



Welcome to the Spring 2022 edition

We are pausing the 'Heroes of Irish Archives' series, and beginning a new one about new and custom-built archives buildings.

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New Archives and Library Buildings I The Archives and Special Collections Reading Room at NUI, Galway

In August 2013, we moved into our new Reading Room (ASCRR) in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Building (AHSSRB) on the National University of Ireland, Galway campus. The AHSSRB was later renamed the Moore and the Whitaker Institutes. Prior to the move a series of meetings culminated in a service plan and a project plan for the logistics of the move. The objective of the project

was to ensure the accurate movement of archives and special collections and associated services to the AHSSRB in a timely fashion. This involved estimating stock quantity, type and location in the Main Library and the appropriate alignment with space availability in the new building.



The AHSSRB nearing completion (NUIG website)

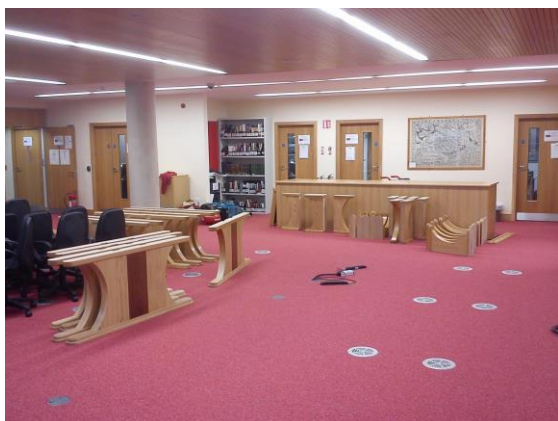
A review of the existing service was necessitated by a few considerations including:

- The major expansion in the size of the reading room – from 12 to 36 reader spaces
- The provision of access to digital archives using PC workstations
- The transfer of all of the archives and a significant portion of the Special Collections book stock to new storage space
- All archives and special collections staff operating from the same work space and participating in a roster

covering the reading room desk over lunch time

Prior to the review, benchmarking visits were undertaken to the Special Collections services in the University of Edinburgh and Glasgow (2010) and the University of Aberdeen (2012), all of which offered opportunities for observing reading room management, collection storage and a variety of service offerings.

Within the building, storage space had to be compliant with BS544 (the British Standard which preceded BS 4971: 2017) in order to ensure a proper preservation standard for the shared storage of unique material of permanent value as well as an appropriate consultation space for researchers. By complying with the standard, the university wanted to send a strong signal that unique material in its care was going to be preserved and that this would continue into the future. For a collecting archives service like ours, this assured potential donors of the university's long-term commitment to preserve unique collections.



Reading Room prior to furnishing

The plan also encompassed an appropriate consultation space for archival material, as well as an

exhibition space and lecture rooms for outreach activities. By placing the archives and special collection reading room in the new AHSSRB, as well as providing appropriate consultation space for microform, digitized and outsized collections, it allows researchers easy access to unique material in line with best practice and procedures.



ASCRR with new tables

The move itself was carried out rather quickly. Archival material was moved into the stores in six days, being gathered into the unfurnished reading room and stacked into groups of six boxes (each stack representing two linear metres, enough to fit on two shelves). This allowed for the bringing together of collections that had come in in a number of tranches previously, as well as drawing material from eight different locations in the Main Library into one location. A similar project with Special Collections allowed books to be drawn from three different locations in the Main Library Basement to become one run of Special Collections books in in two rooms.

The service now offered comprises the following (March 2022):

- A Reading Room opening Monday to Friday throughout the year, 9.00-13.00

and 14.00-17.00 with a late night opening on Tuesdays during academic terms, though it is hoped to return to pre-pandemic full-day openings. The RR is open again at full capacity and operates a booking system.

- An inquiry service with a Librarian/Archivist on duty - rotated between two archivists (2 x FTE), 1 Special Collections Librarian (0.5 FTE), 1 Senior Library Assistant (1 x FTE but some time also devoted to supporting Research Librarian), and it is hoped that a second library assistant will join the team; there are two dedicated email addresses for special collections and for archives.

