Archives & Records Association
Cumann Cartlann agus Taifead
Ireland/Éire

Spring 2019 Newsletter

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A Word from the Chair

Dear Member,

Welcome to the spring 2019 newsletter.

Firstly, thanks you to all members who attended our recent training event which was held in March. The event consisted of two presentation on digital preservation from Kieran O'Leary, Data and Systems Manager at the Irish Film Institute, and Anja Mahler, Digital Archivist at the Digital Repository of Ireland. We also had a presentation from Chris Sheridan, Head of Professional Standards and Development at ARA on the updated Professional Development Programme. A big thanks to Kieran, Anja and Chris.

Nominations are now open for the ARA Archive Volunteering Award. Nominations for this award which celebrates the role of volunteers in the archive sector, are open to all archives services in the UK and Ireland. Details of the nomination process are available inside this issue.

The Annual General Meeting of ARA Ireland was held following the training event on March 21st. A big thank you to all who attended. I would like to express my gratitude to all committee members for their hard work and commitment over the past year. A special thank you to the outgoing committee members Pearl Quinn, Sarah Gallagher and Paul Heffernan. I would also like to welcome out two new committee members Fionnuala Parfrey who will be taking over the training officer role and Lisa Murphy, the Section for New Professionals Representative.

Slán agus beannacht,
Gerard Byrne, ARA Ireland Chair.

The Research Data Alliance and Data Opportunities for Libraries and Archives

Take-aways from the public lecture with the same title by Hilary Hanahoe, Secretary General Research Data Alliance[1]

Timea Biro, Project Manager, Digital Repository of Ireland

The first in a series of 8 “Meet the Experts” talks organised by the RDA in Ireland national node was held on January 14th 2019 at the National Library of Ireland. Focused on bringing to the stage national and international speakers to present topics focused on research data and Open Science, of relevance and interest to different audiences, the series launched with the public lecture given by Hilary Hanahoe, Research Data Alliance Secretary General. The goal of talk was to highlight how the Research Data Alliance supports the work of the libraries, librarians, archivists and information professionals in the current evolving context defined by the emergence of data intensive science and the extension of data management mandates to traditional libraries.



Hilary Hanahoe, RDA Secretary General opens the RDA Ireland “Meet the Experts” series

The Research Data Alliance (RDA) has a very ambitious **vision: “Researchers and innovators openly sharing data across technologies, disciplines, and countries to address the grand challenges of society”**. At its core it strives to support many different stakeholders and data professionals to find solutions to enabling FAIR (and not only) data across technologies, across disciplines and across countries. Why? Simply because the grand challenges of society are everybody’s challenges and being able to find, access, interoperate, reuse research data offers limitless possibilities to everyone.

In more practical terms the RDA aims to further research innovation, efficiency and reproducibility by identifying and facilitating socio-technical “bridges” which often translate into best practices and standards for research data, tools and infrastructure that advance solutions to society’s Grand Challenges and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

RDA has a grass-roots, inclusive approach covering all data lifecycle stages, engaging data producers, users and stewards, addressing data exchange, processing, and storage. It is a neutral social platform where international research data experts meet to exchange views and to agree on topics including social hurdles on data sharing, education and training challenges, data management plans and certification of data repositories, disciplinary and interdisciplinary interoperability, as well as technological aspects.

What are the main RDA problem solving & discussion mechanisms?

Since 2013, RDA members, volunteers from across the globe, have set up Working & Interest groups to resolve and discuss specific research data management challenges. Working Groups develop and implement data infrastructure, e.g. tools, policy, practices & products. Interest groups focus on solving a specific data sharing problem and identifying what kind of infrastructure needs to be built.

Navigating the RDA groups is challenging. Work is being done on making the RDA world and vibrant "heart" or groups more comprehensible. At the moment, six different "loose" categories are being used to cluster groups: base infrastructure, community needs, data Stewardship and services, domain science, partnership groups, reference and sharing. A large number of groups focused on domain science areas (28 at the moment) and data stewardship and services (23 groups currently), in fact the latter category is where the Libraries for Research Data Interest Group and related ones are classified. A list of the groups under these classifications is included in the RDA Statistics slides.[2]

Who are the international experts that make up the RDA and where do Librarians, Archivists & Information Professionals fit into the RDA?

RDA is an international organisation, it is unique in its bottom up approach, its openness and its collaborative nature. Currently there are 7,700 members of RDA from 137 countries across the globe. With over 50% of them from Europe. Based on the statistics available online at https://rd-alliance.org/about-rda/who-rda.html, generated from the member self-classification, the type of organisation that the community members mainly represent are Academia & Research (over 67%) with government and public services at 14%.



RDA across the globe statistics

Library and information service professionals within RDA are one of the largest single stakeholder groups in the community, currently counting over 12% of the members[3] (2nd only to Researchers). There are many on-going activities in RDA of interest to libraries and their staff, and it is clear that libraries are taking the initiative in addressing the technical and social infrastructure needed to enable and sustain open research.

Benefits of engaging with RDA:

- Get involved in an enabling organisation offering a global, open, neutral, experienced and independent forum for librarians to interact with data professionals, researchers, ICT experts and academics;

- Partner with experts from across the globe to augment the library community and corresponding data interoperability solutions;

- Develop strategic, collaborative relationships and partnerships with data producing stakeholders (researchers, data scientists, computer scientists etc.) across various domains;

- Engage in institution-wide advocacy processes for development of institutional and national technical and human infrastructures, legal frameworks, training programmes and policies for data stewardship.

- Engage in an international forum that facilitates the harmonisation, integration and/or implementation of existing standards and methods for data interoperability;

- Adopt RDA recommendations and outputs to support the strategic aims of libraries in relation to research data management, curation, preservation and publication;

- Get actively involved in a unique forum for creating use cases and a 'working space' for library and information professionals;

- Discover and engage in opportunities and networks for data management skills development and expertise.

The opportunities above can be of great benefit and interest especially to the institutions or organisations, but there are also many benefits for individuals, as professionals. Archivists, information service professionals and librarians are tasked with acquiring, appraising, arranging, managing, preserving and making accessible research material, both digital and analogue.

As the global community works towards the harmonisation of research data management, these professionals have the necessary skills and expertise which can contribute greatly to the development of best practices and RDA can be a vehicle for archivists, information service professionals and librarians to:

- Gain greater experience and expertise in data management and data science regardless of whether one is a student, early or seasoned career professional;

- Enhance the quality and effectiveness of personal work and activities;

- Improve their competitive advantage professionally and position themselves for international leadership within the broader research and data community;

- Access an extraordinary network of international colleagues and organisations with a broad set of experiences, perspectives, practices, and intellectual frameworks relevant to data-driven innovation.

What is the benefit to RDA in encouraging and nurturing the involvement of libraries and information service institutions in its activities?

