Archives & Records Association
Cumann Cartlann agus Taifead
Ireland/Éire

Summer 2019 Newsletter

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A Word from the Chair

Dear Member,

Welcome to the summer 2019 newsletter.

ARA Ireland will be holding a joint training event with the Information and Records Management Society (IRMS) on the 12th September. The keynote speaker will be John Morgan. John is heading the inquiry into the Renewable Heating Initiative, and his talk will focus on this particular case study and record keeping in the public sector. Further details on the event will be circulated in due course.

Work is well underway on the new ARA Ireland Region's dedicated website, and we are looking for images to populate the site. We will also be hosting Archive Hour this coming September (26th) and are now looking for suggestions for topics and guest hosts. More information on both the website and Archive Hour is available in the message from our communications officer inside the issue.

The first committee meeting of the Irish Region of ARA took place 40 years ago this year in 1979. To mark this anniversary, we are hoping to hold an event/birthday party later this year. Watch this space!

ARA Ireland committee currently have a vacancy for a Legislation and Standards Working Group Consultant. If you are interested in the position or would like more information, please email: arairelandregion@gmail.com.

Wishing you all a great summer.

Slán agus beannacht,
Gerard Byrne, ARA Ireland Chair.

New Professionals Summer Seminar 2019

Lisa Murphy
Irish Representative for the ARA Section for New Professionals

The 2019 ARA New Professionals Summer Seminar took place on June 7th at the beautiful Edinburgh City Chambers. This year's theme looked at the changing role of the archives professional and the skills and knowledge developed as a result of this change. The work of the archivist today is incredibly varied and we often wear many hats in our jobs and this was something that was highlighted in the diverse range of speakers at this year's seminar.



Julie Devenney, Social Media Officer, ARA Scotland

Firstly, Julie Devenney social media officer for ARA Scotland spoke about Archive Hour and the role of social media in archives. Many archivists are now responsible for using social media in their work and getting involved in campaigns such as Archive Hour or Explore Your Archive. Both of these are great campaigns that allow you to share aspects of your own collection, gain help and support from other archivists and also learn about valuable resources. Julie spoke about the importance of social media in allowing archives to highlight their collections, their events and their day to day work. She also spoke about the fact that most people will now visit you online before they physically visit you and as such, there is an expectation that you will have an online presence. Julie also provided some wonderful practical tips and advice for getting started on social media such as planning your posts in advance and looking to trending hashtags for inspiration for your posts. Far from viewing social media as another burden on our time, Julie inspired us to see the platform as a way to 'take the archives to the people'.



Sharon McMeekin, Digital Preservation Coalition

The increasingly digital aspect of our role is also a hot topic right now and Sharon McMeekin from the Digital Preservation Coalition gave an informative workshop on getting started in digital preservation. She spoke about simple and practical steps that can be taken to begin the process such as simply knowing what digital assets your archive holds and what format they

take. She also spoke about the importance of having a sound Digital Preservation Policy and strategy in place. There was group work involved in Sharon's session which really helped us to start thinking about how her advice could be applied in our own organisations. Sharon also talked about resources that are available for getting started with digital preservation as well as the various proprietary and open source software options on the market. Her extremely practical advice definitely helped to remove a lot of the anxiety that can creep in when you start thinking about how to tackle this vital but daunting task.

The topic of jobs is one which is obviously of great importance to new professionals as we navigate our early years in the profession and it was refreshing to hear a different take on the employment issue from Alison Scott. Alison spoke about her experience as a freelance archivist, something which is not quite the norm yet in the archives world. It was interesting to hear about why she has taken this route, which was predominantly due to the lack of long term employment. She also spoke about the ways in which she has advertised her services and the importance of attending events and engaging with the sector. Many of Alison's tips are equally applicable to those of us starting out in our careers and it will be interesting to see whether freelance work will become more common for archivists in the future. The final speaker of the day was Stuart Macdonald who provided an interesting insight into his role as a Digital Archivist for Historic Environment Scotland. He spoke about the various processes and tools used in his organisations digital archives. This provided us with a real world example of the processes that Sharon McMeekin had spoken about earlier in the day.

