Archives & Records Association Ireland

Newsletter Summer 2018

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A word from the Chair

Dear Member

Welcome to the summer 2018 Newsletter.

Firstly, thank you to all members who attended our two most recent training events. The first, Excel for Archivists, was held in March in the Catherine McAuley Centre in Dublin. Gillian Sherlock presented a very informative lecture and gave practical demonstrations on the use of excel for archive lists and catalogues. The event was followed by our Annual General Meeting.

Our next training event 'Don't Risk It' was held in the National Archives on 12th June. The event showed how to build and populate your own Records Management risk register, promote the inclusion of Records Management risk factors in your corporate or organisational risk register and how to use a risk register to advance RM priorities more broadly. We hope to hold our annual joint training event with IRMS in the autumn on legislative compliance, specifically Copyright and Data Protection.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation at being elected to the Chair of ARA, I it is indeed a great honour. I would also like to acknowledge the outgoing Chair Ross Higgins and outgoing committee members Kieran Hoare, Suzanne Bedell and Fergus Brady and thank them for their hard work and commitment to ARA, I.

Gerard Byrne,
Chair, ARA Ireland.

The Military Archives Oral History Project in Lebanon



The Military Archives team visiting the Blue Line, the border demarcation between Lebanon and Israel.

Between the 5th and 10th of March 2018 a team from the Military Archives travelled to United Nations Post 2-45 in At Tiri, South Lebanon - the home of the Irish contingent in UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) - to collect a series of oral history testimonies for the Military Archives Oral History Project (MAOHP).

The idea of visiting Lebanon to conduct oral history interviews was something that had cropped up several times in the Military Archives, both during project meetings and around the canteen table. We all viewed this as a natural and necessary avenue to pursue. The raison d'être of the MAOHP is to capture the first-hand accounts of the people who have been a part of Ireland's military history and our role in Lebanon is a significant element of this.

Having an idea is one thing; making it a reality is another. While the 40th anniversary of UNIFIL made 2018 and opportune time for the project, there were a lot of people who played a part in putting the wheels in motion. Simultaneous but separately to the Military Archives mooting ideas about a Lebanese oral history expedition, it had been raised in 2017 by Major General Michael Beary (UNIFIL Force Commander). The latter half of 2017 however was taken up with several high level project launches at home so it wasn't until early 2018, with the support of both military and departmental colleagues, that it became a reality.

Preparation

Recording and archiving the experiences of military personnel through oral testimony, particularly their experiences on active service, is not a new concept. While the Military Archives has collected oral histories on an ad hoc basis since the 1980s, with a precedent as far back to the 1940s in the Bureau of Military History, the MAOHP is the first organised, dedicated and systematic attempt to collect such material by the Defence Forces and there was a lot of preparation required by the project team in the weeks prior to deployment.



Hardware including laptops, dictaphones and external storage devices had to be tested, and a workflow designed to include file naming conventions and protocols for post-interview transfer and multiple backup of recordings. Consideration needed to be given to the MAOHP suite of documents, particularly any necessary amendments to the legal aspects of the interviewee consent form, and issues surrounding data protection and any potentially defamatory statements that could be recorded and their subsequent abstraction. The team considered the interview methodology, settling on the semi-structured interview-guide



Cpl Michael Whelan, Noelle Grothier, Lisa Dolan, Capt Daniel Ayiotis, and Sgt Ned Kelly on their first day collecting oral history testimonies at the Irish Defence Forces base in South Lebanon.

approach as the best means of hitting key points while being adaptive enough to follow the lead of the interviewee. We also had to consider the ethical issues surrounding the potential for traumatic memories to be recalled by interviewees in relation to experiences of conflict and an interviewer protocol should such incidents arise.

In Lebanon

The first day began with a camp familiarisation, getting set up with our office space and interview rooms. The team was unanimous in its commendation for how we were afforded every facility, assistance and courtesy possible.

With such an auspicious start it's not surprising that we were extremely happy with the results of the interviews. While there is no shortage of literature about the Irish Defence Forces in Lebanon, the interviews captured rare personal insights into the opinions, feelings and experiences of the Lebanese themselves; events as intimate as childhoods sharing a home in Tibnin with the first Irish soldiers in Lebanon, as harrowing as experiences of civil war and occupation, expressions of sympathies and opinions that may not sit easily with some listeners, and as insightful as local perspectives on the wider geo-political situation in the Middle East.

While the majority of interviews were with Lebanese civilians, we also used the opportunity to capture the testimonies of two of Irishbatt's Finnish and Estonian colleagues, as well as the in-theatre impressions of some UNIFIL "first timers" and seasoned veterans



Visiting the memorial in Tibnin to the 46 Irish soldiers who have died on UN service in Lebanon.

The visit also provided an opportunity for the civilian archivists to expand their insight into the Irish area of operations (AO), with a visit to Irish / Finnish outposts 6-50 and 6-52 located along the southern Lebanese border with Israel, and to the village of Tibnin, a location central to the story of the Irish in Lebanon. This brief experience of life in an overseas post and the AO, seeing things in action that they had previously only read about in archival documents, has greatly expanded and deepened their understanding of the Defence Forces work overseas and their capacity to interpret, appraise and advocate for the Military Archives' overseas records.



Lisa Dolan and Noelle Grothier, after donning helmet and body armour, in preparation for visiting the Area of Operations.

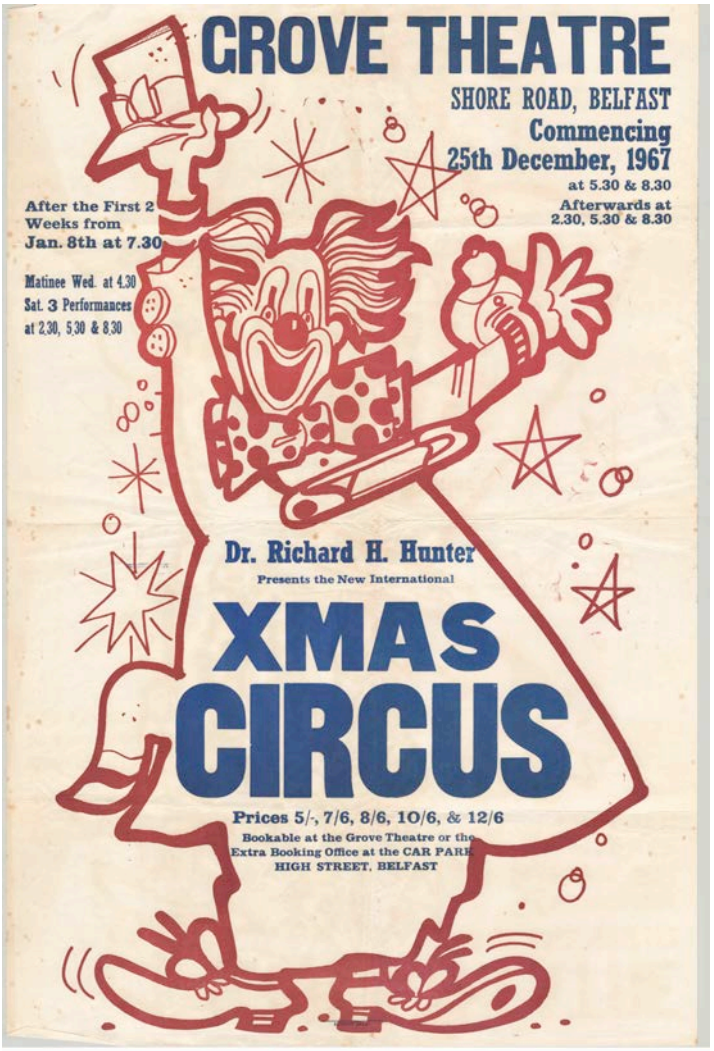
Heading Home

By the end of the week the team was on a high and perhaps not surprisingly we were already discussing the merits and possibilities of having archivists deploy regularly to mission areas at particular milestones. In the immediate term, there was still the matter of post interview processing back in Ireland: preserving the recordings on our server, preparing time-coded thematic abstracts (the most time consuming part) to make them usable for research, and identifying material deemed currently unsuitable for release into the public domain. Most importantly, we left appreciating the significance of what had been achieved; that we had been involved with something that was not only a first for the Military Archives but a first for Ireland and our military heritage.

