

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

The year 2014 proved challenging in terms of the National Museum's finances. The deficit for the year 2013 in December 2013 was met from the Museum's reserves - this meant that there would be no reserves available for 2014. The Museum had expended 99.1% of its total annual 2013 budget at the end of December 2013.

The Board played an active role in seeking answers from the Executive as to ways and means whereby costs could be reduced in any rational and practical basis. At the beginning of 2014 the Board continued to pursue the possibility of purchasing the Collections Resource Centre (CRC) at Swords. The Chairman communicated on a number of occasions with Minister Heather Humphreys and Junior Ministers Brian Hayes and Simon Harris. Furthermore, meetings were attended by the Chairman with both Minister Humphreys and Minister for State Simon Harris. The Board was vigorous in its pursuit of the acquisition of the CRC at Swords, as the acquisition of the same would represent a major step forward in improving the financial position of the NMI and in providing real value for the State and the Museum. The drive by the Board to acquire the Swords facility continued with full momentum, as the logic supporting the case for such acquisition was clear and compelling.

The Strategic Plan for the Museum for 2014 to 2017 was at the forefront of the Board's attention throughout the early part of 2014 and the Board is pleased to announce that after thorough consideration and discussion the Plan was completed and put in place. The Plan was finally agreed by the Board on 1st May, 2014 and was ready for publication at that time.

The necessary focus was also applied by the Board in ensuring that the Employment Control Framework (ECF) was managed appropriately throughout 2014. The ECF number for the end of 2014 was set at 133, albeit this was later revised upwards from 133 to 136.

The new HR Shared Services Unit, having been discussed in detail by the Board in 2013, got underway in 2014. However the Board was aware that the Shared Services system bore certain shortcomings.

The Board continued its support for the retail function and supports its being retained in-house as it represents a very important aspect on how the Museum reacts with and is perceived by the public.

The NMI submitted an application to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for the development of Phase One of the History of Ireland Galleries 1600 to 1916 which is to be launched in March 2016 as the Museum's contribution to the commemoration of 1916 and the Decade of Centenaries. The Board regrets to report that as of 2014 only a very small fraction of the sum

applied for will be received by the Museum. This represented a great disappointment to the Board of the Museum as it considered that it would be entirely appropriate that the NMI should play a leading role in terms of these very important celebrations - in particular in the context of the 1916 celebrations.

The Museum has struggled on many fronts because of the budgetary limitations, and the Board had praise for the Executive for the manner in which it met the very tough challenges with which it was confronted. Great work was done throughout 2014 by the Executive and Board Members in seeking sponsorship and in preparatory work for the limited forthcoming exhibitions programmes that were delayed because of the financial constraints under which the institution had to operate. In this context mention has to be made of discussions and negotiations with Volkswagen Ireland which proved encouraging for the NMI, and through intensive work by the Board Members involved in this task and with the assistance of the Executive a sponsorship deal for the Museum with Volkswagen Ireland for three years was agreed.

Throughout 2014 the operation of the Finance Unit was hampered due to absence on leave of two key members, and there was a delay in completion of the 2012 Financial Statements.

Significant work was done on the revised Staff Structure throughout the year. Some difficult issues had to be addressed and this process continues. The Board approved the Staff Structure Plan and Implementation document in principle at its Board meeting of May 2014 and indicated that notwithstanding some minor adjustments preliminary steps could be taken to put the plan into action. These steps included engagement with Staff Association, presentation of the proposed Staff Structure to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG), and negotiations with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform through DAHG to secure the proposed staffing changes and to introduce a limited number of new posts.

At its meeting of 12th June 2014 the Board resolved that because of the very severe financial difficulties facing the NMI at that time a letter would be sent to Minister Humphries outlining these very significant difficulties - this included a call to the Department to urgently regularise two outstanding issues which threatened the financial stability of the NMI. The first item related to seeking confirmation that the financial liability in respect of the claims for the stairs collapse in the Natural History Museum is not to be borne by the Board. This confirmation was ultimately procured on the basis sought by the Board. The second related to the running down of monies to pay staff pension gratuities.

The very serious state of the Museum's financial affairs continued to be a source of concern to the Board throughout 2014. The exhibition programme was negatively impacted throughout 2014 by the serious state of the Museum's finances. However, there were some exhibitions throughout the year

and in particular the World War One exhibition which was opened by Mr. Gay Byrne attracted a lot of interest and favourable reaction for the Museum.

The Board received the draft Heads of a Bill for a new National Cultural Institutions Act. Having received the Heads of Bill the Board remained of view that the proposal to abolish the Board would be a regressive and very negative step. The Board remains of the view that the abolition of the Board would be detrimental to the institution and could not be supported as a rational way forward in terms of what is best for the Museum as Ireland's leading National Cultural Institution. The Board agreed at its meeting of 12th June 2014 to maintain its opposition to the proposed reforms.

The Board welcomed the appointment of Ms. Heather Humphreys as Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on 11th July 2014. The Board sought a meeting with the new Minister to outline some key actions that needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. This meeting took place in September 2014.

The Board held its meeting on 5th September 2014 at the Museum of Country Life, Turlough Park. The exhibition *Preserving the Peace* opened at Turlough Park in June 2014 and the *Hair Hurling Balls* exhibition was at that stage on loan to the GAA Museum at Croke Park where it was scheduled to be on display until April 2015. There was a meeting with the CEO of Mayo County Council and the Chairman of Mayo County Council in relation to matters of mutual interest including matters relating to the lease of the Turlough Park site and the upkeep of the grounds at the Museum of Country Life.

At its meeting of 5th September 2014 the Board had a presentation in relation to options to bring expenditure at the NMI in line with expected 2015 allocation and income.

At its meeting on 15th December 2014 the Board considered the Deputy Secretary General's draft letter in relation to the State Agency liabilities in which he confirmed the Board's position that the Museum "enjoys the benefit of State cover" and therefore has no liability in respect of public liability claims brought against the NMI in terms of satisfying either damages or costs.

The Board wishes to thank Minister Humphreys and the staff of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for their support and assistance throughout the year. The Board also thanks the Office of Public Works for the fine work it continues to do for the National Museum.

Finally, the Board wishes to thank the Director of the Museum, Ragnall Ó Floinn, and his staff for their dedication and commitment to the great work that they continue to carry out for the National Museum.

The Board looks forward with confidence to continuing the vigorous and effective work that it has been doing and is continuing to do for the great National Cultural Institution that is the National Museum of Ireland.

Ar aghaidh leis an obair,

Dr. John O'Mahony SC
Chairman
Board of the National Museum of Ireland

INTRODUCTION FROM THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

The year saw the Museum developing its new Strategic Plan for 2014 – 2017 to replace the Museum’s Statement of Strategy 2008 - 2012. Developed in the autumn of 2013 and spring of 2014, it was approved by the Board on 1st May, 2014. Entitled *Telling the Story of Ireland*, it involved extensive consultation with staff and Board members with the assistance of an external facilitator. In the current challenging financial environment and uncertain governance structure for the institution, it afforded an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the past five years, the challenges and opportunities facing the institution and to examine how we do our work and how to position ourselves in a changing museum environment. This is reflected in our new vision ‘*To be an outward-looking, people-focused and creative national Museum*’ which places our visitors and staff at the heart of all that we do and our desire to engage with our publics in new and innovative ways. Our other great asset is our collections and our new mission ‘*To collect, care for, manage and interpret the collections we hold in trust and make them accessible to everyone for inspiration, learning and enjoyment*’ reflects the importance of making our rich collections available through first-class collections management, conservation, research and education services.

As part of this strategic process, a review was carried out of the existing staffing structure which involved the restructuring of the Museum’s staff to deliver the goals as set out in the Strategic Plan, involving extensive discussions with staff, staff associations and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The restructuring plan was approved by the Board at its meeting of 1st March and submitted to the Department for approval of key posts. The restructuring involved the reassignment of staff to new positions dealing with Online Collections and Social Media.

The financial difficulties facing the institution severely curtailed our capacity to delivery public programming and acquire material for the collection. Notwithstanding these constraints, a

considerable amount was achieved through the dedication of staff and the development of new partnerships.

The Museum of Country Life's festival, Féile na Tuaithe, returned to Turlough Park on the last weekend in May after an absence of three years, attracting some 22,000 visitors. It is the West's biggest free family festival, organised with external partners in the region, especially Mayo County Council. Despite cutbacks in staff and budgets, we attracted almost 1.1 million visitors to our four sites, an increase of 5/6% on the previous year.

