

museum

National Museum of Ireland

Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Annual Report  
2018



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

2018 marked a period of significant change and culminations at the National Museum of Ireland. After a period of consultation and reflection, we published our 15-year *Master Vision 2018-2032: Connecting our Past and our Future*, setting out a pathway of sustainable growth and redevelopment across all five NMI sites. Our vision for the NMI is a museum of international quality, preserving and presenting the stories of Ireland and its place in the world.

We want the artefacts and services of the NMI to be available to as many people as possible and, with the unprecedented announcement by Government to invest €85 million in NMI facilities over the next 10 years, NMI will now be able to improve accessibility at our sites, increase access to education services, and to build on collections and exhibitions.

The Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht has very firmly placed culture on the same footing as other investment priorities in its capital plan *Project Ireland 2040* and that is hugely important because it demonstrates the much-deserved recognition of the important role culture plays in our society. In addition to the launch of our 15-year *Master Vision*, work commenced on a new four-year strategy *Building Capacity, Driving Change 2019 – 2022*. This strategy will primarily focus on delivering operational excellence through enhanced team work and increased capacity.

2018 also saw change at senior management at NMI with the retirement of Raghnall O'Floinn, who provided a lifetime of service to NMI; beginning his career at NMI in 1976 as Assistant Keeper in the Irish Antiquities Division at NMI – Archaeology. In 2003 he was appointed as NMI's Head of Collections before being appointed as the Director of the National Museum of Ireland in 2013. The Board of NMI is grateful to Raghnall for his distinguished service, and wish him well in his retirement.

The NMI's first female Director, Lynn Scarff, took office in May, 2018. Lynn brings with her a fresh perspective and energy, and established a strong programme of work within months of her appointment. Other changes at management level included the retirement of the Head of Operations and the appointment of a Head of Human Resources to address policy and infrastructural deficits in this area.

But of course, despite such fluxes, the NMI's public-facing work continued. Our commitment to our role as educators and researchers within the cultural sector is apparent throughout this Annual Report - from initiating a research project with Kingston University that focused on women and rural electrification in Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s, to spreading awareness of the unique heritage of the Traveller Community through our *Traveller's Journey* exhibition that was launched by President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.

As Chair of the National Museum of Ireland, I am grateful to the staff, volunteers and Board of NMI who provided valuable service to the State and public through 2018.



Catherine Heaney,  
Chair of the Board of the National Museum of Ireland

# INTRODUCTION BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

2018 saw the NMI set out a roadmap for transforming the NMI into an institution of international standing, by modernising its facilities and promoting learning, creativity and inspiration through engaging experiences. Launched by Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan, T.D. on May 10th with the NMI Chair, Catherine Heaney and then Director of NMI, Raghnall O' Floinn, '*Connecting our Past and our Future 2018 – 2032*' lays the ground for the development of three, five year strategic plans for NMI that align with this ambition. The first of these plans *Building Capacity, Driving Change 2019 – 2022* was developed through a collaborative Museum wide process in 2018.

Concurrently, NMI welcomed the Government announcement of its intention to invest €85 million in NMI facilities over the next 10 years, which was the largest single capital investment outlined in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's Project 2040 capital development plan for 2018-2027. This investment will be used for the redevelopment of the Natural History Museum on Merrion Street (2018 – 2021) and the Museum of Archaeology on Kildare Street (2022 – 2027). In addition to this investment, *Connecting our Past and our Future 2018 – 2032* outlines details for the planned investment for the NMI's other two sites the Museum of Decorative Arts and History at Collins Barracks, the Museum of Country Life at Turlough Park Co Mayo, as well as its Collections Resource Centre in Swords. This phase of the NMI's development will be conducted from 2027 – 2032.

While strategically planning for the future, the National Museum of Ireland continued to deliver compelling and relevant exhibition programmes across all of its Museum sites in 2018. Particular highlights included, the launch of Travellers' Journey /Mincéir Misli'd by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins at NMI – Country Life, Turlough Park in July, 2018. This exhibition was a long-term collaboration with members of the Traveller Community and was expanded through a series of excellent education and learning events throughout 2018 driven by our Education and Learning teams. The legacy of this exhibition will be an updated permanent exhibition as well as a commitment by the NMI to build on the relationships and activity initiated through the delivery of the 2018 programme. Another collaboration, with the Geological Survey of Ireland and the Crawford Gallery in Cork brought the exquisite watercolours of George Victor Du Noyer in an exhibition Stones, Slabs and Seascapes, which opened in NMI's Decorative Arts and History in Collins Barracks in May 2018. Artistic excellence was also at the fore through our exhibitions and series of programmes developed with our 2018 Artist in Residence, Rosín De Buitléar. Basing her studio in the North Block of Collins Barracks through 2018, Roisin's exhibition *CAUTION! Fragile, Irish glass – Tradition in Transition* and workshop programmes provided unique opportunities of engagement for our visitors with the artistic process and a new lens with which to view our decorative arts collections in NMI. In particular our Design and Photography Departments provided invaluable expertise in supporting the communication elements of these programmes as well as the documentation of our collection. We continued to make advances in welcoming new audiences and communicating our programme with a busy schedule led by our colleagues in Marketing and Communications department.

Overall, our Education and Learning teams welcomed over 160,000 visitors to a range of programmes across all our sites in 2018. This also coincided with a major research project on our Schools Programme giving our team greater insights into the type of learning opportunities that best support our school curricula and a better understanding of the needs of these audiences. Our Conservation and Registration teams provided excellent support and leadership in supporting our loans programmes in 2018, which included loans of a traditional

Aran Jumper to MOMA in NY for its exhibition, *Is Fashion Modern?*, ethnographic artefacts to the Royal Academy of Arts in London for its major exhibition *Oceania* (which subsequently toured to the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris), and a busy loan schedule of objects from the national collection to a number of our Local Authority Museums throughout Ireland. The theme of local heritage and community continued through the work of our Irish Antiquities team in supporting a number of unique archaeological finds in 2018. A particular highlight was the discovery of the Tullydonnell Hoard in July 2018 in Donegal by local farmers. This unique find of Bronze Age gold illustrates the strengths of collaboration between local communities, local museums, in this case, Donegal County Museum and the NMI in ensuring that our portable heritage and material culture is made available for citizens throughout Ireland to engage with.

All of this work was achieved within tight budgetary constraints and overall staffing and demonstrates the commitment and dedication of the entire NMI team to the organisation and our mission. Our Operations teams, from our Visitor Security Officers, Facilities, Cleaning and Retail staff provided a human connection to our visitors at the Museum and invaluable support in the delivery of our day to day business. We took on new challenges hosting the RTE Concert for Culture Night in Clarke Square in September 2018, which was driven by our commercial department and demonstrates the NMI's ambition to be a 'go to' cultural partner in the city. An organisation like NMI is continually adapting and changing and it is worth noting a number of important initiatives and projects that our HR & Corporate Affairs, ICT and Finance teams undertook in 2018 to begin a process of improving the NMI's corporate activities.