RDA is a multi-disciplinary and cross-domain global initiative, offering an all-encompassing community of stakeholders. As the global community works towards the harmonisation of research data management, library professionals have skills and expertise which can contribute greatly to the development of best practices. Libraries offer significant contributions to the Research Data Alliance by:

- Augmenting and enriching the worldwide network of international data experts and information professionals to address data challenges via RDA groups;

- Contributing to the development and maintenance of high-quality, practical solutions for data interoperability in libraries across the globe, as well as addressing real-world challenges when creating and shaping RDA’s future Recommendations;

- Acting as the bridge and communication hub for all activities surrounding the data creation and publication lifecycle;

- Acting as RDA adopters who amplify, direct, and promote RDA Recommendations for the greatest effect and utility in libraries.

Proof of the value of engagement is the fact that the Libraries for Research Data Interest Group[4] is one of the largest Interest groups in RDA with over 440 members. It objectives are far reaching but closely tailored to the community needs and the emerging role of libraries in the new research data landscape:

- Define organizational and service models to support RDM in research libraries

- Promote best practices and interoperability of library infrastructures with domain repositories and other RDM initiatives.

- Develop strategies for embedding data management services at academic and research institutions

- Identify sustainable organisational business models for libraries in support of RDM

- Foster the adoption of data-related skills into information literacy instruction for scholars and librarians

- Act as a conduit to bring together the activities of different regional library groups including IFLA, LIBER, ARL, CARL, etc.

- Develop advocacy and outreach material for RDM in the research and education communities, in particular with university administrators

The Libraries for Research Data IG is also one of the group that has produced one of the most widely adopted RDA Outputs, the 23 Things for Research Data Libraries[5]: a useful practical overview to navigate the sea of free, online resources and tools that can be used to incorporate research data management into the practice of librarianship. The 23 things are clustered into 10 “pillars”, namely: Learning Resources, Data Reference & Outreach, Data Management Plans, Data Literacy, Metadata, Citing data, Data Licensing & Privacy, Data Preservation, Data Repositories, Communities of Practice. The practical guide is a non-exhaustive, non-comprehensive list of research data management resources, it should be viewed as a window into the information available online. It is currently available in 12 languages, reflecting the wide interest in this practical overview.

Another activity that might be of interest to the community is the work that RDA is doing in support of Open Science and Open Data. What is its relationship to the European Open Science Cloud, NIH Data Commons and other? What about the FAIR concept?

Concepts or words that come to mind when thinking of these initiatives and open science and open data in general, are

- Allowing collaborative and collective work

- Ensuring that scientific research, data and dissemination accessible to all levels of society (amateur & professional)

- Safeguarding that knowledge is transparent and accessible and shared and developed through collaborative networks

- RDA supports the design and development of solutions and best practices that support the realisation of these fundamental aspects, part of the principles of Open Science.

RDA is one of the MANY organisations that play a key role in supporting the EOSC and working together in Europe and internationally for the benefit of the EOSC users. The working and interest group mechanism is one of the ways in which this is pragmatically supported. To see the

work of RDA related to Open Science, FAIR, the EOSC and other similar international efforts visit the full list of over 100 RDA groups here https://rd-alliance.org/groups.

How to get involved?

There are many facets to RDA and just as MANY ways to get involved. The simplest way is by joining the RDA as an individual member. Registration is free and open to all at https://rd-alliance.org/user/register.



Hilary Hanahoe, RDA Secretary General, and Sandra Collins, NLI Director and RDA Ireland node Coordinator

Another way of connecting with RDA is by interacting on a local or national level and in this case joining the RDA in Ireland group at https://rd-alliance.org/groups/rda-ireland. The Irish node of RDA is coordinated by the National Library of Ireland[6] and supported by the Digital Repository of Ireland[7]. By joining (once you have registered as a member of RDA) you will be subscribed to the group distribution list and receive updates and insights to data related matters in Ireland that the group publicises. The node aims to act as a forum with members sharing and receiving news and insights from colleagues, with updates disseminated not only within the RDA in Ireland group but also to the global community.

RDA Europe[8], the European plug-in into the RDA provides funding through various programmes that support the engagement of practitioners (Early Career, Expert and Ambassador grants) as well as organisations (Adoption Grants). Make sure you check the options available at https://grants.rd-alliance.org/.

The emergence of data intensive science and data management mandates extended to traditional libraries mean that the challenges faced by libraries, and in particular librarians, archivists and information service professionals, in relation to digital data and digital research are quite significant. By engaging with the Research Data Alliance community, and taking advantage of the opportunities offered at national and regional level, the hope is that librarians, archivists, information professionals and their organizations can find the support and the social and technical solutions to deal with some of those challenges.

For more information visit:

1. RDA and Librarianship, Archival Science and Information Science - https://www.rd-alliance.org/rda-disciplines/rda-and-librarianship-archival-science-and-information-science

2. Value of RDA to Libraries (more organisational perspective) - https://www.rd-alliance.org/value-research-data-alliance-libraries

For RDA queries contact enquiries[at]rd-alliance.org.

1. Presentation and detailed notes available at https://rd-alliance.org/research-data-alliance-and-data-opportunities-libraries-public-lecture-hilary-hanahoe-14-january

2. https://www.rd-alliance.org/about-rda

3. 893 RDA members classify themselves as Librarians, see stats at https://www.rd-alliance.org/about-rda/who-rda.html

4. https://rd-alliance.org/groups/libraries-research-data.html

5. https://rd-alliance.org/group/libraries-research-data-ig/outcomes/23-things-libraries-research-data-supporting-output

6. https://www.nli.ie/

7. https://www.dri.ie/

8. https://rd-alliance.org/rda-europe

ARA Archive Volunteering Award for 2019

Sally Bevan, ARA Volunteering Awards Administrator

Do you want peer recognition for excellence? Do you need evidence to show your effective engagement with volunteers? If so, why not nominate your archive service for the ARA Archive Volunteering Award?

Winners will have a national platform to celebrate their volunteers' contribution to the service and gain publicity for their archive's role in supporting individuals and community through volunteering programmes.

2018 Award Winner was **'Ancestors at Sea'**, Lancashire Archives' project to engage new volunteers to create a free, online name-rich index of maritime records.



The 2018 ARA Archive Volunteering Award winner: Lacashire Archives' project, 'Ancestors at Sea'.

The judges said:

"'Ancestors at Sea' was the clear winner in an outstanding field. The new index gives details of over 70,000 seamen from Lancashire, the UK and Ireland and includes a significant number of European and international sailors, too. This is a first-class example of a local project with wider national and international relevance that could not have taken place without the strong support of partners and the commitment of the 17 volunteers that took part, generously giving over 2,300 hours of their time. We were particularly impressed that the volunteers were given challenging roles, for example working on a large number of documents and many with difficult handwriting, as well as being trained (and well managed) by the professional staff at Lancashire Archives."



