

Welcome to the biannual ISA Newsletter, Spring 2018!

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The Archivist and the Historian:

A one-day event organised by the Irish Association of Professional Historians (27 October 2017, National University of Ireland, Maynooth)

Over the last while traditional and social media have been agape at the scale and vision of the "Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury" project. Publicly announced in February 2017 and launched last month, it seeks to digitally reconstruct the buildings and collections of the Public Record Office of Ireland that were destroyed in 1922. Furthermore, this project, a co-operation between Trinity College Dublin, the National Archives of Ireland, the UK National Archives, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the Irish Manuscripts Commission and the Irish Research Council, highlights the vast potential for co-operation between archivists, historians and computer scientists. Irish archivists and historians were afforded an early glimpse of this

endeavour when Dr Ciarán Wallace spoke about it at the above workshop.



Tom Quinlan, Dr Jacinta Prunty, Dr Ciarán Wallace, Prof Raymond Gillespie, Dr Elizabeth Mullins, Barbara McCormack, and Dr Benjamin Hazard

"The Archivist and the Historian" had a number of goals. It sought to examine various aspects of the relationship between archivists and historians, to have archivists explain to historians how they go about their job and what their main concerns are while doing so, to address the most common challenges that researchers pose for archivists and, last but not least, examine the possibilities for greater co-operation between both sets of professionals. The whole thing owed its origins to this writer's previous experience with working in a private archive. Miraculously, he did no (real) damage to the treasure trove of material put in his care, and the experience inspired this workshop, with Dr Ciaran McCabe as co-organiser.

The event itself was staged with assistance from the Department of History in Maynooth University and the MA in Archives and Records Management programme of UCD, and the organisers wish to thank Dr Jacinta Prunty of the

former, and Dr Liz Mullins of the latter programme. Most importantly, the day's proceedings benefitted from a sizeable audience who were more than willing to give their fellow attendees the benefit of their own experience. It has to be said that the bulk of attendees came from the field of archives and record management, with historians (a shy and timid bunch of people) being somewhat underrepresented.



The early morning session focussed on co-operation between those who seek to protect archives and those who seek to plunder them in the most scholarly way possible. Harriet Wheelock, archivist with the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), commenced the day with an account of the fruitful co-operation between the RCPI archive and the Centre for the History of Medicine of Ireland (CHOMI). Dr Benjamin Hazard described a past example of such a collaboration, with his paper on the Irish Oversea Archive in University College Dublin between 1954 and 1972. That session was rounded off with a splendid joint paper by

Barbara McCormack (librarian) and Nicola Kelly (archivist), who spoke about their successful outreach programmes allowing historians and others to see the workings of both the Russell Library and the OPW-Castletown House Archive.

After the break the day took a slightly more sinister turn for historians. On either side of Dr Ciarán Wallace's aforementioned talk, stimulating presentations were made by Brian Casey and Tom Quinlan. Brian Casey, an historian turned archivist (surely the scholarly equivalent of that most unavoidable of clichés, a poacher turned gamekeeper) gave an enlightening talk on the sometimes-fraught relationship between historical researchers and private archives, laying particular emphasis on how the former sometimes show a poor understanding of the legal dimensions of accessing and using material from such a repository. Tom Quinlan, Keeper and archivist at the National Archives, Ireland, for his part, entertainingly disabused any listening historians of the belief that archivists were mere servants of the latter, drawing attention to how his work in the State's central repository saw him dealing far more frequently with genealogists, grave mandarins in government administrative departments and legal-minded types concerned with data protection issues. The latter point was particularly highlighted, as the impending introduction of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation has the potential to

affect the range of material that can be made available to researchers.

After lunch there ensued an enjoyable round table discussion, chaired by Prof Raymond Gillespie of Maynooth University's Department of History. One historian present controversially claimed at this stage that the burning of the Public Record Office in 1922 was the best thing that ever happened Irish historians, as it helped ensure that the latter had a manageable body of records to deal with. Archivists at the event, however, chose not to interpret this as a potential call to set their paper-filled repositories aflame, and thus underscored further the good-natured character of the whole proceedings.

Thus ended the day. From the perspective of the IAPH the whole event was a marked success and we hope to see you at our next such crossover event.

Dr John J Cronin, historian (IAPH)

[4,000-year old Ballybit Vessel returns to County Carlow](#)

[The vessel's trans-Atlantic journey is revealed in the County Museum's archival collection](#)

Carlow County Museum has received on loan from the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) the 4,000-year old hand-made 'Ballybit Vessel'. This is an Early Bronze-Age pottery vessel found in 1862 on the estate of Col, Bunbury, Lisnavagh, Rathvilly, County Carlow. It had a most extraordinary journey

since it was found in the 1860s until it was presented to the NMI in 1928.

