



Welcome to the Spring 2021 edition

In this issue we continue the series about heroes of Irish Archives. It is with some sadness that we also remember another colleague who has more recently passed away, namely Gregory O'Connor. It is for a future issue to consider him as one of the 'Heroes'; for now we pay tribute to him as archivist, colleague, and mentor.

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Heroes of Irish Archives II

Dr Philomena Connolly (1947-2002)

I am pleased to provide a brief personal account for the Irish archive community of the life of Dr Philomena

(Phil) Connolly, for although her name is already familiar to historians of medieval Ireland she also deserves recognition by Irish archivists. Her death in June 2002, at the age of 53, cut short an exceptionally productive and influential career. Her publications alone – mainly in the form of meticulous editions of original record series or finding aids for them – would ensure that she is gratefully remembered by subsequent generations of archivists and researchers, but her generosity to students, researchers, colleagues and friends left a host of other debts and happy memories.



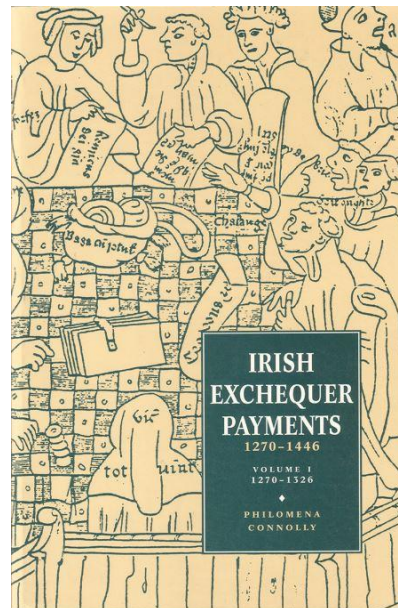
Philomena Connolly, c.1996 (Courtesy Christa Beal)

It is a measure of her significance for my own life and career that I still find it hard to believe that she is no longer with us. My earliest memories of Phil date back to Trinity College Dublin

where we both studied History and Political Science, she graduating in 1969 and I in 1971. Our regular contact began after she returned to Dublin in 1970 with her archives diploma from Liverpool University and took up a post in the Manuscripts department in TCD Library, under the redoubtable William (Billy) O'Sullivan. So, among the first things I learned about Phil were her independent determination to pursue a goal she had set for herself (for professional qualification as an archivist was an unusual career path in Ireland at that time) and her unruffled ability to deal with strong characters in whatever role. Then in my final year, studying (as Phil had done) Anglo-Irish relations in the later middle ages with James F. Lydon, I quickly came to value Phil's friendly willingness to share her expertise with the next generation of students. ß

There were many ways in which Phil helped and influenced me. The first concerned my need to acquire new skills as I embarked on a Ph.D. at Trinity on the subject of Richard II and Ireland. Formal tuition for postgraduates at that time was minimal, but I was rescued by Phil, who was herself beginning part-time study on what would become a doctoral research topic, *Lionel of Clarence in Ireland 1361-1366* (Ph.D., 1978). She was increasingly busy, having taken up a new professional archivist post in June 1971 in the Public Record Office of Ireland/ State Paper Office. Arriving in College by bike after work, she cheerfully introduced me to what seemed an impossible task. She

was a wonderful teacher, always encouraging and helping one's confidence as she demystified the subject. I was perhaps the first of her palaeography students; in later years she provided more formal training for medievalists at Trinity.



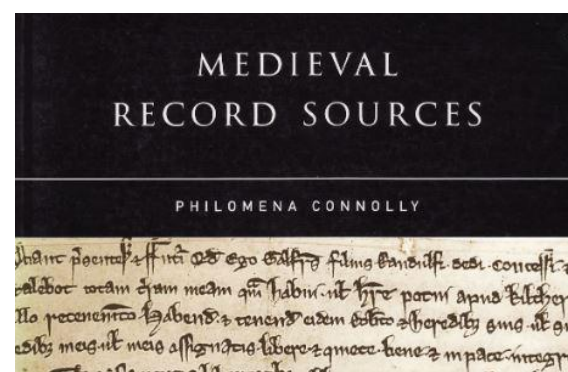
Philomena Connolly, Irish Exchequer Payments 1270-1446 vol.1 (Dublin, 1998)

