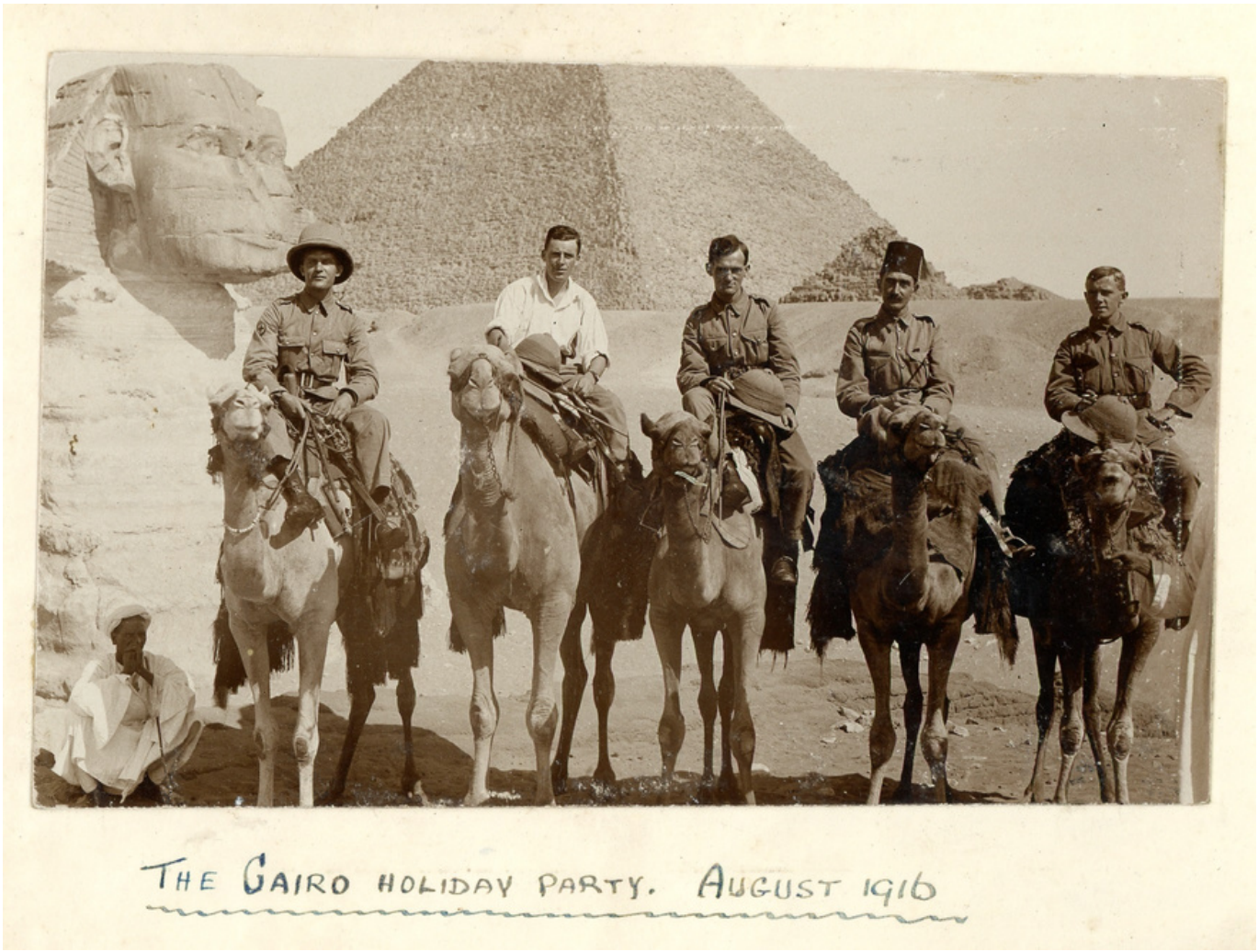
Archives & Records Association
Cumann Cartlann agus Taifead
Ireland/Éire



Gunning Brothers' Collection recuperation in Egypt

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ARA, IRELAND CHAIR VACANCY

Dear Colleagues,

After more than two years in the role, Gerard Byrne resigned as Chair of ARA, Ireland this past July. We are grateful for all his fantastic work with the committee and for being a great colleague and friend.

The position of Chair is currently vacant and we hope to fill it in the coming weeks so the work of the ARA, Ireland committee can continue as efficiently as possible. We are inviting any member who is interested in the position to read the accompanying documentation and submit the nomination form along with a brief statement of interest by Friday, 2 October.

Job Description for Role of Chair
Nomination Form

If you have any questions about the Chair role or the work of the committee, please do not hesitate to contact us at: **ara.irelandregion@gmail.com**

INCREASING ACCESS TO OUR COLLECTIONS DONEGAL GRAND JULY

Niamh Brennan, Archivist, Donegal County Council Archives Service



The last Donegal Grand Jury 1899 (Donegal County Archives)

Over 21 years Donegal County Archives has built up an impressive collection of archives of both public and private origin. Among our key collections is the Donegal Grand Jury Archive, dating from 1753 to 1898. It is our oldest public collection and is of great significance for local, family and academic history.

The Grand Juries of Ireland are believed to have been in existence since Norman times. They were the predecessor bodies of modern local authorities and had a wide variety of public functions, including contracting out roads works; construction and maintenance of infirmaries, dispensaries, courthouses, schools and the County Jail; and collecting the rate ('county cess'). Diverse 'services' sometimes included translation of Irish, culling of certain animals and transportation of prisoners.

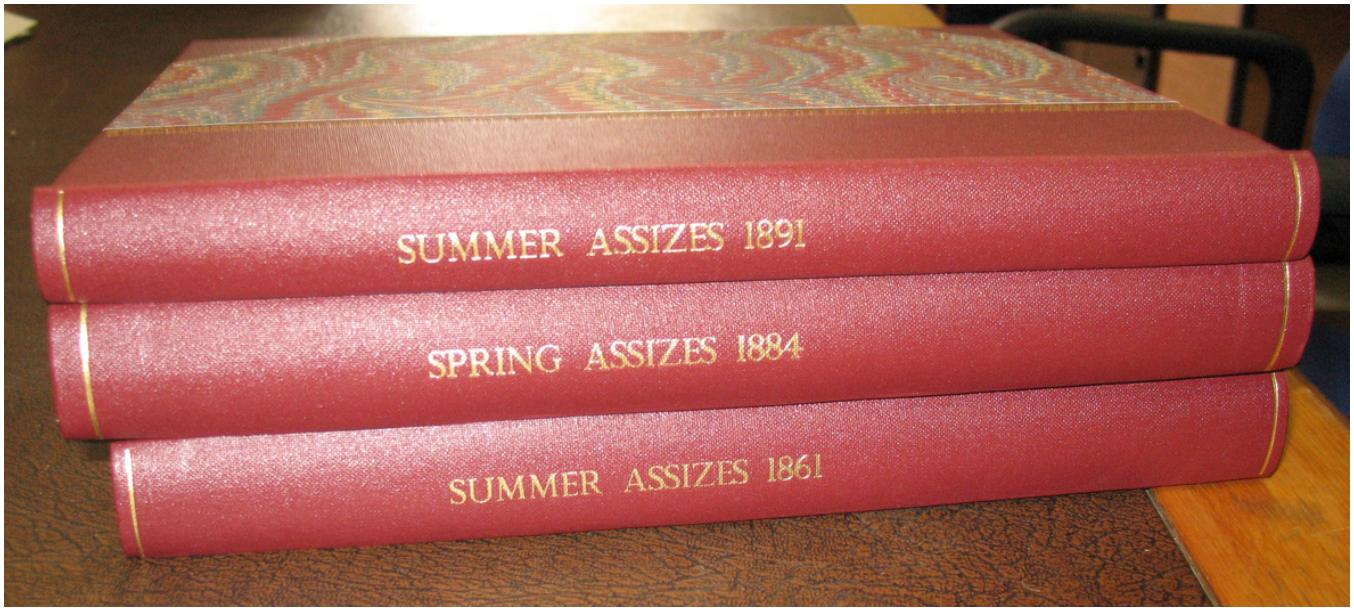
The Donegal Grand Jury records include presentments; accounts; minutes of meetings; correspondence and memoranda; also photographs of the last Grand Jury. They reveal much about life in 18th and 19th century rural Ireland. The original records are held at the County Archives repository. The collection was microfilmed for conservation purposes some years ago. These microfilms, along with the descriptive list have been digitized and can now be viewed on the County Archives' website at no charge.

