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80 Years of Professional Education Branching Out Achievements 1997-2007

Joseph O'Connor and Library Ireland Week 2008
Cybersocial Networks
News from the Stacks



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Front cover: Collage of new buildings, courtesy of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna. Clockwise from top left, Bishopstown Library, Ballinamore Library, Watch House Cross Library, Malahide Library, Bunclody Library, The Source Library and Arts Centre, Waterford Library and centre image, Tubercurry Library
Back cover: Students gathering for Professor Mary Burke's lecture in Second Life during Library Ireland Week.

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Guidelines For Contributors

An Leabharlann: The Irish Library publishes articles on libraries, librarianship and other topics of interest to the library and information community on the island of Ireland. The Editorial Board invites original, unpublished articles for publication. Articles should be between 1,500 and 5,000 words. Occasionally, longer articles may be published.

Articles

Manuscripts will be reviewed by the Editorial Board.

Authors are asked to submit an informative abstract of not more than 200 words. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of statements and references in their articles.

Images which visually support the article are welcomed. Authors should also submit a photograph of themselves. Original photographs and/or high-resolution scans (300 dpi) would be most helpful.

Format

Manuscripts should be submitted by email attachment or on disc as Rich Text File (RTF). Text should be formatted in Times New Roman 12 pt., double-spaced, with margins of 2.54cm (i.e. standard A4 margins). Formatting of text (e.g. italics and bold) should be kept to a minimum.

Authors should provide their name, organization, position and the title of the article at the top of the first page. If the article was presented at a conference, details of the sponsoring organization, the date and title of the conference should be given.

Book reviews should include the full title, author or editor, publication details and price.

Conference reports should include details such as the sponsoring organization, the date, place and title of the conference.

Style

Microsoft Word and other word processing programs allow for a language to be selected. Please ensure that the language selected is either UK or Ireland English (i.e. NOT United States English).

The Oxford Style Manual should be followed for acronyms, capitalization, captions, punctuation, quotations and tables.

An Leabharlann: The Irish Library uses the Harvard system for references.

Editing

An Leabharlann: The Irish Library reserves the right to make revisions and amendments.

Substantive changes to articles will be discussed with the author. For consistency, all material submitted will be copy-edited.

For additional information on style and referencing, please consult: Ritter, R.M. (Ed.). (2003) *The Oxford Style Manual*. Oxford: OUP

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2009 issues

31 December 2008 for March issue

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As I write this editorial, it is impossible to escape the realities of a global economy in trouble. Each day we hear of yet more business collapses as a result of the credit crisis. In the domestic economy, we are only too aware of the effects of a slow-down in the construction industry. There are gloomy economic forecasts, falling house prices and the effects of earlier high oil prices on a range of goods. At this stage, it is accepted that we are in a recession.

Many commentators are suggesting that there should be greater efficiencies in the public service. While some would suggest cutbacks, many are also aware that any cutback in education would be detrimental to long-term growth and competitiveness. Education and libraries are investments for the future.

The results of major investment in public libraries can be seen in Norma McDermott's comprehensive article on public library development. The article details developments in infrastructure and services in the context of *Branching Out: a new public library service*. Joseph O'Connor's address notes the importance of libraries to his father as he grew up in 1940s Dublin. The libraries mentioned are the result of earlier investments.

Conference reports reflect the breadth of LAI members' activities. Future directions of service provision are themes running through the reports from the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) conference and that from European Association of Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL). A pictorial report from the Joint Conference 2008 is also included.

Future LIS developments in cyber space are considered in two short articles on cybersocial networks. The use of virtual worlds may be a way of attracting and retaining the interest of our digital native users and, perhaps, non-users.

Demonstrating value of library services is another recurring theme- in Norma McDermott's article and in the BIALL report. In the current economic climate, this issue is important for all sectors. Academic, corporate, health, public, school and special libraries all need to show the added value the library service can provide. Public libraries are certainly on the government agenda as evidenced by the continuing commitment in

Branching Out: Future Directions. We need to have all libraries on the political agenda.

Inspiration flows through the articles and reports- library buildings, particular books or conference papers. Inspirational librarians who were instrumental in establishing and contributing to the growth of the Library Association of Ireland can be seen in Deirdre Ellis-King's paper on the evolution of professional education for public library staff. Investment in continuing professional development is necessary to ensure that all library users can benefit from best international practice in librarianship.



This month is the 80th Anniversary of the foundation of the Library Association of Ireland. To mark the occasion, a list of all Presidents 1929-2008 is included.

In this issue, I have started a news column entitled *News from the Stacks*. The items included will be of general LIS interest rather than an events listing.

In the March 2009 issue, there will be an increase in the number of books reviewed. These will include four recent IFLA publications. As we welcome EAHIL Workshop to Dublin next June, it is hoped to have some articles on medical librarianship.

I would like to record my thanks to the Editorial Board for their advice. I am especially grateful to Marian Keyes, LAI Development Manager who has again managed the production and distribution of this issue. Thanks also to Alun Bevan (An Chomhairle Leabharlanna), Carmen Morlon (EBLIDA) and Alastair Smeaton (Dublin City Public Libraries) for providing information and photographs and to Mary Sliney for proof-reading.

