

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2013**

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### **Message from the Chairman of the Board of the National Museum of Ireland**

The year 2013 was another challenging year from the National Museum of Ireland.

The year commenced without a new Director but the process of appointing a new Director was in train. Since the retirement of Dr Pat Wallace at the end of February 2012 the Museum had an Acting Director in place, Mr Seamus Lynam.

Again the budget for the National Museum for 2013 was very tight. The budget allocated was €11,674,000. The financial constraints continued to be managed with a focused eye and very careful attention was given as to where reductions could be achieved and revenue could be generated. The Board expressed its concern in particular in relation to both Marketing and Education budgets given that these areas are very much part of the public face of the National Museum. The pay allocation in 2013 was the same as for 2012 i.e. €6,740,000 and this posed a very definite challenge. At the end of 2012 the NMI had 152.5 staff members. The ECF number for the end of 2013 was stated at the beginning of 2013 to be 138. Here again laid a significant challenge. The ECF number was revised upwards from 133 to 136 as the staffing target for the end of 2014.

The Board was delighted to announce the National Museum of Ireland for the third consecutive year had attracted over one million visitors, confirming yet again that the National Museum is the most visited of our National Cultural Institutions.

There were again some very interesting exhibitions held at the National Museum in 2013, including one relating to the *1913 Lockout: Impact and Aftermath: Impact and Aftermath*. For this the NMI drew on objects from the Museum's own collections to tell the story of the Lockout. Central to this exhibition was the Starry Plough flag, which made its first appearance with the Irish Citizens Army in April 2014 in Dublin. The flag flew over the Imperial Hotel in O'Connell St during the 1916 Rising. This exhibition ran until the end of June 2014.

In August 2013 the National Museum was proud to announce that its Natural History Museum in Merrion St had welcomed over one million visitors since its reopening in April 2010. The Natural History Museum – known familiarly to many as the “Dead Zoo” – was built in 1856 as the Museum of the Royal Dublin Society. In State hands since 1877 it is a traditional “cabinet style” museum that has won the hearts and minds of very many visitors and admirers over the past century.

In July 2013 the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht provided a department grant to enable the digitisation of some of the most important paper-based documents held by the Museum. This step was intended to increase the availability of a range of historical material to the public. Of the latter material by far the most significant is the Easter Week collection. This collection includes Patrick Pearse's order of surrender to General Maxwell in 1916 and the collection also includes the last written messages of a number of the executed leaders of the 1916 Rising, including the letter that Patrick Pearse wrote to his mother on the morning on which he was executed.

The Chairman on behalf of the Board engaged in correspondence with Mr Brian Hayes T.D., Minister with responsibility for the OPW, in relation to the Collections Resource Centre, Swords and such commitments were followed through and are continuing.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 the National Museum announced the appointment of Mr Ragnall Ó Floinn as Director of the NMI. The appointment followed an international search for a Director to succeed Dr Pat Wallace who retired from the post at the end of February 2012. The Chairman of the Board of the National Museum welcomed the appointment of Mr Ó Floinn – who is an acknowledged expert in, inter alia, the material culture of Medieval Ireland – as Director, stating that “Our new Director is coming to the post of Director at a time when the NMI is facing very significant challenges because of the moratorium on recruitment and the reduction in staff numbers and the uncertainty as to the future of the Board as having responsibility for the governance of the Museum”. The Chairman stated that it would be most regrettable if the Board of the NMI was to be abolished as the skills available on the Board of the NMI ensure the best possible governance arrangement, which if abolished, would leave the governance of the NMI at a very much poorer level.

During 2013 the NMI also announced the acquisition of an important mid- 15<sup>th</sup> century altar cross from County Waterford. The NMI expressed its gratitude to the Madden family of Ferrybank, Co. Waterford for its generous donation of the cross.

The National Museum was also very pleased to mount an exhibition in January 2013 entitled *The Irish in France- Three centuries of Military Relations*. This exhibition took place as part of Ireland's 2013 EU Presidency Cultural Programme and the NMI hosted this exhibition in association with the French Embassy in Ireland.

The Board was active in the process leading to the formulation of the 2014 – 2017 Strategic Plan.

The Board also strongly favoured the implementation of the Retail Strategy and emphasised the importance of the retail function as a connector with its visitors.

The Board expressed regret in relation to the theft of the rhinoceros horns from the CRC, Swords during the year and urged a review of security arrangements to protect insofar as possible against future theft, and emphasised the importance of follow-up with the Gardaí on the matter.

Overall the Board complimented the Director and staff of the NMI for the commitment and efforts made throughout 2013 in very challenging times because of the budget constraints within which the Museum had to work.

The Board also thanked the Minister and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for their support during 2013, and also thanked the OPW for the high standard of the services that it continues to provide to the NMI.

The Board of the NMI looks forward with confidence and determination to the NMI continuing to play a leading role in Irish cultural life. The Board is determined to maintain the position of the National Museum of Ireland as a leader and critical institution to the development and promotion of Irish culture. The National Museum will continue to develop the invaluable and exquisite beauty of its collections and the services and enrichment that it provides to its visitors' lives and to the unique and universally admired culture of Ireland.

Ar aghaidh leis an obair,

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

## **COLLECTIONS**

### **ART AND INDUSTRY**

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

There were a number of highly significant acquisitions during the year, five exhibitions were opened, and a ground-breaking exhibition in which sixty-two Eileen Gray objects from our collections were sent on loan, opened at the Centre Pompidou, Paris and subsequently at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. This year saw the departure on career break of Audrey Whitty, thereby bringing the total number of curators in the Division to four as opposed to a pre-2012 high of six.

Several significant purchases for the collection were made throughout the year, which included a table (1920s-30s) by Irish furniture designer Barney Herron, the Susan Zelouf and Michael Bell 'Ladderback Chair', Fiona Snow's 'Star Light', Deirdre Feeney's glass sculpture 'The Observatory', and Úna Burke's 'Warrior LadyBag' leather accessory. These last four acquisitions were made possible through the Crafts Council of Ireland/ NMI joint purchase fund for Irish contemporary applied art and craft.

Donations to the costume and textile collections included a 1967 Arnott's labelled wedding dress; a 1944 crepe wedding dress, bought with pooled clothing coupons during The Emergency; a cream linen Celtic Revival confirmation dress with matching brat, circa 1950; and a brat and headband from a First Holy Communion outfit circa 1945/6.

A major project was initiated on the digitising 15,000 objects in the historical collections. Meetings were also held with National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) towards projects to commemorate the events of 1916. Several other meetings on the topic of the Decade of Commemorations took place throughout the year, including one attended by members of the Division and RTÉ management.

Loan agreements and conditions of material were reviewed for Number 29, ESB Georgian House Museum; the Swiss Cottage, Cahir, Co. Tipperary; and the Presidential Landau was conserved and sent on loan to Áras an Uachtaráin.

Public queries continued to be dealt with during the year and researchers were given access to reserve material across all collections.

Curatorial staff also gave interviews and provided information to media across all aspects of the division's collections and exhibitions, which included *RTE Radio 1*, *Lyric FM*, Vincent Woods' *Arts Tonight* programme, *Sunday Independent*, *Irish Examiner* and *Irish Independent*.

