**ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

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**Foreword by the Chair, Board of the National Museum of Ireland**

It is a great honour to be appointed to lead the National Museum of Ireland (NMI). The NMI is a much loved national institution welcoming in 2023 over 1.2 million visitors. I extend my sincere gratitude to Catherine Martin, Minster for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media and her colleagues for placing their trust in me and to lead the NMI Board over the next few years.

2023 was a significant year for the Museum, marking the launch of its Strategic Plan*, Increasing Accessibility, Engaging Community 2023-2028*. This is a blueprint designed to steer our Museum towards a future of enhanced accessibility, impactful programming, and sustainable practices. This outward-looking strategy was developed with a commitment to fostering excellence in everything we do and I am confident that the positive impacts apparent in both staff culture and cultural output made under the direction of Lynn Scarff will continue in a positive trajectory.

As one of the largest National Cultural Institutions (NCI), the NMI has an important role to play in common initiatives across the sector to leverage added public value through collaboration. For any organisation, positive impact on visitors and wider society can be magnified through partnerships with other organisations and it is one of my priorities as Chair to strengthen and unify our relations and communications between our fellow NCIs and other stakeholders.

Sustainability was a dominant lens in the development of our current strategic plan. With the Natural History Museum due to close in late 2024, it is worth noting the important role that our national natural history collection (referred to our staff as ‘the original biobank’) plays in understanding biodiversity loss and climate change. NMI is also a tenant of a number of historic public buildings maintained by our colleagues in the Office of Public Works (OPW) and our work continues with finding solutions in a relatively challenging environment to deliver a carbon net-zero future. The Museum is well primed to establish itself as a leader in environmental sustainability and climate action by working with the OPW and other stakeholders to collaborate on reaching our shared sustainability goals.

The Museum is a high performing organisation, built upon an important mission, good culture and a great team. Our aim in the coming years is to further embed this positive culture and performance and enhance the impact the Museum has on society. Good systems and policies are a foundation for delivery and impact of good culture within an organisation, and an important issue for the Board will be to build on the work of former Chair, Catherine Heaney, and current Director, Lynn Scarff by overseeing the systemisation of processes and behaviours that have so far delivered this culture.

The Museum has been fortunate to be run by great people who are passionate about their careers and the NMI. However, there are many key positions that will turn over in the next few years. With 20% of staff within five years or so of retirement, the recent loss of key experience at Board and Management level and the likely completion of the term of our Director in next five years, succession planning will be critical in 2024, for both maintaining the gains made in previous years and to deliver on the ambitious strategy.

2023 was a year of preparation and strategic oversight and management of high risks. We recognise the inherent risks associated with remaining dependent on the temporary housing of our national collection, while also recognising the high short to medium risks to the Museum’s staff capacity in delivering on both core and non-core work, should a move from one location to another be necessary. As with all risks, our decisions need to be made with transparency, accountability, and in the best interests of the public in mind. While challenges are anticipated, the Board remains confident in the Executive’s planning and risk mitigation strategies to ensure the care and preservation of Ireland’s national collection. I would like to acknowledge and note the Board’s appreciation for the work of the DTCAGS&M for their ongoing positive and constructive engagement with the Office of Public Works and the NMI Executive.

The role of Chair is nothing without the expertise and guidance of my fellow board members who show relentless dedication to the NMI. Their collective expertise, passion, and unwavering commitment have been instrumental in driving the Museum forward. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our former Chair of the Board, Catherine Heaney for her truly remarkable contributions and leadership. Additionally, my gratitude goes to our Vice-Chair, Ambrose Loughlin who stepped into the role of Acting Chair during the Chair recruitment process, ensuring continuity and stability at Board level.

Last but not least, the Museum would be nothing without the small but devoted team who not only care for our important national collection for the people of today and for future generations but promote engagement and research through exhibition and outreaching programmes. The Executive go above and beyond their assigned roles to drive the Museum forward and there is great comfort in knowing that the Museum is in good hands. Finally, a note of sincere thanks to all the staff of the NMI, some of which have been especially welcoming to me during my first year as Chair.



Cathal O’ Donoghue

Chair

**Introduction by the Director of the National Museum of Ireland**

With the launch of our new strategic plan in July 2023, *Increasing Accessibility, Engaging Community 2023-2028*, the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) was afforded time to reflect on the relevance of our museum in a contemporary context. Our vision for 2028 is to be a museum of sanctuary and surprise. By increasing accessibility to our collections, we will strengthen how our audiences can engage with their cultural heritage. By offering unexpected and diverse public programmes, we will engage new audiences and develop opportunities for increased research and collaboration. This strategic plan seeks to promote continuity and change, recognising the important work of conserving our collection as well as expanding our engagement with diverse Irish and global communities.

Our new strategy recognises the volatility of global, social, cultural, political, climate and economic conditions and seeks to orientate NMI’s ambition and vision within this context. We have selected three lenses through which to shape and view our work: community, planet, and shared knowledge and these have provided a nexus for the key activities of 2023.

***For Communities***

In May 2023 the NMI and the Heritage Council launched their partnership to support the Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) at the Brockagh Resource Centre, Laragh, Co Wicklow. iCAN works with 28 local communities across Ireland supporting them to record and digitize their local history and archives. This unique project is led by the community and supported through NMI. Recognising and amplifying the important role NMI can play in communities be it through archaeological finds, engaging with donors and providing a space for community initiatives, the new strategy contains a number of deliverables that aim to grow our capacity and recognition.

Fieldwork by our Irish Antiquities teams in relation to archaeological discoveries found throughout Ireland is one of the key mechanisms by which individuals and communities connect with the Museum. In 2023, fieldwork was carried out in 22 different counties with many significant finds recorded resulting in an engagement with a diverse community of people across Ireland. Throughout our work in 2023, many of our curators were engaged collaboratively with a variety of communities – whether it was our folk life team working with communities of traditional boat makers or our natural history team working with individuals donating scientific specimens, or our arts and industry teams ongoing work with marginalised communities and contemporary collecting aligned to our upcoming *Changing Ireland* galleries scheduled for opening in 2025.

Our schools, public programme and community events engaged a diversity of visitors and participants through 2023. Highlights included the development of tours delivered through ISL and a number of additional languages, as well as youth programmes engaging schools across Ireland as part of the work of Anthony Haughey, our artist in residency for the Decade of Centenaries. A series of events as part of our Youth Assembly led to the development of a new manifesto for a future Ireland that will be exhibited in the Riding School in 2024, as part of the *We Make Our Own Histories* exhibition.

***For the Planet***

With a lens on Planet at the core of our new Strategic Plan, there was specific emphasis on the initiation of programmes of work that will assist in ensuring the overall reduction of NMI’s impact on climate into the future. A reduction in energy consumption to match the requirements of our Climate Action Roadmap in 2023 was a significant achievement of the last twelve months. Apart from our own operational activity, the work in particular of our Natural History teams to support research and engagement on biodiversity loss is an important contribution to wider objectives of the NMI. This work is further reinforced by the opportunities presented by the upcoming capital investment in the refurbishment of the Natural History Museum. The tender for the procurement of the Design team for the project was published by the NMI in partnership with the OPW in 2023 and we expect the team will be appointed within the first quarter of 2024.

***For Shared Knowledge***

While research has long been a key activity and focus within the Museum, our new strategy takes a specific approach through the lens of shared knowledge. This places an emphasis on recognising the opportunities to develop our research capacity in collaboration and partnership not only with third level institutions but also with community. These initiatives occur through exhibition programs like our *GAA: People, Objects and Stories* exhibition which created a space for the sharing of experiences, archives and objects related to GAA and its important position in communities across Ireland.

We have also been reflecting on how we present ourselves to the world, and if this reflects our values as an organisation. We have undertaken work with colleagues throughout the museum to develop our brand and identity to better reflect our vision of a contemporary museum of sanctuary and surprise. This work has taken a focus on the museum as a place for real moments of connection that are driven by genuine engagements with our collection and team. We look forward to launching the refreshed identity in 2024 and mobilising it through a variety of work streams including wayfinding and digital to better reflect the intent of our organisation and strategy.

***The National Collection***

2023 was not without its challenges, we continue to work to develop a longer-term solution to our Collections Resource Centre which is currently located in a leased property in North County Dublin. As our ambition for the Museum and collection grows it is vital that we identify a permanent, environmentally suitable building. As the end of lease approaches in 2030 this will be a key focus of our 2024 operations. As will our continued advocacy for resources to develop the digitisation of our collection. Significant security incidents in peer museums globally demonstrated the criticality of investment in the ‘museum basics’ of inventory and documentation. There are opportunities for the development of this work into new platforms to enable greater online accessibility to our collection and in doing so the sharing of knowledge and understanding of our cultural heritage both nationally and internationally.

Welcoming over 1.2 million visitors to the Museum through 2023, our focus continues to be on providing an engaging and genuine experience at all of our sites. We cannot achieve this without the input and talent of our team across departments. Everything that is outlined in the following pages is an achievement of a small team of dedicated people who are passionate about the museum, our collection and the people we engage with. We look forward to building on the ambition of our strategy and work in 2024.



Lynn Scarff

Director

**COLLECTIONS & ACCESS**

**ART & INDUSTRY**

The Art & Industry Division is responsible for the curation of the National Museum of Ireland’s (NMI’s) Art and Industry collections. Comprising over 530,000 artefacts, these collections are associated with Irish cultural, economic, industrial, military, political and social history, over the last four centuries. This includes decorative and applied arts; musical and scientific instruments; vehicles; arms and armour; manuscripts and artworks; the Eileen Gray collection; and Asian artefacts, notably the Albert Bender collection. Art and Industry curators develop and research the collection to interpret it and present it to the public at the NMI - Decorative Arts and History at Collins Barracks.