Captain Daniel Ayiotis

Director, Military Archives

Samson and Banana: Stories from Belfast Circus Archives



Dr Hunter's Christmas Circus 1967 (PRONI)

In 2018 *Circus250* is the name given to a brilliant year-long celebration of all things circus with Belfast chosen as one of the UK's nominated Six Cities of Circus and as it is the 250th birthday of circus, I will be taking a look at the history of circus in Belfast and exploring circus archives held in The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

My father first took me to the circus in the early 1980s when I was about 12 years old. I remember the colours, sight and sounds of the event as if it came from another planet such was the grim and troubled reality in Northern Ireland at that time. Here was something that took you away from all that. The circus was held in a park outside Belfast and was Tom Duffy and Son's circus no less. This famous Irish circus family has been putting on

performances all over Ireland from around the 1890s and still performs today. Some of the most striking examples of circus photography from the Edwardian period in Ireland are of the Duffy circus family. These were taken by celebrated photographers J.W.Burrows and H. Cooper and the informal style gives the photographs a naturalism and energy that is fascinating. Prints of these wonderful photographs looking at the early circus in Ireland can be found in the Cooper collection in PRONI and on PRONI's Flickr page.

Circus in 19th century Belfast and Ireland definitely had an edge to it. Political questions over land reform, home rule and the contentious issue of playing the national anthem often created tensions that fuelled violence. Recent research by Dr. Richard McMinn has shed light on some fascinating events around the Duffy family circus and some of the occupational hazards of the job. In one notorious incident in 1906 in Coalisland, County Tyrone (40 miles from Belfast), a row between a member of the Duffy circus and a local mill worker provoked an attack by a gang of mill workers on the circus. Some accounts have put the mob at 500 people. The circus employees had to mount a cavalry charge to repel the attackers using 20 horses from the show. The headline in the Irish Times newspaper read: 'The Battle of Coalisland: Gallant Circus Cavalry Charge'.



Buff Bills Circus c.1910- Tom Duffy's grandmother Lena Kayes is the female acrobat on the left-hand side of the photograph (PRONI)

Dr Richard (Dickie) Hunter was born in British Guiana in 1884. His mother brought him to Portglenone, Co Antrim after the death of his father. He was educated in Ballymena, Co Antrim, and later served an apprenticeship in the local drapery trade. At the age of 30, he became a salesman in the same trade in Belfast. Following the outbreak of the First World War, he became a hospital orderly with the French Red Cross. After only one year he was injured and transported home however, by then, he had acquired a strong interest in medicine and working among the sick. When he regained his health, Queen's University of Belfast granted his application for a scholarship in the faculty of Medicine.

Besides his work in the University, Dr Hunter's interest in, and love for, animals was well known and he was made curator of Belfast Zoo in 1937. He caused delight and amazement by entering a cage with two fully-grown lionesses. He wished to demonstrate how the fiercest animals could be trained without cruelty. In 1938, he went to England and met with the Chipperfield Circus family and the opportunity arose to become a stand-in ringmaster. Dr Hunter was so good that Chipperfield asked him if he would consider becoming a full-time ringmaster for their famous circus. He declined the request but the die had been cast and Dickie decided that in order to fulfil his new interest, he would have to open a circus in Belfast.

On Christmas Day, 1940, he presented his first circus in the Belfast Hipprodrome in partnership with G.L. Birch as proprietor. It was a huge success and the first of many he would bring to Belfast at Christmas time. More and more people got to know Dr Dickie Hunter, not as an academic but as a ringmaster, resplendent in his scarlet uniform and top hat. He moved with his 'Continental Circus' to the Empire Theatre and it became an integral part of Christmas in Belfast for many people.

Dr Hunter discussing his love for the circus in his memoirs:

'I am still a boy at heart, and feel a thrill of excitement at the mere sight of the brightly coloured bills which announce the approaching visit of a circus'.

Even in the colourful life of the circus, world events would soon have a massive impact. Belfast was severely bombed by the Luftwaffe in April and May 1941. It would take a spirit of the 'show must go on' to put on a circus for the Christmas season of 1941. Dickie Hunter was determined and in his memoirs outlined some of the challenges he faced: 'This was the great problem before the three people (G.L.Birch, Jack Delino and myself) who would be

responsible for the circus? But it was faced with courage and determination; come what may, short of the actual theatre being blown sky high by the enemy, a circus would be produced for the entertainment of such of the population which remained and for the troops stationed in Belfast'.

Dr Hunter remained with his circus world until age would not allow him to travel extensively for new acts as had been his yearly custom. There can be no doubt that he entertained and inspired people in the lecture theatre as well as the circus and he died in July 1970. The Dr Hunter circus archive in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is well and truly from another era, but no one can deny the glamour, smiles and colour that he brought to Belfast during the austere days after the War.



'Banana the Clown' aka James Duffy (PRONI)

In the 1970s new ideas about circus and its role in the community began to take hold and the movement of community circus emerged. This movement combined the talents of theatre and circus with a belief that it could transform people's lives by enthusing a new generation of circus performers. Circus skills could be passed on to young people and could reach people previously marginalised or disadvantaged in society. In the late 1980s community and youth circus schools had been established in various parts of the United Kingdom and the largest and oldest of these is the Belfast Community Circus School.

In 2004 Belfast Community Circus School started the first international street theatre festival in Northern Ireland known as Festival of Fools. This has played out on the streets of Belfast with performers coming from all over the world each spring. It brings a riot of colour and noise and substantial benefits to Belfast City Centre. My first encounter with Festival of Fools was witnessing an Italian Clown abseiling from the top of a city centre shopping complex and singing Opera: It is not something you forget easily.



Festival of Fools Festival 2018 in Belfast

Belfast has firmly embraced the youth and social circus sector and the city is seen as a centre of excellence in the world of circus teaching and education. Other circus organisations such as Tumble Circus, Streetwise Community Circus and the Belfast Youth Circus, along with traditional circuses such as Tom Duffy's, Fossetts, Circus Gerbola and Circus Vegas continue to raise the profile of the art by staging performances that delight and amaze in equal measure. Ken Fanning and Tina Segner of Tumble Circus put it very well when asked what Tumble Circus is all about:

‘It is our desire and life’s work to create new and exciting circus that entertains, amazes and is accessible to all’.

Dr Hunter’s circus papers are open to the public and can be consulted in PRONI with the reference number D4577. The Cooper circus photographs can be viewed on PRONI’s Flickr page: https://www.flickr.com/photos/proni/albums

All visual and archival material used with permission of the Deputy Keeper of Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the Belfast Community Circus School.

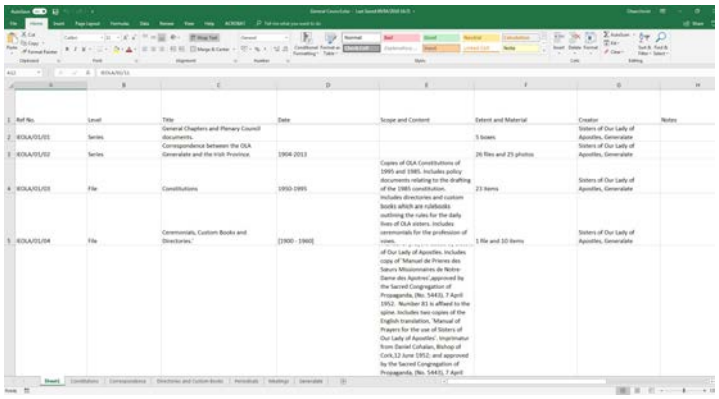
Brett Irwin, Archivist
Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

Reorganising and coding the Archive

One of my main tasks as the Contract Archivist Officer is to catalogue the Archive to a recognised standard. A properly catalogued archive enables researchers to more easily find what they are looking for, and it allows the Province to know exactly what type of records they hold.

In the first phase of this exercise, I went over the entirety of the Archive and described its contents. I assigned titles to each file, dated them, gave them a short description of their contents and filled in other important details. I finished this task in the early part of this year.