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Tracing the Path of Public



The Library Association of Ireland (LAI) was founded on the 28 October 1928 in Dublin's Mansion House, at a meeting which was held under the auspices of the Irish Local Government Officials' Union.¹ The decision was not of course, sudden. An early catalysing agent may indeed be observed in the (UK) Library Association meeting held in Dublin on 1 October 1884. Delegates attended the formal openings of libraries at Capel Street and Thomas Street. Locally driven catalysing agents existed in previous associations with similar interests, and in meetings at which the foundations for development were laid, most notably Cumann Leabharlann na hEireann, formed in 1904 at Kevin Street Library. This organisation had the honour and foresight of having been publisher of the first *An Leabharlann* (1905-1909). The Irish Rural Libraries Association, founded in April 1904 at the Mansion House, Dublin, can also be considered as a likely formative agent, as can a 1923 meeting of County Librarians held in University College Dublin (UCD). However, a 1927 general meeting of library officers in local government, held with the objective of forming a library service branch of the Irish Local Government Officials' Union must be seen as seminal. It was at this meeting, chaired by Thomas Gay of Dublin City Libraries, that the groundwork was laid for an Association which, in its Constitution, envisaged the role of the newly formed Library Association of Ireland, among other objectives, as being 'to promote whatever may tend to the improvement of the position or qualifications of librarians.'²

These were certainly heady times with 'open access' not too long in place and the development of the 'County Library' system underway. The need for co-ordination and the benefits of co-operative effort were clear. So too was the need for training, and it may be observed that the initiative of setting up a School of Library Training at UCD in 1928, can be coupled with the initiative of forming the Library Association of Ireland, both possibly having their origin, or at least their inspiration, in the same 1923 and 1927 meetings.

The journal of the Association, *An Leabharlann*, dating from 1930 to 1978, provided the primary source of research material for this paper.³ Indeed, *An Leabharlann* proved to be a fascinating journal of record in its early days, showing an evolving LAI focus on what was termed, 'library training', this gradually moving from emphasis on the need for staff to acquire professional competencies, to a realization that professional qualification needed to be an

essential requirement for those carrying out professional duties. Given the changing pattern of library development, a picture emerges from the record of changing nomenclature in line with a maturing profession. The picture is one which depicts progression along a path on which achieving library training opportunity was the goal, to one on which, with gathering momentum, the objective was determined to be that of gaining, as a norm, professional qualification in librarianship. However, progression to the point where professional qualification was accepted as being essential, took place over fifty years of what may be described as battles of differing opinion. These battles seem largely to tell a story about public libraries, but it would be erroneous to assume that to be the case, since for much of the eighty years of the Library Association of Ireland, not a single Librarian to a university in Ireland held a professional qualification. Indeed, Máirín O'Byrne, (LAI President, 1966-67), writing in respect of an advertisement for a post at university level in 1985, notes that it stated only that a professional qualification, would be 'an advantage' (1985). Given such a background, the battle to recognise the need for professional qualification may be observed to have been one of common interest to all librarians.

The librarians of 1928 were in fact, far seeing. Notwithstanding the Association's origins within a framework of local government, the Association's history and its story of movement towards professional recognition is one of inclusion of librarians in all sectors of the profession as evidenced by the composition of early Councils of the Library Association of Ireland and its governing body, the Executive Board. The

Professional Education for Library Staff: 1928 – 2008

Presidential Address by Deirdre Ellis-King at Joint Conference of Library Association of Ireland and CILIP Ireland,
Athlone 2008

National Library, the Royal Irish Academy, the Universities, the Royal Dublin Society and the School of Library Training at University College Dublin, were all represented in the Association by people who were proactive in their engagement with the issues of the day, professional qualification of course being a critical issue. In their involvement, those founding members of the LAI looked outwards, and indeed as early as 1929, following a meeting at the Library Association Conference in the UK, the LAI set up a Liaison Committee with colleagues in Northern Ireland. So the path towards professional education in the public library sector was broad based, with all LAI members, regardless of sectoral interest, offering support for professionalism, all striving to raise professional standards in a young, but growing profession.

As a consequence, co-operation between the LAI and University College Dublin was strong and the School was proactive over many years in holding summer schools for library staff from rural areas who found difficulty in attending full, or indeed, part-time courses. A summer school, the second of its kind, was held in UCD in 1930, the syllabus being advertised in *An Leabharlann*. Evidently, the issue of geography, defined as the physical distance of its members from access to educational opportunity, was a serious one which exercised the mind of the Executive Board. As early as 1930, the Executive Board had under consideration the preparation of a scheme for correspondence classes in library training.

In this context, it is important to note that even prior to 1928, there were many librarians in Ireland, particularly in Dublin, who had obtained professional qualifications, through correspondence courses with the (UK) Library Association. One such individual was David Barry of Dublin, a founding member of the LAI who held the Diploma of the (UK) Library

Association. The 1930s were of course pioneering days in Librarianship, even revolutionary, bearing in mind that between September 1929 and March 1930, acting under enabling legislation, five additional 'County library' systems were formed within that short time-frame, leaving only three still without provision. The need for qualified staff was vital.

The foundation of the UCD School of Library Training in 1928 had however begun to make an early impact. By 1930, people such as P.B. (Brendan) Glynn and P.J. Stephenson⁴ (both Dublin City Libraries) received the Diploma in Library Training.

The beneficial effect of proximity of Dublin based students to UCD can perhaps also be seen in the appointment of Dermot Foley (Dublin) to the position of County Librarian in Clare. Foley⁵ was ultimately appointed to the position of Director of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna/The Library Council where he was influential in the move towards professionalism within Irish public librarianship. The appointment in 1933, of Eugene Carberry (Dublin City) who graduated in 1932 as a Fellow of the Library Association, to Cork City Library, further suggests the benefit of access to professional education from an east coast sea route base, offering opportunity to attend workshops in England.

Carberry had extensive training in a major library system, but, significantly, graduate diplomates of UCD with little or no prior library experience, were also being appointed to the evolving county systems. The drain of experience from the Dublin Public Library service may have had its negative effects on that service, but from a rural perspective, these appointments of professionally qualified staff from outside the county in question, serve perhaps to illustrate the rationale governing a priority focus of the Library Association of Ireland, as being to ▶

1 *An Leabharlann* 3(4) 1933: 98.

