the opportunity to learn about the role of photography in documenting Museum collections and exhibitions, and how it can be used to engage audiences.

Training and research

The Design & Photography team attended many webinars, training and strategic planning workshops. A member of the Design team attended an Exhibition Design course run by Node Center and also commenced a Design Leadership and Management course. Along with the exhibition project team, a member of the Design team visited the Stiftsbibliothek in St. Gallen, Switzerland for research and preparatory work for the *Words on the Wave* exhibition, due to open in 2025. Staff from Design & Photography also attended brand engagement and storytelling workshops as part of the Museum brand and identity refresh project.

EDUCATION & LEARNING

NMI's Learning & Engagement Department remains committed to its mission of connecting people with Ireland's rich cultural and natural heritage through inclusive, accessible, and innovative programming. In 2024, we deepened our engagement with schools, families, and communities, expanded our digital and on-site offerings, and worked to create meaningful connections between our collections and our audiences.

Through initiatives such as the Visitor Transformation Program, we made significant strides in enhancing accessibility, improving visitor flow, expanding digital engagement, and strengthening our understanding of audience needs. The introduction of sensory-friendly resources, late-night openings, website enhancements, and audience research in Dublin 7 and Dublin 8 demonstrates our commitment to making the Museum an open and welcoming space for all.

The growth of the Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) is a testament to our ongoing support for community-led heritage preservation, empowering local groups to document, share, and celebrate their histories in new and dynamic ways. Meanwhile, our schools and public programs continued to thrive, ensuring that learners of all ages could engage with Ireland's history in ways that are meaningful, educational, and inspiring.

In 2024, the department welcomed 118,400 visitors to 2142 events.

Exhibition & Public Programming

- The Department delivered the *We Make Our Own Histories* exhibition (Feb–Aug 2024) with associated public events, including the Changemakers workshop series for 500+ students. (Collins Barracks)
- As part of the St Gallen Schools Manuscript Project, a cross-cultural educational initiative with students from Ireland and Switzerland was developed, integrating calligraphy, archaeology, and science. Engaged 90 direct participants and influenced 150+ more. (Kildare Street)
- Wood Quay 50th Anniversary: A landmark five-event series attended by 358 people, featuring archaeologists, curators, and international scholars. (Kildare Street)
- Delivered Viking Family Day at Woodstown, Waterford and a Historical Harp Society workshop, reaching 900+ participants. (Kildare Street)
- Delivered Viking Family Day at Woodstown, Waterford and a Historical Harp Society workshop, reaching 900+ participants. (Kildare Street)
- Created three themed audio tour scripts for the *Changing Ireland* exhibition, enhancing visitor engagement. (Collins Barracks)
- Bumbly Wings & Crawly Things Workshops (linked to the *Murmur of Bees* exhibition) inspired student-led art installations (Turlough Park)
- Expanded *Wonder Cabinet* programming to include ISL tours and neurodiverse-friendly events, attracting 3,356 visitors. (Merrion Street)

Community Engagement & Collaboration

- Partnered with Fighting Words on the *Changing Ireland, Changing Stories* project, supporting Irish Refugee Council and Fatima Resource Centre in creating written and audio stories for the upcoming Changing Ireland exhibition. (Collins Barracks)
- Partnered with UCC, TCD, Library of Congress, and The Discovery Programme to explore archaeology through science, engaging 7,158 visitors. (Kildare Street)

- Halloween & festive events engaged hundreds of families with craft workshops, scavenger hunts, and storytelling sessions in collaboration with Arts Squad Mayo and Marketing. (Turlough Park)
- M.Ed Drama & Resilience Project with Trinity College Dublin explored performative teaching methodologies. (Turlough Park)
- Developed five new orienteering trails, including an accessibility-friendly trail, with ATU-Castlebar and the MAPRUN digital navigation app.
- Partnered with Kildare Wildlife Rescue and the Midlands Science Festival for biodiversity and conservation programming. (Merrion Street)
- Hosted 69 onsite school tours (1,727 students) before closure for redevelopment, followed by 27 online workshops (648 students). (Merrion Street)

Education & Schools

- Developed a Transition Year Programme for 20 students, providing hands-on museum career experiences.
- Increased guided school tours by 20%, with 4,500 students participating in Junior Cert History and Leaving Cert History of Irish Art workshops. (Kildare Street)
- Created Reelist Video Resources, an online history and folklore learning tool for primary school students. (Turlough Park)

The Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN)

2024 was a remarkable year for iCAN, marked by new groups, archives, and local authority partnerships. iCAN empowers communities to preserve and share their heritage through digital and physical archives, events, and exhibitions.

Key Achievements:

- Two major publications launched:
 - A Local History Guide (May 2024) at an annual in-person gathering of 90+ attendees.