One of the volunteers contributing to Lacashire Archives' award winning project, 'Ancestors at Sea'.

The Archives and Records Association seeks to celebrate the role of volunteers in supporting archive services, and to collect good practice case studies to inform the wider sector. This award is a

key strand of the work of ARA's Volunteering in Archives, Action Plan, bringing to life the recommendations the ARA report Managing Volunteering in Archives. The award is also supported by The National Archives, the Welsh Government's Museums Archives and Libraries Division, and the Scottish Council on Archives.



Some of the volunteers contributing to Lacashire Archives' award winning project, 'Ancestors at Sea'.

This award is open to archives across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Awards will be publicised widely throughout and beyond the sector.

We welcome nominations for the award. A short nomination form is available from the ARA website http://www.archives.org.uk/careers/volunteering/volunteering-awards.html and organisations may nominate projects, or ongoing volunteer programmes, that ran during 2018/2019.

Nominations will be assessed against three key outcomes:

A) Impact on volunteers

B) Impact on service

C) Wider impact

Completed nomination forms need to be returned to volunteeringaward@archives.org.uk by the end of National Volunteers Week – **7 June 2019**.

If you have any queries about the award please contact Sally Bevan, Volunteering Awards Administrator, (020 7332 3820) or via volunteeringaward@archives.org.uk

Earth, Water and Stone: The Construction of the Silent Valley Reservoir

Brett Irwin, Archivist, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland



The landscape on fire; work underway on the massive and ambitious project

With the rapid expansion of the industrial city of Belfast at the turn of the 20th century, the existing water supply was becoming inadequate. Something had to be done if the city could continue to grow and supply clean water for its increasing population and booming rope works, linen and shipbuilding industries.

Civil engineer, Luke McCassey, was tasked with finding a source of water large enough to supply the city with its water needs. A site deep in the Mourne Mountains in County Down was chosen due to the amount of rainfall and the cleanliness of the water. An engineering plan was devised and put onto three stages.

Stage one was to divert water from the Annalong and Kilkeel river to a reservoir outside Belfast.

Stage two was to lay new pipes and construct a storage reservoir across the Kilkeel River. This could supply the city with 10 million gallons of water per day. This would be known as the Silent Valley Reservoir.

The final stage was to build a huge storage reservoir to retain water from the Annalong River although this final part of the grand project was not completed until 1951 and is now known as the Ben Crom Reservoir.

This plan would create a total supply capacity of 30 million gallons of water every day.

On the 1st October 1923 Lord Carson formally started the ambitious project by digging up the first sod of earth. A railway had to be constructed between Annalong Harbour and the Silent Valley site. This was a distance of 4.5 miles and was essential to move all the heavy machinery needed. It is estimated that the train carried over one million tonnes of material and the hundreds of workmen involved throughout the life of the project. A settlement emerged accommodating the workmen and engineers. This was known as ‘Watertown’ and had its own power station, shops, canteens, hospital, police station and a cinema. Interestingly, the power station provided the first electric street lighting in Ireland.



Tough and dangerous working conditions in the trench

One of the major engineering challenges was to dig a 212 feet trench to stop the risk of the water pressure uplifting and seeping out of the reservoir. This was very demanding work due to the subsoil being wet silt and the solid bedrock being at a depth of over 200 feet. An engineering innovation of that time was to dig the trenches using compressed air. Deep shafts of cast iron were sunk into the ground. The water was then pumped out through the shafts from the silt. This highly dangerous work even required workers' to decompress in an air lock chamber known as 'The Gazoon'. The men had to go through gradual compression before entering the air shafts and de-compression when leaving.



Reshaping the mountains

Above the trenches a watertight barrier of clay was layered to prevent leakage. When the trench reached 100ft deep, the walls had to be supported by special cast iron segmental plates and then filled with concrete to stabilise the trench. All this work was done by hand and it is estimated that on some days a 100 tonnes of concrete was mixed and poured.

The construction of the reservoir was completed in the autumn of 1932. Today, the reservoir still pumps water to the city of Belfast through a 44 mile pipeline. It is surrounded by the Mourne Wall and mountains and has the appearance of a beautiful and peaceful mountain lake.

What about the name Silent Valley? The continuous blasting noise associated with the massive construction project is said to have driven all the birdlife away with only an eerie silence lingering over the valley. It also must be remembered that many workmen lost their lives on the project such was the dangerous nature of the work.



The decompression chamber- *The Gazoon*

The Sir Anthony Campbell papers consists mainly of photographs relating to various construction contracts undertaken by the Belfast construction and civil engineering firm McLaughlin and Harvey. The business was established in 1853 between Henry McLaughlin and William Harvey. Projects have included the Silent Valley Reservoir project, Annalong, Co. Down, Slipway 14 at Harland and Wolff shipbuilders, Belfast, Barnett's grain silo, Belfast, and the Shannon hydroelectric scheme in Ardnacrushna, Co. Clare. The company continues to this day. The collection also includes some technical reports relating to the Silent Valley reservoir project and some publications relating to the firm.

All archival material used with permission of the

Deputy Keeper of Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. The archive photographs can be viewed in PRONI using the reference number D4560/1.



The Silent Valley today (image courtesy of Peter Williamson)

Dublin City Council continues to mark the Decade of Commemorations

Mary Clark, Dublin City Archivist



Na Fianna Eireann banner at Dublin City Hall

Having successfully completed its commemoration of the centenary of the First World War at the end of 2018, Dublin City Council returned to pay tribute to the Irish Revolution. In the first four months of 2019, this was focused on the Mansion House, where the First Dáil was convened in the Round Room on 21 January 1919. A week of celebrations was held, and the central event was a joint meeting of the Dáil and Seanad in the Round Room on 21 January 2019, which was addressed by President Michael D. Higgins. Mindful that most of the proceedings of the First Dáil were conducted in Irish, the President delivered his address mainly in that language. Meanwhile, descendants of TDs from the First Dáil were present, a tangible link to the centenary.

Lord Mayor Nial Ring also opened the Mansion House to the people for a long week-end, 18-20 January and over five thousand people took the opportunity to visit the mayoral residence and of course the Round Room. Banners in each room explained its link with the Irish Revolution; the Lord Mayor's Ceremonial Chair was on display, along with the 17th century President's Chair from the Confederation of Kilkenny; and standing in the forecourt was the magnificent Lord Mayor's Coach – a rare opportunity for people to see it close up. The weekend was so successful that it was repeated on 5-7 April 2019.