View the collection at: http://www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives/donegalgrandjurydigitised/

Rural District Councils

As part of the ongoing Decade of Centenaries commemorations the Archives' Rural District Council minute books from 1917 - 1925 are in the process of being digitized. They will be uploaded over the next few months, and made available free to view on the Archives website. (Those from 1915 - 1916 are already online and freely accessible already.)

See facebook.com/DonegalCountyArchives and Twitter @DonegalCoArchiv for all the latest news.



Bound volumes of the Donegal Grand Jury (Donegal County Archives)

THERE BUT FOR FORTUNE

Brigid Clesham

Historically the spelling of surnames varies greatly and the name Macnamara is no exception. In the early eighteenth century a colourful character, George Macnemara, lived in the small village of Cong located on the border between Counties Mayo and Galway. He is still remembered in the local folklore and has been the subject of projects in Cong's national school. Most commonly his surname is spelt Macnamara or McNamara but he always spelt it 'Macnemara'. In one instance a search on the Web, using this version of the spelling of his surname 'McNemara', revealed a reference to a journal in a New Zealand university archive. On further investigation it transpired that this journal



Cong Abbey, Co Mayo

provides a fascinating insight into the character of George Macnemara and records in some detail a year in his life. Unfortunately the Hocken Collections Archives and Manuscripts Section of the University of Otago, Dunedin, since expanding their description of this journal have reverted to the spelling of George's surname as McNamara.

The journal was written by an English Jesuit priest Father Thomas Tasburgh and it records a visit he made to Ireland from July 1726 until his death in Dublin a year later. Father Tasburgh's brother, Henry Tasburgh of the parish of St Giles-in-the-fields, London, was the landlord of the Cong Abbey estate and George Macnemara was his tenant. Both were Catholics but their relationship was marred by George's tardiness in paying his rent although they both had to stand together in legal battles against the local Protestant clergy who seized back the tithes of the estate in 1724 and a claim to the estate made by the Eustace family. Father Tasburgh himself had a vested interest in the estate as he was entitled to an annuity of £50 from its revenue left to him by his father John Tasburgh.

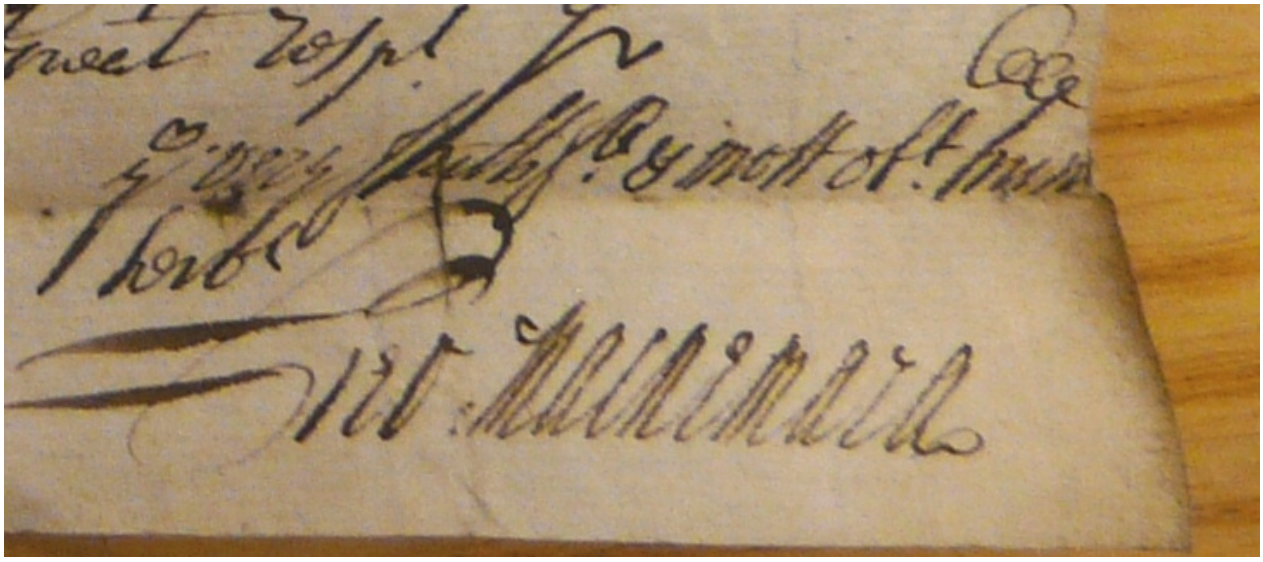
George Macnemara was the son of Florence Macnemara of Ardcloony, near Killaloe in Co Clare. In April 1722 he was granted a 31 year lease of the Cong Abbey estate following his marriage to Ellis or Elizabeth Tasburgh, widow of a cousin of the Tasburgh brothers and a daughter of Patrick Lynch of Lydacan, Claregalway. Ellis was previously married to Peregrine Tasburgh, who acted as agent for the Cong Abbey estate at the end of the seventeenth century and became its tenant in 1702. A stone tablet set into a wall at Ross Errilly Friary near Headford, Co Galway, memorializes Peregrine who died on 25 February 1710/11. Following Peregrine's death his widow Ellis became the tenant of the estate and ran it for ten years until her marriage to George in November 1721. It is not clear how she became acquainted with George Macnemara but it may have been through a family connection George himself had with the Tasburghs. Rent arrears were due when George signed his lease on 24 April 1722 and by 1726 had accumulated.



Memorial to Peregrine Tasburgh at Ross Errilly Friary, Headford

Henry Tasburgh decided to send his brother Father Tasburgh over to Ireland to see what the situation was with regard to George's non payment of his rent and the seizure of the tithes by the clergy. Father Tasburgh's journal begins with a description of his journey to Dublin where he arrived on 1 July 1726. He remained in the capital for a number of weeks awaiting the arrival of George and conversing with legal experts in relation to the tithes. He was quite social and describes visits with lawyers and land owners with interests in the west of Ireland such as Sir Walter Blake of Menlough, Galway. George arrived in Dublin on 13 July and it is quite obvious from the tone of the journal that Father Tasburgh was resentful towards George and critical of his actions.

On 29 July they left Dublin together and travelled in George's new chaise to Galway where they met members of the Browne and Lynch families in the town. George nearly had a fight with his wife's son-in-law, Owen O'Malley of Ardagh, near Newport, Co Mayo, when there was a dispute over the dowry to



Gerard Collection DDGE(M) 1321. Letter dated 5 July 1736. (Courtesy of the Lancashire Archives)

be paid to one of George's step daughters. After spending some time in Galway, where it is apparent from other sources that Father Tasburgh was quite ill, George brought Father Tasburgh to Cong by boat across Lough Corrib. Father Tasburgh complains bitterly in his journal about the treatment he received in Cong from both George and his wife and of their attitudes towards Ellis's three daughters from her previous marriage. Eventually Father Tasburgh left Cong in late October 1726 and returned to Dublin. As far as it is known Father Tasburgh spent less than a year in Dublin, however, following his death his remains at St Michan's Church were venerated and one of his fingers was supposed to perform cures.