- Consolidation of all archival collections into one storage area

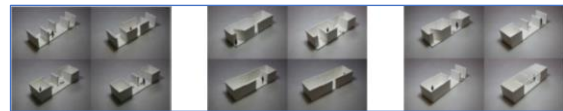
- Dewey sequence of Special Collections books classified in one continuous run

- Named Book Collections brought together in one storage area

- A dedicated seminar room for teaching and outreach next door to the reading room in which staff can conduct classes, seminars, or meetings with researchers. Teaching was conducted in a mixture of online and in-person classes during the academic year 2021-2022 but in-person presentations recommenced in March 2022.

- A dedicated exhibition area in building foyer – the first post-pandemic exhibition is being prepared.

- A digitization service (though not part of Archives and Special Collections) also located within the reading room area.



The exhibition area comprises 24 moveable display panels, allowing different layouts (NUIG website)

Conclusion

The move to a planned purpose-built space was not without its traumas. The physical move of collections was hard work. Despite extensive advance planning it triggered more decision-making, some major and some minor, relating to shelf allocation and the need to be responsive to changing demands on the service, even over a short time frame. The benefits of the new building include the scope to provide reading space to many more readers, in a more attractive and comfortable environment; the facility to offer outreach and teaching opportunities close to the collections; a more streamlined storage of the collections

The disadvantages include no longer being within the Main Library building and not being as easily discovered by readers; a certain disconnect from colleagues in other areas of the library service; finally, the storage of some Special Collections materials in the Main Library building means that retrieval can still involve visiting two or three different storage areas.

Marie Boran, Special Collections Librarian, and Kieran Hoare, Archivist (James Hardiman Library, NUIG)

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Airfield House Exhibition:

Airfield: A Woman's World_

Exhibitions are an important form of outreach; they allow curators to take a deep dive into archival collections and can facilitate a greater understanding of specific topics for the general public. *Airfield: A Woman's World* was launched at Airfield House, Airfield Estate in Dundrum in March 2022 - the exhibition focuses on the use of land at the south Dublin property and showcases how a century of farming tradition, pioneered by Lily Overend, rubs shoulders with modern organic horticultural and regenerative agricultural practices at Airfield Estate today.



Lily Butler Overend, circa 1880 (courtesy of Airfield Estate)

The display also explores the legacy of Airfield's female occupants including Naomi and Letitia Overend, daughters of Lily, who managed the estate for much of the twentieth century and had

the foresight to establish Airfield as a charitable trust in the 1970s with the mission 'to inspire and enable people to make better food choices'.



Display case featuring archival material

The exhibition includes display panels exploring the history of other local big houses managed by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, including those at Marlay, Cabinteely and Fernhill. Inspired by the exhibition *Shifting Foundations: The Big Houses of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown* curated by David Gunning, dlr Historian in Residence 2021, the exhibition forms part of a wider initiative of the Decade of Centenaries, funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media. It will run to June, requires a daily admission ticket or an annual pass, and for opening hours please visit www.airfield.ie.

Genevieve Whitfield (Heritage & Events Manager, Airfield Estate)



The Archival Collection of the Feis Ceoil and its 1899 Exhibition Catalogue

The author previously wrote about the Feis Ceoil for the Spring 2019 Newsletter – here she talks of the broader archival context and hones in on an exhibition held in 1899.

The Archive of the Feis Ceoil is held in the National Library of Ireland (NLI) and accessed in the Manuscripts Reading Room. Donated in September 2000 by the Feis Ceoil Association, it was catalogued as Collection List No. 92, *Records of the Feis Ceoil Association*, in 2004, with the following description: "Records of the Irish music festival, 1897-1972".