Dublin City Library & Archive also commemorated the Irish Revolution. City Archivist Mary Clark arranged for the April series of City Hall Lunch-time lectures to focus on Irish Women and the Irish Revolution. The first speaker, Constance Cassidy, is the co-owner of Lissadell House in Co. Sligo and most appropriately her topic was 'Countess Markievicz: rebel and parliamentarian'. A very large crowd turned out for this – Dubliners have adopted Constance Markievicz as one of their own – witness the number of statues of her dotted across the city - and her Fianna Eireann banner is now on display in the City Hall Exhibition Centre. The second speaker, Dr Margarita Cappock, spoke about 'Sarah Cecilia Harrison – artist and social campaigner' who in 1912 was the first woman elected to Dublin City Council – and

attended meetings in the very Council Chamber where the lectures take place. It is sobering to realize that although Councillor Harrison had a vote in local elections, as a woman she was precluded from voting in parliamentary elections. As an artist, her output was mainly devoted to portraiture, and she also campaigned vigorously for an appropriate gallery for the Hugh Lane collection. Other talks in the series will include Helen Litton speaking about her great-aunt Caitlín Bean Uí Chléirigh, who was the widow of 1916 Signatory Thomas J. Clarke and later became the first woman Lord Mayor of Dublin (16 April); Anthony Jordan will talk on 'Maud Gonne's Men: I had forgiven enough that had forgiven old age' (23 April) ; while the last speaker, Dr James Curry, will tell 'The Story of Rosie Hackett' (30 April).



Author Micheal Mac Donncha with book and mayoral arms
Photograph by Pol O Duibhir

Working with the author, Íar-Ármhéara Mícheál Mac Donncha, the City Archivist helped to prepare his book for publication by Dublin City Council, subvented by the DCC Decade of Commemorations Committee. 'The Mansion House and the Irish Revolution/Teach an Ardmhéara agus Réabhlóid na hÉireann' is our first history in Irish and English, and posed some technical issues around the necessity to have both languages treated equally. We decided to 'flip' the book so that effectively it has two front covers and no back cover (we also had a bar-code on each cover – I was assured that was too much!). The book is hard-back with dust-jacket and we decided to put the English-language text on one flap with the Irish-language text on the other. But we reneged on one point. Strictly speaking, we should have had exactly the same illustrations in both texts – but as we had quite a range of images it seemed a pity not to use them all – and so there are different images in both texts.

The author notes: 'Having researched this book I realised that the Mansion House was even more central to the events of 1912 to 1923 than I had suspected.. And it was seen as such at the time. People looked to it as a place where debate took place and ideas and leadership emerged. For example, I had not been aware that, in common with many ordinary homes throughout Ireland, the Mansion House was raided and damaged on several occasions by British crown forces during the War of Independence.'

That the First Dáil held its inaugural meeting in the Round Room on 21 January 1919 is well-known but so many more significant events also took place in the Mansion House. When the Irish political prisoners were released in 1917 it was to the Mansion House that they marched; in 1918 the Mansion House was the centre of resistance to the

British Government's attempt to force conscription on Ireland; and the Truce between the IRA and the British forces, which ended the War of Independence in July 1921, was signed in the Mansion House. And supporting this was the low-key figure of Laurence O'Neill, an independent nationalist and Lord Mayor of Dublin from 1917 to 1924, whose strategy of supporting the cause of Irish freedom, while still keeping an eye on Dublin Castle, enabled the mayoral residence to house so many republican events.



Lord Mayor Nial Ring with author Micheal Mac Donncha
Photograph by Pol O Duibhir

Lord Mayor Nial Ring launched the book in the Mansion House on 11 April 2019 and was impressed by a quotation from Laurence O'Neill, who was speaking in the Mansion House in 1918:

'We are in the freest spot upon earth and from time to time there met within the portals of the Mansion House people of different degrees – socially, politically and perhaps morally. Indeed, on the flag outside might be inscribed the legend that the Mansion House is 'the Home of Civil and Religious Liberty.'

Title: *Teach an Ardmhéara agus Réabhlóid na hÉireann/The Mansion House and the Irish Revolution 1912-1923*

ISBN: 978-0-9500512-0-8

Author: Mícheál Mac Donncha

Publisher: Dublin City Council

Distributor: Four Courts Press

Embedding Archival Collections in the Postgraduate Curriculum at Maynooth University Library

Róisín Berry and Ciara Joyce, Archivists, Maynooth University Library

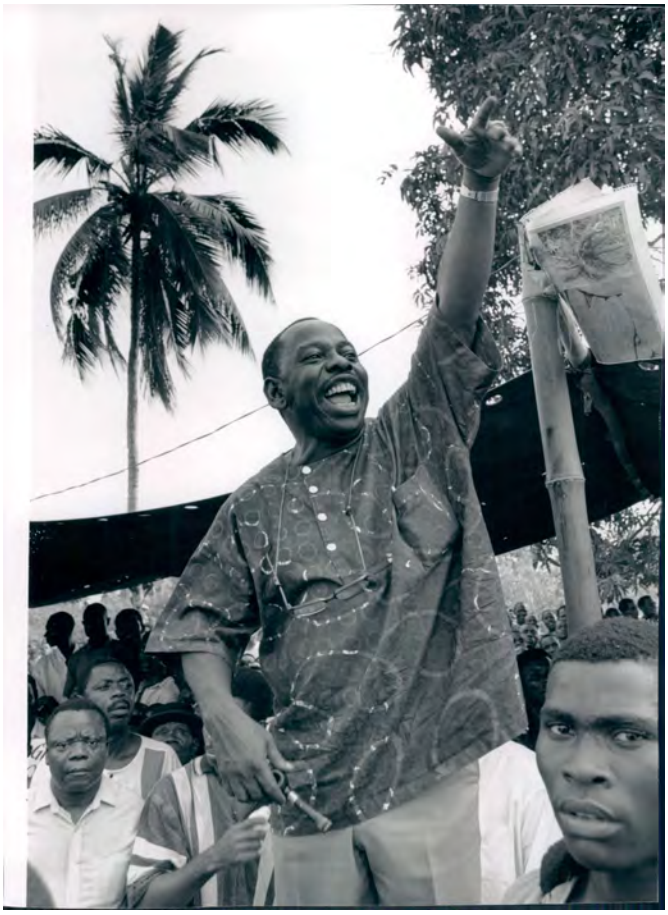
Introduction

The Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive, a collection of death-row correspondence and other material from Nigerian writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa to Irish nun Sister Majella McCarron (OLA), is one of Maynooth University Library's most hard-working collections. Since acquiring the archive in 2011, it has been utilised as part of a wide range of outreach experiences, including seminars, exhibitions (nationally and internationally), blog posts, articles, poetry workshops, school visits, and guided tours. Most recently, the collection was the focus of a workshop delivered as part of the module *Peace, Religion and Diplomacy* offered on both the MA in Mediation and Conflict Intervention and the MA in International Peacebuilding, Security, and Development Practice at Maynooth University (MU).