Much of my research material lay in what was then the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, London (now The National Archives), and Phil helped to prepare me for that too. A lasting lesson, both as historian and archivist, was the need to understand the administrative origins and physical makeup of any document before trying to read it. Phil was expert at detecting the human element behind the diplomatic formulae, both in the stories explicit in the content and ones that could only be extracted from a knowledge of official appointments and administrative procedure. Pursuing the evidence for malpractice or corruption by a medieval officer was

a challenge she could rarely resist. A trip to the PRO was infinitely more enjoyable and rewarding if it coincided with one of hers. Her professional training and experience made her uniquely placed to identify Irish material in the Public Records in London, an enormous boon to Irish historians. As the years went by, and I heard more about her experiences in the State Paper Office in Dublin Castle, I realised what a fascinating business the world of archives could be. I doubt if I would have ended up an archivist, or enjoyed my career as much, if I had not known Phil — and I know that was true of other colleagues too.

In subsequent years, as I worked at the universities of Aberdeen and then Nottingham, keeping in touch with Phil remained important for me, and had several different strands. Her wide literary interests and amazing recall enriched my reading as she made recommendations, particularly of crime fiction, and her knowledgeable appreciation of music, from classical to contemporary, introduced me to new works and specific recordings. Phil always encouraged me to continue with medieval Irish history, though she was characteristically also enthusiastic about new research subjects. Increasingly we talked about the challenges facing archive professionals, from computerisation and new building projects to records management and Freedom of Information legislation. I followed her news of the establishment in 1988 of the National Archives and its move to Bishop Street in 1992. Phil, modest and

unassuming, always preferred a low profile, but for the expanding archive service she supplied the proverbial 'safe pair of hands'. As familiar with the modern record series as the medieval ones, she was passionate about discovering new sources for researchers, often illustrating their value with great enjoyment through stories of individual experience.



Philomena Connolly, Medieval Record Sources (Dublin, 2002): another 'essential [tool] in our repopulation of the shelves of Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury' (Dr Paul Dryburgh, see below)

In this memoir I have not listed Phil's many publications, as these and other details of her background, education and personal interests are already available in other accounts, notably her obituary in *The Irish Times* (22 June 2002). A personal appreciation by her former fellow student Katharine Simms, which appeared in S. Duffy (ed.) *Medieval Dublin IV* (2003), focuses on her contribution as a medieval historian, her palaeography teaching, and the support she gave to generations of researchers. For an archivist perspective, I recommend the warm tribute by Ken Hannigan of the

National Archives of Ireland, published in the *ISA Newsletter* (2002). Describing her as 'a person of true and remarkable genius', he provides facts about her professional career and achievements, noting particularly the quality of her editorial work, and highlighting her generosity to many other researchers and editors. He also describes her personal qualities as a colleague, her 'phenomenal knowledge' of the collections, modern as well as medieval, and her keen intellectual curiosity in whatever subject came her way as she delved in the records. I echo him in singling out her commitment to public service, given without prejudice or distinctions by rank, which eased the path for many nervous novice archive users.

Phil Connolly's lasting influence on Irish archives is recorded by Paul Dryburgh, [whose blog](#) (7 May 2020) acknowledges the importance of her publications to the 'Beyond 2022' project. As one who helped so many people to be confident that sources could be found for their subject of study, she would have relished the challenge of this amazing project. It is timely to acknowledge her legacy as one of the indispensable strengths on which its quality and strength rests.

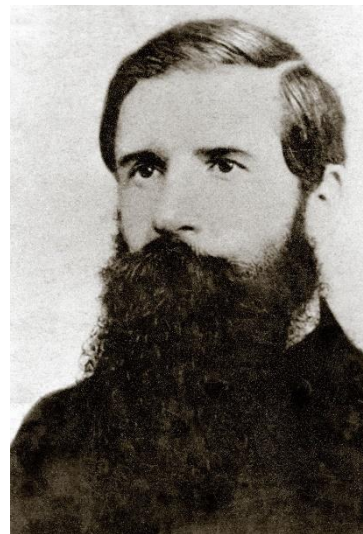
Dr Dorothy Johnston (retired Keeper of the Manuscripts, Nottingham University)



[Discovering the true founders of Stewarts Hospital](#)

The practice of naming of an institution after a benefactor, as several former

Dublin hospitals such as Dr Steevens, Mercers and Sir Patrick Dun's were, all now subsumed into larger modern hospitals, can sometimes overshadow the part played by other individuals in its foundation. This is very true for Stewarts Care, Palmerstown which was named after Dr Henry Hutchinson Stewart in 1872, two years following the handing over of his Lucan Spa House Asylum to its founding committee. It still provides extensive services to people with an intellectual disability. Founded as The Stewart Institution, it changed to Stewarts Hospital in 1942 -this is how most people will know it – and to Stewarts Care in 2010.