Feis Ceoil Programme, 1899 (all images courtesy of the NLI)

The Archive is a richly curated collection of over 750 items organised into eight categories. These categories contain documents relating to membership, annual general meetings,

committee meetings, financial matters, correspondence, printed records which comprise festival programmes, programmes for concerts and individual days of competitions as well as concert programmes in addition to annual syllabi of prize competitions. The eighth and final category encompasses twelve very large scrapbooks, in which life-time committee member Edith Oldham began to archive the activities of the Association in its first quarter century. Spanning the period 1894 to 1973, scrapbooks from the early years of the Feis's existence contain an especially wide-ranging and comprehensive collection of newspaper clippings on multiple aspects of the Feis Ceoil's activities. Publication sources and dates for all included articles are noted within the scrapbooks, which cover an extensive range of printed media sources. Irish daily newspapers are the most frequently occurring publications, punctuated by articles on the Feis Ceoil which featured in the *London Musical Courier* and *The Musical Times* as well as reports from much further afield such as *The Chicago Citizen*.



Feis Ceoil Medal Design, 1909

Annual syllabi and programmes issued by the Association contain vast swathes of data. By 1901, syllabi recorded all office holders and committee members, the Association's membership and Prize Fund contributors. Annual reports from the Association's Executive Committee and adjudicators were included, as well as competitors and prize-winners.

Feis Ceoil Prize Winners.

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COMPOSERS' COMPETITIONS.

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Cantata.	Original Song.
1901 Carl Gilbert Hardebeck.	1901 Leopold L. Dix.
1900 Rev. W. Houston Collisson, Mus.D.	1900 Mrs A. A. Needham.
1899 Rev. W. Houston Collisson, Mus.D.	1899 Harold R. White.
1898 F. Keller, Mus.D.	1898 Mrs A. A. Needham.
1897 Michele Esposito.	1897 Mrs Wm. Beckett.
Concert Overture.	Original Song (Irish Words).
1901 F. R. M'Clintock.	1901 E. A. S. MacAlister.
1900 Robert Dwyer.	1900 Mrs A. A. Needham.
1899 F. R. M'Clintock.	1899 Mrs A. A. Needham.
1898 Brendan J. Rogers.	1898 J. C. Culwick, Mus. D.
1897 J. C. Culwick, Mus.D.	Violin and Piano Duet.
Oberthur Prize (Orchestra).	1901 Patrick Delany.
1899 Michele Esposito.	1900 H. H. Harty.
Morrison Prize (Pf. Trio).	1899 Carl Gilbert Hardebeck.
1901 H. H. Harty.	1898 F. R. M'Clintock.
Brass and Reed Band (Irish Airs).	1897 George F. Bell.
1900 Henry Bast.	Pianoforte Solo.
String Quartet.	1900 Henry Bast.
1901 F. R. M'Clintock.	1899 Leopold L. Dix.
1900 H. H. Harty.	1898 Leopold L. Dix.
1899 Michele Esposito.	Ancient Irish Air, arr. as Part Song.
Anthem or Latin Motet.	1900 Mrs A. A. Needham.
1900 Rev. G. W. Torrence, Mus.D.	1899 Carl Gilbert Hardebeck.
1899 Carl Gilbert Hardebeck.	1898 Jos. Seymour, Mus. B.
1898 G. P. Horan.	1897 Rev. Ernest Whelan.
1897 Carl Gilbert Hardebeck.	Ancient Irish Air, arr. as Song.
Unaccompanied Part Song.	1900 {Rev. W. H. Callison, Mus. D. Mrs A. A. Needham.
1901 C. S. Cradlock.	1899 Mrs A. A. Needham.
1900 Carl Gilbert Hardebeck.	1898 Leopold L. Dix.
1899 Harold H. White.	Hymn Tune.
1898 Leopold L. Dix.	1900 Rev. G. W. Torrence, Mus.D.
1897 C. S. Cradlock.	1899 Rev. Ernest Whelan.