I'd like to also sincerely thank our voluntary Board who brought their expertise and unfaltering commitment to their roles and responsibilities through 2018 providing strategic guidance and excellent governance to an institution in a period of change. As a new Director who commenced in May 2018, the support of the NMI Board and the wider NMI staff has been invaluable and I look forward to the significant advances we will be making collectively as an institution in the coming years.



Lynn Scarff  
Director

# NMI DIVISION 1: COLLECTIONS AND LEARNING

## 1.1 ART & INDUSTRY

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

The Division welcomed two new members of staff during 2018, Ms Brenda Malone and Dr Edith Andrees, who both began two-year temporary contracts as curators. Brenda has responsibility for the military, flags and banners, arms and armour and transport collections. Edith has responsibility for the metalwork, numismatics and scientific instruments collections; collections which have not had a curator solely devoted to them since the retirement of the former Keeper, Michael Kenny, in 2012.

### Research

NMI's Art & Industry staff participated in various cross-departmental committees and work continued on the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MPSI) accreditation process throughout the year. Curators delivered gallery talks, tours and lectures and participated in various conferences, some examples include:

Dublin City Council's Culture Club events  
Exhibition tours for Icelandic Museums Association  
Speaking at the *Curating Conflict* Conference at DCU  
IMA Conference 2018  
Lecture given at the 57th Annual Seminar of the Corning Museum of Glass, New York on *Irish Cut and Engraved Glass from 1783 to circa 1950*  
Lecture given to the Guild of Irish Embroiderers in April

All staff facilitated researchers with access to the reserve collections, for both individuals and special interest groups. The division facilitated student interns from Maynooth University, UCC and NCAD during the year as well as a number of transition year students.

### Collaboration and Outreach

#### *Artist in Residence*

Glass artist Róisín de Buitléar became the first artist-in-residence of NMI, operating from a temporary studio on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the North Block at NMI – Decorative Arts & History where she held workshops and worked with various groups and the

general public. Staff of the division facilitated Róisín's forays into the stores where she researched objects in the reserve collections to inspire new works of her own.

NMI Art & Industry curators worked with the Marketing Department to film short stories for the Minister of the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Ms Josephine Madigan's Instagram account in July, and subsequently on NMI's Instagram account.

## NMI – Decorative Arts & History: Exhibitions 2018



Two new exhibitions opened at NMI – Decorative Arts & History during 2018: ***CAUTION! Fragile: Tradition in Transition*** which showcased Róisín de Buitléar's collaborative work with former master glass cutters from Waterford, and ***Niamh Barry Light on Earth***, an installation of the lighting designer's signature pieces.

A third museum exhibition, ***Suffrage***, commemorating the centenary of votes for women, opened in the Houses of the Oireachtas where it remained in situ for six months.

To mark the centenary of the ending of WW1 on Armistice Day November 11<sup>th</sup> 1918, new panels and displays

were installed in *Soldiers and Chiefs*. The uilleann pipes of renowned piper Leo Rowsome went on display in order to highlight this significant donation to the collections. The photographic exhibition *Portrait of a Century* travelled to the Market Place Theatre and Gallery in Armagh.



## NMI – Decorative Arts & History Acquisitions 2018

A small number of significant purchases for NMI's Art & Industry collection were made throughout the year; the most significant of which was a rare Charles II Irish silver six-part toilet set made by Dublin silversmith John Segar in 1685 that was purchased at auction in New York.

A collection of late 17th century letters and objects relating to the Sarsfield family, including a letter from James II to Lord Kilmallock, (Dominick Sarsfield) was also purchased by NMI, and a letter from Patrick Sarsfield, 1st Earl of Lucan, testifying to the presence of Dominick Sarsfield at the surrender of Limerick in December 1691.

## NMI – Decorative Art & History Donations 2018

- uilleann pipes made by Leo Rowsome and used by him throughout his musical career
- a large Cuala Industries embroidered picture by Lily Yeats
- enamel work pieces by Oswald Reeves and his wife Dora Allen
- a set of six chairs by mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Irish furniture designer Brendan Dunne
- *Souette*, a lighting design prototype by Niamh Barry
- a collection of garments and accessories dating from the late 1920s to the 1970s, comprising unsold stock from Murphy's Drapery shop in Mallow, Co. Cork;
- a collection of 1940s and 1950s hand crocheted gloves, made under the auspices of Gaeltarra Eireann and distributed in the UK and France by Dublin firm Astra Gloves;
- an Irish Women's Franchise League *Votes For Women* badge, circa 1912;
- a women's suffrage sash;
- the WW1 diary and Certificate of Service of James Langford who served on HMS Albion during the war;
- a collection relating to WWI Royal Engineer sapper George Woods;
- a collection of objects owned by James McKenna of Coles Lane, Dublin, a member of the Ambulance Irlandaise in the Franco Prussian War of 1870-71;
- a souvenir pin of the Irish International Exhibition held in Dublin in 1907;
- two Celtic Revival dresses worn for First Holy Communions and Confirmations in the early 1950s;
- a collection of 1960s Irish designer outfits worn by the late Kathleen MacWhite, whose husband Eoin MacWhite was Irish Ambassador to Australia at that time.

Ephemera relating to the Repeal the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment referendum was collected by a number of NMI's Art & Industry curators including badges, banners and posters, jewellery, and pieces of activist fashion. Items were collected from various sources including campaigners and members of the general public. This wave of collecting prompted curatorial staff more generally to assess thinking and policies around contemporary collecting and to initiate a process around new policies in these areas. Items relating to the visit of Pope Francis in August 2018 were also acquired.

Staff worked with the electricians on upgrading lighting in the galleries, particularly in the exhibitions *A Dubliner's Collection of Asian Art*, *Irish Country Furniture* and *The Way We Wore* and participated in the gallery deep cleans that took place on Mondays during the year.

## NMI – Decorative Arts & History: Loans 2018

Inward loan objects borrowed from *In Flanders Field Museum* in Belgium were returned and NMI staff facilitated the same-day loan of the De Burgo-O'Malley Chalice to Newport Church, Co. Mayo, as part of its centenary programme of events. The

very large collection of objects which had been on display in No. 29 Merrion Square was unpacked and documented at NMI's Collection Resource Centre in Swords.

## 1.2 IRISH ANTIQUITIES

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

### Licensing Report

The Division carries out duties relating to NMI's statutory functions under the National Monuments Acts. 1134 licence applications were processed in 2018 (see table below) and site inspections were carried out in relation to a number of these archaeological works:

Licence to excavate/monitor/detect/dive	711
Ministerial Consents and Directions	70
Licence to alter an archaeological object	202
Licence to export an archaeological object	151

### Research

NMI's IAD staff attended regular meetings with the National Monuments Service on the proposed Monuments and Archaeological Heritage Bill and NMI/NMS liaison meetings. NMI Irish Antiquities staff liaised with the State services and An Garda Síochána on a range of issues concerning protection of portable heritage and reviewed matters relating to flood relief schemes, underwater archaeology and the impact of climate change on archaeological heritage.