Curators continued to deliver gallery talks, tours and lectures throughout the year. Audiences included: the general public, specialist interest groups, defence forces personnel, adult education and active retirement groups, and third level and postgraduate students. In relation to the latter lectures by divisional staff were given at UCD; NUI, Maynooth; IADT, Dún Laoghaire; DIT and Griffith College, Dublin. Talks were also delivered IMMA and the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork in addition lectures were given at a variety of venues around the country, including to a number of local history societies.

## **IRISH ANTIQUITIES**

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

In 2013 fieldwork in relation to archaeological discoveries was undertaken in nine counties. Staff of the Division continued to liaise with consultant archaeological companies and state services on the acquisition and deposition of excavated collections and associated archives. IAD Divisional staff dealt with statutory licensing responsibilities throughout the year on a routine basis. The total figures for all licences for 2013 are as follows:

Excavation licence applications: 392  
Applications for Ministerial Consents: 78  
Detection device applications: 30  
Applications for licences to alter: 138  
Applications for licences to export: 140

### **Acquisitions**

Almost one thousand objects were registered in the 2013 register including finds from Cos Antrim, Carlow, Clare, Cork Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry Kildare, Laois, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Mayo Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Tyrone, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow. This number includes objects previously unregistered that were encountered by the Documentation team working on the inventory of the Irish Antiquities Division's collections. These include a wide range of archaeological objects including lithics, ceramics, wooden vessels and bog butter. The exceptionally large number of acquisitions is due to the number of previously unregistered artefacts recorded and validated by the Inventory Project in this year. The most significant acquisition was a large collection of prehistoric and later metalwork from the Roscommon/Galway/Westmeath area.

During 2013 IAD staff were involved in discussions and negotiations on exhibitions and loans to institutions national and internationally. These included Shannon Development/Limerick City Museum re proposed exhibition in King John's Castle, Limerick; Cavan County Museum, Bailieborough, Co. Cavan; Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin. Some objects from the hoard of Iron Age gold found at Broighter, Co. Derry, were exhibited in museums in Limavady and Derry City.

The National Museum of Ireland's loan of significant Viking objects from Ireland to the international exhibition *Vikings – life and legend* was exhibited at the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen, Denmark.



Loans of ethnographic material relating to Captain Cork's voyages were considered for exhibition in 2015 in museums in Vancouver, Canada, Seattle, Washington and Anchorage, Alaska, USA.

The National Museum made a significant contribution to the exhibition *Credo—the Christianisation of Europe in the Middle Ages* at the Erzbischöfliches Diözesanmuseum Paderborn, Germany.

New acquisitions exhibited in the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology included a medieval altar cross from Rathgormack, Co. Waterford. An Early Bronze Age hoard of gold ornaments from Coggalbeg, Co. Roscommon, was placed on permanent exhibition in *Ór-Ireland's Gold*. An important hoard of seventeenth century coins found at Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Waterford was also displayed at several venues.

As part of its remit to work with local and regional museum in Ireland IAD staff liaised and consulted with colleagues in the following mid-Antrim Museum, Ballymena; Armagh County Museum; Athlone Castle Museum; Carlow County Museum; Clare County Museum; Corca Dhuibhne Regional Museum; Cork Butter Museum; Donegal County Museum; Down County Museum; North Down Museum; Galway City Museum; Kerry County Museum; Hunt Museum, Limerick; Louth County Museum; Monaghan County Museum; Tipperary South Riding County Museum; Waterford City Museums and Waterford County Museum. These contacts relate to matters concerning renewal of ongoing loans, new requests for loans, advice on acquisitions and other matters particularly regarding the role of designated museums and curators.

The IAD actively encourages and supports researchers at all levels to use the divisional archives and collections. Facilitating researchers with access to the collections and the archives forms a major part of the divisional work every year. This has the advantage of making the collections better known and encouraging new research into areas of the collection that may be little known. In 2013 the number of research visits to the Reserve Collections was 201 and the number of visits to the Archives was 108. We also accommodated 16 internship placements (8 Irish, 2 Canadian, 2 German, 1 Italian, 1 USA, 1 Spanish, 1 French) and 22 Transition Year work experience students in 2013.

### **Research/ Projects**

IAD staff members were involved in a number of projects including the Dublin Excavations Publication Project; the Bog Bodies Research Project; a project on dating and typology of iron spearheads; prehistoric gold; Dublin City Council's Dublin Archaeology G.I.S. project and the Heritage Council's Heritage Mapviewer G.I.S. project

An ongoing project on cataloguing unregistered colour film and transparencies for incorporation into the museum's main photographic database continued throughout the year.

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

Committee. Staff also participated in a Round Table discussion on cultural data infrastructure in Ireland at the Discovery Programme and took part in a University College Cork Programme Approval Panel to review proposed MA in Museum Studies.

Due to the nature of the museum's statutory functions under the National Monuments Act regular liaison with the National Monuments Service on applications to excavate and Ministerial Consents; and on illegal metal detecting continued throughout the year. Several meetings were arranged in relation to proposed amendments of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 and on the issuing of joint NMI/NMS statement on metal detecting. Other matters addressed included thefts from monument sites and illegal/unlicensed excavations, and underwater archaeology.

There was contact with the Receiver of Wreck in Co. Donegal in relation to the discovery of anchors at two locations in Donegal and the relevant legal provisions.

There was also regular liaison with Cultural Institutions Division, Dept. of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht in relation to various export licence applications.

Divisional staff delivered lectures to a variety of local and national bodies on archaeological and museological topics at the following venues:- Dept of Archaeology, Dept. of History, University College, Cork; Trinity College, Dublin; Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, and to local history societies in Ballyfermot and Cabinteely, Dublin; Kildare; Abbeyleix, Co. Laois and Tyrrellspass, Co Westmeath.

IAD staff facilitated the following special visits and tours:-

- a presentation to Polish museum archaeologists on an EU related fact finding trip to Ireland
- two tours to students from St. Patricks Teacher Training College, Dublin
- UCD's School of Archaeology's Lithic Course
- a one day loan of objects from excavations at Lagore crannog, Gaelscoil na Ríthe, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath
- a visit of the Shanghai Association of Science and Technology
- a visit and Irish language tour of Ór and the Treasury to An Ciorcal Caidrimh, an Irish language social group from south Co. Dublin
- the annual UCD MA seminar on work of Irish Antiquities and NMI
- a special viewing of the Ardrin trumpet arranged for a local group from Ardrin, Co. Down
- Dublin City Council and Compass Informatics in relation to Dublin City Council Heritage Project: Archaeology GIS mapping

## IRISH FOLKLIFE

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

The principal acquisition during 2013 was a Galway Bay flat boat. Other acquisitions include 12 stereo photo prints from 1900s, a long-line basket, long-line and cork floats, a cow de-horner, a rushlight holder and an autograph book dating to the second decade of the twentieth century from a pub in Castlebar that was frequented by British soldiers garrisoned in Castlebar. A number of books were also donated to the Library.

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

Ms Clodagh Doyle lectured on the Hair Hurling Balls at a conference on sport in Ireland at the University of Ulster in Derry in September. She also delivered a seminar on Hair Hurling Balls to graduate students of Irish folklore in University College, Dublin, and gave a talk on the same subject to Museum Staff in Collins Barracks in October and at the opening of an art exhibition in Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Tony Candon delivered a seminar on national museums and society to students on the MA in Cultural Policy and Arts Management, in University College, Dublin, in October.