This journal of more than seventy pages appears to be a record kept by Father Tasburgh of his activities while in Ireland for the benefit of his brother Henry. One of the most extraordinary facts about the journal is its lack of reference to religious matters and it is completely devoid of any mention of its author being a member of a religious order. It does refer to the effects of the Penal Laws on some of the family members of persons whom Father Tasburgh met while in Ireland and it gives many interesting insights into the relationship between landlord and tenant. It records in some detail the character of George Macnemara and his wife Ellis, their relationship with Ellis's daughters Margaret (Peggy), Lettice and Ann (Nanny), farming practices in the west of Ireland and the cost of everyday items.

It is a puzzle to know how this journal ended up in New Zealand. It was bought by the donor with other books for $1 at a garage sale! However its contents are now very accessible as a transcription is available on the website of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society and this year's edition of Archivium Hibernicum will contain a more up to date transcription plus transcriptions of letters and accounts of Peregrine Tasburgh and letters of George Macnemara from the Gerard Collection in the Lancashire Archives. In 1749 Henry Tasburgh's only surviving child, Maria Clare, married Sir Thomas Gerard 8th Baronet. An archival listing of the items relating to the Cong Abbey estate in the Gerard Collection will also be published in Archivium Hibernicum and transcriptions of some relevant documents from the Twigge Collections in the British Library. A book entitled George Macnemara of Cong: Folklore & Facts 1722-1760 is to be published shortly.

http://gahs.ie/transcript-of-the-journal-of-thomas-tasburgh-s-j-on-his-visit-to-ireland/

IRISH VOICES FROM THE NAPOLEONIC WARS TALK ON ZOOM

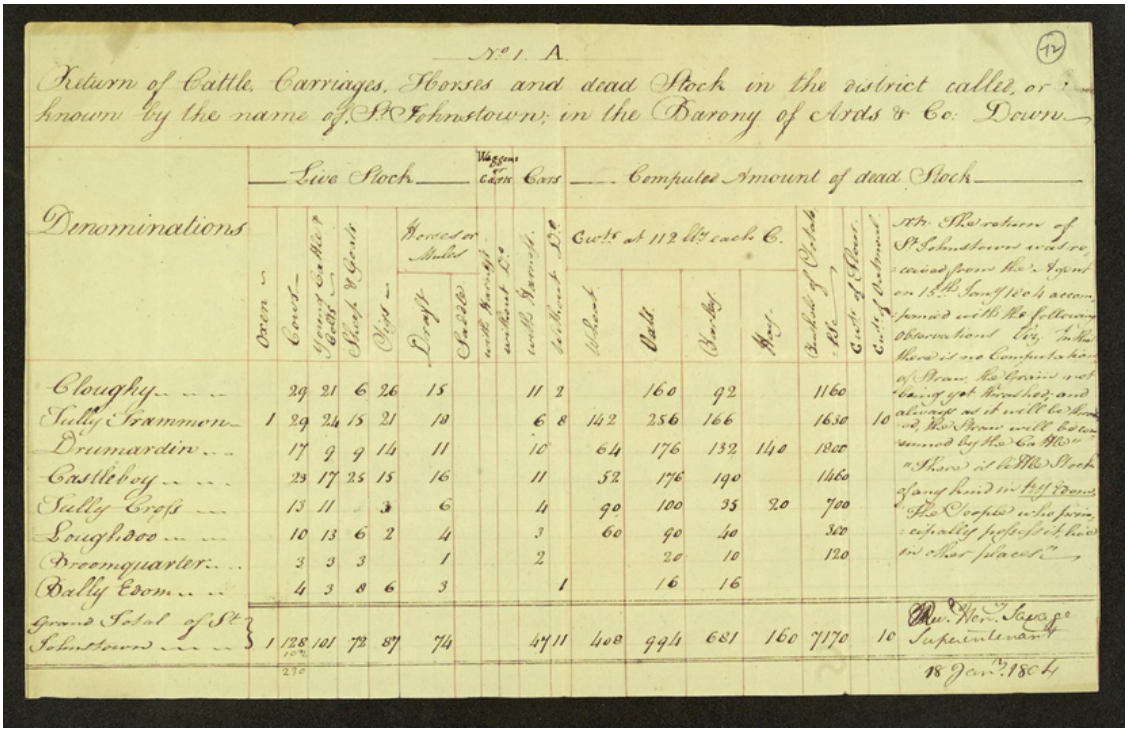
Brett Irwin, PRONI

I had a public history talk planned in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) for June 18th 2020. The talk was titled 'Irish Voices from the Napoleonic Wars' and the date was the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Although the event was cancelled due to the global pandemic, I thought it might be a good idea to try to do the talk via Zoom later in the year. My Zoom talk took place on September 3rd 2020 and after a few initial nerves, I hit my stride and embraced the 'new normal'.

The talk went well and I received positive feedback as it had reached a wide audience locally and internationally and was delivered from the comfort of my home. I will look at some of the key archival sources here as it is a subject that I find fascinating.

When Great Britain occupied Malta in 1803, thus violating the Treat of Amiens, war with France broke out again. The peace had barely lasted a year. Napoleon Bonaparte formed a new army known as the armee des cotes de l'ocean (army of the ocean coasts). This new 'invasion' army trained at camps on the French Atlantic coast, port facilities and fortifications were improved and Britain went on a high alert of a French invasion. Such was the threat that militias were raised and defensive positions reinforced all along the south coast of England and Dover Castle had tunnels added to garrison more troops. Fear of the invasion did lead to panic amongst the population, although in reality Napoleon had to gain naval control of the English Channel. The efforts of the French Navy to break the blockade failed and no invasion came.

In 1803, the 1st Marquess of Londonderry, in anticipation of a French invasion of Ireland created an agricultural survey of returns for over 40, mainly maritime parishes, in County Down. The authorities wanted to know what to move and what support would be available for the army if an invasion came, and what would have to be destroyed to avoid falling into French hands. The surveys record an inventory of livestock, provisions, crops and equipment. The returns record the names of each townland and parish and details stock held.