Additional grants from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht enabled us to mount a number of exhibitions. *Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin* opened in Kildare St and we worked with colleagues in Trinity College Library on a parallel exhibition *Emperor of the Irish: Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf 1014*, held concurrently in the Long Room. The exhibition was accompanied by a series of videos made by our Education Department and posted on YouTube, a first for the Museum. Departmental funding was also secured for the exhibition *Recovered Voices: the Stories of the Irish at War, 1914-15*. Held in Collins Barracks, it deals with the Irish involvement in the first two years of the Great War. We also received financial support from the French Embassy for this exhibition. The 200th anniversary of the Peace Preservation Act was marked by the exhibition *Preserving the Peace* in the Museum of Country Life. In keeping with our new mission to be innovative and creative, the exhibition, *Beyond Pebbledash* consisted of an intervention consisting of a life-size pebbledash house in Clarke Square, Collins Barracks aimed to challenge views on city living and urban architecture. It was accompanied by a publication and programme of events and represented a partnership with Dublin City Council which we hope to continue.

The Museum secured a three-year partnership with Volkswagen Ireland and other commercial partnerships and revenue generating initiatives are being planned. Existing partnerships with external bodies and institutions continued and new partnerships were developed including Dublin City Council, Mayo County Council, Poetry Ireland, Age & Opportunity Ireland, the Education Centre network and the Danish and French embassies.

Energy saving initiatives by the Facilities Department in the Museum, in conjunction with our colleagues in the OPW resulted in an 8% reduction of consumption and savings of €100,000 on our utilities bills. This achievement was recognised when the Collections Resource Centre, Swords and the Museum of Decorative Arts and History at Collins Barracks were National Winners in the Historic Buildings category at the OPW's Optimising Power @ Work awards ceremony for 2014.

Staff continue to give tours, lectures, demonstrations and talks both in the Museum, throughout the country and abroad and have published widely. In 2013, the Inventory staff began to produce online articles on objects encountered during the documentation process from all four divisions, including entries on objects as varied as an elephant bird egg from Madagascar, a deck of Italian tarot cards, tin objects made by a Donegal traveller and musician and a Greek Corinthian helmet. Dr Matthew Parkes continued to produce popular guides to the geological heritage of Irish counties with guides to Clare and Roscommon. A number of significant publications on aspects of the Museum's collections appeared during the year. Jennifer Goff's *Eileen Gray – Her Work and Her World* represents the fruit of years of research by Dr Goff on one of the most influential twentieth-century designers, based on the Museum's unparalleled collections. Dr Griffin Murray's monograph *The Cross of Cong – A Masterpiece of Medieval Irish Art* is a full study of one the Museum's greatest archaeological treasures. The publication of *Viking Graves and Grave-Goods in Ireland* by Stephen Harrison and Ragnall Ó Floinn was the latest in the Museum's Dublin Excavations monograph series.

The Revenue Commissioners made a significant donation of postal and fiscal stamps and related archival material covering the period 1923 to XX. This was marked by a special presentation at the Revenue Museum, Dublin Castle on 16th September, 2014 in the presence of Josephine Feehily, Chairman, revenue Commissioners and the Director. A significant collection of mineral specimens was donated by University College Dublin. The contents of a Sligo boat builder's yard including tools, templates and finished vessels were acquired by donation for the Folklife collection.

The Museum continues to purchase works by contemporary Irish craftspeople through its joint National Museum of Ireland/Design and Crafts Council of Ireland Joint Purchase Scheme established in XX. Important purchases during the year included a late Bronze Age gold dress fastener, possibly

from the Great Clare Find of 1854 acquired through Bonham's of London and historical material was acquired at auction.

2014 saw the completion of the inventory of the entire Folklife collection of some 35,000 records, thanks to the work of Noel Campbell and Joanne Hamilton of the Registration Department. Considerable progress was made on the documentation of the collections in other divisions and over 550,000 records have now been added to the collections database. Collections continue to be moved to the new Collections Resource Centre in Swords from Lanesboro', Co. Roscommon, Daingean, Co. Offaly, Beggar's Bush and Inchicore, Dublin as well as from Kildare St and Merrion St.

A number of long-serving staff retired in the course of the year, including Eamonn Kelly, Keeper of Irish Antiquities, Paul Doyle, Registrar and Dr Séamas Mac Philib, Assistant Keeper I, Irish Folklife Division. We wish them well in their retirement.

Ragnall Ó Floinn

Director

COLLECTIONS

ART & INDUSTRY

The Art and Industrial Division is responsible for over a quarter of a million artefacts reflecting Irish economic, social, industrial, political and military history over the last four centuries. In addition, staff in the division care for collections of Irish, European and Asian decorative arts.

There were a number of highly significant acquisitions during the year; three exhibitions were opened, as well as short term displays in Clarke Square of an Alouette helicopter from the Irish Aer Corps and a World War One French 75 Gun. In addition 2014 saw the publication by Irish Academic Press of the ground-breaking and internationally acclaimed book written by Jennifer Goff, *Eileen Gray: Her Work and Her World*. This year was also marked by the continued career break of Audrey Whitty, thereby bringing the total number of curators in the Division to four as opposed to a pre-2012 high of six.

Several significant purchases for the collection were made throughout the year, which included three fans: an 1860s bog oak brisé fan carved with harps and shamrocks and the crest of Napoleon III, made for the Empress Eugénie by Jeremiah Goggin; an 1870s carved bog oak fan with Irish lace mount, believed to have been made by Elizabeth Laird, proprietor of the Paris House, Grafton Street for Lady Frances Duane; and a souvenir fan of the 1907 Dublin Exhibition made by the French fan company, Duvelleroy, for the French section of the exhibition. Contemporary collecting by the Division continued with a significant purchase of a Gráinne Lyons lamp under the National Museum of Ireland's joint purchase fund with the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland.

Donations included a 20th century Cynthia Rice silver bowl and Pye radio; a 1963 wedding dress of machine lace purchased in McDonald's (Specialists in Ladies Wear) of Mary Street, Dublin, with original receipt; an Irish Hospital Sweepstakes pageant costume from the 1930s, worn by one of the ticket loaders, and a collection of 15 black and white photographs relating to the Sweepstakes showing parades, floats, prize draws, etc. taken in Dublin during the 1930s and 1940s.

Scanning continued throughout the year with a focus on historical collections, along with the majority of the Eileen Gray photographic archive. Movement of collections continued, which involved the transfer of fictile ivories from Collins Barracks to the Collections Resource Centre, Swords. Several meetings on the topic of the Decade of Commemorations took place throughout the year, and towards late 2014 it was decided that the centenary exhibition on the 1916 Rising would be displayed in the Riding School rather than as part of an Irish history gallery in the North Block, Collins Barracks as previously planned.

Loan agreements and conditions of material were reviewed, including objects given on loan to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum for their exhibition *A Step in Time*.

Public queries continued to be dealt with during the year. Researchers were given access to reserve material across all collections. One such research initiative involved the Courtauld Institute's Gothic Ivories Project in which access to the Division's collection was provided.

Curatorial staff also gave interviews and provided information to media across all aspects of the division's collections and exhibitions. Curators continued to deliver gallery talks, tours and lectures throughout the year. Audiences included the general public, specialist interest groups, adult education and active retirement groups, as well as third level and postgraduate students. Staff also delivered talks and participated in symposia panels occurred at significant cultural venues such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the Royal Irish Academy. Likewise lectures were given at a variety of venues both nationally and internationally, including the Royal Dublin Society, the Royal Irish Yacht Club and the Tribeca Film Festival, New York.

IRISH ANTIQUITIES

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

2014 was a very significant year for the Division as the Keeper of Irish Antiquities, Eamonn P. Kelly, retired on 31st July after almost 39 years' service. The occasion was marked by a presentation and reception attended by NMI staff and many colleagues and friends. During the year Nessa O'Connor AK1, was conferred with a Doctorate in Philosophy from Queen's University, Belfast.

Divisional staff dealt with statutory licensing responsibilities throughout the year on a routine basis.

The total figures for all licences for 2014 are as follows:

Applications for licence to excavate, monitor, dive and detect: 597

Applications for Ministerial Consents: 48

Applications for Directions: 3

Applications for licences to alter: 122

Applications for licences to export: 92

In 2014 fieldwork in relation to archaeological discoveries was undertaken in sixteen counties.

Three hundred and sixty objects were registered in the 2014 register from 25 counties including finds from Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Leitrim, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Tyrone, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow.