*Dr Henry Hutchinson Stewart, 1797-1879
(Courtesy Stewarts Care)*

It was then named The Stewart Institution. That committee, instigated by Jonathan Pim and led by Dr George Kidd, had up to then undertaken an eight-year campaign to found such an institution for the education and training of people with an intellectual disability.

In 2017 as Stewarts approached its 150th anniversary my research into the foundation of the organisation began with reviewing our own records, starting with the Minute Books of the committee of management (February 1866).



Signatures and seals of Butler, Pim, Parker, and Stewart on the Deed of Transference of Ownership for the properties at Lucan (Courtesy Stewarts Care)

These primary sources introduced me to the names and roles of that founding committee which had been formed at a public meeting in Charlemont House, Parnell Square that year. Most names I had not seen recorded before and in fact the general consensus was that the organisation was founded by Dr Stewart. The officers and trustees of that first committee were Jonathan Pim, Dr George Kidd, James Wandesford Butler and Alexander Parker.

I had learned of the contribution of the Central Relief Committee of the Quakers during the Great Famine under its secretary Jonathan Pim but did not connect him with the founding committee until I came upon a reference to his absence at a meeting due to his 'parliamentary duties'. Consulting the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* revealed a man who had

given a lifelong commitment to social reform and was elected Liberal MP for Dublin (1865-74), and following up on the references therein brought me to the Religious Society of Friends' Historical Library. Among its collection of Pim's papers are notes of meetings and letters referring to the campaign of 1864. The other half (and more) of his papers are held at the National Library (M.S 8667/8668). It is worth mentioning here a pamphlet he presented to the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society in January 1864 where he addressed the educational needs of children with disabilities who had been excluded in the Education Act (*On the Necessity of a State Provision for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb, The Blind and The Imbecile*, 1864/65).



Jonathan Pim, 1806-85 (Courtesy of the Religious Society of Friends, Dublin)

Following this meeting Pim began communicating with Dr George Kidd of the Coombe Hospital and the two men continued their correspondence in 1865 and 1866. The letters gave good insights into the characters of both men and whilst Pim had initiated the idea to

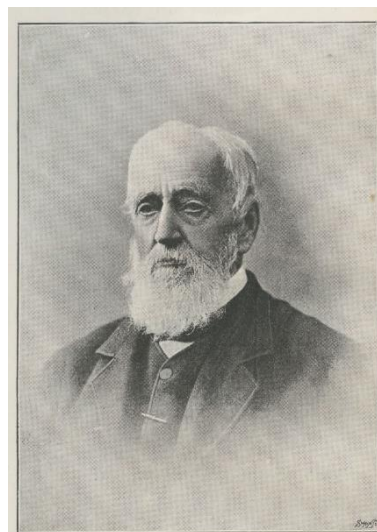
found an educational institution by bringing interested parties together, it was Kidd who later became the driving force. This became apparent from June 1865, as Kidd communicated directly with Pim's contacts, namely Lord Charlemont, Justice Fitzgerald, Sir John Lentaigne and Cheyne Brady. These papers were invaluable in positioning the other main players involved in those early years.