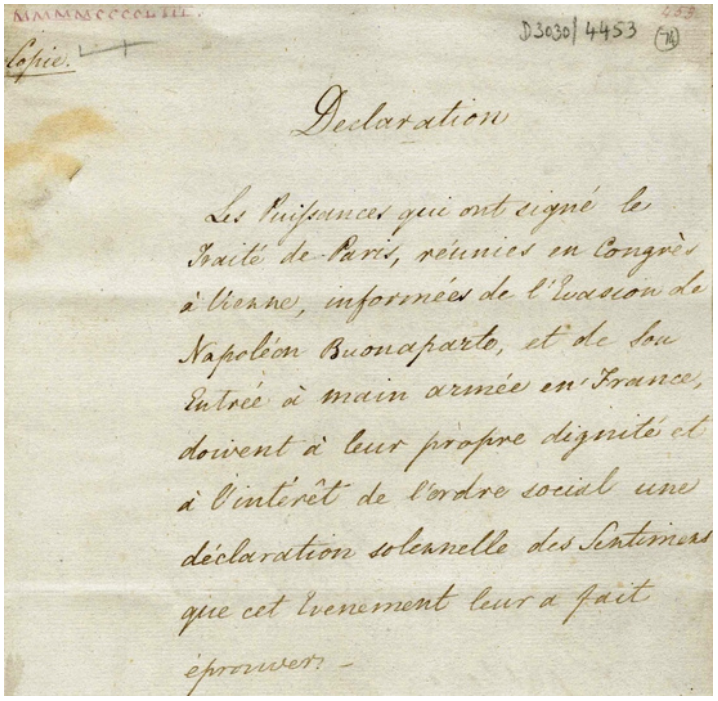


Archive 1 - D654/A/2/1-37- Agriculture Survey 1803

During the Peninsular War (the Napoleonic Wars fought in Portugal and Spain), General Wellington needed to road the Madrid clear so he could attack the French in the Spanish capital. The formidable fortress of Badajoz stood in his way and it would take a long, bloody siege to finally gain control of the town. The fifteen foot thick walls had protected the fortress for over two centuries but the walls were finally breached on the 6th April 1812. Over 20,000 cannonballs had been hurled at the walls during a three week period, and the Connaught Rangers had been some of the first troops to enter into the breach in the walls that became known as the Forlorn Hope- an almost suicidal mission that brought rewards of instant promotion and money if you survived.

The Peninsular War papers in PRONI contain some fascinating military geography maps of key battles in Portugal and Spain. The Badajoz map was drawn shortly before the actual battle and list the key bastions of the fortress. They are held under the reference number T2893/1-8. The description of the Badajoz map is as follows - 'Invested March 17th 1812 and carried by Storm on the night of April 6th by the Allied Army" commanded by Gen the Earl of Wellington. With explanatory index. Published by W. Faden, Geographer. Scale 1" to 500 yds'.

On the 1st March 1815 Napoleon Bonaparte landed on the coast of France ending his ten month exile on the Mediterranean island of Elba. He was informed of


D3030/4453

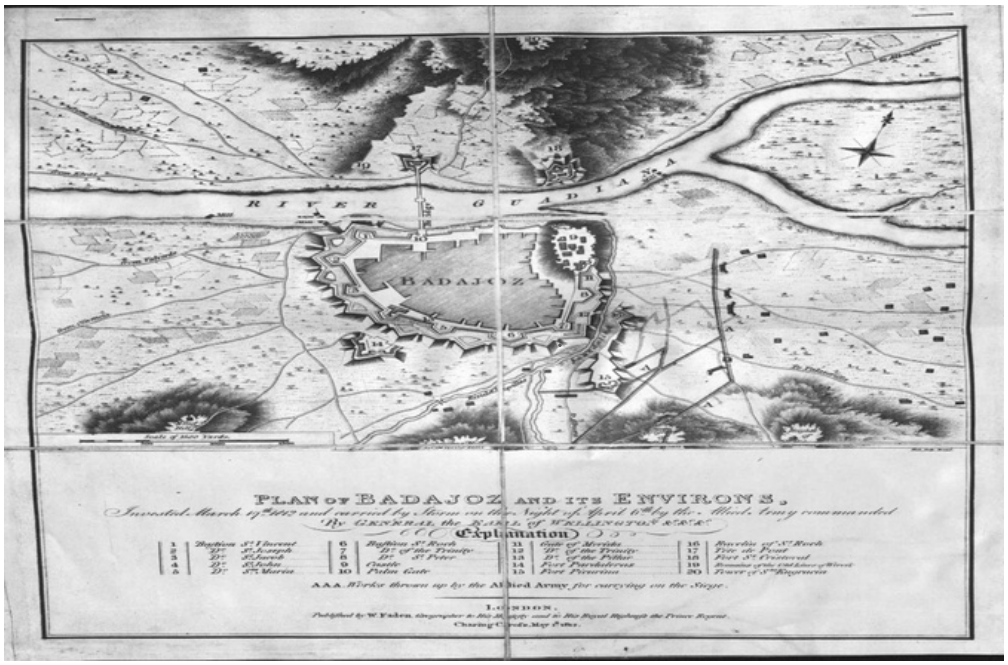
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Declaration

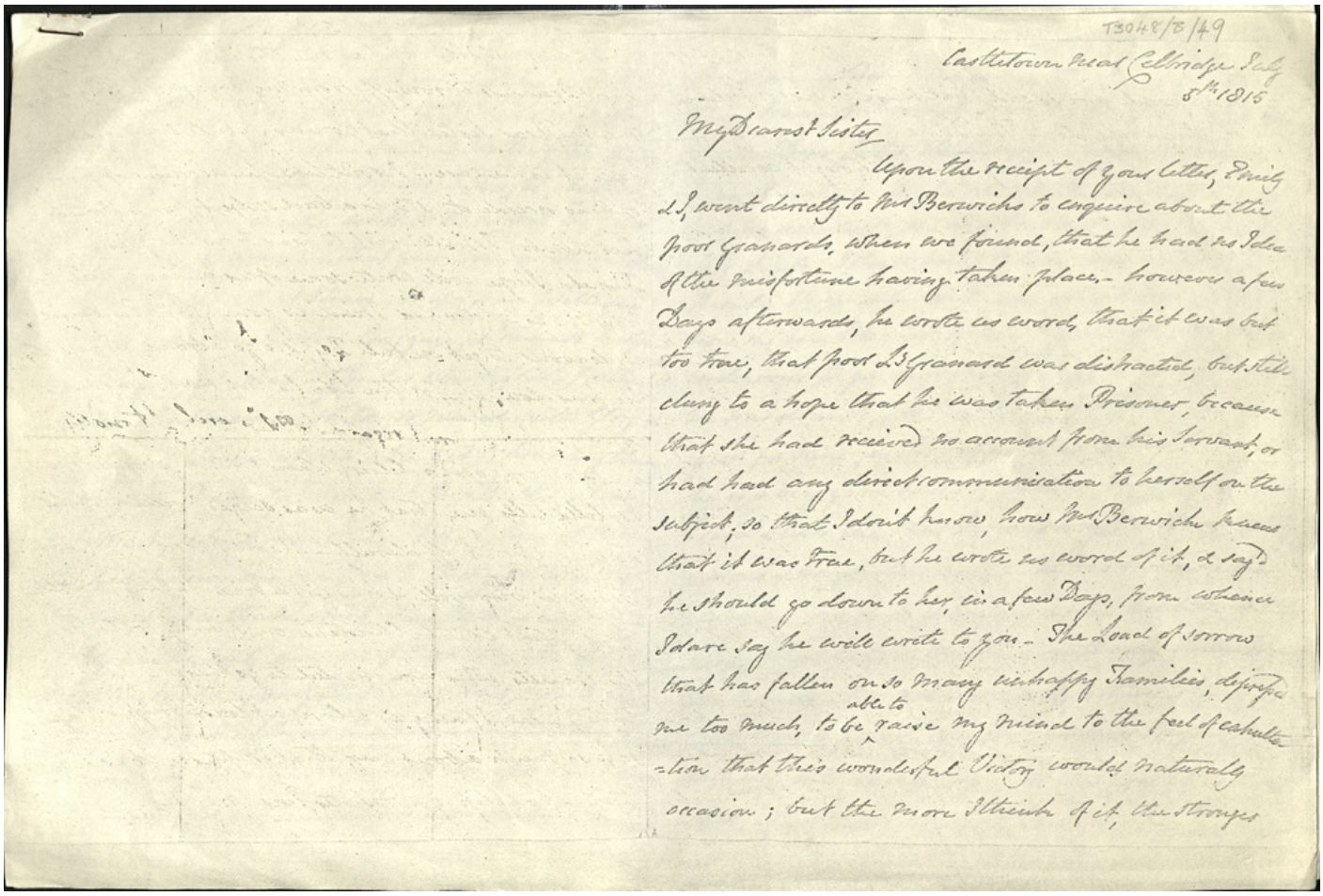
Les Puissances qui ont signé le Traité de Paris, réunies en Congrès à Vienne, informées de l'evasion de Napoléon Buonaparte, et de son Entrée à main armée en France, doivent à leur propre dignité et à l'intérêt de l'ordre social une déclaration solennelle des Sentimens que cet Evenement leur a fait éprouver. -

Archive 3 - D3030/4453 - Napoleon's Escape from Elba Dispatch- written in the international diplomatic language of the day.

discontent with the Bourbon regime and within the French Army, and Napoleon marched on Paris with his loyal military supporters. His desperate one hundred days gamble had begun. When the news of his arrival in France reached the Congress of Vienna (The peace talks taking place to bring stability back to Europe), there can be no doubt that the diplomats present shuddered at the thought of further bloodshed and the chaos that it would bring. This all finally ended with Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo and his permanent exile to St Helena.