These include a wide range of archaeological objects including lithics, ceramics, wooden vessels and bog butter. A rare bow stave from Co. Offaly was acquired.

Staff of the Division continued to liaise with consultant archaeological companies and state services on the acquisition and deposition of excavated collections and associated archives at the Collections Resource Centre, Swords.

Due to the nature of the museum's statutory functions under the National Monuments Act regular liaison with the National Monuments Service on applications to excavate and Ministerial Consents; and on illegal metal detecting continued throughout the year. There was also regular liaison with Cultural Institutions Division, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to various export licence applications. Illegal metal-detecting continues to be a cause of concern and several meetings with interested third parties took place during the year.

Duty Officers on a rotational basis dealt with numerous queries from members of the public, researchers etc., and day-to-day business. Other divisional work included an ongoing project on cataloguing unregistered colour film and transparencies for incorporation into the museum's main photographic database.

There were meetings with Facilities, OPW and contractors to plan the re-lamping of the Medieval Ireland and Ancient Egypt exhibitions and the refurbishment of inter-active elements in Medieval Ireland. A new Strong Room was fitted out and commissioned.

As part of its remit to work with local and regional museums in Ireland divisional staff liaised and consulted with museum colleagues and engaged in discussions and negotiations with museums all over Ireland. These included Arklow Maritime Museum, Ballymena Museum, Ulster Museum, Belfast, Carlow County Museum, Cavan Co. Museum, Clare County Museum, Tower Museum Derry, Donegal County Museum, IMMA, Dublin, Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, Skerries Mill Museum, Co. Dublin, Fermanagh County Museum, St Mary's Church, Kilkenny, Limerick City Museum, Tipperary South Riding County Museum, Lismore Heritage Centre, Co. Waterford and Waterford City Museums. These contacts relate to matters concerning renewal of ongoing loans, inspections, new requests for loans, advice on acquisitions and other matters particularly regarding the role of designated museums and curators.

At an international level the division continued its involvement with the British Museum's exhibition *The Viking World – Cultures in Contact* and also with the Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin for *The Vikings: Life and Legend* exhibition. Negotiations on loans to the House of European History, Brussels and the National Maritime Museum, Falmouth, Cornwall were initiated.

The Division actively encourages and supports researchers at all levels to use the divisional archives and collections. Facilitating researchers with access to the collections and the archives forms a major part of the divisional work every year. This has the advantage of making the collections better known and encouraging new research into areas of the collection that may be little known. In 2014 the number of research visits to the Reserve Collections was 127 and the number of visits to the Archives was 129.

During the year numerous researchers were facilitated and advised by divisional staff. Amongst these were a Smurfit Institute of Genetics TCD project on ancient a DNA from Ireland; a programme of non-destructive scientific analyses of Early Medieval glass beads at the Institute of Technology Sligo; a project to digitise topographical files for the Dublin Archaeology G.I.S. project and participated in the Heritage Council's Steering group on *A Cultural Data Framework for Ireland?*

Staff members were involved in a number of projects including the Dublin Excavations Publication Project; the Bog Bodies Research Project; a project on dating and typology of iron spearheads; prehistoric gold; Dublin City Council's Dublin Archaeology G.I.S. project and the Heritage Council's the Heritage Council's Steering group on *A Cultural Data Framework for Ireland?* The division facilitated a strategic review of the Dublin Excavations Project undertaken by the School of Archaeology, University College, Dublin.

We also accommodated twelve internship placements and nineteen Transition Year work experience students in 2014.

The National Museum was represented on the following boards by staff from the Irish Antiquities Division: -
Discovery Programme Council, Royal Irish Academy Standing Committee for Archaeology, Bord na Móna

Archaeological Liaison Committee. A staff member represented NMI at the Scotland-Ireland Archaeology Seminar at Edinburgh Castle to discuss Scotland Ireland Archaeological Collaboration.

Divisional staff delivered lectures to a variety of local and national bodies on archaeological and museological topics at the following venues:- NUI Galway, Trinity College, Dublin, Queen's University Belfast, Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland, Donegal County Museum, Cashel Library Summer series, International Bog Day, Clara, Co. Offaly, Robert Day: Cork's Premier Antiquarian Collector Conference in Cork, Celtic Fringe Festival, Grange, Co Sligo, Offaly Heritage Seminar 2014, Heritage Week talk in Kildare Street, and participated in the National Museum of Ireland Seminar, *The Vikings: New Archaeological Discoveries*.

Staff members also delivered lectures to UCC's MA in Museum Studies students on the work of the Division and on curatorial work associated with the development of Treasury Galleries; led an archive and crypt talk/tour to a group of post-graduate students from Dept. of Archaeology, NUI Galway; led a seminar on NMI to TCD's M. Phil course on Public History and Cultural Heritage and delivered a seminar on 'The National Museum of Ireland as a source for historical studies' to a postgraduate history class from University College, Cork.

During 2014 several independent film companies were facilitated in relation to programmes on bog bodies and the Treasury. Staff members participated by providing specialist knowledge and interviews for these productions. Numerous interviews were conducted with print and broadcast media on news items relating to archaeological discoveries.

Staff members attended the Atlantic Bronze Age Conference in University of Cardiff and the international workshop, 'Between the Vikings and the Hanseatic League: Continuity and change of the major transfer site Hedeby/Schleswig during the 11th century AD' held at Archäologisches Landesmuseum Schleswig-Holstein, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig, Germany where Dr Andy Halpin delivered a paper on 'Dublin in the 11th century'.

IRISH FOLKLIFE

The Folklife Division manages the national collections of objects representing Irish traditional life in the period principally between the Great Famine and the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The Division is based in the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life at Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. The bulk of the Folklife collections are housed at the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life; the remainder are in the process of being removed from the Museum's storage facility in Daingean, Co. Offaly to the Collections Resource Centre, Swords, Co. Dublin.

The main exhibition for the year was *Preserving the Peace – two centuries of policing on the island of Ireland, 1814-2014* marking the two hundredth anniversary of the passing of the Peace Preservation Act in 1814, which established the Peace Preservation Force. This is the first NMI exhibition to extend onto the Museum's website, where its presence was not just the replication of the exhibition panels but included supplementary materials not available in the physical exhibition. It was opened jointly by Commissioner Noirín O'Sullivan of An Garda Síochána and Deputy Chief Constable Alistair Finlay of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Other exhibitions were held in the galleries, the café and in the grounds of Turlough Park.

Among acquisitions for the Folklife collections were a model of a Traveller's Barrel Top wagon dating to the 1960s, an archive of approx. 2,000 photographs of traditional houses throughout Ireland, some Irish costume dolls from the 1950s, a copy of Garda Regulations from the 1920s, a Travel Permit permitting travel between Ireland and Britain in the 1940s and 1950s. A very significant acquisition made in September was a collection of tools, matrices, templates and a boat from a small traditional boat-building company that operated in Co. Sligo for nearly a century.

There was steady progress in the transfer of the collection from Daingean to the Collections Resource Centre in Swords. This was overseen in the first half of the year by Sharon Quinn who was based in the Collections Resource Centre. Cleaning and preparation for transfer was undertaken by the Conservation Department.

Clodagh Doyle presented a poster on the CT scanning of the Hair Hurling Balls to a medical conference at NUI Galway in February. Clodagh also gave a talk on dress in rural Ireland at Galway City

Museum. Rosa Meehan gave a lecture to the Irish Decorative and Fine Arts Society in Dublin on traditional furniture and she also gave a talk at the Cuan Modh Centre for the Elderly in Newport, Co. Mayo. During the autumn, Tony Candon provided advice on collections management to the Bunratty Furniture Trust and also provided advice to Limerick City and County Council on their museum service.

There were changes to staffing in the Irish Folklife Division as a result of restructuring across the National Museum as a whole. Sharon Quinn, Technical Assistant based in the Collections Resource Centre in Swords, was transferred to the Education Department. Liam Doherty, Clerical Officer in the Administration Department in Turlough Park, was transferred to the Irish Folklife Division. Ms Rosa Meehan returned from secondment to the Jackie Clarke Collection, Ballina, Co. Mayo in March. Dr Séamas Mac Philib retired from the National Museum of Ireland at the end of 2014.