2 *A.L.* 1(2) September 1930: 46.

3 *A.L.*, various issues 1930-1978; vol.1(1) 1930- vol.7 (3) (New series), Autumn 1978.

4 Later Dublin City Librarian and LAI President, 1957.

5 LAI President, 1962.

examine the potential for providing its own courses by distance learning, a practice in line with that provided by its sister Library Association in the United Kingdom.

A record of the August 1930 meeting of the Board shows that the question of providing courses in library training under the auspices of the Association was considered at several meetings. Indeed, a special committee was appointed with instructions to report on the matter to the September meeting.⁶ Committee members included David Barry and other graduates of UCD whose names are synonymous with the development of the LAI: T.E. Gay, first Chair (1928) of the LAI Executive Board, Christina

‘Their difficulties indeed reflected a general deficit in access to education nationwide.’

Keogh, Librarian to the Irish Central Library for Students⁷ and Roisin Walsh, Dublin City Librarian (founding member of the LAI and Chair of the Executive Board in 1941), P.J. Stephenson and P.B. (Brendan) Glynn, Honorary Secretary of the first Executive Board of the LAI.

The Committee met in September 1930 and developed proposals for professional education, including the setting up of an examining board in respect of courses to be provided in library training. The proposals were referred for further consideration by the Executive Board and for consultation with librarians throughout the country.

Christina Keogh, writing in 1933, provides an overview of those previous critical five years dating from the beginnings of the Association. The overview substantiates the dominance of training as being a key issue, continually on the agenda. She refers, for example, to the need for properly trained and competent librarians to administer the newly established libraries. Significantly, she acknowledges University College Dublin which decided to set up a ‘school of librarianship whereby university graduates and, under certain conditions, members of library staff who were not graduates, would be enabled to pursue a course of study leading to a Diploma in Library Training.’ Reference however, is made to the fact that ‘When the [UCD] syllabus was made available, the Executive Board found itself compelled to register disapproval on many points, the chief of these being the omission from the curriculum of certain professional subjects and the policy of awarding Diplomas to persons who possessed no practical experience in library work’ (Keogh 1933). These are issues of relevance even in 2008, but of course now the context is different as time and changing societal norms have ensured that LAI links with UCD are secured within a different, working

framework than that which pertained in the 1930s. In 2008, the LAI, the accrediting body for professional qualification, recognises, for purposes of candidature for its Associateship, UCD courses of study, subject to certain agreed conditions. These conditions include curricular content and practical experience. However, a key point of contention during the 1930s and thereafter, lay in the difficulty of access to the UCD course. Although this was hardly the fault of UCD, certainly attendance at lectures for a minimum of two years, appeared of little use to those who lived outside Dublin and for whom, given the reality of distance and transport, professional qualification by correspondence course, seemed the only viable option.

Given all of this attention in the context of the business of the Executive Board, it is somewhat surprising that the programme for the first Library Conference held in Cork in June 1933, did not include a dedicated paper on professional education, although the programme did deal with the public library as an essential social service. Other topics included hospital libraries, book selection, censorship, An Gúm, and policy and administration. These can be observed to be subjects clearly of interest to all sectors: public, special and academic.

The omission, perhaps, on reflection, is not surprising when we are reminded that many of the Chief Librarians, including academic librarians, did not themselves have a professional qualification in those early days of the evolution of the profession. Nevertheless, they recognised the value of appropriate qualification and, throughout the 1930s, training remained a substantive issue. In 1933, for example, the County Section is recorded as discussing the relative value of the UCD Diploma and the Diploma of The Library Association of the United Kingdom. This was an important issue and is discussed at length by David Barry (1934). His consideration of options for professional courses through the [UK] Library Association and UCD is accompanied by analysis of the advantages of university degrees, with and without library diplomas, from the perspective of library service management and delivery. That this analysis may have stimulated further debate can be observed by the action of the County Librarians Section which, in 1934, asked, ‘for a ruling on the qualifications required for higher posts in the library service [and significantly] for a ruling on the relative value of the existing library diplomas ...’⁸ Clearly there were differences of opinion as to the value of either, or both, and indeed the debate may understandably have related to identification of a need to incorporate library administration and library routine in relevant training programmes as opposed to the less ‘library specific’ focus of a university agenda, to offer broad-based education. Without digressing to the subject of education within its broader university context, but recognising the validity of differing points of view in the context of the debate of that period of time, it is useful to note that such a philosophy can indeed be equated with current day university concern in all subject areas, that the curriculum reflect market and employer needs.

Perhaps it is useful also to remind ourselves about the availability or, rather non-availability, of education in 1930s Ireland. (Coolahan 1981). In 1930/31, for example, only 28,994 students benefited from second-level education. By the end of

LAI conference delegates,
UCD June 1935.
Courtesy THE IRISH TIMES



the decade, 1940/41, only 38,713 were in attendance. Indeed, the statistics, indicating only 76,843 in attendance by 1960/61, speak for themselves and shed light on the continuing concern among librarians over many decades about 'country-based' library staff and their difficulties in accessing professional education at UCD. Their difficulties indeed reflected a general deficit in access to education nationwide.

The 1930s moved on, one must note, in a context of inadequate resources, limited staffing and certainly limited access to training or educational opportunity. That reality provided the background to the first Annual Conference which took place in 1933. This was a time when the state itself was young and the county library system was in embryonic form, as it equally was in 1934 when the 2nd Annual Conference was held in Galway and indeed in 1935, when the 3rd Annual Conference took place at UCD. I mention these early conferences particularly, because, notwithstanding the programme content, the growth of networking opportunities presented by the simple process of coming together must have been extraordinarily beneficial. They provided stimulation for discussion and professional evolution as the collegiality afforded by being members of a common interest professional group took root.