The Ballybit Vessel did not come to light as the result of an archaeological excavation but was found by chance under a large granite boulder weighing two tonnes which may have been part of a cist burial. In an article published in the Journal of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland in 1862, the Ballybit Vessel was described 'as sound and fresh in its appearance (without a flaw) as it was when it left the hands of the ancient Celtic potter'. The Bowl Tradition, to which the Ballybit Vessel belongs, is a specific style of pottery dated to the earlier part of the Bronze Age (2500 to 1500BC).

Decorated with incised lines and short lines of comb impressions, the vessel is classified as a ribbed bowl, a term applied to a category of bowl with three or more horizontal ribs on its exterior. It has been in the NMI since 1928 but between 1862 and 1928 it undertook an extraordinary journey of several thousand miles!



The 4,000-year old Ballybit Vessel which crossed the Atlantic twice (image: Carlow County Museum)

Some years ago, some of the personal papers of Mr. Edward O'Toole (d. 1943), former principal of Rathvilly National School were donated to Carlow County Museum by his granddaughter, Noreen O'Keeffe. Ms O'Keeffe had published his memoirs *Whist for your life, that's treason. Recollections of a long life* in 2003. While cataloguing these papers, Museum staff discovered in Edward O'Toole's manuscript book, entitled the 'History of Rathvilly', his description of the surprising history of the journey undertaken by the vessel after it was discovered.

Edward explains that the finder of the vessel, a Mr. Lynch, presented the vessel to Colonel Bunbury. It was then presented to Mr Smyth of Little Moyle, near Kellistown, by Colonel Bunbury. Upon the death of Mr Smyth, the vessel was given to Robert Bell, an auctioneer in Carlow town who in turn presented it to his brother-in-law, Mr Hobson who lived in New York. As there was no air service between Ireland and America at this time, the pottery vessel would have crossed the Atlantic Ocean by boat. Some years later, upon Mr Hobson's death, the vessel was returned from New York, again by boat, to Robert Bell in Carlow. Edward O'Toole then wrote to the National Museum informing them of the artefact and Robert Bell presented the Ballybit Vessel to them in 1928. Amazingly, this 4,000-year old object that travelled thousands of miles is still in perfect condition!

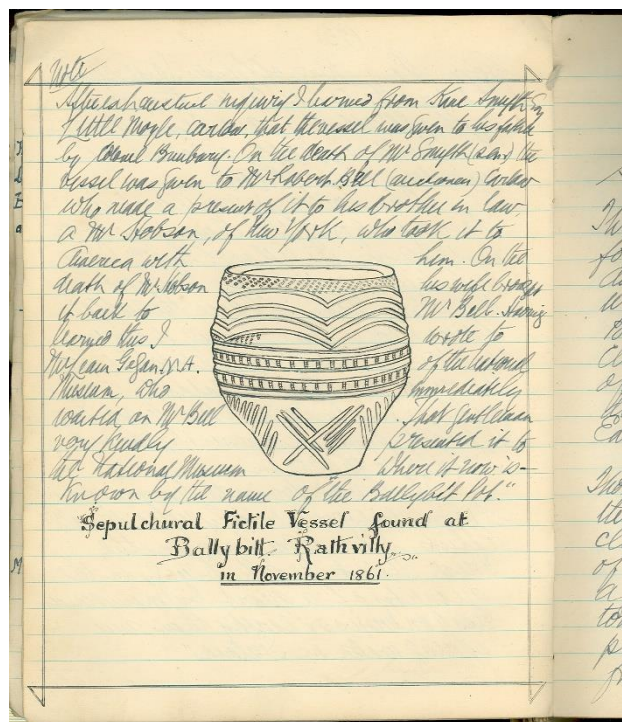
Isabella Mulhall of the Irish Antiquities Division of the National Museum and a native of Tullow, County Carlow said "it is a wonderful opportunity to display this immaculately preserved vessel in its county of origin", and that the research undertaken by both the staff of Carlow County Museum and Edward O'Toole served to highlight the remarkable journey that the object had undergone since its discovery in 1862. She added that "it was quite incredible that the vessel had remained perfectly intact throughout the 150 years since its discovery and that it was a testimony to the skills of the potter who manufactured it. The Ballybit Vessel, undoubtedly adds yet another dimension to the rich legacy of prehistoric Carlow".



