

The Archives in 2014: some highlights

This is a brief overview of some highlights in terms of archives developments in 2014, with occasional reference to preparations for the coming year, including use of collections, engagement events and new additions. Coverage is selective in the interests of brevity.

Publications based on Archival Collections

- The majority of chapters in the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre* have been written fully or in part about theatres and plays which are represented by our collections, including the Abbey Theatre Digital Archive, Druid Theatre Archive, Thomas Kilroy Archive, Siobhan McKenna Archive, Lyric Theatre Belfast Collection and Arthur Shields Archive.

At least four NUI Galway authors will be included in the *Handbook*. Visiting authors have come from:

University of Oxford; University of Wisconsin; St, Mary's University, London; Trinity College, Dublin; University College Dublin; Maynooth University

- Druid Theatre Archive, Macnas Archive and Prof. G.A. Hayes-McCoy papers used extensively by Prof. Joan F. Deane, University of Missouri, as part of new book ["All Dressed Up: Modern Irish Historical Pageantry"](#) (Syracuse University Press, 2014)
- Various theatre archives cited in [Mapping Irish Theatre](#), (Morash and Richards, Dec 2013), [launched](#) in the Hardiman Research Building in March
- A senior BBC journalist is making a documentary on post-conflict Northern Ireland and made use of the Brendan Duddy and Ruairí Ó'Brádaigh archives in December 2014.

Usage of the Archives and Special Collections Reading Room

The Reading Room in the Hardiman Research Building has proved to be a very attractive location for using collections, paper and digital, as indicated below:

- 2,349 users (including repeat visitors) have signed in to use the facilities from Jan 1st 2014 to end of November 2014. There has been a monthly increase in users for each of the last six months.
- 87 new archive users have been added to the user database during this period. Many of these will use an archive over a period of time and use an archive many times during their research engagement.
- 3,495 campus ID logins took place on the Abbey Theatre Digital Archive and there have been 6,714 searches to date this year.

Visitors

The [Moore Institute Visiting Fellowship Scheme](#) continued to engage use of the collections by visiting scholars; areas of interest included human rights, women's studies, Northern Ireland and John McGahern.

Further visitors came from, among other places, University of Oregon; (Druid Archive) University of Sao Paulo, Brazil (Druid Archive) University of Cambridge (Druid Archive) University of Melbourne (Ó'Brádaigh papers/Local Studies)

Visiting *groups* included:

24 students from Furman University, South Carolina, for half-day session on Druid Archive

18 students as part of Princeton University Summer School on Theatre and Drama – multiple seminars held

12 students from Maynooth University's MA in Archive Management course – Archives in Research

A visit took place in June from the extended Bligh family to inspect the University's 1856 Roll Book. This contained the signature of their ancestor, Dr John Bligh, who was the first student to graduate with a Degree of Master in Surgery from the Queen's Colleges in Ireland.

Likely visiting groups *in 2015* include:

- Student group from Villanova University for Abbey Theatre Summer School, June 2015
- Potential booking for University of Berkeley Theatre Summer School, July 2015

NUI Galway Students

Almost 50 hours of seminars and information sessions have been provided by Archives and Special Collections staff to all BA years in Drama; MA in Irish Studies; BA History groups; Graduate modules on Book and Textual history, MA in Archaeology.

There has been embedded archival usage in modules including: "Discover the Archives"; "The Abbey Theatre Digital Archive"; "Writing for Theatre"; and "Graduate Research Information Skills".

The Archivist team has developed content for an undergraduate Archives Module in 2015/16 and has submitted an outline proposal to the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies.

Exhibitions and Events

The new Hardiman Research Building is proving an excellent venue for exhibitions, with associated seminars and symposia, related to the archives; this has generated excellent collaboration between academic staff and archivists and examples include:

- *Performing Ireland: 1904-2014* (Abbey Theatre Digital Archives, Druid, Kilroy, McKenna, Taibhdhearc archives)
- *Connemara and Elsewhere*: symposium, exhibition and publication (NUI Galway, Royal Irish Academy) to mark launch of book of same title and Tim Robinson archive acquisition. This exhibition, book and archive featured strongly in a profile of Tim Robinson by Vincent Woods in the [Arts Tonight](#) RTE Radio 1 programme on 15 December.
- *The Scholar/Activist or Activist/Scholar?* - Symposium, exhibition and brochure to mark the cataloguing of Prof. Kevin Boyle Archive, with School of Law and Irish Centre for Human Rights
- Culture Night 2014: Lecture by Prof. Jim Gosling on John Huston Film Archive and Jean Paul Sartre
- To coincide with a symposium to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Professor William King's research into the origins of Neanderthal man, a viewing by President Michael D. Higgins and others of the Professor's Declaration Book in the Reading Room
- Co-exhibition between Hardiman Library and Russian State Art Library, Moscow – *Unchanged But the Spirit*: Production history of *The Seagull* from Chekhov to Kilroy

Recently Added Collections

We have been fortunate to receive a number of new collections in 2014, including:

Flynn and Lehany Coal Mining Company Collection

Professor Etienne Rynne Collection

John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy Collection (initial deposit)

The Abbey Theatre Digital Archive has grown from 308,195 to 563,986 pages

Conference presentations (by archivists)

[New Voices Conference](#), NUI Galway, June 2014 (Kilroy and Abbey Archives)

[SIBMAS Theatre Archives Conference: Body, Mind, Artifact: Reimagining Collections](#), John Jay College, New York, June 2014 (Abbey Theatre Digital Archive)

[Arts, Peace, Conflict Conference](#), Liverpool Hope University (Abbey, Lyric, Boyle, Duddy Archives)

[The Scholar/Activist or Activist/Scholar?](#), NUI Galway, November 2014 (Kevin Boyle Archive)

2015 Archive Conference at NUI Galway

Performing the Archive conference, July 2015

<http://performingthearchive2015.wordpress.com/>

Digital Scholarship Enablement Strategy

Archives feature prominently in the Library's [Digital Scholarship Enablement Strategy](#), published following a consultation period initiated at a seminar hosted in July 2014. The seminar, organised by the Library, was titled [Creating and Exploiting Digital Collections](#) which showcased a range of initiatives across the campus.

Digital archive projects have become increasingly significant, examples being the [Abbey Theatre Digital Archive](#) and the [Duanaire](#) repository of Irish economic history data.

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