New approaches to skill acquisition and critical thinking using primary sources are increasingly common across campus and beyond. They present to the Library exciting ways to engage with users, and to the archivists a wonderful opportunity to share their knowledge and love of archival collections to an engaged and enthusiastic audience.

Who Was Ken Saro-Wiwa?

Writer, TV producer, businessman and activist Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa was born on 10 October 1941 in Bori, Ogoni, in what is now Rivers State in Southern Nigeria. He received a scholarship to attend the Government College in Umuahia and went on to study English at the University of Ibadan, graduating with honours in 1966. He took on brief roles as a teacher and graduate assistant before the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War. Saro-Wiwa was appointed Administrator of Bonny province that same year before moving on to focus on his own writing and business interests. He established a publishing company, Saros International, and wrote and produced a popular television series *Basi and Company*.



Ken Saro-Wiwa (from his daughter Noo Saro-Wiwa)

Meeting Sister Majella

Ken Saro-Wiwa was deeply concerned about the level of environmental destruction caused by the oil industry in his homeland in the Niger Delta region of South Eastern Nigeria. He established the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1990 and led a peaceful campaign against the damage wrought by Shell's oil extraction in the area. It was at this point that he first met Sister Majella.



Sister Majella McCarron (from her own collection)

Born in Derrylin in County Fermanagh, Sister Majella joined the Missionary Institute of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA) in 1956. She taught science for over thirty years in Nigeria, having moved there in 1964.

Through her work with the Brussels-based Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN) Sister Majella met Saro-Wiwa. The Network lobbied the European Union on behalf of communities badly affected by European business interests.

The Ogoni Struggle

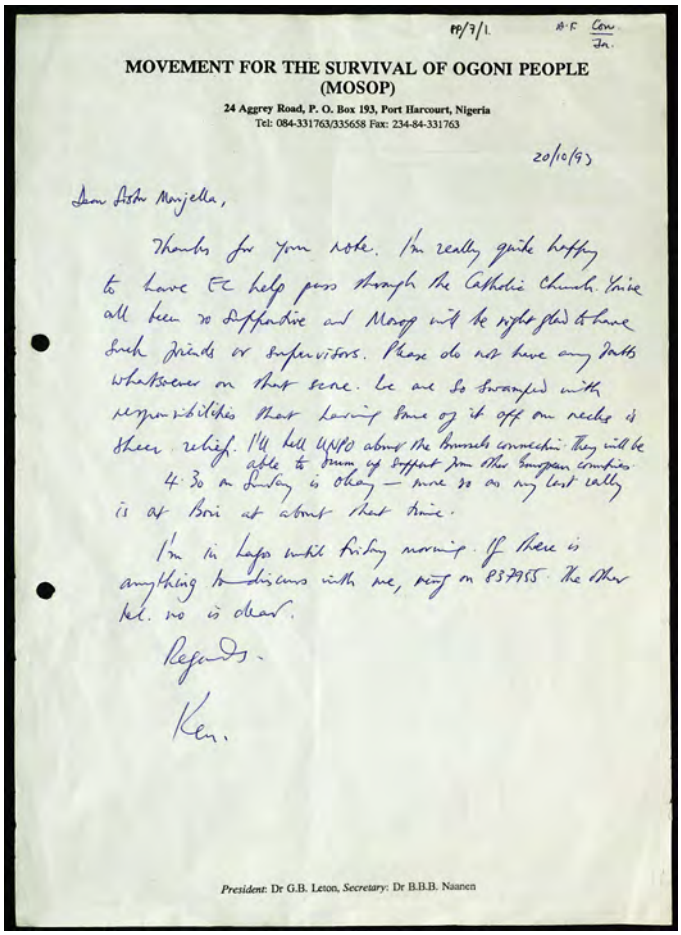
On 4 January 1993, over 300,000 Ogoni people protested in marches across each of the six kingdoms that comprise Ogoniland. Following the marches, the Federal Nigerian Government blockaded Ogoni and the villages were attacked. It is believed that over 800 people met their death, although this was blamed by the government on local ethnic conflict. In May 1994, during this period of unrest, four local chiefs were murdered. Saro-Wiwa was arrested and accused of encouraging the killings. He was held along with a number of others in military detention for nine months without charge. Sister Majella returned home from Nigeria in August 1994 having completed 30 years of work there. She had planned to work on the Northern Ireland process, but instead dedicated her efforts to campaigning tirelessly, with Trócaire, Ogoni Solidarity Ireland and other groups to save the lives of the 'Ogoni Nine' as they became known. During this period she corresponded extensively with Saro-Wiwa, and these letters form the main part of the archive today.

Despite Sister Majella's efforts in Nigeria and Ireland, and an outcry from the international community, Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight colleagues were executed by the Nigerian Federal Government on 10 November 1995.

The Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive

The Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive was donated to MU Library by Sister Majella in November 2011, some

21 years after that first meeting. The archive includes 28 letters to Sister Majella, 27 poems, photographs showing the destruction of Ogoni villages, video cassettes recording visits and meetings after Saro-Wiwa's death, and articles and reviews relating to his work and to the campaign to save his life.



MOVEMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF OGONI PEOPLE
(MOSOP)
24 Aggrey Road, P. O. Box 193, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
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20/10/93

Dear Sister Majella,

Thanks for your note. I'm really quite happy to have EC help pass through the Catholic Church. You've all been so supportive and Margo will be right glad to have such friends or supervisors. Please do not have any doubts whatsoever on that score. We are so swamped with responsibilities that having some of it off our necks is sheer relief. I'll tell UNPO about the Brussels connection. They will be able to drum up support from other European countries.

4-30 on Sunday is okay — more so as my last rally is at Bori at about that time.

I'm in Lagos until Friday morning. If there is anything to discuss with me, ring on 857955. The other tel. no is dead.

Regards.

Ken.

President: Dr G.B. Leton, Secretary: Dr B.B.B. Naanen

Earliest letter from Ken Saro-Wiwa to Sister Majella in the Archive

The importance of the archive is that it captures in rich detail the last two years of Saro-Wiwa's life, and documents his transition from activist to political prisoner. The letters and poems in particular record themes such as the on-going struggle to protect the Ogoni people, growing instability in Nigeria, Saro-Wiwa's conditions during his detention, and the importance of his friendship with Sister Majella during the final chapter in his life.

A letter to Sister Majella dated 13 July 1994, provides an intimate account of Saro-Wiwa's living conditions during his imprisonment. He states:

'My condition is not very bad. I have an air-conditioned room to myself and the electricity has only failed once. I can write and only yesterday succeeded in smuggling my computer into this place. I can cook (though I cannot cook) for myself and from time to time, I can smuggle out letters … The only thing is that family members, lawyers and doctor are not allowed to see me.'