Staff also took part in both television and radio programmes on various matters relating to their specialties throughout the year. Staff contributed a regular monthly column to the *Connaught Telegraph* on different subjects relating to the Museum of Country Life during the year. Dr Séamas Mac Philib acted as advisor to, and participated in, the making of an RTÉ film, *The Lost Village*.

Further progress on a catalogue of a major element of the Collections – straw, hay and rushes – was made in 2013; work also continued on catalogues of the collection of currachs and on the hair hurling balls in the collection.

The Museum hosted a one-day conference entitled 'Gaeltachtaí Mhaigh Eo: Bás nó Fás' in November. The conference was organised by Dr Séamas Mac Philib in conjunction with Mayo County Council to mark Bliain na Gaeilge.

The Division loaned an Irish dancing costume to the **Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, Dresden** for an international exhibition on Dance.

Tony Candon opened the exhibition of the Brighter Hoard in the Tower Museum, Derry, in November. He also opened an exhibition of art works by students in GMIT Galway in December; the exhibition was inspired by a visit by the students to the Museum of Country Life.

Dr Anne O'Dowd retired from the National Museum of Ireland with effect from 22 June. Ms Rosa Meehan was seconded to the Jackie Clarke Collection, Ballina, Co. Mayo from September 2013.

As Dr Mac Philib was on sick leave during 2013, Noel Campbell and Joanne Hamilton of the Documentation Department very kindly assisted with queries from the public.

## NATURAL HISTORY

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

The Natural History Museum continued to see high visitor attendances since reopening in April 2010, with a steady figure of almost 300,000 visits a year, demonstrating that this is one of Ireland's most popular visitor attractions. The second and third floor balconies unfortunately remain closed, awaiting implementation of a works programme that would provide fire exits direct from these upper levels. Such works, when funded, would also ensure lift access to all floors. Major work is required on the roof, and the ground floor needs to be re-laid. The National Museum of Ireland recognises these limitations and continues to press for the funding to resolve these issues on behalf of our visitors.

In addition to its important scientific role, the Museum continued to prove popular with artists, art students, radio and television programme makers, and photographers. The children's television show *Elev8* on RTÉ collaborated in a *Sleepover Safari* where ten children spent a night at the museum on a treasure hunt that was broadcast as a TV special. The award-winning BBC period drama *Ripper Street* used the museum as a filming location for an episode that was seen by 5.5 million UK viewers during its initial broadcast. Staff supported research by UCD colleagues into the Blaschka collection of over 550 glass models of marine animals and assisted in high quality photography of 90 models that shows intricate details not previously known.

The focus on collections management during the year was in assisting documentation project staff with databasing of specimens and preparing collections for cataloguing. Once catalogued, specimens are shipped to the Collections Resource Centre. This involves palletising hundreds of drawers of specimens, wrapping all taxidermy in plastic for freezing as part of IPM quarantine control, and documentation of all moves. Most vertebrate fossils were relocated during the year, along with 10,000 minerals, 17,000 bird study skins, and a large number of trophy heads and large pieces of taxidermy.

Specimens acquired during the year included: type specimens of Italian insects; several insects noted for the first time in Ireland; samples of foreign organisms released for use in pest control in Irish farms; fifty jars of Irish crustaceans; and a large collection of Irish bees collected as part of a major study into insect pollination.

Staff continued monitoring for insect pests that can cause damage to collections, particularly in the old museum building where moth and beetle larvae are a regular problem. Replacement of evaporation in alcohol collections is also a major task for the technician who continued to service a collection of 25,000 jars of pickled specimens. This service ended in September

when the contract for that post came to an end. The Conservation Department has taken on responsibility for IPM (insect pest management) for Natural History collections.

Active curation of the zoological and entomological collections, and expert identification of animals came to an end following the early retirement of two of the Museum's curators in recent years, leaving just one curator on the staff, dealing with geology. Enquiries in zoology and entomology are now handled by the Keeper, as there are no longer any biological curators while those posts are subject to embargo.

Work by volunteers continues to increase in importance, as key staff take early retirement and cannot be replaced. Eleven adult volunteers and ten transition year students were accommodated. The Transition Year programme came to an end during the year, due to the low staff levels and the challenges in managing adequate levels of supervision for the students.

Significant assistance was given to a project to develop a museum of mining in the Copper Coast Geopark, at Bunmahon, Co. Waterford, opened by An Taoiseach on 23 November. Staff also worked with the British Geological Survey and University College Dublin to provide advice on curation and display of natural history specimens and delivered modules of the *Museum Basics* course of the Irish Museums Association.

In addition to their scientific publications, the two remaining scientific staff contributed to the production and management of the journals *Earth Science Ireland*, *The Geological Curator*, *Irish Journal of Earth Sciences*, *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, *Journal and Newsletter of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland* and *Museum Ireland* and also to the websites of the Irish Museums Association and *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, and the library of the Speleological Union of Ireland. Staff gave a number of public talks, tours and assisted with organisations including the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Geological Survey of Ireland's Heritage and Planning Programme. A geoscience stand at the Young Scientists' Exhibition was supported, as were exhibitions in the Ulster Museum in Belfast and Royal Irish Academy in Dublin.

## CONSERVATION

The work of the Conservation Department for the year 2013 was concentrated primarily in three areas; the programme of temporary exhibitions that were put in place during the year across the four museum sites, preparing Folklife objects in the stores in Daingean for transfer to the CRC in Swords, and servicing the unusually high number of loans of museum objects to other institutions that took place during the course of the year.

A number of temporary exhibitions took place during the year, while the conservation also began for other exhibitions scheduled for 2014 (Exhibition for which conservation work and mounting was carried out included *The 1913 Lockout: Impact and Aftermath*, *Hair Hurling Balls – Earliest artefacts of our national game* and the exhibition of a substantial gold coin hoard in Collins Barrack). The Thangkas on exhibition in the Bender exhibition were rotated with other, recently conserved examples.

2013 saw an unusually large number of loans go out from the NMI, and several of these were very substantial. All objects had to be conserved, condition reports generated, and then had to be packed for transport to the venues (Loans included Viking material to both Paderborn and Copenhagen and Antiquities material that formed the basis of the new exhibitions sent to St John's Castle, Limerick. A number of Eileen Gray pieces were loaned to IMMA and the recently conserved Presidential Landau was loaned to the Áras an Uachtaráin. Ethnographic material was sent to a venue in Vancouver, the Broighter Hoard was loaned to venues in Derry and Limavady and a number of objects from the Art and Industry collection were loaned to the new exhibitions at the Guildhall, Derry).

Conservation, investigation and analysis continued on a number of recent high status finds, identified as priorities by the Irish Antiquities Division. Work on the conservation of material from the Dublin Excavations continued with particular emphasis on the ironwork and waterlogged wood, the conservation of which was completed at the Museum's facility at Lanesborough, Co Roscommon.

A number of projects took place or continued, upgrading the conditions of entire collections or the conservation of key objects in poor condition from others. Such projects included continuing work on the Art and Industry Ceramics and Sculpture collections, the Ironwork collection, the Folkart collection and selected firearms and swords from the Armoury.

During the year, as for 2012, the Conservation Department hosted the conservation of the fire damaged objects from the St Mel's Cathedral, Longford Diocesan Museum, carried out by a private sector conservator. This work was completed to a very high standard and to the agreed schedule.