- A Succession Planning Guide (July 2024) for heritage organisations.
- First object-based exhibition:
 - *Mary Anne Fanning: Remembering our Community Midwives* (Oct 2024), featuring contributions from 22 iCAN groups and drawing 150 guests, leading to a 71% increase in Turlough Park visitor numbers.
- Expanded volunteer and digital engagement:
 - 46 digital archives maintained by 300+ volunteers.
 - 1,071 volunteers participated in iCAN training & meetings.
 - 1,840 attendees at iCAN talks and events.
 - 2.2 million visitors to iCAN digital archives.
 - 8.1 million page views across the network.

Visitor Transformation Program

The Visitor Transformation Program is reshaping the visitor experience across all NMI sites. Key achievements include:

- Improving accessibility: Partnered with AsIAm, Ireland's Autism Charity, and began the process to achieve accreditation across three sites with the introduction of sensory-friendly resources and staff training. We have also expanded the number of Irish Sign Language Tours across our sites.
- As part of NMI's commitment to the Government's Nighttime Economy agenda, we introduced late night summer opening across our Dublin sites.
- Moved out Freelance Panel of Guides to a Supplier of Services Model.
- Undertook a comprehensive audit of the Museum website to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- Introduced Phase 1 of the Digital Bookings System with the introduction of online bookings for non-guided school tours.
- Undertook audience research on the NMI Public Programme. Given the Museum's strategic commitment to community engagement, there was a specific focus on the audience research for the communities who live in Dublin 7 and Dublin 8.

OPERATIONS

FINANCE

The 2024 allocation received from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGS&M) was as follows:

Pay	€11,057,000
Pension	€857,000
Non-Pay	€5,884,000
Total Current	€17,798,000
Capital	€1,308,000
Total	€19,106,000
Allocation	

During 2024, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media also awarded amounts totalling **€3,555,621** in relation to grants for specific purposes. Fixed asset expenditure of **€242,735** was capitalised.

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

Financial Statements 2024

The Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2024 and the accompanying audit file in early 2025. The Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) audit of the Financial Statements for 2024 took place during March -May 2025. NMI's accounts in respect of the year ending 31 December 2024 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 2024 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 2024 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 continues building internal expertise in the area of procurement.

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.

HUMAN RESOURCES

In 2024 the Human Resources Department continued to provide a wide range of services in support of the day-to-day operations across NMI sites and to contribute to strategic developments at management committee and senior management level.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruiting staff to fill vacancies and to staff new positions remained a high priority for the HR Department. Activity levels remained high. The on-going development of a Recruitment section has enabled the implementation of a highly professional Recruitment Policy and procedures which has resulted in NMI being able to carry out greatly increased volumes of recruitment.

There were thirty-three new starters and six internal promotions throughout the year, culminating in more than forty recruitment competitions to fill positions for the Natural

History Capital Project, Education, Human Resources, Retail, Irish Antiquities, Art and Industry, Finance & Procurement, Irish Folklife, Design, Facilities and Registration. The associated induction/'on-boarding' activities were efficiently undertaken by staff in HR, line managers, and the staff in other departments as required.

The capacity to deal with this workload is a key enabler in supporting NMI's delivery on new developments and projects.

HR administration and payroll processes

With NMI payroll and HR administration processes outsourced to National Shared Services Office (NSSO), the interface between NMI HR, NSSO, Line managers, employees and NMI Finance dept. is an essential function of HR and we have developed an HR processes/queries section with many streamlined procedures and processes. Clearly increased numbers of employees, and internal promotions/transactions generate additional work in this section and there are many legacy issues post-covid which have surfaced and been successfully resolved. Shared Service provision in general has undergone significant challenges due to loss of experienced staff and there are many gaps and deficits in the NSSO service to NMI, however, the dedicated team in HR has ensured greater visibility of transactions in-process, and robust 'tracking' of the cases raised, which allows for better follow-up and appropriate accountability for resolving issues.

Learning and Development /Organizational Development

In 2024 HR coordinated online and onsite learning and development, under the broad umbrella headings of mandatory training, professional and personal development, as well as coordinating organisation-wide training and supporting identified training requests under the Refund of Fees scheme. Seven staff members availed of the Refund of Fees Scheme in 2024.

HR is now positioned to have a key role in supporting NMI Management to lead the successful delivery of People and Culture Transformation, necessary for developing as a high-performing organisation and delivering on the mission to create an inclusive, contemporary museum.

NMI senior management in collaboration with HR supported and sponsored working with external Change Management /Leadership consultants implementing participative processes and co-design/customised programmes. There has been a diverse range of activities and events including team development work with specific departments, individual coaching/mentoring, leadership development workshops with the management committee, reflection/action learning spaces as well as staff engagement initiatives beginning with the Facilities Department, i.e. Agenda from the Floor. The cross-functional, and multiple levels of staff involved to date provides valuable insights and learning about the potential components of an organisation-wide transformation programme and critical stakeholders internally and externally.