Fieldwork relating to archaeological discoveries was undertaken in nineteen counties; Carlow, Cork, Derry, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow. Staff liaised with consultant archaeological companies and State services on the care and deposition of excavated collections and associated archives at the Collections Resource Centre in Swords.

75 researchers accessed the Irish Antiquities Division (IAD) reserve collections and 133 researchers consulted the IAD curatorial files. Sixteen Transition Year placements

and two third-level Archaeology student interns were accommodated. IAD staff were involved in a number of projects including the Dublin Excavations Project; the Bog Bodies Research Project and staff facilitated and worked on a number of different research projects including a multi-disciplinary study on bog butter. Staff continued to facilitate research on our ethnographical collections for the forthcoming NMI publication. Samples of recently-acquired human remains, wood and bog butter were submitted for radiocarbon dating.

## Collaboration and Outreach

Together with colleagues across NMI, IAD staff continued to clean, monitor, upgrade and improve exhibitions in Kildare Street; staff dealt with issues around environment, lighting and AV and worked with OPW to improve conditions throughout the galleries.

The Tullydonnell Hoard was placed on display in the centre court in October, attracting significant public attention. In November, the Prosperous Crozier, on loan from the Jesuit Community at Clongowes Wood College, was placed on exhibition. Both national and international loans form a significant part of the Division's exhibition work.

Throughout the year staff liaised with colleagues across the Museum sector in Ireland and internationally. In January, staff travelled to Turlough Park House to return the loan of the Cushalogurt Hoard and Viking sword and worked on a loan to **Athlone Castle Museum**. In March, staff inspected loans at the **Braid Museum Ballymena**, **The Tower Museum Derry** and the **Solstice Centre, Navan, Co. Meath**. In May staff installed a loan of recently-excavated Viking material from Cork City in **Cork Public Museum**. In July staff carried out inspections of loans to King John's Castle, Limerick, **Limerick City Museum** and Rathfarnham Select Vestry, **Dublin**. Staff also liaised with colleagues in *Dublinia* to de-install their NMI loan in advance of building upgrades. In October a medieval gold ring-brooch went on short-term display at **Musaém Chorca Dhuibhne, Ballyferriter, Co. Kerry**. In November, IAD staff installed a loan exhibition at **Rathcroghan Heritage Centre, Tulsk, Co. Roscommon** and inspected a loan of a **Sheela-na-Gig in Edenderry, Co. Offaly**. In December staff travelled to the U.K to de-install a major loan of ethnographical objects from the exhibition *Oceania* at the **Royal Academy of Arts, London**. Staff also travelled to the **House of European History, Brussels** to supervise the opening of cases containing a loan of NMI ethnographical material.

In addition to loans, and as part of our commitment to work with local and regional museums in Ireland, staff met and liaised with museum colleagues throughout Ireland including Designated Museums in Cavan, Carlow, Cork, Donegal and Waterford and worked closely with curatorial colleagues in the Ulster Museum. In December, the Keeper of Irish Antiquities, Ms Maeve Sikora accompanied the Director to a meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Culture and Heritage and the Gaeltacht to discuss the relationship between the NMI and local museums.

Lectures were delivered to a wide variety of local and national bodies on archaeological and museological topics both within NMI and across the country. IAD staff participated in a number of television and radio programmes and attended many

conferences and organised a number of workshops for an international archaeology conference also. Staff represented NMI on external bodies including the Discovery Programme Council; Royal Irish Academy Standing Committee for Archaeology; Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Committee and the Designated Museums Liaison Group. A training seminar for Bord na Móna staff on finds from bogs was organised by IAD staff. Staff represented the Division on a range of policy committees as part of the NMI's entry to the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI).

## NMI – Archaeology: Acquisitions 2018 – the highlights

2018 saw some very significant acquisitions of antiquities. In June the second heaviest hoard of Bronze Age gold on record from Ireland was discovered at Tullydonnell, Co. Donegal.



In total **more than 200 objects** were registered in Irish Antiquities including a Viking-age sword from Limerick and a fragmentary zoomorphic penannular brooch from Co. Laois. There was a significant increase in the reporting of bog finds such as bog butter as result of the hot summer weather and consequent increase in peat extraction.

## 1.3 IRISH FOLKLIFE

**NMI's Irish Folklife Division manages the national collection of objects reflective of Irish traditional life, understanding that traditions change and evolve. The**

**Division continues to work with communities and explore themes for contemporary collecting. The Division is based at NMI – Country Life, Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.**

## **NMI – Country Life: Exhibitions 2018**

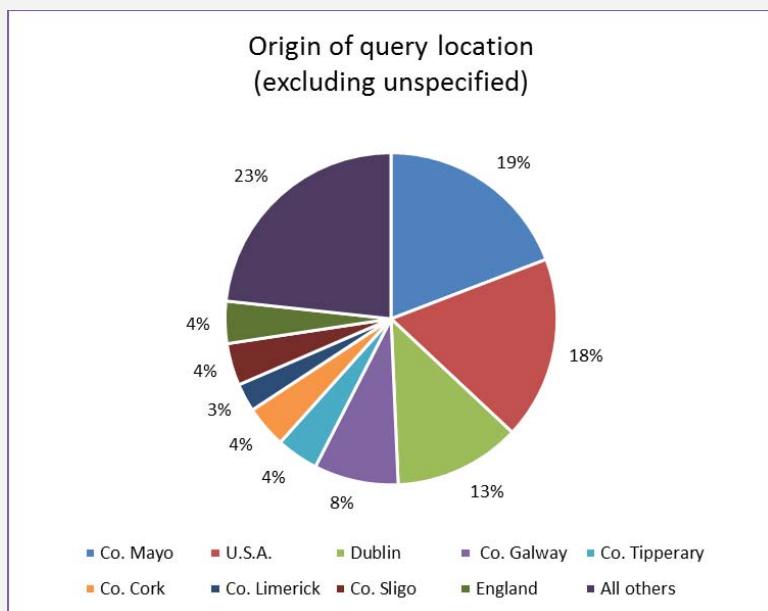
*Travellers' Journey*, curated by Ms Rosa Meehan, was NMI – Country Life's flagship exhibition in 2018. Significantly, the exhibition was co-curated with the Western Regional Travellers Health Network (members of the Traveller community from Mayo, Roscommon and Galway). The exhibition was launched by President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins in July 2018.

*The Hoard and the Sword: Echos of the Vikings in Mayo* continued on display until April 2018. *The Enemy Within: The Spanish Flu in Ireland 1918-1919* opened in NMI – Country Life in September 2018. *OnSight* was mounted again on the grounds for the summer. *Hair Hurling Balls – Earliest Artefacts of our National Game* continued on display in Cork Public Museum. An Aran Sweater from the collection was displayed at MOMA, the Museum Of Modern Art, in New York and returned to NMI – Country Life in February 2018. *Preserving the Peace* continued on display in Monaghan County Museum until May 2018. An ancillary series of exhibitions was mounted in NMI – Country Life Café.



## **Outreach and Collaboration**

NMI – Country Life staff dealt with numerous queries about the Folk Life collection from members of the public, students, academics, and other institutions during 2018. An analysis of the queries received illustrates aspects of the geographical spread of these queries.