Dr George Kidd, 1824-95 (Courtesy of the Royal College of Physicians Ireland Archive)

In a previous search I had consulted the archives of the Royal College of Physicians, of the Royal College of Surgeons, and of the Representative Church Body Library for biographical and family information on Dr Stewart. As a former Master of the Coombe Hospital and President of the RCSI, Kidd's illustrious career is well documented the two first-mentioned. By chance I learned that James Wandesford Butler was a past president of the Royal Society of

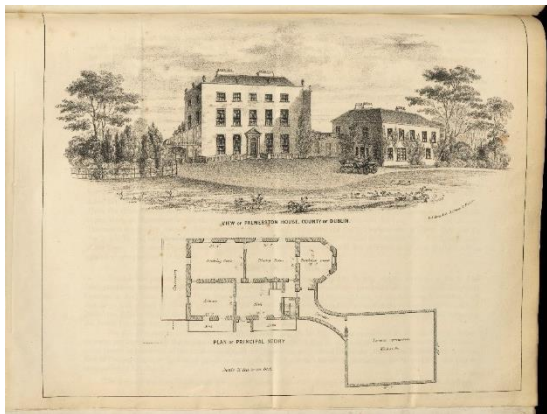
Antiquaries of Ireland which brought me to their 1909 *Journal's* comprehensive biography of him. In the records of Dublin Chamber Of Commerce (National Archives), Alexander Parker is registered as vice president in 1867 and a founding Commissioner of Rathmines Township. Further extensive biographical details were generously shared by Enda McMahon, genealogist and author of *A Most Respectful Meeting of Merchants: Dublin Chamber of Commerce* (2014).



James Wandesford Butler, 1815-93 (Courtesy of the Royal Society of Antiquaries Ireland)

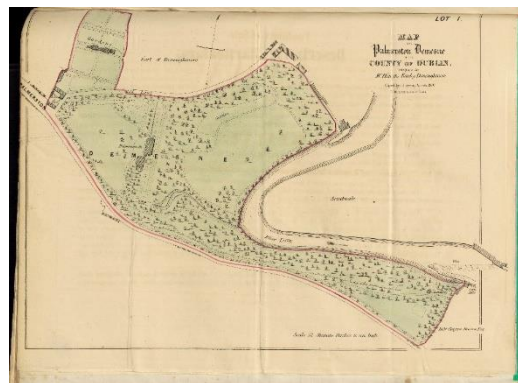
Timelines of developments recorded in the Minute Books led to cross referencing with surviving correspondence, and newspaper notices and articles now available through the Irish Newspaper Archive. Gradually a picture began to emerge of how issues of promoting, fundraising and acquiring premises for the institution and even religious controversy were approached. Records of this controversy are present among

Cardinal Paul Cullen's letters to secular clergy (Dublin Diocesan Archive) and in contemporary newspapers such as *The Freeman's Journal*.



Palmerston House (LEC Rentals vol. 59 - Courtesy of the National Archives)

Original title documents, legal searches and letters from solicitors were invaluable in recording what had formerly existed on the site at Palmerstown and reference to the Landed Estates Court led me to explore the LEC Rentals at the National Archives. There I discovered a description of the property, maps of the estate, drawing and plan of the original Palmerston House prepared for when it was sold in the Court in 1860. This was a great discovery, particularly when matched with the earlier ordnance survey map of 1843. The collection of Thom's Official Directories at Dublin City Archive proved a good resource in confirming addresses, periods of residence of many individuals connected with the organisation in those early years.



Palmerston Demesne (LEC Rentals vol. 59 - Courtesy of the National Archives)

Discovering records in the many different repositories allowed me to position these four men appropriately in the part they played in the foundation of Stewarts and to ensure that they will not remain forgotten.

Pat O'Donohoe (Senior Manager, Stewarts Care and author of 150 years of Stewarts Care - The pathway to the present, 2020)



[National Irish Visual Arts Library \(NIVAL\)](#)

[The Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment Archive](#)

The Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment (ACREA) was set up in 2015 by visual artists Cecily Brennan, Alice Maher, Eithne Jordan, and the poet Paula Meehan. It began as an online campaign appealing to fellow artists, writers, musicians, and actors to put their names to a statement calling for a repeal of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution of Ireland (Article 40.3.3). The aim of the Campaign was to promote national and international awareness of the restrictive reproductive laws of Ireland and to

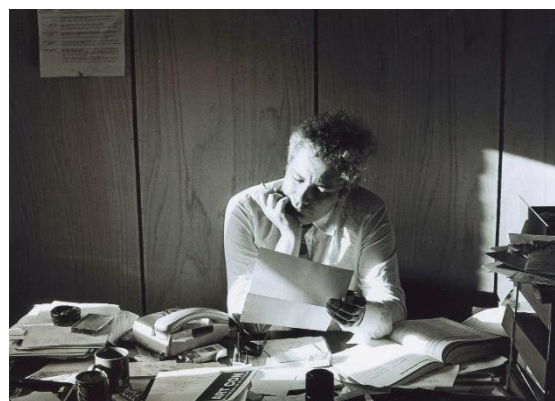
encourage and inspire other groups and activists to use cultural means to promote social change. Offline, the group went on to have a large presence at various demonstration marches and to organise numerous public events and exhibitions. At the EVA International Biennial in 2018, ACREA performed a processional march through the streets of Limerick and installed an exhibition which included their banners and a display of press and other documentary material of the Campaign to date.