To the fore of Saro-Wiwa's mind, however, is always the plight of the Ogoni people. Letter after letter, he expresses his concern regarding their welfare. His commitment to his people and their protection is unwavering, even when he himself is faced with death. In a letter dated 29 October 1994, he states:

'My moments of depression here had more to do with the political situation in the country: worries over the Ogoni and such-like than the fact of my confinement. I miss my family, of course, but…it is a fitting price to pay for the joy of others.'

Throughout his detention, and during some of the darkest chapters in his life, Saro-Wiwa reached out again and again, to his supporter and friend, Sister Majella McCarron or 'Sister M' as he often referred to her in his letters. A quote from another of his letters, dated 1 October 1994, captures the importance of their friendship to him. He tells her:

'I long to see you back in Nigeria, helping among others, to guide the Ogoni people….You don't know what help you have been to us, and to me personally, intellectually.'

Archives Workshop

In early 2019, the Edward M. Kennedy Institute at

MU approached Special Collections and Archives about the possibility of using the Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive to deliver part of a module entitled *Peace, Religion and Diplomacy*. The Institute, established in 2011, aims to 'build capacity for constructive approaches to conflict at all levels in society'. Through a series of lectures and workshops, the module addresses freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief, and raises questions regarding religion and society from the perspective of diplomacy.



Visitors from the Kennedy Institute

Two workshops were offered on the theme of conscience and the individual, one looking at the case of Ken Saro-Wiwa and one at the case of Franz Jägerstätter, a World War II conscientious objector. Students were then asked to compare the stories of the two men.

Deputy librarian Helen Fallon and archivist Ciara Joyce, delivered the Ken Saro-Wiwa workshop to participating students in the Special Collections and Archives Reading Room, on 14 March 2019.

Methodology

The two-hour workshop began with an introduction to Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni cause, delivered by Helen Fallon. Students were given the context of Saro-Wiwa's campaign, arrest and execution and the background to how the letters he wrote to Sister Majella found their way to Maynooth.

Students then had the opportunity to look at the original letters, poems and photographs on display in the Reading Room. Archivist Ciara Joyce spoke about each item on display, reading out relevant extracts. The items were carefully chosen based on their content and the required learning outlined in the course descriptor. Students were asked to consider the complexity of the personal, political, economic and legal issues facing Saro-Wiwa or anyone who takes a 'counter-cultural' stance. Each letter exhibited showed evidence of these issues. For the quick dissemination of the contents of the documents and to aid the discussion, students received a handout highlighting relevant extracts from the letters.

The students undertaking this module were extremely enthusiastic, well-informed and engaged with the topic. The subsequent discussion demonstrated both their knowledge of the Saro-Wiwa story, and that they had thoroughly considered the implication of the stance he made and his personal sacrifice. Four of the participating students are from Nigeria and were able to offer their unique perspective on Saro-Wiwa's writing and the contents of the letters, which was interesting for both participants and Library staff.

Outcomes:

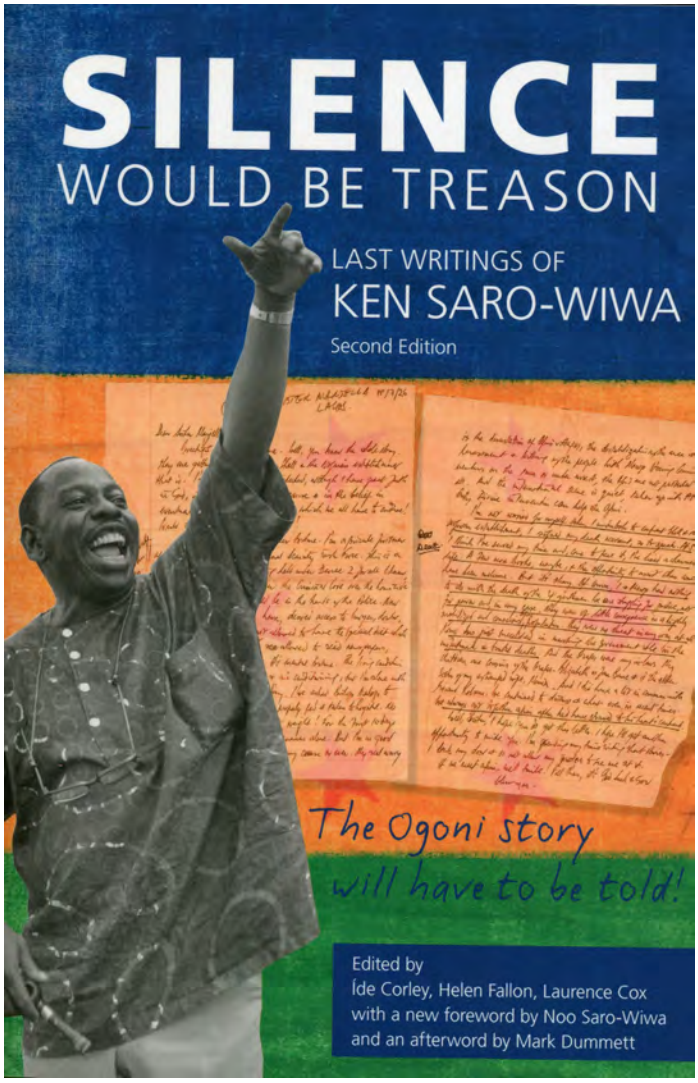
The workshop afforded the opportunity to critically examine a complex and multidimensional topic. The original letters and the issues they embody were used as a catalyst for the discussion, demonstrating their usefulness in the development

of investigative and interpretive skills in the students and in stimulating informed group discussion.

For some of participants, it was their first visit to Special Collections and Archives and it demonstrated to them the importance of preserving and consulting primary sources.

Overall the workshop was very enjoyable and worthwhile for both students and staff and the Library has received very positive feedback from the participants. Three out of the seven student have decided to use Saro-Wiwa for their module assignment, indicating the high level of interest in the contents of the workshop.

Through this collaboration the Library plays a significant role in a postgraduate programme that seeks to examine and influence the changing character of diplomacy and international relations.



Ken Saro-Wiwa Publication

Access to the Collection:

The letters and poems contained in this collection have been published in the publication *Silence Would be Treason: Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa* (edited by Íde Corley, Helen Fallon and Laurence Cox) which is available on open access. The digitised letters are also accessible in the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI). The Ken Saro-Wiwa Audio Archive, a collection of recordings of people connected with Ken Saro-Wiwa, including his daughter Noo and his brother Owens, is freely available via the internet.