Given such a context, the official Conference programme may be observed to offer only one barometer of interest or concern. The ever pressing issue of training and qualification was discussed, perhaps, in more relevant contexts, such as, for example, in 1938, at the Annual General Meeting where a motion 'To consider the question of setting up an examining Body for Library Assistants' provided an impetus leading to growing dialogue with UCD. 1939, however, saw the beginning of war, its impact immediately obvious as the AGM of that year was postponed until the following year. It was, however, a significant year. The December 1939 issue of *An Leabharlann* is noteworthy for an article by Ellen Power, then a member of staff at UCD Library, later Librarian at UCD and Head of the

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List of Diplomates of the School of Library Training, U.C.D.

Year in which examination was passed.	Name.
1935.	Anderson, Charles.
1936.	Asswad, Mary J. (né Dixon), B.A.
1930.	Barron, Brigit, B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1928.	Batt., Beatrice M.
1936.	Bonfield, Caitlin, B.A., B.Comm., H.Dip. in Ed.
1936.	Bourke, Annie M.
1933.	Bourke, Mary V., B.A. (Queen's University, Belfast).
1936.	Bradley, Moira F.
1929.	Brady, Frances J.
1934.	Brophy, Mary M., B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1929.	Browne, Gladys M.
1935.	Browner, Eithne M.
1929.	Brougha, Nodlag, B.A.
1930.	Burke, Ellen, B.Comm., H.Dip. in Ed.
1937.	Byrne, Hannah, B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1935.	Carey, Veronica, B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1933.	Carr, Bina M., B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1929.	Clarke, Mary B., B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1930.	Coghlan, Anna G., B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1930.	Condon, Teresa J., M.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1930.	Connell, Bridget G., B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1934.	Cox, Maure J., B.Comm.
1936.	Croin, Catherine M., B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1931.	Cullen, Katie, B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1930.	Cunningham, Dorothy M., B.Comm.
1936.	Daly, Margaret, B.A.
1934.	Dargan, Dermot J. P., B.A.
1930.	Dolaney, Mary A. C., B.A.
1938.	Delap, Mary, B.Comm.
1939.	Ni Dheochmhaí, Máire, M.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1934.	Dooley, Elizabeth M.
1932.	Dowling, James T.
1938.	Dunphy, Catherine, B.A.
1939.	Fingleton, Helena, B.A.
1931.	Flannery, Bridget, B.A.
1934.	Flynn, Una M. C., B.A., H. Dip. in Ed.
1937.	Fox, Edith S., B.A.
1937.	Fox, Mary B., B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1930.	Gaffney, James E.
1933.	Gillan, John F., B.A., H.Dip. in Ed.
1930.	Glynn, Patrick B.
1930.	Guise-Brown, Gerald E., M.A. (T.C.D.), B.L.
1936.	Healy, Nuala F. M., B.A.
1939.	Heron, Mary A., B.Comm.

6 *A.L.* September 1930, 1(2) 1930: 48.

7 LAI President, 1958.

8 *A.L.* (April 1934) 4(1) 1934:21.

School of Library Training. Her article outlines in detail the focus and subjects of the UCD Diploma, then in its twelfth year. The course was one year for graduates and two years for non-graduates, the second year being common to both (Power 1939). Interestingly, the article is followed by a list of Diplomates of the School of Library Training UCD for the years 1929-1938. These include:

- J.E Gaffney (1930) – later Dun Laoghaire Borough Librarian,
- Iona M. McLeod (1929) – later County Librarian, Carlow,
- Ellen Power (1929) – later Librarian, UCD and
- Patrick J. Stephenson, (1930) – later Dublin City Librarian.

‘... the future lay in university - based professional education’

There were many others, including Beatrice Batt (1938) of Dublin City Libraries, who was to contribute enormously to professional development in her role on the Professional Education Committee of the LAI.

As a direct result of the Second World War, annual conferences proposed in 1941 and 1942 had to be discontinued due to problems of travel and difficulties in attendance. Equally, emergency war duties impacted on Association development with the unavailability of some members such as Thomas Gay, Chair of the Executive Board, who took on the responsibilities of Director of the Air Raid Precaution service in Dublin.

However, progress was achieved in association with UCD in respect of a course in library training. With regard to the issue raised by Keogh, of qualification being accorded to graduates without practical experience, the LAI, having met with UCD in May 1942, achieved agreement on a level of one hundred and fifty hours per session, either whole-time or part-time, as arranged by the College Authorities with the Librarians who were required to furnish the College with an account of each student's attendance and work. The work performance was compulsory and was required to be completed prior to sitting for the UCD Diploma Examination. Bearing in mind that this proposed training facilitation required resources, UCD agreed to raise the question of obtaining facilities with the County or City Manager, as appropriate, and the Report of the Executive Board was agreed in this regard and passed at the Annual General Meeting of the Association in 1942.

The UCD course continued to make an impact on the professionalisation of library competency levels, although still being largely inaccessible to county library staff. This issue of accessibility must be positioned, however, in an overall context of continuing limited access to second- and third-level education

generally in the 1930s and 1940s and thereafter, bearing in mind that it was a period which presents an entirely different social reality from that of today or even that of the 1970s. In this context, it is indeed useful to recall that the school leaving age was raised to 15 years only in 1972 and to 16 only in 2000. In essence, people who attended second-level education in the 1970s were privileged, only 197,142 students attending in 1970/71 according to reports to be found on the Central Statistics Office website, www.cso.ie. How much more privileged can we observe to be those 4,978 students who according to John Coolahan, attended university full-time in 1938/9, the number rising only to 6,796 students in 1948/9 (Coolahan 1981). Even those who might have had access to university part-time or to the examinations set by a professional body such as the LA (UK) were privileged. Nevertheless, bearing in mind that library staff were the mediating factor acting in support of what many have described as the ‘University of the People,’ they above all, needed to be equipped to deliver on that role through having access to an appropriate level of education themselves. The Association continued with its mission to ensure that appropriate access should become available on as wide a basis as possible.