We lent both individual objects and complete exhibitions to other museums in Ireland and abroad. We loaned an Irish Dancing dress to the Deutsches Hygiene Museum, Dresden, for their exhibition *Dance! Moves that move us*. The exhibition *Hair Hurling Balls – Earliest artefacts of our national game* transferred to GAA Museum in Croke Park where it opened on 20th July and will run until April 2015. In December, together with the other collecting Divisions in the National Museum, we loaned several Folklife objects to the Irish Museum of Modern Art for an exhibition entitled *Trove*, curated by artist Dorothy Cross.

NATURAL HISTORY

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

The Natural History Museum continues to be very popular with the public, with 300,000 visits in 2014, demonstrating that the 'Dead Zoo' remains one of Ireland's most popular visitor attractions. The National Museum of Ireland continues to press for the funding to allow the second and third floor balconies to reopen in line with the restoration plan for this 150 year old building and to provide wheelchair access to upper floors.

The Natural History Museum also remains popular with the media, for its educational role or simply as a venue. In 2014 the museum featured on television and radio ranging from promotional features for children's channels, staff interviews about cosmic rays and rhino horns, as a backdrop for a fashion shoot and a documentary on Irish seals to mark the anniversary of the first legislation for seal protection in 1914. Scottish artist Lara Scouller was in residence for a month and produced drawings that later went on exhibition as *The Pastel Menagerie*, in Edinburgh. Local artist Saidhbhín Gibson exhibited several artworks within cases in the Irish Room as part of her *Natura natura* project with Dublin City Council. Science Week was marked with a display of 'Metaperceptual Helmets' that visitors could try on and experience the eyesight of various animals.

An Irish experiment to measure cosmic rays was carried on the Apollo-16 mission in 1972. Specially prepared metal plates were designed by Professor Denis O'Sullivan and Professor Alex Thompson of the Irish Institute of Advanced Studies and their colleague Professor P. Buford Price in the University of California. These plates were donated to the museum and join the Solar System collection of meteorites, tektites and rocks from the Moon and Mars.

An unhatched egg of a golden eagle was received from the Golden Eagle Project. This is the first evidence of mating between Irish-bred golden eagles that are part of a reintroduction programme. A large slab of exceptionally preserved fossils was collected from Hook Head, Co. Wexford in

partnership with NUIG and TCD. An extensive collection of very rare 'jellyfish' fossils from Morocco was acquired following completion of a PhD on the fauna at NUIG. A collection of over 500 coastal and marine invertebrates was received from Dr Dave McGrath of the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology covering several decades of research.

The most significant addition to the collections was the transfer of over 5,000 mineral specimens from UCD. A grant from the Heritage Council supported the project to rehouse these specimens, with the help of numerous volunteers.

The focus on collections management during the year was in assisting documentation project staff with databasing of specimens and preparing collections for cataloguing. Once catalogued, specimens are shipped to the Collections Resource Centre. This involves palletising hundreds of drawers of specimens, wrapping all taxidermy in plastic for freezing as part of IPM quarantine control, and documentation of all moves. This project is affording the opportunity to unpack some geological collections crated since the 1962 evacuation of the fossil hall exhibition beside the Natural History Museum prior to its demolition.

Staff shortages limit the work of monitoring for insect pests that can cause damage to collections, particularly in the old museum building where moth and beetle larvae are a regular problem. Replacement of evaporation in alcohol collections is also a challenge for the collection of 25,000 jars of pickled specimens.

Staff worked with the British Geological Survey, Newtown School in Waterford, Castlecomer Discovery Park and with University College Dublin to provide advice on curation and display of natural history. Staff also delivered modules of the *Museum Basics* course of the Irish Museums Association. Exhibition support was also given to the Copper Coast Geopark in Waterford.

In addition to their scientific publications, the two remaining scientific staff contributed to the production and management of the journals *Earth Science Ireland*, *The Geological Curator*, *Irish Journal of Earth Sciences*, *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, *Journal and Newsletter of the Mining Heritage*

Trust of Ireland and *Museum Ireland* and also to the websites of the Irish Museums Association and Irish Naturalists' Journal, and the library of the Speleological Union of Ireland. Staff gave a number of public talks, tours for third level colleges and special interest groups, and assisted with organisations including the Merrion Square Innovation Network, National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Geological Survey of Ireland's Heritage and Planning Programme.

CONSERVATION

The work of the Conservation Department in 2014 was largely orientated towards three specific areas. These were the preparation of objects for upcoming temporary and permanent exhibitions, the preparation of objects for loan to other institutions and the transfer of objects to the Collections Resource Centre in Swords.

A number of temporary exhibitions took place during the year and all of the material included in them was conserved and mounted. These exhibitions included *Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin* and *Recovered Voices* in Dublin and *Preserving the Peace* at Turlough Park. Work continued conserving and mounting costumes for the Ib Jorgensen exhibition due to open in Collins Barracks in 2015. At the end of the year, a large amount of high profile material from the Art and Industry collections was conserved in the private sector in preparation for future exhibitions about the History of Ireland and 1916.

An unusually large amount of material went out on loan in 2014 to various exhibitions- both domestic and international. All objects had to be conserved, condition reported and in many cases mounted. Major loans were sent to the new galleries at the Ulster Museum, and to a temporary exhibition at the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall. Numerous Viking objects were lent to an exhibition that travelled to both the British Museum and Berlin. The Hair Hurling Balls exhibition originally produced for Turlough Park was transferred to the GAA Museum in Dublin. In the latter part of the year, a major exhibition *Trove* by Dorothy Cross was mounted at IMMA and included large numbers of objects from all four curatorial divisions.

Other remedial conservation carried out in the Department consisted of long standing projects and the conservation of recently excavated archaeological finds. These included a sword recovered from the River Shannon at Banagher and a group of Viking period axes found in a dugout boat in Lough Corrib. These objects were later included in the *Clontarf 1014* exhibition. Major progress was made in the treatment of the backlog of organic waterlogged objects including the completion of the conservation of timbers from the Dublin Excavations. Unfortunately the project to conserve the material from this site for publication was ended due to a lack of funds.

The museum environment continued to be monitored and maintained, as far as practicable, in a state where the conditions for the preservation of the collections are as favourable as possible. The relative humidity was continuously monitored in sites where collections are held, as was temperature, with surveys also made of light levels. Insect pest monitoring continued on all sites, with objects being frozen to control infestations as necessary.

A great deal of planned and scheduled investigation of the collections took place during the year using the Museum's X-ray and XRF facilities.

A great deal of conservation time was spent during the year, preparing objects for transfer to the Collections Resource Centre in Swords. Objects were transferred to the facility with a particular emphasis being placed during the year on the collections housed in Daingean. A series of monthly three day visits by up to five members of the Department took place throughout the year, to clean and prepare these collections for transfer to the Collections Resource Centre.

The Department was again heavily affected by the recruitment and contract renewal embargo, with departmental personnel levels reduced to around 40% of their former numbers.

The programme of public tours of the Department continued, and the usual range of enquiries was received, from both the public and professional colleagues.

REGISTRATION

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

The inventory project continued in the four curatorial divisions. A total of 48,568 records were validated this year. The total number of validated records since the Project began is 558,297. Two audits of the project were carried during the year recording an average of 99.35% accuracy over the four sites. This year saw the completion of the National Museum of Ireland – National Museum of Ireland - Country Life inventory, 35,184 records in total. Staff in all divisions also continued to work on broader documentation tasks.

The digitisation of historical documents, funded by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, continued throughout this year with approximately 7,427 scans completed and attached to the Adlib Collections Management database. Alongside this project, the associated Historical and Easter Week records are being enhanced and 8,164 have been validated for online access, subject to curatorial review.

Twenty-seven articles were published online in 2014. The themes covered were broken-down almost equally between the four collections, with six articles on Art and Industry subjects, six articles on Folklife subjects, seven articles on Irish Antiquities subjects and eight articles on Natural History subjects.

In 2014 there were seventy-nine loans processed in and out of the NMI. Of these thirty-five were loans inwards while forty-four were loans outwards. Of the total, twenty-one were loans renewed for a specified duration. Thirty-four were new loans. Eighteen were loans returned back to the National Museum of Ireland or to the respective owners. Of the seventy-nine loans processed six were research/conservation loans out of the NMI. There were five international loans inwards and thirteen international loans outwards. The remainder were all domestic loans.

In February 2014, Chris Harbidge took over the management of the Archive Service in the absence, on leave, of the Archivist, Emer Ní Cheallaigh. During this time rehousing of the files of the museum's Directorate continued, with three hundred boxes prepared for listing. The Esmonde Family Papers and Waterford Glass Collections were processed on to Adlib Archive and uploaded to the Irish Archives Resource Portal for public access. A transfer of files from the Revenue Commissioners was received and accessed by Nieves Fernandez who has been appointed as a liaison for the Archive and Library collections. The Easter Week acquisition files have been digitised and prepared for listing and the issue of the introduction of a records management system into the Museum has been proposed and prioritised for 2015.