**ACQUISITIONS**

Working with a limited budget, Art & Industry curators developed the collection through purchase and donation. Acquisitions included:

* *The Glass Quilt*, a collaborative artwork created by fifty glassmakers from across the island of Ireland, during a COVID-19 lockdown, purchased from the Glass Society of Ireland.
* A set of seven posters associated with the hunger strike at the Long Kesh prison in 1981.
* A rare, late-nineteenth century, Celtic Revival, diamond-set brooch by Edmond Johnson, Dublin, in the form of a bronze-age Irish fibula.
* The Blessington Commode by John Kirkhoffer, one of the most important pieces of Irish Georgian furniture, purchased through Adam’s Auctioneers.

Thanks to the generous support of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, NMI acquired a large and important collection of Irish revolutionary era material assembled by Conor Dullaghan. This included an early Irish Citizen Army flag with a hand-stitched "Starry Plough" pattern; Winnifred Carney medals; documents relating to the truce ordered for the cessation of fighting in the Four Courts in May 1922; and Piaras Béaslaí's Irish Free State National Army colonel's tunic.

**COLLECTION DISPLAYS AND EXHIBITIONS**

***Changing Ireland Galleries***

Work continued on *Changing Ireland,* NMI’s soon-to-be launched permanent galleries at Collins Barracks. This new collection display and associated infrastructure has been a major project for NMI over the last number of years and has been a top priority for the Art & Industry curatorial division, and that of NMI’s Director of Collections & Access, Dr Éimear O’Connor who was appointed in November 2023. By the end of 2023, contractors were appointed in project management, exhibition design, graphic design, lighting and showcase production.

***Imaging Conflict: photographs from revolutionary era Ireland 1913-1923***

The temporary exhibition *Imaging Conflict: photographs from revolutionary era Ireland 1913-1923*, curated by Brenda Malone and Dr Orla Fitzpatrick, continued through 2023. Launched in 2022, this exhibition was a collaboration with Photo Museum Ireland and is part of the Museum’s contributions to the Decade of Centenaries Programme.

***GAA: People, Objects & Stories Objects***

The temporary exhibition *GAA: People, Objects & Stories Objects,* curated by Dr Siobhán Doyle opened in September. Through a selection of objects dating from the fifteenth century to the present day, this exhibition explored the influence of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) through the lens of social history, design and popular culture.

***Temporary Closures***

The Asgard exhibition closed regularly throughout the year due to shortages in our Visitor Security Officer (VSO) staff.

In June, galleries 19-23 of Collins Barracks closed to the public due to a building fabric safety issue. These form part of the Military collection displays and include: *The Irish in the First World War; The Easter Rising; War of Independence and Civil War; The formation of the Irish Army; Irish Naval Service; The Emergency and WWII; and UN Peacekeeping Missions*. The Galleries remained closed at the end of the year.

***New on Display***

Among the new additions to the permanent collection displays included, *The 18 pounder Field Gun 9168: Lost and Found* and *Mr Pride Coatee* in *Exhibiting the Nation* room.

**COLLECTION STORAGE**

A major decant of collections both internally within the North Block and from the North Block to the CRC was completed early in the year. This major project moved the entire reserve ceramics and scientific instruments collections to the CRC. External art handlers and conservators were contracted to support the project. Storage and documentation of the scientific instrument collection in the CRC continued through the year. The move of the armoury collection within the North Block stores was completed successfully with the support of Conservation staff. Regular documented checks were carried out in galleries and stores around the CB campus in accordance with MSPI.

**LOANS**

The division facilitated a number of loan requests and the return of loan objects during 2023. This included: The return of artworks and artefacts borrowed for the Museums exhibition Studio and State. A loan of the O’Leary medals to the House of European History. A loan of the gate padlock from the Kilmainham prison escape to Kilmainham Gaol. The return of uniforms loaned to Kerry County Museum and a Liam Mellows letter from Galway City Museum.

**STAFFING**

The division was strengthened through the recruitment of both key and supporting roles. Sarah Nolan was appointed Collections Assistant in June; Interviews were held for the post of Keeper of Art and Industry and Dónal Maguire was appointed to the post and commenced his employment in September. Alex Ward, who acted as Keeper from July 2019 returned to her role as AK1 Curator of Dress and Textiles. Donna Rose was appointed Irish Research Council Enterprise Partnership Scheme PhD Scholar. Her thesis is ‘Collecting, Interpreting, and Mediating the Material Heritage of Ireland’s Institutional Systems’.

**TALKS, LECTURES &INTERVIEWS**

A&I staff provided talks and lectures to a range of audiences both in person throughout the year, including local history and specialist interest groups. Staff participated in seminars and panel discussions at the Ulster Museum, Royal Irish Academy, Queen’s University and the Irish Museums Association.

The Division provided a number of talks and tours and were interviewed by student groups from History & Heritage Studies Media at John Moore University, Liverpool; University College Cork’s Museum Studies MA; National College of Art & Design’s Design and Material Culture MA; University College Dublin’s Art History, Collections and Curating MA; and Maynooth University’s Design Innovation MA.

**IRISH ANTIQUITIES**

The Irish Antiquities Division (IAD) is responsible for the archaeological, ethnographical, classical and Egyptian collections, along with the administration of various statutory functions such as 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 1930 to 2014.* A total of **1521** licence applications were processed, and a number of site inspections were carried out in relation to these archaeological works as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Licence to excavate/monitor/detect/dive | 1017 |
| Ministerial Consents and Directions | 123 |
| Licence to alter an archaeological object | 219 |
| Licence to export an archaeological object | 162 |

In 2023, IAD staff liaised regularly with the National Monuments Service (NMS) and advised many commercial archaeologists on the care and deposition of excavated assemblages. Staff continued a major project to process a legacy collection of excavated material in NMI’s Collections Resource Centre. This project, which is supported by the NMS, will ensure appropriate care and future accessibility of material from more than 200 archaeological sites.

**FIELDWORK**

Fieldwork relating to archaeological discoveries was undertaken in 22 counties: Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, and Wicklow.

**IAD ACQUISITIONS**

A total of 362 annual acquisitions were registered in 2023, including some very significant objects. In addition, two large collections were registered, totalling 258 objects. Significant acquistiions include a yew wood mallet found at Ballaghurt bog, Co. Offaly, was radiocarbon dated to the early Bronze Age. A bronze brooch found at Roosky, Co. Donegal establishes a link between zoomorphic penannular and pseudo-penannular brooches and is a very important discovery. A copper alloy mount found by a guide at Aughnanure Castle Co. Galway, is a fine example of zoomorphic decoration, probably of eleventh century date. Several discoveries of bog butter were made during the summer months and investigated by IAD staff, one of which has been dated to approximately 1200BC. A very fine spatulate-headed bronze ringed pin was acquired from Co. Roscommon as was an important hoard of silver coins of late medieval date.

**LEGAL MATTERS**

Owing to the nature of NMI’s statutory functions under the *National Monuments Acts*, frequent liaison with An Garda Síochána and NMS, particularly on the issue of unlicensed metal detecting, took place throughout the year.

Staff dealt with twenty-nine separate reports of objects discovered by detection devices. Staff liaised with colleagues in the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGS&M), relating to export licences to the United Kingdom. Staff also liaised with the Chief State Solicitor’s Office on a number of different issues during 2023.

The passing of the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 in October was a major milestone for the NMI and staff have begun working with colleagues in the DTCAGS&M to begin commencement.

**EXHIBITIONS**

The IAD staff continued to plan and prepare for a significant, world-first exhibition of manuscripts and metalwork that will be opening to the public in May 2025. In January, a curatorial researcher was appointed to the project group to assist in the development of this highly anticipated exhibition.

**CARING FOR COLLECTIONS ON DISPLAY**

In February, IAD staff arranged for a condition survey of all showcases in Kildare Street. IAD staff engaged with OPW colleagues to upgrade lighting in the *Ór* exhibition. Throughout the year staff continued the cleaning of the exhibitions with the *Viking Ireland* exhibition decanted and cases cleaned internally. Staff also worked with OPW colleagues to mitigate risks to collections owing to issues with drains in the Kildare Street building.

**LOANS**

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

***Local Museums***

As part of IAD’s remit to work with local and regional museums in Ireland, staff consulted with museum colleagues all over Ireland. Staff inspected loans in counties Cork, Clare, Dublin, Offaly and Waterford. Staff installed a medieval wooden mether for displaying in the *GAA: People, Objects & Stories Objects* exhibition that was launched in September in Collins Barracks. IAD also installed a number of prehistoric lithics in the Waterford Museum of Treasures. Staff facilitated a one-day display of the replica of the Lismore Crosier for the enthronement of the Bishop of Lismore and facilitated a very successful one-day display of the Shrine of St. Lachtin’s Arm in Freshford, Co. Kilkenny, in June, where more than 800 visitors came to view the shrine.

***International***

Further afield, staff travelled to inspect IAD loans to the House of European History in Brussels, in Douglas, Isle of Man, in the Royal Armouries, Leeds and the Captain Cook Memorial Museum in Whitby.

**RESEARCH VISITS**

A major part of IAD’s work each year is to actively encourage and support researchers access to the divisional archive and its collections. Staff facilitated 387 visits to the archive and 231 visits to the reserve collections.

**Research/Projects**

Staff worked on several research projects and on publications of recent acquisitions. Staff supported numerous research projects through access to collections or archives and provided advice to researchers on this. Research progressed on bog butter, early medieval vessels and on recently excavated burials among other topics. Staff provided curatorial support to phase II of the inventory project. In February 2023 the Digital Benin website was launched; IAD staff provided content and images for the NMI section of this website.

**REPRESENTATION**

Given IAD’s wide remit, staff represent NMI on a number of important committees. In 2023, IAD staff represented the NMI on the following:

* Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Committee
* Designated Museums Liaison Group
* Board of Directors of the Discovery Programme
* Royal Irish Academy Standing Committee for Archaeology
* Council of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
* Editorial Board, Journal of Irish Archaeology
* Government’s Advisory Committee and Working Group on Climate Change Adaptation; Lusitania Working Group
* Dive Training Grant Scheme
* National Strategy for Underwater Archaeology.