A process of on-going discussion continued in respect of what was termed the ‘country assistants’ and in 1949, a special delegation from the LAI engaged with UCD in discussions on the possibility of it setting up a correspondence course, discussions ‘leading to the hope that the long-standing handicap on country library assistants may soon be removed’.⁹ But change in UCD damaged that hope, as in the academic years 1950/1951 and 1951/1952, no non-graduate students were accepted for the Diploma course.

The reality of potential denial of access or, at least, of limited access to UCD in future years, acted, therefore, to galvanise the members to implement an intent declared many years previously. The Library Association of Ireland moved towards incorporation and to a process enabling it to hold examinations and confer certificates of professional competency leading to Fellowship of the Library Association of Ireland. The 1950s saw purposeful movement on the part of the Association to take control of professional education through provision of an alternative opportunity to the university-based system which was perceived by many to be outside the reach of those in rural areas. Notwithstanding that access to the two year Diploma course for non-graduates was re-instituted by Ellen Power who took office at UCD in 1953, the process leading towards qualification through examination and thesis by the LAI continued. Significantly, however, a position of trust between LAI and UCD signalling belief that the future lay in university-based professional education may be inferred as the LAI course was designed, as noted in the Executive Board Report of 1971, to be an interim arrangement, complementary to that in university, intended to be transitional, not long-term.

The Library Association of Ireland became an incorporated body in 1952 and the Association published its Regulations and Syllabus in 1952, as noted in *An Leabharlann* of June of that year. Immediate action resulted in the setting of examinations, the first being in cataloguing and classification in June of

it is hoped, will be a long series of professional examinations, to be held under the auspices of the association'

The milestone was achieved following a lengthy process and period of twenty years aimed at enabling librarians in every part of Ireland to acquire professional status, ...and to establish the association as 'the final arbiter' of what constitutes the essential qualifications of librarianship in Ireland.¹²

This was a bold statement, one which has proven vital to Association policy and practice as it has moved to a position where, in 2008, the LAI is the arbiter of professional qualification in Ireland.

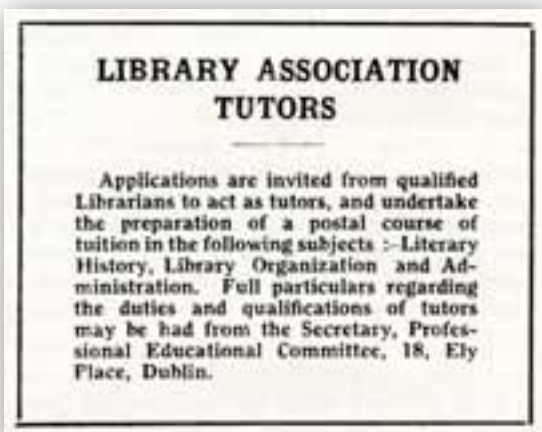
The significant progress made by the Association is reflected in an article in the June 1955 issue of *An Leabharlann* by P.J. White¹³ who charts the path of change. 'The need [he acknowledged] for a course of training, suited to conditions in Irish Libraries had of course been voiced as far back as 1934 when in his Presidential address to the Galway Conference that year, James O'Neill, of UCD, President of LAI in 1934, said, the 'time has arrived when the Library Association of Ireland might apply for incorporation'. This would make the Library Association of Ireland a statutory body and would confer upon it the power to hold examinations, and confer certificates for proficiency in library subjects.' (White 1955) Eighteen years passed before the Association was in a position to apply for incorporation and receive the necessary powers. In March 1952, the same year of incorporation, due to the excellent work of a most energetic Education Committee, courses of study were made available to library students all over Ireland. The course as set out required a minimum of three years of study. A panel of tutors, all volunteers, was appointed. The course format was one of correspondence based on the published syllabus. Critically, despite limitations attendant on learning by correspondence, the course offered flexibility and access to opportunity. Importantly, in a context where many students

1953, and in setting up an Examination Board. It is noteworthy that the potential for Association growth can be observed in the requirement that any student sitting an LAI exam had to be a personal member of the Association. Incorporation and its consequences enabled the Association to establish a Register of Fellows in accordance with the new Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Fellowship categories comprising:

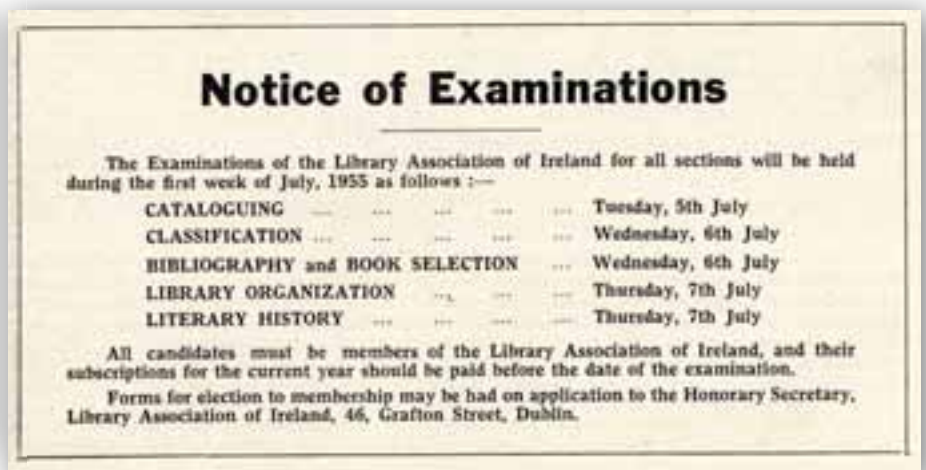
- 1) Members of the Association holding or who held executive positions in recognised Libraries on or before the date of incorporation of the Association, i.e. 3 March, 1952
- 2) Holders of recognised Diplomas of Library Training with at least five years experience in a recognised library on or before the 3rd March, 1952
- 3) Librarians who have completed such course or courses as set down by the Association and have passed the examinations leading to Fellowship as laid down by the Association.¹⁰