The single most significant preventive conservation project for the NMI in 2012 was the continuing transfer of material to the Collections Resource Centre in Swords. Extensive work was carried out in Lanesborough and Daingean, cleaning and packing objects prior to their transfer to the new facility with the majority of staff in the department committing regular and substantial time to this activity.

Work continues on monitoring the state of the storage facilities at Swords and Collins Barracks to ensure that they complied as closely as possible with the Heritage Council's Standards for Collections Storage in Accredited Museums and the UK MLA's conservation related 'Best Practice' -Benchmarks for Collections Care (the highest standards available).

The programme of freezing objects to treat suspected insect infestation continued, as did continuous environmental and insect pest monitoring which took place on all NMI sites where collections are housed.

The regular programme of public tours of the department continued and the usual range of enquiries, both from the public and from other institutions, were dealt with.



## REGISTRATION

The Registration Department is responsible for the documentation, transfer and location management of the collections. It controls and maintains the Museum's Collection Management Database and also manages the Museum's archives, central library and collections resource centre in Swords, Co. Dublin; and administers museum loans.

In 2013, centralising the reserve collections continued at the Collections Resource Centre in Swords with a focus on archaeological excavations, particularly clearing the North Block of the National Museum of Ireland - Decorative Art and History, with a secondary aim of creating space for the exhibition galleries. Some 7,000 boxes were transferred from Collins Barracks, an estimated total of over 18,000 finds. This complex transfer would not have been possible without the hard work and co-operation of Registration, Conservation, Irish Antiquities and CRC staff. In addition, there were 6 deposits from 4 archaeological companies which consisted of approximately 1,000 boxes and six very large crates, an estimated 3,000 finds. The Irish Antiquities plaster cast High Crosses, as well as several new acquisitions were also transferred.

The transfer of the Transport collection and related material from St Conleth's Reformatory, Daingean, Co. Offaly continued. Approximately 159 objects were transferred (including Twenty-nine large transport items, sixteen smaller land transport items, shafts, bicycles and dorm collections (school chairs, desks, ploughs etc.), a loan from ESB's No 29 and a newly acquired Galway Cot Boat). A dedicated Irish Folklife technical assistant is now based in the CRC for this collection.

Transfer of the Natural History collections from Beggars Bush also continued, approximately 29,056 specimens have been transferred, including all large slab fossils, giant deer, game heads, Vertebrate Palaeontology, minerals, some models and the entire bird skin collection (collections were prepared by Natural History staff, but also with the assistance of the Documentation officer, the inventory team and Beggars Bush interns, as well as a dedicated CRC documentation assistant on the receiving end).

A small number of Art and Industry objects were transferred, including large transport and a miniature ivory Chinese Junk to be conserved. The Ironwork collection, transferred last year is currently being conserved and hung to create an open-storage display, as the focus on public access increases.

Documentation and conservation is on-going as collections are transferred. The store was assessed under the 'Benchmarking for Collections Care' programme and found to be of at a very high international standard. Research visits have also been facilitated and a total of 20 researchers accommodated, spending an average of 3 days per visit. Several tours and training days have been conducted, particularly for the Northern Ireland Museums Council and Fingal County Council. Excellent feedback has been received from all researchers and tour groups and plans to develop a public programme are underway.

Security and risk management have become top priorities, following this year's Rhino horn theft. However, environmental stability to protect the collections was also prioritised. CRC staff worked closely with Noonans, Gannon Homes, G4S, the OPW as well as other NMI staff to raise standards. In June the National Monuments Service transferred their full archaeological archive to the CRC.

The Inventory Project, compliant with SPECTRUM, the UK Museum Documentation Standard, continued in the four curatorial divisions. A total of 95,451 records were validated this year. The total number of validated records since the Project began is 509,729 as follows:

Art and Industrial Division	105,426
Irish Antiquities Division	245,185
Irish Folklife Division	34,856
Natural History Division	124,262

Two audits of the Project were carried out during the year recording an average of 99.8% accuracy over the four sites.

In January 2013 Registration began writing short weekly introductory object-based articles, to highlight the inventory project. This received very positive public feedback and thirty-seven articles were published this year.

Digitisation Art and Industry's Historical documents collection began in September, funded by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, a collaborative project involving staff from Registration, Art and Industry, Photography and ICT (the aim of this project is to digitally preserve the documents as well improve access, initially through Adlib and Portfolio, and ultimately through the NMI website via an online catalogue). Registration also continues to work with ICT on the creation of an NMI-wide on-line catalogue.

During the course of 2013, cleaning and box-listing the Directors' Archive continued, as well as some Marketing and Education records and the military index of volunteer regiments. The 1916 arms questionnaires, Waterford Glass Collection and Esmonde Family Papers have been listed. A programme of Adlib Archive Register retrospective accessioning is ongoing. A records management programme for the Collections Resource Centre and the Education department have been discussed.

Since the Librarians career break began (2012) staff of the Registration Department and volunteers have maintained a minimum level of library service. Inter-library loans, membership renewals and journal subscriptions have continued. New acquisitions are recorded and processed but not catalogued. All numbered books moved during the library flood have now been sorted and re-shelved. The storage of journals and catalogues has become an issue, alternative storage is required. A small section of the Library collection has been transferred to the CRC to resolve this issue, particularly from the Inchicore storage area.

In 2013 one-hundred and one loans were processed in and out of the NMI. Of these fifty four were loans inwards while fifty seven were loans outwards. There were fourteen international loans inwards and sixteen international loans outwards. The remainder were all domestic loans.

In 2013, the work of the entire Registration department has been generously assisted by one long-term volunteer, three transition year students and fifty interns.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

### **National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History**

#### ***The Irish and France: Three Centuries of Military Relations***

As part of Ireland's 2013 EU Presidency Cultural Programme, the National Museum of Ireland in association with the French Embassy in Ireland produced by the Musée de l'Armée (Army Museum, Paris). This was the first exhibition launched as part of the Culture Connects – Ireland's EU Cultural Programme 2013.

The exhibition showed Irish and French military cooperation since the 17th century. From the "Wild Geese" to the First World War to Samuel Beckett's time in the French resistance, the exhibition retraced the history of the close relations between the Irish and France.

January to June 2013. Curated by Lar Joye.

#### ***Display of 17th century Carrick-on-Suir Gold Coin Hoard***

The hoard was discovered on 14th January 2013 by David Kiersey, Shane Comerford, Tom Kennedy, Shane Murray and Patrick Murray during groundworks being undertaken at Main Street, Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary. The find consists of 81 gold coins dating to the reigns of Charles II (1660-85), James II (1685-8), William and Mary (1688-94) and William III (1694-1702). There are 77 guinea and 4 half guinea coins present, with the earliest dating to 1664 and the latest to 1701. The Carrick-on-Suir Hoard probably represents the accumulated wealth of a single family over a number of generations.

May 2013 to September 2013. Curated by Eamonn P. Kelly.

#### ***The 1913 Lockout: Impact & Aftermath***

The exhibition drew on objects from the Museum's own collections to tell the story of the Lockout. It documented life in Dublin in 1913, the key players and events surrounding the Lockout and its aftermath as well as the formation of the Citizen Army, the women's suffrage movement and the rise of trade unions. Central to the exhibition was the original Starry Plough flag which made its first appearance with the Irish Citizen Army in April 1914 in Dublin. The exhibition also included the Larkin Banner, on loan from the Irish Labour History Society.