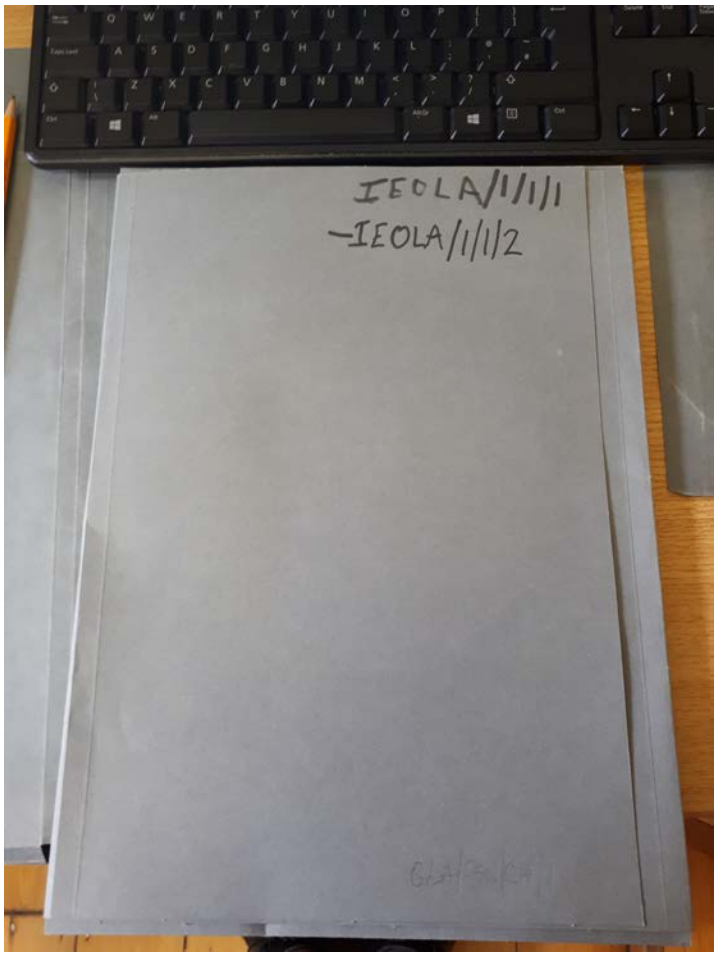
The second phase of this project is to reorganise the material, and to assign reference codes to each file and item. The first major group of material that I decided to organise was that created by the OLA Generalate. The Generalate is the global headquarters of the OLA, and the Archive contains material sent by the Generalate to the Irish Province. This material shows the links between both bodies, how they interacted with each other and how this relationship changed over time.



Screenshot of the initial ‘Generalate’ list with reference codes assigned.

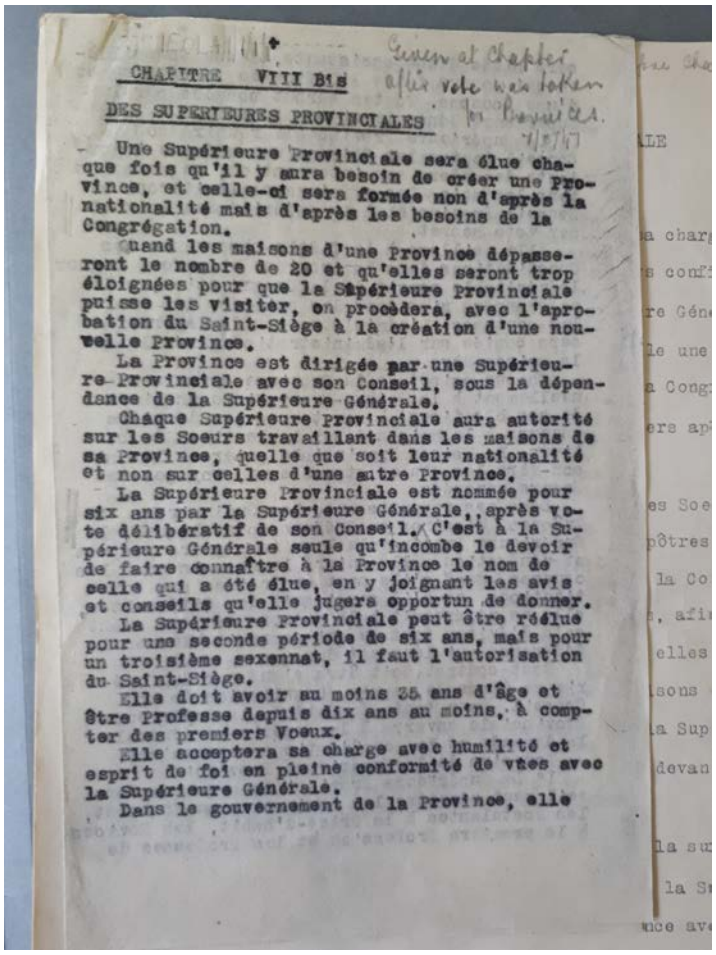
My first task was to identify and make a list of all the materials in the Archive that originated from the Generalate. Previously, OLA sisters who worked in the archive had organised most this material together into filing cabinets, and this initial organisation made my job much easier. Examples of such material were, ‘General Chapters and Plenary Councils’, ‘Correspondence and circulars between the OLA Generalate and the Irish Province’ and ‘OLA Constitutions’, these groups of material are known as ‘series’.

Once this list was compiled, I had to decide the order in which these series were to be presented. Was it to be chronological or was some other method of organisation to be used? I decided to go with a hybrid order in which the Chapter material was presented first, followed by correspondence between the Generalate and the Province, followed by material relating to rules of the OLA, and the rest material was presented in chronological order.



Folder containing the files IEOLA/1/1/1 [General Chapter, 1947] and IEOLA1/1/2 [General Chapter, 1955].

Reference codes are hierarchical. They start at the biggest level of description and narrow down to the smallest. For example, the very first item in the 'General Chapters and Plenary Council' series has the reference code IEOLA/1/1/1/1. What does this mean? Well, 'IEOLA' is the reference code for the entire archive, the first '1' means that this item is part of the group of records which were created by the Generalate, the next '1' tells us that that it is part of the series known as 'General Chapters and Plenary Council', the third '1' tells us that it is in the first file in this series which in this is 'General Chapter, 1947' and the last '1' tells us this item is the first item in that file. This method allows an archivist to find requested material very quickly. If a researcher wanted to view this item, an archivist can walk into the archive, he/she would know where all the material beginning with IEOLA/01 is located , he/she would then see box which in this case would be labelled 'IEOLA/1/1/1-IEOLA/1/1/4', and he/she would be able to quickly find the requisite file and item, and present it to the researcher.



CHAPITRE VIII Bis

DES SUPERIEURES PROVINCIALES

Une Supérieure Provinciale sera élue chaque fois qu'il y aura besoin de créer une Province, et celle-ci sera formée non d'après la nationalité mais d'après les besoins de la Congrégation.

Quand les maisons d'une Province dépasseront le nombre de 20 et qu'elles seront trop éloignées pour que la Supérieure Provinciale puisse les visiter, on procèdera, avec l'aprobation du Saint-Siège à la création d'une nouvelle Province.

La Province est dirigée par une Supérieure Provinciale avec son Conseil, sous la dépendance de la Supérieure Générale.

Chaque Supérieure Provinciale aura autorité sur les Soeurs travaillant dans les maisons de sa Province, quelle que soit leur nationalité et non sur celles d'une autre Province.

La Supérieure Provinciale est nommée pour six ans par la Supérieure Générale, après vote délibératif de son Conseil. C'est à la Supérieure Générale seule qu'incombe le devoir de faire connaître à la Province le nom de celle qui a été élue, en y joignant les avis et conseils qu'elle jugera opportun de donner.

La Supérieure Provinciale peut être réélue pour une seconde période de six ans, mais pour un troisième sexennat, il faut l'autorisation du Saint-Siège.

Elle doit avoir au moins 35 ans d'âge et être Professe depuis dix ans au moins, à compter des premiers Voeux.

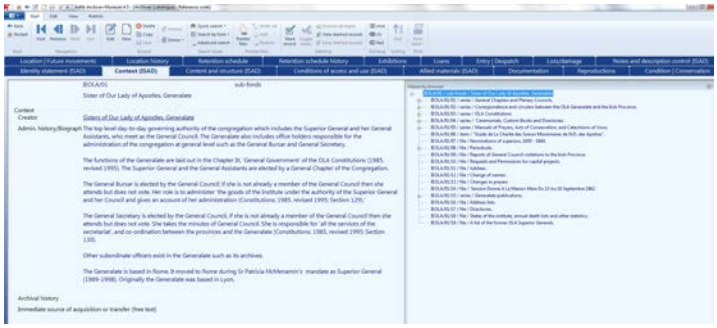
Elle acceptera sa charge avec humilité et esprit de foi en pleine conformité de vues avec la Supérieure Générale.

Dans le gouvernement de la Province, elle

IEOLA/1/1/1/1.

Once I knew what the reference codes were going to be, I began the long process of writing reference codes on the folders and on each individual item within. When writing on items, I use a light '2H' pencil so that corrections can be easily made and so there is not a permeant mark on the archival documents. I used a marker for the folders, though I will use pencil moving forward and only use marker at the very end of the process because if corrections must be made mid-process than struck-through marker can look messy and unprofessional. Sr Mary Barron helped put reference codes on the items which significantly sped up this phrase.