Composition Competition Prize-winners, 1902 Syllabus

Recorded minutes for committee meetings are included in several volumes of minutes for the Executive Committee and other sub-committees. Those pertaining to the early years of the Feis's Executive Committee are most numerous; three volumes encompass the period 1896 to 1903 while a further three bring records up to 1974. In addition, multiple musical scores published in association with the Feis Ceoil, most frequently as prize-winning compositions, are held in the

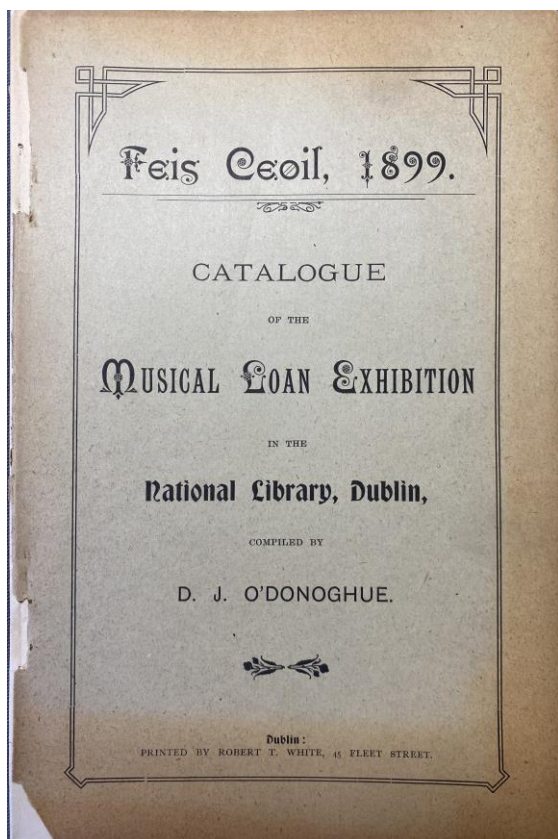
NLI's general collection with many more uncatalogued scores whose origins may lie in its composition competitions and commissioning of suitable repertoire for inclusion within the syllabus. A complete collection of Feis Ceoil syllabi from 1897 which extends to the current day is also held at the offices of the Feis Ceoil Association, recently relocated to Nassau Street having occupied 37 Molesworth Street since March 1901.



Minute Books, 1899

Given the comprehensive and almost uninterrupted chronology of the collection, a single 'Exhibition Catalogue' from 1899 is a fascinating document as it records the artefacts that were displayed at a 'Musical Loan Exhibition' the same year. The 1899 Exhibition of Irish music, early editions, manuscripts, portraits, instruments and other items of interest proved popular with the public and was housed in both the National Library and National Museum. Six months in advance of the third festival, an Exhibition Sub-Committee was established to determine the feasibility of holding an exhibition, the nature of such an enterprise and potential avenues of support. Members included George Coffey and Robert Young, both

contributors to much smaller-scale efforts in 1897 and 1898, but recorded minutes show activity was spearheaded in 1899 by David James (D.J.) O'Donoghue, Vice-President of the National Literary Society and librarian to University College Dublin. Exhibits were loaned on a much larger scale than previously and items from the National Library and Museum, National Gallery, Royal Irish Academy of Music and the Belfast Natural History Museum and Philosophical Society featured in the Exhibition. Personal donations from almost thirty individuals were also received, several Belfast exhibits being so valuable that a special insurance policy was required.



1899 Catalogue, Front Cover

O'Donoghue's accompanying A5-sized catalogue of the Exhibition's 172 items runs to thirty-two pages and includes

detailed descriptions of their genesis and place within Irish musical history. This continued commitment to education and improvement by the Feis Ceoil was previously revealed in its provision of programme notes which accompanied Feis Ceoil evening concerts. The Executive declared O'Donoghue's Catalogue of the Musical Loan Exhibition "of great interest" being "practically the first attempt at a complete bibliography on the subject". A week in advance of the 1899 festival, the Executive decided to print and publish 1,000 copies of the Catalogue, an endorsement of both the quality of O'Donoghue's work and the significance of its content. This publication and the Exhibition itself were warmly received by the press; in May 1899, the *Evening Herald* predicted the pioneering catalogue would be a 'much-prized little publication' in the future and the *Belfast Newsletter* expected the Musical Loan Exhibition to be 'an exceedingly interesting adjunct' to the third Feis Ceoil.