Archive 2 - T2983/4 - Military Map of Badajoz



T3048/B/49

Castletown near Celbridge July 8th 1815

My Dearest Sister

Upon the receipt of your Letter, Emily & I went directly to Mrs Berwicks to enquire about the poor Granards, when we found, that she had no Idea of the misfortune having taken place.- however a few Days afterwards, he wrote us word, that it was but too true, that poor Lt Granard was distracted, but still clung to a hope that he was taken Prisoner, because that she had received no account from his Servant, or had had any direct communication to herself on the subject, so that I don't know, how Mr Berwicks knows that it was true, but he wrote us word of it, & says he should go down to her, in a few Days, from whence I dare say he will write to you.- The Load of sorrow that has fallen on so many unhappy Families, depresses me too much, to be able to raise my Mind to the full Gratulation that this wonderful Victory would naturally occasion; but the more I think of it, the stronger

Archive 4 - T3048/B/49 - Louisa Connelly Letter - Waterloo Aftermath

On the 18th June 1815 Napoleon's army faced the Allied forces of the Duke of Wellington on the field of Waterloo. This was to be Napoleon's last battle after many years of desperate fighting, and it was his last big gamble that failed to bring him dominance in Europe. The Napoleonic age was over. Although historians have endlessly debated all the facets of that day, it is rarely mentioned about the effect on the civilian population on news (or lack of) of loved-ones who were missing after the battle. This letter brings some of the anguish felt by people at home and reveals that in an age when news moved slowly, every day without information was an agony that had to be endured.

'Upon receipt of your letter, Emily and I went directly to Mrs Berwick to enquire about poor Granard. When we found that she had no idea of the misfortunes having taken place...We cling to the hope that he was taken prisoner'.

All archival material used with permission of the Deputy Keeper of Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

GRANT AWARDED TO EXPLORE NEW WAYS TO BRING PROPERTY RECORDS TO LIFE

Ellen Murphy , Regsitry of Deeds

The Property Registration Authority and partners have received funding to explore new ways of making our historic Registry of Deeds records more accessible and user friendly.



Signature of Wolfe Tone, PRAI

On 1 August 2020, the Property Registration Authority joined with archival partners National Records of Scotland, and research partners Trinity College Dublin and the University of Glasgow to begin a research project exploring ways of making two of Ireland and Scotland's largest record collections for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries more accessible and user friendly.

This project is funded by a grant awarded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council & Irish Research Council Digital Humanities Research Networking scheme to Dr Andrew MacKillop (University of Glasgow) and Dr Patrick Walsh (Trinity College Dublin). This scheme aims to foster research cooperation across institutions on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Liz Pope Chief Executive of the PRA says:

"The PRA is responsible for the Registry of Deeds which consists of a large, unique and very significant body of historical records relating to property transactions in Ireland. We are pleased to support this new research network which aligns with our long term vision to develop a digitisation strategy to make the historical records of the Registry of Deeds available and discoverable online"

Ellen Murphy, Archives Manager of the PRA:

"The research network will be hugely beneficial to us in exploring the potential of using new technology to increase public engagement and access to the Registry of Deeds. We look forward to collaborating with the research project partners, as well as engaging with the different user groups of both the Registry of Deeds and Sasines Register"

The Registry of Deeds (Ireland), held by the Property Registration Authority in Dublin, and the Scottish Registers of Sasines, held by the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh, are among the most comprehensive historic land records anywhere in western Europe. Although currently used largely in relation to legal matters of ownership, these documents contain a wealth of information on all aspects of life, society and locality in Ireland and in Scotland from the early 1700s to the present.

The project brings together the archival expertise of the Property Registration Authority and National Records of Scotland with digital humanities specialists, historians, and historical linguists at Trinity College Dublin and the University of Glasgow.

This digital partnership aims to develop automatic transcriptions of sample volumes from the early 1700s. The second stage will involve Trinity College Dublin's Digital Research Centre (ADAPT) working with archivists, historians, linguists and other users to develop new, flexible methods of searching the records. The longer-term aim is to consolidate creative partnerships between archives, universities and cultural and heritage groups in Ireland and Scotland.

Contact us at **heritage@prai.ie** if you require any further information regarding the research project.

THE ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS ASSOCIATION: TWENTY FIVE YEARS A-GROWING

Mary Clark, Dublin City Library & Archive

Credits: Tom Burke; Louise Kennedy; Ellen Murphy; Padraic Stack

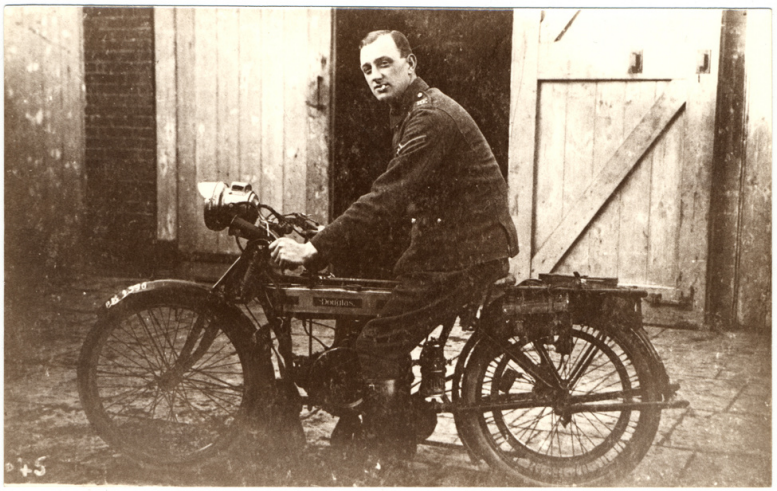
Standard archival doctrine maintains that a series of collections grouped around a theme does not constitute an archive – because it is not organic, not in the way collections generated by an organisation are organic, and can therefore be classified as archives. The story of the RDFA archive proves otherwise. It began in 1995, with a chance encounter between Tom Burke and his elderly neighbour. Tom was an engineer in UCD, and was very keen on sports, mainly GAA – he played hurling – and rugby – he is a dedicated Leinster supporter. So when his neighbour told Tom that he had been in the British Army but felt the need to keep this a secret, Tom was surprised and saddened – no-one in his own family had fought in the Great War so he never had occasion to think about those veterans. This was all about to change. The neighbour produced a battered shoe-box containing medals and certificates which he hadn't shown to anyone for decades – and soon there was a constant stream of people to Tom's house, bearing letters, photographs, medals, diaries, telling stories of their relatives who had fought in the Great War as members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. And they urged Tom to arrange a public exhibition of these private treasures – after all this time, the relatives were prepared to step into the light.