In September 2010 the Librarian began a three year career break and was not replaced. Since then staff of the Registration Department has maintained the library service. Emer Ní Cheallaigh and Chris Harbidge processed memberships, online subscriptions and requests for ISBNs. Brenda Malone was responsible for interlibrary loans and Fran Devoy carried out internal distributions of journals. Anne Vaughan and a volunteer, Hugh Pierce, continued to reinstate the Library collection following a flood in 2010. Due to financial constraints a decision was made not to acquire additional books for the Library but some donations were received namely the John O'Sullivan collection.

This year, the focus continued on transferring and centralising collections from across all NMI sites and from external depositors to the Collections Resource Centre, Swords. In total forty-six collections transfers took place, alongside ten non-collections transfers. All excavated finds have now been transferred from the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Art and History, including Metal Finds and Human Remains.

Transfer of collections from the National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology began this year, with a focus on quernstones. The complete Marine Mollusc Collection has been transferred from the National Museum of Ireland – Natural History, along with the entire Horse Harness and Boat collections, as well as the entire contents of the Playhall and Washroom from the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life store in Daingean, Co. Offaly. Most collections have been transferred from the Inchicore storage facility, leaving just one object under review. The entire fictile ivory collection has been transferred from the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Art and History.

The NMI provided temporary storage solutions at the Collections Resource Centre for two institutions (National Gallery of Ireland and National Road Authority), through a total of eight transfers in and seven out. Approximately fifteen researchers were facilitated at the Collections Resource Centre, four of which took up three-month residencies at the Collections Resource Centre to complete PhD and Post-Doctoral research. A range of tours and meetings focused on developing the public aspects of the Collections Resource Centre with potential for partnership with Fingal County Council and the Association of Teachers Education Centres in Ireland, as well as visits from the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly and from the Ulster Museum, looking at the Collections Resource Centre as a successful model on which to base their request for future centralised storage in Northern Ireland.

The Collections Resource Centre was awarded the prize of *National Winner 2014: Historic Buildings Category* at the Regional and National awards ceremony of the OPW's Optimising Power @Work (Staff Energy Awareness Campaign) alongside Collins Barracks.

This year saw the retirement of Paul Doyle as Registrar. Judith Finlay took over these duties until this position is filled, while continuing in her roles as Collections Resource Centre manager and Documentation Officer for Art and Industry. The Archivist continued to manage the Library in the absence of a Librarian, and went on maternity leave for part of this year. Chris Harbidge took over the management of both collections, while continuing his work as loans officer. The Natural History Documentation Officer continues managing the Irish Antiquities team, in the absence of a dedicated officer for this division.

The assistance of interns and volunteers has proved increasingly invaluable as resources decline. During 2014 Registration were generously assisted by one long-term, invaluable volunteer in the Library and Archive, eight interns and one transition year student, of particular note were the four JobBridge interns based in the Collections Resource Centre for nine months.

EXHIBITIONS

National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology

Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin

The National Museum's special exhibition to celebrate the millenary of the battle of Clontarf opened in Kildare Street. It brought together over 130 artefacts (including three large coin hoards found in Dublin and loans from the National Museum of Scotland and the National Library of Ireland), many of which had never been exhibited previously. These artefacts illustrated the political and cultural background to this iconic battle and the remarkable career of Brian Boru; the economic importance of Dublin as the central factor in the battle; the military and technological aspects of the battle itself; and the political fallout of the battle, extending right down to the present day. The exhibition was mounted in parallel with another on Brian Boru held in the Long Room, Trinity College Dublin Library.

Opened April 2014. Curated by Dr Andy Halpin.

Samhain: shadows, sounds and stories

An exhibition of photographs, soundscape and creative writing which explored how previous generations marked the passing of the seasons and the cycle of life and death. Three groups of older people came together in Dublin, Mayo and Belfast to collaborate with Museum staff, musicians, composers, poets and photographers to create this exhibition which took inspiration from artefacts in the Museum of Archaeology associated with Celtic rituals and the landscapes where these artefacts were discovered. This project was a collaborative venture involving the National Museum of Ireland, Age and Opportunity and Poetry Ireland.

On display 19th November - 7th December 2014. Curated by the Education Department in collaboration with the Samhain Project Team.

National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Art & History

21st Century Irish Craft

In 2004 the National Museum of Ireland and the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) established a joint purchase fund to acquire pieces of contemporary Irish applied art as part of the museum's decorative arts collections. A selection of objects, acquired through the fund was selected and included examples of the best of Irish ceramics, glass, furniture, wood turning, jewellery, accessories and silverware.

21st Century Irish Craft was originally mounted in 2011, but re-installed to highlight the NMI/DCCoI joint purchase fund collection.

Opened September 2014. Curated by Alex Ward with assistance from Jennifer Goff and Sarah Nolan.

Recovered Voices; the Stories of the Irish at War, 1914-15

About 21,000 Irishmen were already serving in the British Army when war broke out in 1914. This exhibition explores what happened to them, and the other 47,000 who joined in the first few years of the war. From the lush green fields of France in the summer of 1914, through that first Christmas in the trenches, to the sun dried beaches of Turkey in 1915, the exhibition unveils the complexity of Ireland's part in World War One. Detailing the stories of 21 Irishmen and women, the exhibition uses original objects and interactive material to illustrate the human impact of the war on their lives.

Opened December 2014. Curated by Lar Joye.

Beyond Pebbledash

The exhibition comprised of the installation of a 'typical' Dublin pebble-dash house, life-size, with a pebble-dash façade and steel frame to replicate its walls, stairs, internal doors, windows, chimney and roof. The installation was on display in Clarke Square, Collins Barracks from August 2014 to January 2015. It was curated by Paul Kearns and Motti Ruimy in collaboration with the Education Department. The project was a partnership between the Museum and Dublin City Council's Public Arts Office and its Heritage Office and was supported by the City Council and by the Arts Council.

The accompanying public engagement programme sought to generate discussion about how Irish society values the places in which we live. The programme also aimed to question what future urban

developments and designs for urban living might look like. An interdisciplinary team of professional architects, artists and educators worked with schools, youth groups and families to explore these themes.

The workshops culminated in a public exhibition, *City Makers*, which ran at the Museum alongside the installation, from December 2014 – January 2015. It was curated by Ruairí Ó Cuív in collaboration with the Education Department.

The project's website is <http://beyondpebbledash.com/>

Stitches in Time

The exhibition involved 12 contemporary garments created by fashion design students from the Limerick School of Art & Design. Second-year students visited the Museum in February 2014 with staff from the Limerick School of Art & Design (LSAD) and explored the *Soldiers & Chiefs* exhibition and handled uniforms and related artefacts from the Museum's Handling Collection with curatorial and education staff. The students used photographs, drawings and notes from their research visit to the Museum to design and create a garment based on one of four themes: The Wild Geese –those Irish soldiers who fought in foreign armies, such as the French, Spanish and Austrian armies from the 16th to 19th centuries; World War I; World War II and the Irish Defence Forces.

On display August – October 2014. Curated by Helen Beaumont. It was a collaborative project with the Department of Fashion Design, LSAD.

Christmas

The Museum's Neapolitan crib figures and 18th century painted sleigh were displayed in the foyer. In addition the room settings in the Irish Period Furniture gallery were dressed with festive decorations including those by Irish designer Gráinne Lyons.

December 2014. Curated by Jennifer Goff with assistance from Patrick Boyle, Nieves Fernandez and Sarah Nolan.

National Museum of Ireland – Country Life

Hair Hurling Balls – Earliest artefacts of our national game

An exhibition featuring the fourteen hair hurling balls in Irish museum collections, exhibited along with our oldest-known hurley. The exhibition focused on the discoveries made regarding the composition and dating of the hurling balls.

On display January – May. Curated by Clodagh Doyle.

Interland

An exhibition of ceramic works developed by women refugees in the County Mayo area coordinated by Mayo County Arts Office, Mayo Arts Squad and Mayo Intercultural Action was displayed on Level B of the Museum Galleries.

