



NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF IRELAND

REPORT 2019



museum

National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

OUR VISION

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND'S VISION IS FOR A MUSEUM OF INTERNATIONAL QUALITY AND STANDING, RIGHTLY POSITIONED AND VALUED AT THE FOREFRONT OF IRELAND'S CULTURAL LIFE, BY PRESERVING AND PRESENTING THE STORIES OF IRELAND AND ITS PLACE IN THE WORLD.

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

Diversity, inclusion, collaboration and social history were among some of the themes and approaches that dominated the work of the National Museum of Ireland in 2019.

At the start of the year, as Brexit loomed large, the National Museum of Ireland signed a Memorandum of Understanding with our counterparts at the National Museum of Wales. This Memorandum facilitates closer and more collaborative working relations, and – even after Brexit – we are committed to deepening our engagement through exhibitions, sharing of practice and collections. To mark this important relationship, which is underpinned by much shared history, we were honoured to host St David’s Day celebrations on our Kildare Street site in 2019.

Collaboration is a central theme of the National Museum of Ireland’s strategy. During a time, when Brexit could potentially put borders and barriers between Ireland and Wales, this partnership agreement shows that cultural ties can continue to flourish, regardless.

One of our most important exhibitions to launch in 2019 was *‘(A)dressing Our Hidden Truths’* – an empowering, reflective and sensitive exhibition that was developed out of the testimonies of survivors of institutions such as the Mother and Baby homes and Magdalene Laundries.

Comprising works by eminent artist, Alison Lowry, it captures the trauma – as well as everyday life – of the women who endured – and continue to endure the fallout – of this dark part of Ireland’s history. The sensitivity and utter beauty of Alison’s work makes this a world-class exhibition that will move every visitor who interacts with it. The exhibition, based at our site in Collins Barracks, is a credit not just to Alison, but to the women who engaged in its making, as well as the team at the National Museum of Ireland who brought it to fruition.

By mid-summer, the National Museum had embraced the rainbow to facilitate the Pride Mother Block Party on the grounds of Collins Barracks. Not only did this event demonstrate our commitment to diversity and inclusion, but it also highlighted how cultural spaces can – and should – facilitate cultural expression. Our spaces are not static and can be animated for social wellbeing.

To coincide with the Mother Block Party, we were delighted to launch the ‘Rainbow Trail’ – an illumination of objects from the national collection that speak to LGBTQI culture. The Museum was thrilled – and remains extremely grateful – to Panti Bliss and Minister Katherine Zappone for donating dresses to the collection: they have very moving and inspiring stories to tell, and are included in the ‘Rainbow Trail’.

Meanwhile, at the National Museum of Ireland’s site in Mayo, a key project ‘CAMP’ was launched. The project comprises a series of collaborative works created by artists working directly with Irish Traveller groups and communities. Working closely with local members of the Traveller Community, a group of artists explored cultural heritage through a range of unique art works.

In Mayo, we were also pleased to open the nostalgic and social history project focusing on women’s experience of electrification in Ireland. *‘Kitchen Power: Women’s Experiences of Rural Electrification’* was an important exhibition, involving the ICA, which focused on the importance of electrification in empowering women, and taking the some of the hardships out of domestic life. Complemented by the recorded stories of women who experienced the transformative impacts of electrification, this compelling exhibition was a backwards time travel in electrical items that have their place in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

2019 drew to a close with the launch of 'Ireland in Focus: Photographing the 1950s'. This exhibition, featuring the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson, among others, was launched by the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins.

The photographs in this exhibition provided a unique opportunity to consider how we were viewed across the world, when Ireland was still finding her place in the world as a new Republic. With images from all over the country, this exhibition connected with so many communities and families, and documented a time in Ireland that is often less represented and remembered in our national collections.

The Board of the National Museum of Ireland continued to drive improvement and enhancements across all of our responsibilities. We were pleased to present our three-year Strategic Plan (2019 – 2022); *Building Capacity, Driving Change* to the Minister for the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan T.D. in April. The Minister acknowledged that “this Strategic Plan demonstrates the NMI’s ambition to deliver a contemporary museum experience that connects with diverse audiences across Ireland and builds opportunities for collaborative programming on all its four sites.”

In addition, the Board continued to make systematic improvements across corporate governance and we continued to drive our work under the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI), which resulted in the development and updating of key policies governing the care of our collections.

As Chair of the Board of the National Museum of Ireland, I am grateful for all of the work that my fellow Board members deliver, especially those who drive the work of our sub-committees. I am

also deeply indebted to the work and commitment of the leadership team, staff and volunteers at the National Museum of Ireland. Each time I enter the National Museum of Ireland – at any of our four sites – I feel honoured and privileged to be associated with this important cultural institution that is driven by commitment, passion and care from our collective team.



Catherine Heaney,
Chair

INTRODUCTION BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

2019 was an exceptionally busy year at the NMI, while welcoming over 1 million visitors across our four Museum sites, it was also the first year of our new strategic plan - *Building Capacity, Driving Change 2019 – 2022* and saw the initiation of a number of strategic projects across the organisation. Launched by the Minister for the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan T.D. in April 2019, *Building Capacity, Driving Change 2019 – 2022* set out a four-year direction for the NMI across three key pillars of capacity, collections and engagement.

Under the pillar of Capacity, the NMI delivered projects that focused on the development of the NMI workforce plan through Project Engage. This was a Museum wide consultation process that reviewed systems and processes, roles and responsibilities and team capacities to enable the NMI to set a course for future staffing resources as well as training and organisational structures within the NMI. The first report of Project Engage was delivered in 2019 and established a steering group responsible for the implementations of the key objectives over the coming months.

The NMI is privileged to operate in a number of historic sites. While this built heritage adds significantly to the overall visitor experience, many of our sites require significant levels of refurbishment and redevelopment. The allocation of €5 million to the NMI through Project 2040 for the redevelopment of our Natural History and Archaeology museums is vital, not only for the collection but also to ensure that we fulfil our public sector duty and support the social, cultural and economic development of Ireland. A significant step on this journey was completed in 2019, with the submission of the Preliminary Business plan for the NMI – Natural History project to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This submission will enable the initial drawdown

of funds in 2020 to initiate the decant process of the upper galleries of NMI – Natural History as we prepare for future major works on the roof and building structures.

Alongside the capital development of our buildings, NMI initiated key infrastructural works to enable the availability of WiFi across all our sites and a review of records management processes within the institution to ensure a cohesive and user friendly programme and process for the future.

Under the pillar of Collections, a significant body of work was undertaken in reviewing, updating and producing new policies for the NMI. This is important work that underpins the NMI's engagement with the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI). Additional projects initiated in 2019 include the development of required infrastructure to enable cohesion across the NMI's collections databases. This will be a critical enabler of the future digitisation of the NMI's collection. In addition, new processes and procedures around exhibition development and planning for the initiation of the second phase of the collection inventory project were key activities in 2019.

A programme of excellent exhibitions was delivered in 2019 including *Marching on the Road to Freedom: Dáil Éireann 1919*, which opened in January and marked the centenary of the first Dáil; *Alison Lowry: (A)dressing our Hidden Truths. An artistic response to the legacy of mother and baby homes and Magdalene laundries*, an exhibition by contemporary glass artist Alison Lowry, which opened in March; and *Ireland in Focus: Photographing the 1950s*, an exhibition curated by Dr. Fidelma Mullane in collaboration with the NMI, which opened in November. The exhibition highlighted the way in which three photographers, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Dorothea Lange and Robert Cresswell,

saw and portrayed Ireland through the places they visited and the people they photographed. *Rainbow Revolution*, a pop-up exhibition and trail was launched to mark Pride 2019, and it included a number of important recent acquisitions from the Contemporary Ireland collections. In July, the Australian Government lent the NMI the Victoria Cross of Tipperary born Martin O'Meara, which went on display in *Soldiers and Chiefs*. We also launched *Kitchen Power: women's experience of rural electrification* at NMI – Country Life. These exhibitions, combined with a full and engaging education and learning programme, brought new communities of visitors to the National Museum in 2019 ensuring that wider communities in Ireland saw their own identity reflected in their national collection. Particular highlights of these programmes are outlined in the annual report under the Collections and Learning sections.

Under the pillar of Engagement, the Museum further developed its project plans for the *20th Century History of Ireland Galleries* as well as developing methods to underscore and strengthen cross-departmental collaboration on visitor experience and exhibition programmes. Progress on the development of a new website for the NMI continued with an expected delivery in 2020. This will enable greater online engagement with our audiences and provide a new platform for greater depth on demand. 2019 also saw significant strides in our commercial development particularly in the areas of retail and large-scale events with the NMI hosting the *Mother Pride Block Party* event in June 2019 and RTE's *Culture Night Concert* in September 2019.