NIVAL ACREA Founding Members: Cecily Brennan, Alice Maher, Eithne Jordan, and Paula Meehan at the 'Get the Boat to Vote' event in 2018 (photo by Sarah Cullen, courtesy of NIVAL)

NIVAL is a public research resource located at the National College of Art & Design, Dublin. It is dedicated to the documentation of 20th and 21st-century Irish art and design. The Library collects, stores, and makes accessible an unparalleled collection of material relating to Irish visual culture from 1900 to the present day. NIVAL is an initiative of former NCAD librarian Edward (Eddie) Murphy, who recognised the value of arts documentation as a key resource in the building of cultural memory. His ambition in establishing NIVAL was to

build a public collection through active collaboration with artists, designers and cultural organisations.



Edward Murphy, early 1980s (courtesy of NIVAL)

Documentation of socio-political events created by artists and designers is of interest to NIVAL. Therefore, any ephemera related to both sides of the debate on the referendum on the Eighth Amendment with a visual and artistic merit falls within NIVAL's collecting remit. This meant that from 2015, NIVAL has been collecting documentation on the public murals, fashion activism, poster design, and related exhibitions.

When ACREA officially launched the Campaign with a press conference in 2015, NIVAL established a physical file to capture the material as it happened. As the activities of the campaign expanded, we could see the value in preserving the documentary record with a view to long-term public access. In 2017, we initiated a conversation with the artists involved about the possible deposit of their archive. The founding members of the campaign were acutely aware of the value of documentation and the need to retain and safeguard this material for the

future. Founding ACREA member Cecily Brennan had been a student at NCAD when Eddie Murphy was the Librarian. Cecily said that he taught her 'the importance of collecting and storing material no matter how ephemeral it appeared'. This awareness has resulted in a rich, meticulously compiled collection of primary source material that attests to the significant and powerful contribution made by ACREA to the national movement for repeal.



NIVAL ACREA International Women's Day March 2018, O'Connell Street (Photo by Karl Leonard, courtesy of NIVAL)

NIVAL is a member of the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI) and is committed to long-term preservation and maximum accessibility for collections. ACREA was enthusiastic that the archive would be preserved and accessible to all. Even before the referendum had been held and ACREA were still active, we were having conversations about the best way to organise the collection for future ingest to the DRI. We provided guidance on arrangement to Cecily, who together with Trish Griffin, did fantastic work on assembling and arranging the Campaign materials. The digital and physical ephemera is supplemented by an enormous amount of descriptive

information - a rich source of metadata at all levels of the collection. Deposited in NIVAL in 2019, the collection was ingested to the DRI in 2020 and is now publicly accessible.



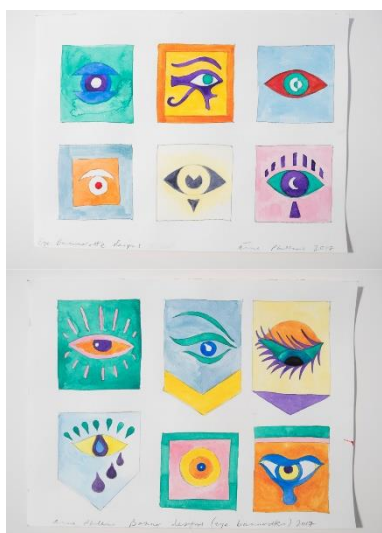
NIVAL ACREA March For Choice 2017, showing some of the banners -see below for 'Madonna of the Eyes' (photo by Bryan Meade, courtesy of NIVAL)

ACREA played a leading role in the referendum with an unprecedented intervention in the public life of the State. This unique archive is documentary evidence of a decisive moment in the interface between artists and public policy. The archive demonstrates the tireless work of the founding members and a wide network of individuals and grassroots organisers committed to social change. Thousands of images and videos bear witness to a Campaign that combined art and politics to amplify their voices.