Monica Roberts

By the end of 1995, Tom, along with other like-minded men, had founded the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, to capture the stories of these veterans, to research the background to their experience of the Great War and to mediate this to the public through lectures and through articles in their RDFA journal, The Blue Cap. Other elements were to follow: group visits to France, Belgium and Gallipoli and a website www.greatwar.ie launched in April 2001 at a State Reception in Dublin Castle by then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern T.D. And, after a diligent search, Tom had finally found a venue for his exhibition. Mainly thanks to Tom and the committee of the RDFA, and before them, Kevin Myers and Frank McGuinness, the Meath Peace Group, the late Professor David Fitzpatrick of TCD, and later Sebastian Barry, we now largely accept the story of the Great War as an integral part of Irish history. But this was not the case in 1995, when the Great War was still contentious, with participation considered to be at best British, at worst traitorous. So when Tom wrote to various heritage institutions, outlining his plans for an exhibition and asking if they would care to host it, the answer was uniformly 'no'. Tom then wrote to the late Noel Carroll, then PRO of Dublin Corporation, who was unfazed by any hint that this exhibition might be controversial, 'but isn't it about Dublin - Royal Dublin Fusiliers?' and he arranged for it to take place in the Dublin Civic Museum in Autumn 1996.

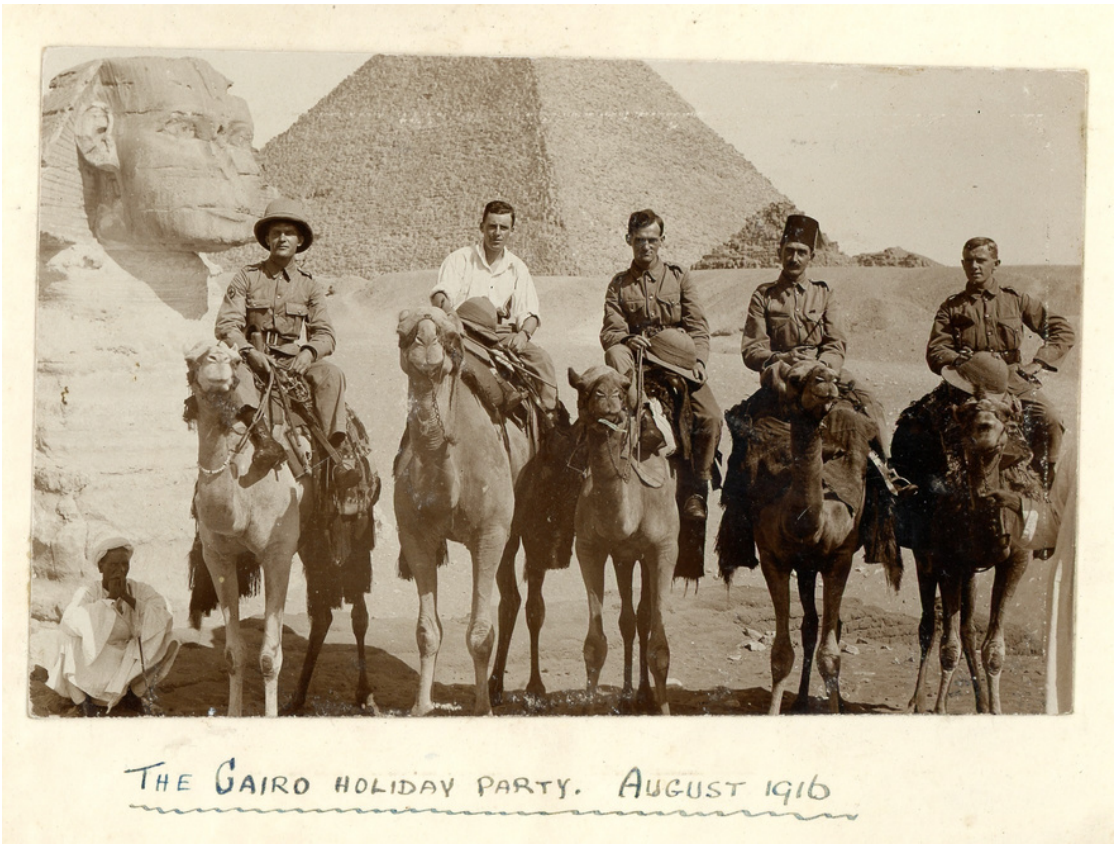
The Octagon Room of the Civic Museum (now HQ of the Irish Georgian Society) was a very large space to fill - as well as floor and wall-space, there were thirteen outsized display cases to fill. Now that he could guarantee that the exhibition would go ahead, Tom re-doubled his efforts to persuade more people to lend their treasures for display. In addition, he collected stories about the soldiers to create wall-panels, which included photographs of them in uniform. The exhibition was opened in November 1996 by Dick Spring T.D. Minister for Foreign Affairs, with the British Ambassador to Ireland, Veronica Sutherland. While we wondered whether there would be an attack of some kind on the exhibition - it never came; instead, there was a steady stream of visitors all day, every day, and frequent visits from school groups.



George Vincent Poulton; Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Many people who attended the 1996 exhibition brought memorabilia with them and offered to include their prized possessions in the next presentation. And so the 1998 exhibition was born and took place again in the Civic Museum. The context had completely changed, as the Good Friday agreement in the same year guaranteed parity of esteem, among other progressive benefits. Interpreted in Northern Ireland as equality for the culture, history and customs of nationalists vis-à-vis unionists, in the Republic it was the opposite, equality for unionists vis-à-vis nationalists, and the work carried out by the RDFA fitted well with this. The 1998 exhibition was opened by Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, with the British ambassador present again, along with the ambassadors of Belgium and Turkey. In a spirit of reconciliation, parliamentary members of the Official Unionist Party of N.I also attended. In the same spirit, Tom was awarded an Honorary MBE in December 2004.

One outcome of holding any exhibition, is that this always leads to donations of relevant material. When the RDFA closed the 1996 and 1998 exhibitions, and attempted to return memorabilia to the lenders, Tom Burke was usually told: 'No, my children and grandchildren aren't interested, I'd rather you kept it and made good use of it.' Other events, such as lectures and seminars, led to further donations so that by 2005 Tom's house was full and he resolved to come to an agreement to place the collection with an archival institution. Remembering that Dublin Corporation had given him a space when no-one else would, Tom decided to approach Dublin City Library & Archive, which had moved into the refurbished Pearse Street Library in 2003, and was very glad to accept Tom's offer.



Gunning Brothers' Collection recuperation in Egypt

While the staff at DCLA was of course delighted, it was daunting to be offered an entire archive. Tom was aware of this, and brought in one collection at a time, each one accompanied by his own notes of information obtained from the donor. This gave some breathing space and allowed the staff to accession, list and pack the collections into archival-quality storage: the RDFA Archive now contains 130 collections. With the Celtic Tiger still roaring, DCLA could afford to purchase nine albums from Preservation Equipment along with packets of archival-quality mylar. These were for the Monica Roberts collection, of letters which she had received from the Irish soldiers (mainly Dublin Fusiliers) in the Great War – from France and Belgium, but also from Turkey. The daughter of a Church of Ireland minister, as soon as war broke out in 1914, Monica and her friends raised money through holding concert and plays, which they used to purchase small gifts for the soldiers – socks and Vaseline for tired feet, handkerchiefs, but most welcome were cigarettes and tobacco. Monica included her name and address in every parcel she sent and when the recipient wrote to thank her, this started a correspondence which only ended with his death. Monica's daughter, Mrs Mary Shackleton, who donated the correspondence to the RDFA Archive, stipulated that it should be available for everyone, but particularly for schoolboys who were seventeen years old – the age most of Monica's correspondents were when they died.