The seminar was a great success and culminated in some informal networking which provided an opportunity to hear about the variety of places in which new professionals are working. Irish attendance also increased this year as two bursaries worth €200 each were provided for two Irish new professionals to attend the summer seminar. The bursaries were awarded to Éilis Crowe a project archivist at the Guinness Archive and Anna Hunter a student on the MA in Archives and Records Management at UCD. I would encourage all Irish new professionals to join the new professionals section and apply for the bursaries next year. The summer seminar is a great opportunity to meet your peers and discuss issues and topics which are relevant to you. I hope to see you there in 2020!

Theatre Maquettes at Dublin City Library & Archive

Mary Clark
Dublin City Archivist

The classic archival collection consists largely of documents along with bound volumes and possibly maps, deeds and photographs, which all provide a preservation challenge for the archivist. However, when it comes to theatre archives, the number of extraneous items which have to be listed and cared for is remarkably varied. These range from costumes, bonnets and caps, fans, a miscellaneous collection of props, scenic backdrops for the stage – as well as the more expected programmes, playbills, photographs and playscripts. Particularly prized because of their rarity, theatre maquettes present a 3-D image of the proposed stage set which links the viewer with the original production. DCLA has a number of theatre maquettes, including one showing the original players in scaled-down costume, made for the Irish premiere of Waiting for Godot. This was actually placed in the front window of the Pike Theatre by Alan Simpson and Carolyn Swift, as an advertisement to encourage patrons to come to the play. The collection of the Northern Ireland stage designer, Eddie Johnston, contains more regular maquettes, intended to demonstrate to the scene builders what exactly they had to do. As heritage items, theatre maquettes have a varied life – they have a role in scholarly consideration of a play and also in introducing children to the magic of drama. So Dublin City Library & Archive was very pleased to receive ten maquettes from Cormac O'Malley and his sister Etáin, as the vanguard of the collection of their American mother, Helen Hooker, relating to the Players Theatre which she co-founded in Dublin in 1945. Helen was the wife of the War of Independence veteran Ernie O'Malley. She trained in graphic design in the United States and her work in Dublin included a colour scheme for Pearse Street Library, executed for her friend, the republican Roisin Walsh, who was the first Dublin city librarian.

The end of the Second World War released energies and concerns which had been suppressed during The Emergency. At the Abbey Theatre this translated into resentment towards the Director Ernest Blythe, who had introduced a more formal, mannered style of acting, which younger players disliked. In addition, although they were glad to have permanent posts with guaranteed salaries, younger players were often not given parts to play, and were sidelined as understudies. These people formed the core of Players Theatre, which was founded by Helen Hooker O'Malley, Liam Redmond and Gerald Healy. The aim was to produce a more natural style of theatre without stiffness or reserve. Helen became the stage and costume designer for Players Theatre and the Maquettes have been attributed to her. It should be said that despite its name, Players was a movement without a theatre as it did not have a permanent home. Venues were hired as needed, and Cormac opines that this may have caused the ultimate collapse of Players, for example when its directors naively rented the enormous Olympia Theatre for one of their small-scale productions. It proved impossible to clear the debt, and no doubt this contributed to the closure of

Players in 1954.



The Black Stranger Maquette: before and after conservation

Maquettes are exceptionally fragile, because they are constructed from paper and thin cardboard. It is not surprising that the Players maquettes of such an early date had become damaged and effectively disbound. The first maquette, relating to 'The Black Stranger' by Gerard Healy (a Famine play about Black '47) was relatively intact, and only the tiny furniture had become detached from the floor – luckily it was all there! DCLA engaged paper conservator Liz D'Arcy to work on the 'Black Stranger' maquette and she developed a strategy whereby she placed the furniture in what she considered to be the correct position, photographed it, and then sent a copy to Cormac O'Malley in Connecticut, for his opinion. When the remaining nine maquettes arrived in DCLA at the beginning of April, we asked Liz to continue the work of conservation – a daunting task, as Cormac O'Malley had asked us to put them on display on 26 June 2019, in tandem with an exhibition of his mother's photographs at the National Photographic Archive. In the end, Liz made the deadline, and the newly-elected Lord Mayor of Dublin, Paul McAuliffe, formally opened the presentation in our exhibition room in Pearse Street, with the maquettes on show in the display cases.