Undoubtedly, the accomplished and comprehensive Exhibition and Catalogue were the result of O'Donoghue's commitment to the project and tireless stewardship of the Sub-Committee in 1899. There are no records for a similar Exhibition in 1900 in either the Feis Ceoil Archive or Feis week press coverage. O'Donoghue obviously did not desire to continue in his role as curator in 1900 and there is, in fact, no further mention of the Exhibition Sub-Committee thereafter. That is not to say, however, that the Feis Ceoil did not wish to continue its role

as educator and edifier from this point; it embraced the lecture as a viable medium by which the cultivation and study of Irish music and music in Ireland could be furthered. Lectures, or more often lecture recitals, featuring scholars and performers of the highest quality were often included as part of Feis week in subsequent years. The Catalogue of the Musical Loan Exhibition, however, captures an important moment in the history of the Feis Ceoil which demonstrates the burgeoning interest of *fin de siècle* Ireland in antiquarian scholarship of its musical past.

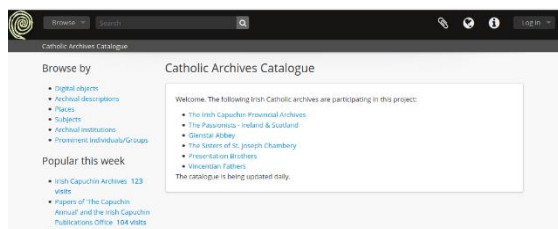
Helen Doyle (PhD candidate in musicology, Conservatoire, TU Dublin)



The Catholic Archives Catalogue

A resource giving online access to archival lists

The Catholic Archives Catalogue is a website which is attempting to collate catalogues and digital items of Catholic archives in Ireland to make them as accessible as possible. At the same time, for archivists on a low budget, it is helping them catalogue their collections in a professional manner.

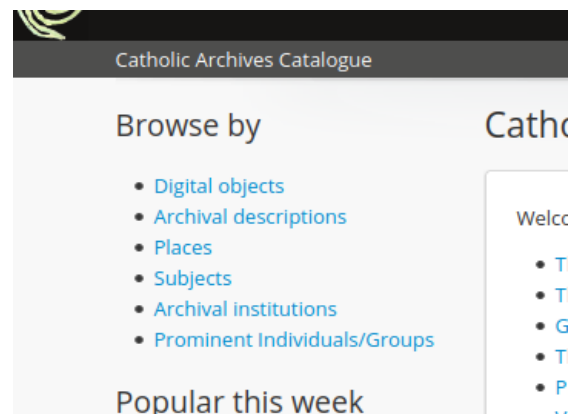


Find the resource at catholicarchives.ie

At present there are six archives which are participating in the project, with more to join in the near future. The

system uses the open-source catalogue software AToM (Access to memory) as also used by prominent archives such as the United Nations, the Bodleian library and MIT. It is open to all Catholic archives who wish to participate.

Originally used by the Passionist Archives, the archivist there began working also for Glenstal Abbey and expanded its use to their archives. It grew further when the Capuchin archives, the Vincentians and Presentation Brothers' archives joined.



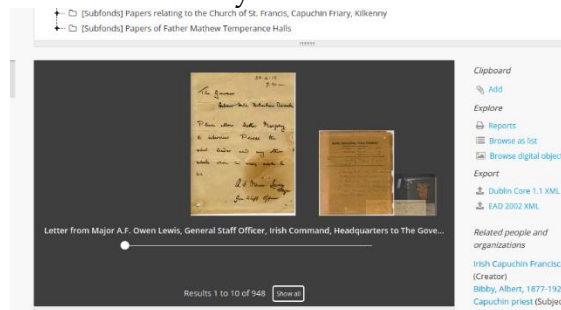
Browsing the site

Behind the scenes, the website is used by their respective archivists to catalogue their collections. The public-facing catalogue is constantly updated, which sets it apart from other such initiatives. The archivist chooses which part of the collections they are happy to make public, and with one simple click it becomes live.

The collective nature of the project has many advantages. If for example a researcher wishes to look up a particular individual, they will be able to find results across archives rather than having to visit ten different

websites. In the case of bishops and religious orders, their correspondence is to be found around the country. The browse feature of AToM, a feature which stands out among its advantages helps particularly in this regard. Google searches will also lead to items on the website.