In addition, to the initiation of the key projects above and other new initiatives, our wider team delivered on an ever increasing scope of work in the day to day business of the Museum. Whether fieldwork, acquisitions, registering of objects,

preventative conservation, loans and exhibitions, security and facilitating our visitors, all of our departments had a busy 2019. The following report gives some insight into the breadth and scope of work carried out over the last twelve months; none of which would have been possible without the commitment of the NMI team. I would like to thank all of the staff and our Board members for their contribution in 2019 and look forward to building on these successes into 2020.



Lynn Scarff
Director

COLLECTIONS AND LEARNING



ART AND INDUSTRY

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

Exhibitions:

Staff curated and worked on a number of temporary exhibitions which opened during the year, beginning with *Marching on the Road to Freedom: Dáil Éireann 1919*, which opened in January and marked the centenary of the first Dáil; *Alison Lowry: (A)dressing our Hidden Truths. An artistic response to the legacy of mother and baby homes and Magdalene laundries*, an exhibition by contemporary glass artist Alison Lowry, which opened in March; and *Ireland in Focus: Photographing the 1950s*, an exhibition curated by Dr. Fidelma Mullane in collaboration with the NMI, which opened in November. The exhibition highlighted the way in which three photographers, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Dorothea

Lange and Robert Cresswell, saw and portrayed Ireland through the places they visited and the people they photographed. *Rainbow Revolution*, a pop-up exhibition and trail was launched to mark Pride 2019, and it included a number of important recent acquisitions from the Contemporary Ireland collections. In July in a world first, the Australian Government lent the NMI the Victoria Cross of Tipperary born Martin O'Meara, which went on display in *Soldiers and Chiefs*, only the second time that the medal has ever been in Ireland. In December a small display of recently acquired silver pieces was mounted in the foyer, including the 1685 dressing table set by John Segar of Dublin which was acquired in 2018. The exhibition, *Niamh Barry Light on Earth*, which opened in late 2018 continued throughout 2019 and in November the living history performance project, *Beyond These Rooms*, a collaboration between Anu and Coiscéim, premiered in National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History.

Alison Lowry: (A)dressing our Hidden Truths. An artistic response to the legacy of mother and baby homes and Magdalene laundries, an exhibition by contemporary glass artist Alison Lowry

Collections and Loans

All staff were involved in the movement of reserve collections in the East Block and North Block stores, a preventative measure following a series of leaks in July and August. Staff also oversaw the ongoing LED gallery lighting project, an initiative of the OPW, and a number of galleries were completed during the year, including the Franciscan Silver gallery, the north block ground floor temporary exhibition space, the Ib Jorgensen gallery and parts of Soldiers and Chiefs. Staff assisted and worked with representatives of the Apollo Foundation to assess the keyboard instruments collection, a project which produced a wealth of new research. Staff were also involved in de-installing and packing furniture which had been on long-term loan to Avondale House in Co. Wicklow. Assistance with suitable imagery and information from the corresponding AdLib records was provided to the former Keeper

of the division, Michael Kenny, for his 2019 publication, *Raising the Banners of War: The flags of 1916 and their historical significance*.

Outward loans completed during included the Carrick-on-Suir gold coin hoard which went on display in Tipperary County Museum, a Ferdinand Weber spinet displayed in Dublin Castle, and Irish Volunteer material which was lent to the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. The Lord Chancellor's Mace was brought to the Department of Taoiseach to mark the 100th anniversary of the first Dáil. The inward loan of Martin O'Meara's Victoria Cross from the Australian Government followed an event at the Australian Embassy in Dublin and the Australian Ambassador attended the launch of its display in the museum on the 26th July along with some of O'Meara's descendants.



Panti Bliss's 'Noble Call' dress and the dresses worn by Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan at their 2016 wedding



Acquisitions

A number of significant purchases were made during the year, including a 1922 Cork silver cream jug by William Egan; the 1718 'Kirwan' chalice along with the paten, missal and altar stone with which it was used, a rare survival of associated objects; and a collection of furniture designed and made in 1971 by Arthur Edwards, for Cranach Furniture in Navan. Through the NMI/DCCoI Joint Purchase Fund, a Donegal hand-woven tweed coat by Natalie B. Coleman, and knitwear by Colin Burke and Ros Duke, all of which featured in Perry Ogden's fashion film "Fi" were acquired; as well as "A dressed up life", a collection of six metal vessels by Cecilia Moore.

Donations to the collections included the dresses worn by Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan at their 2016 wedding, garments which help to illustrate the fight for equal marriage rights in Ireland; Panti Bliss's "Noble Call" dress given by Rory O'Neill; a collection of material from the "Border Communities against Brexit" protest; and a collection of objects relating to the pharmacy chain, Hayes Conyngham & Robinson. Milliner Margaret O'Connor presented the "Repeal" hat she designed for a "Fashion in Repealing" event held in May 2018. Other donations included a scrapbook of magazine cuttings relating to the designer Donald Davies; a collection of photographs relating to Marjorie Boland's Dublin wedding dress business (1930s to 1980s). An anonymous donation of six pieces of Irish silver, including a rare 18th century chocolate pot and the two handled "Lawder" cup, was made through Section 1003; and a commemorative silver dish ring presented to master silversmith Tony Marshall in 1983 was given by his family in his memory. The Bridge family in Canada presented two mid-18th century silk gowns worn in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, by an ancestor; and the Galligan family presented a wooden baton used by Peter Paul

Galligan during the Asgard gun running in 1914. A selection of material relating to different aspects of WWI and WWII, the revolver of Frank Shouldice, and an RPG-7 grenade from the Troubles era were also amongst the donations.

Research, Collaboration and Outreach:

Staff participated in a variety of cross-departmental committees and work continued on the Museum Standards (MSPI) accreditation process. Curators delivered gallery talks, tours and lectures to a wide range of audiences and presented papers and talks in various conferences and seminars, including the *Material Culture of Health Activism* workshop held in the Science Museum, London; and *Beyond Storytelling – Museums and the Representation of History Workshop* held in the Royal Society of Antiquaries. Staff collaborated with Education to organise and participate in conferences hosted by the Museum; the half-day seminar held in January to mark the centenary of the First Dáil in 1919; the *Women in Design* Conference held in May; and, *After the War – Peace, Conflict and Trauma* Conference, held in November.

Staff facilitated researchers with access to the reserve collections, for individuals and special interest groups. Scoil na Clarsach (Irish Harp Society) and the American Harp Society were given behind the scenes tours of the harp collection, and the Guild of Irish Lace Makers made several visits during the year looking at a different type of lace from the reserve collection on each occasion. Student interns were facilitated during the year as well as a number of transition year students. Curatorial staff also gave interviews and provided information to media across all aspects of the division's collections and exhibitions. A wide variety of queries from the general public were dealt with, as well as research queries from students of all levels.

"A dressed up life", six metal vessels by Cecilia Moore, purchased under the NMI/DCCoI Joint Purchase Fund (image courtesy of Cecilia Moore and Damien Maddocks)

IRISH ANTIQUITIES

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

Licensing

The Division carried out duties relating to the NMI's statutory functions under the National Monuments Acts. A total of 1205 various licence applications were processed as follows and site inspections were carried out in relation to a number of these archaeological works:

Licence to excavate/monitor/detect/dive	724
Ministerial Consents and Directions	71
Licence to alter an archaeological object	266
Licence to export an archaeological object	174

Irish Antiquities staff attended regular liaison meetings with the National Monuments Service (NMS) and carried out a number of joint inspections. Staff liaised with consultant archaeological companies across the country in relation to the care and deposition of excavated collections at the CRC, Swords.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork relating to archaeological discoveries was undertaken in 20 counties; Carlow, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow.

Acquisitions

In 2019, 168 artefacts from 23 counties were registered. This includes a range of objects including ancient human remains, lithics, ceramics, metals and organic objects such as bog butter. A late Bronze Age socketed axehead found during unlicensed metal detecting near Adare, Co. Limerick; IAD staff worked with An Garda Síochána to recover this and other significant objects and

worked on a media campaign in relation to the legislation on the recovery of archaeological objects through metal detecting. A significant collection of excavated material was received from Cork Public Museum stores and resulted in a large number of acquisitions to the excavations database. In September, the IAD accepted a donation of an early medieval handbell from Knockatemple, Co. Wicklow from the Archdiocese of Dublin, represented by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin.