Research image and preparatory drawings for Madonna of the Eyes banner (courtesy of NIVAL)

They communicated ideas in creative and impactful ways, organised events such as the Day of Testimonies, and created remarkable banners to lead demonstration marches. This archive is of interest not only to NIVAL's customary user-base of art and design researchers but is also a useful resource for those interested in Public Policy, Social History, National Activism, Women's History, Medical History, and Gender Equality. NIVAL is delighted the collection is now accessible through the DRI and preserved for future generations.



Preparatory drawings for Eye Bannerettes (courtesy of NIVAL)

The Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment collection can be accessed in DRI's [online repository](#).

Clare Lymer (Digital Collections Officer, NIVAL) and Donna Romano (Head Librarian, Edward Murphy Library, NIVAL)

[A Tribute to Gregory O'Connor](#)

A long-standing member of staff at the National Archives

When the sad news of Gregory's sudden passing from a heart attack on the 31st of December 2020 reached the staff in the National Archives and his wide circle of friends, there was shock, disbelief, sadness and more than a few tears were shed.



The author and Gregory O'Connor at the Irish Genealogical Research Society Ireland Branch's 50th anniversary 2017 (Courtesy IGRS)

Gregory Augustine O'Connor was born on the 28th of April 1954 at the Eveleen Nursing Home, Eccles Street, Dublin. His father, Ruaidhrí, had been born in 1893 and his paternal grandfather, Bernard, in 1839, which undoubtedly coloured Gregory's view of the passage of time and the immediacy of the past. A sense of history and curiosity was also stimulated by his family background. Bernard's wife, Kate O'Connor, who died in 1941, had been a friend of James Stephens and other Fenian leaders, and Pádraig Pearse had been a frequent visitor to her home. Gregory's father had attended the founding of the Irish Volunteers and the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa. He worked in the Land Commission at one point and Gregory was delighted to find him

identified, in one of the police files in the National Archives, as a man with a particularly dangerous political outlook. Gregory was an only child and spent his early life in the family home in Serpentine Avenue. He was educated at Marian College in Ballsbridge. He attended Trinity College not long after the ban on Catholic attendance had ended and graduated in History and Politics in 1975.



Giving an introduction to testamentary records at one of the popular Culture Club talks organised with Dublin City Council (Courtesy Dublin City Council Culture Company)

His subsequent entry into the civil service was the continuation of a long family tradition, for not only his father, but also his grandfather had been in the public service, the latter having worked in the Registry of Deeds. Gregory's career began in the Department of the Public Service and the Institute of Public Administration where he made many friends and developed disciplines which would be of great value to him in his later archival work. In the National Archives, where he was to spend over 30 years, he found his true vocation. He joined the archives during a period of great change. A new National Archives Act had recently come into operation and the archives

itself was about to move from the original Public Record Office of Ireland premises in the Four Courts to the present headquarters in Bishop Street. Gregory was one of the last members of our existing staff to have worked in the old building. He was fascinated with archives and developed an unprecedented knowledge of our records, particularly the more obscure ones, and of the context in which they were created.

Much of Gregory's career was spent working in the reading room of the National Archives and he took great pride in being part of the human face of the archives. He was generous in sharing his knowledge and helped generations of researchers in the reading room – academics, genealogists, family historians, and local historians. He also took extraordinary trouble when answering his correspondence, was very disciplined and kept copious notes and indexes and was able to refer almost instantaneously to letters he had written decades before. He encouraged and enabled researchers to make the most of available sources and was particularly patient and kind to those who required special attention. He had an extraordinary memory and could, at will, recall the details and locations of thousands of documents. He was a friend and mentor to many of the younger archivists who worked in the National Archives over the years.

He was one of the first archivists to receive the designation Higher Archivist when it was introduced

within the National Archives to recognise those archivists with conspicuous service, experience and knowledge. When there were difficult questions with regard to sources, Gregory was the man most likely to know the answer. He worked in the field outside the archives as well, and brought in many collections from courthouses and solicitor's offices, often risking life and limb in attics and basements. I accompanied him on several of these field trips and was impressed by his great physical resilience, boundless energy and his almost unnatural capacity to withstand the cold. He was a very confident and effective lecturer and could speak *ex tempore* on a wide variety of subjects, an ability which proved useful on many occasions when groups turned up unexpectedly at the National Archives. He lectured extensively abroad in Australia, North America and once gave a series of genealogical talks on a cruise ship in the West Indies.