**IAD TALKS, LECTURES & INTERVIEWS**

Throughout the year, deliver public lectures and tours of the various exhibitions and collections to a wide variety of audiences on archaeological and museological topics both within the NMI, across the country and abroad. Staff also respond to numerous media reports and requests throughout the year for interviews, tv documentaries, podcasts and other broadcasts relating to the collections.

In 2023, staff provided talks and lectures to a range of audiences and organisations both in person and online, including the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, the Irish Museums Association and Queens University Belfast for the ‘Africa in Ireland’ conference. Staff members also lectured to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in University College Dublin, National University of Ireland Galway and University College Cork, including the UCC Museum Studies MA course.

Staff participated in a roundtable discussion at the European Association of Archaeologists Conference in Belfast. IAD’s Ethnographic curator took part in the Africa Discussion Group as a part of NMI’s artist in residence programme.

**NATURAL HISTORY**

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

**STAFFING**

2023 saw significant changes in the staffing of the Division. External recruitment resulted in the appointment of a new Keeper in January and an Assistant Keeper (AK1) was recruited following an internal competition in August and an Assistant Keeper II (AKII) was recruited in December.

**NATURAL HISTORY CAPITAL WORKS**

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media announced the funding of the Design Phase of the Natural History Museum Redevelopment Project in January 2024. Planning, recruitment, and procurement for the major capital works project was significantly progressed during the year. This included recruitment of a 5-year fixed term contract at AK1 level as collections moves project manager to oversee the decant of the building on Merrion Street in 2024. Procurement included a cascade framework for natural history conservation specialists, and furniture conservation specialists to undertake a survey of historic cases. NHD were also involved in the procurement of the architect-led integrated design team with project partners in the Office of Public Works (OPW).

**EXHIBITIONS**

The Merrion Street building was restricted to Ground Floor-only throughout the year, due to the unsuitability of the First Floor to public access following significant construction works undertaken in 2022 in preparation for the capital works. Despite this, the building saw in the region of 423,000 visitors, with weekends and school holidays being particularly busy, often with long queues forming outside.

**De-install of *Down to Earth – Exploring Ireland’s Geology***

The staff of the NHD worked on a variety of collaborative exhibitions. Dr Patrick Roycroft worked in partnership with Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) to maintain and improve displays and support delivery of activities around the exhibition *Down to Earth – Exploring Ireland’s Geology* in the Riding School, Collins Barracks. The exhibition closed on 6th November and was deinstalled with assistance from GSI, OPW and a variety of other internal and external stakeholders.

***Decant Discoveries***

Dr Amy Geraghty developed a small exhibition in Merrion Street titled *Decant Discoveries* to help explain the necessary closure of the First Floor of the building to the general public.

***Murmur of the Bees***

Dr Aidan O’Hanlon collaborated with NMI colleagues on the *Murmur of Bees* exhibition based at NMI-Country Life, Castlebar, County Mayo. This exhibition explores the influence of bees on culture and the environment, displaying Irish Folklife Division collections alongside specimens and macro photographs from the NHD.

***A Drop In The Ocean?***

Keeper of Natural History, Paolo Viscardi collaborated with Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and taxidermist Donal Mulcahey on an exhibition entitled *A Drop In The Ocean?* shown in Merrion Street from April 3rd – November 27th 2023.

***Wonder Cabinet***

The Natural History Museum’s Wonder Cabinet welcomed the arrival of a new artistic display of a jellyfish. Created by artist, Andrea Spencer, a glass model of a moon jellyfish (*Aurelia aurita*) was commissioned by Education.

**COLLECTIONS**

Ongoing collections work occurred throughout the year as part of core activity, including maintenance of collections, improvements in storage, and addressing issues of health and safety, particularly around radioactive minerals. The Barrington Birds were decanted from Merrion Street to test workflows for the capital works decant planned in 2024. Acquisitions continued at a steady rate, with globally scientifically significant specimens, and species new to Ireland being deposited, along with large collections of geology from UCD and thousands of terrestrial invertebrates from the late Martin Cawley, the foremost recorder for myriapods and under-researched invertebrate taxa in Ireland.

**RESEARCH AND COLLABORATIONS**

Staff responded to **643** new public enquiries during the year. Some notable research collaborations included:

* Working in partnership with SIGNIFY, a digital decolonisation project that contributes to developing an understanding of the biodiversity of Singapore and a greater knowledge of the people and linkages that led specimens from Singapore to be dispersed around the globe.
* Our ongoing collaboration with the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group to manage the Irish Cetacean Genetic Tissue Bank, a Citizen Science project that enables researchers to better understand species conservation needs of whale and dolphin species found in Irish waters by using skin samples of stranded whales collected by volunteers. Capacity to continue this project was enabled this year by the acquisition of a new laboratory refrigerator.
* Involvement in the NetVec Ireland project that monitors blood feeding insects that act as vectors of disease, which are becoming a greater threat to health in Ireland due to the warming climate.
* Staff maintained ongoing collaborations with other government agencies and related bodies (including National Parks and Wildlife Service, Revenue, National Biodiversity Data Centre, etc.) by assisting with verification of species identifications for biological recording, managing voucher specimens of new records to Ireland, and supporting the assessment of natural materials seized for wildlife legislation enforcement purposes.
* NHD also contributed to a variety of loans to facilitate research. This included hundreds of minerals for use in a hyperspectral scanning project by the GSI, mollusc Type specimens for use in the John Ellerman Foundation’s funded Mollusca Types in Britain & Ireland project, insects and other invertebrates for use in taxonomic studies at a variety of international research centres, and a fossilised giant dormouse skull to be microCT scanned at UCL.

**EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

NHD staff engaged with the public on social media, contributed to television, radio and news items, gave a large number of virtual and in-person talks, and attended and hosted training courses and seminars online and in person. Lectures and tours were supported for a variety of third level institutions and staff variously supported student projects.

# **IRISH FOLKLIFE**

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

**ACQUISITIONS**

A total of **285** acquisitions were registered in 2023. This illustrates some of the traditional areas where additions were made but also where opportunities arose to add more contemporary objects. Highlights included:

* a Skateboard
* land-holding documents
* 1990 World Cup Commemorative Milk Bottle
* Covid-19 related objects
* selection of objects connected to *The Murmur of Bees* exhibition
* objects from a Fermanagh blacksmith’s forge
* wedding gifts
* computer games
* Ursula Jacob Camogie helmet
* Brian Cody baseball cap
* late 19th century school notebooks
* St. Brigid Crosses.

**EXHIBITIONS**

***A Breath of Fresh Air – The Keep Well*** Glass Quilt

This exhibit was displayed in the Landlord’s Library from November 2022 until its subsequent acquisition and transfer to the CRC in November 2023. This beautiful artwork was the product of a collaborative project undertaken by members of the Glass Society of Ireland during the third wave of Covid-19 and subsequent 12 weeks of lockdown.

***Gaw-Yas Grannie***

This installation of artwork was developed by Mincéiri/Traveller children through the Gaw-Yas Grannie project, developed by Leitrim County Council in partnership with Leitrim Development Company, artist Kate Murtagh Sheridan and Shannonside Community Childcare Centre as part of Leitrim County Council’s Creative Ireland programme, funded by Creative Ireland.

***Making a wooden sieve – online exhibition***

This [exhibition](https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Collections-Research/Folklife-Collections/Folklife-Collections-List-(1)/Agriculture/Online-Exhibition-Making-a-Wooden-Sieve/Making-a-wooden-sieve) outlines the process involved in the making of a wooden sieve by John Hamilton, The Naul, Co. Dublin. The exhibition is based on film footage and photography undertaken by A. T. Lucas (N.M.I.) and Kevin Danaher in 1948.

***Making a Cart – online exhibition***

This [exhibition](https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Collections-Research/Folklife-Collections/Folklife-Collections-List-(1)/Land-Transport/Making-a-cart-(1)) details the NMI’s recording in 1972 of 70-year-old wheelwright James Kelliher of Glenflesk, Co. Kerry, making a donkey cart using traditional hand tools. Additional sections display tools of the wheelwright trade and feature the 2004 cart building project in TP.

***FOLK 21***

This series of exhibitions marked both the new national St Brigid’s Day holiday from 2023, and the twenty-first anniversary of the opening of the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life in Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.  The crosses were displayed in time for St Brigid’s Day 2023. Online galleries were also created to display new photography of the objects.

***Our Irish Chair***

This exhibition came to a close in March 2023 and all divisional staff were involved in the de-install and the return of the chairs to various stores and loan material returns of student chairs to ATU Letterfrack.

***Moldovian Costumes***

A request from the Embassy of Moldovia was facilitated and mannequins in traditional costume were displayed for a month around the Easter period.

***Crónán na mBeach/The Murmur of Bees***

This exhibition was developed throughout 2023 for opening in early 2024.

**COLLABORATION & OUTREACH**

Members of the IFD staffwere invited to Comité Catholique International pour les Tsiganes (CCIT) / International Catholic Committee for Gypsies conference in Prague to discuss and develop a wider dialogue with regards to scanning over 6k images from the Parish of the Travelling People, which was completed in December. The scans are in the process of being turned into a series of themed work - starting with Pilgrimages and the scans will be hosted online, with public access, as overseen, with NMI support, by the Parish of the Travelling People Council.

***Currie Horse Project***

Some other highlights of 2023 was the Currie horse project, supporting the mapping of oral histories, heritage week’s workshop on Gammon-Cant language, the initiation of recording the reconstruction of a wagon in Tullamore, acquiring the ‘book of evidence’ in regards to the Fir-House four arrests and case, eleven requests for translations, from University Galway to the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, four conferences, six school visits/ zooms, *Hidden Histories* Recording with RTE and *Ag Triall ar an Tobar* with TG4.

**RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT**

Through a number of meetings and seminars, IFD staff contributed to two research projects in University College Dublin; one called FOODSEC which looked at grain storage throughout prehistory and the other called CUPHAT, a tourism initiative for a number of coastal and upland areas of both Wales and Ireland. Staff worked to promote our Covid Collection in *The Irish Times* as well as on the *GAA: People, Objects & Stories* exhibition at Collins Barracks. Staff worked with young filmmakers, Ruairi Glasheen and Fintan Vallely on a short documentary film on the [*History of the Bodhrán*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjMEOzfDDBY&t=6s) as well as with Singer Julie Feeney on research, writers on St. Brigid and with Artist Liing Heaney.

Extensive facilitation was provided to researchers, artists and workshops for textiles, ceramics, peatland finds, geopark, fulling cloth, samplers, Aran clothing, relics, midwifery and traditional furniture and dairy artefacts and archival research. Staff participated in the County Mayo Heritage Forum as part of the boat gallery development, research and engagement. Staff provided behind-the-scenes tours to students from University College Dublin, Dublin City University, University College Cork, ATU Mayo and University of Galway, Centre for Maritime Archaeology, Ulster University and completed fieldwork in Galway, Clare, Waterford, Kerry, Tyrone, and Cork.

***The Courtyard Gallery***

The Courtyard Galleryat Turlough Park hosted a busy schedule of art exhibitions throughout 2023, including Mags Duffy’s *The Hand Remembers*, Annaliese Brown’s *Exploring the Lakes of Mayo* and Jo Killalea’s *Preservation: Famine, Climate & Peatlands.*

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***Clare Currach Build***

Recordings were made of the traditional currach build by Master Shipwright, James Madigan.

***Cart Restoration project***

A cart made in 2004 was restored as part of a collaboration with the Castlebar Mens’ Shed.

**Conservation**

NMI’s Conservation Department has predominant responsibility for maintaining standards of collection care and conservation for the extensive NMI collections it holds in trust for the Nation. The main areas of focus of the Conservation Department is to determine and enact the preventative, remedial and investigative care needs of the NMI Collection. Together the team of fourteenaddressed the conservation needs across all curatorial divisions and NMI’s eight museum sites on the decant of ceramics and glass collections from Collins Barracks to the CRC to enable the Changing Ireland gallery development.

**HOUSEKEEPING AND UPGRADE OF COLLECTIONS**

A Preventive Conservator was appointed in February 2023 after a six-month vacancy. Along with fellow colleagues from Registration and other departments, Conservation staff were involved in the decant of the scientific instrument, glass, and ceramic collections from the North Block of Collins Barracks to the Collections Resource Centre and the decant of the Armoury. Wooden artefacts from our colleagues from Irish Antiquities Division were removed to a new storage space in the Collections Resource Centre and a rationalisation of workspaces for waterlogged wood took place.

Two new cold rooms, an upgraded freezer and a steel mobile platform for supporting the Armada Cannon were installed in the Conservation department in 2023. Installation of a second plan-chest for flag storage in Block 14 was unfortunately delayed. A new roller-storage unit was installed at NMI – Country Life for the collaborative textile collections storage upgrade project. An extensive survey of the textile stores in Collins Barracks was undertaken after detecting moth activity. Gallery and case cleaning by conservation and curatorial staff took place in the *Viking Ireland*, *Ór, The Way We Wore* and *Country Furniture* exhibitions. There are still ongoing issues that hinder the completion of the Low RH room in NMI – Archaeology, Kildare Street. Dehydrated log boats from were cleaned and rehoused in Daingean.

**REMEDIAL CONSERVATION**

Treatment was undertaken on objects for exhibition and loans, improved storage, publication and research as well as first aid measures for freshly excavated archaeological material such as bog-butters and a silver coin hoard. The principal focus was on objects destined for exhibition in the upcoming *Changing* *Ireland Galleries,* the *Murmur of Bees* and the anticipated manuscript exhibition that is due to be launched in 2025. Conservation was also carried out on core collections including the *Schlagintweit* life mask collection, prehistoric wooden tridents, the Drogheda boat in Collections Resource Centre, the Armada cannon, gun-carriage wheel and pitch vessel and the recently acquired medieval bells from Howth Castle.

**INVESTIGATIVE CONSERVATION**

Examination, investigation and scientific analysis of the collections routinely form part of conservation processes. Radiography of core collections continued along with the service to private archaeological conservators. Since the new Bruker XRF is portable and operable it has been used to analyse artefacts in Kildare St, Natural History and in Clare County Museum. Routine xrf analysis of new and potential acquisitions from IAD was undertaken to determine composition and authenticity - a number of coin forgeries were detected. Research projects for forthcoming publications and theses were continued: Drumanagh Iron-age copper alloys, and early medieval vessels. Analysis was also carried out on artefacts selected for the 2025 manuscript exhibition. Additionally, Conservation undertook or facilitated sampling of artefacts such as crosiers, spear shafts, tool handles and human remains for C14 dating and wood identification. The Cross of Clogher was obtained on short-term loan from Monaghan County Museum and was surface cleaned, fully recorded and subjected to radiography and XRF analysis to determine the form, construction and the alloys used in its manufacture.

**EXHIBITIONS AND LOANS:** Conservation staff from Textiles, Paper, Furniture and Applied Arts were involved in numerous planning meetings and discussions concerning the content of the *Changing Ireland* exhibition. Staff also conserved and mounted artefacts selected for *the GAA: people, objects & stories* and the *Murmur of Bees* exhibitions. The latter included an important loan from the Corning Museum of Glass, USA. The *Airgead* exhibition was upgraded and remounted. Conservation and IAD staff were involved in visits to archaeological companies, local museums and heritage centres to inspect artefacts, environmental conditions and buildings. Loan inspections also took place in Yorkshire at the Royal Armouries, and the Captain Cook Museum, Whitby, where a long-term loan was returned.

**FIELDWORK**

Fieldwork was carried out following recovery of archaeological material and minor excavations from a variety of contexts in particular bog butters, human remains and wooden artefacts. In addition, numerous medieval metal artefacts were recovered from the River Shannon by divers. Conservation staff were also active in inspecting county museums, heritage centres and commercial archaeological premises (Co. Waterford, Clare and Offaly) and facilities.

**RESEARCH, COLLABORATION, ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH**

Conservation staff continued to deliver a number of modules (Light, Pollution, Insect Pests; Temperature and Relative Humidity; Disaster Preparedness; Investigative Conservation, Handling and Packing), workshops and tours to MA in Museum Studies students at the University College Cork. Staff also provided tours of the Conservation labs for NMI staff and other cultural and research institutions. Conservation staff are represented on the committees of Institute of Conservator Restorers of Ireland (ICRI) and the Conservation and Collection Care Group of the Council for National Cultural Institutions of Ireland (CNCI).

Conservation staff actively participated in numerous online CPD training courses, conferences and seminars, e.g. CNCI conferences: *Open and Shut – display case requirements* and *Specifications* and *Managing Museum Environments*, and provided conservation advice to cultural institutions, researchers and the public. Conservation staff also participated in a number of workshops to discuss and develop NMI’s Collections Care and Conservation Strategy and Risk Management templates. NMI’s Textile Conservator worked closely with Education and Artist-in-Residence, Anthony Haughey on the development of the *We make our own histories* exhibition. The team also assisted colleagues in the National Monuments Underwater Unit on the formulation of an Underwater Cultural Heritage strategy.

**REGISTRATION**

The NMI Registration department’s role is to develop and maintain collections management to ensure the integrity of information on the National Collection. The team prioritises the development of procedures and ensures location control, and co-ordinates collections logistics and upgrades in museum storage.

Registration also co-ordinates NMI’s busy loans programme and provides exhibition support and access to information for researchers through outreach initiatives, behind-the-scenes tours, onsite research appointments and via the management of the object, library and archive catalogues, where collections are catalogued, and data is systematically enhanced.

**COLLECTION MOVES**

In 2023, much of the focus of the Registration Department was on the preparation for upcoming large-scale capital development projects in the Natural History Museum in Merrion Street, Beggar’s Bush storage site, Collins Barracks, Daingean storage site and the Collections Resource Centre (CRC). Registration worked with colleagues in Natural History and Conservation to oversee the fitout of a large decant space in the CRC to receive Phase 2 of the decant of the Natural History Museum.

The Registration team assisted NMI colleagues on upgrading the storage of radioactive material in the geology collection. 2023 saw Registration continue work on a number of projects including the management of an inventory of collections stored in the crypt in NMI - Archaeology and an inventory of the University College Dublin’s Mineral Collection at the CRC and Beggar’s Bush. Staff also worked with Conservation to increase the storage capacity in the stores in NMI – Country Life and conducted reviews of existing processes, policies and procedures on behalf of the Registration Department.

A project to clean and enhance data in the linked thesauri in *Axiell Collections* also continued. Registration worked with colleagues in Art & Industry and Conservation to deliver a **decant of** **12,000 objects** from the North Block of Collins Barracks to other museum sites to allow for the development of new *Changing Ireland* gallery spaces and the move of NMI’s arms and armour collection.

**INCREASING CAPACITY**

Registration led the production of a framework agreement for art handling and logistics services and work alongside colleagues in Procurement, Curatorial and Conservation on a framework for specialist conservation services and conservation of historic cases in support of the programme of capital works. 2023 also saw the delivery of a logistics report from external consultants on the long-term storage and move requirements for NMI that fed into a Strategic Assessment Report for government.

**DOCUMENTATION PROJECTS**

Beyond decants and inventory, documentation of all NMI’s collections continued. As part of the core work of the Registration Department, Art & Industry (A&I) Documentation focused on loans with several historical loans and temporary numbers resolved. A post-move locations audit of the North Block Decant was carried out alongside colleagues in AID and Conservation resulting in new shelving and plans for a full cataloguing project of the Scientific Instrument Collection.

Registration coordinated the import of two significant acquisitions on behalf of NMI.

Colleagues worked on the deinstall of *Down to Earth* exhibition in the Riding School of Collins Barracks. As well as managing the inventory in Irish Antiquities, colleagues worked with curatorial and conservation on planning for NMI’s upcoming manuscript exhibition, moving the collection of log boats in Daingean and worked on the return of a significant loan from the Captain Cook Memorial Museum.