The Black Stranger Maquette with conservator Liz D'Arcy

Cormac and Etáin O'Malley have now lent to DCLA more material relating to Players, for scanning and cataloguing. We also hope to develop more of a narrative around this interesting if little-known Dublin Theatre movement.

Message from ARA Ireland Communications Officer

Niamh Ní Charra

Guest hosts for ArchiveHour

As many of you who are on Twitter are already aware, ARA Ireland has run the @ArchiveHour account in rotation with several other ARA regions and specialist groups for the past two years. Our last successful foray was in October 2018 when guest hosts **Aisling Keane**, Digital Archivist, NUI Galway, and **Deirdre McParland**, and **Tanya Keyes** both from ESB discussed questions based on that month's chosen topic 'Exploring Identity, Language and Landscape in Archives'. ARA Ireland will again be running the account in September, with ArchiveHour taking place on Thursday 26th 8-9pm. We are interested in hearing from anyone who would like to guest host, and who have a suitable inclusive topic in mind. For more information please contact me directly at niamhnicharra@gmail.com.

Call for images

I am also currently busy working on a brand new website for the ARA Ireland region. To this end I am seeking images from archives and institutions all over Ireland that showcase the work of archivists and records managers. These images would be used (and credited) on the home page and elsewhere throughout the site. If you have suitable images and would like to boost the profile of your institution, please contact me directly at niamhnicharra@gmail. Images need to be received by Friday 16th August. Míle buíochas.

Small Voluntary Groups using, recording and bringing Local Archives to your Village and the World

Hazel Morrison, Tara de Renzy & Mark McNally
Moycullen Heritage/Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh

Moycullen Heritage/Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh was formed in 1995 with an aim to preserve and conserve Moycullens rich and diverse written and aural history.

This article describes our use and online storage and access to locally compiled archive and census data as a valuable genealogical information source for projects and general research. We will be focusing in on the 1793-1813 census compiled by Fr Francis Xavier Blake to provide examples of the use of small but valuable archives not fitting into the bigger national repositories as a catalyst for a range of projects undertaken by Moycullen Heritage such as publications and recordings of the history and heritage our area.

We will also be highlighting our membership of the Irish Community Archive Network (ICAN) and Galway Community Heritage and the ability it has given our society in terms of sharing our local collections, information and content online, including the Blake Census through our website and providing an ideal forum to make links and improve access to data and archives in general.

So, who was Fr Blake? Francis Xavier Blake was born *c*.1757 and was probably of the Menlo (Galway) branch of that family and a brother of Doctor Patrick Blake of Dominic Street, Galway. Like many of his fellow priests at that time, he was educated at Salamanca in Spain and later became Rector of an Irish College in Belgium. He was described as ‘a scholar of more than ordinary accomplishment having been educated in the famous University of Salamanca where he acquired several literary distinctions’. His previous appointments before coming to Moycullen as parish priest are uncharted but he would appear to have spent some time in Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo.

From the scant records that are available, there is evidence of his single-mindedness and independent spirit. In 1789 he was involved in a boundary dispute with the Tuam Diocese, unfortunately the reason for this is not recorded and in April 1816 he protested to Rome after the Election of Warden French. Amongst other bequests, he bequeathed £500.00 towards the first school in Moycullen, which was built in 1834, which unfortunately has since been demolished.

There is evidence that he retired to College House as early as 1822, but in March 1824, Bishop O’Kelly of Tuam gave Blake as his third choice for the vacant See of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, stating that “although old and in bad health and not able to do parish work, he has the prudence, knowledge and piety sufficient to make him a good bishop”. A victim of a cholera epidemic, he died in College House aged 75 years.

During his time in Moycullen (1792-1825), he carried out a census of his parish, which was to become an invaluable source of genealogical information to our society. It is noteworthy that the census focuses on the male householders only but I think we can forgive Fr Francis Xavier Blake for his gender bias in light of the historical legacy he has left his former parish of Moycullen, Co. Galway – after all it was the late 18th/early 19th century and a census of the local people was unheard of.