Irish Folk Life Division (IFD) staff worked as part of a team in the development of exhibition and event programming at NMI – Country Life; particularly programming associated with temporary exhibitions. IFD staff also participated in the delivery of talks and other educational activities in the galleries, outreach to community and local history groups and conferences.

NMI – Country Life entered a number of partnerships with communities, groups and organisations in the development and installation of the *Travellers' Journey* exhibition and programming. *The CAMP Project*, for example is an art project that was commissioned by NMI with support from the Limerick School of Art & Design and Limerick Institute of Technology. The aim of this partnership is to extend the reach and themes of *Travellers' Journey /Mincéir Misli'd*. The project saw the creation of a series of art works that aimed to convey the identity and lived experiences of some Irish Travellers. These art works were created by three student artists in the Limerick School of Art and Design, in collaboration with Traveller Community groups in the west and south of Ireland.

The Irish Folklife Division, also partnered with Scoil Íosa, Involve Youth Project and Kids Own Publishing in the publishing of a book created by and for children in response to the *Travellers' Journey* exhibition. This noteworthy publication is among the few

Irish-produced resources for the exploration of identity, diversity and material culture, particularly that of the Traveller community.

NMI - Country Life entered a partnership with Kingston University, London on a research project that focused on women and rural electrification in Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s. The project, entitled *Electric Irish Homes: Rural Electrification, Domestic Products and Irish Women in the 1950s and 1960s*, will result in an academic monograph, a series of publications, a website ([electricirishhomes.org](http://electricirishhomes.org)) and a major temporary exhibition at NMI - Country Life in 2019-2020. The project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the UK.

## Acquisitions

There were 28 new acquisitions during the year and 273 individual objects were registered. IFD additionally contributed to the overall project work on the MSPI application by NMI.

## 1.4 NATURAL HISTORY

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

NMI – Natural History continues to be very popular with the public, with over 345,000 visits in 2018. **This represents the most successful year on record and a steady increase over the previous decade which has seen annual attendances double over that period.** The building hosted its first civil wedding ceremony and was used for a number of television and radio projects during the year.

### NMI – Natural History: Exhibitions

While there is currently no space for temporary exhibitions in the NMI - Natural History, NH staff delivered two at NMI – Decorative Arts & History: *Stones, Slabs and Seascapes: George Victor du Noyer's Images of Ireland* ran from June to September, and *Jurassic Skies* opened in December. An exhibition on fossil plants and fish from a classic site at Kiltorcan, Co. Kilkenny was organised with support from Geological Survey Ireland and the National Botanic Gardens. *Devonian Plant Fossils: A window into the past* ran through August to coincide with the European Palaeobotanical and Palynological Conference (EPPC 2018) at UCD. Staff also assisted with the National Gallery of Ireland exhibition *Curious Creatures: Frans Post and Brazil* which included taxidermy as well as his artworks, running from September to December. All exhibitions had supporting activities delivered by curators.

Behind the scenes, a two-year project was completed, that saw the relocation of one million insect specimens to the Collections Resource Centre (CRC) along with thirty cabinets of microscope slides. Rooms were fitted out and additional cabinets purchased. Interviews were held to recruit a curator for these extensive entomological collections. Staff offices were completed at that site and 5,700 volumes of books in the natural history library were relocated. Minor works were carried out at the remaining store at Beggars Bush to improve facilities for managing the large collection of animals stored in alcohol.

## Donations

Two retired palaeontologists based in Scotland and England donated a large and significant collection of fossils from eastern Ireland. These include several type specimens, those examples on which a new species is based. A collection of 260 pieces of taxidermy was acquired from a wildlife centre in Co. Monaghan that closed down. A giant squid was captured off the Porcupine bank and added to the collections as were a number of insects that represent new species to Ireland.

The support of volunteers greatly assisted in the range of projects that could be accommodated and made a significant contribution to the relocation of the insect collections in particular. The details of that project formed the basis of two publications, with our experience contributing to good practice in this field.

## Research

In addition to their scientific publications, the three scientific staff contributed to the production and management of the journals *Earth Science Ireland*, *Geoheritage*, *The Geological Curator*, *Irish Journal of Earth Sciences*, *Irish Naturalists' Journal* and *Journal of Natural Science Collections*. The website of the Irish Naturalists' Journal, and the library of the Speleological Union of Ireland were also managed by staff. Staff gave a number of public talks, tours for third level colleges and special interest groups, and assisted with organisations including the Geological Curators' Group, Natural Sciences Collections Association, Merrion Square Innovation Network, National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Geological Survey of Ireland's Heritage and Planning Programme.

## 1.5 CONSERVATION

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

The work of the Conservation Department in 2018 was considerable and was concentrated on a number of key activities/areas. Work included Disaster Response intervention in Natural History and country furniture gallery; light surveys of the Du Noyer and other exhibitions and conservation and freezing of a number of artefacts to eradicate potential pests.

Conservation staff supervised and participated in the upgrade and deep clean of exhibition galleries and stores: the Medieval, Bog Costumes, Kingship & Sacrifice and Viking galleries in Kildare and the Armoury, Curator's Choice, *The Way we Wore* (jewellery), Coins & Medals, Irish Silver and Country Furniture in NMI - Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks. Major work was completed on the upgrade of Block 14 stores including considerable work on the keyboard musical instrument collection in preparation for a research visit. Cashel man's condition was in particular checked at regular intervals and the environment of the Asgard exhibition reviewed and upgraded in collaboration with the OPW.

## Projects

Along with condition reporting, packing and providing advice for a number of objects, remedial conservation was undertaken on objects for NMI exhibitions, for improved storage, for publication and research as well as first aid measures for freshly excavated material.

A number of armoury objects were taken from poor condition to storage standard, a Sedan chair, Donnybrook Laundry finds, artefacts for the *First Dáil* Exhibition, four Traveller's tables and many more were conserved. Considerable work was undertaken in the conservation of ethnographic objects for the R. Hand publication and for the *Oceania* exhibition. Archaeological metal finds from Drumnashear, Co. Donegal, bog butter from Shancloon, Co. Galway, the Prosperous Crozier, the Lough Kinale book shrine, the Finglas Brooch project and the Faddenmore small finds were all treated. A series of waterlogged finds from the small Drogheda boat were additionally conserved and processed prior to freeze-drying.

External Conservators were engaged on a number of NMI conservation projects in 2018. These included the conservation of textile collections for NMI's *Travellers' Journey* and *Battle of Messines* exhibitions; the Huangchao Liqi Tushi illustrations (54 Folios) for upgraded storage and care of collections and paper-based items in preparation for the *First Dáil exhibition* in 2019. In addition, a number of Natural History specimens were conserved for the *Jurassic Skies* exhibition and ethnographic material for the *Oceania* loan. Conservation of small fragments of the Faddenmore Psalter and consultancy on the small finds were progressed. The focus of this work relied on specialisms (paper, textile and natural sciences etc.) that fall outside of those held by the current NMI Conservation Department staff.