Once the material has reference codes attached to them, I can upload information onto the archive's electronic catalogue which further enables the efficient retrieval of material from the archive.



Screenshot from OLA, Province of Ireland Archive Adlib Database showing the Generalate Series.

A lot of the material relating to the Generalate were held in drawers. To better preserve this material and to place all Generalate documents in proximity to each other, I decided to remove all the material from these drawers and place them in archival acid free boxes. These have been placed on the Archive's new shelves.



The filing cabinet in which some of the Generalate documents were stored.

In total the Generalate material fills eighteen boxes and contains approximately 3092 items.



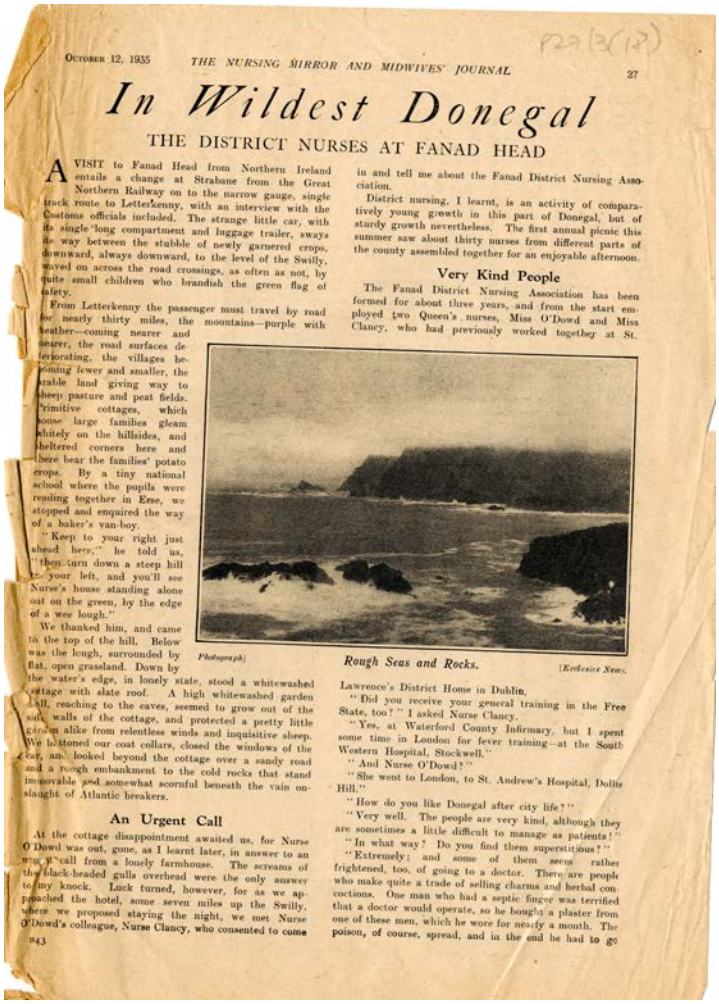
The Generalate documents taking up the tope three bays of the new shelves.

The next group of items that I will be adding reference codes to are documents created by the Irish Provincial Council, which makes up the largest body of material in the OLA Irish Province Archive. My first attempt at organising the Generalate documents will hopefully mean that this process will be much more efficient.

Michael Kelliher, Contract Archivist Officer
Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles, Province of Ireland Archive

This article was originally published on the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles website: http://www.olaireland.ie/index.php/news-events/news/archive-corner-organising-and-coding-cork/. ARA Ireland would like to thank the Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles, Province of Ireland, for permission to reproduce the article.

Pedalling into the Storm: District Nursing in mid-twentieth century Fanad, County Donegal



October 12, 1935 THE NURSING MIRROR AND MIDWIVES' JOURNAL 27

In Wildest Donegal

THE DISTRICT NURSES AT FANAD HEAD

A VISIT to Fanad Head from Northern Ireland entails a change at Strabane from the Great Northern Railway on to the narrow gauge, single track route to Letterkenny, with an interview with the Customs officials included. The strange little car, with its single long compartment and luggage trailer, sways its way between the stubble of newly garnered crops, downward, always downward, to the level of the Swilly, waved on across the road crossings, as often as not, by quite small children who brandish the green flag of safety.

From Letterkenny the passenger must travel by road for nearly thirty miles, the mountains—purple with heather—coming nearer and nearer, the road surfaces deteriorating, the villages becoming fewer and smaller, the arable land giving way to sheep pasture and peat fields. Primitive cottages, which house large families gleam whitely on the hillsides, and sheltered corners here and there bear the families' potato crops. By a tiny national school where the pupils were reading together in Erse, we stopped and enquired the way of a baker's van-boy.

"Keep to your right just ahead here," he told us, "then turn down a steep hill to your left, and you'll see Nurse's house standing alone out on the green, by the edge of a wee lough."

We thanked him, and came to the top of the hill. Below was the lough, surrounded by flat, open grassland. Down by the water's edge, in lonely state, stood a whitewashed cottage with slate roof. A high whitewashed garden wall, reaching to the eaves, seemed to grow out of the side walls of the cottage, and protected a pretty little garden alike from relentless winds and inquisitive sheep. We buttoned our coat collars, closed the windows of the car, and looked beyond the cottage over a sandy road and a rough embankment to the cold rocks that stand immovable and somewhat scornful beneath the vain onslaught of Atlantic breakers.

An Urgent Call

At the cottage disappointment awaited us, for Nurse O'Dowd was out, gone, as I learnt later, in answer to an urgent call from a lonely farmhouse. The screams of the black-headed gulls overhead were the only answer to my knock. Luck turned, however, for as we approached the hotel, some seven miles up the Swilly, where we proposed staying the night, we met Nurse O'Dowd's colleague, Nurse Clancy, who consented to come in and tell me about the Fanad District Nursing Association.

District nursing, I learnt, is an activity of comparatively young growth in this part of Donegal, but of sturdy growth nevertheless. The first annual picnic this summer saw about thirty nurses from different parts of the county assembled together for an enjoyable afternoon.

Very Kind People

The Fanad District Nursing Association has been formed for about three years, and from the start employed two Queen's nurses, Miss O'Dowd and Miss Clancy, who had previously worked together at St.

[Photograph] *Rough Seas and Rocks.* [Exclusive News.

Lawrence's District Home in Dublin.

"Did you receive your general training in the Free State, too?" I asked Nurse Clancy.

"Yes, at Waterford County Infirmary, but I spent some time in London for fever training—at the South Western Hospital, Stockwell."

"And Nurse O'Dowd?"

"She went to London, to St. Andrew's Hospital, Dollis Hill."

"How do you like Donegal after city life?"

"Very well. The people are very kind, although they are sometimes a little difficult to manage as patients!"

"In what way? Do you find them superstitious?"

"Extremely; and some of them seem rather frightened, too, of going to a doctor. There are people who make quite a trade of selling charms and herbal concoctions. One man who had a septic finger was terrified that a doctor would operate, so he bought a plaster from one of these men, which he wore for nearly a month. The poison, of course, spread, and in the end he had to go

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The Nursing Mirror & Midwives Journal October 1935 article on District Nursing in Fanad

In the early 1920s, life in the newly established Irish Free State, particularly in rural west and north west, was extremely poor. Men, women and children were crammed into third or fourth class homes, still eking out precarious livings on tiny subdivided holdings in remote, rural, often inaccessible territory, in much the same way as their grandparents had done in Famine times a few decades before.

Donegal County Archives holds a collection of papers which vividly reveal the effects of a severe food shortage, leading to almost famine like conditions, across the western seaboard, in the early years of independence from 1923 to 1927.

Among these papers is a letter from John O'Neill, Meenatottan District Distress Committee, Dungloe to Eugene Doherty, one of the local TDs, dated 4 January 1924, describing:

> 'an impoverished migratory people here, living, or rather existing in the midst of a weary and barren waste of bog and rock with an occasional patch of what is termed soil thrown in here and there, and which has been redeemed by almost superhuman toil and with restless energy by successive generations from the surrounding barren and inhospitable rocks and bogs.'

Lamenting the subsistence living, and lack of good crops he added: 'what little we had, the forces of nature wrested from us… the potato crop an absolute failure…' potato is the staple food of the great majority here.'