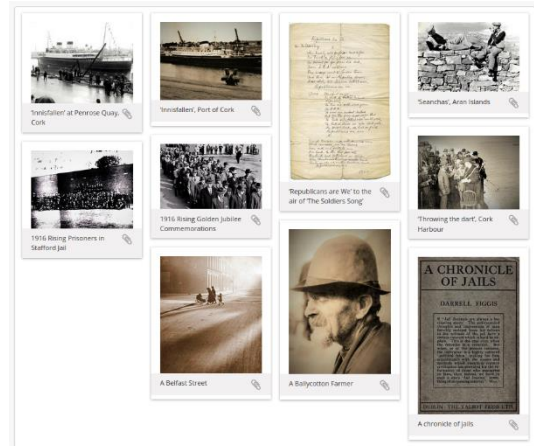
To augment catalogues, the archivist has the ability to attach digital images to an entry. In the case of this website, the Capuchins and Passionists have uploaded a large collection of photographs of various aspects of Irish life from the early 20th century. Glenstal Abbey has begun digitising the letters of Mother Mary Martin who founded the Medical Missionaries of Mary. There is enormous potential for archives which may be inaccessible at certain times to display important collections to anyone around the world.



Display of digital images

Despite the collective nature of the project, the site is not a central repository, nor aspiring to be such. Each archive maintains full control over their own collections. This respects the right of the congregation, order or diocese in question to decide how to preserve their memory. It simply provides a platform for collaboration on the promotion of archives. This allows it to have as wide

an appeal as possible, and goes some way to explain the interest so far.



Browsing digital images: a random selection

In terms of progress on the catalogues, the Capuchins and Passionists have uploaded a large amount so far, with the others at initial stages. The progress can depend on the method with which archives have catalogued before, or whether they have already catalogued at all. In any case, anyone joining the site will help provide researchers with a rich historical resource in the years to come.

Matthew Bruton (Archivist, Passionist Congregation and webmaster for catholicarchives.ie)



'Archivists and Historians: Common Challenges, Common Opportunities' A workshop, 29 October 2021

This day-long online workshop aimed at bringing archivists and historians together, to discuss issues common to both professions, was held on 29 October 2021. It comprised three thematic panels, followed by a roundtable discussion, and was the second event in a series of initiatives to foster cross-disciplinary reflection and

engagement by archivists and historians, and those from related fields, respecting the relationship between the closely-linked, but distinct, fields. (The first workshop, organised by Dr John Jeremiah Cronin and Dr Ciarán McCabe, was held in Maynooth University in 2017, under the auspices of the Irish Association of Professional Historians).



IAPH Home page

The first panel, entitled 'Exploring Prison History and Memory', focused on bringing new perspectives to the records of officialdom through a case study of the Prisons Memory Archive (PMA). Led by Professor Cathal McLaughlin of Queen's University Belfast, the PMA comprises more than 150 audio-visual recordings, filmed at the sites of Armagh Gaol and the Maze/Long Kesh Prison from 2006 onwards. Speakers David Huddleston and Kate Keane of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) explained how the archive was transferred to PRONI in 2020 to facilitate greater access. Guided by three ethical principles — Inclusivity, Co-Ownership, and Life Storytelling — the collection includes contributions from a wide range of experiences and viewpoints.

Varied perspectives on religious archives and institutional care served as the focus of the second panel. The

role of religious archives — and their custodians — in respect of access to materials is frequently misperceived, a fact addressed by Noelle Dowling of the Dublin Diocesan Archives (DDA). Her paper considered the archivist as an advocate and as a guide for the researcher, while negotiating complexities of access, restrictions, digitisation, resourcing and GDPR. Among Dowling's collaborators is Lindsey Earner-Byrne, Professor of Irish Gender History at University College Cork, whose work on the charity letters to Archbishop of Dublin Edward Byrne between 1921–40 (held in the DDA) resulted in her monograph, *Letters of the Catholic Poor: Poverty in Independent Ireland, 1920–1940* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).



Some of the tweets on the day...