Still from an [Interview](#) by the Irish Independent regarding readers' genealogical interests (13 March 2015, courtesy Irish News and Media/ Independent.ie)

He was a passionate and fearless advocate of the preservation of archives and a stalwart member of archival organisations promoting such

preservation such as the Irish Society for Archives, on whose committee he served for over 25 years. He took a very broad view of what was likely to be of historical interest and should be preserved and his views were always on the liberal side with regard to access. As one of his great uncles had fought and died in the Crimean War, Gregory was an active member of the Crimean War Research Society and a regular attendee at their annual conferences. When members of the Society visited this country some years ago he was a genial host and they left with a very positive image of Ireland.

He was fascinated by the law and was the staff member with the greatest understanding of our court and legal holdings. An important responsibility of his in the National Archives over several decades was the signing of certified copies. His enthusiasm for the law continued into his sixties and he was on the second year of his Diploma in Legal Studies at the King's Inns at the time of his passing.

He cut a very distinctive figure with his black coat and umbrella, hurrying along Bishop Street in the morning, commenting on the vagaries of the buses when he entered the building. He had a great sense of humour. His day was peppered with quips and puns with staff and readers until he made a final joke to the security man as he was departing at night, invariably the last member of staff to leave the building. I remember showing Gregory a curious Department of the Marine file which dated from the 1870s. It related to a

dead mule or a donkey having been washed up on a beach and the difficulties the local coastguard officer was having in trying to pay someone to bury it. Gregory immediately remarked that it was an early example of a civil servant trying to “cover his ass”.

Rathfarnham Historical Society November Meeting



Rathfarnham Historical Society will hold their November meeting tomorrow, 3rd November, at 8:00 pm in the Church of Ireland Parish Centre, Rathfarnham Village. Chairman of the Society, Gregory O'Connor, will give a talk titled 'Glimpses of Life in Rathfarnham at the Turn of the 20th Century' All welcome! Admission for non-members is €4.00.

Lecture 'Glimpses of Life in Rathfarnham at the turn of the 20th century' (advertised by [South Dublin Libraries Local Studies](#), 2 November 2016)

He was generous both with his knowledge and with his time. In Rathfarnham, where he lived, he was Chairman of the Historical Society for many years and his considerable organisational abilities and wide circle of contacts were a great boon for the local history of the area.

He was a polymath, an inveterate traveller and a talented linguist. He had travelled in Eastern Europe long before the fall of communism and, while in the Balkans, felt strong intimations of those tensions which later tragically fuelled the unrest of the 1990s. His Irish was of a very high standard (his grandmother was a prominent supporter of the language movement at the turn of the last century) and he developed a proficiency in many other languages, including French, Italian, Romanian, Serbo-Croat, Turkish, Korean and, more recently, Mongolian. He conducted research in the Archives in Bucharest reading original documents in Romanian. He had a deep interest in religion and enthusiastically attended a wide variety of church services of various denominations, particularly those conducted in the foreign languages he was studying. He had a great interest in sport and played cricket in his younger days and tennis into his middle years.



Welcoming visitors during Culture Night 2019 (Courtesy National Archives)

At the time of his death, Gregory had been working from home for some months because of the Covid-19 restrictions. He was looking forward to coming back to the archives in the New

Year but, sadly, it was not to be. Gregory was an institution in the National Archives and an irreplaceable one. The many tributes paid to him by readers and friends are testimony to the esteem in which he was held and what a wonderful ambassador he was both for the National Archives and archives in general. We shall miss him but we will not forget him. Our thoughts are with Pauline, his wife, and his children Annalouise, Maeve and Neil.

Brian Donnelly (Senior Archivist, National Archives)



Panic and Potential World Digital Preservation Day at the National Library of Ireland

Now more than ever, in the face of unexpected and unforeseen challenges the importance of working together to ensure the long term preservation of our digital legacy is paramount. Whether you are working to support organisational decision making or documenting real life stories in these strange times, this is a time to share and discuss the challenges we have faced and opportunities we have embraced.