Legal Matters

Due to the nature of the Museum's statutory functions under the National Monuments Act, regular liaison with NMS took place. Staff also liaised with the Cultural Institutions Unit of the Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to export licences and with Receivers of Wreck. Unlicensed metal detecting continues to be a cause of concern and IAD staff liaised frequently with An Garda Síochána and NMS on this subject throughout the year.

Exhibitions and Loans

Both national and international loans form a significant part of the Division's exhibition work each year. Together with colleagues across the Museum, IAD staff continued to monitor, upgrade and improve exhibitions and stores in Kildare Street and at other locations; staff worked with OPW and dealt with many issues around the Museum environment. Significant ongoing maintenance work is required to ensure the protection of the collections on display and in store. The Dowris Hoard was removed from exhibition for cataloguing and photography.

In November IAD launched a permanent exhibition of the Finglas burial, a rare richly-furnished female Viking grave. As part of the launch, local community representatives from Finglas and representatives from the Royal Norwegian Embassy attended a lecture and reception.

As part of IAD's remit to work with local and regional museums in Ireland, staff liaised and consulted with museum colleagues and engaged in discussions with museums all over Ireland.



In October, a loan featuring high-profile objects from the NMI's medieval collections was installed by IAD staff at Galway City Museum for the exhibition *Keepers of the Gael*. In November, the Tullydonnell gold hoard went on display to Donegal County Museum. An early Bronze Age lunula was loaned to the Irish Museum of Modern Art as part of an exhibition entitled *Desire* which opened in September. Staff facilitated the decant and re-installation of a large loan of artefacts to Dublinia. Staff inspected loans of IAD objects at Designated Museums in counties Cavan, Kerry, and Monaghan. Staff also inspected loans at Fermanagh County Museum, Músaem Chorca Dhuibhne, Ballyferriter, and the Lismore Heritage Centre, Co. Waterford. In September, in advance of gallery upgrades, staff de-installed the entire NMI loan exhibition at Reginald's Tower, Waterford. Staff facilitated the

installation of an additional loan to the Medieval Mile Museum, Kilkenny and commenced object selection for a loan in 2020 to Galway City Museum as part of the City of Culture programme for 2020. Staff worked on the selection of material for exhibition at Brú na Bóinne in Meath.

A number of significant international loans were also completed; in October a major loan of Viking-age material went on display at the Fries Museum, Netherlands. Ethnographical collections loaned to the Oceania exhibition in 2018 travelled from the Royal Academy, London in March to the Musée du Quai Branly- Jacques Chirac, Paris until July 2019. IAD collections on loan to the Royal Armoury in Leeds and to the Captain Cook Museum, Whitby were also inspected.

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The Dowris Hoard

Research, collaboration and outreach

IAD actively encourages and supports researchers to use the divisional archive and collections and this work forms a major part of the divisional work each year. IAD staff facilitated 116 researcher visits to the reserve collection and 160 research visits to the curatorial files. In 2019, 16 Transition Year placements and two third-level Archaeology student interns, including students from the UCC MA in Museum Studies, were accommodated.

Staff were involved in a number of projects including the Bog Bodies Research Project and staff facilitated and worked on a number of different research projects including a multi-disciplinary study on bog butter and on organic residue analysis on Bronze Age ceramics. Staff continued to facilitate research on the ethnographical collections for the forthcoming NMI publication. Samples of recently-acquired human remains, wood and bog butter were submitted for radiocarbon dating.

Staff represented the NMI on the following external bodies: Discovery Programme; Royal Irish Academy Standing Committee for Archaeology; Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Committee; Designated Museums Liaison Group; Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's Climate Change Advisory Group; Heritage Ireland 2030 workshops. Staff liaised with the State services and An Garda Síochána on a range of issues concerning protection of portable heritage. Internally, staff represented the Division on a range of policy committees as part of the NMI's entry to the MSPI. Staff attended many training courses and worked

on Health and Safety committee, participated many NMI projects including Project Engage and the Records Management Project.

Public Engagement

Staff delivered public lectures, specialist tours and talks to a wide variety of local, national and international audiences on archaeological and museological topics both within the Museum and across the country. Staff participated in a number of television and radio programmes and lectured to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in UCC, UCD and NUI Galway.

Staff represented IAD at the following conferences and public events:

Annual Conference of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland in Cork; Keynote speech at the Rathcroghan Annual Conference; papers presented at: the Bog Body Research Network at the British Museum; Glendalough Heritage Forum; International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA) 2019 conference; Midland Science Festival; Represented NMI at Clay Pipes Conference, Drogheda; FOODCULT Seminar, TCD; Proteomics in Archaeology seminar UCD; Three separate lectures were delivered by staff as part of the Donegal County Museum lecture series; Staff delivered four separate public talks as part of the NMI's education and outreach department's Culture Club programme. Staff also represented NMI at the National Ploughing Championships in Co. Carlow.



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Garraunboy, Adare,
axehead being presented
to NMI, © Julien Behal
Photography

IRISH FOLKLIFE

NMI's Irish Folklife Division manages the national collection of objects reflective of Irish traditional life, understanding that traditions change and evolve. The Division continues to work with communities and explore themes for contemporary collecting. The Division is based at NMI – Country Life, Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

In January, Clodagh Doyle, Assistant Keeper, returned to work after bereavement absence in 2018. Tony Candon was Keeper Manager of the Irish Folklife Division since 2007 and this position became vacant when he retired in June. This vacancy remained unfilled for the rest of the year. The site management was partially undertaken by the Head of Conservation, Dr Karena Morten whereas the Division reported to the Head of Collections and Learning, Dr Audrey Whitty.

Exhibitions

The NMI – Country Life continued its partnership with Kingston University, London on a research project focusing on women and rural electrification in Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s. *Kitchen Power: women's experience of rural electrification* Was officially launched by former President of Ireland Mary Robinson. Dr Sorcha O'Brien, the external researcher/curator worked with the Noel Campbell, Assistant Keeper, Irish Folklife Division, developing the exhibition and the full programme of public events.

Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson at formally launched *Kitchen Power: women's experience of rural electrification*



The Enemy Within: the Spanish Flu in Ireland 1918-1919 exhibition marked the centenary of the massive impact the Spanish Flu had on Irish society with This temporary exhibition in the NMI – Country life explored the folk medicines and cures used by people to combat the devastating illness. The exhibition is based on the collection within the National Museum of Ireland.

Travellers' Journey / Mincéir Misli'd was a temporary exhibition exploring the rich culture, traditions and crafts of the Traveller community curated by Rosa Meehan in partnership with the Western Regional Traveller Health Network. The exhibition was launched by President Michael D. Higgins in 2018 and continued until May 2019.

On Sight - MMRAM Pavillion/Mother's Lament is an annual installation of artworks in and around the grounds of Turlough Park. In 2019 the project was undertaken by Niamh McCann, whose installation reflects and provokes questions about tradition and craft influencing the relationship between past and present.

In June 2019 '*Rainbow Revolution*' as a complement to a larger exhibition in Collins Barracks, Rosa Meehan oversaw the installation and event '*Rainbow Revolution*' LGBTI+ Oral History Project – element at the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life.

In addition to the exhibitions that take place in the Museum Galleries, the NMI – Country Life facilitates exhibitions by others in the Courtyard Gallery. These exhibitions relate to the overall theme of the NMI – Country Life.

Acquisitions

This cluster of three reclining Pods, was purchased during the year from basket-maker, Joe Hogan. Made using willow rods, wood and stones they were created in 2018 for the Portfolio exhibition by the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland.

28 new acquisitions were made during the year and 273 individual objects were retrospectively registered as part of the amnesty project backlog.

Other additions to the Irish Folklife Collection;

- Two chairs from Co. Antrim and are of the straight backed three legged type.
- Land league banner from Clontuskert, East Galway.
- Donkey collar and donkey straddle.
- Castle Brand Nenagh were famous for their aluminium cookware but they also made toys near Christmas. A doll's pram of metal associated with Shillelagh, Co. Wicklow.
- An Aran Cardigan knitted in the 1970's on Clare Island.
- 150 objects were accessioned from Graignamanagh, Co. Kilkenny associated with Drapery and Footwear.
- A selection of Irish dancing dresses.
- Also donated were a seamstress accounts book (1920s), a P.O. Savings' books and a wicker egg basket.
- Donation of 35mm slides to the Division by retired Irish Folklife Curator John O' Sullivan. These related to his time at work and on fieldwork and these have been scanned now.

Collaboration and Outreach

Staff participated in the delivery of talks and other educational activities in the galleries, outreach to community and local history groups and conferences. Staff participated in the development of the Museum's Programming, particularly programming associated with temporary exhibitions.