It is hard to imagine that this letter was written in 1924, just a couple of generations ago. As the 20th century progressed, there was gradual improvement in living standards across the country, rural and urban. But despite national and local initiatives such as widespread purchase of land, public housing including the building of labourers' cottages, modernised water supply and sewerage, developments in skills and educational opportunities, agricultural improvements and the growth in industry, some circumstances remained fairly static, at least in the first few decades. Women were very much second class citizens. Married women were still faced with the prospect of unending pregnancies and little public health support; unemployment benefit was marginal while unemployment was rife, a nascent public health system emerging slowly from the antiquated poor law system was basic and completely unresourced. Seasonal migration and emigration thrived whilst they also contributed to the difficulties suffered by those left at home. These difficulties included being sick and/or elderly in often remote districts with no resources. Thus the development of a comprehensive or indeed any nursing support, in such areas of the west especially, was of paramount importance to people throughout this period.

The Queen's Institute of District Nursing (the Irish branch of the UK based Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for District Nursing) was established in Ireland in the late 19th century, its remit to train

nurses to assist the poor and sick at home. District nursing associations were set up to manage the scheme locally. The committees were run by volunteers, usually wealthy and of some standing in the community. The Lady Dudley scheme, set up in the early 1900s, was affiliated to the Queen's Institute. Elizabeth Prendergast and Helen Sheridan have written an invaluable book on the subject of the Queen's or Jubilee Nurses in Ireland, using extensive archival sources, including from Donegal Archives. Entitled *Jubilee Nurse,* it chronicles the story of the Jubilee or Queen's Nurses in Ireland. The authors emphasize how under valued and unrecognized the work of the nurses was. They suggest a few reasons why this was the case… because of the association of the 'Queen's Nurses' (symbolically at least) with the Crown, perhaps because the women or associations themselves didn't seek recognition or perhaps simply because 'they were women'. And also perhaps because their work involved benefiting mothers and children, and such work would have been considered of far less significance than national or political achievements at the time, particularly as the country emerged from revolution in the early 1920s. 'Women's issues' were not a priority.

The work of the Queen's Nurses was time consuming and physically and undoubtedly mentally exhausting, especially in the remoter parts of the country, including County Donegal. Training took place primarily in two locations, St Patrick's Home in Dublin and St Laurence's home, Dublin (one Protestant- ethos, the other Catholic). Training included supervised visits to districts. Subjects learnt included midwifery and maternity, child welfare, care of the old, treatment of TB and other communicable diseases, nutrition, diet, hygiene including teaching people ways to avoid diseases such as typhoid and diphtheria. These were just some of the many health issues nurses would be dealing with as part of their daily duties once they were employed.

The district nurses who were appointed were usually experienced, always skilful and needed to be physically fit. They travelled far and wide, in good weather and bad, often by bicycle or horse and cart, they were on call 24 hours, they had to keep up their learned skills and develop new skills. Above all, they had to deal with a huge range of illnesses, diseases, injuries and health issues in the homes they visited. They were required to liaise with the local committee and to maintain meticulous records of their work. Nurses' tasks included recording deaths, birth and marriages. They travelled as many as 30 miles a day and many made approximately 5000 visits a year.

Nurses could be transferred between district associations; on average they usually spent three to four years in a western district. Many found the work and life hard, with long hours, little time off and often very isolating. Remaining longer than a couple of years in a remote rural district was usually believed to be too arduous for even the hardiest of nurses. *Jubilee Nurse* records that Annie P Smithson (later a novelist and INMO general secretary), who was a district nurse in Glencolmcille for eighteen months left her post in 1912, as she felt lonely and isolated.

Nurses worked closely with local doctors and reported directly to the local dispensary doctor. Nurses, already overworked, often had to take over some of the doctor's routine tasks including making up poultices and ointments as well as the expected preparatory tasks, preparing bandages etc. Nurses could be called on to tend to people who had been injured in the course of their employment, on farms, fishing trips, in factories, even down mines. Care of the elderly and frail was a vital part of the work done for communities. Duties regularly involved midwifery and maternity care; preparing the dead for wakes; dressing burns, wounds and cuts; maintaining the TB register. Children's health included running clinics for the under fives. As the century progressed nurses administered diabetes injections and penicillin. It seems incredible to think that, with everything else they had to do, somehow they fitted in school visits, with basic health checks such as examining children's eyes, ears, height and weight, even combing hair on the hunt for lice.

Given the era and the sheer scale of their many tasks, it was inevitable that nurses' salaries did not match their efforts out in the community. Local committees were expected to do much fundraising to keep the schemes in operation. Local clergy and medics were important factors in fundraising. Doctors were often vital to the setting up of nursing associations or 'clubs' to which households were encouraged to subscribe for a small fee. The new clubs or associations were careful (at least theoretically) not to interfere or to be seen to be interfering with the duties of the midwives of the Board of Health, established since 1924. In practice many had no choice but to carry out midwifery functions.

Fanad Health Club

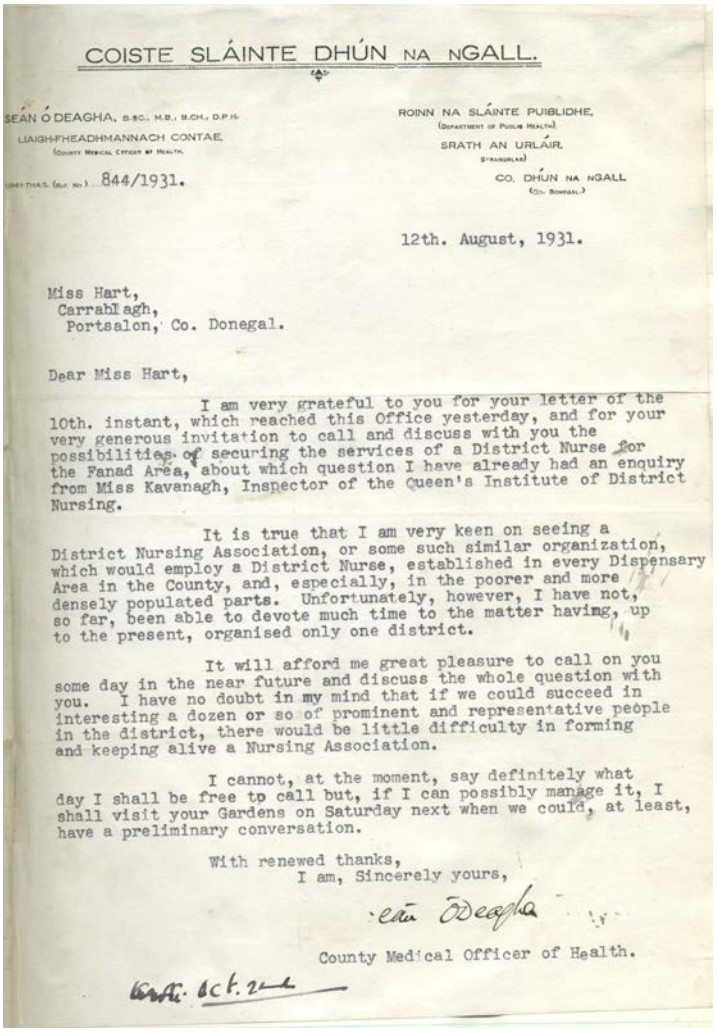
Two people paid a vital part in the setting up of Fanad Health Club in 1931 –1932: the County Medical officer, Dr Sean Ó Deagha and Miss Edith Rosamund Chichester Hart. The latter, born in 1893, was the daughter of well known botanist Henry Chichester Hart and Edith Susan Anna Donelly. Miss Hart lived in the family home, Carrablagh House, Portsalon. In 1931 Dr Sean Ó Deagha was asked by Miss Hart to help organise what was to become Fanad Health Club (District Nursing Association). The surviving records of the association are now online at www.donegalcoco.ie/archives.



Fanad Health Club Committee members pictured with Miss Coburn, Queen's Institute Superintendent for Ireland, (at back third from left), including Edith Rosamund Chichester Hart (at front centre, seated, third from left) and beside her, Dr Sean O Deagha, c. 1932.

Dr Ó Deagha had earlier that year been involved in setting up a similar club in Carndonagh. It was felt if one person in each household in the district became a member of a club for a small fee, with few or mainly no additional charges for nurses' attendance, the community as a whole would feel invested in the project and support and assist in financing associated costs. To develop Fanad Health Club Dr Ó Deagha sought the support of the local clergy and wealthier families. The newly established committee consisted of Canon Gallagher (chair), Rev. Faulkner, Dr McMenamin, Miss G Barton and Miss Hart.

The starting salary for the Fanad district nurse was £60 per annum with small allowances for board, laundry and uniform. According to a UK Official Data website, £100 in 1930 had the same "purchasing power" as £6,148.09 in 2017. They were also entitled to allowances for uniform, travel, heat, light and accommodation, amounting to £154, so perhaps by the standards of the time it was believed to be a reasonable salary, though it is known that many district nurses were not well off.