On display February – March

Preserving the Peace – two centuries of policing on the island of Ireland, 1814-2014

The exhibition marked the two hundredth anniversary of the passing of the Peace Preservation Act in 1814, which established the Peace Preservation Force. This exhibition focuses on organised policing over two hundred years on the island, exploring the degree to which standard policing has metamorphosed or remained static against the backdrop of British and Irish rule. From the initial crime to capture and punishment, both corporal and capital – *Preserving the Peace* opens a door onto the sometimes uncomfortable reality of Ireland's official past.

On display June – December. Curated by Noel Campbell.

Memory Book Project

This initiative evolved out of an examination of existing visitor comment books for the first 10 years of the National Museum of Ireland –Country Life (2001-2011). These showed a need to provide a platform for visitors to record personal memories and stories triggered by their Museum visit. A memory book was subsequently designed and is located in Level C of the Museum galleries. The Registration Department has an ongoing responsibility to replace recording sheets and archive recorded memories and stories from visitors.

Women and Rural Electrification in Ireland Project

The Women and Rural Electrification Project is a collaboration between the National Museum of Ireland –Country Life and the ICA network which aims to capture memories of how the coming of electricity impacted on the lives of rural Irish women. Links are being created with ICA guilds nationwide and recording packages distributed so that members can record their stories and memories related to this transitional period. Relationships are also developing with international academics with specific interests in the topic and there is potential for an exhibition in the future as a result.

Curated by Joanne Hamilton.

Cycling the Country

A display of bicycles from the Folklife Collections (including one bicycle from the Art and Industry Collections) opened on Level B. The exhibition will be completed early in 2015.

September. It is being curated by Clodagh Doyle.

Christmas

A display of toys and other gifts loaned primarily by Clodagh Doyle, together with images of Christmas cards from the Museum's collection, on Level A of the Galleries.

OnSight

OnSight is an annual installation of artworks in and around the grounds of Turlough Park. The theme for OnSight 2014 was 'Traditional Farmhouse Fare – Farm to Plate'. This year saw the installation of 15 artworks. This artist-led exhibition project was a collaboration of the National Museum of Ireland, Mayo County Council and Mayo Arts Squad. It involved a number of independent artists, the Rural Training Centre Castlebar, Luisne Arts Group Ballinrobe and the intercultural refugee group in Ballyhaunis.

On display May – September 2014. Co-ordinated by Rosa Meehan.

Café Exhibitions

In addition to the exhibitions that take place in the Museum Galleries, the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life facilitates exhibitions by others in the Museum Café. Such exhibitions must relate in some way to the overall theme of the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life. They are co-ordinated by an inter-departmental team consisting of Liam Doherty (Administration/Irish Folklife – Chair), Clodagh Doyle (Irish Folklife), and Aoife O’Toole (Education).

The exhibitions included *Poc Fada*: an exhibition of paintings by Tom Meskill, was inspired by the Museum’s Hair Hurling Balls exhibition; *On Leaving*: a photographic exhibition by David Monaghan on the theme of emigration; *On Wings*: a multimedia exhibition by the Rural Training Centre, Castlebar and *Turlough Park, Christmas 2010*: a photographic exhibition by Tony Candon.

SERVICES

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

In 2014 the Department continued to provide a first-class, inclusive and accessible learning programme in the four Museums, online and in the community, despite a limited budget and staff reductions at some sites.

Approximately 125,000 visitors used our Education services at the Museum in 2014. A public programme of breadth and depth, designed for diverse audiences, was produced every quarter and featured in the Calendar of Events. A Schools' Programme was developed for the academic year for the 90,378 students and educators who participated in it. The Department devised and led training programmes for teachers. Self-directed learning resources were created to help audiences engage more deeply with our exhibitions, including 'Family Activity Resource'; videos on the Vikings and 'Viking Trail'; 'Preserving the Peace' teachers' resources. In addition, 42 Bronze Age Handling Boxes and Resource Books for loan to schools nationwide through the Education Centre network.

The Department led the development of exhibitions including *Stitches in Time* and *Samhain: Shadows, Sound and Stories* and also inputted our expertise into exhibitions including *Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin*; *Preserving the Peace* and *Recovered Voices*.

The Department continued to build relationships with local communities through Knitting Circles, Music Circles and Genealogy Groups and outreach to schools, libraries and other venues.

We engaged with new partners and built on previous partnerships with organisations including Age and Opportunity, Dublin City Council, Poetry Ireland, Mayo County Council and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals.

We attracted external funding for programming/resources, including sponsorship from the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht for *Samhain* and from the Arts Council and Dublin City Council for *Beyond Pebbledash*.

The Department advocated for the value of museum learning by speaking at the History Teachers Association of Ireland conference and developing policies with the Council for National Cultural Institutions and Encountering the Arts Ireland.

Other highlights include:

National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology:

47,486 visitors used Education services in 2014.

- *Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin*: An extensive Viking programme included drop-in activities, a seminar 'The Vikings-New Archaeological Discoveries', production of 8 Viking videos and a sell-out event 'Melodies & Myths of the Vikings and Gaels'.
- *Samhain*: A successful expansion of the project involved older people in Dublin, Mayo and Belfast exploring dying, death and loss in a series of workshops (photography in Belfast, music in Dublin and creative writing in Mayo) and culminating in a showcase performance and display of work, launched by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Heather Humphreys.
- Initiated a popular series of lunchtime talks on recent archaeological discoveries.
- 'Cultures of Stone' – a conference organised in collaboration with UCD.

National Museum of Ireland – Natural History:

29304 visitors used Education services in 2014.

With no education staff in Natural History it was not possible to put on a year-long programme. However, we piloted lunchtime talks in October which proved very popular and organised events for Culture Night and Science Week which attracted a lot of interest.

National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts and History:

27538 visitors used Education services in 2014.

Highlights included -

- *Beyond Pebbledash*: An architectural installation which went on display in Clarke Square and a public programme including a seminar, an urban party, talks, workshops and an exhibition by young people 'City Makers'. External funding from the Arts Council and Dublin City Council made this project a reality.
- *Stitches in Time*: An exhibition involving 12 contemporary garments created by fashion design students from the Limerick School of Art & Design and inspired by the *Soldiers and Chiefs* exhibition.
- 'Creative Engagement': A display of art work by 30 post primary schools from across the country was launched by Minister Damien English, T.D.
- Decade of Centenaries events: High profile events were organised to mark the outbreak of WW1 including seminars and music events.
- 'Contemporary Craft: Curating, Collecting, Critical Writing': This conference was organised in partnership with the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland and the National College of Art and Design and received high satisfaction ratings for conference speakers, organisation and venue.

National Museum of Ireland – Country Life:

20597 visitors used Education services in 2014.

Highlights included -

- 'Sandford Award for Heritage Education': This award was received in recognition of the quality and breadth of the learning programme and services.
- Our Irish Heritage and 'Irish Community Archive Network' (iCAN): User numbers of 'Our Irish Heritage' website increased. iCAN continued to expand with Galway County Council Heritage Office joining the network.
- *Preserving the Peace*: A full programme of events was developed to mark the bicentenary of the Peace Preservation Act of 1814. Accompanying resources proved very popular with primary and post primary schools.

- *Samhain*: A series of creative writing workshops involving older people was led by writer Terry McDonagh and culminated in performances of their poetry, prose and storytelling in November 2014 as part of the wider *Samhain* project.

MARKETING AND PR

The Museum welcomed over 1 million visitors for the 4th consecutive year. This was a fantastic achievement, given the limitations on the marketing budgets and staffing levels. Some of the key reasons for this achievement were the consistent public relations throughout the year, the public programming and events, exhibitions and galleries. In addition, the policy of free admission should not be underestimated given the current economic climate. Visitor breakdown by site was as follows:

Visitor Numbers	Monthly Figures			Year To Date		
	2013	2014	% Change	2013	2014	% Change
Dec. '14						
Kildare Street	19,572	22,824	17%	404,230	447,137	11%
Merrion Street	13,628	13,060	-4%	284,323	300,272	6%
Collins Barracks	14,708	15,298	4%	251,226	243,172	-3%
<i>Military History</i>	<i>5,190</i>	<i>6,105</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>103,167</i>	<i>105,078</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>Gymnasium</i>	<i>2,084</i>	<i>1,917</i>	<i>-8%</i>	<i>44,210</i>	<i>44,009</i>	<i>-1%</i>
Turlough Park	5,594	3,274	-41%	99,358	96,857	-3%
Total	53,502	54,456	2%	1,039,137	1,087,438	5%

***The cumulative total figure of 1,087,438 showed an increase of 5% on 2013.

However, there is a problem with recording of the number of visitors to the Galleries in Turlough Park. It is thus estimated that the more correct annual figure to Turlough Park was approximately 109,000 – which represents an increase of 10% on 2013. On this basis, the final total visitor figure to the 4 Museum sites for 2014 was 1,099,581 which represents a 6% increase on 2013.