Professor Earner-Byrne's paper explored the importance of understanding sources within their archival contexts, using the charity letters in the Archbishop Byrne papers as a case study, with a view to understanding the relationship between source, collection, archive and historian. The final paper in this panel comprised a joint presentation between historian Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley and archivist Dr Barry Houlihan (both of NUI Galway), who discussed their ongoing Tuam Oral History Project (TOHP). This paper provided an

overview of archival methodologies regarding the management of sensitive oral history content, from survivor testimony to institutional records and from ethics to access, as utilised within the Tuam Oral History Project (TOHP); their paper also discussed the importance of consent and language within the project.



Innovative approaches to access of materials formed the unifying link between the three contributors to the third panel. Firstly, Dr Neil Johnston (The National Archives, Kew) discussed the importance of understanding the administrative and bureaucratic mechanics of British rule in Ireland in the context of the loss of records in the Public Records Office of Ireland (PROI) fire of June 1922; he then suggested that recent cataloguing work undertaken at Kew has uncovered vast swathes of Irish or Irish-related records, especially litigation records, where Irish cases were heard at Westminster. As equity cases were determined on the weight of evidence, cases heard at Chancery often included significant amounts of detail that are ripe for exploitation by historians of Ireland. Running into the thousands, this collection will be used to illustrate how the PROI collections can begin to be reimagined, if not always recreated. This paper dove-tailed perfectly with the discussion by Dr Ciarán Wallace

(Trinity College Dublin) of the transformative work of the Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury, which is creating a virtual reconstruction of the destroyed PROI. Dr Wallace's conclusion was that archivists and historians have much to learn from collaborating not only in creating virtual databases, such as Beyond 2022, but in accessing and interpreting the metadata contained therein. Innovation in the provision of access to materials was also at the heart of the paper by Damien Burke (Irish Jesuit Archives), who outlined how, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Jesuit Archives introduced virtual access to collections for researchers and what this experience offers for future archival access.



The workshop concluded with a roundtable discussion, in which the four participants — Virginia Teehan (Chief Executive Officer, Heritage Council); Professor John McCafferty (UCD and chairman of the Irish Manuscripts Commission); Cécile Chemin (Military Archives); and Kieran Hoare (Irish Committee of Historical Sciences) — reflected on the nature of the archivist-historian relationship. It is hoped to pursue a publication arising from the workshop

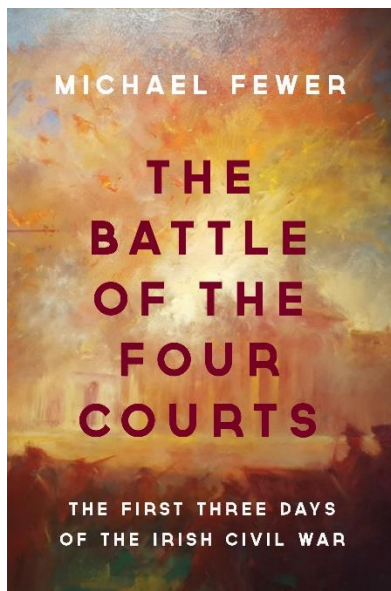
'Archivists and Historians: Common Challenges, Common Opportunities' was held in association with the Irish Association of Professional Historians, the UCD School of History, the Humanities Institute UCD and Offaly History. Joint organisers were Dr Elizabeth Mullins (School of History, UCD), Dr John Jeremiah Cronin (Dundalk IT), Lisa Shortall (Offaly Archives), and Dr Ciarán McCabe (DCU). We are also grateful to the Irish Society for Archives and the Archives and Records Association, Ireland for organising members to serve as panel co-chairs.

Dr Ciarán McCabe (Historian, Dublin City University)



ISA NEWS

- The AGM to be held on Thursday, 5 May, 6pm (online). It will be followed by a lecture by Michael Fewer on the Battle of the Four Courts



How to become an ISA member

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Deirdre O'Connell at
ISAsubscription@gmail.com
or by post c/o National Archives,
Bishop Street, Dublin 8

Rates

Individual €30

Institutional €45

Student/Retired €15

- The ISA journal *Irish Archives* will be launched by Aideen Ireland on Monday, 23 May, at the Irish Architectural Archive, Merrion Square, Dublin.

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