Research and Engagement

Rosa Meehan organised *I am Traveller: Our Histories and Heritage* conference as a continuation of the work of the Travellers' Journey exhibition project bringing visibility to Traveller culture. Senator Collette Kelleher, chaired the event with panellists, Brigid Carmody, Hugh Friel, Michael McDonagh, Mary Collins and Oein DeBhairduin sharing their insights on traditional and contemporary Traveller culture and community initiatives. An article related to this event was featured in the Traveller's Voice magazine.

Staff visited the National Folklore Collection Archive in UCD in order to enhance the Divisional knowledge of the inter-connectedness of both collections.

St Fagan's, Cardiff, Wales.

In November 2019, the Irish Folklife Division, visited St. Fagan's, the National Museum of Wales.



Reclining Pods,
purchased from Basket-
maker, Joe Hogan

Staff collaborated with Sligo Folk Park, the Polish Embassy, the Mag Uibhir family in the creation of a panel based exhibition on the life and works of folklore collector and writer, Séamus Mag Uidhir from Doohoma, Erris, Mayo (1902-1969) and the Addergoole Titanic Society.

Research commenced on the forthcoming exhibition on traditional boats of the west coast of Ireland.

Research commenced on the Tuam/Sligo chair exhibition which is planned for 2021 and an Advisory Group on Exhibitions was established. Research and information was provided for ICOMOS Ireland for an article 'Other Stories: Cultural Heritage and Society on the Migrant Women: Shared Experiences exhibition'.

Staff attended and contributed to the theatrical performance/installation *Arán & Im* by Manchán Magan exploring the Irish traditions of bread and butter and Noel Campbell completed a Galway hooker sailing course at the Claddagh, Galway.

Queries

Staff dealt with numerous queries about the collections and Folklife from members of the public, students, academics, and other institutions during the year. An analysis of the queries received via the Folklife Duty Officer illustrates aspects of the geographical spread of these queries. Aran Knitting always features strongly in information requests as does material related to customs and festivals.

NATURAL HISTORY

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

The National Museum of Ireland – Natural History continues to be very popular with the public, with over 388,000 visits in 2019. This represents the most successful year on record and a steady increase over the previous decade, which has seen annual attendances double over that period.

The National Museum of Ireland worked with the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht and the Office of Public Works to prepare a Strategic Assessment under the Public Spending Code. This was approved by the Minister and paves the way for more detailed work towards the full restoration of this 1856 building. OPW works to restore the roof will be the first stage, and it is then hoped that this will be followed by the full restoration plan for the building as allowed for under Project Ireland 2040. Leaks in the roof continued to keep maintenance staff busy, and OPW carried out effective repairs that have helped greatly.

Exhibitions

While there is no space for temporary exhibitions in the National Museum of Ireland – Natural History, *Jurassic Skies, When dinosaurs took to the air* continued its run at the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History site up to September. This featured research into the first birds by our partners at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, while showcasing our own fossil flying reptiles. A model of the early bird Archaeopteryx was commissioned for the exhibition.

A new installation was erected in the ground floor of the museum. The Wonder Cabinet acts as an interactive exhibit, but also houses support facilities to allow education staff to hold talks, workshops, and handling sessions for the public. A small exhibition and activities were organised for International Year of the Salmon.

The support of volunteers greatly assisted in the range of projects that could be accommodated and made a significant contribution to the relocation of the geological collections in particular. They also played a key role in managing the archives of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland, which ceased trading. Staff managed the development of a legacy website to ensure that twenty-one years of research and publication went online to new audiences.

Donations and Acquisitions

Artist Shevaun Doherty gifted an original painting of a bumblebee, which was the image used to promote the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. She researched her detailed portraits of animals with the assistance of staff and using specimens from the collections to get the fine detail familiar to the public from her postage stamps. Four other artists also visited the collections for an Arts Council-funded project (*An Urgent Enquiry*) examining different aspects of biodiversity through art. An American bird was blown across the Atlantic during a storm and this Least Bittern found in Co. Kerry was acquired for the collections. Several specimens of insects not previously known from Ireland were gifted to the museum by researchers, and a new beetle species was added to the Irish list based on previously over-looked museum specimens. Several new type specimens were also identified within the entomology collection by taxonomic specialists, including a Mediterranean butterfly species originally described by W. F. Kirby – the Museum's first entomology curator. A large snake found in the Wicklow Mountains was acquired for the collections.

A number of purchases included meteorites, minerals and a hyena coprolite. Two wide-ranging collections of gems and gemmological equipment were gifted to the museum. A significant collection of giant deer specimens was acquired by transfer from Cork Public Museum.

Research and Collaborations

In addition to their scientific publications, the three scientific staff contributed to the production and management of the journals *Geoheritage*, *The Geological Curator*, *Irish Journal of Earth Sciences*, *Irish Naturalists' Journal* and *Journal of Natural Science Collections*. The website of the Irish Naturalists' Journal, and the library of the Speleological Union of Ireland were also managed by staff.

Staff gave a number of public talks, led scientific training workshops, and appeared on a variety of radio programmes, even performing at Electric Picnic. Tours were arranged for third level colleges and special interest groups, staff also assisted with organisations including the Geological Curators' Group, Natural Sciences Collections Association, Merrion Square Network, National Biodiversity Data Centre and Geological Survey Ireland's Heritage and Planning Programme. They also played a role in the major international conference on the ice age, which saw 2,500 delegates come to Dublin for INQUA 2019. The museum also hosted filming by the BBC Natural History Unit for a TV series *Secrets of Skin*, with our curator as scientific advisor.

A new curator of entomology commenced in February, bringing the Natural History Division up to a staff four. Behind the scenes, the extensive collections of scientific publications were rehoused at the Collections Resource Centre. The steady move of collections from other buildings continued to the centralised facility in Swords.

CONSERVATION

The Conservation Department is responsible for the preventative, remedial and investigative care needs of the NMI's Collection.

Preventive Conservation

Routine monitoring and maintenance of the Museum environment and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) was re-invigorated in 2019. A series of site surveys and reports were undertaken to identify key Preventive Conservation issues and a 'plan of action' created for all museum sites. Defects in the MEACO system were identified (this records temperature and relative humidity values) and an assessment survey of the system configuration was undertaken. Conservation also addressed environmental control issues (building maintenance system) in exhibition galleries and adjustments were implemented for established and for new exhibitions.

Inspections of objects on display or in store, recent acquisitions, incoming collections or collections being moved between different areas of the same site were made routinely and objects suspected of infestation were quarantined or treated by freezing as appropriate. Requests for object freezing from outside agencies were also accommodated. Collections upgrade and housekeeping continued and collections were upgraded and packed in preparation for transfer. Maintenance of collections from special environments such as marine archaeological objects and condition checks on human remains were made regularly.

The oversight of equipment services and maintenance, repair and replacement parts was ongoing. There were a number of incidences of flood damage to the buildings and collections throughout 2019. Conservation were involved in emergency responses following roof or drain leaks which caused water damage. This damage necessitated subsequent conservation of a number of objects and archives. These water-related issues involved ongoing recovery and acclimatisation process for buildings affected by floods.

Remedial Conservation

This was undertaken on objects for exhibition and loans, improved storage, publication and research as well as first aid measures for freshly excavated material. Further treatments were undertaken on objects from the ethnographic collections for publication-photography and for improved storage. This included conservation treatment of a large chest and 11 oarsmen from a canoe. The latter object was packed and returned to store after photography in a bespoke storage crate – ensuring a secure, stable and protective enclosure.



.....
Ethnographic model canoe with 11 figures – fully assembled in bespoke storage crate and with front panel fitted

Conservation for exhibitions and loans dominated including preparing collections for *Kitchen Power: women's experience of rural electrification* exhibition in NMI – Country Life. Conservation of Irish Antiquities collections continued, examples included the completion of the Finglas Viking Brooch replica; the Knockatemple Bell was

conserved and reconstructed for the *Glendalough* exhibition in 2020; treatment and reconstruction of a Human skull for St Mary's Church (Medieval Mile Museum), Kilkenny was undertaken. A wooden bowl and a ceramic Jug were conserved for the *Dublinia* loan and a wooden Bronze Age small table, harp peg, wooden platter, mether and wooden terminal for the *Gaelic Ireland* loan to Galway city Museum. A silver toilet set was cleaned prior to photography and later exhibition in CB; a Ferdinand Weber Spinet was conserved for loan to Dublin Castle loan as was furniture for a potential loan to Newman House furniture and a preliminary assessment and conservation treatment of a Hicks Cabinet was undertaken.