COISTE SLÁINTE DHÚN NA NGALL.

SEÁN Ó DEAGHA, B.Sc., M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.
LIAIGH-FHEADHMANNACH CONTAE.

ROINN NA SLÁINTE PUIBLIDHE,
SRATH AN URLÁIR,
CO. DHÚN NA NGALL

844/1931.

12th. August, 1931.

Miss Hart,
Carrablagh,
Portsalon, Co. Donegal.

Dear Miss Hart,

I am very grateful to you for your letter of the 10th. instant, which reached this Office yesterday, and for your very generous invitation to call and discuss with you the possibilities of securing the services of a District Nurse for the Fanad Area, about which question I have already had an enquiry from Miss Kavanagh, Inspector of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing.

It is true that I am very keen on seeing a District Nursing Association, or some such similar organization, which would employ a District Nurse, established in every Dispensary Area in the County, and, especially, in the poorer and more densely populated parts. Unfortunately, however, I have not, so far, been able to devote much time to the matter having, up to the present, organised only one district.

It will afford me great pleasure to call on you some day in the near future and discuss the whole question with you. I have no doubt in my mind that if we could succeed in interesting a dozen or so of prominent and representative people in the district, there would be little difficulty in forming and keeping alive a Nursing Association.

I cannot, at the moment, say definitely what day I shall be free to call but, if I can possibly manage it, I shall visit your Gardens on Saturday next when we could, at least, have a preliminary conversation.

With renewed thanks,
I am, Sincerely yours,

Sean Ó Deagha

County Medical Officer of Health.

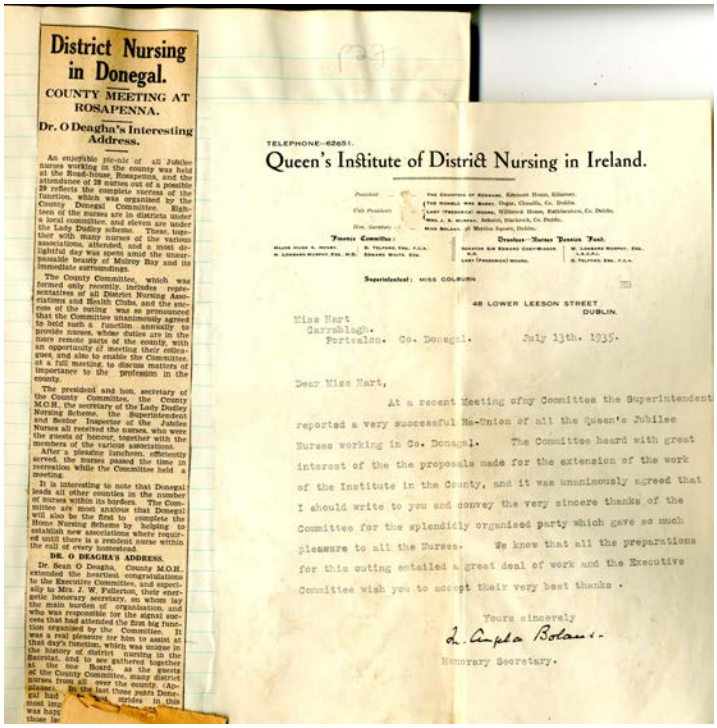
Letter from Dr Sean O Deagha to Edith Rosamund Chichester Hart, re setting up of Fanad Health Club, 12 August 1931.

As well as being provided with a furnished cottage the district nurse also had a bicycle. In terms of the associations' responsibility for provision of a nurse's accommodation Dr Ó Deagha noted that 'her health must be considered in order that she would give of her best to the people'. The Jubilee Institute was firm about this, he stressed. No doubt for good reason given the taxing and all consuming nature of the job expected of these women.

Ó Deagha managed to secure a subsidy from the Queen's Institute towards the running of the club including towards

accommodation for the nurses; it was also partly funded by the Department of Local Government & Public Health and County Donegal Board of Health. The local association paid towards each nurse's affiliation with the Institute of District Nursing.

The April 1932 meeting setting up the club was attended by prominent people, men and women including clergy and Mrs Nora Blaney (nee Nora Sweeney), wife of Neal Blaney, FF TD. It was decided that one nurse would focus on North Fanad, the other on the southern part, but where they would be based was immediately a bone of contention. For example some locals from Kerrykeel petitioned for one of the nurses to be based in their town.



District Nursing in Donegal.

COUNTY MEETING AT ROSAPENNA.

Dr. O Deagha's Interesting Address.

TELEPHONE—62651.

Queen's Institute of District Nursing in Ireland.

48 LOWER LEESON STREET DUBLIN.

Miss Hart
Carrablagh.
Portsalon. Co. Donegal. July 13th. 1935.

Dear Miss Hart,

At a recent Meeting of my Committee the Superintendent reported a very successful Re-Union of all the Queen's Jubilee Nurses working in Co. Donegal. The Committee heard with great interest of the the proposals made for the extension of the work of the Institute in the County, and it was unanimously agreed that I should write to you and convey the very sincere thanks of the Committee for the splendidly organised party which gave so much pleasure to all the Nurses. We know that all the preparations for this outing entailed a great deal of work and the Executive Committee wish you to accept their very best thanks.

Yours sincerely
L. Angela Boland.
Honorary Secretary.

Letter from Angela Boland, Secretary, Queen's Institute for Ireland, 13 July 1935 to E. R. C. Hart, re Fanad Health Club, plus news cutting.

By mid 1932 the two Fanad nurses were in place. Margaret Elizabeth O'Dowd was from Sligo. Since 1925 following her initial training, she had worked in St George's Hospital and East End Maternity Hospital in London; she had then trained as a district nurse in St. Laurence's Home, Dublin. She was to be based in Ballyhiernan, north Fanad.

Kathleen Clancy was from Galway. Her credentials were equally impressive; since 1923 she had trained in Wexford County Hospital, worked in a fever hospital and a 'nursing institute' in different parts of England, and in the National Maternity hospital in Dublin; she had also trained as a district nurse in St Laurence's Home. She was to be based in Drumfad.

These women were seriously well trained, experienced and qualified professionals. They received official recognition as health visitors by the Department of Maternity and Child Welfare.

The association followed the Queen's Institute's written Constitution and Rules. The rules laid down were strict, and on paper seemed reasonable for the time. For instance, nurses were supposed to adhere to an eight hour working day, with a half day off at weekend and 'occasional weekends off'. In practice they appear to have been permanently on call.

The nurses took up duty in the summer of 1932. Official duties included maternity work and they became part time nurses for the County TB and School Medical Scheme.

Fundraising was a vital factor in the District Committee's *raison d'etre,* because funds raised included for district nurses' pension fund. Fundraising materials abound in the Archives' Fanad Health Club Collection. Finance-raising methods included setting up a finance subcommittee; garden fetes, carnivals and dances; requests to charities such as the Irish Peasantry society (London); and door to door subscription collection. Nationally there was a Big House 'opening of gardens' scheme as part of the fundraising. Miss Hart's family opened their own gardens several years in a row including during the summer of 1932; that year, organisers bussed people from other parts of the county and from County Derry to Portsalon for the occasion but they were forced to cancel a planned motorboat across Lough Swilly due to inclement weather.

Evident in the correspondence in the collection is not only the hard work carried out by members of the committee but the mutual respect between Dr Ó Deagha and Edith Rosamund Hart and the Queen's Institute Superintendent for Ireland, Miss Coburn.

A County Committee of District Nursing was formed in September 1932 to coordinate the then seventeen County Donegal district nursing associations and Lady Dudley schemes (rising to 40 in a

few more years). It held its first annual dance in the Butt Hall, Ballybofey, in November of that year and encouraged the health clubs to fundraise similarly. Not every health club committee thought dances were a good idea. Some thought dances morally dangerous, preferring whist drives.



Nurses of the County Donegal Nursing Association, c. 1934 with Dr O Deagha and Miss Coburn.