Now in the diocesan archives, access to the original census is limited, but Moycullen Heritage have transcribed the document into a searchable database which can be found on our website at https://moycullen.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/uncategorized/blake-census.

Fr. Blake's Census Explanatory Notes:

– List commences with Christmas of the year 1793 and ends in 1813.

– It comprehends the name of every married man then residing in the parish.

– It also includes the name of every unmarried man having a separate dwelling whether bachelor or widower.

– It comprehends every person of that description who have come to reside in the parish since the above-mentioned period and the particular time of their coming is distinguished by a special mark.

– Every newly married man is put on the list and the time of his marriage is known by a particular mark.

– A particular mark points out the time that any person entered on the list, removes from the parish, dies or becomes a widower.

– Yearly dues by the provincial statute are 2s. 2d. - by custom in this parish, which we have not changed, 1s. 7½d.

– Every married man, widower, or bachelor having a dwelling and able to pay are by order of the Ordinary subject to pay: married people only are used to pay.

Various marks were used by Fr. Blake. One of these indicated a days work of a mower, thatcher, mason or suchlike, valued at one shilling; other marks represent a labourer at 6d. or a horse at 6d. per day.

Letters of abbreviation used by Fr. Blake and copied in the register are:

– M: Married

– D: Died

– W: Widowed

– R: Removed from Parish

– C: Changed habitation within the parish

– N: Newly resident

– P: Poor man, no dues but an occasional day's work

There are other marks also e.g. O. indicating that confessions were heard at that house

So how was the Blake Archive used by our society In 2008, Moycullen Heritage published *Maigh Cuilinn- A muintir*, the book is divided into townland chapters including townland name and meaning/ past townland census data and a short townland

history and substantial pictorial history. The census information was arranged chronologically and includes the Moyculen Parish census (1793-1813) carried out by Fr Francis Xavier Blake, PP Moycullen (1792-1825). This locally compiled census can be seen as a valuable information source in conjunction with national archives such as the Griffiths Valuation (1855) and the 1901 census and 1911 census.

Moycullen Heritage led a project to record and map the families buried within the walls of our 13th Century Sean Reilig (Old Graveyard). This was undertaken after our group studied and noted the links between the Blake Archive and the families buried within the graveyard. This project was a community effort to initially tidy up the overgrown graveyard followed by grant funding from the office of the Taoiseach to aid in the process of graveyard recording and mapping. This project data was put online, thanks to our ICAN membership, which has also led to overseas interest. The Hinde Family from Tennessee, amongst several examples, visited their family plot after finding their name on the online census archive.

The Sean Reilig mapping project took place beside Moycullen Castle where Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh, the renowned 17th century historian and scholar, whom our society was named after, was born. The church within the graveyard was under the patronage of the O'Flaherty family. Our society marked the tercentenary of his death in 2018 with an award winning year of projects and events "The Year of O'Flaherty" with key content placed online.

The society also published a childrens tri-lingual book *Ruaidhrí's Story How Moycullen Got Its Name*. This book tells the mythological story of how Moycullen got its name as told by Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh. The book is based around the area containing Moycullen Castle and the Sean Reilig.



CAHG Award Presentation in Glasgow.
L-R: Dr Nick Barratt (Sticks Research Agency - Conference Sponsor), Averil Staunton (Ballinrobe Heritage), Hazel Morrison (Moycullen Heritage - Award Winners), Lorna Elms (Irish Community Archive Network and National Museum of Ireland Countrylife), Jane Golding (CAHG Chair).

The book is now a double award winning publication after Moycullen Heritage was awarded a Cathaoirleach's Award for "Heritage Publication" in May 2019 and most recently for the "Most Impactful Involvement in a Heritage Project by Young People" prize at prestigious Community Archives & Heritage Group (CAHG) Awards in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on the 10th July 2019. The CAHG awards showcased the work of community groups throughout Britain and Ireland. Judges commented that "[w]e were deeply impressed at such innovative and deliberate efforts to engage with wider communities and, particularly, in the way Moycullen Heritage engaged young people and schools and the model it has created that others may use."

The book is available for sale on our website and to date has sold copies to our diaspora in the USA, UK and Australia as well as throughout Ireland. These

awards acknowledge that small groups can make a big difference.