Conservation of an Eileen Gray painted block screen was completed in preparation for loan in 2020. A lacquered cane from the *What's in Store* exhibition required remedial conservation and several objects including two medallions and a badge were conserved for the Museum of American Revolution, Philadelphia. Conservation for the *Irish Wars* exhibition, included treatment of manacles, a set of De Valera keys medals, Ribby of Dublin pistols, revolvers and rifles an IRA sniper shield; medal dies, a Kevin Barry commemorative plaque; Michael Collins portable shrine and rosary; 1917 maxim machine gun; the rosary beads of Rory O'Connor; a Hamman Hotel bowl. Additionally, paper, textile, and ceramic objects for this exhibition were treated by conservators external to the NMI.

Conservation on the Lough Kinale Shrine and on WOAM (waterlogged organic archaeological material) continued as well as some work on small finds from Faddenmore; a number of bog butters and their containers and collections of PEG (Polyethylene Glycol) pre-treated objects were progressed through freeze-drying. Conservation of MAM – (Marine Archaeological Material) focused exclusively on the continued removal of concretions and desalination of the wheel from the *La Juliana*, Armada wreck of 1588. A significant collection of stone axes with wooden handle, recovered by

the Underwater Archaeology unit (UWU) of the National Monuments Service (NMS) are now housed in Conservation.

Projects

Staff facilitated and supported the work of curators and other collections staff and were active participants in the planning and scoping of the 2020 Natural History decant project. Conservation collaborated with curatorial divisions during the development and implementation of the LED lighting project.

Staff were involved in completing and approving facilities reports for incoming and outgoing loans, and undertook site visits of potential loan venues. Staff undertook condition reports, packing, ensured collection care in the transfer and handling of collections, collaborated closely with mount makers; acted as couriers for loans, and were directly involved in the installation and de-installation of exhibitions and loans.

Some of these loans included the Lord Chancellor's Mace, loaned to the Mansion House and a spinet to Dublin Castle. Objects on loan to the *Countess Markievicz* exhibition were de-installed and returned to the NMI. A hoard of 81 gold coins from Carrick-on-Suir was loaned and couriered to Tipperary County Museum. Archaeological material was loaned widely including the *Tullydonnel Hoard* which went on loan to Donegal County Museum. A gold lunala was loaned to IMMA. A substantial and long-term loan to Avondale House was prepared and packed for return to the NMI.

Internationally, a loan was returned to the Royal Collections, a loan in Captain Cook's Museum, Whitby was reviewed and re-installed. Ethnographic material on loan to the *Oceania* exhibition was returned from Paris. Large loans were prepared for the Museum of American Revolution, Philadelphia, a loan of Viking Material was couriered and installed in Friesland. Considerable conservation works was undertaken in 2019 in preparation for a loan to the

Bard Centre, New York in Feb 2020. Conservation engaged the expertise of Dr Brenda Keneghan, Plastics Conservation Scientist in the V&A to undertake a condition assessment and to determine the suitability for this loan of a very large and vulnerable Celluloid screen by Eileen Gray.



Patrick Boyle, Furniture Conservator, NMI and Dr Brenda Keneghan – Plastics Conservation Scientist, V&A Museum

Fieldwork mainly concerned the inspection or recovery of archaeological material. Numerous nationwide site inspections were undertaken and assessments of Archaeological collections intended for deposition in the NMI stores were made.

Conservation also carried out condition assessments of material being considered for acquisition most notably in 2019 was a large collection of material from HCR Pharmacy.

Examination and scientific analysis of the collections continued. Routine xrf of new and potential acquisitions was undertaken. XRF surveys and research of artefacts was undertaken including

artefacts from Drumanagh, Drumasheer and Dowris, medieval cheek pieces and various artefacts for Irish Antiquities including the Prosperous crozier prior to exhibition in the Viking Gallery. The Department facilitated and supported, through x-radiography analysis the Irish archaeological and conservation sectors. Conservation also undertook or facilitated sampling of artefacts, leather or bog butter for analysis, C14 dating; and wood species ID and facilitated examination and sampling of human remains.

Research and Engagement

Conservation arranged a tour of the State Laboratories to assess scientific instrumentation with potential for NMI conservation research projects & to discuss analytical techniques and their application to Cultural Heritage projects. Conservation strengthened its partnership with the Conservation Research team from Cardiff University.

Professional Development

2019 saw the continued delivery of a module on 'Museum Environment' to the UCC Masters in Museum Studies and a module on 'Deterioration and Conservation of Archaeological and Museum Objects' to the BSc. in Archaeological Sciences, Sligo IT. Staff presented a wide range of lectures, public talks and specialist tours including a lecture on Irish Book shrines at a multidisciplinary symposium on 'Relics in Medieval Ireland'; on the Lough Kinale shrine and early medieval metalwork to TCD Art History students; on rhino horns replicas for the NatSCA conference; an Introduction to Preventive Conservation and on the Finglas Brooch Replica in Kildare Street In addition, Conservation delivered quarterly public tours & a Heritage Week tour of the department and hosted specialised tours. Conservation, together with IAD hosted a seminar on the Lough Corrib project.

Staff attended a wide variety of professional and other training events including *Hazards in Collections*, (International Academic Projects) event arranged by the CNCI Conservation Working Group. A museum wide workshop on *Business Resilience, Continuity & Disaster Preparedness* took place and conservation staff worked together with the Care of Collections and Conservation Policy Working Group to draft a suite of policies.

REGISTRATION

The NMI Registration department focus on maintaining standards of collections management to ensure the integrity of collections information by prioritising location control, collection logistics, loans, exhibition support, store management, providing access to information for researchers, behind-the-scenes tours, object and archive digitisation, preparing priority collections to catalogue level and systematically tidying of data in the various collections management databases.

Phase 1 of a Records Management System Implementation Project was successfully completed in 2019. This was the culmination of three years planning. A records management system is required to ensure consistent and efficient records management by all NMI staff to end the production of a records management backlog. This survey resulted in a set of recommendations presented to NMI staff and management for implementation.

The Archivist continued providing a service for staff and researchers, processing 89 queries. Work continued preparing the Directors Archive for cataloguing. The former Directors Archive room, Collins Barracks was fire-proofed by the OPW and converted into a Records Centre. The Directors Archive and 100 crates of non-current Block 18 records transferred to the CRC, Swords. Contract Archivists catalogued the Easter Week Acquisition Files and Natural History Archive. The Turlough Park Archive upgrade was completed and the collection transferred to this new space. Scanning of NMI's original letter files continued with 14,750 preservation-quality digital images created.

The Librarian continued to provide a service for NMI staff at all NMI sites including book orders, processing 78 invoices, 53 Inter library loans, processing 165 research queries, renewing 490 subscriptions/memberships, re-shelving books and cataloguing backlogs. The Librarian and Registrar continued planning the Rare Books Project, to commence when funding is available.



Phase 1 of the records management project took place to reduce the creation of future archive and records backlogs



Tours-by-appointment and research visits continued at the CRC in 2019

The Rainbow Revolution exhibition, trail and oral history archive project all launched in June. This was a collaboration between Registration, ICT, Art and Industry, Irish Folklife and Education. Registration co-created the digital archive element of the exhibition with key LGBTIQ+ community experts. The digital touchscreens located in Collins Barracks and Turlough Park, introduced Ireland's LGBTIQ+ rights movement. The screens included archival material from the Irish Queer Archive (National Library of Ireland), Irish Trans Archive, Cork LGBT Archive, RTE Archive, personal interviews from activist Edmund Lynch and some original interviews recorded by NMI, as well as material from private archival collections. NMI have agreed to distribute 12 of the digital screen to the Local Authority Museums (LAM) to ensure national exposure and increase LAM-NMI connections. Registration also coordinated the Rainbow trail through existing exhibitions with Art and Industry colleagues and worked with Education colleagues to organise the 'Out on Display' symposium in October. The Registrar gave a series of lectures about the Rainbow Revolution in various universities and cultural institutions.

This project gave rise to a number of new initiatives such as:

- LGBTIQ+ Living Archive Project with 12 oral history interviews complete in 2019
- LGBTIQ+ Awareness training for NMI staff
- The Registrar co-founded the LGBTIQIA+ History and Culture Network (now called 'Queer Culture Ireland') a collective of over 100 LGBTIQIA+ Culture experts collaborating to increase the visibility of Irish LGBTIQIA+ history
- Registration and Education collaborating with the National Gallery of Ireland and Kilmainham Gaol to organise an LGBTIQ+ history festival (Outing the Past) in March 2020



- NMI staff took part in Pride 2019 under the Civil and Public Service LGBTIQ+ Staff Network, of which the Registrar is part of the founding committee
- The first annual review of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs LGBTIQ+ National Youth Strategy took place in National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History

Registration led the creation of digital multimedia touchscreens telling the story of Ireland's LGBTIQ+ rights movement

Mary Shannon (left), custodian of Ireland's AIDS Memorial Quilt, under the Names Project and Senator David Norris (right): the first two interviewees for the NMI LGBTIQ+ Living Archive Project



Registration produced a series of draft Documentation and Information policies, as well as stand-alone policies for both the Library and Archive. Essential to the running of the NMI, these policies were also integral to the overall NMI MSPI submission. Registration staff sat on all of the policy-creation committees, as well as a wide range of NMI and other committees and groups. Registration staff also provided talks at a range of conference, university and other cultural institution events, provided training, workshops and attended training on a range of subjects.