October 2013 to June 2014. Curated by Lar Joye.

#### ***Banners Unfurled and Lockout – the Tapestry***

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions' 1913 Commemoration Committee hosted two temporary exhibitions at Collins Barracks. *Banners Unfurled* consisted of replicas of 18 guild and trade union banners. *Lockout - the Tapestry* displayed the tapestry commissioned in 2012 by SIPTU and the National College of Art and Design from artists Kathy Henderson and

Robert Ballagh. The 30-panel tapestry, creating a visual narrative of *the 1913 Lockout: Impact and Aftermath*, was made by voluntary. October to November 2013. Co-ordinated by Lar Joye

## **National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology**

### ***15th century copper alloy altar cross from Co Waterford***

The copper alloy cross was donated to the Museum by the Madden family on behalf of Mrs. Bridget Madden (née Kelly) of Ferrybank, Waterford and is one of only half a dozen later medieval altar crosses known from Ireland. March 2013 to present. Curated by Nessa O'Connor.

### ***Display of 17<sup>th</sup> century Witch Bottle from Dublin***

A 17th century example of a witch bottle found in excavations at Bow Lane, Dublin was put on temporary exhibition to the public to celebrate Samhain. Witch bottles were placed around doors, windows and fireplaces to protect the inhabitants of dwelling places from witches.

October to November 2013. Curated by Eamonn P. Kelly

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

### ***The Irish Headhunter – the photographic albums of Charles R. Browne***

An exhibition mainly of photographs taken in remote parts of the west of Ireland between 1891 and 1900. In addition to the photographs, a number of objects from the National Museum's collections also formed part of the exhibition.

January to May 2013. Curated by Dr Séamas Mac Philib

### ***No Ordinary Family: Johan Zoffany's Portrait of George Fitzgerald with his Sons George and Charles (c. 1764)***

The Fitzgerald family owned an estate of some 3,400 hectares in the Turlough area of Co. Mayo. They also owned Turlough Park where the Museum of Country Life is situated. Zoffany's portrait of George Fitzgerald and his sons was loaned by the National Gallery of Ireland for display in the Museum at Turlough Park.

January to April 2013. Curated by Rosa Meehan

### ***Folk Fiction: Encounters with Material Culture*** (A loan-in exhibition)

A multi-media exhibition by visual artist Gareth Kennedy. The exhibition features film, photographs and objects. On display is work created over the past two years with the residents of Inís Oírr, on the Aran Islands and Gneeveguilla, Co. Kerry. February to April 2013. Curated by Rosa Meehan

***Les Irlandais et la France: Trois siècles des relations militaires***

Loan-in exhibition from Musée de l'Armée, Paris, with objects from Art and Industry Division of the National Museum of Ireland. It featured Irish participation in French armies from the seventeenth century to the present.

June to September 2013. Curated by Dr Séamas Mac Philib

***OnSight***

A community art project organised jointly by the Museum of Country Life and the Arts Office of Mayo County Council. The works made as part of the project were displayed in the Museum grounds.

May to September 2013. Co-ordinated on behalf of the Museum by Clodagh Doyle, Irish Folklife Division and Aoife O'Toole of the Education and Outreach Department.

***Hair Hurling Balls – Earliest artefacts of our national game***

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

September to December 2013. Curated by Clodagh Doyle.

***Your Christmas Story*** – December

A display of toys and objects related to Christmas from the Museum's collection, coupled with a display of objects loaned by members of the public together with the stories associated with them.

December 2013. An inter-departmental project led by Clodagh Doyle.

**Café Exhibitions**

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

***Luisne Art Project***

An exhibition of work in different media from the Luisne Art Project, a disability arts programme developed for members of The Crann Mor Centre, Ballinrobe.

May to June 2013.

***Hearth - Art for Older People at Home***

An exhibition of works from a project supporting artists working with older people in their homes.

July to August 2013

***Contemporary Ireland***

A photographic exhibition by Fetac Level 5 and Level 6 students of Westport College of Further Education.

September to October 2013.

***Mayo Architectural Heritage***

A photographic exhibition. It coincided with the launch of *An introduction to the Architectural Heritage of County Mayo* by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

November to December 2013.

***Past Perspectives***

An art exhibition in different media, by artist Garry Dullaghan. April 2013.

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

2013 proved to be a challenging and successful year for the Department. We continued to provide a first class, inclusive and accessible learning programme in the four Museums, online and in the community against a backdrop of reduced staffing and budgets.

Over 230,000 visitors used Education services in 2013.

The Schools' Programme included tours, workshops, demonstrations, competitions and learning resources. A quarterly public programme for families, young people and adults was produced and listed in the Calendar of Events.

In partnership with colleagues and others we developed exhibitions, improved interpretation and interactivity in exhibition galleries and produced accompanying exhibition programmes such as:

- **CRAFTed:** Exhibition of work by primary school children and craft workers held in Collins Barracks included a series of workshops for eight primary schools involving experienced craft workers. In partnership with the Crafts Council of Ireland, the event was launched by Minister Frances Fitzgerald and attracted large numbers of primary schools.
- **Café Art Exhibition Space:** Exhibitions by local artists, community groups, national organisations and colleges were hosted in Turlough Park Café.
- **1913 Strike and Lockout exhibition:** Day of talks on *The 1913 Lockout: Impact and Aftermath* attracted a lot of interest at Collins Barracks. Videos developed by students at Larkin Community College were integrated into the exhibition.
- **Kildare Place Society and Schooling in the Nineteenth Century exhibition:** Sixteen primary schools participated in creative writing workshops with writer Terry McDonagh at Collins Barracks. Workshops funded by Poetry Ireland.
- **Your Christmas Story:** For the first time an exhibition of objects loaned by members of the public was displayed alongside moving memories and personal stories.

### **Self-directed learning resources were created and included:**

- **Viking On Line Resource:** Series of eight educational films produced to mark the Battle of Clontarf commemorations.
- **It's Your Museum: A Guide for Families:** Family trail piloted with families.
- **100 Objects and Learning resources:** Developed learning resources for schools with the Royal Irish Academy of Ireland.
- **Events App:** Students from NUI Galway and Blanchardstown IT commenced work on developing an app for Museum events.

- **[www.ouririshheritage.org](http://www.ouririshheritage.org)**: Home of the Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN), visitor-led local history archive and platform for interactive museum projects, competitions and collaborations with peer institutions.
- **Memory book**: Produced for audiences at Turlough Park to record their personal stories based on their response to exhibitions.

**The Education Department continued to work strategically in partnerships with key organisations in order to reach new audiences and to share resources and expertise:**

- **Samhain**: With Age and Opportunity and Poetry Ireland we developed a series of workshops, a trail and a music and poetry event which attracted over 155 people in Kildare Street.
- **Creative Engagement**: Organised a display of creative work in Collins Barracks by 35 post primary schools with the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals including, a recreated Viking House by Coolmine Community College and ten feet high puppet heads by Larkin Community College. Launched by Minister Jimmy Deenihan the event attracted over 500 people.
- **Discovery Primary Science & Maths**: Continued delivery of curriculum-specific workshops as part of a national certified programme.
- **Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN)**: Community groups continued to develop their online archives supported by a training programme. A strong partnership with Galway County Heritage Office fostered and expansion of project to include Wicklow Heritage Forum.
- **Bronze Age Handling Box Project**: Piloted the project in five education centres with the Education Centre Network, St Patrick's College of Education and the Professional Development Service for Teachers. Request made for production of 42 boxes to go on loan to schools through the network.