DCLA partnered with a number of secondary schools who visited on a yearly basis just to see Monica's collection and as the boys leafed through the letters (safely enclosed in mylar!) they started off looking bored, then began to engage with the material – and when their teacher told them: 'These soldiers were the same age as you, lads' they were very shocked. Meanwhile the collection had become famous, with scholars from England, Belgium and France coming especially to see it. When asked, they explained that most letters which survive from the Great War were written by officers – while this was a very rare instance of letters written by the lower ranks – corporals and privates.

The range and quality of the RDFA Archive allowed DCLA to generate five exhibitions from the collections, which described the progress of the Great War, while trying to convey its outright horror. Our first exhibition, Letters from the Great War, was curated by staff member the late Andrew O'Brien and was created in 2007 to accompany Dublin City Libraries' festival 'One City, One Book' which highlighted Sebastian Barry's novel, 'A long, long way.' At one public reading, Sebastian was accused of inaccuracy by giving his protagonist, Willie Dunne, a soldier with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a gift for writing poetic letters. The author pointed out that the Irish system of national education was outstanding and far from confining itself to the

three Rs it ranged widely and included poetry in its remit. He also remarked that real poetic letters, written by real-life Irish soldiers, could be read in the Monica Roberts collection.

The next four exhibitions were all sponsored by Dublin City Council, through its Decade of Commemorations fund. These were: Fragments: Stories from Gallipoli 1915 (accompanied by an exhibition from the Turkish Embassy, Çanakkale: Road to Peace out of War); Dublin Remembers: Stories from the Somme 1916; Irish women in the Great War (2018); and The Peace at Home: Dublin after the First World War (2018). The City Council supported these exhibitions in many practical ways, such as arranging publicity and providing transport, while the Lord Mayor of the day was there to open the exhibitions.

Digitisation is an essential tool of modern archivists, and as soon as the RDFA Archive began to be deposited, DCLA began an in-house scanning programme for it. In 2013, portions of the RDFA Archive were published online in a searchable format on our website www.databases.ie; other portions were moved later to an in-house platform, called Vital; in 2018, the RDFA Archive was published online by the Digital Repository of Ireland; and in 2020, coinciding with its 25th anniversary, the RDFA Archive has been published by the DRI on Europeana.

While we still have collections to list and scan, there is one last exhibition to be mounted in 2022 - to mark the centenary of the disbandment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. People often accuse archivists of living in the past, but as the RDFA archive shows, this is only part of the story. We mine the past, to shape the present, and to inform the future. We also hope that the organic growth of this archive, from Tom Burke's meeting with his neighbour, to publication across Europe, has been demonstrated here.

RESEARCH QUERY FOR MEMBERS

Dear Editor,
The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser of 13th April 1849 recorded the gift to Ireland of two copies of Raphael cartoons, 'Saints Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate' and 'Elymas the Sorcerer struck with Blindness'. They were donated by the widow of Christian William Nicolay of London.

Stewart Blacker of Carrick Blacker, Co. Armagh, was the person who facilitated transfer of the cartoons and arranged preliminary accommodation for them in the RDS. He was a founding member and Hon. Secretary of the Royal Irish Art Union, a member of the RDS, and of the Orange Order.

The cartoons have been in the National Gallery of Ireland since 1862, Cat.Nos.171, 172. I am hoping to establish their provenance, hence my interest in Blacker and the Nicolays.

I have searched extensively in Libraries/Archives North and South and consulted Blacker relatives, but cannot find the minutes of the R.I.A.U. for 1848-9, nor perhaps of more relevance, the correspondence between Blacker and the Nicolays.

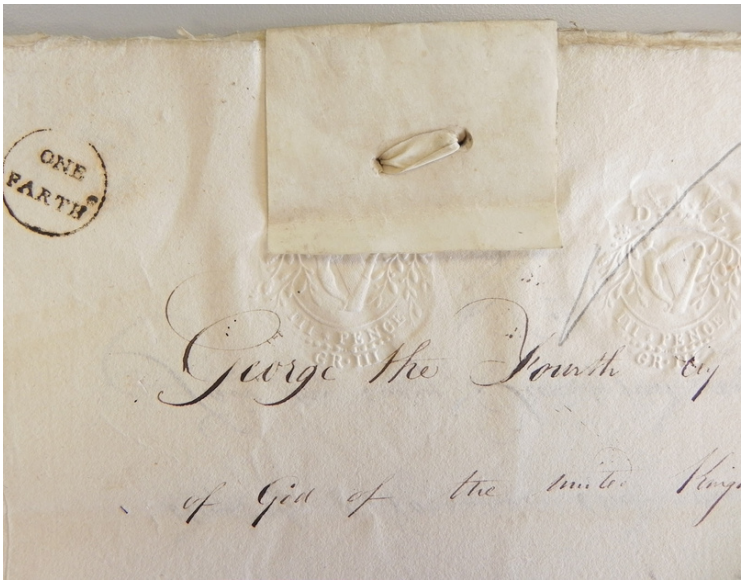
Any help you or your members can give will be much appreciated. I can be contacted via the National Galley, e-mail: **library@ngi.ie**

Maighread McParland

REMOVING UNWANTED METAL FROM COLLECTIONS

Zoe Reid, National Archives of Ireland

In medieval times single sheets of parchment were often held together with thin strips of twisted parchment along the top edge. Take a look through papers from many 17th -19th century collections and you will see that to hold pages together it was common to make two small parallel slits in the paper in the top left hand corners and secured the pages by threading through a ribbon or thread. Sometimes a small fold of parchment or paper was also included to secure the pages together as the thread was inserted.



It is not until the 20th Century that we find a vast amount of metal used to hold pages of documents together. From the 1900s collections are full of metal fasteners such as paper clips, straight pins, brass butterfly clips and staples.

Check out this website for a short history on the invention and development of paper clips at the end of the 19th Century. It also has a very cool gallery which you can scroll through and see how many different styles of paper clips you recognised! I got up to 15.

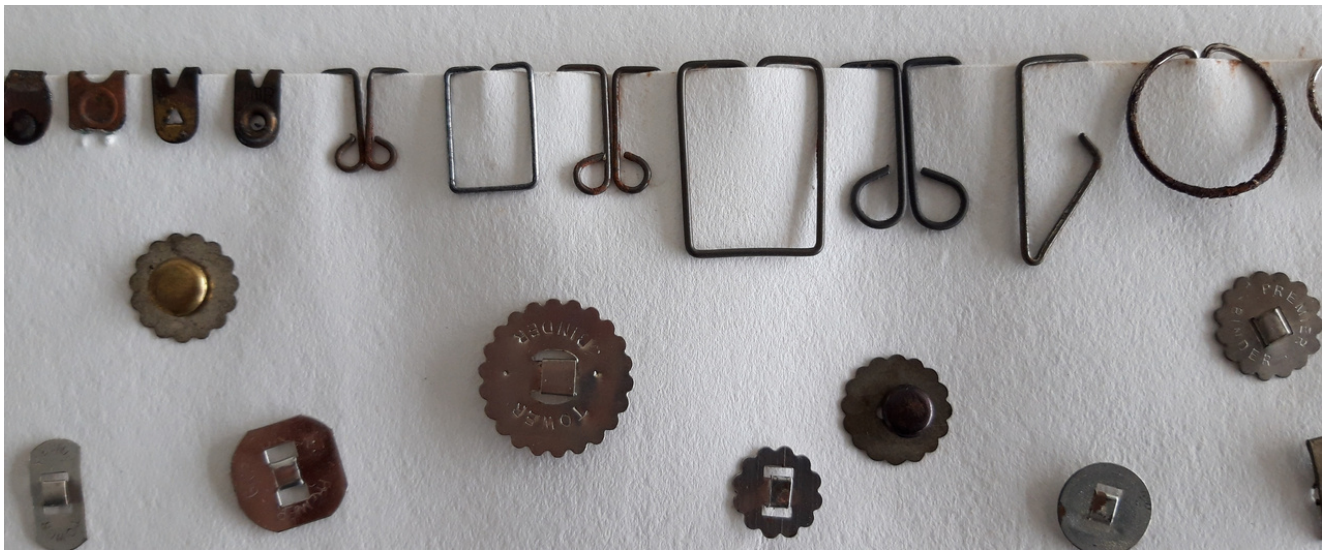
https://www.officemuseum.com/paper_clips.htm