Employee Relations/Industrial Relations/Staff Wellbeing

The HEO has streamlined internal processes for submitting regular returns to the department in respect of Public Service Numbers, Disability census etc. There is also a streamlined process for completing the DS sanction template and Business Cases and for maintaining an up-to-date Workforce Plan.

Work on updating HR policies and procedures continued and included the drafting and negotiation of the following new policies: Blended Work Policy, Employment of People with Disabilities Policy, Gender Policy, Equality Diversity and Inclusion.

The HR department now acts as a robust source of advice and support to senior management, department heads, and other line managers on a wide range of people management and employee relations matters.

The majority of Industrial Relations are dealt with internally and day-to-day relationships with local shop stewards and the Forth Official are in the main healthy and constructive. We are working towards a more progressive museum council agenda and revised arrangements including reduced meetings to three per year have been agreed.

Strategic HR Management and Future Proofing NMI Workforce development

The NMI workforce is changing rapidly, there is a significant number of 'new recruits' and an expectation of a proactive HR Department that contributes to a positive workplace culture. NMI is strategically examining best ways to support additional resources to enable a greater focus on organisational development and strategic HR management.

The HR department has shifted focus towards providing a professional and best practice informed HR service to staff and managers in NMI. There is a continuous improvement mindset, and an aim to have improved efficiency in operational HR processes. The future development/enhancement of NMI is very dependent on developing/realizing the full potential of our staff. The NMI Board and Director are well positioned and keen to influence a 'wider cultural institution's' development agenda, and to advocate with funders/government to secure more sustainable and continuous funding to support a modern 'People Strategy' approach to workforce planning and development.

CORPORATE AFFAIRS

The Corporate Affairs Unit works closely with Director's Office, the Board's Governance, Audit & Risk Committee, 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 number of policy and legislative documents were reviewed and updated during the year including the Customer Charter and Freedom of Information Scheme.

Ethics in Public Office

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

Risk Management

A review of the NMI's Risk Management framework as per the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 was carried out in 2024. Quarterly risk workshops took place with the Senior Risk Team and the Corporate Risk Register was continuously reviewed, and regular updates were provided to the Governance, Audit & Risk Committee.

Internal Audit

Following a successful procurement programme a new Internal Audit service commenced in 2024. An Internal Audit Plan 2024-2026 was agreed with the Governance Audit & Risk Committee. The mandatory review of the Systems of Internal Control commenced in December 2024 and was signed off by the Governance Audit and Risk Committee in February 2025. A review of Governance also commenced in late 2024 and was ongoing into 2025. Implementation of the recommendations from previous internal audit reviews continued throughout 2024.

GDPR

Work continued in relation to the assessment of the NMI's compliance with GDPR. As part of the annual programme of work, data protection policies were reviewed and updated. All departmental and divisional Records of Processing (RoPA's) were reviewed and updated in Q4 of 2024. Work in relation to assessing the overall governance structure for managing data protection at NMI continued throughout 2024.

Freedom of Information

Under Freedom of Information Act 2014, 23 FOI requests were responded to during the year.

Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

A total number of nine PQs were received from the Houses of the Oireachtas during the year. The PQs related to queries of relevance to departments across NMI in both Operations and Collections & Access Divisions.

Irish Language

Work continued to enhance the use of the Irish language at the NMI and to ensure compliance with the Official Languages Act. We as an organisation are committed to achieving our required compliance figures according to the regulations. As outlined by the Official Languages Act, we strive to meet specific targets related to Irish language promotion. These targets include:

- **Placement Requirement:** The Act mandates that 20% of our advertising efforts should be in Irish. In 2024, we achieved 45% placement rate, demonstrating our dedication to promoting the language.
- **Budgetary Requirement:** We are also committed to allocating 5% of our budget to the Irish language media. In 2024 we spent 7 % of the overall budget on Irish language media.

NMI is committed to improving its engagement with the Irish Language. As a National Cultural Institution, we value our Irish language and are constantly looking to increase the use of Irish in our day-to-day work across the NMI. In 2024 we conducted Irish language training for staff and focused on front of house staff. We continue to work with Measmedia who support the NMI in its efforts to meet both the placement and budgetary requirements for Irish.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The ICT department is responsible for the development and management of all telecommunications, audio-visual and information systems, and in doing so supports and enhances the mission of the NMI across all its functions and geographical sites.

In addition to his senior role, the Head of ICT continued to fill in as the Head of Facilities and Security throughout 2024 while the position was advertised. Team capacity was further stretched due to staffing constraints. The ICT department is staffed by a small but agile team consisting of three area specialists, supported by an Administrator and the Head of the Department.