**The Department continued to build relationships with local communities:**

- **Culture Night**: Attendance increased on the previous year with the Céilí at Collins Barracks proving very popular as well as the flint knapping at Kildare Street and the interview with Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh at Turlough Park. Guided tours at Natural History and a display of objects from storage by the Registration Department proved popular.
- **Mayo Genealogy group**: This newly established group joined the Knitting and Music Circles and the Connacht Textile Crafters at Turlough Park.
- **Outreach** to local libraries, schools and colleges continued where possible.



- **Larkin Community College and Lourdes Day Care Centre:** Development of a heritage trail in collaboration with north inner city Dublin community.

**Other highlights include:**

**National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology**

- Great response to ‘Experimental Archaeology’ seminar organised in partnership with UCD.
- Attendance at drop-in events in the Learning Resource Room increased.
- Primary Teachers In-service groups from UCD and TCD totalling 300 were given presentations on using the Museum as a resource.

**National Museum of Ireland - Country Life**

- ‘The Way We Were’ event with the Third Age Foundation and Men’s SHED movement had 325 visitors from schools and groups at Turlough Park.
- Tóstal Mhaigh Eo (Irish speaking Canadians) enjoyed a programme of Irish language tours and workshops.
- ‘*In my Grandparent’s time*’ competition received 140 entries from National School children across the country.

**National Museum of Ireland - Decorative Arts and History**

- Great interest in the World War 1 seminar.
- ‘Objects in Focus’ a research conference held at Collins Barracks with focus on visual and material culture.

**National Museum of Ireland - Natural History**

- ‘Wonders of Snakes’ family event organised with St Patrick’s Day Festival attracted over 5,000 people.

## MARKETING AND PR

In 2013, the National Museum of Ireland welcomed over 1 million visitors for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year. This was a fantastic achievement given the limitations on marketing budgets and staffing levels. Key reasons for this achievement were: consistent Public Relations throughout the year, public programming and events and exhibitions. In addition, the policy of free admission should not be under-estimated given the current economic climate as this is a key factor in encouraging repeat visitors. Visitor breakdown by site was as follows:

<b>Visitor Numbers</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>		
<b>Dec-13</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Kildare Street</b>	<b>409,275</b>	<b>404,230</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>Merrion Street</b>	<b>290,927</b>	<b>284,323</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b>Collins Barracks</b>	<b>271,309</b>	<b>251,226</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<i><b>Military History</b></i>	<i><b>109,108</b></i>	<i><b>103,167</b></i>	<i><b>-5%</b></i>
<i><b>Riding School</b></i>	<i><b>49,649</b></i>	<i><b>1</b></i>	<i><b>-100%</b></i>
<i><b>Gymnasium</b></i>	<i><b>31,050</b></i>	<i><b>44,210</b></i>	<i><b>42%</b></i>
<b>Turlough Park</b>	<b>99,682</b>	<b>99,358</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,071,193</b>	<b>1,039,137</b>	<b>-3%</b>

The National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts and History gained extensive PR coverage in national, regional and international print and broadcast media. It had a number of popular exhibitions and photo calls in 2013: *The Irish & France: Three Centuries of Military Relations, 1913 Lockout: Impact and Aftermath* and *17th Century Carrick-on-Suir Gold Coin Hoard* went on display.

Several Photo Call Notices were issued including: a viewing of recovered medieval silver coins and other looted antiquities, the City Of Dublin Winter Solstice Celebration 2013 and Minister Deenihan welcomes over 1 Million Visitors to the National Museum of Ireland in 2013.

Corporate events were held throughout the year and included high profile dinners for the following; IDA Ireland founders (part of the Web Summit), Department of Agriculture (EU Presidency) and The Senators Cup.

Filming Requests and photo shoots were also accommodated where possible, the most significant being *Ripper Street* which was filmed in NMI – Natural History, which in turn won a BAFTA for its unique location.

The Gathering was hugely successful for the Museum and we were very proactive in targeting community groups and organising committees throughout the county.

Culture Night attracted large crowds across our three Dublin sites. At NMI - Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks we worked closely with local community group ‘The Complex’ on a new initiative.

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

The National Museum of Ireland’s exposure through social media - in particular Facebook and Twitter continues to grow in popularity. The development of this is now an essential part of the strategy of the Marketing Department and should also play a role across all Museum departments. Continuing updating of the presence of the National Museum of Ireland on social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, external blogs has proven very popular and is another way of reaching new audiences and making the public aware of what the National Museum of Ireland has to offer. This has been evident in the number of followers we have on the National Museum of Ireland social media platforms.

The National Museum of Ireland-Country Life gained extensive PR coverage in national and regional print and broadcast media. It had a number of popular exhibitions in 2013:

Zoffany painting; Headhunter exhibition, Folk Fiction exhibition; ***The Irish and France: Three Centuries of Military Relations***; *Hair Hurling Balls – Earliest artefacts of our national game*; Christmas Exhibition and Family day. The Café extension was also the location for a number of quality art exhibitions during the year including the ICOMOS photographic exhibition which was co-ordinated by the Dept. Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Corporate events were held throughout the year and included the launch of the National Genographic Project (attended by An Taoiseach), NUIG International Conference, Civic Reception for a visiting US Trade Delegation to Mayo, launch of the Mayo Architectural Survey (DAHG) and a summer expo on the August Bank Holiday weekend by Mayo Craftworks.

Sponsorship of €3,000 was raised for ***The Irish and France: Three Centuries of Military Relations*** exhibition which coincided with the Gathering summer programme. The Gathering was hugely successful for the Museum and we were very proactive in targeting community groups and organising committees throughout the county.

The focus for the retail area in 2013 was on the future of the service. A detailed review was undertaken on financial and operational aspects of the Retail service across all sites through consultation with retail staff, management and staff representative groups.

A comprehensive Retail Strategy was adopted by the Board in December 2013. The Retail Strategy 2014 to 2016 retains an in- house business model agreed by all stakeholders.

It was agreed that the purpose of the Museum's retail service is to provide a sustainable revenue stream to the Museum which enhancing the visitor experience through excellent customer service, well presented shops and relevant quality products.

The business model provides for the following:

- Sells relevant products that Museum visitors wish to buy
- Provides a consistent quality retail service at all set at set opening times
- Establishes and implements robust cost control measures
- Has a fit for purpose stock purchase, management and control plan
- Maximises gross profit margins through product selection and pricing policies
- Increases annual turnover by 1.5% per annum

The three museum cafes (located in Collins Barracks, Kildare Street and Turlough Park) provided the public with a quality service. The cafes – combined with the shops lend for a unique visitor experience.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

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

Great progress was made this year on the managed Digital Photographic Image Archive project. Following the successful testing to a Pilot Users group in conjunction with the ICT Department training followed for all relevant users. The Digital Asset Management Team archived thousands of new and existing digital images including 1000 Asgard restoration images, reviewed and rationalised c.540 images relating to 1916, Art O'Murnaghan, Leabhar na hAiséirghe, Fenians, Cashman Collection, Roll of Honour and Neo-Celtic. The Folklife BF series was researched, edited and archived along with c.686 unregistered Archaeology images with new embedded descriptions.