A number of temporary and permanent exhibitions took place during the year and most of the associated artefacts required conservation and mounting. This included

major work for the *Traveller's Journey* at NMI – Country Life, the *Suffrage Exhibition* and *George Du Noyer* at NMI – Decorative Arts & History, and the *Prosperous Crozier* and the *Tullydonnell Hoard* for NMI - Archaeology. De-installation early in 2018 of the *Christmas* exhibition, the *Hoard and Sword* took place as well as adjustments for the Leo Rowlinson Uileann Pipe display.

## **Research and Engagement**

Investigation and scientific analysis of NMI's collections took place during the year using NMI's X-ray and XRF facilities. The results of analysis and investigation enabled curators to determine the authenticity and composition of artefacts prior to acquisition. A number of research projects continued including the alloy determination of medieval horse cheek-pieces, the Drumanagh archaeological material, the Prosperous Crozier and selected artefacts from the Dowris Hoard. The Ash Omni digital microscope was purchased and was utilised by the Education and Learning Department, under the supervision of the Conservation Department, for examining and recording the Ardagh Chalice and the Derrynaflan Hoard for research purposes.

Conservation continued to deliver a module on Museum Environment to the UCC Masters in Museum Studies, and a module on deterioration and conservation of archaeological and museum objects for the BSc in Museum Studies. NMI Conservation staff delivered lectures and modules on conservation topics at TCD, UCG Medieval History/Archaeology post-graduate programme and on heritage science for a Material Culture Workshop. NMI Conservators also gave lectures on the Neapolitan Crib, for the institute of Conservator Restorers in Ireland, on the conservation of four Travellers' Tables and spoke at the *Remembering Armada* Conference, in Sligo.

## **Professional Development**

Considerable training needs were addressed in 2018. The broad range of topics addressed is indicative of the extensive remit of the conservation department.

NMI's Head of Conservation attended ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) and BlueShield's First Aid for Cultural Heritage in times of Crisis training, Conservation staff attended and/or presented papers at the Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA) conference in Oxford; Institute Of Conservator In Ireland (ICRI) Conservation Activities conference and

## 1.6 REGISTRATION

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

### Systems

A major upgrade of the Adlib Collections Management System continued, including NMI, Archive and Library catalogues. NMI's Documentation staff continued to provide Adlib training and mentoring for colleagues across departments when requested. The Registration Department drafted the full series of Registration-related policies, with separate archive and library policies where the approach is significantly different, to be assessed by a cross-departmental committee. The Terminology Group continued to work through terminology issues, recording decisions in the Documentation Procedural Manual and Adlib help sections. Terminology lists are also being streamlined to reflect these decisions.

### Projects

NMI's Registrar led an NMI-wide consultation process to create a contingency plan for the potential exit of the Collections Resource Centre (CRC). This was done in collaboration with the Office of Public Works and NMI Board representatives with a consultant from the British Museum engaged to complete the final element of the plan. A series of exploratory museum visits, training workshops on environmental standards and discussions followed to clarify the Museums requirements. Space was also temporarily provided for the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery to store artworks during their storage renovation project. Final learnings and future actions were collated on the first phase of the Inventory Project in preparation for Phase 2.

### Research and Collaboration

Alongside contingency planning, business as usual continued at the CRC, such as centralising, managing and providing access to reserve collections with as far as possible was the priority for transfers. It also included receipt of archaeological finds from commercial companies and other vital collection transfers. 35 researchers were

facilitated at the CRC over 90 working days. 12 CRC tours were provided for a wide range of groups, with presentations and tours provided by CRC staff. A preventative conservation patrol schedule continues to be carried and disaster plans were reviewed and supplies replenished as utilised during heavy snows early in the year.

The Archivist continued to provide a service for staff at all five NMI sites, processing 73 queries. Work continued preparing the Director's Archive for cataloguing with 372 boxes containing 3,944 files complete. A contract Archivist completed the catalogue of 1916 acquisition files and processed the first phase of the Directors Archive onto Adlib Archive. The upgrade of the CRC Archive and NMI – Country Life Archive commenced with shelving installation, installation of a protective wall in the CRC, 10 archive transfers and planning, bringing the Museum closer to its statutory obligation as a 'Place of Deposit' under the National Archive Act.

Scanning the NMI's original letter files continues with 14,234 preservation-quality digital images created. The Archivist continues to lead the Archive and Records Working Group preparing staff for the upcoming records management and data protection compliance survey clarifying roles, responsibilities, legal responsibilities and long-term vision for the NMI, including clarification of our relationship with and standards required by National Archives of Ireland. The requirement for this increased in urgency on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 with the introduction of GDPR.

The Librarian continued to provide a service for staff at all five NMI sites including book orders, processing 64 invoices, 49 Inter library loans, processing 142 research queries, renewing 488 subscriptions/memberships, re-shelving books and cataloguing backlogs. The Librarian and Registrar began planning the Rare Books Project and aim to commence this in 2019 resources allowing.

## 1.7 EDUCATION

**In 2018 over 160,000 people participated in learning programmes and used education services across the National Museum of Ireland's four sites (four PUBLIC sites). Over half of this figure were young people from schools. Demand for tours and other services increased with enquiries to the Bookings Offices in Dublin and Mayo averaging at 450 enquiries per week.**

### Projects & Outreach

In 2018, NMI's Education team developed a public programme for schools using the arts as a lens to engage with the collections, drawing inspiration from the wealth of collections across all four sites and responding to key commemorative events in Irish History. Drama and visual art workshops facilitated children to explore Ireland's medieval treasure, the Ardagh Chalice, while the '*Fighting Words*' project encouraged creative writing and storytelling sessions among school groups. Special tours were

developed to explore how women's roles changed in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and skulduggery tours continued to provide hands-on interactive experiences for students.

Re-enactments invited school children to explore life before, during and after Easter Week 1916. Online resources were developed with curriculum links reflecting universal suffrage in Ireland in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the First World War. A long-term intergenerational project entitled '*In Our Words*' and involving St Louis Kiltimagh Community School, the Museum's Writers' Group and the National Theatre got under way in collaboration with NMI's Education team. An exhibition to mark Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and entitled '*The Rights Museum*', involved students at Larkin Community College selecting personal objects that reflected the theme of children's rights. Other project partners included the Ombudsman for Children's Office and Collapsing Horse Theatre Company.

NMI's Education Department organised over 280 events for adults, families, local communities and special interest groups in 2018. These included tours, workshops, conferences, seminars, talks, re-enactments, demonstrations, open days and drop-in events to coincide with festivals and anniversaries such as St Patrick's Day, Easter, Bealtaine, Heritage Week, Culture Night, Open Studio and Christmas and to reflect commemorative events in Irish history. At NMI – Archaeology, a public programme celebrated the discovery of the Ardagh Chalice 150 years on.

To commemorate women's suffrage, three events were organised in collaboration with the Houses of the Oireachtas and held in the Seanad Chamber, Leinster House. A number of key conferences were also organised focusing on women's roles in society and how societal and cultural changes affected women over the last 100 years.