Highlights

The majority of the team's time in 2024 was spent on operational support and in support of projects headed by other departments. The ICT helpdesk responded to over **1600** support requests from users in 2024 in addition to delivering on the IT modernisation programme for the NMI, including:

- Provision of new storage capacity
- Completion of offsite backup
- Support for new gallery builds
- Removal of out of support systems
- Improvements to IT security systems.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Footfall

Visitors Online	5,617	Visitors (Physical)	1,325,268
Number of Events Held	2,142	Number of Visitors Total at Events	118,400

Visitor Numbers						
December '24	2023	2024	% Change 2024 vs. 2023	2023	2024	% Change 2024 vs. 2023
Kildare Street	25,608	22,343	-13%	510,236	505,232	-1%
Collins Barracks Site*	42,265	31,854	-25%	467,331	448,997	-4%
Merrion Street	22,275	N/A	#VALUE!	423,246	291,218	-31%
Turlough Park Courtyard**	3,948	4,170	6%	87,143	79,821	-8%
Total	94,096	58,367	-38%	1,487,956	1,325,268	-11%

General

The four sites of the NMI achieved good national and regional print and broadcast media coverage throughout 2024. While visitor figures were slightly down on 2024 – this was due to Natural History closing in August 2024.

External Partnerships

The Marketing Department maintained and further partnerships with agencies including Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Mayo County Council, ITOA and AVEA.

Website

The team focused on regular homepage updates to enhance search enhancement optimisation and Google rankings. The brand refresh was integrated into the Museum website's design and content. The Museum Newsletter saw significant growth in engagement and subscribers since the end of 2023. The total website traffic figure for 2024 was **2,694,138**.

Branding

Zero-G were contracted to lead out on an NMI-wide brand and identity refresh, and the brand refresh was launched across all sites in September 2024. Rollout will continue in 2025 across all branding touchpoints.

Audience Research

The Marketing team worked closely with Context Studio on NMI's Visitor Experience Research project. An implementation plan is in development, with findings to inform future communications strategies.

Advertising and Promotion of the National Collection

Strategic on-and-offline campaigns promoted key events, exhibitions and small-scale festivals, across a number of media channels, including RTÉ Radio Supporting the Arts, Raidió Na Life and Micro Media. Most of NMI's paid advertising focused on engaging with regional audiences. In April, the Museum featured in *Ireland's Hidden Treasures*, a three-part series on RTÉ that examined the cultural role of Ireland's national cultural institutions.

Events & Exhibitions

The team led out on the promotion of the following events and cultural initiatives in 2024 and received strong PR support throughout:

February	<i>We Make Our Own Histories</i> exhibition.
February	<i>The Murmur of the Bees</i> exhibition.
April	The launch of <i>The Mincéirí Archives</i> website: Celebrating Irish Traveller culture.
Summer months	Late Night at the Museum: A summer campaign, informed by audience research, promoted extended Thursday openings (until 8pm) at Dublin sites, with a focus on Decorative Arts.
September	<i>Culture Night</i> : All sites opened until 9pm. Highlights included military history tours at Collins Barracks, a harp session at Kildare Street, and an evening with artist Alice Maher at Turlough Park.
October	<i>Mary Anne Fanning: Remembering our Community Midwives</i> .
October	Expanded Halloween programme based on the legend of Stingy Jack, now in its second year.
December	Popular two-weekend Christmas event with a live crib and market, now in its second year.
November to January	<i>Winter in Dublin</i> : NMI showcased seasonal events across all sites, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland.

Throughout 2024	Changing programme of Courtyard Gallery art exhibitions throughout the year at Turlough Park, including <i>Women of the Thar Dessert</i> by Karen Cox; and <i>Who Brings the Light</i> by Breda Mayock.
Throughout 2024	The team continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland, including the 'Key Accounts' programme and promotion of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Digital Marketing and Online Content

In 2024, the Museum underwent a significant transformation in digital marketing with the approval and implementation of a Digital Marketing Strategy. The strategy focused on enhancing content consistency across its website, newsletter, and social media channels. This strategic shift enabled the Museum to streamline content distribution, ensuring that visitors across digital platforms encountered the Museum's content consistently and frequently.

Continuing our collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and the Museum's Education & Learning Department, a concerted effort was made to develop and promote *Winter in Dublin*-themed content. This included arranging a briefing for the education and outreach team by Fáilte Ireland in preparation for the winter content. This collaboration not only enriched the Museum's digital presence but also contributed to the broader cultural promotion of Dublin during the winter months.