Post-production in 2013 consisted of processing camera raw images, retrieving, cleaning, optimizing and outputting 14,500 images for staff and the external market as well as dealing with several thousand photographic queries via email and telephone and interactions with colleagues in other Departments/Divisions.

### Exhibition Photography

Photography undertaken for various exhibitions included Paderborn Museum, Germany, Carrick-on-Suir gold coin hoard, Hair Hurling Ball exhibition in Turlough Park, Eileen Gray: Architect Designer Painter exhibition at IMMA, Irish Dancing Dress for exhibition in Dresden, Lockout exhibition along with the Plough and the Stars Flag, Contemporary Christmas Display in the Furniture Gallery and Clontarf 1014 exhibition.

Among the many other collections photographed by the Department were Stamps, Mace from Fethard, Co Tipperary, Gold Penannular ring, Enniskillen, Gold ring money from Cloughjordan Collection, Egan Harp, Thomas Clarke's Mauser Rifle, Connemara Wall Tables as well as Children and Young People at Education events and the Royal Irish Academy Art and Architecture of Ireland project. Images were supplied quarterly for the Calendar of Events.

All images supplied for 'A History of Ireland in a 100 Objects' were subsequently formatted in 2013 for the series App in conjunction with the Royal Irish Academy, Adobe and the Irish Times which was one of four nominated in the Best Large Sponsorship Category in the Allianz Business to Arts Awards 2013.

ICT Department consulted the Photographic Department for technical advice for the Historical Collection Project

The Department upgraded to the latest version of Adobe CS6.0 software.

Conference Dublin Castle

Staff attended the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union eu2013.ie, International Digitisation Conference-“Access, Use, Re-Use: Unlocking the Potential of Online Digital Cultural Content” in Dublin Castle.

## DESIGN

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

In 2013, the Design Department designed and developed the graphics for the exhibition *Hair Hurling Balls – earliest artefacts of our national game*, which was displayed in the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life. A poster and flyer were developed to accompany this, in addition to an invitation and web banner.

*The 1913 Lockout – Impact and Aftermath* opened at the National Museum – Decorative Arts & History in October 2013. The Design Department again designed and developed the exhibition graphics and marketing collateral for this exhibition.

Preliminary Design concepts were developed for the forthcoming Clontarf 1014 Brian Boru and the battle for Dublin exhibition, which will open in spring 2014.

The Department worked on a number of Education projects including the quarterly Calendar of Events, the Schools Calendar, and the Contemporary Crafts Conference and the Samhain Trail.

A flyer and poster were designed for a conference on the Irish language, which was hosted in the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life.

Work on the Dublin excavations Project is ongoing and in 2013 various maps, plans and illustrations were completed to publication standard for forthcoming volume ‘Viking Graves and Grave-Goods in Ireland’ which will go to print in 2014.

As a Design Department we provide support, advice and quality control for any external design projects which due to staffing levels we are unable to undertake ourselves.

Various signage and labelling was produced across all four sites on an ongoing basis. A number of transition year students were also facilitated throughout the year including two students from the Bertha von Suttner Schule Mörfelden-Walldorf Germany.

The Department upgraded its Computer Graphic software packages through the Museum’s ICT Department in order to keep in line with changing technology.

## **FACILITIES (ACCOMMODATION AND SECURITY)**

The Facilities Department in organisation terms falls under the remit of the Services Division of the National Museum of Ireland. Our Department coordinates allocated workspace in addition to the safety and security of visitors and collections.

Our maintenance programme once again was hugely supported by the OPW. The Building Management Services (BMS) Division responded to all of our maintenance requirements. In addition the M&E Department of OPW arranged for the removal of several tons of redundant cable from the crypt which had accumulated since the foundation of the state. Furthermore they invested heavily in financial terms in upgrading the security systems across all museum sites following the recommendations of the Garda security survey reports. The security brief requires the dual and sometimes conflicting aims of ensuring that collections are rendered as accessible to the public as possible while maintaining their security at the highest level.

The National Museum of Ireland welcomes in excess of one million visitors to our four public sites, the Archaeological Museum, Natural History, Museum of Country Life and the Museum of Decorative Arts. We are very fortunate to have a large number of very experienced and hardworking invigilation staff attending to the needs of our visitors and enriching their experience.

With so many visitors across all sites Health and Safety is taken very seriously and in this regard we are very reliant on all staff to contribute to making the museums a safe environment both to visit and to work in. Our safety programme is rolled out to all staff to implement, in addition we have been working on drafting a safety manual incorporating our safety policies and procedures. Our safety record during 2013 could be rated as very good. Mr Brendan Torsney is our manual handling instructor and he assists with this safety programme. Brendan trains all museum staff in manual handling techniques – the course is mandatory.

However, one of the areas of particular concern from a Health and Safety perspective is the Air Quality throughout the Kildare Street building. During the year some staff complained of feeling unwell as a consequence of chest infections and some bronchial irritations. We carried out an investigation and based on the parameters tested the results did give some cause for concern. However, I am glad to report as a consequence of the remediation's carried out that the situation is now under control. This project will continuously be monitored and we have the full support of Museum Management in implementing any necessary changes.



## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

#### **Administration**

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

#### **Financial Management**

The 2013 allocations received from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht are as follows:

	€
○ Pay	6,740,000
○ Non Pay	4,029,000
○ Capital	905,000
Total	<u>€11,674,000</u>

As part of the annual business planning process, the capital and non-pay allocations from the Department were allocated to the Museum's internal budgets for expenditure. Due to underfunding in pay it was necessary to receive sanction to allow for a transfer to €860,000 from current non pay to current pay.

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

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

The Finance Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2013 and accompanying audit file in late 2013. The C&AG audit of the 2013 Financial Statements took place in November 2014. The Museum's accounts in respect of the year ending 31st December 2013 were prepared in accordance

with the requirements of section 35 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997, are included in this report.

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

With the reduction in funding, the area of Accounts Receivable is becoming ever more important. In July 2013 the Museum introduced car parking charges at the National Museum of Ireland Decorative Arts and History to increase its revenue generation operations. The Museum also continued the outsourcing of the catering function to Brambles at three of its sites.

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

## **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Human Resources (HR) continued to work closely with Divisional Heads on various issues. Despite increased pressure on staff resulting from the moratorium, retirement, redeployments and continued emphasis on cost cutting measures, the hard work and commitment from all Museum staff, augmented by the welcome efforts of volunteers, enabled the Museum to continue to deliver a high standard of quality service to the public with little disruption.

### **Training**

The Museum continued to implement its staff performance management development system (PMDS) in 2013. The training budget was severely restricted due to a reduced allocation.

Throughout the academic year 2012/2013, nine staff members undertook approved third level courses of education in their own time and availed of the Percentage Refund of Fees Scheme in accordance with the Department of Finance guidelines.

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

Staff due to retire in 2014 were offered the opportunity to attend pre-retirement courses in 2013. Four staff members availed of this opportunity.

### **Ethics in Public Office**

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

## **Freedom of Information (FOI)**

HR coordinated four requests under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.