The Board of Carlow Museum, with Pat Deering TD, a native of Ballybit: Noreen Whelan, Gary Hughes, Cllr Walter Lacey, Cllr Andrea Dalton, Dr Séamus Ó Murchú, Cllr Fergal Browne, John Shortall, Pat Deering TD, and Dermot Mulligan (image: Carlow County Museum)

Under the National Monuments Acts (1930 and 2004), all archaeological objects are the property of the Irish state. This is enforced by

the National Museum of Ireland. In recent decades, the National Museum has 'designated' twelve of our county and city museums to also collect and display archaeological finds from their particular county. Carlow County Museum has been designated since 2003 and has many archaeological objects from Carlow's past on display. This includes a special exhibition on the excavated finds from the construction of the Carlow Bypass entitled 'Journeys in Time' that was developed by the Museum in association with the National Museum and Transport Infrastructure Ireland.



Handwritten page from Edward O'Toole's 'History of Rathvilly' (image: Carlow County Museum)

The 'Ballybit Vessel', along with the rest of the displays, can be viewed in the County Museum on College Street, Carlow town, free of admission.

Dermot Mulligan, Museum Curator (Carlow County Museum)

The Irish Revenue Police:

New publication listing the 'Poteen Hussars', and the research it took to bring it about

The idea of compiling a genealogical guide to the Irish Revenue Police developed from a variety of experiences. In compiling my three books on the Royal Irish Constabulary 1816-1922 (85,028 members) and two books on the Dublin Metropolitan Police 1836-1925 (12,566 members), I encountered the names of additional policemen who served between the 1830s and the 1850s, in the Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers (CSORP), National Archives. Their names could not be matched with RIC registered numbers of service or with DMP warrant numbers. Also, when looking at death certificates of Irish policemen between 1864 and 1900 in the General Registrar's Office, I noticed that the occupation listed on some of the death certificates was 'revenue policeman', and in the RIC registers of service in particular I found that several Irish Constabulary members who joined on and after 1 October 1857 had an additional date of enlistment prior to that date.

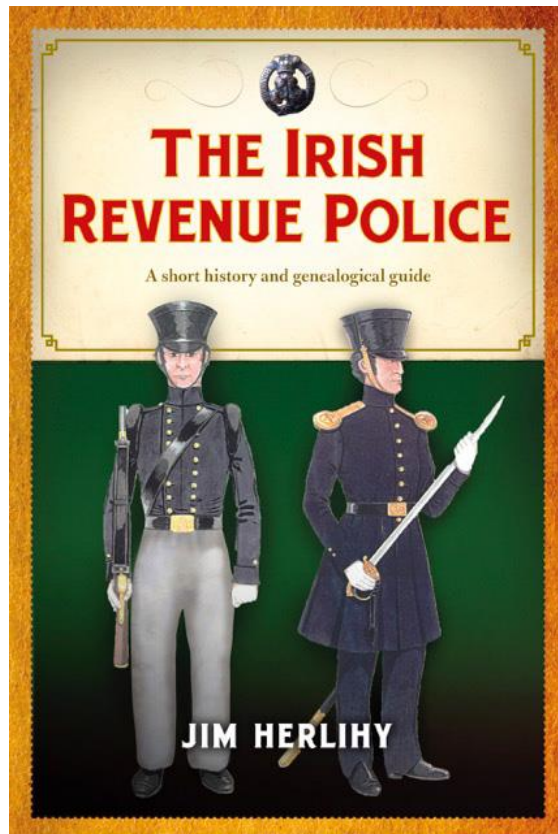
This was in fact the date of disbandment of the Irish Revenue Police. On examining the RIC rank-and-file registers of service, I found that a total of 519 revenue policemen had transferred to the Irish Constabulary on and after that date. On checking the Royal Irish Constabulary officers' registers, I found that 28 former lieutenants of the revenue police transferred to the constabulary as 3rd class

sub-inspectors. On checking the Dublin Metropolitan Police register of service, I found that 48 DMP men had served in the Irish Revenue Police. Another very valuable source was *The Irish Constabulary list and directory*, published biannually from 1840 to 1921 which also contains information on other government departments, including the Irish Revenue Police from 1840 to 1857. In 1999, I was in the Public Record Office (now the National Archives) in Kew, Richmond, Surrey, and on searching the catalogue, I found a complete list of Irish Revenue Policemen who enlisted between 1830 and 1857. The records were catalogued under Customs and Excise (CUST 111) and contained the names of approximately 4,000 men. The manner in which these records had been compiled was much different to the service registers of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, in that Irish Revenue Policemen were not allocated unique sequential service numbers. I copied the index of the revenue policemen, made a database in strict alphabetical order, and added the names of those I had found in *The Royal Irish Constabulary list and directory*; those who had transferred to the Irish Constabulary or to the Dublin Metropolitan Police.