**LOANS**

2023 was an extremely busy year with regards to incoming and outgoing, national and international loans:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NMI Division** | **Ireland** | **International (incl. Northern Ireland)** |
| Art & Industry | 55 | 2 |
| Irish Antiquities | 50 | 13 |
| Irish Folklife | 8 | 2 |
| Natural History | 5 | 0 |

**ARCHIVIST AND LIBRARIAN WORK**

The Archivist and Librarian continued to provide a research service for NMI staff including book orders, archive and library acquisitions. The Librarian renewed journal subscriptions/ memberships and Inter library loans and carried out an audit and assessment of library spaces and a series of needs assessment with colleagues in curatorial divisions. The Archivist established a programme of transfer and accession and has cleared a non-current record backlog from Collins Barracks.

Registration also provided talks at a range of conference, university and other cultural institution events, provided training, workshops and attended training on a range of areas .

Registration was delighted to contribute to the Irish Registrars Group (IRG) with the Acting Registrar chairing an IRG Subgroup on Capital Projects and Storage. The team continue to participate in and contribute to various network groups and associations.

**DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY**

2023 was another busy year and one member of our team retired in June 2023. A business case and recruitment process were implemented to find a suitable replacement. A new position at Executive Officer grade (Illustrator) was also established and suitably filled.

**EXHIBITIONS**

Design and Photography provided substantial exhibition support for a number of current and forthcoming exhibitions. This included design procurement, advice on branding, exhibition layout design and exhibition marketing collateral, including *GAA; People, Objects & Stories* exhibition and the *Murmur of Bees* exhibition scheduled to open in 2024.

A number of design projects were undertaken including Natural History exhibit label and signage design; St Patrick’s Festival poster and leaflet design; spring and summer events leaflet and poster design; Irish Design Trail leaflet design; Christmas Family Day at Collins Barracks and Education banners.

**DESIGN**

***NMI’s Strategic Plan 2023-2028***

The design of NMI’s new strategic plan, *Increasing Accessibility, Engaging Community 2023 – 2028* was overseen by the Design and Photography Department and the final version was published in both print and web format.

***Brand and Identity Refresh project***

As part of our previous strategic plan the NMI Brand and Identity refresh project commenced in June 2023. A substantial procurement project was enacted with input from Marketing, Finance and Senior management and a specialist Brand design company was appointed. The Design and Photography Department provided the project lead for this project.

**PUBLICATIONS**

The team supported a number of NMI department publications, including the *Irish Community Archives Network (iCAN) Skills Handbook – A guide to researching and writing Local History* and

an Irish Art Pottery publication.

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

Requests for imagery from the archive were supplied for publications. Imagery was scanned for divisional records and future exhibitions.

As part of the Department’s Business Plan 2023 we have worked closely with the Registration Department to collate the archaeological drawing archive with a view to cataloguing and digitising the archive for future use.

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

NMI’s contract Photographer undertook over 97 photography sessions across all NMI’s divisions, resulting in **753 items photographed and 2368 photographs delivered**. Photography also continues to be provided. Much-needed photographic equipment was procured with a view to extending the range of the photographic services to the various departments across NMI.

***Digital Imaging***

Photography responded to **575** requests which amounted to the preparation and distribution of **8,474 images;** a considerable increase in output when compared to 2022. Out of the 8,474 images, 473 images were processed for *Changing Ireland*, 115 images for *The Murmur of Bees*, and over 200 images were processed for numismatic lectures.

**2,450 new images** from 108 photographic sessions reviewed, organised, edited for image quality and metadata content, and were added to the Photographic Department’s Digital Archive. Highlights include 388 images for *Changing Ireland*; over 200 images of NMI’s Handling Collection objects; new photography of St. Brigid’s shoe shrine; the Ballinderry sword; and bodhrans from the Irish Folklife collection.

***Training courses****:*

Design and photography team attended many Seminars, webinars, training workshops.

­­The Department attended Design-related talks which were hosted by Design Skillnet Ireland on: Type Trends / Colour Theory for Creatives / Service Design in August 2023. The Department trained 15 new users in the operation of the DAMS.

*MuseumNext Digital Summit 2023* and *Planning Your DAM Migration*. As a member of the CNCI Digitisation & Cataloguing Group, attended the CNCI Digitisation and Cataloguing Group Seminar *Heritage for all: Inclusive and Accessible Collections Online* at IMMA.

**EDUCATION & LEARNING**

As a public sector cultural institution, NMI recognises the significant role that education, informal learning and community engagement play in the overall 21st century museum experience. The Education & Learning team are active across all NMI’s exhibition sites and also partake in community outreach initiatives. The Education & Learning department also supports the Irish Community Archive Network in collaboration with the Heritage Council. The team raises awareness of NMI’s learning programs and resources, and the role that museums can play in informal learning at both the Art Teachers Association’s and the History Teachers Association’s Annual Conferences.

In 2023, the Education & Learning team engaged with **130,000 people** of all ages, both online and onsite through formal education sessions, public programs such as tours and events, targeted community engagement initiatives. Through the establishment of NMI’s Freelance Panel, the NMI was able to increase its offering and an increase in engagement was noted across the four sites.

**OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT**

At **NMI-Archaeology,**2023 offered the highest amount of school tour slots in over a decade. At **NMI-Natural History**, numbers attending programming were constrained by the closure of the first floor and by staffing changes.

Additional highlights included the development of an Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreted workshop for deaf students and seven of the online video resources were updated to include ISL. Interestingly a snapshot analysis showed that 66% of the groups who had tours in the autumn have never visited the museum and almost half of the classes attending the Dead Zoo Tour were from DEIS and Special Education schools. There were over **12,000 views** for the NMI’s Education & Learning science resources and videos, with a video for schools explaining extinction having over **1700 views**.

**At NMI – Decorative Arts and History,** the range of tours expanded to include new curriculum-linked themes, including *Revolutionary Women* and *A Taste of the Past* which explored the social history of dining in 17th – 19th century Ireland. The new film *Bonnets, Bandoliers and Ballot Papers* and accompanying teachers' resources provided schools with a resource exploring the changing role of Irish women at the start of the 20th century through key artefacts in NMI‘s Collections. The team worked closely with the Decade of Centenaries Artist-in-Residence, Anthony Haughey on the *Young People’s Assembly,* a project involving five post-primary schools across Ireland, including Belfast. **At NMI-Country Life** highlights included Engineering week where schools were hosted through YouTube live in an interactive session with 400 students across Ireland.  Other events included making use of the grounds for Orienteering Week and Biodiversity Week and working with curatorial colleagues from Natural History Division. in a cross-collaborative way for Bio-Blitz workshops.

**PUBLIC PROGRAMME**

At **NMI-Archaeology**, the long-term development of regular guided tours and regular drop-in sessions for families in school holidays and at core national festivals, was progressed during the year. During Bealtaine onsite concentrated on the topic of Ancient Crafts. Storytelling was a key focus for 2023, with sessions being run for International Museum’s Day, Culture Night, and during the Medieval Open Day.

**At NMI-Natural History**, there were a wide range of events for families at the Wonder Cabinet, mainly the Pop-Up Chats series and using the handling collection to encourage engagement. A new trail about Invasive Species was developed in partnership with the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

**At NMI – Decorative Arts and History**, new life-long learning resources were developed, including a Design Trail which was launched during Design Craft Council of Ireland (DCCoI) Design Week. Two family trails – *Museum in Bloom* and *The Music Trail*, and the general Guide for Families in the Museum was updated and improved as was the Heritage Trail. There was also participation in major nationwide festivals such as Brigid’s Day and Heritage Week, and seasonal events such as Easter and Christmas.

2023 also saw the range of themes for the popular drop-in, hands-on sessions for the public, to include, for example, ‘Food and Drink’, ‘Going Out, Staying In’, ‘Childhood Games’ and ‘Life, Disease and Death’ (to coincide with Dublin’s Bram Stoker Festival).  **At NMI-Country Life**, the focus was on Calendar Customs events and with the re-focus on St. Brigid and St Brigid’s Day. Biodiversity Day was particularly popular over the course of six events including trap release, pond dipping, rare bees of Mayo talk and wildflower and bee spotting.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**At NMI-Archaeology**, a new slot for tours for community groups was created as part of the regular programme ranging from groups of new citizens In Ireland, the National Organisation of the Unemployed, to local community special interest and needs groups. There also was a range of tours and workshops delivered during eight sessions for refugee families and adults who came with the Jesuit Refugee Service at Baleskin Asylum Centre to the museum.

**NMI-Natural History** worked with Focus Ireland to facilitate a tour with a collections handling session. Focus Ireland’s customers are a diverse group with specific needs, and many are homeless and/or financially challenged. Throughout the summer, the team facilitated tours with handling sessions at The Wonder Cabinet for different community groups. Three sessions were delivered to children from Sonas, the largest provider of frontline services to women and children experiencing domestic abuse in the greater Dublin region. A session was also delivered to adults and children from the Baleskin Reception Centre for refugees and asylum seekers.  One of the key activity trails was also translated into Ukrainian and between April and December 2023 a total of 766 Ukrainian activity sheets (My Favourite Animal) were used by Museum visitors.

**At NMI – Decorative Arts and History**, the Museum’s ongoing programme of community engagement included the ‘Take-Over Day’ in July. This is a collaboration with local community groups including the Children & Youth Action Group and Aosóg After-School Programme. The groups ‘take over’ Clarke Square, Collins Barracks with art activities, games, food, music and dance events. The theme for 2023 was Creativity in the Community, and the numbers of participants in 2023 was greater than in 2022, with **over 800 participants**.

The Culture Club programme, a partnership with Dublin City Council Culture Company continued at NMI. There were a range of talks, tours and behind-the-scenes visits with all 11 monthly Clubs booked to capacity.