## **Industrial Relations**

It was agreed between management, IMPACT and CPSU, that the Advisory Services of the Labour Relations Commission that a review of industrial/workplace relations in the National Museum of Ireland would be carried out in 2013. The role of the Advisory Services of the Commission is to promote good employment relations practices in workplaces and deliver specific services in that regard including reviews of industrial relations, customised training, facilitation, mediation and advice on good industrial relations practice generally. The Advisory Services of Commission carried out a review of industrial relations in the National Museum and a presentation on the review was made to all staff in September and October 2013. It was agreed that the Advisory Services of Commission would then facilitate a process that would seek to address the industrial relations issues that arise from time to time. The agreed process was to set up a working group to review and improve workplace relations. The working group comprised members of the Advisory Service, Management and two staff associations. Three meetings were held in 2013 in the latter part of 2013.

## **Employment Control Framework (ECF)**

The Museum was notified in January by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, that its Employment Control Framework (ECF) target for 2013 was set at 138. The options to reduce staff numbers are by means of retirements, expiry of fixed-term contracts and natural wastage. Three staff members were voluntarily redeployed to other agencies and Government Departments. The Museum continued to work towards reducing staff numbers in line with the ECF.

## **Volunteers**

The Museum continued to avail of experience of volunteers during 2013. During the year volunteers carried out various assignments in most Museum departments across all sites. The Museum recognises that volunteers are a valuable asset and the Museum's Volunteer Committee ensures that best practice is being followed and approved Government initiatives such as the Job Bridge programme are introduced in the Museum.

## **Job Bridge**

Further Projects were identified in various divisions of the museum during 2013 and were undertaken under the National Internship Scheme "Job Bridge". Ten Internships which commenced in 2012 were completed in 2013. A further four internships 2013, one of which was completed in 2013. Three will be completed in 2014.

## **Occupational Health**

Corporate Health Ireland continued as the Museum's provider of occupational health.

### **Human Resources Shared Services Unit**

In December 2013, a shared services agreement for the provision of human resources was agreed between the National Museum and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht resulting in the establishment of the HR Shared Services Unit (HRSSU). This was one of the key individual measures proposed under the Government's Public Service Reform Plan announced in November 2011 for increased use of shared services among public bodies and it is in this context that the HRSSU has been established.

HRSSU is a unit within the Department reporting to the Head of Human Resources at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Its key function is to provide HR services for the management and staff of the National Museum of Ireland (and to other institutions in due course).

HRSSU works closely with management in the National Museum on the implementation and ongoing management of HR matters. The Board of the NMI remains as the employer of all NMI staff, and all decision making on HR matters remains the statutory responsibility of the Board of the NMI as the employer.

In order to inform and provide further clarity to the Museum staff regarding the transition of human resource services from the NMI to the HRSSU, a number of briefings and initiatives were rolled out in January 2014.

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

Information and Communications Technology department (ICT)

ICT reduced further costs during 2013, while maintaining high systems availability, despite low ICT-staff-to-users ratio, hardware failures, and increased helpdesk requests facilitating new interns, temporary contractors and volunteers. ICT achieved this by reducing the numbers of technical issues with analysis and continuous improvement of operational activities: helpdesk, asset management, risk management, data storage and back-up, interactive and audio-visual systems support, and the coordination of the [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie) website. It improved security standards, further encrypting laptops and USB keys, and adding remote data-wiping capabilities to smart phones. ICT also participated in and led a number of projects to drive positive and strategic changes, outlined below.

ICT managed some of the digital media elements for the mobile devices application "A History of Ireland in 100 Objects", a collaborative project with the Royal Irish Academy and The Irish Times, launched as part of Ireland's EU presidency events.

Working with the Facilities department and the OPW, ICT helped upgrading energy management systems, and increased the availability of the corporate network including Wi-Fi.

ICT led the procurement and project managed the digitisation of the 2D historical collection, comprising over 20,000 pages of artefacts and archives. The production team was mainly composed of registration and curatorial officers who showed tremendous dedication to this project. Support from the Facilities department was also invaluable. The digitised images and associated inventory-level records are expected to be made available online.

ICT continued transferring content to a new website platform, customising elements of the future Content Management System (CMS), and providing in-house training. Expected to be launched during 2014, the new website will permit greater integration with social media platforms, have better-illustrated pages with access to larger images, and have improved accessibility. The new platform provides an enhanced software development environment to facilitate the provision of further online services. ICT researched and drafted an object framework for the future online collection, and an online exhibition framework, which it first tested with the Asgard exhibition by hosting a volunteer in its offices, in collaboration with the on-site exhibition curator.

ICT provided internal users access to the new digital asset management system (the photography department's images database), another step in the preparation towards improved online accessibility to the Museum's collections.

While preparing for the future website, ICT concurrently improved the existing website content, working with the Registration department on 'Inventory Project Discoveries' articles, and with the Irish Antiquities department to increase online information regarding metal detecting, Cashel Man, and the newly discovered hoard of gold coins from Carrick-on-Suir. The double-digit yearly growth in number of visits to [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie), was achieved a fifth consecutive year, with high growth from US, UK, Canadian and Australian visitors.

ICT participated through interactive presentations and website pages to temporary exhibitions (Becoming European hosted by the NMI for the National archives, 1689 - 2013, The Irish France: Three Centuries of Military Relations, Fougua Magister in Clarke Square, Crafted, Hair Hurling Balls – Earliest artefacts of our national game ), and to events related to the EU presidency and The Gathering. ICT also managed the re-engineering of twelve interactives in the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life, and several interactives in the Decorative Arts and History galleries.

ICT participated to further web presence work with the Marketing department and Fáilte Ireland, regarding social media, online/e-marketing, search engine optimisation and AdWords campaigns sponsored by Google. ICT also drafted and applied processes regarding digital communications activities, with Education, Curatorial and Marketing departments, resulting for example in the opening of Google+ accounts, the administration of Trip Advisor profile and the first Twitter curator Q&A session.

ICT further underpinned and streamlined a number of processes. It enabled the remote administration of the NMI flexi-time system by the newly formed HR Shared Services unit (HRSSU) of the DAHG. It put in place a translation corporate database to increase quality and consistency, and to achieve higher efficiency in in-house translation and cheaper outsourced translation. It helped improve the OPW request process for the Facilities department, and participated to an audit of the collections management systems.

To improve internal communication and collaboration, ICT further deployed the Intranet to the HR department, and produced an intranet template for planning and monitoring future projects. It coordinated a series of “Lunchtime Talks”, where staff could on a voluntary basis present a variety of subjects to their colleagues, outside of office hours. ICT also provided ICT-related training (databases, website CMS, translation software, intranet) and upgraded the training room equipment.

The ICT Manager secured EU funding with the Head of Administration through participation in the Athena Plus project (providing content to Europeana.eu). ICT also supported the request for funding by DAHG for the digitisation of the historical collection, and was part of a team that participated to a cross cultural institutions workgroup chaired by the DAHG, to explore the possibility of a common online project for curated and highly visual content, Inspiring Ireland. Within the framework of a master’s dissertation, ICT also undertook research on corporate sponsorship and individual giving in cultural institutions in Ireland, outside of office hours.

ICT was involved in reviewing the 2008-2012 strategy and in establishing the 2014-2017 statement of strategy, through team consultation and through the membership of the ICT Manager to the Strategy Workgroup. The ICT Manager was also involved in the Workforce Planning Group and both its subcommittees on activities audit and skills inventory, in preparation for the 2014 organisational restructuring.

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## **BOARD OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND**

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