The Museum continued to expand its blog offerings in 2024, including the continued development of the Museum's established blog dedicated to the traditions and history of boats along the western seaboard of Ireland, and blogs created by the Museum's Registration department. Curatorial teams from each of the divisions also shared insights into artefacts featured on RTÉ's *Ireland's Hidden Treasures* television programme, enriching the Museum's online content and maximising the impact of the spring 2024 broadcast.

Across all digital platforms, including *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *YouTube*, the Museum maintained a robust presence, marked by consistent growth in followers (see table ...below). Notably, the Museum's newsletter, *YouTube* channel, and *Instagram*

platforms experienced substantial percentage increases in engagement and followership. We also expanded the Museum’s social media presence by opening a *LinkedIn* account and a *BlueSky* account.

To reach a wider audiences, the Museum ran targeted digital display ads regionally and nationally, including in the *Dublin Gazette*, *History Ireland* and *The Connaught Telegraph*. This approach helped raise awareness of the relevance of the Museum’s programmes and exhibitions among communities across Ireland.

The digital Marketing Team also introduced the refresh of the NMI brand across all digital channels, modernising visuals and messaging to enhance audience engagement. This was achieved by using the digital graphic tool Canva.

There was also development in new digital creative formats, e.g. carousels, reels, videos and stories.

2024 also saw the introduction of a structured communication strategy for the post and post-primary school’s programme. The new strategy delivers monthly newsletters, aligned with the academic year and curriculum themes, providing teachers and school administrators with timely updates on tours, workshops, and online events across all four museum sites. *Mailchimp*’s automation and analytics tools allow for targeted messaging and performance tracking, enabling continuous improvements.

Social Media Followers/Subscriber Growth 2024

	<u>January</u> <u>'24</u>	<u>December '24</u>	<u>Growth</u>
Facebook	65,914	71,000	8%
X (formerly Twitter)	52,256	51,423	-2%
Instagram	24,457	27,311	12%

YouTube	3,480	4,240	22%
General Newsletter	10,540	12,005	14%
LinkedIn		3,325	100%
BlueSky		703	100%

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RETAIL

The Commercial Development and Retail department is responsible for developing and maximising all revenue generation and commercial activities at the Museum. The Department leads the retail function focussing on opportunities to increase turnover and maximise sales. The Department is also responsible for maximising the commercial return from other existing activities including catering franchises, photographic rights and reproductions, venue hire, film location, car parking, donations as well as new commercial

In 2024, the Commercial Department advanced its objectives in generating revenue, enhancing footfall, and expanding access to new audiences through a diverse programme of events, retail activity, and commercial development. Events at Collins Barracks attracted a total of 98,197 visitors, significantly enhancing visibility for a site typically challenged by lower footfall.

Accessibility to New Audiences

The Ceol Country Music Festival marked an inclusive new initiative, offering a free, family-friendly, alcohol-free festival environment, aligning with NMI's core values and welcoming a broad demographic from across Ireland. The Winter Lights projection brought intergenerational audiences into Clarke Square for Ireland's first-ever 360-degree outdoor immersive light and sound show.

Strategic Developments

A new café operator, Synge & Byrne, was selected via a 3-stage procurement process,

with operations beginning in early 2025, contributing to improved visitor experience at Collins Barracks. A new financial control system for retail is under implementation to drive profitability in 2025.

The commercial activities of 2024 have not only enhanced the Museum's financial sustainability but also significantly expanded its reach and engagement with diverse audiences. Continued investment in partnerships, digital innovation, and visitor-focused services positions the NMI for further growth and impact in 2025..

Throughout 2024 several mid to large scale events were held with tactical partners, in keeping with Museum policy to bring a wider awareness of the Museum.

Over the past year several concerts and events took place, these included *Tradfest*, *St Patrick's Festival*, *Mother Pride Block Party*, *Wider than Pictures Concert Series*, *Ceol Country Music Festival*, *Bram Stoker Festival* and *Dublin City Council's Winter Lights*.

2024 saw the inaugural *Ceol Country Music Festival* on site in partnership with Dublin City Council. This initiative welcomed thousands of country music fans from the four corners of Ireland to the Museum. As a free, family-friendly, no alcohol event, this project was very much in keeping with the ethos of the NMI's core principles. One of the highlights of the festival year at Collins Barracks.

As the year ended, thousands of visitors experienced Ireland first ever outdoor 360-degree immersive light and sound display at Collins Barracks. People of all generations experienced *Winter Lights* - a dynamic, colourful and imaginative light projection on the four historical facades of Clarke Square. Commissioned by Dublin City Council and designed by both Irish and international artists, this project saw stunning lights, colours and sounds fill the Square as abstract shapes and images of an imagined world danced along our 18th century granite walls, bringing them to life for the local community.