Button used by the Irish Revenue Police (image: National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks)

Then I made contact with Brian Donovan of Eneclann, who was instrumental in securing the digitisation of these records at The National Archives (UK), thus making them easily accessible through *findmypast.ie*.



The forthcoming book, with colour illustrations by the late F Glenn Thompson

In order to compile a complete alphabetical index of names of all IRP men who joined between 1830 and 1857 without having a unique number for each, I chose to add the enlistment date of each member as a starting point for the researcher. In cases where several persons of the same fore-and surnames enlisted, I have chosen to include the earliest date of enlistment for each individual.

One of the files in Kew (CUST 111) contains the names of 496 members who were awarded gratuities on disbandment in 1857. More importantly, the revenue party they were attached at that time is also given, which is of enormous benefit to the researcher in identifying the exact place where individual IRP men resided in 1857, seven years before the commencement of civil registration in Ireland.



Sword hilt used by the Irish Revenue Police (image: National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks)

To put the Irish Revenue Police into context, the key dates to remember in its history of suppressing of illicit distillation are 1787, when the first organized attempts were made on a voluntary basis; 1818, when the first purpose-built revenue police stations were secured; 1824, when excise commissions were

awarded to revenue police lieutenants enabling them to operate separately to excise officers, in charge of revenue police parties; 1830, when the Board of Excise revenue police personnel records commence; 1836, when there were major structural changes to the force; and 1857, when the Irish Revenue Police was disbanded, its role then taken over by the Irish Constabulary. The successful administration of the IRP was primarily due to the appointment of Chief Inspector William Brereton in 1836. He completely revamped the force, establishing a training depot in Clonliffe, Dublin and devising a code of instructions, thereby fixing accountability for every action of each member of the force.

For further contextualisation, the book has 24 appendices: for instance, I included in this book the observations and recommendations of Cap Thomas Drummond (1797–1840), later Under Secretary for Ireland, who had encountered illicit distillation when he was posted to various places in Ulster as an army officer and civil engineer engaged in the Trigonometrical Survey of Ireland during the 1820s. As a case study, I also included the reminiscences of Matthew Power who served in the Irish Revenue Police as a lieutenant (1847-1854).

Tracing an ancestor in Ireland involves identifying the "paper trail" made during the person's lifetime. In the case of the Irish Revenue Policemen, this can be difficult as

their careers predate civil registration in Ireland (beginning on 1 January 1864), and as the relevant census forms 1821-1851 were destroyed in 1922. The purpose of this book, then, is to at least name and remember those who served government in what was then a thankless occupation.

The Irish Revenue Police: 1830-1857. A complete alphabetical list, short history & genealogical guide to the 'Poteen Hussars' will be published this month by Four Courts Press, Dublin.

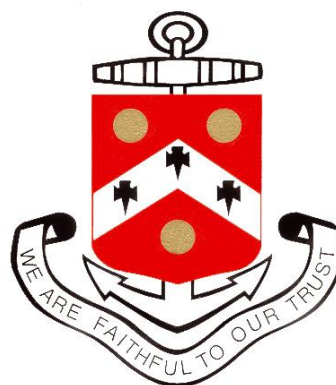
Jim Herlihy, Irish police historian and retired member of An Garda Síochána

[Erasmus Smith Schools Archive](#) [A change of name for this Dublin repository](#)

What has been previously known as the Erasmus Smith Trust Archive will now be named the Erasmus Smith Schools Archive. The shift from Trust to Schools is to better reflect charity regulations as after a recent legal review it was felt that the existing name did not reflect the workings of the organisation or how it is referred to in legal papers. As a result, there is a new website and email contact available at www.erasmusmithschools.ie.