Twitter post from the NLI (5 November 2020)

You are probably familiar with digitisation, where the files are digital reproductions of physical objects – a scan of an old photograph for example. You might think that means the file is safe and preserved for the long term, but it doesn't. That's where digital preservation comes in.

It includes storing files and making sure they are accessible, but that's not all. There is also a lot of planning, monitoring, research, advocacy, cataloguing, packaging – and much more. All of these are required to ensure that the objects that we preserve will be accessible and understandable to future generations, so that the digital file we collect today will be available to you in years to come.



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Digits: For Good

About World Digital Preservation Day

There's lots to think about, and that's why we were delighted to host World Digital Preservation Day ([Panic and potential: Challenges and Opportunities in Pandemic Collecting](#)) on the 5th of November 2020. This was the third annual event for WDPD that the NLI hosted, but the first online one (see the article by Della Keating about the first event in the Spring 2019 issue of the Newsletter). It allowed for far greater

participation from beyond Dublin, and we had a great turnout and excellent feedback from all over the world.

It's inspiring to see how Irish institutions are facing up to the challenges of digital collecting, and the opportunities for a digital preservation community in Ireland, where digital preservationists across many sectors can share skills, discuss their work and ask questions.

Below we have shared a summary of each presentation, along with videos. If you learn something new or surprising while watching our presentations, we'd love to hear from you. Send us an email at digitalpreservation@nli.ie.

Capturing COVID-19: healthcare workers' experiences of the pandemic

Harriet Wheelock from the Royal College of Physicians Ireland spoke about their COVID digital collecting project (please find the video [here](#)). This project aims to capture the experience of COVID from a medical perspective. This collecting takes a variety of forms, including text, images and even musical composition. It was fascinating to see the COVID collecting project in the context of other first-hand accounts of pandemics within the RCPI collections, such as the 1918 flu pandemic.



Slide from Lorraine McCann's presentation

Pandemic Diaries: embarking on digital records collecting with the Louth diary project

Lorraine McCann of Louth County Council also spoke about their COVID collecting project, this time taking the form of diaries in digital form (please find the video [here](#)). It was great to hear about the workflow that Lorraine developed, even down to the acquisition form and all of the relevant metadata acquired from the donors.

Archiving an international pandemic online

Maria Ryan talked about the NLI's web archive as a whole, but focused on our COVID collecting, giving a glimpse at some of the day to day work that is required by a web archivist (please find the video [here](#)).



Slide from the author's presentation

Practical Digital Preservation: Leveraging existing systems and learning how to fill the gaps

Finally, I spoke about how standards can aid large and small memory institutions to focus their efforts around moving from physical to digital collections, and which tools and standards (things like OAIS and NDSA Levels of Preservation) can get you up and running (please find the video [here](#)).

*Kieran O'Leary (Digital Preservation
Manager, National Library of Ireland)*



ISA NEWS

- The Committee has a vacancy for the role of social media officer – to find out more about the role, please email sec.societyforarchives@gmail.com.
- We will hold an online AGM in April and full details will be circulated to members shortly.
- The Committee is looking forward to announcing details of our next lecture series which will be online until Covid-19 restrictions allow us to begin meeting in person again.

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Dublin 8

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ISA Committee Members 2020-2021

Ellen Murphy, **Chairperson:** ellen.murphy@prai.ie
Brian Donnelly, **Vice-Chairperson:** bdonnelly@nationalarchives.ie
David Gunning, **Secretary:** sec.irishsocietyforarchives@gmail.com
Dr Kerry Houston, **Treasurer:** kerry.houston@tudublin.ie
Hanne Sheeran, **Membership Secretary:** isasubscription@gmail.com
Elizabeth McEvoy and Dr Susan Hood, **Co-Editors of *Irish Archives*:**
emcevoy@nationalarchives.ie, susan.hood@rcbdub.org
Natalie Milne, **Website Editor:** natalie.j.milne@gmail.com
Antoinette Doran and Deirdre O'Connell, **Committee Members:**
antdoran@gmail.com, doconnell@nationalarchives.ie
Vera Moynes, **Newsletter Editor:** vera_moynes@yahoo.com
Social Media Officer: vacancy