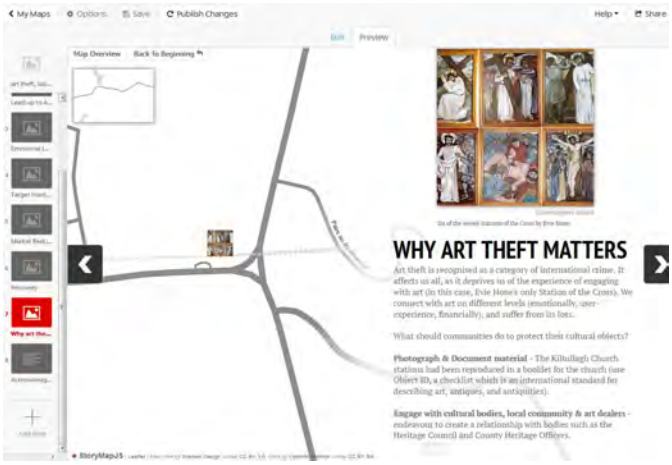
The collection is also available to students and external readers to consult in the Reading Room. For more information please contact Special Collections and Archives at library.specialcollections@mu.ie

Online distance learning: a personal experience

Damien Burke, Archivist, Irish Jesuit Archives

Previously, I have attempted online distance learning courses in digital preservation and rare books. Both attempts ended poorly. The course structures prioritised flexibility and individualisation of learning, laudable in relation to learning theory, however, the minimal teacher/ student interaction, and 'tick the box' assessment of the courses, resulted in a lack of engagement on my part.

In 2017, with some hesitation, I started a free three-week course on Futurelearn (a digital education platform), on the subject of Antiquities Trafficking and Art Crime, run by the University of Glasgow. The collaborative nature of the taster course, suited my approach to learning (social constructivism), and resulted in my enrolment in 2018 for a PGCert at the University of Glasgow. Taught by Dr Donna Yates, the online distance learning course comprised three modules: Antiquities Trafficking, Art Crime and Repatriation, Recovery, Return, and 'delved into the grey market for looted and stolen cultural objects, combining fields of criminology, archaeology, art history, heritage studies, and law'. From an archival perspective, it touched upon issues such as ethics, ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the intersection of archives and museums. Dr Yates created a space where differing viewpoints were encouraged, critiqued, and outcomes suggested, ending with the conundrum - what would good policy look like? The course introduced theories that challenged perceptions, made me reflect on the way I work, my inherent biases, and concepts such as cultural capitalism, red power and decolonising the archives.



Digital artifact assignment for module on Art Crime, University of Glasgow, 2018

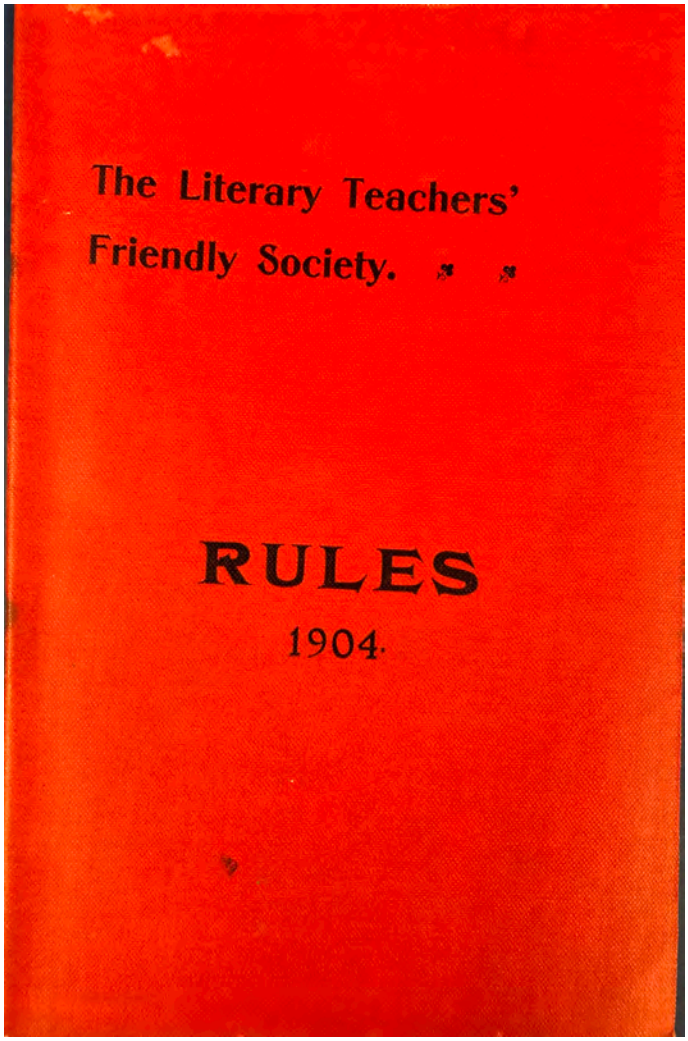
The platform for learners from different backgrounds and time zones was enabled by collaborative software. Course details were uploaded to Moodle (learning management system) and lectures were pre-recorded to watch on Prezi (presentation software). The bi-weekly seminar (or virtual classroom) for group online discussion used Slack (collaboration software) to focus on the weekly lectures and any queries we may have had. Padlet (online bulletin board) was piloted and WhatsApp (messaging application) was (and is) used to keep in touch with fellow students. Assessment took the form of essays (with inline citation!), group work in presenting an online case study, reviews and a 'digital artefact'. My experience of this online distance course was wholeheartedly positive, to the degree where I have undertaken archaeological fieldwork for the first time. However, the course severely tested my

time-management skills and luckily for me, my employer paid the course fees. So what does an effective online distance learning course look like?

A course with a knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher, with varied and engaged learners, who are willing to discuss, challenge and interact using collaborative software, to ascertain what can be done ‘to protect our past and our culture for the future’.

The Literary Teachers Friendly Society

Stephanie Rousseau, Assistant Archivist, Dublin City Library & Archive



In September 2018, the President of the Literary Teachers Friendly Society deposited the Society's records at Dublin City Library & Archive. The collection has now been preserved and catalogued and runs to an extent of five boxes.

To put the material in context, friendly societies were popular before the modern insurance or welfare payments were available. They provided financial and social services to their members, often according to their religious, political or trade affiliations, at a time when the breadwinner losing their job, or indeed their life, meant destitution for their family.

The Literary Teachers' Friendly Society was founded in Dublin on 26 March 1789 as The Abecedarian Society. Its founder was John McCrea, principal of the Academy in Fade Street, Dublin, and members of note included the educationalist and principal of the grammar school on Grafton Street, Samuel Whyte. Other well-known figures of late eighteenth-century Dublin were honorary, non-professional members, including Peter LaTouche of the famous banking family, and Arthur Guinness himself!