Educator and artist Róisín de Buitléar worked as Artist in Residence in 2018, collaborating with the Education team and a range of visual artists, musicians and community groups on a public programme that included tours, workshops, seminars and longer-term projects. One such project at Collins Barracks involved Travellers sharing stories, traditions, history and skill sets through the construction of the Beady Pocket, a traditional item of Traveller culture.

Working with local communities was a priority for the Education Department in 2018. We collaborated with Dublin City Council's Culture Company on the Culture Club initiative where tours spanned a range of themes and enabled local communities to dig deeper and discover more about the NMI collections. Creative Ireland's grant of €90,000, to support year one of the growth and expansion of the Irish Community Archive Network project (iCAN), supported more communities throughout Ireland to participate in this community archive project. iCAN communities also developed the 'Our Irish Women' exhibition which went on tour from the end of 2018. Local community groups continued to meet regularly in different Museum sites to pursue their interests as well as engage with Museum staff and the wider public including the

Knitting Circle, Connacht Textile Crafters, Mayo Genealogy Group, Music Circle and the Museum's Writers' Group at the Museum of Country Life.

The panel of freelance guides continued to enable the Museum to reach a wider, more diverse audience and work started on the expansion of this panel at other sites.

At NMI – Natural History, NMI's Education staff continued to work with AP+E Architects on the design of the Wonder Cabinet; a multisensory, interactive space reflecting the theme of predator and prey.

## Research

Audience research involving schools was completed by an outside consultant and work started on the implementation of recommendations across the four sites. Work also commenced on gathering content for a publication to document the diversity of learning programmes organised by the Education Department to commemorate significant developments in Irish history between 1913 and 1918.

## 1.8 PHOTOGRAPHY

**The work of the Photography Department in 2018 included photography of collections, buildings, exhibition galleries and activities along with the management of NMI's Digital Asset Management System and the Digital Photographic Image Archive, which support and enhance NMI's Strategic Plan across all sites.**

### Systems

**Digital Asset Management System (DAMS)/Digital Photographic Image Archive (Archive):** Expansion of content and development of the DAMS and Archive continued throughout 2018. To modernise and enhance the efficiency of the DAMS/Archive, work commenced on the migration of these to a new server. Work also began in conjunction with the ICT Department on the initial installation and configuration of a new version of the DAMS software.

The Photography Department also procured an updated Hasselblad H6D-50C Camera Body for the Hasselblad system.

### Projects

NMI's Photography Department undertook photography for many exhibitions throughout 2018:

### ***Exhibitions***

'Traveller's Journey' along with the photography of the exhibition gallery, 'Niamh Barry Light on Earth' exhibition galleries, 'Marching on the Road to Freedom: Dáil Éireann 1919' and 'Dáil 100, Houses of the Oireachtas' and the 'The Prosperous Crozier'.

### ***Publications***

Photography forthcoming publications: 'Ethnographic Collection in the National Museum of Ireland' with 69 images, additional photography of drawings for the 'Ardagh Chalice' publication and 'Early Medieval Hand-Bells' with 84 new images.

Other photography included new finds in the Irish Antiquities Division including 'Tullydonnell Hoard', 'Magdalene Laundry', Donnybrook, 'Vodrey Dublin Pottery', 'Copper alloy cannon undergoing conservation from the Wreck of La Juliana, Spanish Armada, Streedagh, Co. Sligo', 'General Headquarters Staff of the I.R.A. 1921' painting. New images of buildings and exteriors of two NMI sites: Country Life and Decorative Arts & History as well as interiors of Turlough Park House.

A 'Series of Christmas Season images across Archaeology site, Kildare Street'. Ethnographical collections for the 'Oceania' Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 'A Meeting' by Harry Clarke, 'Bandon Bridge Farthing', 'Bandon Mace', 'Belt Buckles'. In addition, the Photography department facilitated a number of external requests for new images of the collection.

## **Image Requests & Distribution**

The distribution of over 3,250 images from over 300 requests from staff and the external market through processing of raw captures, searching, retrieving, optimising, quality assurance and distribution of final images.

## **Online Collections**

The Department contributed to Online Collections/Google Arts & Culture Project by completing the preparation and supply of over 50 images.

## **Engagement**

'Extensis Portfolio Heritage & Culture User Group Meeting' in the National Gallery, London in May. Both NMI's Senior Photographer and the Digital Imaging Officer attended the Seminar and made a presentation on 'Custom Metadata and Portfolio Workflow Strategies in the National Museum of Ireland'.

As a member of the Digitisation and Cataloguing Group - Council National Cultural Institutions, the Senior Photographer was involved in organising the “*Opening up Cultural Collections: Providing access in a digital environment*” in The National Gallery of Ireland. The Digital Imaging Officer, Photographic Department presented a case study on ‘*Images of Collections: DAMS, Workflow and Metadata in the Photographic Department*’ at this Seminar.

## Research

The Photography Department facilitated an intern from BA Photography, School Of Media, Dublin Technological University, Grangegorman.

## 1.9 DESIGN

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

In 2018 the department was involved in a large number of projects, which included artefact illustration, exhibition design & support, student placement, cartography and general graphic design support.

## Exhibitions

Design Department support for the temporary exhibition ‘**CAUTION! Fragile: Tradition in Transition**’ providing Illustration graphics, pull up banners, and Marketing collateral to support the Exhibition.

The Exhibition titled ‘*Travellers’ Journey*’ was a ground-breaking exhibition on display at NMI – Country Life. The Design Department were involved in the initial planning, tendering, design of all graphic panels & labelling, and the marketing collateral for the exhibition.

Exhibition graphics and catalogue were provided for a temporary exhibition entitled ‘*Niamh Barry Light on Earth*’ and also all promotional material for the exhibition.

Promotional graphics were designed for another temporary exhibition ‘*Stones, Slabs and Seascapes*’: George Victor du Noyer’s Images of Ireland.

Display graphics were provided for two new objects: Leo Rowsome Uilleann pipes and a Thomas Clarke statue.

## **Book Design**

*Happy Days and Hard Times*, a collection of visitor memories inspired by NMI - Country Life, by Joanne Hamilton. This was designed by our in-house designer and has proved a very popular seller in our retail outlet at NMI – Country Life.

## **Illustration/Plans**

Archaeological Illustration was an ongoing activity throughout 2018.

Site plans were drawn for JIA article '*Recent Discoveries of Early Bronze Age Burials*' by Ms Maeve Sikora, Ms Mary Cahill and Ms Laureen Buckley

Plans of NMI Stores at Daingean were produced for NMI's Registration Department as part of NMI's Spatial Planning project.

## **Collaboration and Engagement**

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

The Design Department provides 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, including the redesign and typesetting of the labels in the Prehistoric Ireland exhibition which concluded in early 2018. This is now a vast improvement on the previous labels and provides a much great visitor experience for this exhibition.

## **Research**

A number of transition year students were also facilitated throughout the year including two students from the Bertha von Suttner Schule Mörfelden-Walldorf Germany.