The first two categories were discontinued in 1960 as following a change in the Articles of Association recorded in a note, sufficient opportunity [was] deemed to have been given to any eligible member to apply for Fellowship under those categories.¹¹

The initiation of Association examinations represented serious progress as indicated by an editorial in *An Leabharlann* of June 1953, which records 'This month marks yet another milestone in the history and development of the Library Association of Ireland for some fourteen candidates will sit the first of what,



Ad for Librarians to act as tutors for postal correspondence course



LAI Exams – notice

9 A.L. September, Annual General Report 1949/ 1950 10(2) 1950:71.

10 A.L. (December, 1952) Register of Fellows, 10(6) 1952:180.

11 A.L. Fellowship, 18(2) June, 1960: 32.

12 A.L. Editorial Note 11(2) 1953: 37.

13 Chair, County Libraries Section, 1969.

were returning to learning after some years, mentors were available. White saw the new LAI professional education course as offering the 'Country Assistant' an improvement in opportunities for promotion. But an important factor lay in the fact that it was to provide, along with the scholarship scheme to be introduced in 1970, a steady stream of qualified librarians to feed an unprecedented level of development facilitated by the 1961 Public Libraries Grants Scheme.

The take-up of the Fellowship programme was significant and among the first group of Fellows by examination and thesis was Thomas Armitage, later Director of An Chomhairle

'... with a view to qualification being declared an *essential qualification*.'

Leabharlanna, who was elected to Fellowship having completed his thesis on a subject which was then, and is now, an icon of Irish society, the Gaelic Athletic Association.

This catalysing educational development seems to have instilled a new confidence in the Association. Editorial statements in *An Leabharlann*, September, 1958, now noting, 'the Examinations of LAI – should be the basis for entry into the higher grade of librarianship' and 'It ... behoves the LAI to assert its professional status, otherwise it can serve ... little to raise librarianship in Ireland to the standard of a worthwhile profession.' Equally, offering evidence of the Association's vision of a future in which professional qualifications should be essential, the editorial noted that 'failure to press for recognition of the Association's professional examinations would be a negation of the aims and objectives laid down in the Articles of Incorporation.'¹⁴

The Executive Board had no intention of negating their aims of achieving high standards, a view echoed in September 1963 by Editorial statement, 'Staff training and professional qualifications must play an important role in library development, and we are faced at the moment with the problem of obtaining qualified staff to fit into the scheme of development which is called for under the plans formulated by most local authorities. There is no cut and dried scheme which permits interchange of staff or allows of the attendance of staff at a library school.' It goes further, in commenting that there is a need for a 'top level meeting between The Library Association[of Ireland], An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, and the Authorities of University College Dublin so as to work out harmoniously, an educational training scheme that will meet present needs and provide for the future.'¹⁵

The need to provide for the future proved a driving force, as reflected in the 1963 annual report of the Executive Board.¹⁶

This recommended that a scheme of training open to library assistants throughout the country be established, making use of the training facilities offered at UCD. The scheme envisaged the full-time leave of absence with pay, plus the cost of the university course, to at least one member of each authority's library staff every two years. Interestingly, supporting the belief of the LAI as outlined in 1953, that the future lay in university-based professional education, the introduction of the scheme was accompanied by two significant policy decisions: the first was the ultimate cessation of training courses conducted by the Association, these to continue during a transitional period, and the second of immense significance, was the general acceptance, that all Fellowships awarded by the Association be ranked equally as a professional qualification with the University Diploma, as it was then termed.

Daniel Doyle in his Presidential Address of 1964 noted that the above proposal, which was startling in the degree of its ambition, was submitted to the Minister for Local Government. It was hoped that by the following year 1965, the Minister would have drawn up regulations in line with the proposals. An editorial in the same year, 1964, records that 'It is with deep satisfaction that we record the decision of the Minister, Mr Neil Blaney, to declare new qualifications for the position of City, County and Borough Librarian and Librarian of an Urban District.' The relevant declaration deemed that 'Each candidate must ... hold the Diploma in Library Training of the National University of Ireland or be a Fellow, by examination, of the Library Association of Ireland or possess an equivalent qualification or have had otherwise such training in library work as the Local Appointments Commissioners deem sufficient.' The declaration was to be reviewed in three years with a view to qualification being declared an *essential qualification*. This in essence meant that the interim provision by which such training as might be 'deemed sufficient' by the Local Appointments Commission would no longer be applied.¹⁷ The support of UCD was acknowledged by editorial comment for its part in supporting the achievement of a journey towards professionalism begun some forty years previously by the Association.

Three years passed without qualifications being declared essential, a position which led the Association on a deputation to the Department of Local Government in March 1968. The record notes that the Department indicated 'they were not irrevocably committed to a three year period and they wished now to examine the effects their circular had had, for example, [whether] more people had presented themselves for training as a result.'¹⁸

The Association's annoyance, after a wait of four years, may be measured by the radical action taken. In February 1969, recommendations were accepted by the Executive Board to advise members not to apply for any post of City, County or Borough Librarian advertised by the Local Appointments Commission, unless possession of a professional qualification was an essential pre-requisite of application. Furthermore, members were not to sit on Appointment Boards 'unless and until professional qualifications shall have been declared essential for applicants' and they were to withdraw an

application for a post or acceptance of invitation to sit on an Local Appointments Commission interview Board in respect of such offices which might already have been made.¹⁹ The Executive Board clearly meant business, instructing the Honorary Secretary to ensure that the recommendations were implemented.