NMI-Dublin Sites

The NMI-Dublin sites gained extensive PR coverage in national, regional and international print and broadcast media. It had a number of popular exhibitions, book launches and photo calls in 2014. Exhibitions included *Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin* (NMI – Archaeology, Kildare Street); *Meta Perceptual Helmets at the Dead Zoo* (NMI – Natural History, Merrion Street); *Beyond Pebble Dash* (NMI –Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks). Photo call notices included ‘Replica *Asgard* Dinghy presented to the NMI’; ‘NMI acquires forensic facial reconstruction sculpture of Irish WW1 Soldier’; ‘Volkswagen announce sponsorship with NMI’; ‘Revenue donates significant collection of postage stamps to NMI’; ‘Bog Body discovered at Rossan Bog, Co Meath’ and ‘Director welcomes over 1 Million Visitors to the National Museum of Ireland in 2014’.

Corporate events were held throughout the year and included high profile dinners for the following; IDA Ireland – Web Summit; St Patrick’s Festival Launch 2014; Self Help Africa Launch and Institute of Archaeologists’ reception. Various government departments hired facilities for training courses.

Filming Requests and photo shoots were also accommodated where possible, to include the following TV series: *Penny Dreadful* and *Clean Break* which assisted in generating additional revenue.

Culture Night attracted large crowds across our three Dublin sites. Events in the NMI - Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks were done in conjunction with The Complex, a local community group.

Extensive networking was undertaken with trade partners including Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Dublin City Council as well as the accommodation and business sectors. Tour operators and cruise liners were targeted for the Dublin sites.

The Marketing Department was actively involved in the development of all exhibitions held at the Museum sites. Extensive programmes of events were run in conjunction with exhibitions.

Work formally commenced on the establishment of a Social Media/Digital Communications Strategy for the Museum. Since this work formally commenced in August 2014, the social media engagement and interaction has increased dramatically with over 10,000 followers on Facebook and over 21,000 followers on Twitter. There has been on-going updating of the presence of the NMI on social networking sites which has proven very popular and is another way of reaching new audiences. Fáilte Ireland assisted in developing a mentoring programme for our social media initiative. The development of this is now an essential part of the strategy of the Marketing Department and should also play a role across all Museum departments.

The NMI agreed a three-year partnership contract with Volkswagen Group Ireland. This partnership includes a monetary donation as well as assistance with promotion and advertising.

NMI-Country Life

The Museum of Country Life gained extensive PR coverage in national and regional print and broadcast media. The Museum's temporary exhibitions, *Hair Hurling Balls* and *Preserving the Peace* proved to be very popular, and attracted visitors from all over the country. Extensive programmes of events were run in conjunction with both exhibitions.

The Café extension was also the location for a number of art exhibitions during the year

Corporate events were held throughout the year and included the launch of the CEDRA report by An Taoiseach; a Civic Reception for the Rhode Island Business Association; a Summer Expo on the August Bank Holiday weekend by Mayo Craftworks and book launches and corporate meetings and trainings days.

Sponsorship of €3,000 was raised for the *Preserving the Peace* exhibition.

The theme for *Culture Night* centred around the 20th anniversary of *Riverdance* and its origins in the Spirit of Mayo concert in 2003. A large crowd attended this evening of interviews, music and traditional dancing. The main sponsor was Irish TV who broadcast the evening's show on its 'County Matters' series.

Traveller Pride Week was held in the Museum in late May and was sponsored by Mayo Traveller Action Group in association with the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform.

Extensive networking was undertaken with trade partners including the accommodation sector, business sector etc. Tour operators were specifically targeted. New relationships were established with NUIG, Western Development Commission and Údarás na Gaeltachta in particular and potential projects are being explored with each of these.

Féile na Tuaithe 2014 made a hugely successful return in May 2014. Additional income streams of over €38,000 were secured, in addition to €25,000 worth of sponsorship-in-kind. The event was a huge success and attracted 22,000 people from all over the region.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Photographic Department is responsible for a wide range of photography of the collections, buildings and activities to support the Museum's strategic objectives. It also manages the Museum's Digital Photographic Image Archive and the Digital Asset Management System.

This year saw the expansion of content and further development of the Digital Asset Management System and Digital Photographic Image Archive. Training of additional relevant Museum staff in the use of the Digital Asset Management System continued throughout the year, encompassing 31 new users in 2014. Thousands of newly photographed and existing digital images were archived including c.1000 Out of Storage images, c.100 Blaschka images, c.440 Eileen Gray images and c.150 World War I related images. Additionally an Archaeology catalogue containing c.6000 unregistered images of 35mm slide collections was made available to owners of the respective collections. Among images reviewed and rationalised were c.500 Hecker Müller Archive images and c.300 Circulation Collection images in preparation for curatorial consultation.

Photography undertaken for various in-house exhibitions included *Preserving the Peace, Recovered Voices: the Stories of the Irish at War, 1914-15*, Contemporary Christmas Display and Decorations in the Furniture Gallery and *Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin*. Objects from all four divisions were photographed for *Trove* at the Irish Museum of Modern Art as well as ethnographical objects for an exhibition in Anchorage.

Images were supplied for the publication *Eileen Grey: Her Work and Her World*. Ethnographical objects were photographed for the *Irish Arts Review*. Among the other collections photographed by the Department this year were Early Bronze Age Gold Discs, Embroidery Design, Retail Products from National Museum of Ireland-Country Life, Cashel Crozier, Breac Maodhóg Shrine, Kilmainham Brooch, Rathlin Brooch, Easter Week Collections, Natural History Galleries, Collections Resource Centre as well as Education events. Images were also supplied quarterly for the Calendar of Events.

This year consisted of processing camera raw images, searching, retrieving, cleaning, optimizing and outputting in the region of 12,000 images for staff and the external market as well as dealing with several thousand photographic queries via email, telephone and interactions with colleagues in other Departments/Divisions.

The Senior Photographer was appointed to the Online Collections Advisory Group which was established by the Director in late 2014. Following the Online Collections Project Manager's

appointment in September the Department contributed to the Online Collections Project through the Online Collections Project Manager.

The Department upgraded to Mac OS X 10.7 and the latest version of Portfolio Server 11.2. The Department facilitated access for a PhD student to large format images for research. The Senior Photographer press passed the print production of images in the *Viking Graves and Grave-Goods in Ireland* publication.

The Department continued to operate with one fulltime member of staff, a Senior Photographer and two part-time contractors one for Digital Imaging Services and one for Digital Archiving Services. Although two Photographers are on a multi-party framework there was limited engagement of their services due to reduced budgets.

DESIGN

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

Together with the Education, Photography and ICT Departments, we produce an online quarterly Calendar of Events for all 4 sites.

In 2014 the Design Department designed and developed the graphics for the *Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin* exhibition. This included all exhibition graphics, poster, flyer and exterior advertising.

An exhibition on cycling in Ireland entitled *Cycling the Country* was opened in the Museum of Country Life, Castlebar. The Design Department produced all exhibition graphics, flyer, poster and information leaflets.

At the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks, design work began on a fashion retrospective on the work of the couturier Ib Jorgensen scheduled to open in 2015. All exhibition graphic panels, exhibition poster, flyer and audio visuals were designed by the Department.

The Design Department developed a series of graphics for had a Christmas Exhibition at the Museum of Country Life. Extra graphics were designed for the move of the *Hair Hurling Balls* exhibition to the GAA Museum.

A number of plans were produced for the Google indoor Maps project. These covered all 3 Dublin sites. New signage and labelling was produced across all four sites on an ongoing basis and branding signage was designed and installed for the Collections Resource Centre, Swords.

Work on the Dublin Excavations Project is ongoing and in 2014 various maps, plans and illustrations were completed to publication standard for the volume *Viking Graves and Grave-Goods in Ireland*. This has been printed late 2014 and will be launched in 2015.

As a Design Department we provide support, advice and quality control for any external design projects which, due to staffing levels we are unable to undertake ourselves. A number of transition year students were also facilitated throughout the year including two students from the Bertha von Suttner Schule, Mörfelden-Walldorf, Germany.