The creation of a CRC contingency plan was a key priority this year, as there was a risk the proprietor would enact a lease-break. Thankfully, in September the proprietor confirmed the lease would continue until 2030. The NMI then formed the Collections Accommodation Solutions Project (CAST) to look at a long-term solution for the CRC replacement.

Alongside contingency planning, all aspects of collections, facilities and public access management continued at the CRC. Seventy-seven collection transfers took place, including significant transfers such as the return of the Avondale House furniture loan, new acquisitions for Natural History and Art and Industry and various Irish Antiquities excavation deposits. CRC staff facilitated fifteen researchers over eighty-two working days and provided sixteen CRC tours for a wide range of groups. A series of shelving installations took place to facilitate incoming collections, as well as preventative conservation patrols.

A major upgrade of the Adlib collections management system continued, merging the Object and Archive catalogues. Documentation staff continued to provide Adlib training and mentoring for colleagues across departments

maintained the Documentation Procedural Manual and implemented decisions made by NMI's Terminology Group. Registration and ICT collaborated on the first phase of the Online Collections Project, building the required infrastructure, procured by both and led by ICT and the Online Collections Project Manager.

Documentation of all NMI collections continued with minimal staff following the end of the Inventory Project in 2017. This focused on maintaining minimum standards of collections management to ensure the integrity of collections information, logistics, storage and care. Unions and Management agreed a scaled-down version of the Documentation Plan, focused solely on inventory for phase two. The procurement process for this project is complete and it will commence in early 2020. Irish Folklife Documentation focused on the Receiving Room Amnesty Project clearing the backlog of unregistered acquisitions from this area, as well as implementing a digital register, a format for new acquisitions and a plan to upgrade the furniture collection. Natural History Documentation focused on clearing a backlog of location updates in the CRC as collections continued to transfer in. Irish Antiquities Documentation focused on tidying excavation data for transfer into Access and meeting MSPI standards. Art and Industry Documentation focused on loans with twenty-one new loans administered. In November, the Art and Industry Documentation Officer resigned.

EDUCATION



The Wonder Cabinet -
NMI – Natural History

In 2019, 173,473 people participated in and engaged with learning programmes and services across the National Museum of Ireland's four public sites, 104,016 of which were young people from the formal education sector. The Education Department organised 1,256 events and activities and demand for tours and other services increased enquiries to 500 weekly.

The Education Department drafted a Learning Policy and Strategy and a Handling Collections Strategy.

A publication outlining highlights of the Education Department's public programme was disseminated widely along with a schools' newsletter. Education also worked alongside colleagues at outreach events including the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition, the Ploughing Championship and the Midlands Arts Festival.

The panel of freelance tour guides continued to enable the Museum to reach a more diverse audience and progress was made on creating panels in other sites.

In July *The Wonder Cabinet* was launched in NMI – Natural History. This specially designed, multisensory and interactive space enabled children, families and schools explore a range of themes and specimens related to predators and prey.

Schools' Programme

Alongside outreach to schools, tours were delivered across the sites, some with Irish sign language interpretation while others involved use of the handling collection. Workshops and other events were organised covering diverse themes and disciplines, using a cross curricular and enquiry based approach. Examples include an Art and Conflict workshop at NMI – Decorative Arts & History exploring how political ideas and propaganda can be expressed through art and design; exploring biodiversity within the grounds of NMI – Country Life and learning about Prehistoric Ireland using the handling collections at NMI – Archaeology.

Intergenerational projects involving schools included: *Stories Between Us* - an oral history project involving St Gabriel's Primary School, local communities and Grangegorman Development Agency collaborating with artist Janine Davidson in co-creating an exhibition on the theme of 'past times'; *In Our Words* enabled students at St Louis Community School, Kiltamagh, to create and perform their response to Louise O'Neill's play *Asking for it* at the Linenhall Arts Centre, a collaboration involving the National Theatre, the Museum's Writers' Group and Galway City Museum.

Family and Adult Programme

NMI Education's public programme for adults, families and special interest groups coincided with many festivals and anniversaries including St Patrick's Day, Bealtaine, Heritage Week, Festival of History, Open House and Christmas. Programmes included a spring and autumn series of lectures on new discoveries from Ancient Ireland and the Anglo Normans in Ireland at NMI – Archaeology; a four-week course on extraordinary people who shaped Irish and international design, fashion and decorative arts and a conference on 'Women in Design' at NMI – Decorative Arts & History; a talk on the History of Falconry in Ireland and Norway at NMI – Natural History and a seminar themed around discrimination against Travellers as part of the CAMP project at NMI – Country Life. The Family programme included the *Jurassic Skies, When dinosaurs took to the air Open Day* which attracted



Siobhan Pierce, Education Officer for Archaeology and Natural History, on Outreach to Portlaoise as part of the Midlands Science Festival, Science Week November 2019

1641 people, a cross site collaboration involving educators and curators at NMI – Archaeology, NMI – Decorative Arts & History and NMI – Natural History.

Learning programmes related to temporary exhibitions were developed across all sites and included at NMI – Country Life the *CAMP* installation with artist Aileen Barry and students from Limerick School of Art and Design creating art works based on themes in *Travellers' Journey*, while the *Electric Irish Homes Textile* project involved artist Anna Spearman and a group of women co-creating an exhibition on the impact of rural electrification on women's lives as part of *Kitchen Power: women's experience of rural electrification*.

Local Communities

The Irish Community Archive Network project (iCAN) continued to expand and Creative Ireland contributed a further €40,000 towards its growth. New groups in Galway and Clare brought the total number of participating groups to twenty eight. The 'Our Irish Women' exhibition went on tour to other venues. Training was delivered to groups and network meetings held. iCAN's home site *Our Irish Heritage* had visits from 154 countries, 4652 cities,

87,013 page views, 35,667 Users, 528 new pages and 77 new comments.

Education engaged with local communities in Stoneybatter and facilitated an exhibition at NMI – DAH celebrating the community of O'Devaney Gardens and curated by young local artists. Collaboration with Dublin City Council's Culture Company on the Culture Club initiative continued and the team at NMI – Archaeology engaged with communities in Harold's Cross on a National Neighbourhood community project.

Local community groups continued to meet regularly in different Museum sites to pursue their interests as well as engage with Museum staff and the wider public.

Decade of Commemorations

The Education Department was successful in receiving a grant of €10,000 for its publication on learning programmes and commemorations. Commemorative events at NMI – Decorative Arts & History included a seminar to mark the centenary of the First Dáil and a conference on the human impact of World War One on Irish soldiers who returned home.

acquisitions in the Irish Antiquities Division (90), the first new images of the 'Dowris Hoard' in many decades, objects for the *Fries Museum, Netherlands*, ethnographic objects for the *British Museum, John Segar* silver, coin models, drawings by *Du Noyer*, gold objects, axeheads with wooden hafts, coin hoard, ring brooch, the *Inishkea Stone*, the head of Ptah.

In addition, the Photographic Department facilitated a number of external requests for new images of objects from the NMI collections.

Image Requests & Distribution

Preparation and distribution of over 4,100 images from over 400 requests from staff and the external market through processing of raw captures, searching, retrieving, optimising, quality assurance and distribution of final images. The new DAMS installation enables more efficient image search and identification by the Rights and Reproductions Department and other divisions, and subsequent communication of image selections to the Photographic Department for output.

Online Collections

The Department contributed to the NMI's Online Collections Project and the Digitisation and Cataloguing Group of the CNCI (Council of National Cultural Institutions).

Engagement

As a member of the Digitisation and Cataloguing Group of the CNCI, the Senior Photographer was involved in organising the '*Digitising Collections: Planning & Practicalities*' in The National Gallery of Ireland.

The Senior Photographer and the Digital Imaging Officer facilitated visits from NGI staff and IMMA staff for overviews of the Department's DAMS and digital workflow strategies.