Moycullen Heritage is a small voluntary group with no permanent building to call our own, hence, membership of ICAN and Galway Community Heritage and use of their platform has made our group archives and content available worldwide as well as providing a safe repository for storage, including the Blake Archive.

This article has highlighted that there is an opportunity to search out gems of archives still out there that the larger repositories don't hold and sometimes it takes small voluntary groups to have them recorded and brought to the world. In turn these archives can become catalysts for other positive projects within communities including engaging the diaspora.

References:

Blake, Martin Joseph: *Blake Family Records 1300-1600*, London, Stock 1902.

Analecta Hibernica No. 14 by the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

Moycullen Heritage, Fr. Blake Census https://moycullen.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/uncategorized/blake-census.

One Case at a Time: Tips and Thoughts on Effectively Displaying Archival Documents

Zoë Reid
Senior Conservator/Collection Care, National Archives of Ireland

For the past few years visitors to the National Archives have been greeted with a modest display of original documents in the front reception hall. These are often highlights from the many collections held in the repository stores. Documents are changed on a monthly rotation, so even regular visitors are treated to new archives of interest, and no one document is on display for a prolonged period of time.

This year, 2019 marks the centenary of the founding of the Irish diplomatic service, and the curatorial selection has been handed over to the historians working on the Documents on Irish Foreign Policy project. 'This is a project that aims to make the history of Irish foreign policy accessible to all and promotes public engagement with the history of Ireland's international relations. DIFP is a partnership project of the Royal Irish Academy, the National Archives and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.'[1]

Topics were chosen by the historians and a plan mapped out for the year; the first monthly mini-exhibition started with a selection of documents relating to the foreign policy of the first Dáil Éireann in 1919-21. Joseph P. Walshe (1886–1956), a senior civil servant who has been called the founding father of the post-independence Irish diplomatic service, was the focus of February's display. In March attention was on the St Patrick's Day celebrations in 1962 in Lagos, hosted by Eammon Kennedy, the first Irish Ambassador to Nigeria. The file also included some original shamrock, which was digitised but not put on display, as the exposure to light would have caused significant fading.

Documents relating to Ireland's application in 1923 to join the League of Nations 1923 [displayed in April]; the history of Iveagh House as a home for the department [on display in May] Ireland and the D-Day landings [on display in June]. Irish humanitarian aid after the Second World War was highlighted in July and the August display draws attention to the immediate response of the Jack Lynch government to beginning of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Conservation at the ready!

Every month a new selection of documents, which give a narrative to the chosen topic arrive in the conservation workroom. An itemised list is drawn up of the files and the documents and letters which are to be digitised and displayed.

A strict and well established workflow is followed to ensure that the required amount of conservation preparation is carried out before digitisation and the documents go on display, and to keep track of everything.

The documents to be displayed are marked with a temporary paper slip and paper clip. The selected pages are removed and a brightly coloured A4 page is put in its place on the file and a description of the page written on it. The pink or yellow sheet is useful to be able to spot quickly where a page is meant to go in when the document is to be returned to its correct position within the file! The document is surface cleaned and repaired as required. If there are creases or folds, the documents are lightly humidified with the ultrasonic humidifier for about 8 minutes, before being placed between blotters and boards and pressed flat. Many of the documents have a variety of twentieth-century inks and stamps which can often be very sensitive to water, which can in turn limit treatment options as the use of too much water could make the inks feather and blur into the paper, compromising the text. Repairs are carried out using a very thin tissue with a tapioca paste already applied to one side, after placing the repair strip over the area of damage and moistening with a slightly damp brush the repair tissue is secured by drying with a small heated spatula.

Once the documents are conserved they are sent to the digital imaging unit for scanning; as these documents could potentially be used both in print and web-based formats they are scanned as Tiff at 600 dpi and then reduced to Jpegs for the social media platforms.

Keeping it elegant, but simple.