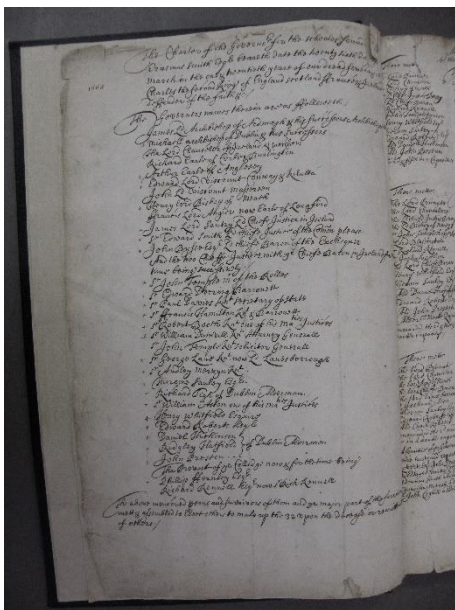
As a matter of fact, there has never been an entity legally called 'The Erasmus Smith Trust' and the other name 'The Governors of the Schools founded by Erasmus Smith

Esquire' has been long out of use outside of financial documents. To better reflect existing legal terminology, the "1938 Erasmus Smith Schools Act" was taken as the best place to start. The Trust will therefore be known as "Erasmus Smith Schools" which also connects better with how the former schools were always known locally. The word "Trust" will not disappear of course as it is on the crest motto "We Are Faithful to Our Trust".



This motto is part of the school crest for The High School, Dublin in Rathgar where the archive is located. The school was the last one established since the charity started funding school development in the mid-17th century and so bears this motto. The relationship with the school extends from general record management through to class visits to illustrate, for example the difference between primary and secondary research methods for history classes. The material held is too subject-specific to fit into curriculum projects or topics – Transition-Year students did however build a significant website detailing former pupils who died during World War I.

Accessing pupil records such as entry forms, address books and fee ledgers help map out their time at the school. Online genealogical and war record sites helped fill in the war career of many. The school magazine also served to provide lists of servicemen who were recorded for half of the war, and further insight into military careers.

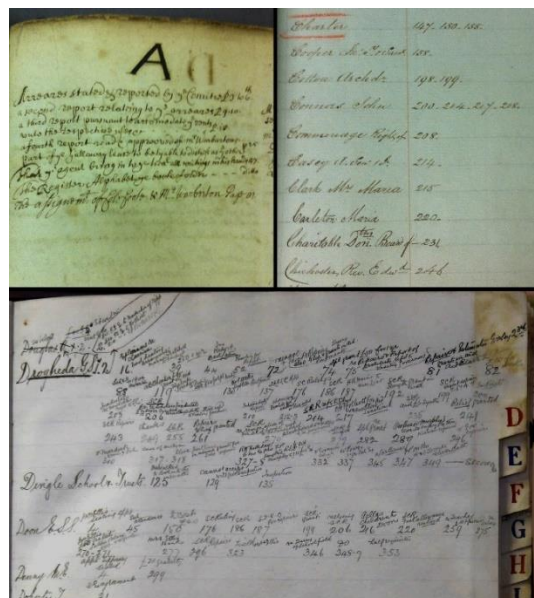


First page of the School Archive's first Board Register, listing its Governors from 1668 (image: Erasmus Smith Schools Archive)

Researchers who use the archive tend to come primarily from education history and land history, often with an interest in specific individuals but not from a genealogical perspective. Since our Board of Governors' minutes or registers start in 1674 there is a limited but varied range of topics and people in the records, but outside of teachers, scholarship students and tenant lists there is very little personal information.

Having said that it is always amazing how even one reference to a name can be of enormous help.

Finding researchers (or rather them finding us) can be difficult but with the new website more finding aids related to our holdings will be put online. One project will be to digitise the indexes of the Board registers. There are 12 volumes that have indexes and while these seemed at first to be a straightforward task it has proved more complicated.



Three samples of index lists (image: Erasmus Smith Schools Archive)

The indexes are all different for the various volumes, with a variety of different subheadings that are not consistent. This makes a database to record the "keywords" tricky, coupled with the limited resources at hand. A full digitising project was beyond the means and scope of this small institution but once the procedure is figured out it should be a valuable resource.

The image below was the most significant discovery of last year as it is the only one that shows pupils of the primary schools funded by Erasmus Smith Schools. The birth of photography coincides with the decline of the schools, and their rural nature and relatively short lifespan meant there were no photographs in our holdings. This image is from Doon English School, near Knocknacarriga and Cappamore, County Limerick, circa 1907. The photograph shows



Doon School, County Limerick (image: Brian Ellis) the pupils in their Sunday best with the teacher Elizabeth A Ellis, back row, second from the right. Our records show that the school was open from 1867 to 1918.