## **1.10 EXHIBITIONS 2018: An Overview**

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

## **CAUTION! Fragile, Irish Glass - Tradition in Transition – March 2018**

A stunning exhibition of glass art, exploring the history and social experiences of workers at Ireland's famous Waterford Crystal factory, opened at NMI - Decorative Arts & History in March 2018. The exhibition featured 54 blown, cut and engraved works and was developed by well-known glass artist Róisín de Buitléar in collaboration with three glass masters and former Waterford Crystal workers – Mr Fred Curtis, Mr Greg Sullivan and Mr Eamonn Hartley.

## **Stones, Slabs and Seascapes: George Victor du Noyer's Images of Ireland – June 2018**

For over half a century, Irish artist and surveyor George Victor du Noyer travelled the length and breadth of the country to make drawings and paintings for the Irish Ordnance Survey and the Geological Survey of Ireland. Stones, Slabs and Seascapes, an exhibition of watercolours and drawings, was curated to mark the bicentenary of his birth.

## ***Niamh Barry – Light on Earth* exhibition – November 2018**

This exhibition celebrated the work of contemporary Irish artist Niamh Barry, one of the world's leading innovators in the use of LED technology. Her signature works are highly sought after and included in many prestigious public and private collections around the world. Her client list includes some of the leading interior designers and architects internationally, amongst them, Peter Marino, Nate Berkus, Miles Redd and David Easton and Kelly Hoppen. This is her first solo exhibition in Ireland.

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

### ***The Prosperous Crozier - November 2018***

Considered to be a highly significant artefact surviving from Medieval Ireland, the Prosperous Crozier is the oldest, securely-dated, complete crozier from Ireland and Britain, and also one of the oldest in Europe. Discovered in a bog near Prosperous in Kildare in 1839, the Prosperous Crozier has remained in the care of the Jesuit Community in Ireland since then, at Clongowes Wood College. Its exhibition at NMI-Aracheology has been made possible by the Jesuits Community and the Trustees of Clongowes Wood College.

### ***Tullydonnell Hoard – November 2018***

Investigations by experts at the National Museum of Ireland have confirmed that the four gold rings unearthed in Donegal earlier this year date to the late Bronze Age. The hoard of gold went on public display at NMI – Archaeology and is among the heaviest hoards of gold on record to be discovered in Ireland.

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

### ***Travellers' Journey - An exploration of Irish Traveller Culture - July 2018 to May 2019***

Travellers' Journey was a temporary exhibition exploring the rich culture, traditions and crafts of the Traveller community. The exhibition aimed to showcase and encourage discussion and appreciation of the unique heritage of this community. This exhibition was curated in partnership with the Western Regional Traveller Health Network. The exhibition was launched by President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

### ***The Hoard and the Sword – Echoes of the Vikings in Mayo - May to December 2018***

This exhibition explored the discovery of a hoard of silver bracelets from Cushalogurt, Kilmeena, and a Viking sword found in the River Moy at Coolcronaun.

### ***The Enemy Within: the Spanish Flu in Ireland 1918-1919 - September 2018 to April 2019***

NMI marks the centenary of the massive impact this event had on Irish society with a three-stranded programme, *The Enemy Within - The Spanish Flu in Ireland 1918-19*. The temporary exhibition at NMI - Country life explored the folk medicines and cures used by people to combat the devastating illness. The exhibition is based on the collection within the National Museum of Ireland.

### ***OnSight - November 2018 to April 2019***

OnSight is an annual installation of artworks in and around the grounds of NMI – Country Life. Its focus was on the theme 'Suffragette'. This artist-led exhibition project was a collaboration between NMI, Mayo County Council and Mayo Arts Squad. Artist Ms Breda Mayock, through workshops and a call-out to the public, encouraged submissions of fabric with words, quotes etc. for inclusion in an installation at the reception area of the exhibition galleries.

## **NMI DIVISION 2: OPERATIONS**

### **2.1 FINANCE**

The 2018 allocation received from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht was as follows:

€

o	Pay & pensions	8,244,000
o	Non-Pay	4,194,000
o	Capital	1,108,000
	Total	<b>€13,546,000</b>

During 2018 the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht also awarded amounts totalling €311,920 in relation to grants for specific purposes.

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

## Financial Statements 2018

The Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2018 and the accompanying audit file in early 2019. The C&AG audit of the Financial Statements for 2018 took place during June 2019. NMI's accounts in respect of the year ending 31 December 2018 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 2018 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 2018 Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the reporting requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

## Procedures

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

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.

## 2.2 HR/CORPORATE AFFAIRS UNIT

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

## **Corporate Governance**

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

## **Recruitment 2018**

The HR function was further developed in 2018 with the recruitment of a Head of HR. This was one of 27 positions recruited, including that of the new Director as well as positions in Retail, Facilities, Education, Conservation, Irish Antiquities, Art and Industry, Finance and HR/Corporate Affairs.

## **Training and Engagement with NMI Staff**

The HR/Corporate Affairs Unit continues to work closely with all staff, to meet the learning and development needs of NMI. The Unit delivered 15 training events, with 96.7% of staff receiving training. 2018 saw the commencement of a ten month Management Training Programme for all managers. Topics covered included Leadership Skills, Team Building, Dignity at Work, Discipline, Grievance procedures, Diversity and Equality/Gender.

Other training events included Traveller Awareness, Health and Safety, Communications and Induction. Staff engaged with online Child Protection training, with a 92% completion rate. There were 10 departmental training events, covering job specific topics; 23 staff availed of training in role specific development and 5 staff availed of the Refund of Fees programme. All new NMI staff now engage in a two-stage induction process, initially departmental and then a Museum wide induction.

A world café day was held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018, with a full programme of events for all staff.

## **Staff Forum**

Constructive work continued with the Museum council, a forum for staff and management to discuss IR issues, chaired independently. The council met six times over the period of the year. Relationships were further developed throughout the year,

working through issues with Forsa trade union, including the Visitors Services Consolidation agreement, which changed the pay and work patterns for over 53 staff.

## Policies & Procedures

A full audit of all policies was conducted and a three-stage plan was devised to develop policies in line with best practice and agreement. This work will continue in 2019, with a bi-annual review. Some policies have also required training for implementation.

The establishment of a working group on Diversity and Equality commenced, to identify how diverse is the workplace and its customers, devise a policy, with training opportunities.

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

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, 23 requests were responded to throughout the year and 1 Data Protection request was responded to.

## 2.3 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

### Infrastructure

New fibre was laid between NMI-Archaeology and NMI-Natural History, within NMI - Decorative Arts & History and to NMI-Country life and these cables will be commissioned in future years. New cables, connections and configurations were also implemented in NMI - Decorative Arts & History to enable the artist in residence workshop, and more generally on the second and third Floors of the North Block, NMI – Decorative Arts & History, and the relocation of the business reception, which was merged with the public reception. The ICT department also planned for firewall replacements with its network suppliers.

The ICT staff resolved long-standing issues required for the successful deployment of specialised workstations in the Photography Department, improved patch deployment on both standard client PCs and server virtual machines, and reconfigured file storage on servers to facilitate better granularity of data backups and restore.