In 1969, professional qualifications were deemed to be an essential requirement for Librarians holding major office, i.e. City, County and Borough Librarians upon agreement that existing office-holders would not be debarred from competing for other posts at the level. But, the journey was of course only beginning. A report of the Executive Board for 1970/71, indicates that the Association had raised the issue of declaring professional qualification to be essential for the lower level posts of Assistant Librarian, and it was acknowledged by the Department of Local Government at that time that such a provision would have the effect of attracting professionally qualified candidates to those posts. It is noteworthy that the Assistant Librarians' Section of LAI was formed at this time of professional development, the first meeting being held in January, 1970. Interestingly, as noted in the LAI 1970/71 Report, the Education Committee is recognised to be by far the busiest of all Committees, twenty-nine candidates having sat the Association's examinations in 1970, and there being sixty-four persons registered as students. Many of these would have been in the process of completing their Fellowship theses. The level of professional commitment can be measured by the logistical effort required. Tutorial support and mentoring was provided, a syllabus had to be prepared and revised, textbooks recommended, examination papers had to be set and corrected, and all, by way of voluntary effort by Association members. The impact of professional and logistical effort by those involved, particularly Beatrice Batt (Director of Examinations) and Nodlaig Hardiman,²⁰ (Secretary to the Committee), both of them staff members of Dublin City Libraries, must have been considerable. So also, doubtless, was the infrastructural and professional support, essential to the process, provided by the Dublin City Library system by way of commitment to professional education by successive City Librarians.

In 1970, however, in line with its 1963 policy decision, the Association reviewed its direct involvement as course provider and examining body in the field of professional education. Its rationale for doing so undoubtedly took account of sustainability issues surrounding continuing provision on the part of a small organisation, relying on voluntary effort. Otherwise, recognising the changing face of library education, the Board noted in its *Report for the year, 1970/71*, 'a too great reliance was being placed by the Local Authorities on the Association to continue its training function indefinitely 'given that their involvement, as direct provider, had been instituted

only in 1952 to address the then lack of opportunity within the country as a whole.²¹ The members of the Education Committee, at a meeting held in December, 1970 as noted in the same report, made a recommendation therefore to the Board 'that the Association's Educational and Training Scheme should be phased out, due to:

- 1 the availability of alternative courses;
- 2 the shortage of tutorial and examining personnel to support the Association's scheme;
- 3 the shortage of tutorial facilities and follow-through necessary to maintain high standards.'

The serious nature of this recommendation can be seen in the directives which were issued namely that:

'All library staff be put on notice that the last year in which enrolments will be accepted is that commencing, October, 1972;

That the last First Year examinations will be in 1975 and the last Third Year examinations will be in 1978;

That the FLAI continues to be granted to: those who having completed the LAI examinations submit an acceptable thesis; and those who, possessing an approved alternative qualification, submit an acceptable thesis.'

This recommendation of course has to be seen in the light of the Association's success in securing agreement on a scholarship scheme whereby, remarkably, beginning in 1970, public library staff, selected by application and interview, were

'... professional qualifications were to be an essential requirement for all professional posts'

eligible for release on a full-time basis to attend the Diploma in Librarianship at UCD or at an alternative acceptable library school. The scheme, with the acknowledged support of UCD, An Chomhairle Leabharlann and the Local Authorities, was implemented with nine students, who being either graduates or ▶

14 A.L. 1958:70.

15 A.L. Editorial, 21(3) September, 1963: 75- 76.

16 A.L. March, 1964, 22(1) Report of the Executive Board for the Year 1963, March 1964:31.

17 A.L. (December, 1964) Editorial, 22(4) December 1964: 113-114.

18 A.L. (1968) Summary of the Proceedings of the Executive Board 26(2) June 1968: 63.

19 A.L. (1969) Summary of the Proceedings of the Executive Board, 27(4) December, 1969:137.

20 LAI President, 1986/87.

21 29(1) 1971:34.

having completed First Arts at University, joined the post-graduate Diploma students that year. It is to the credit of Irish local government, notwithstanding that the formal scheme discontinued in 1986, that a number of Local Authorities still continue, in 2008, to offer a scholarship scheme, with some amendments, based on full-time release.

However, the 1970 scholarship scheme ensured the future. The regime governing studies for librarianship was changed forever. Indeed, as I noted in another context, this method of 'fast-tracking the availability of professionally qualified librarians at a time of rapidly expanding service paved the way

'... Dean's idea of library education challenged the notion of 'library training'

for efficient and effective management of library services at both central and local levels. It enabled public library systems to contribute in a very dynamic way to the evolving progressive society which Ireland had become.' (Ellis-King 2002). It is probable that the increasing output of professionally qualified graduates from UCD and other universities, most notably the University of Wales at Aberystwyth, guaranteed the availability of professionals to staff the many new libraries under construction during the late 1970s as a result of the Public Libraries Grants Scheme. Significantly, the availability of professionally qualified staff may in turn, be perceived to have informed the Ministerial decision to declare, in 1976, that professional qualifications were to be an *essential* requirement for all professional posts in the public library sector.

Despite such evidence of dramatic progress, it is acknowledged that not everyone was in favour of the university-based system. Differing agendas existed, one for example, likely to have been the changing status of public librarians and a potential consequential impact on pay structure leading to opposition to a graduate profession. Beginning in the late 1980s, efforts were made to set up a course at Diploma level as an alternative to that in UCD.