FACILITIES (ACCOMMODATION AND SECURITY)

The primary function of the Facilities Manager is to coordinate the buildings management and maintenance programme of the eight historic sites of the National Museum of Ireland. A secondary and equally important role is in providing front-of-house services to the one million visitors who visit the four public museum sites annually. In rolling out these functions the facilities manager is ably assisted by a staff of sixty three front-of-house personnel.

In 2014 economies delivered by proactive resource conservation delivered a saving of ten percent of the museums utility spend in the Collections Resource Centre, Swords. This ten percent saving on the previous year's usage was delivered through strategic management coupled with the cooperation of colleagues and OPW support of our corporate goals.

Another area of concern for the Facilities Department is Health and Safety. The National Museum of Ireland endeavours to meet its obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and relevant Safety regulations. These requirements are based on the key principle of what is 'reasonably practicable' as defined in the Act. The Museum Safety Statement, roles and responsibilities and implementation of the Safety Statement is based on that principle.

In 2014, the National Museum developed and introduced a Safety Management System for the organisation in order to provide a systematic method to manage the safety health and welfare of all employees and those affected by its activities, so far as is reasonably practicable. The Safety Management System consists of documented Policy, Procedures, Risk Assessments, Audits and Inspection and Reviews. The safety risk register which includes a safety database was upgraded in 2014. The Safety Statement and relevant support documents and information were made available on the Museum intranet site for consultation and information. Staff and management briefings on the system were carried during 2014 as part of the development of the Safety Management System.

Following the reduction of staff down to current ECF levels we have also had to be more creative in our use of technology. In this regard we have received excellent support with the introduction of new technology and new systems of work patterns for attendants.

ADMINISTRATION

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

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The 2014 allocations received from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht are as follows:

	€
o Pay	6,426,000
o Non Pay	4,074,000
o Capital	958,000
Total	€11,458,000

The 2014 Financial Statements show a net deficit for the year of €386k compared to a deficit of €586k for 2013.

There was a one-off provision made in the 2014 accounts in relation to holiday pay accruals for €204,395 in order to comply with the requirements of the new accounting statement FRS102.

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

The Finance Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2014 and accompanying audit file in May 2015. The C&AG audit of the 2014 Financial Statements took place in May/June 2015. The Museum's accounts in respect of the year ending 31st December 2014 were prepared in accordance with the requirements of section 35 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997, are included in this report.

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

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

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

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT UNIT AND THE HUMAN RESOURCE SHARED SERVICES UNIT

The Human Resources Shared Services Unit worked closely with the Museum's Divisional Heads on various issues. Even though there was pressure on staff members as a result of the moratorium, retirements, and redeployments, the hard work and commitment from all Museum staff, augmented by the valuable efforts of volunteers; enabled the Museum to continue to deliver a high standard of quality service to the public with little disruption.

Training

The training budget was severely restricted due to a reduced allocation.

Throughout the academic year 2013/2014, 3 members undertook approved third level courses of education in their own time and availed of the Percentage Refund of Fees Scheme in accordance with the Department of Finance guidelines.

Staff from departments across the Museum attended conferences and seminars throughout the year on various topics.

One staff member who retired in 2014 availed of the opportunity to attend a Pre-Retirement Course organised by the Retirement Planning Council.

Ethics in Public Office

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

Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Administration Support Unit coordinated 2 requests under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003. A further 4 requests received in 2014 and were dealt with under the new 2014 Freedom of Information Act.

Industrial Relations

The Museum continued to avail of the Advisory Services of the Labour Relations Commission to promote good employment relations practices in workplaces and deliver specific services in that regard including reviews of industrial relations, customised training, facilitation, mediation and advice on good industrial relations practice generally. The working group, comprising members of the Advisory Service, Management and two staff associations met 8 times in 2014. During the year, a Working Group was set up which reviewed and revised the Museum's Grievance Policy. This draft policy was presented to all staff members in a workshop format in late 2014.

Employment Control Framework (ECF)

The Museum was notified in March by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, that its Employment Control Framework (ECF) target for 2014 was increased from 133 to 136. During 2014, 5 staff members retired, 1 took a career break, 3 returned from career break and 5 left the employment of the Museum (including 2 who resigned at the end of their career breaks).

Volunteers

The Museum continued to avail of experience of volunteers during 2014. During the year volunteers carried out various assignments in most Museum departments across all sites. The Museum recognises that volunteers are a valuable asset and the Museum's Volunteer Committee ensures that best practice is being followed.

Job Bridge

JobBridge Internships which commenced in 2013 in the Marketing, Education and Registration Departments were successfully completed in 2014. Further Projects which were approved and advertised in 2013 commenced in 2014. Four of these Internships were in the Collection Resource Centre, Swords. Further projects identified in the Education Department were approved and advertised in late 2014.

Occupational Health

As part of the service level agreement with the Human Resources Shared Services Unit, the Museum availed of the services of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer for occupational health purposes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The ICT Department lost its two executive officers early in 2014, and its two remaining staff maintained operations through outsourcing the IT helpdesk, adjusting scopes of existing contracts and using three multiple operator frameworks the Department had setup in previous years through public tenders, and delaying projects such as the launch of its new website platform. Knowledge silos and loss of corporate knowledge have been an important issue but the impact of same has been mitigated through documentation and good will. The ICT Department further reduced costs during 2014 in some areas, while maximising availability of systems in adverse circumstances (an even lower ICT-staff-to-users ratio and an increase in demands).

The Department's operations of telecommunication and information systems include IT helpdesk, asset management, risk management, bandwidth optimisation, back-up and maintenance of office and gallery information, interactive and audio-visual systems, and the maintenance and coordination of the website museum.ie. Despite the extremely low internal resources, the ICT Department also participated to and led a number of projects to drive positive and strategic changes detailed below.

The ICT Department implemented a wireless solution in National Museum of Ireland - Country Life to increase its bandwidth tenfold, as a modern cabled infrastructure was not available. The team also procured a new wide area network in Dublin through a public tender process to take advantage of new telecom infrastructures and resulting in better value-for-money bandwidth from 2015. It upgraded the client operating system for its Apple-based users (Photography and Design Departments) as well as upgrading the Apple server operating system and its Digital Asset Management software. It also participated in the procurement and specification of a new booking system for the Education Department, facilitated the deployment of a new Health and Safety risk management system, and consolidated the infrastructure of the retail systems.

It led the project management of the digitisation of the historical collections, composed of 2D artefacts and archives (40,000 pages digitised). The production team was mainly composed of

contractors, registration and curatorial officers. It also led the specification and the software development of systems to integrate the two collection management systems (inventory records) and the Digital Asset Management System (photography), and to enable the future publication of its online collection. It also participated to the newly formed Online Collections Workgroup and associated information requirements.

In parallel with the launch of eight Viking Ireland videos from the Archaeology Education team and the Irish Antiquities Division, the ICT Department created and managed a number of YouTube channels. It also worked closely with the Marketing Department, covering social media platforms in the period of transition from a temporary social media marketing intern to a permanent resource following the restructuring, and participating in workshops to improve the synergies between the website and social media platforms. The ICT Department also led the Google indoor maps initiative for the three Dublin NMI sites, which went live on Google Maps in December 2014.

The ICT Department continued its transfer to a new website platform providing training to all departments to prepare for a more decentralised content management. The launch of this new platform was delayed due to resource constraints and is now expected to be launched during 2015. While preparing for the future of the NMI's website, the ICT Department also maintained and improved the current website content, working with staff from all departments. The double-digit growth observed for six years in a row in terms of number of visits continued for its website museum.ie, with high growth during 2014, most notably from US, UK, Canada and Australian visitors, continuing the geographical trends observed in 2013.

The ICT Department also participated (interactives and/or website pages) to all temporary exhibitions and associated events. It reengineered a number of interactives in existing exhibitions and upgraded the audio-visual equipment in the Audio-Visual Room in the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology.

To improve communication and collaboration internally, ICT further increased the use of the Intranet applying the template it created for projects (for both planning and monitoring) and workgroups. Externally, ICT management was part of the project team of *Inspiring Ireland*, a cross cultural institutions initiative coordinated by the Digital Repository of Ireland.

The ICT Manager was further involved in the strategy workgroup around the impact of the statement of strategy on business plans, and in the Workforce Planning group and its subcommittees (function/activities audit and skills inventory) in preparation for the restructuring of the NMI which was presented to staff during spring 2014. The ICT Department also participated in the C&AG and internal audits (capital asset management, procurement and contractual documentation, ICT controls, etc.).

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