Another well illustrated website that gives a potted history of the paper clip including how it was adopted as a symbol of the Norwegian resistance movement during WWII.

https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/technology/visionaries/great-little-inventions-the-paper-clip/

Unfortunately anyone with experience of working with archives will know all too well the damage that can be caused by these small items. Metal fastenings corrode over time due to environmental conditions and the resulting rust is easily visible and damaging to the paper, making it brittle as well causing discolouration. There may also be evidence of physical damage to the paper such as puncturing, tearing or creasing the paper.

In most cases these metal fastenings can be removed from the documents, and a visual check should alert you to anything problematic, take time to look before you start. Done carefully these items are easy to remove, but careless removal will result in further damage to the document.



Like any job, arm yourself with the essentials, prepare a clear, flat and clean work space which supports the documents well. It is also important to make sure that you have good light, so that you can see what you are doing.

I know that archivists don't have quite the same obsession with tools and brushes as conservators do, but if you can get a small spatula it can be a very handy tool to have in your pencil case. A pair of tweezers can be useful as well. I always have small squares of Mylar to slip under the metal fastening, but a slip of paper will work just as well. My advice on PPE for doing this type of work is to wear nitrile gloves, they will protect your hands from the dirt and provide a barrier especially if you are dealing with rusty metal, that can be a bit on the spiky side!

How to remove a metal paper clip

With the short side of the paper clip facing up insert Mylar or a piece of paper underneath to protect the document. Using a spatula lift up the top part of the paper clip and open it out to release it from the pile of paper. Then it should be easy to remove it carefully from the pages without causing damage.

How to remove a straight pin

Insert a piece of Mylar or paper underneath the edge of the pin and either wiggle or push the head of the pin to loosen it. Once eased through the paper pull by the pinhead to release the pin fully.

How to remove a butterfly clip

Insert a piece of Mylar or paper underneath one wing of the clip and lift it up with a spatula or tweezers. Repeat with the other wing and close them together. The pages can now be lifted easily off the document without causing damage.

How to remove staples

Avoid using a staple remover tool that can be commonly found in offices, this will without a doubt rip and cause damage to historic paper. Instead with the tip of a spatula or tweezers open up the 'tongs' of the staple, then placing the spatula under the flat 'crown' of the staple it should be easier to release it from the paper.

Keeping it together

So, now that you have removed the metal what do you replace it with? Sometimes it is good to consider your options.

Plastic paper clips work well and even though they are brightly coloured there is no issue with colour staining the paper. They can however pinch the paper and can create an impression, this can happen on thin sheets and also thicker papers. It is for a conservator a straight forward task to remove these dents, but it is annoying. It happens because the clips used are perhaps too small





or too many pages have been crammed together. If you see this happening, maybe increase the size of plastic clip that is being used or place the group of documents inside a simple paper folder.

We can also look back to how they use to do it, and use a small fold of paper to create a barrier to protect the paper from the paperclip. It take more time and there is always a fear with large collection that researcher might not realise the significance of the paper and not replace it. But I would argue that it is our role to explain and educate researchers.

Removing metal can be a time consuming job and depending on the size of your collection can seem like a daunting task. Like everything if it becomes part of a routine, progress will be steady and whilst you may not see the long term benefits, future users of the archives will.

EXPLORE YOUR ARCHIVE 2020

Niamh Ní Charra, ARA, Ireland Communications and Campaigns Officer

It is coming around again to that time of year, when archives and institutions start to plan for the annual ARA "Explore Your Archive" campaign. Despite the ongoing pandemic, this year's campaign will go ahead and will run from Saturday 21st to Sunday 29th November. The ARA Board have instructed committees not to hold any in-person events before the end of this year. Therefore, while we won't get to see your lovely faces in person (over the usual glass of vino) we do hope to see you for our virtual launch which will take place online on Thursday 19th November.

The advantage of running an online virtual launch is that ARA Ireland members can tune in from all over Ireland. You can doll yourselves up in your latest lockdown purchases, or deck yourselves out in last year's Christmas onesie. Go black tie or show off that summer Bahamas shirt you never got to wear on a beach this summer! Cocktails, mocktails, tea or hot chocolate - the choice is all yours!

Another brilliant advantage of this online launch is that we were able to choose an ambassador without having to be restricted by their location. We wholly embraced this silver lining and are thrilled to announced that ARA Ireland's ambassador for EYA 2020 is the wonderful Emma Dabiri. Emma is an Irish-Nigerian author, academic and broadcaster, currently residing in London who has become world renowned for her fabulous book "Don't Touch My Hair", published last year. Emma will join us virtually to launch the week's activities.

For those not familiar with ARA's Explore Your Archive annual campaign , it aims to showcase the best of archives and archive services across Ireland and the UK and to make the public aware of the phenomenal array

of archival collections held by organisations, both public and private, whatever their size and scale, and wherever their location.

Here are just a few suggestions on how to get people engaged with your archives during the campaign and show off the fantastic work that you do:

Events and 'Featured Archives'

Hold an event such as a talk, exhibition or tour relating to your work, project or collection. (Socially distanced of course!) Let us know what you plan on doing and we will host details of these events online; we can also promote events through social media and a press release.

We would also welcome submissions for 'featured archives'. This is a great way to show off a collection from your archive or a project that you are working on. It should be about 250 words and can include text, images and links. This will also be promoted and shared on social media.

For more ideas, check out last year's events (https://www.araireland.ie/explore-your-archives) and featured archives (https://www.araireland.ie/featured-archives-people-events) on our website.

Social Media

This year, rather than daily hashtags, the Explore Your Archive campaign have introduced a different theme each day. We would love you to share your work, collections and experiences online to give your followers a sense of the work that goes on behind the scenes and the fabulous archives that you care for. You can use these themes to inspire your tweets, but don't forget to tag us at @araireland and to use the #ExploreYourArchive hashtag each day. (You can also tag us and/or use #ExploreYourArchive on any archives related tweet throughout the year.)

EYA 2020 Themes:

- Saturday 21st November: Communication
- Sunday 22nd November: Home
- Monday 23rd November: Plans
- Tuesday 24th November: Education
- Wednesday 25th November: Labels
- Thursday 26th November: Science
- Friday 27th November: Celebration
- Saturday 28th November: Health
- Sunday 29th November: Light



The Launch

We're still working on the details of this unusual virtual launch but for now save the date! The ARA Ireland campaign will be launched on the evening of Thursday 19th November 2020 at 6:00 pm (tbc). We will send more information and some promotional materials soon and hope you can join us.

If you have any questions about the Explore Your Archive campaign, or wish to submit events or material for the featured archive please do not hesitate to contact me on niamhnicharra@gmail.com