The documents are then returned to conservation and prepared for display. The single page documents are often on thin paper which would curl if not supported in some way, and because the display changes every month, the method for mounting has to be kept very simple and easy to do. Rather than attach paper hinges to the documents to secure them to the mount board, which can be time-consuming and problematic, a non-adhesive method is used. The document is measured and a support from conservation board is cut, 2 mm larger on all four sides. Mylar strips are cut from a roll 30mm wide and cut long enough to wrap around the board [see image 1].

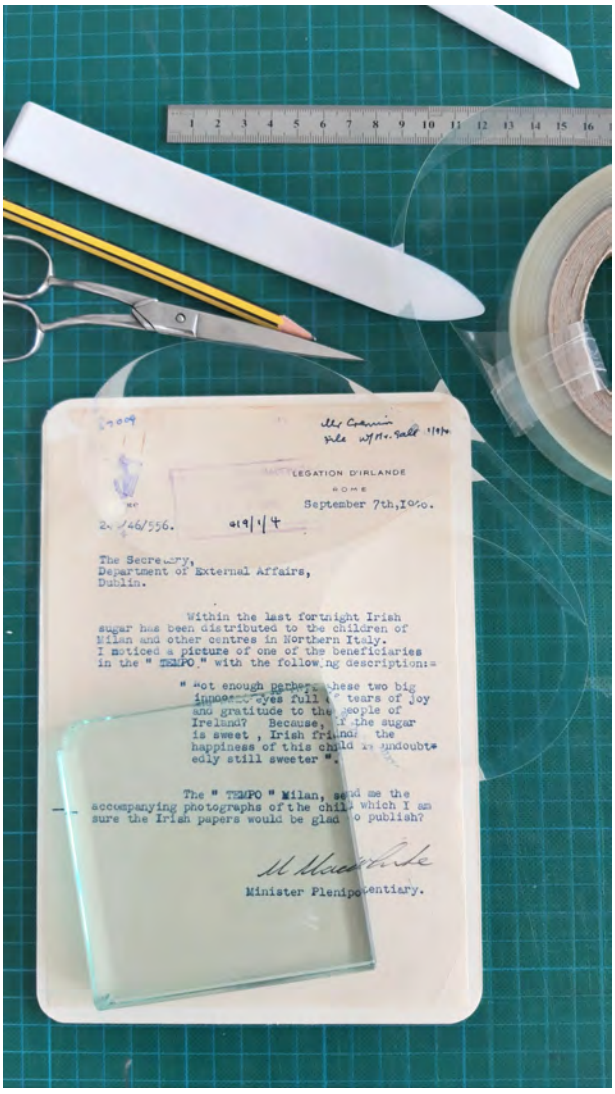


Image 1

The Mylar strips are secured with a small piece of double-sided tape to create a band, and yes, there is sticky tape in the conservation tool kit, but this is the only job it is used for [see image 2]! These bands of Mylar are secure but free moving to allow correct positioning.



Image 2

The Mylar bands are put on the board before the document and then the document can be slid into place on the board [see image 3].

The mount board is cut 1-2 mm larger than the document, to ensure that the Mylar band will hold the document secure but not cut into the pages because they are rubbing the edge.

For photographs, Mylar V-hinges are used, again attached to the board with a small amount of double sided tape and positioned in each corner. These are just a homemade version of photographic corners [see image 4].