With overall 2024 attendee numbers reaching 98,197, these mid and large-scale events not only generated press and social media coverage but also continued to help build

awareness and grow our visitor reach. Overall, they have proven again to be an important footfall generator particularly for the marginal site of Collins Barracks.

Café

In 2024, the commercial team worked through the tender procurement process seeking an appropriate café operator. Over the course of the second half of 2024, the 3-stage tender process allowed the commercial team to analyse and process the responses to the tender. Ensuring the awarded contract would be received by an operator that aligned with the values and mission of NMI.

In late 2024, the best and final offers from the remaining operators taking part in the tender process for the café operation contract were received. Synge & Byrne were the outstanding operator during this process and by December 2024, the NMI was in the closing stages of offering Synge & Byrne the café contract to begin operations early 2025.

During this time, the commercial team worked closely with OPW furniture branch to complete the café space refurbishment. Designs reflective of the Eileen Gray exhibition were the inspiration submitted to the OPW for the tables and chairs for the café space.

Digital That Delivers

The Digital That Delivers initiative, which involved the securing of €66,000 in funding by Fáilte Ireland continued through 2023 in partnership with ATS and with a view to rolling out a digital pilot scheme.

The pilot is currently in development and will involve a curated digital tour covering selected artefacts located on the ground floor of the National Museum at Kildare Street. The handheld digital device will allow for visitors to access additional information in 5 different languages while improving visitor engagement and enhancing the overall experience.

Donations

Overall donations in 2024 increased by 11% against the 2023 total with contactless tap donations accounting for 29% of total donations, online through the website accounting for approximately 1% and the remaining 70% collected through cash donations. Kildare Street accounted for the largest total of cash donations collected across the museum, with almost two thirds of total cash contributions.

Retail Sites

Retail income for 2024 increased by 2.5% on the previous year, with 66% of sales coming from Kildare Street, 14% from Collins Barracks and 19% of sales from Turlough Park. Total cost of goods sold in 2024 was 49% of total sales, with operating profits modest but improving through streamlined purchasing and inventory controls. Towards the end of 2024, the retail team implemented a strategy of closer alignment between retail, exhibitions and events, starting with the Harry Clarke exhibition in Collins Barracks. This involved developing bespoke products for the newly opened exhibition, at the store in Collins Barracks to coincide with late night curatorial talks and the outdoor light installation event Winter Lights. As a result there was almost 3-fold increase in sales in December at Collins Barracks. This strategic approach has proven its value and will be adopted further in 2025. In addition, a new financial control system is being implemented to support profitability and stock turnover in the next financial year.

Image Rights, Reproductions and New Photography

The distribution of over 3,813 images from over 319 requests from staff and the external market was administered throughout 2024 by the Rights & Reproductions Officer. The NMI operates an open access policy of no fee for researchers or for educational or academic publications. The future of image databases for museums will be defined by greater accessibility, interactivity and technological integration.

FACILITIES AND SECURITY

The Facilities and Security Department, which includes a technical facilities function and a front of house visitor services function, played a leading role in ensuring that all of our visitors, staff and collections remained safe and secure throughout 2024, and that our premises were maintained in a condition befitting Ireland's largest National Cultural Institution. . The Department worked closely with colleagues in the Office of Public Works on a number of key capital projects. These included finalising the base build works for the forthcoming Changing Ireland exhibition in Collins Barracks, fabric and roof repairs in Collins Barracks, minor works in Kildare Street including initial works in the Ceramic room for the upcoming Words on the Wave exhibition and the design for the base build works required for the proposed Boat Gallery in Turlough Park, as well the progression of minor fire upgrade works in Turlough Park House.

The local BMS sections within the OPW and the OPW M&E Helpdesk carried out numerous individual tasks across NMI sites in 2024. The Museum appreciates greatly the ongoing support from the OPW which is indispensable in keeping the premises functioning for our needs.

2024 was a busy year for the Department with regard to security and health and safety management and the department continued ongoing work on updating relevant policy and procedures.

The facilities teams played in a vital role in managing the health and safety and security requirements for large scale events that took place in Collins Barracks as follows:

- St Patrick's Day Festival event March 2024
- Mother Block event June 2024

- Wider Than Pictures event August 2024.
- Ceol Country event with Dublin City Council August 2024.
- Dublin Winter Lights December 2024

Recruitment was ongoing in the department in 2024, with recruitment for the key position of the Head of the Department (Head of Estates) underway. As well as this a new role, Facilities Manager, was appointed in 2024. This role manages and coordinates the technical facilities, safety and security related functions across all of the NMI's estates. The Facilities Manager leads the NMI technical facilities team and in conjunction with the Head of Estates leads out on the establishment of facilities, fire and safety related processes and procedures in order to bring NMI in line with best practise. The aim is to

ensure that NMI's facilities and sites are maintained and secured in a manner that ensures they are welcoming, engaging and safe, thus providing the foundation for a positive visitor experience. It is a key coordination role across the sites linking in with Operations and Collections divisions.