Four-handled mether
with incised decoration.
Inscription reads:
'Dermot Tully 1590'

DESIGN

In servicing the various departments/divisions within the National Museum's four sites, the Design Department provides a high quality, professional design service to enhance audience's experience of the Collections in the National Museum of Ireland.

In 2019 the department was involved in a large number of projects, which included artefact illustration, exhibition design & support, student placement, publication design, cartography and general graphic design support.

Exhibitions

The Design Department produced exhibition graphics, promotional graphics and provided general exhibition support for a Natural History exhibition that took place in NMI – Decorative Arts & History; *Jurassic Skies, When dinosaurs took to the air.*

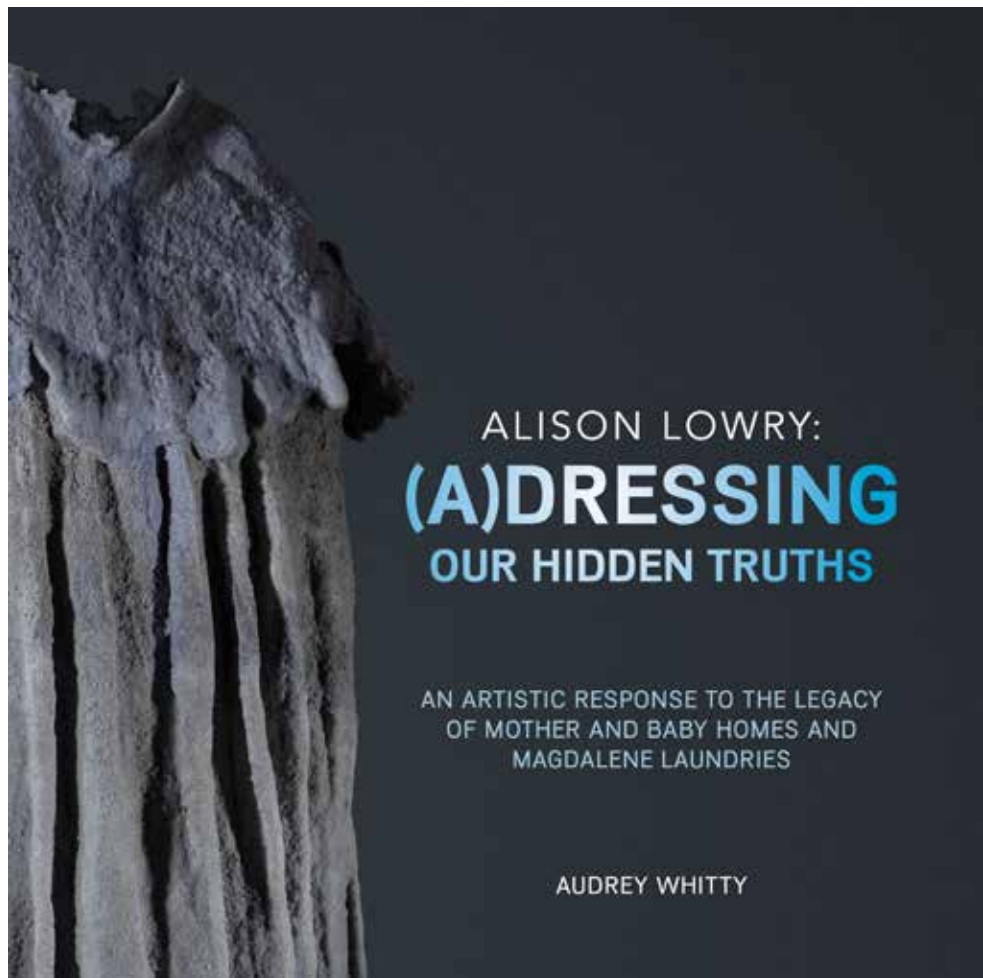
Exhibition graphics, promotional graphics and exhibition catalogue were designed and produced for the poignant temporary exhibition by glass artist *Alison Lowry: (A)dressing our Hidden Truths. An artistic response to the legacy of mother and baby homes and Magdalene laundries*, on display at NMI – Decorative Arts & History.

The Department designed the exhibition and promotional graphics for the hugely popular photographic exhibition *Ireland in Focus, Photographing the 1950s.*

Display graphics were designed for a collection of newly acquired *Segar Silver* from the 17th century that went on display alongside contemporary designed Irish silver.

Exhibition support in the form of document and photographic scanning was provided for *The Irish Wars* exhibition.

Design for the *Alison Lowry: (A)dressing our Hidden Truths. An artistic response to the legacy of mother and baby homes and Magdalene laundries* exhibition and catalogue by the Design Department



Book Design

A publication on the flags of 1916 and their historical significance, *Raising the Banners of War*, by Michael Kenny was designed in-house by the Design Department. It was the second book in a series by the author.

Illustration/Plans

Archaeological Illustration was an ongoing activity throughout 2019. Illustration work produced included a bronze spear-butt, silver armlets from Lurgabrack, weft beater from Ballinderry, decorated lead weights from Drumnashear and gold overlapping rings from Tullydonnell.

Site plans were drawn for Deerpark, Co. Wexford for the Irish Antiquities Division in preparation for publication 2021; Seaver, M (In Prep) A Radiocarbon Dated Door-knob Spearbutt from Deerpark, County Wexford for journal submission in winter 2020, *Journal of Irish Archaeology*.

Drawing survey

In collaboration with the Registration Department, the Design Department began initial work on a long-term project to archive the Archaeological and Scientific Drawings in the Museum.

Collaboration and Engagement

The Design Department contributed to the quarterly Calendar of Events. This is a joint effort between a number of areas in the Museum including: Education, ICT, Design, Photography and Marketing and highlights the events for each of the 4 sites bilingually.

The Design Department provided support, advice and quality control for any external design projects.

Various signage and labelling was produced across all four sites on throughout the year.



Graphics for the *Women In Design* conference

Events and programming

Graphic design work was produced for number of Education led programmes and events such as the Women in Design Conference and the Stoneybatter festival at the NMI – Decorative Arts & History and Sustainable Summer talks and activities at the NMI – Natural History.

Research

Two students from the Bertha von Suttner Schule Mörfelden-Walldorf Germany were facilitated by the Design Department by spending a number of weeks in the studio gaining practical design experience in a Museum setting.

OPERATIONS

FINANCE

The 2019 allocation received from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht was as follows:

	€
● Pay & pensions	8,757,000
● Non-Pay	4,224,000
● Capital	1,108,000
Total	14,109,000

During 2019 the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht also awarded amounts totalling €245,955 in relation to grants for specific purposes.

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

Financial Statements 2019

The Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2019 and the accompanying audit file in early 2020. The C&AG audit of the Financial Statements for 2019 took place during August 2020. NMI's accounts in respect of the year ending 31 December 2019 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 2019 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 2019 Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the reporting requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

Procedures

The Unit is responsible for the management of the procurement process of all National and EU procurements. To this end, NMI is building internal expertise in the area of procurement and structured procedures and policies were reviewed and updated in 2019 and procurement training was provided to all Managers.

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

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

HR/CORPORATE AFFAIRS UNIT

The HR/Corporate Affairs Unit continued to roll out its function across NMI working closely with the NMI's Divisional Heads on various HR and Corporate responsibilities and initiatives.

Corporate Governance

The Unit continued its engagement with both internal and external stakeholders, particularly with the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht as well as Internal and External auditors to ensure NMI's responsibilities and obligations as a public sector body are being fully complied with. The Unit also continued to develop its relationship with PeoplePoint (Shared Service for HR and Pensions) to ensure issues are resolved in a timely manner for staff and to enhance the overall service for NMI.

Risk Management

A full review of the NMI's Risk Management framework was undertaken in 2019. The NMI's Risk Management policy was updated, a Risk Management Appetite developed and Risk Management training was provided for all Managers across the organisation. A new Risk Register was developed for both Operations and Collections and Learning in addition to the Organisational Risk Register. Quarterly Risk Management meetings take place with Managers to ensure risks are being recorded and mitigated against and regular meetings and briefings take place with both the Senior Risk team and the Audit and Risk Committee.

Recruitment 2019

The Human Resources function was very active in 2019. There were 24 positions recruited, including some key management positions, such as Head of Operations and Head of Finance and Procurement, Head of Digital and Information Systems, other positions were in retail, facilities, education, conservation and generally across all departments. With staff turnover at 5.5%, there was 20 leavers including transfers, retirements and resignations.

Training and Engagement

Working closely with all staff, to meet the learning and development needs of the museum, the unit delivered 19 training events, or 44 days training of which 17 were facilitated internally, with 92% of staff receiving training in 2019. Training events included LGBTQIA Awareness, Health and Safety, Diversity and Equality, Procurement, Customer Services, Media training and Induction. The refund of fees programme was availed of by 7 staff.