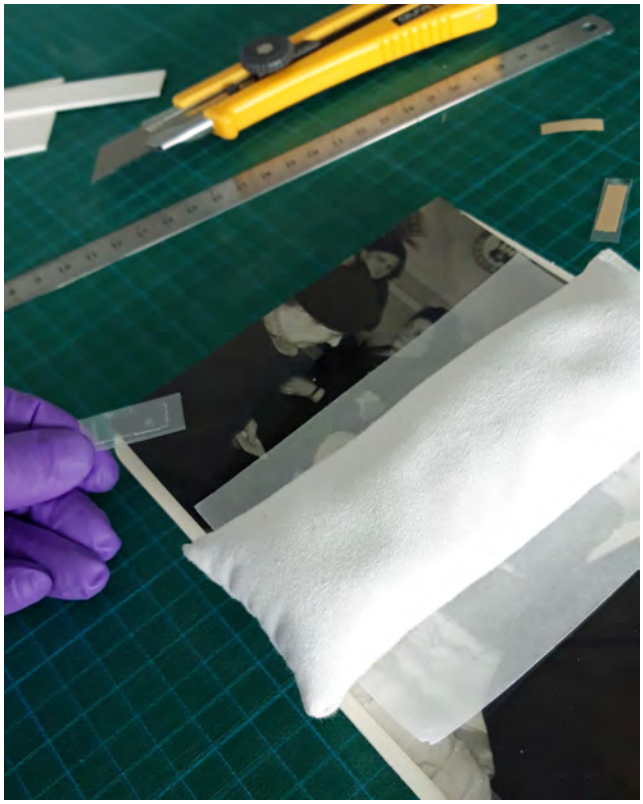


Image 3

The text labels are printed on 120gsm cream lightweight card than can go through the desk printed and trimmed to size. The text for labels needs to be kept short and at the same time effectively communicate the information to the audience. The V&A have an excellent 10 point guide to writing labels on their website, which is essential reading for anyone set with this task.[2]



Image 4

Also printing the labels in a clear font such as Calibri works well, for both the heading (14 point) and the text (12 point) [see image 5].

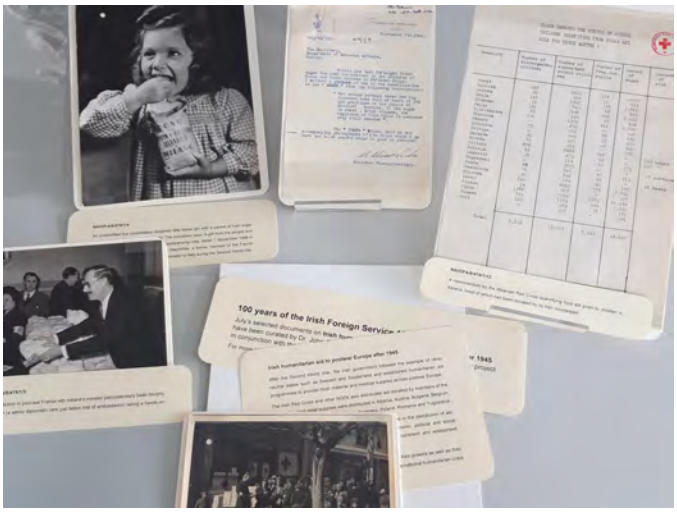


Image 5

Placing the documents on display also takes a bit of consideration as well; overcrowding of the display case can be distracting. It is better to attract attention with three or four well-placed documents and clear text explaining their historical significance, rather than having a display case so crowded with documents. Too many items and it is hard for the onlooker to see anything clearly at all.

The advantage of having the online exhibition on the website is, that if not everything fits in the case the other documents can be highlighted or shared on social media such as Twitter and Instagram. Also the same text can be used across the various platforms.

There are also two display cases in the lobby on the fifth floor of the National Archives, outside the reading room, the documents are moved there after being in the limelight on the ground floor. This rotation also means that over the course of the year, each set of documents has been on display for 12 weeks, which is within recommended guidelines for light exposure on original copies.

So why don't you call in to the National Archives over the reminder of the year to see what each month brings or check our Document of the Month out online.[3] Also don't forget to follow Twitter (@NARIreland & @NAIConservator) and Instagram (narireland & zoe_reid_) for updates and behind the scenes news.

1. https://www.ria.ie/research-projects/documents-irish-foreign-policy
2. http://www.vam.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/238077/Gallery-Text-at-the-V-and-A-Ten-Point-Guide-Aug-2013.pdf
3. https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/july-document-month/

New Digitisation Strategy Steering Group and Outreach Room at the Registry of Deeds

Ellen Murphy
Archives Manager, Property Registration Authority of Ireland



Registry of Deeds, King's Inns, Dublin.
Image: Courtesy Liz D'Arcy

Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Steering Group

The inaugural meeting of the Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Steering Group was held on 28 June 2019 in the newly refurbished Outreach Room at the Registry of Deeds, Henrietta Street, Dublin 1.