The ongoing training and development of Facilities and Security Department staff remains a priority for the Museum.

In 2024 we commenced a Facilities team engagement programme, entitled 'Agenda from the Floor: A New Conversation' with the first of three planned sessions taking place in December 2024. It is a new initiative seeking to identify opportunities for organisational and cultural development within the NMI, rooted in the lived experience and expertise of the people who power it, mainly the Visitor

and Security Officers of which there are 53 in NMI.

Leading out on this, Aoife Hurley, Director of Operations, invited representatives of the Facilities and Security Department to come together to share knowledge and ideas and look ahead together. The expectation being that over the course of the three planned sessions, going into 2025, a number of ideas will be identified for further exploration and experimentation, and ultimately translated into concrete actions.

The starting objectives for the engagement were as follows:

- Engage with the Facilities and Security team to gain a more informed view of how things are happening now, and how things could happen differently in the future.
- Share an understanding of the integral nature of the Facilities and Security team to how the Museum operates and delivers on the Museum's Strategic Plan.
- Get closer to the realities of the roles and experiences of the Facilities and Security team members on the ground.
- Highlight the ideas and insights that the Facilities and Security team can offer the wider Museum.
- Open up new channels of connection across the Facilities and Security team and between the Facilities and Security team and the rest of the Museum.

With regard to the National Museum's capital programme, the Integrated Design Team led by Fitzgerald Kavanagh and Partners, was appointed for the Natural History capital project in 2024. Working Group, Project Group and Steering Group meetings were ongoing throughout 2024 in conjunction with the NMI, the OPW and our parent Department. The Natural History decant is ongoing as thousands of specimens are being moved from Merrion Street to both the Collections Resource Centre and Beggars Bush. As part of the decant there are minor works underway in Beggars Bush to prepare this space for Natural History material. Some significant procurement projects for the Natural History project were completed in 2024 including the conservation of the historic display cases and the conservation of the specimens.

Funding was received from our parent department to progress a Preliminary Business Case towards the end of 2024 and into 2025 for the Kildare St capital project. This work will be carried out in conjunction with the OPW with a view to addressing accessibility issues and the lack of lift access within the Archaeology Museum. A collaboration is underway with the Houses of Oireachtas for NMI to use their passenger lift for access to the forthcoming Words on the Wave exhibition on the first floor in Kildare St, due to open in May 2025.

Working with colleagues in OPW a successful renewal of the lease at CRC Swords was negotiated prior to its sale to a new landlord. This lease secures the premises for a further twenty years.

Green Team

NMI is committed to embedding sustainability across its operations and public programming. Throughout 2024, NMI launched a range of cultural and educational sustainability initiatives.

In NMI established its Green Team as part of a broader commitment to sustainability, climate action and raising awareness of biodiversity, which are all key areas included in our current strategic plan 2023-2028 [‘Increasing Accessibility, Engaging Community’](#) Our small but dedicated team, comprising of staff from across all sites , supports NMI’s alignment with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021 and the evolving targets of Ireland’s climate action plans. These plans require the public sector to lead by example on climate action to reach the target of reducing Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and becoming climate neutral no later than 2050.

The Green Team, led by the Climate and Sustainability Champion, meets four times a year. Its role includes developing and implementing annual climate action roadmaps;(promoting energy-saving practices, providing a forum to discuss sustainability issues and organising awareness and training initiatives (behavioural and technical). From January 2023 to June 2024, NMI achieved a significant 25% reduction in carbon emissions, thanks to a focused effort across departments and the recruitment of a dedicated Energy Manager.

Key achievements in decarbonisation efforts included:

- Winning the SEAI Energy Award 2024 for Sustainability via Digital Technologies for our achievements in reducing natural gas usage, electricity consumption, and CO2 emissions in 2023 and 2024.

- By leveraging digital technology, the Museum enhanced energy efficiency, achieving a 32% reduction in natural gas usage, a 12% reduction in electricity consumption, and a 28% decrease in CO2 emissions within 18 months.
- The implementation of an innovative IoT-based Energy Monitoring System transformed its energy management approach, identifying over 100 energy-saving opportunities with minimal capital investment.
- The Museum installed over 50 IoT devices across its sites, which feed data into a central dashboard, providing near real-time performance of key assets. This heightened energy awareness led to a 43% saving in natural gas and over 30% in electrical energy, all achieved within six months with minimal infrastructural interference.