A number of community engagement projects and initiatives were in development in 2023, including a partnership with Fighting Words Creative Writing Agency, funded by Léargas, the EU Youth Work, Education & Training Agency. The project will involve groups from the Irish Refugee Council and local community groups from Dublin 8, including a Ukrainian Women’s Group.The Artist in Residence, Anthony Haughey’s exhibition is at the planning stage, with the education team closely involved in development of the exhibition and onsite and online public and schools' engagement programmes. The decant of the *Little Houses* exhibition took place. This exhibition was a hugely popular exhibition with the public. Our visitors regularly enquired about the exhibition, which continues to have an online presence through NMI’s website.  It is planned that a number of the artworks will be acquired into NMI’s permanent collection, as documenting the pandemic, as it impacted on young people from the Dublin 7 community.

**At NMI-Country Life**, some of the handling collection went on loan to the Museum of Birds and Beasts in West Cork. This culminated in outputs such as an exhibition and book of the reminiscence work, with a talk and outreach to local nursing homes. The team worked on the Hidden Histories event with the Mayo Genealogy Group which culminated in a display of over 30 pull ups of stories about revolutionary women of Mayo and their hidden histories.

**IRISH COMMUNITY ARCHIVE NETWORK (iCAN)**

TheIrish Community Archive Network (iCAN) continues as a leading organisation championing and supporting digital community archives in Ireland. iCAN empowers and equips local communities to document their own history, heritage, and culture on digital platforms, and make it accessible to people all over the world.

A new partnership between the Heritage Council and the National Museum of Irelandwas established to jointly fund and further support the delivery of the iCAN programme. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU, 2023 to 2028) both organisations will facilitate iCAN’s growth and expansion and provide additional resourcing for participating communities. The partnership was officially announced in May at a celebratory event in Co Wicklow and was attended by 60 partners and iCAN community members from across the country. A suite of six films featuring community members talking about their iCAN experience was also successfully launched on the day.

*Network Growth & Expansion* was a focus for 2023 with the addition of seven new archives, bringing the total number of websites in the Network to 35. Events were held to celebrate the launch of Heritage Cork, and Clonlara Heritage in Co Clare over August. Ten new groups were welcomed into iCAN after successful recruitment drives in collaboration with the County Heritage Officers in Wicklow and Tipperary, bringing the total number of member groups to 38.

A Project Assistant was recruited on a full-time, three-year contract, adding to the team’s capacity to support existing member groups and to expand the Network into new counties.  By year end, **just under 2 million users** had accessed the iCAN archives, with **6,745,531 pages** of cultural heritage content viewed.

As a result of the MoU, the inaugural iCAN Community Fund was rolled out in collaboration with participating Heritage Officers. 19 grants were provided to groups for the purchase of essential equipment. iCAN presented a 20-minute film featuring community members who highlighted how iCAN supports their technical needs and skills development. The film event was attended by 3000+ at the MuseumNext Digital Summit. iCAN co-hosted a one-day conference entitled *Supporting Community Archives into the Future* at the Royal Irish Academy in collaboration with the Digital Repository of Ireland. The conference attracted 65 delegates from across Ireland, representing not only local history and heritage but also identity, activist, and cultural collections.

**OPERATIONS**

**FINANCE**

The 2023 allocation received from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGS&M) was as follows:

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| --- | --- |
|  | € |
| o                  Pay & pensions | 11,274,000 |
| o                  Non-Pay | 6,084,000 |
| o                  Capital | 1,308,000 |
| Total | **€18,666,000** |

During 2023 the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media also awarded amounts totalling **€4,869,626** in relation to grants for specific purposes. Fixed asset expenditure of **€1,511,064** was capitalised.

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

**Financial Statements 2023**

The Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2023 and the accompanying audit file in early 2023.  The C&AG audit of the Financial Statements for 2023 took place during April 2024. NMI’s accounts in respect of the year ending 31 December 2023 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 2023 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 2023 Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the reporting requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

**Procurement**

The Unit is responsible for the management of the procurement process of all National and EU procurements. To this end, NMI continues building internal expertise in the area of procurement.

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

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

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**HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Human Resources Unit provides the full range of HR services including recruitment, administration of staff pay and other terms and conditions, employee relations services and pension services. HR is also responsible for developing HR policies, people management initiatives, and learning and development which creates a framework for supporting staff and managers to work together to deliver on the overall mission and ongoing strategic development of NMI.

2023 was another busy year for HR. The new five-year strategic plan which was launched in June is an ambitious strategy requiring notable change in practices/processes, culture and people management structures etc. Embracing this and dealing with the usual staff movement, and turnover renders workforce forecasting and planning quite challenging. Developments such at as the Natural History Museum, resourcing new exhibitions and dealing with infrastructural projects required a mix of resourcing models including directly employed staff, agency workers, contractors etc.

NMI found it challenging to attract applicants in certain specialist areas due to low entry-level pay rates. Understandably there is not a lot of standardisation or consistency of staffing levels across the cultural institutions, however, a desktop benchmarking exercise revealed that staffing levels in NMI are quite low especially when servicing several sites in diverse locations. NMI therefore relies heavily on the hard work, commitment, and diverse skills/expertise of staff across all departments and this level of dedication and loyalty is particularly important and appreciated by NMI management.

HR continued to provide the full range of HR services including recruitment, administration of staff pay and other terms and conditions, employee relations, pension services, and policy development. HR also took responsibility for mandatory training, organisation-wide training as well as managing the refund of fees scheme for professional and personal development to create a framework for supporting staff and managers to work together to deliver on the overall mission and ongoing strategic development of NMI.

***Recruitment***

2023 was a good year for recruitment, and internal promotions, the highest on record in any one year. There were 26 new starters and 13 internal promotions throughout the year, culminating in more than 40 recruitment competitions to fill positions in Education, Design & Photography, Conservation, Human Resources, Retail, Irish Antiquities, Art and Industry, Finance, Irish Folklife, Natural History, Registration, Facilities and Registration. The associated induction/’on-boarding’ activities mandatory was efficiently undertaken by staff in HR, line managers, and the staff in other departments as required. Alongside this line managers and HR managed a fluctuating pool of agency workers and contractors in line with service requirements.

***Learning & Development /Leadership Development***

Learning Development covers a diverse range of activities in NMI for the purpose of providing employees with the skills and knowledge needed to grow in their roles and to contribute to the strategic and operational development of the organisation.

HR coordinated online and onsite learning and development, under the broad umbrella headings of mandatory training, professional and personal development, as well as coordinating organisation-wide training and supporting identified training requests under the Refund of Fees scheme. These included external coaching for newly appointed managers, those undertaking projects and/or seeking assistance with specific operational/strategic was also provided, as was facilitated coaching /team development for some areas.

***Leadership Development Programme***

In March, a leadership development programme was launched for the Management Committee. The programme was designed in collaboration with key stakeholders and comprises of a mix of self-directed and facilitated team events.  The initial focus was on creating greater understanding of respective roles and responsibilities, styles, values, collaborating and acting as a collective leadership team.

Participants were provided with a space to reflect and learn, supporting individual and collective development as the Museum’s management team. The programme aimed to respond to the challenges and opportunities for management committee members as leaders and managers in shaping the day-to-day life of the Museum and its transformation towards its future strategic ambitions.

During the year there were nine facilitated activities, including a wider staff engagement session where management and staff were facilitated to reflect on what makes the Museum work day-to-day, (the mechanics) and what contributes to the creativity and uniqueness of NMI (the magic). The initial feedback from staff was positive, and it was agreed to commission a second phase of development in 2024, with a view to exploring a shift towards a wider organisational development programme focusing more on change management and whole system engagement.

***Health, Wellbeing, and Diversity***

The focus on health and wellbeing remains a high priority for workplaces and NMI continued to support employees across a range of needs and work positive initiatives.  NMI revised and strengthened the contract with Inspire Healthcare for the provision of an Employee Assistance Programme/Services (EAP). The Inspire Support Hub provides access to a range of online resources. We also contracted with Medmark, an independent Occupational Health Service provider, in addition to the services of the Chief Medical office for staff with health issues.

HR updated EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) –related policies, i.e.

* Gender Identity & Expression Policy
* Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy
* Gender Policy
* Employing people with Disability Policy

HR worked with a contracted specialist who facilitated staff consultation (three separate sessions) and one individual consultation in drafting the new policy documentation.

Beo will facilitate further communication sessions for staff and managers regarding the new policies and provide training for line managers. Under the Comprehensive Strategy for People with Disabilities (2015 – 2024), the Government has committed to increasing the public service employment target for persons with disabilities on an incremental basis from a minimum of 3% to a minimum of 6% by 2024. In 2023, 13% of employees in the NMI reported a disability using the definition of disability as defined in the Disability Act 2005, which leaves us comfortably exceeding that target.

***Employee /Industrial Relations***

Industrial and Employee Relations were active but generally good throughout the year. There was a shift towards local meetings with HR and Shop Stewards, as well as meetings with Forsa when necessary. The need for museum council meetings reduced and the work of building trust and collaborating on issues, i.e., restoration /grading structures continued.  Several longstanding issues were satisfactorily resolved and there was only one referral for ‘third party’ resolution.

At end of 2023 there was a recognition of the benefits of enhancing people management skills and pursuing a strategy of building this into promotional roles, to support practices and enable the development of skills in preparation for more senior roles within NMI and externally. It was also noteworthy that our workforce's profile is undergoing notable change in demographics and age. For the first time in many years, there is a sizable number of staff aged 30 or younger which adds a much-needed dimension of youth and new energy.  The largest cohort of workers are in the 40-60 age group (105) and approximately 30 employees are over 60.  This blend of youth at one end of the spectrum alongside a growing number of employees reaching retirement eligibility creates an interesting workplace dynamic, of great richness, but also known risks and vulnerabilities which cannot be overlooked. This intergenerational and multi-cultural work force is NMI ‘s greatest asset and the HR team will play an integral role in enhancing its capacity to grow and develop, professionally and personally into 2024.

**CORPORATE AFFAIRS**

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

**Corporate Governance**

A number of policy and legislative documents were reviewed and updated during the year including work on a new Code of Conduct for Employees.