## Gallery Interactives

The ICT Department re-engineered several interactive and audio-visual presentations in existing exhibitions, most notably completely replacing 14 of the film and interactive units in the galleries of the NMI-Country Life, enhancing the media content with additional texts and descriptions, digitally enhancing the visual content, in addition to the re-developing and enhancing the quiz zones for our younger visitors. Despite strong resource constraints, nearly all of the NMI's 150+ electronic interactives have had some work done or been completely redeveloped in the last decade.

The ICT Department also led the development, production and exhibition display for new exhibitions:

- supplied and installation of the *Travellers' Journey* exhibition interactive equipment in NMI-Country life: media content development and editing, enabling same through working in partnership with external supplier and exhibition curator.
- installed an interactive in *Soldier & Chiefs* displaying the *Bureau of Military History* website in NMI – Decorative Arts & History, allowing visitors to search witness statements, 1916 press cuttings and a gallery of images.
- produced an in-house short behind-the-scene film and associated audio-visual installation for the NMI - Decorative Arts & History exhibition *Niamh Barry - Light on Earth* and for the NMI YouTube Channel and website.

## Applications

The ICT department managed the technical upgrade and server migration of key software such as NMI's digital asset management system with the photography department, its main collection management system with the registration department, its flexi system with the HR and Corporate Affairs department, and its anti-virus system across all departments.

It enabled the deployment of the Safety Management System on NMI's Intranet with the Facilities department, and modified elements of the existing booking system for the Education Department.

## Online

2018 saw over **670,000 visits** to NMI's website ([www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)). This increase compared to 2017 echoes the yearly increases between 2007 and 2016. The discovery of the Tullydonnell Hoard in Donegal, together with renewed interest in Bog Bodies brought additional visitors. There was a double-digit growth in 2018 from most mainland European countries, as well as Canada and New Zealand.

The ICT department also led and completed the procurement for a user-centric,

mobile-first redesign of its website. It organised user experience workshops across NMI's public-facing departments, defining personas representing key audiences, as well as their respective requirements and expectations. This new website will be delivered in 2019.

## Professional Development

The ICT department continued to organise new user and refresher classes for the website content management system, so that departments can take ownership of the relevant pages on the website. It also participated in the induction of new NMI employees, in particular highlighting data security and confidentiality best practices.

## Policies And Procedures

The ICT Department assisted in the development of policies and procedures through participation at workgroups with the relevant officers from other departments for Information Compliance (e.g. GDPR), Archives and Records, and Visitor Services.

## 2.4 MARKETING

Overall, visitor numbers were slightly down on 2017. Nevertheless, the NMI achieved **over 1.1 million visitors** - the eighth consecutive year to attract over 1 million visitors. The breakdown by NMI site was as follows:

Visitor Numbers	2017	2018	% Change
NMI - Archaeology	474,564	466,038	-1.8%
NMI – Natural History	336,412	345,513	+2.7%
NMI – Decorative Arts & History	234,336	198,974	-15%
NMI – Country Life	107,183	116,206	+8.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,152,495</b>	<b>1,126,731</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>

The Marketing Department gained extensive PR coverage in 2018 through national, regional, international print, broadcast and social media.

## Media Coverage 2018

Highlights included; the launch of the European year of cultural heritage. The launch of Róisín de Buitléar exhibit “*Caution! Fragile: Tradition in Transition*” along with the Artist in Residence programme for Róisín de Buitléar. *Niamh Barry Light on Earth* launch - this exhibition celebrated the sculptural lighting of internationally renowned Irish artist Niamh Barry.

The *National Treasures* exhibition at NMI – Country Life and its associated television programmes were well received and visitor numbers showed a marked increase to NMI – Country Life as a result. This involved a comprehensive television, radio and digital advertising campaign across all RTÉ platforms as well as a PR campaign across local, regional and national media. The Marketing Department also worked on two other exhibitions in Turlough Park i.e. *Travellers’ Journey* which was launched by President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, and *The Enemy Within – Spanish Flu in Ireland 1918-1919*.

Marketing also promoted *The Blaze*, an art installation to commemorate the centenary of women’s suffrage for the annual Onsight project at NMI – Country Life in partnership with the Mayo Arts Council.

In the run up to and throughout September and October, the Marketing Department promoted the Ardagh Chalice 150th commemoration in Dublin.

Other highlights include Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) broadcast of their event for *Culture Night* from NMI – Decorative Arts & History and this **attracted almost 9,000 visitors** on the night.

## Partnerships and Engagement

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

## Social Media

NMI maintained a strong presence across all digital platforms (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram) in 2018 for all four NMI sites. Areas of continued developments in Digital Marketing include Digital Display (Irish Times, Irish Independent, Galway Advertiser, The Connaught Telegraph), SEO via Google Ads / web content, in-house video production (Róisín de Buitléar Artist in Residence, *Come Back to Erin* Online Collections, *Jurassic Skies* Q&A) and Facebook Ad targeting. As a further promotion for NMI’s digital online presence.

## **Online Follows: 30<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018**

Facebook: 33,754

Twitter: 36,121

Instagram: 2,787

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

**Facilities coordinates the building management functions across all NMI sites. This can range from making small improvements in welfare facilities to upgrading exhibitions and managing significant building development works across NMI. In this regard, we are very grateful for Office of Public Works (OPW) support in rolling out maintenance programmes across all of our historic sites.**

One of the highlights during 2018 was finalizing the Visitor and Security Officers reform and pay consolidation process, which ultimately gave the NMI the capacity to open seven days a week. The process was not without its challenges but with the cooperation of all staff, it was a very significant development in the history of the NMI.

### **Collaboration with the Office of Public Works (OPW)**

During the first quarter of 2018, a significant building project was undertaken at NMI – Decorative Arts & History with the upgrading of the South Block of Clarke Square. These works involved the replacement of the roof tiles with natural roof slates, the repointing of the chimney's including the stone façade overlooking Pearse Square. The stone masonry comprising of Dublin Calp (limestone) was scheduled to be rendered in lime mortar but the stonework was deemed so good that it was decided to repoint instead – displaying the original natural beauty of the stone. The Clock Tower is particularly noteworthy in that it was totally refurbished in line with its original drawings dating back to the 1820's.

## **Engagement**

In addition the NMI was pleased to have its historic building go green as part of the five day "St Patricks Festival". The global greening sees hundreds of landmark buildings around the world lit up green to celebrate the island of Ireland and St Patrick. Notwithstanding all NMI's Dublin sites took part in this initiative.

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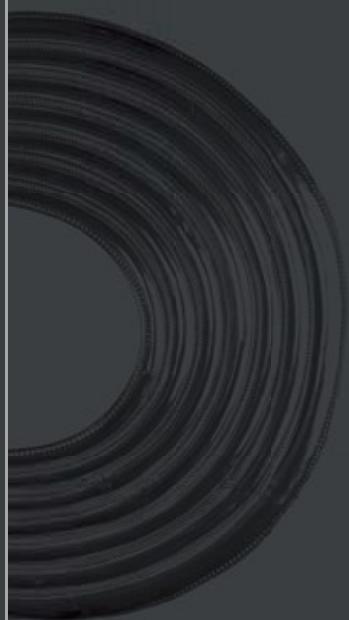
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