Carbon-reduction initiatives included:

- Ensuring the NMI's major capital project portfolio puts sustainable capital development at the forefront of design.
- The roll-out of green procurement training to senior management (need to check this with Paige)
- unifying waste management across all sites with external brown bins set up at multiple locations
- Efforts to monitor water usage, address leaks, and plan public water stations are underway along with a review of paper usage to move towards a paperless system.
- Energy-saving opportunities were identified with a new tracker in a CRC freezer.

Natural History plays an active role in Ireland's biodiversity efforts. In January 2024, the NMI was proudly named a key stakeholder in the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan. NMI is also a proud partner of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

Awareness initiatives such as 'No Mow May', took place at Collins Barracks and Turlough Park and were extended beyond May throughout the summer period.

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Board of the NMI (31st December 2024)

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Ambrose Loughlin (Vice Chair)

John R Bowen

Rowena Neville

Suzanne Costello

Barra O Donnabhain

Susan Rogers

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Lynn Scarff

Secretary to the Board/Executive Assistant to the Director

Jade Dillon

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Director of Collections and Access

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Art & Industry

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Dónal Maguire

Assistant Keeper Grade I

Alex Ward

Brenda Malone

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Dr Edith Andrees

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Collections Assistant

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Head of Digital Information Systems

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Network and Systems Administrator

Lukasz Komoterski

User and Content Leader

Gavin Woodruff

Intranet and Website Administrator

Neil Hand

Clerical Officer

David McKenna

HR

Head of HR

Anne Mc Neeley

HR Officer

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Aoife Mc Bride

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Tiernan Gaffney

Liam Doherty

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Emma Murphy

Collections Assistant

Anna Massignan

Dr Jamie Maxwell

Dr Kim Chandler.

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Executive Officer

Gráinne O'Donnell

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Head of Marketing

Ann Daly

Marketing Officer

Maureen Gaule

Marketing Executive

Frances Toner

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Archivist

Christina Tse

Librarian

Connie Bettison

CRC Manager/Deputy Registrar

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Maeve Conway

Nicola Lavin

Ryan Daniel Koenig

Jennifer O'Brien

Celestina Sassu

Pauline Stack

FACILITIES

Head of Facilities & Security

Bruce Barclay

Senior Facilities Executive

Paddy Matthews

Facilities Officer

Rory Loughnane

Robert Berrigan

Brendan Torsney

Clerical Officer

Timothy Heanue

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Graphic Designer

Renata Dias

Graphic Illustrator

Darko Vuksic

Photographer

Kyle Tunney

Digital Imaging Officer

Richard Weinacht

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Education & Outreach Officer

Helen Beaumont

Siobhan Pierce

Assistant Keeper II

Olivia Merriman

Nicola Murphy

Patrick Fallon

Service Attendant

Patrick Moore

Elecerio Abijay

Cleaner

Martina Connolly

Catherine Finnegan

Louise Hanlon

Caretaker

Michael Byrne

Visitor Services Officer

Craig Berrigan

Sean Brady

Conor Carlisle

Cian Carolan

Ramona Chereji

Ciaran Dowdall

Andrew Gallen

Enda Greenan

Chris Keenan

Geraldine Breen

Tom Doyle

Patricia Ryan

Mathew Lester

Diarmuid Bolger

Niamh Keating

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Grace O’Sullivan

Sheila Stenson

Ciara Olden

Joyce Delaney

Booking Assistant

Courtney McKee

ICAN Project Development Officer

Lorna Elms

iCAN Executive Officer

Caragh May O’Mahony

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Head of Conservation

Dr Karena Morton

Assistant Keeper I

Dr Paul Mullarkey

Assistant Keepers Grade II

Majella Lynch (DFO)

Keith MacDonald

Conor Marschall

Emmet McNamara

Lisa Mc Auley

John Mulrooney

Thomas Murphy

Simon Ó Donnobháin (DFO)

Greg Stevenson

Dominic Swaine

Linda Switzer

Luke Sweeney

Eric Breslin

Martin Byrne

Laura Casey

Ross Dooley

Paul Fennell

Martin Fitzmaurice

Padraig Fleming

Derek Flynn (DFO)

Eoin Foley

Henry Hackett

Dylan Hctor

Patrick Boyle

Helen Butler

Carol Smith

Nieves Fernandez

Hannah Power

Ellen McKeever

Lorna Rowley

Jennifer Stapleton

Collections Care Conservator

Marissa Toner

John Murtagh

Maurice O'Connor

Ellen Organ

Sheena Tucker

Mandy Johnston

Fergal Leahy

Daragh Magee

Mark McDonnell

Alan McKeever

John Power

Eamonn Reel

Alan Scully (DFO)

Alan Walsh

Liam Walsh

Lillian Walsh

Neil Walsh

Sean Young

Mary Gaughan

Raymond Gearty (DFO)

James Reynolds (DFO)

Jack Kelly

Noreen Ward

Sarah Talbot

Tony Geoghegan