Alan Phelan, Archivist (Erasmus Smith Schools Archive)

[ISA Seminar 2017](#)

Commemorating 90 Years of the Dublin Gate Theatre

The 2017 ISA journal, *Irish Archives* launched last November, was dedicated to the 90-year history of the ESB. This year's journal will

celebrate the Dublin Gate Theatre likewise computing 90 years since foundation, and to that end, a seminar was held at the Dublin City Library and Archive (DCLA) on 13 February. A large audience enjoyed five lively and in parts even theatrical papers about the Gate and its founders. Margaret Hayes, Dublin City Librarian, and Ray Refaussé, ISA Chairman, welcomed listeners and handed over to Hugh Linehan, Arts and Culture Editor at the *Irish Times*, maitre de cérémonie for the evening. He did not need to remind the audience that the Gate Theatre had sadly been featured in the news lately – for all the wrong reasons– but found that this provided a good reason to look back at what the Gate meant and continues to mean to Irish cultural life.

Dr David Clare (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick) began with a paper on three successful but now neglected and nearly forgotten women playwrights whose oeuvre was produced by the Gate: Mary Manning, Christine Longford, and Maura Laverty. Introducing the writers and presenting short dialogues from one play each, he had the audience convinced that comedy of this calibre ought to be revived! Colette O'Flaherty (Keeper of Archival Collections, National Library of Ireland) showed how many of her institution's collections of playwrights, actors, and theatre-goers, provide a multitude of perspectives on the Gate, but especially including the collection of Micheál Mac Liammóir himself, and those pertaining to

Joseph Holloway, a collector and diarist, and of John Jordan, poet and literary critic.



Micheál Mac Liammóir and Hilton Edwards outside the Gate Theatre, 1974 (image: Irish Theatre Archives, DCLA)

Barry Houlihan (archivist, James Hardiman Library, NUI, Galway) reported on the ongoing digitisation of the Gate Theatre Archives, but also on the various perspectives on the Gate provided by this repository's other theatre collections, most prominently those of An Taibhdhearc, Siobhán McKenna, and Thomas Kilroy.

Des Lally (NUI, Galway) alerted the audience to the very large tranche of memorabilia and papers which Mac Liammóir and Hilton Edwards sold to the Northwestern University, Illinois, at a time of financial straits. The Dublin Gate Theatre Papers (1928-1979) at the university's Charles Deering Memorial Library offer the researcher as it were a swab of the Gate's DNA, so Lally. Finally, Dr Mary Clark (Dublin City Archivist), expressed her delight that Irish universities have changed their attitudes to theatre archives tremendously

since 1978 when the Gate celebrated its Golden Jubilee. The Irish Theatre Archives were founded at Dublin City Library and Archives, and contain a sizeable number of theatre collections, including those of actors Christopher Casson and Patrick McLarnon, and notably those of Patricia Turner, personal assistant to Mac Liammóir and Edwards.

Each paper was generously illustrated with photographs of stage productions and with Mac Liammóir's captivating drawings and sketches, proving that he was a superb and imaginative draughtsman as well as a humorous correspondent.

The panel discussion touched on the two founders' huge energy, diligence and courtesy; while also broadening out to the archives of the Abbey Theatre, and the theatre company of the Longfords who for a time partnered with the Gate. The lack of any archives belonging to the Longfords was much regretted by members of the audience and panellists alike.



Panellists and others at the event: Margaret Hayes, Barry Houlihan, Hugh Linehan, Dr Mary Clark, Dr David Clare, Des Lally, and Colette O'Flaherty (image: DCLA)

The five talks were short and served to whet listeners' appetites for the journal itself which will be published in November. In the meantime, Dublin City Library and Archives will host an exhibition about Mac Liammóir (see next article).

Vera Moynes, archivist and ISA Newsletter Editor

Anyone wishing to join the Irish Society for Archives should apply for **membership** to:

Antoinette Doran

Membership Secretary

National Archives of Ireland

Bishop Street

Dublin 8

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Exhibition

Aspects of Micheál: Mac Liammóir and the Dublin Gate Theatre

Dublin City Library and Archive is curating this exhibition based on its Gate Theatre collections, especially those of Patricia Turner, and Sheila and Carmel Leahy. All three women were close to Edwards and Mac Liammóir and their collections offer a personal insight to illuminate their work and energy. The exhibition will run in the Dublin Room, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2, from 8 May to 30 June 2018.

Mary Clark, City Archivist (DCLA)



Micheál Mac Liammóir's costume design for Gay & Pepusch's *The Beggar's Opera*

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