L-R: Dr. Michael Willis (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland), Shane Tierney (Registry of Deeds Northern Ireland), Tadgh O'Shea (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht), Liz Pope (Chief Executive, PRA), Hazel Menton (National Archives of Ireland), Mark Service (Registry of Deeds Northern Ireland), Jean Murray (Human Resources Manager, PRA), Aidan Timmins (Compliance Manager, PRA), Aileen McHugh (Head of Operations, PRA)

The records held by the Registry of Deeds are a comprehensive source of property transactions in Ireland from 1708 to present day, and a unique source of information for family, local, social and economic historians. The Property Registration Authority has a long term vision to make the historical records of the Registry of Deeds available and discoverable online for research and the enjoyment of all. This project aligns with the strategic goals in its Statement of Strategy 2019-2021 *Integrity and Innovation*.

The Steering Group comprises internal PRA staff and PRA Authority Member Helen Murray O'Connor, as well as external nominees from government departments, institutions, key user groups and professional bodies from the entire island of Ireland. The attendees have a wealth of experience in the fields of archives, digitisation, digital preservation, conservation, and historical research, and a shared archival interest in protecting and promoting Ireland's cultural heritage.



L-R: Dr. Eoin Kinsella, (Association of Professional Historians), Fiona Fitzsimons, (Association of Professional Genealogists), Padraig Laffan, (Federation of Local History Societies), Ellen Murphy (PRA Archives Manager) Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú (Trinity College Dublin), Dr. David Brown (Trinity Collge Dublin), Dr. Natalie Harrower (Digital Repository of Ireland), Dr. John McCafferty Irish Manuscript Commission, John Grenham (Association of Accredited Genealogists)

The meeting opened with a warm welcome by Liz Pope CEO of Property Registration Authority who gave an overview of governance and legislative framework of the Property Registration Authority. Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú and Dr. David Brown from Trinity College Dublin then spoke about the global significance of the Registry of Deeds records and how the transcription software in use in the Beyond 2022 project had the potential to be used effectively on certain categories of records held at Registry of Deeds. Ellen Murphy, Archives Manager made the final presentation which summarised the different collections held at Registry of Deeds, their historical and cultural value to Irish state, and the rich informational content which would be unlocked by digitisation.



L-R: Liz Pope (Chief Executive, PRA), (Ciarán Mulhall, ICT Operations, Infrastructure and Security Manager, PRA), Louise Purcell , Department Housing and Local Government, Margot Dunne , Department of Public Reform and Expenditure, James O'Boyle (Financial Controller, PRA)

The floor was then open to discussion and Steering Group members offered expert advice on the next steps forward. Given that the Registry of Deeds holds over 5 million memorial records and 17,000 bound volumes, the key guidance centred on establishing priorities for digitisation by identifying and consulting with all stakeholders and user groups and the necessity of identifying funding and collaborative partners.

The Property Registration Authority are aware that the challenges of embarking on a digitisation project of this scale and extent are immense. We are very grateful for the goodwill and generosity of the Steering Group members for their support and advice as we begin the process of designing, developing and initiating a sustainable best practice digitisation strategy

We will continue to keep the archives community informed as this exciting journey evolves.

New Outreach Room at Registry of Deeds

The Property Registration Authority is pleased to announce the completion of a joint project between Corporate Services, ICT and Archive Services sections to develop a new outreach room at the Registry of Deeds, Henrietta Street, Dublin 1.



Outreach Room at Registry of Deeds

The room has excellent ICT facilities for presentations and speakers, and a flexible layout which can host up to sixty people lecture style and twenty people for class-room or board room settings. It is intended to use the space for hosting visiting groups and organising high quality

education and outreach events onsite.

The overall aim of the outreach programming is to encourage use of Registry of Deeds collections, increase visits, and create greater public awareness of both Registry of Deeds and wider Property Registration Authority functions.

For Autumn 2019, a busy program of talks, tours, seminars and workshops have been scheduled to co-inside with national cultural heritage programming and festivals such as Heritage Week, Culture Night, Open House, Festival of History and of course Explore Your Archive. Full details of each event and booking requirements will be advertised via our twitter account @PRA_Ireland and published at https://www.prai.ie/registry-of-deeds-archive-services-and-heritage-section/. Alternatively email us at heritage@prai.ie to be added to our events mailing list.