Conclusion

By 1935 Donegal had more district nurses than any other county. By then sadly the tireless Dr Ó Deagha had died, aged 42, of complications with appendicitis. His sudden death occurred just a few months after he had married Dr Attracta Halpenny, a pathologist from Dublin. (Dr Halpenny is recorded in a medical dictionary as having trained in the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland.) But Nurses O'Dowd and Clancy were still going strong in Fanad as is evident from an article entitled 'In Wildest Donegal' in the *Nursing Mirror and Midwives Journal* 1935. The writer of the article noted there had been an increase in membership over the three years of the club, as 'many a farmer's wife saves the pennies by rigid economy in order to contribute a share for the family'. Nurse Kathleen Clancy, interviewed briefly for the article, still lodged at a local farm, having been unable to secure a cottage. She didn't stay long to talk to the interviewer saying 'I have one more late call to make before I get home'. The interview ends with this paragraph:

> 'The rain had come and the wind was blowing gustily but Nurse Clancy smiled aside my suggestion that she should wait, mounted her bicycle and pedalled into the storm, one hand holding together the skirts of her waterproof coat.'

This last paragraph possibly sums up the spirit, work ethic, dedication and relentless toughness of the Jubilee/Queen's/District Nurse.

Niamh Brennan, Archivist
Archives Service, Donegal County Council

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*Note on the records held in Donegal Archives

Donegal County Archives holds archives relating to Fanad Health Club dating from 1931 to 1945. These archives are now accessible to view online at http://www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives/



Exterior view of Ardnacrusha. Photo credit: ruaphotography @Instagram

#JJInstrail and ESB Archives goes to Ardnacrusha to celebrate St. Patrick's Festival

A truly national institution such as ESB, needs a truly national presence. What better way to share our proud industrial heritage preserved in ESB Archives than to continue our dynamic partnership for the second year in a row with St. Patrick's Festival.

The concept to develop a unique train tour to Ardnacrusha, Ireland's first national hydro-electric scheme, was developed when the Festival's Artistic Director visited ESB Archives in late 2017 and learned about the history of ESB through the original documentation preserved in the archives.

Taking inspiration from the original guided tours of Ardnacrusha in 1928, '#JJInstarail tour to Ardnacrusha' was born. The concept of #JJInstarail was developed through St. Patrick's Festival partnership with #JJCommunity, a leading global Instagram photography group with a global following of 600,000.

Along with Irish Rail, St. Patrick's Festival organised a private train to Limerick Station with bus transfer to Ardnacrusha for 150 members of the public who booked their tickets early for the bank holiday March 19th event.

With remnants of snow in the city, the bank holiday morning began bright and early with traditional Irish musicians warming up our guests on arrival at Heuston Station.

We had action packed entertainment on the train with specialised talks from ESB Archives sharing stories and photographs on Instragram relating the momentous story of Ardnacrusha, the establishment of ESB and the legacy of Ardnacrusha.

Limerick based historian Brian Goggins shared stories of the history of the Shannon, along with traditional musical sessions in between the storytelling sessions. #JJCommunity photographers' visitors shared their photography expertise on the train.



Transmission lines at Ardnacrusha. Photo credit: pmccrthy @Instagram

On arrival to Ardnacrusha, visitors enjoyed a unique guided experience of the interior of the power station including the very heart of the station with unique views of the turbine hall. Visitors explored the exhibitions and animations throughout the station and the revamped visitor centre, along with an opportunity to view the stunning headrace canal, navigation locks and tailrace offering an unparalleled Ardnacrusha experience. Engineers and guiding staff from the station shared their technical expertise and local knowledge.



Interior view of turbine hall. Photo credit: ronan.jameson @Instagram

Throughout the day, actors brought life to the story and debates surrounding the Shannon Scheme with performances in the Sean Keating gallery and original control room. The scripts for the actors were researched from content and oral histories of staff from Ardnacrusha preserved in our archives, authenticating the visitor experience.



Actor in control room with an engaged audience. Photo credit: dohnjoran @Instagram

During the tour, visitors were busy snapping away and tagging their industrial heritage photographs of Ardnacrusha on Instagram. By partnering with JJ Community it allowed the story of the journey and Ardnacrusha to be shared not just with the people on the tour but with a huge audience of followers and viewers on Instagram.



Feedback from Dublin branch of JJ Community. C. @igersdublin

Before departing to Limerick station, visitors were brought on a guided walking tour of Limerick city.



Feedback from a happy visitor. C. @IamPhoebe

Our collaboration with St. Patrick's Festival offered many innovative ways for ESB Archives to engage with staff throughout ESB. We ran an employee photography competition on the theme of the festival 'Home' for budding photographers to win tickets to the event. With the permission of our winners, we shared the winning photographs on our social media platforms along with St. Patrick's Festival.

On the lead up to the event, the day itself and following the event we engaged with staff through our internal channels. We published a full news story on our digital and print channels including a video of the event, scripted by ESB Archives and produced by an employee with a keen interest in video editing reaching out to ESB's employees globally.

The event was advertised in St. Patrick's Festival programme, 75,000 of which are distributed nationwide through The Irish Times and 30,000 distributed citywide. We promoted the event on esbarchives.ie and social media channels. The event was also an opportune time for us to launch and develop our Instagram account @esbarchives. The promotion of the event on various platforms resulted in the event being the first sold out Festival event of 2018 with a waiting list in place.

The event was profiled on the Festival Highlights show on RTE One on March 19th, viewed by 230,800 people.



Musicians in advertising gallery at Ardnacrusha. Photo credit: damosnaps @Instagram

By sharing our history in new and innovative ways, we continually reach out to new diverse audiences and in turn enhance the reputation of ESB brand. Linking with a worldwide photography community, JJ Community gave ESB Archives a new platform to share our content and was a fantastic way to launch our Instagram account which we will continue to develop.

While the event was instigated and led by ESB Archives, it would not have been possible without the dedication of our colleagues throughout ESB. We worked closely with many departments, including: corporate communications, event management, employee engagement, and station staff at Ardnacrusha. The willingness of staff to volunteer their time on a snowy bank holiday Monday is testament to the value and pride that ESB staff have in the birthplace of ESB, Ardnacrusha.

Free public tours of Ardnacrusha run from 2 July to 14 September 2018. The guided tours can accommodate groups of up to 30 people and runs for approximately 90 minutes. All bookings can be made online on www.esb.ie.

Deirdre McParland, Senior Archivist
ESB Archives

Exhibition to mark 90th anniversary of the Dublin Gate Theatre at Dublin City Library & Archive



Green clad figure:

Costume design for Peer Gynt by Micheal Mac Liammoir

At the commencement of the Decade of Centenaries 2013-2023, Dublin City Council made a policy decision to widen this into a Decade of Commemorations, covering the same period. This has allowed us to take in anniversaries which are not centenaries – for example, we commemorated the Millennium of the Battle of Clontarf in 2014 and the 300th anniversary of the Mansion House in 2015, as well of course as landmark centenaries such as the 1913 Lockout, the 1916 Rising and the First World War 1914-18. The 90th anniversary of the foundation of the Dublin Gate Theatre takes place in 2018, and DCC's Commemorations Committee has funded the production of an exhibition on this topic based on the Theatre Archive held at Dublin City Library & Archive. This also has an unexpected link to the centenary of the First World War: the young Londoner Alfred Willmore, who was a conscientious objector, migrated to Ireland when conscription was introduced to Britain in 1916 and stayed here, transforming himself into Mícheál Mac Liammóir, actor, playwright, designer, self-adopted Irishman (claiming to be from County Cork!) and founder, with his partner Hilton Edwards, of the Dublin Gate Theatre in 1928.

We decided to prepare an exhibition titled 'Aspects of Mícheál: Mac Liammóir and the Dublin Gate Theatre'. This consists of 18 large storyboards along with original materials in our display cases. The exhibition was opened on 8 May 2018 by Dr Christopher Fitz-Simon, biographer of Hilton Edwards and Mícheál Mac Liammoir. It will run in Dublin City Library & Archive until the end of June and will be revived for the Dublin Theatre Festival in October. It has been entirely generated from our own collections at DCLA, with one exception. In 1970, Mícheál gave one of his costume designs for 'The Heart's a Wonder' as a wedding present to a young couple who were friends of his – and forty-eight years later, they have very generously lent it to us for the exhibition. Otherwise the materials have come from three main collections at our Theatre Archive: the Richard Pine Collection; the Turner Collection and the Leahy Collection.