A world café day was held on 18th February 2019, the programme concentrated on the Engage project.

Staff Forum and Museum Council

Constructive work continued with the Museum Council, a forum for IR issues to be raised and discussed which is chaired independently. The Council met six times over the period of the year. Relationships were further developed throughout the year, working through issues with Fórsa Trade Union, such as policy development and work life balance initiatives.

Policies, Procedures Legislative responsibilities

There are now 19 Human Resources policies approved. Some of this work was carried out with various working groups. A full staff consultation process was established for agreement and approval. This is ongoing work as all have a bi-annual review. Some policies have also required training for implementation.

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

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, 7 requests were responded to throughout the year and 4 Data Access requests were responded to.

Diversity and Equality

The working group on Diversity and Equality conducted a staff survey in April gathering statistics on a number of topics including gender identity, disability, religious beliefs, cultural and citizens groups. The purpose of the survey was to assist in gathering baseline diversity statistics, understand perceptions around diversity, and to help the NMI to develop and put into effect a Diversity Action Plan for the NMI. As a result of the survey the NMI gained a better understanding of the workforce and made plans to become a more diverse and inclusive organisation. This group also forwarded a number of policies, including Gender Identity and Expression Policy and Policy on Employing People with Disabilities, which have received approval.

There was the establishment of a pilot Audience Advocacy group in Turlough Park, with interested members of the community in Mayo, coming together to advise on initiatives, for consideration when planning exhibitions to ensure that all members of the public are included.

Health and Well-being

The establishment of a Health and Well-being working group in late 2019, made plans for a programme of events to continuing address, learn and promote well-being for the staff. The working group also received approval for policies, Working from Home and Work-life Balance and Leave.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The ICT department's remit is the development and management of all telecommunication, audio-visual and information systems, to support and enhance the mission of the NMI across all its functions and geographical sites.

Staffing

The Head of Digital & Information Systems, Olivier Kazmierczak left the NMI in April and John Phelan was contracted as IT programme manager in the interim while recruitment for a permanent head continued.

Infrastructure

Procurement for a public WiFi system was completed and work commenced on installing and updating the prerequisite underlying systems, this is a large and ambitious system which a lot of interconnected dependencies.

Equipment required for upgrading of the office networks was procured and planning for replacement and installation is at an advanced stage. The storage for the virtual server cluster in Collins Barracks was increased significantly with the provision, additionally the server back strategy was improved by the provision of site to site replication of servers between Collins Barracks and Kildare Street

The firewalls in Collins Barracks were replaced, improving network security for our web server.

Applications

The roll out of Windows 10 commenced across the NMI, all desktops and servers were migrated to the latest version of McAfee Endpoint Protection. Procurement for software supply and configuration support for the Online Collections Project was completed, with the contract being awarded to Knowledge Integration, who have completed similar projects with museums in the UK.

Online

The total visitors to NMI website in 2019 was almost 710,000 which represents a continuing trend of year on year visitor growth.

Development continued on the new NMI website, which will involve a major upgrade to the website as well as the underlying infrastructure to support this website.

MARKETING

Overall, visitor numbers were up on 2018 with the NMI achieving over 1.2 million visitors. This is the ninth consecutive year to attract over 1 million visitors. The breakdown by site was as follows:

Visitor Numbers	2018	2019	% Change
NMI – Archaeology	466,038	505,420	8%
NMI – Natural History	345,513	387,491	12%
NMI – Decorative Arts & History	198,974	230,729	16%
NMI – Country Life	116,206	127,127	9%
Total	1,126,731	1,250,767	11%

The Marketing Department gained extensive PR coverage in 2019 through national, regional, international print, broadcast and social media.

Media Coverage 2019

Exhibition Highlights included; *Alison Lowry: (A) dressing our Hidden Truths. An artistic response to the legacy of mother and baby homes and Magdalene laundries*, the Centenary of the First Dáil, *Jurassic Skies, When dinosaurs took to the air* in partnerships with the National Museum of Wales, Martin O'Meara Victorian Cross, International Year of the Salmon in partnership with Inland Fisheries, 50th Anniversary of the Moon Landing, *Rainbow Revolution*, The Wonder Cabinet. Marketing also promoted, *Kitchen Power: women's experience of rural electrification*, Courtyard Gallery – changing programme of art exhibitions throughout 2019, Onsite 2019 – Installation of IMMRAM Pavilion/Mother's Lament by Niamh McCann in the grounds of NMI – Country Life

Marketing also supported various donations and events which included; the donation of Asgard Baron The Art of Pollination by artist Shevaun Doherty, Minister Katherine Zappone donated the dresses she and her late wife, Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan wore on their wedding day to the NMI contemporary collections, Dublin sites. In addition, Mayo Day was hosted in the grounds of NMI – Country Life which attracted over 12,000 visitors. The Future is Rural was hosted at NMI – Country Life. As well as the visit to the Museum by the King and Queen of Sweden, in preparation for which we liaised with Tourism Ireland-Nordics.

The Marketing Department ran very comprehensive radio and digital advertising campaign across all RTÉ platforms as well as a PR campaign across local, regional and national media to support numerous exhibitions, donations and NMI events across all sites.

Marketing also supported the PR of the National Museum of Ireland and National Museum Wales signing a Memorandum of Understanding outlining a new partnership between these two cultural organisations.

Other highlights include Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) broadcast of their event for *Culture Night* from NMI – Decorative Arts & History and this **attracted over 8,000 visitors** on the night. A comprehensive television, radio and digital advertising campaign across all RTÉ to support the event.

Partnerships and Engagement

Partnerships and networking continued with trade partners including Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, and the Association of Visitor Experiences & Attractions (AVEA) along with other visitor attractions, e.g. the Guinness Storehouse as well as RTÉ for *Supporting the Arts Scheme* on radio.

Social Media

In addition to supporting the above; the marketing worked with the Education department to promote the Museum's outreach involving multi-generational learning opportunities in Stories between us and in community festivals Stonebatter Festival – 2019. Our social media channels amplified the conferences run in the Museum space during the year such as the "Women in Design" Conference, the "Ireland after the War" conference, and Natural History's series of Lunchtime talks.

NMI maintained a strong presence across all digital platforms (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram) in 2019 for all four NMI sites. Areas of continued developments in Digital Marketing include Digital Display (Irish Times, Irish Independent, Galway Advertiser, The Connaught Telegraph, NewsGroup.ie, Rollercoaster.ie, FleadhTV, Military History Matters, Crafts magazine), SEO via Google Ads / web content and Facebook Ad targeting.

As a further promotion for NMI's digital online presence.

Online Follows: 30th Dec 2019

Facebook: 41,076

Twitter: 39,575

Instagram: 6,054

FACILITIES

(ACCOMMODATION AND SECURITY)

The Facilities Department coordinates the building management functions, including security, Health & Safety and front of house services across all eight sites of the National Museum of Ireland.

Engagement:

2019, heralded a new milestone in the history of the NMI as this year marked our first venture into facilitating large scale events. In June, we partnered with the LGBT Community and held the ninth Mother Block Party attended by six and a half thousand people in the main carpark of Collins Barracks.

On Friday 18th September we facilitated a large open air concert featuring Aslan and a number of other acts. This event was RTE's main event for Culture Night and it was beamed live across the airwaves.



Remedial works were carried out at Collins Barracks throughout the year due to significant leaks in the North and East Blocks necessitating the moving of collections. With the architectural support of OPW we are planning to replace the roof on the east range of Clarke Square commencing in Q4, 2020. Furthermore, we had leaks in the Irish Antiquities Division Crypt, and significant roofs leaks in the National Museum of Ireland – Natural History too. The leaks in the National Museum of Ireland – Natural History has expedited the roof replacement project which is due to start in Q3, 2020. We are very grateful to the OPW for responding so efficiently and speedily to these situations and for carrying out remedial works and assisting in implementing preventative measures.

An additional challenge during the summer months was the arrival of the “urban gulls” into Collins Barracks. These gulls pose a danger to both the public, generate significant noise and make it problematic for the maintenance teams who endeavor to maintain/repair/clean the gutters/downpipes. We hope to commence a conservation programme with Wildlife Ireland with improved housekeeping measures in place during 2020.

Finally, I would like to mention the Front of House team who work tirelessly keeping the NMI open to the public. Similarly, it would be remiss not to mention the support that we receive from OPW, from the conservation architectural division to the mechanical engineering division and the Building Maintenance Services who are always at hand to support and maintain NMI buildings.

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