**Ethics in Public Office**

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

**Risk Management**

A review of the NMI’s Risk Management framework commenced in conjunction with Mazars. A series of workshops took place with the Senior Risk Team and the Corporate Risk Register was revised with additional columns being added to assist in the ongoing management of long-term risks. Throughout the year the Risk Register was continuously reviewed, and regular updates were provided to the Governance, Audit and Risk Committee.

**Internal Audit**

Internal Audit continued with its programme of work throughout 2023. The mandatory review of the Systems of Internal Control was carried out and signed off by the Audit and Risk Committee in April 2023. Implementation of the recommendations from previous internal audit reviews continued throughout 2023. Towards the end of 2023, procurement of a new Internal Audit service commenced.

**GDPR**

Work continued in relation to the assessment of the NMI’s compliancy with GDPR. As part of the annual programme of work, data protection policies were reviewed and updated. All departmental and divisional Records of Processing (RoPA’s) were reviewed and updated in Q4 of 2023. Work in relation to assessing the overall governance structure for managing data protection at NMI continued throughout 2023.

**Freedom of Information**

Under Freedom of Information Act 2014, 14 FOI requests were responded to during the year.

**Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**

A total number of 15 PQs were received from the Houses of the Oireachtas during the year. The PQs related to queries of relevance to NMI Divisions right across NMI in both Operations and Collections areas.

**Irish Language**

Work continued to enhance the use of the Irish language at the NMI and to ensure compliance with the Official Languages Act. We as an organisation are committed to achieving our required compliance figures according to the regulations. As outlined by the Official Languages Act, we strive to meet specific targets related to Irish language promotion. These targets include:  
  
**Placement Requirement**: The Act mandates that 20% of our advertising efforts should be in Irish. In 2023, we achieved an 17% placement rate, demonstrating our dedication to promoting the language.  
  
**Budgetary Requirement**: We are also committed to allocating 5% of our budget to the Irish language media. While in 2023, we reached 5.3%. we recognise the need for improvement.  
  
We recognise the need for improvement. To further enhance our compliance efforts, we have engaged the services of Measmedia for 2024. With their expertise, we aim to fully meet both the placement and budgetary requirements.

**Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

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

In addition to his senior role, the Head of ICT continued to fill in as the Head of Facilities and Security throughout 2023 while the position was advertised. Team capacity was further stretched due to staffing constraints. The ICT department is staffed by a small but agile team consisting of three area specialists, supported by an Administrator and the Head of the Department.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

The majority of the team’s time in 2023 was spent on operational support and in support of projects headed by other departments, however, the programme of modernisation of the ICT environment in NMI continued throughout 2023.

The ICT helpdesk responded to **1960** support requests from users in 2023.

 Other key achievements include:

* Implementation of new cloud-based endpoint threat prevention system.
* Implementation of managed off-site backup.
* Improvements to ransomware resistant backups.
* Procurement of new core infrastructure support contracts.

**MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The Marketing and Communications department is responsible for promoting NMI’s activities, exhibitions, events, and collections to attract visitors. The team manages the NMI’s public image through advertisement, media communications and partnerships.

Without our visitors NMI would not exist. In 2023, we were extremely proud to welcome over **1.4 million visitors** onto our sites.

A screenshot of a computer screen

Description automatically generated

***External Partnerships***

The Marketing Department continued to develop ongoing partnerships with a number of agencies including Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and AVEA.

***Website***

In acknowledging NMI’s online visitors and accessibility to the National Collection, NMI’s website was a primary focus in the development of an overarching Digital Strategy for NMI.

***NMI Newsletter***

A special thanks to our visitors and followers who are currently subscribed to NMI’s Newsletter. We witnessed a steady increase in subscriptions for NMI’s public newsletter throughout 2023.

***Branding & Identity Refresh and Audience Research***

Together with Design & Photography and other teams, the Marketing & Communications team was involved in the workshops and staff consultation phases of NMI’s branding & identity refresh project. In parallel with this project, NMI commissioned experts to conduct a visitor experience research project to inform communication plans for a wide range of audiences over the coming years.

**Exhibitions**

The four sites of the National Museum of Ireland achieved good national and regional print and broadcast media coverage for a number of exhibitions that were launched or de-installed in 2023. With thanks to RTE’s Supporting the Arts Scheme, a radio campaign was developed for the launch of *GAA: People, Objects & Stories* and proved to be a great success in increasing exhibition footfall.

***Culture Night***

The Museum sites remained open until 9pm to mark Culture Night in September. A number of programmes were developed for this occasion from discovering the Stone Age to Medieval times, through to the folklore and traditions of 19th and 20th century Ireland.

***Winter in Dublin***

Winter in Dublin was a collaborative event between Fáilte Ireland and Dublin stakeholders including the National Museum of Ireland. It provided the opportunity to showcase great activities and events taking place across the NMI’s sites during Q4 2023.

***Late Night at the Museum***

Based on audience research NMI focused a marketing campaign around increasing footfall to the NMI- Decorative Arts & History, campaigns extended over the summer with Museum sites open until 8pm.

***NMI - Country Life***

Overall, it was a positive year for the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life with footfall increasing by 21% on 2022 figures (72k in 2022 to +87k in 2023). Turlough Park achieved good national and regional print and broadcast media coverage throughout 2023 for a number of PR campaigns including St Brigid’s Day; the *Gaw Yas Grannie* exhibition; *The Hand Remembers* exhibition and Halloween at the Museum.

***Advertising***

There were a number of offline and online advertising campaigns for NMI – Country Life with the majority of paid advertising focussed on regional media. The breakdown for total advertising spends for Country Life in 2023 was digital (social media and digital display) 43%; print 23%; radio 19% and tourism/specialist publications 15%.

***Fáilte Ireland***

The NMI - Country Life continued to work closely with regional Fáilte Ireland representatives. The Country Life site joined the ‘Key Accounts’ programme in 2023 which provides valuable benchmarking data to inform marketing priorities and opportunities. NMI – Country Life was featured in the Buyer’s Guide for Meitheal 2023; Ireland’s largest tourism industry event. The NMI – Country Life site is one of the first visitor experiences in Co. Mayo to be listed in Fáilte Ireland’s new ‘online buyer’s portal’ for travel trade industry. The site continues to utilise the Wild Atlantic Way brand in its promotion and marketing activities.

***Digital Marketing***

In 2023 a Digital Marketing Strategy was implemented. The strategy focused on enhancing content consistency across its website, newsletter, and social media channels. This strategic shift enabled the Museum to streamline content distribution, ensuring that visitors across digital platforms encountered the Museum's content consistently and frequently.

Collaborating closely with Fáilte Ireland and the Museum's education and outreach department, a concerted effort was made to develop and promote *Winter in Dublin*-themed content, aligning with the city's seasonal themes for 2023. This collaboration not only enriched the Museum's digital presence but also contributed to the broader cultural promotion of Dublin during the winter months. Progress was also achieved in promoting various Museum blogs. Across all digital platforms, NMI maintained a robust presence, marked by consistent growth. Notably, the Museum's newsletter, YouTube channel, and Instagram platforms experienced substantial percentage increases in engagement and followership.

To amplify its reach, the Museum strategically placed digital display advertisements regionally and nationally, leveraging platforms such as the *Dublin Gazette*, *History Ireland*, and *The Connaught Telegraph*. This multifaceted approach to digital marketing ensured broader visibility and engagement with diverse audiences, reinforcing the NMI's position as one of the leading cultural institutions in Ireland.

***Social Media Followers***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| January ‘23 | December ‘23 | Growth |
| 63,507 | **65,349** | **3%** |
| 51,199 | **52,199** | **2%** |
| 21,303 | **24,100** | **13%** |
| 2,480 | **3,310** | **33%** |
| 8,988 | **10,316** | **15%** |

**COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RETAIL**

The Commercial Development is responsible for developing and maximising all revenue generation and commercial activities at the Museum. The Department is responsible for the retail function by increasing its turnover and maximising sales. The Department is also responsible for maximising the commercial return from other existing activities including catering franchises, photographic rights and reproductions, venue hire, film location, car parking, donations as well as new commercial

2023 was another busy year for the Commercial Department. As staffing levels were tight, resources were focused on the safe and successful management of many mid-scale and large-scale events that took place in Collins Barracks.

**EVENTS**

Throughout 2023, the NMI hosted a number of popular concerts and events with strategic partners, including *Tradfest*, St. Patrick’s Festival, *Mother Pride Block Party*, Defence Forces 98th Cadet Commissioning, *Wider than Pictures Concert* Series, *Bram Stoker Festival* and The New Year’s Eve Festival.

With overall 2023 attendee numbers reaching **88,854** at Collins Barracks, these hugely successful spectacles generated a significant amount of press and social media coverage as well as building awareness of the Museum among the wider community.

NMI engaged in other projects to further develop Collins Barracks for future events including a safe capacity analysis, a ground survey across the Collins Barracks campus and a number of refurbishment projects on our indoor spaces.

**CAFÉ**

The Office of Public Works continued the refurbishment of the Collins Barracks café space and Palatine Room kitchens. To provide an offering for visitors in the interim the services of two temporary outdoor catering trucks during 2023 were engaged; *Currabinny* until July 2023 and *Good Vibrations* as well as a number of pop-up stands during busy periods. The Norwegian Tour Company brought visiting brass bands and choirs to entertain museum visitors relaxing over coffee during the spring and summer months.

NMI – Country Life were successfully awarded retail experience mentoring support from Fáilte Ireland in late 2023 to enhance NMI’s retail experience and commercial outcomes. The onsite café interior was significantly upgraded in 2023.

***Digital That Delivers***

The Digital That Delivers initiative, which involved the securing of €66,000 in funding by Fáilte Ireland continued through 2023 with a view to rolling out a digital pilot scheme.Work on the development **of** the pilotcontinued throughout 2023 will involve a curated digital tour covering selected artefacts located on the ground floor of the National Museum of Archaeology. The handheld digital device will allow for visitors to access additional information in five different languages while improving visitor engagement and enhancing the overall experience.