In 1978, Richard Pine organised an exhibition to mark the 50th anniversary of the Gate Theatre. As part of this process, he was given photographs and slides which he subsequently donated to our Theatre Archive. The photographs are of excellent quality and as they were commissioned by Mícheál we had permission to reproduce them in the exhibition. The photographs are monochrome, size 10" x 8" and are of such excellent quality that they can be enlarged to great effect. Two of these production photographs, one of Mícheál and one of Hilton, were scanned at 2,400 dpi and have been printed onto boards size 8 ft x 4 ft without any loss of definition. Our intention here was to give a flavour of a theatre foyer, where large-scale photographs are routinely displayed. Mícheál and Hilton treasured their friendships and this is clearly illustrated in the other two collections from which the exhibition has also been generated. Patricia Turner was Mícheál's personal assistant and a theatre producer in her own right, who became a close friend. Her collection was donated to us by her son Robbie, who grew up largely in Mícheál and Hilton's household at 4 Harcourt Terrace. It is wide-ranging, including programmes, playbills, photographs, extensive correspondence, notes, graphic designs, set designs, costume designs, and books

written and published by Mícheál and Hilton, some of which are very rare. The correspondence is wide-ranging, covering the period 1948-1978, but with a particular focus on letters written by Mícheál from his astonishingly successful world tour with his one-man show 'The Importance of Being Oscar'. The notes written to Patricia were a by-product of their household management – Mícheál and Hilton had their studies at the top of four-storey 4 Harcourt Terrace so they would leave notes for her for the day's updates on the hall-table so that she wouldn't have to climb all the way up!



Ellen Murphy, Brendan Teeling, Dr Christopher Fitz-Simon and Mary Clark at the opening of the Mac Liammoir Exhibition

The Leahy Collection is testament to Mícheál and Hilton's gift for friendship. They were great friends with a civil servant, William Leahy, who invested in the Gate Theatre. Leahy was a widower and when he asked Mícheál if he knew of a 'resting' actress who might be able to care for his two young daughters after school, Mícheál replied: 'Nonsense, my dear boy! Sheila and Carmel will come to us at the Gate. They will do their homework in the Green Room, Hilton and I will look after them and you can collect them when you have finished work'. This arrangement continued for many years, with Mícheál adopting the younger girl, Carmel, as his god-daughter. When they had grown up, the two girls went on holidays with Mícheál and Hilton and were privileged to see the capital cities of Europe under their guidance. Their collection, which was donated to the Theatre Archive in 2010, contains correspondence, photographs, playbills, postcards, books and long-playing records.

In making a selection of material for the exhibition, the focus was very much on choosing visually-appealing items. Photographs, programmes and playbills were to the fore, while all of Mícheál's designs were digitally photographed for possible inclusion. Vastly enlarged colour photographs of two costume designs were printed onto canvas pull-ups and these form the entrance to the exhibition in a dramatic manner. One costume is in green and one is in plum and we then chose these colours for the background to the exhibition. The first part of the exhibition is chronological, commencing with Alfred Willmore's juvenile career as a child actor. Each storyboard recounts one aspect of Mícheál's later career and the first part of the exhibition continues with the foundation of the Gate Theatre and An Taibhdhearc – the Irish-language theatre in Galway – Dublin Civic Week; Mac Liammóir and the Irish Language; Gate Theatre tours abroad; and the move by Edwards-Mac Liammóir Productions to the Gaiety Theatre for six months each year, following the split with Longford Productions. A short text was written for each storyboard and the well-known tales of how Orson Welles and later James Mason received their early training at the Gate were of course told. The second part of the exhibition was thematic containing storyboards about Mícheál at home; Mac Liammóir the Actor; the Graphic Designer; the Set and Costume Designer. One Storyboard is just full of photographs of Mícheál – arranged as they would appear in a theatre foyer - while the last one celebrates Hilton Edwards. The acknowledgements board contains a television screen where two slide shows run consecutively in a continuous loop, with audio facilities allowing visitors to hear Mícheál's warm voice narrating 'The Importance of Being Oscar.' The storyboards are mounted on a heavy-duty framework, designed and made in Ireland, which is very versatile and can be configured in various ways. The framework is anchored by very heavy feet which prevent it from toppling; however, the feet are not visually-appealing, so we have devised a custom at DCLA of covering them with lively images, the motif for this exhibition being the subject's signature 'from Mícheál Mac Liammóir'. We have also devised a custom of mounting banners from poles emerging from the wall of the Exhibition Room at a high level. The subject for this exhibition was four book-illustrations by Mícheál in the Celtic Revival style; the originals were 6" x 6" and they were scanned at 2,400 dpi and enlarged to 6 ft x 6 ft emerging crisp and sharp from this process, an indication of the quality of the original design.

A very important part of the exhibition was the selection of documents to be placed on display in our exhibition cases. (We commissioned these purpose-built modern museum-quality cases in 2016 – if anyone would like to have a copy of our specification, just e-mail cityarchives@dublincity.ie). We chose a mixture of costume designs, set designs and graphic designs to give an overview of Mícheál's talents and capacities. We also have what we call 'a uniform case' in the exhibition room, and in here we placed Mícheál's dressing gown, in rich brocade, on a mannequin. As a young man, he regularly wore this while he was doing his make-up in advance of his performance – and then realising that he had run out of cigarettes, dash out of the theatre to buy these, heedless of how he looked!

To animate the exhibition, we are giving guided tours on Tuesday mornings, and are booking in retirement and local history groups at other times. In addition, the exhibition serves as a 'shop-window' for our collections and for what we do with them – apart from having them available for research - and arising from this we have already been offered two more Mac Liammóir collections – a phenomenon which has also happened when we have mounted exhibitions on other themes – sports archives are offered when we have sports collections and First World War collections come in, in the wake of exhibitions on that topic. The exhibition was curated by City Archivist Dr Mary Clark, was designed by Source Design with significant input from the DCA staff, and was printed by The Printed Image. We are grateful to Dublin City Council for supporting the exhibition and for giving us the chance to celebrate Mícheál and Hilton in this, their special year.

Mary Clark

Dublin City Library & Archive

'Doing their bit': Irish Women and the First World War



St John Ambulance Nurse Kate Middleton Curtis (1860-1980). Courtesy Dublin City Library and Archive.

In March 2018, Dublin City Archives launched the exhibition 'Doing their bit: Irish women and the First World War' at Dublin City Library and Archive in Pearse Street The exhibition was curated by Ellen Murphy, senior archivist and Dublin City Council Historian-in-Residence, Dr. Bernard Kelly. It was funded by Dublin City Council Decade of Commemoration.

The exhibition centred on the impact that the First World War had on the lives of Irish women and the new opportunities that opened up for them. The exhibition showed that the conflict greatly accelerated the changes which had been slowly taking place in Irish society before the outbreak of war. In 1914 Irish women did not have the right to vote and were hugely underrepresented in

the workforce. By 1918 Constance Markievicz was the first woman elected to the British House of Commons and Irish women had experienced economic freedom and union solidarity through the employment opportunities offered by the war.

The exhibition drew on the rich vein of archival materials contained in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association Archive held at Dublin City Library and Archive, from Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses to munitions workers, home front volunteers and anti-enlistment activists. Other artefacts on public display included a ‘death penny’ commemorating Sgt Michael Guilfoyle of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, killed at Salonica in 1916 and a book of poetry by the renowned republican poet Maeve Cavanagh.

Two notable women were highlighted in the exhibition; **Kate Middleton Curtis** a distinguished member of St. John Ambulance in Dublin who referred to herself as ‘The oldest ambulance lady in Ireland’ and **Monica Roberts**, a young Stillorgan woman who in 1914 established ‘The Band of Helpers for the Soldiers’. This voluntary group sent ‘home comforts’ such as cigarettes, food, clothing and watches to Irish soldiers in the front line. Kate’s diary and other medical artefacts, as well as letters and postcards from the Monica Roberts collection were displayed. Free guided tours of the exhibition were provided to a variety of groups and organisations including the National League of the Blind, students on adult literary programs, and local history groups.



Staff of National Shell Factory, Parkgate street, Dublin, May 1918. Courtesy Dublin City Library and Archive.

The exhibition was accompanied a well attended program of talks in both City Hall and Dublin City Library and Archive throughout April relating to topics such as the Dublin munitions factories, Irish nursing, women volunteers with St John Ambulance, and women and the anti-conscription movement. The key note lecture was given by Dr. Finoula Walshe who examined the long term legacy of the First World War and Irish women. A number of the talks were recorded and will be podcast at: http://www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-services-recreation-culture-dublin-city-public-libraries-and-archive-eresources/podcasts



Irish Life 1915 Photo of volunteers from the Cork Refreshments Committee supplying tea, cakes & buns to travelling soldiers and sailors. Courtesy Dublin City Library and Archive.

The exhibition finished its run at Dublin City Library and Archive at end of April, and will be displayed again at Dublin’s City Hall in from September to November 2018.

Further information cityarchives@dublincity.ie; 01 674 4848

Ellen Murphy, Senior Archivist
Dublin City Library & Archive