The society was a voluntary association, the object of which was the relief of 'decayed and indigent teachers' and their families. Prior to the establishment of the Society, the pay received by teachers was such that it was impossible for them to make provision against accident, illness or old age. In 1797, the Society availed itself of the Friendly Societies Act and became incorporated under the name of The Society for the Relief of Distressed Literary Teachers and their Families. In 1799, it became known as The Literary Teachers' Friendly Society. In accordance with the Friendly Societies Act, a review of the rules took place in 1804. According to the new rules, any person under the age of 60, actively engaged in teaching was eligible to become a member. Each member paid a fee of one guinea per annum, and when the funds reached an amount which yielded an interest of £120, relief was made available to any member or his family who were in 'actual distress' for as long

as the distress continued. The payment would amount to no more than one guinea per week. If a member were to die, a payment of up to £10 would be made to cover burial costs. The society was funded entirely by membership fees.

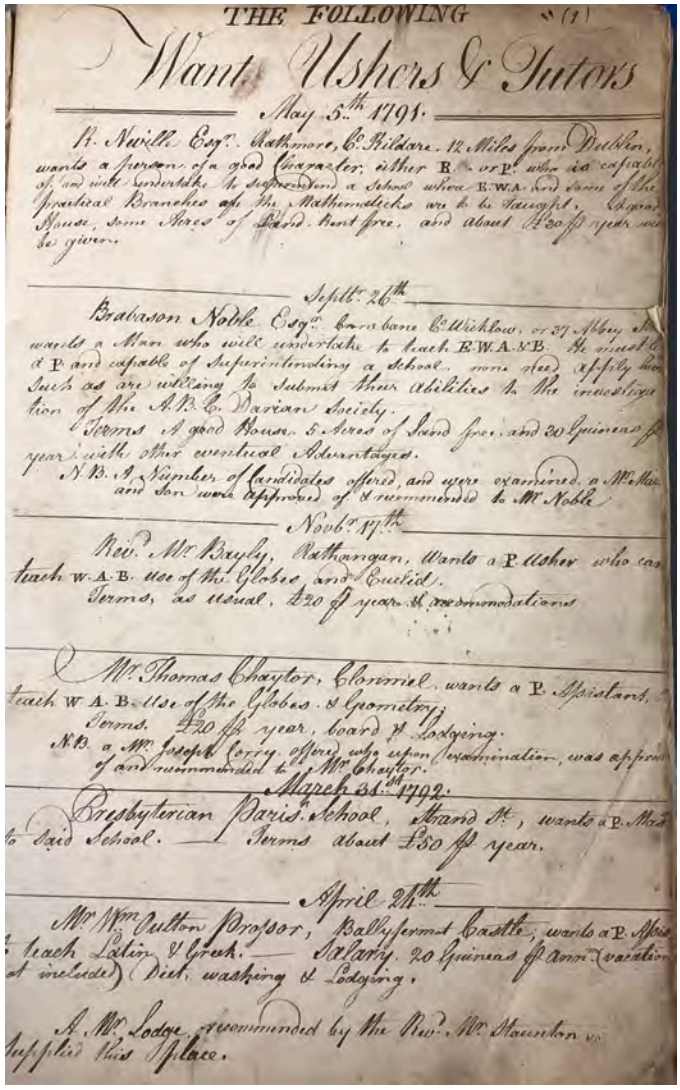
In 1818, Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh's History of Dublin records that the fund stood at £2,780, vested in government stock, and had 30 subscribers. Three members were in receipt of a pension from the fund.

The society remains in existence to this day.

This fascinating collection provides an overview of the administration of the Society from 1798 (some nine years after its foundation) to c.1970, including rule books, minutes and accounts ledgers. It reflects the work of the Society and the changes that took place within it over a period of nearly 200 years and consequently, these records are of historical value in the context of Irish social history as well as in terms of the history of teachers and teaching in Ireland and of the history of friendly societies in the country.

The earliest item held within the collection is a scroll from 1798, which lists 17 rules to which the Society adhered. The document is signed by the members of the society and witnessed by the president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. Rules relate to a variety of issues, including record-keeping and the obligation of members to ensure the orphaned children of professional members continue to obtain an education.

Other interesting items include a ledger book from 1806-1830 containing various financial information, including a list of life subscribers, information regarding the purchase of government stock by the Society, and payments of subscriptions by members. It includes the details of some significant figures from the early 19th Century such as Peter Latouche. A bound volume of monthly committee meeting minutes dating from 1826-1852 contains minutes of a special committee meeting regarding the expulsion of former secretary Mr Daly.



THE FOLLOWING

Wants Ushers & Tutors

May 5th 1791.

R. Neville Esqr. Rathmore, Co. Kildare. 12 Miles from Dublin, wants a person of a good Character, either R. or P. who is capable of and will undertake to superintend a School where E.W.A. and the practical Branches of the Mathematicks are to be taught. A good House, some Acres of Land rent free, and about £20 ster. per ann. will be given.

Septr. 26th

Brabazon Noble Esqr. Ballybane Co. Wicklow, or 37 Abbey St. wants a Man who will undertake to teach E.W.A.N.B. He must be a P. and capable of superintending a School. None need apply but such as are willing to submit their abilities to the investigation of the A.P.C. Marian Society.

Terms A good House, 5 Acres of Land free, and 20 Guineas per year, with other veritical Advantages.

N.B. A Number of Candidates offered, and were examined, a Mr. Mac and Son were approved of & recommended to Mr. Noble

Novbr 17th

Rev. Mr. Bayly, Rathangan, Wants a P. Usher who can teach W.A.B. Use of the Globes and Euclid.

Terms, as usual, £20 ster. year & accommodations

Mr. Thomas Chaytor, Clonmel, wants a P. Assistant, to teach W.A.B. Use of the Globes & Geometry;

Terms. £20 ster. year, board & Lodging.

N.B. a Mr. Joseph Corry of Cork who upon examination, was approved of and recommended to Mr. Chaytor.

March 8th 1792.

Presbyterian Parish School, Strand St., wants a P. Master to said School. Terms about £80 ster. year.

April 24th

Mr. Wm. Cullon Professor, Ballysonnet Castle, wants a P. Assistant to teach Latin & Greek. Salary 20 Guineas per Ann. (various at includes) Diet, washing & Lodging.

A Mr. Lodge recommended by the Rev. Mr. Staunton &c supplied this Place.

Adverts for ushers and tutors featured in the 'Principals and Assistants Book' from 1791

Another item, entitled 'Principals and Assistants Book' contains handwritten adverts for ushers and tutors for 1791. Adverts include information such as the religion of the desired tutor, subjects he/she would be required to teach, and the payment on offer. It also contains what appears to be a payment register recording payments to various individuals. One advert reads:

'R. Neville Esqr., Rathmore, Co. Kildare, 12 miles

from Dublin wants a person of good character, either R[C] or P. who is capable of and will undertake to superintend a school where E. W. A. and some of the practical branches of the Mathematicks are to be taught. A good house, some acres of land, rent free, and about £30 per year will be given.'

The majority of the material in this collection can be viewed by readers at Dublin City Library and Archive, although as the more recent records contain details of members who could still be alive, these items remain closed.