***Donations***

The rollout of contactless donation boxes alongside our traditional cash boxes resulted in a significant increase in contributions in 2023 with an overall **increase of 105% in total donations received** compared to 2022. NMI’s contactless donations contributed almost a third of on-site donations with cash donations still significant at a ratio of 2:1. Initial work commenced on a tender to provide assistance in the areas of sponsorship and fundraising which will issue in early 2024 and look to develop those areas of revenue generation.

***Retail Sites***

2023 delivered further growth in revenue as normal trading conditions continued. The shop located at NMI - Archaeology saw growth in revenue of 3% which was a robust result as we introduced a significant change in terms of visitor entry and exit points at the shop site. Additional staff were engaged in order to provide enhanced visitor service and trading times across our Dublin sites which will provide further benefit throughout 2024. A retail review was carried out in for the NMI – Country Life shop with recommendations including improvements in shop layout and offering which will be completed in the first half of 2024. NMI’s online shop is currently undergoing a review with a view to developing an updated site for launch in 2024.

***Image Rights, Reproductions and New Photography***

The distribution of **over 3,619 images** from over **340 requests** from staff and the external market were administered throughout 2023 by the Rights & Reproductions Officer**.** **127 New Photography sessions** were coordinated for key projects, resulting in **2,876 new images** of NMI artefacts, exhibitions and museum activities stored digitally in the data access management system.

**FACILITIES AND SECURITY**

2023 was a very positive and constructive year for the department despite ongoing resource gaps. The front of house and facilities teams played a leading role in ensuring that all our visitors, staff and collections remained safe and secure, and that our premises were maintained in a condition befitting of the Nation’s premier cultural institution.

The Facilities department worked closely with our colleagues in the Office of Public Works on several key capital and other projects.

These included:

* Climate Control Defences: Bund walls have been constructed in the crypt in Kildare St to combat climate change. Water detection alarms have been installed in the basement areas.
* Upgrade of staff facilities and workspaces.
* Completion of major improvement works and refurbishment for the future Changing Ireland gallery space.
* Fire safety upgrades and refurbishment work for the Collins Barracks Cafe.
* Historic roof restoration for the Carpentry Wing at Daingean.

The local BMS sections within the OPW and service providers contracted to OPW carried out hundreds of individual tasks across NMI sites in 2023 all of which were facilitated, managed and supervised by our Facilities teams.

2023 was a busy year for the department regarding health and safety and security management and training. Our teams developed and rolled out security training and health and safety training programs in First-Aid, fire safety, Safe Pass and Manual Handling across all NMI sites.

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

* St Patrick’s Day Festival event March 2023.
* Mother Block event June 2023.
* Wider Than Pictures event August 2023.
* New Year’s Eve Festival.

A key goal is the development of our staff and the building capacity within the Facilities Department. To these ends the role of Deputy Facilities Officer was established in 2023. A role which gives team members an opportunity to develop managerial experience and skills and enhances the functioning of the department.

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**Board of the National Museum of Ireland (31st December 2023)**

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|  |
| Cathal O'Donoghue (Chair)  Ambrose Loughlin (Vice Chair) |
| John R Bowen |
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|  |
| Rowena Neville  Suzanne Costello |
| Barra O Donnabhain |
| Susan Rogers |
| Claudia Kinmonth |
|  |
| Geraldine Sheridan |
| Beatrice Kelly |
| Ciaran Byrne |
| Marianne Doyle |
| Iseult Dunne |

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| **STAFF DIRECTORY** (31 December 2023)  **DIRECTOR’S OFFICE**  **Director**  Lynn Scarff  **Secretary to the Board/Executive Assistant to the Director**  Jade Dillon | |
| **COLLECTIONS AND LEARNING DIVISION**  **Director of Collections and Access**  Dr Eimear O’Connor  **Art & Industry**  **Keeper**  Dónal Maguire  **Assistant Keeper Grade I**  Alex Ward  Brenda Malone  **Assistant Keeper Grade II**  Dr Edith Andrees  Dr Jennifer Goff  Sandra Heise  **Collections Assistant**  Sarah Nolan  **IRISH ANTIQUITIES**  **Keeper**  Maeve Sikora  **Assistant Keeper Grade I**  Dr Nessa O’Connor  Matthew Seaver  Isabella Mulhall  **Assistant Keeper Grade II**  Sharon Weadick  Dr Bernard Gilhooly  Joanne Gafrey  Dr Aoife O’Brien  **Collections Assistant**  Alexandra Guglielmi  **Executive Officer**  Eamonn McLoughlin  **IRISH FOLKLIFE**  **Keeper**  Clodagh Doyle  **Assistant Keeper Grade I**  Noel Campbell  **Assistant Keeper Grade II**  Rosa Meehan  Oein De Bhairduin  Tiernan Gaffney  Liam Doherty  **NATURAL HISTORY**  **Keeper**  Paolo Viscardi  **Assistant Keeper Grade I**  Dr Aidan O’Hanlon  **Assistant Keeper Grade II**  Dr Amy Geraghty  Dr Patrick Roycroft  **REGISTRATION**  **Acting Registrar**  Emer Ní Cheallaigh  **Archivist**  Christina Tse  **CRC Manager/Deputy Registrar**  Sylviane Vaucheret  **Collections Move Project Manager**  Eimear Ashe  **Documentation Officer**  Joanne Hamilton  Catherine Moriarty  **Technical Assistant**  Emma Crosbie  **Executive Officer**  Ann Vaughan  **Clerical Officer**  Timothy Heanue  **DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY**  **Head of Design & Photography**  John Murray  **Design Studio Manager**  Yvonne Doherty  **Digital Imaging Officer**  Richard Weinacht  **Graphic Artist**  Vacancy  **Illustrator**  Darko Vuksic  **Photographer**  Kyle Tunney  **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**  **Head of Education**  Terre Duffy  **Education & Outreach Officer**  Helen Beaumont  Siobhan Pierce  **Assistant Keeper II**  Geraldine Breen  Tom Doyle  Patricia Ryan  Mathew Lester  Diarmuid Bolger  Niamh Keating  **Education Assistant**  Brendan Mc Donnell  Grace O’Sullivan  Sheila Stenson  Martina Burke Lavin  **Booking Assistant**  Vacancy  **CONSERVATION**  **Head of Conservation**  Dr Karena Morton  **Assistant Keeper I**  Dr Paul Mullarkey  **Assistant Keepers Grade II**  Patrick Boyle  Helen Butler  Carol Smith  Nieves Fernandez  Hannah Power  Ellen McKeever  Lorna Rowley  **On-line Collections Manager**  Deirdre Power | **OPERATIONS DIVISION**  **Director of Operations**  Aoife Hurley  **Head of Finance and Procurement Services**  Mark Sherry  **Finance Officer**  Joan McGrath  **Management Accountant**  Danny Oliva  **Executive Officer**  Ines Babic  **Clerical Officer**  Jack Roche  **ICT**  **Head of Digital Information Systems**  Derek Williams  **Network and Systems Administrator**  Lukasz Komoterski  **User and Content Leader**  Gavin Woodruff  **Intranet and Website Administrator**  Neil Hand  **Clerical Officer**  David McKenna  **HR**  **Head of HR**  Anne Mc Neeley  **HR Officer**  Helen McInerney  **Executive Officer**  Aoife Murray  **Clerical Officer**  Maria Pringle  **CORPORATE AFFAIRS**  **Head of Corporate Affairs**  Aoife Mc Bride  **MARKETING**  **Head of Marketing**  Ann Daly  **Marketing Officer**  Maureen Gaule  **Marketing Executive**  Frances Toner  Brian Houlihan  **Clerical Officer**  Maeve McNicholas  **COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**  **Commercial Development Manager**  Terri McInerney  **Commercial Development Executive**  Clare McNamara  **Commercial Development Assistant**  Charlotte Mathews  **RETAIL**  **Customer and Retail Manager**  Shane Sterio  **Senior Retail Assistant**  Siobhan Collins  Veronica Skeffington  **Retail Assistant**  Tracey Curran  Angela Hart  Damian Kelly  Nicola Lavin  Jean Boyle  Celestina Sassu  Pauline Stack  **FACILITIES**  **Head of Facilities & Security**  Vacancy  **Senior Facilities Executive**  Paddy Matthews  **Facilities Officer**  Rory Loughnane  Seamus O’Donnell  Brendan Torsney  Olivia Merriman  Nicola Murphy  **Service Attendant**  Patrick Moore  Elecerio Abijay  **Cleaner**  Martina Connolly  Catherine Finnegan  Louise Hanlon  **Caretaker**  Michael Byrne  **Visitor Services Officer**  Robert Berrigan  Sean Brady  Conor Carlisle  Ramona Chereji  Ciaran Dowdall  Andrew Gallen  Enda Greenan  Chris Keenan  Majella Lynch (DFO)  Keith MacDonald  Conor Marschall  Emmet McNamara  Lisa Mc Auley  John Mulrooney  Thomas Murphy  Simon Ó Donnobháin (DFO)  Greg Stevenson  Dominic Swaine  Linda Switzer  Luke Sweeney  Joseph Brennan  Eric Breslin  Martin Byrne  Laura Casey  Leigh Coughlan  William Doyle  Patrick Fallon (DFO)  Paul Fennell  Martin Fitzmaurice  Padraig Fleming  Derek Flynn (DFO)  Eoin Foley  Henry Hackett  Dylan Hoctor  Mandy Johnston  Fergal Leahy  Daragh Magee  Mark McDonnell  Alan McKeever  Eamonn Reel  Alan Scully (DFO)  Lorraine Stewart  Alan Walsh  Liam Walsh  Lillian Walsh  Neil Walsh  Sean Young  Barbara Barclay  Mary Gaughan  Raymond Gearty (DFO)  Jack Kelly  Oliver Murphy  James Reynolds  Noreen Ward  Brion Gilmore |