A proposed course, noted in the *Public Library Service Review Group Report*, as not equal in standard to a University Diploma or Degree course, but to a London City and Guilds Certificate course was advanced to the stage of draft curricula being drawn up by interested parties, not including the LAI, in association with academic partners which at various stages included Bolton Street College of Technology, as it then was, and latterly, the Institute of Public Administration. This effort to set up an alternative course continued throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. The Annual Report of the Executive Board of 1983,

substantiates the existence of concern by the Board about 'discussions which were taking place between representatives of the Department of the Environment and Local Government, the County and City Managers Association and other bodies, on the setting up of a course leading to a Diploma in Librarianship.' 'The Association, as recorded in the *Annual Report of the Executive Board*, for 1983 was not informed or involved in these discussions and seriously questions the need for a new course leading to a qualification in librarianship. It doubts the availability of resources in staff, library facilities and funding necessary to set up a course which would attain any degree of recognition either here in Ireland or abroad.'²² The issue of recognition at professional level was, of course, the critical issue.

The archival records of the Association should yield further information on this chapter of the story of professional qualification as should the archival records of other involved bodies. As one who was personally active in discussion at Executive Board level through some of the latter stages of this process, who was asked for observations on a draft curriculum as late as 1986 and appraised of discussions involving some County Managers with the Institute of Public Administration much later, my view is that implementation of the proposed course, ostensibly argued as meeting the specific requirements of public libraries, would have been detrimental to the standing and status of public librarianship vis a vis other sectors of the profession. Critically, consideration of an alternative course to that in UCD or other accredited courses in the UK implied that the competencies required of librarians working in the public library sector did not equate with those required elsewhere – an implication unacceptable to the Association. Thankfully, responding to the need to uphold professional standards, the possibility of setting up such a course was strongly resisted by the Association. That particular attempt to lower the bar of equality relating to standards of professional education was a low point in an otherwise concerted effort made by members of the profession, over eighty years, to raise professional standards and professional qualifications which would be equally applicable to all members of the profession.

The philosophy of equality is, in fact, reflected in the Association's policy document, *On staff structure, Recruitment, Education and Training for Librarianship*. Published in 1981, this document signals clearly that the future for librarianship is that of a graduate profession. It cannot go unremarked, that the policy move can also be seen to have paralleled proposed changes in professional education for librarianship at UCD – changes which were in tandem with policy adopted by the Association.

Significant change, in the context of professional education, may be observed to have been speeded up with the appointment, at Professorial rank, of John Dean as Head of the School of Library and Information Studies in 1977. Reading his paper in *An Leabharlann* (Dean 1978) it is difficult, in 2008, to believe that his proposals were considered radical by some

22 Annual Report of the Executive Board, Dublin, for 1983.

since they were in line with professional thinking within the LAI. Certainly, Dean's idea of library education challenged the notion of 'library training' as it had been articulated in the 1920s and 1930s and indeed as some still articulated it into the 1960s and 1970s. More critically, opposition to proposed change is difficult to understand given the Association's efforts from its earliest beginnings to ensure the highest standards of professional education. Equally, it is difficult to understand, given the existence of the scholarship scheme, which was an extraordinary Association achievement which provided opportunities for professional qualification for library staff. It is also difficult to understand given that the Association itself had recognised the need for a pragmatic approach to professional education which would allow it to move progressively towards full graduate status.

In 2008, professional librarians under the leadership of Professor Mary Burke, Head of SILS (1993-2007) and Dr. Ian Cornelius (2007 to date), will see Dean's programme as being simply change required within the new Departmental structure set up in UCD, coupled with the setting of course structure and content within a context of best international practice. Such change had already been heralded. A gradual process of change reflecting best international practice had become evident prior to John Dean's arrival at UCD, as under Ellen Power's guidance, the nomenclature changed, in 1971, for example, from a Diploma in Library Training, to a Diploma in Librarianship. It had further undergone a metamorphosis, when, under Henry Heaney, the School of Library and Information Studies became divorced from the Library. From 1977, the new school, no longer under the stewardship of the Librarian of UCD, became firmly identified as a Department of Library and Information Studies, placing it rightly within a context of mainstream education rather than training.

Dean's vision was one of continuity at Diploma level with graduates and non-graduates, the latter whom he proposed would embark on a two-year programme of dedicated library studies, coming together for the final post-graduate Diploma year. His declared intentions were to move towards a taught Masters level qualification and then to research level qualification. Of course, his programme as articulated in the 1983 Annual Report of the Association, to ultimately move towards termination of the two-year diploma course, would not have found total acceptance with all members of the Executive Board, or indeed of the profession. Therefore, following on consultation with the Executive Board, that transitional arrangements were put in place to allow all eligible students in the Local Authority pipeline to apply for the scholarship, the announcement could be argued to have precipitated the previously mentioned move, arising from perceived employer interests and trade union concerns, to set up an alternative two-year course for public library staff outside of the university system, notwithstanding that the

move was clearly at variance with the future-oriented policy as articulated by the Association.

The difficulties presented to Local Authorities and to staff union interests by Dean's proposal are, of course, acknowledged. However, it must be emphasised that the changes at UCD, as announced, were in line with changing norms of library education internationally. Being totally in line with Library Association of Ireland policy, they heralded the first step towards the graduate profession of librarianship in Ireland.

Today, in 2008, the two year undergraduate UCD Diploma in Library and Information Studies is gone, replaced by a Graduate Diploma. An undergraduate degree, majoring in Library and Information Studies within the Arts faculty, the first Graduates due this year, leads to a qualification acceptable for recognition of eligibility for purposes of candidature for Associateship of the LAI. A similar pathway is available through the Social Sciences. A taught Masters level qualification in Library and Information Studies is available as a norm. In all cases, recognition of the UCD qualifications, in respect of eligibility of candidature for the Associateship of the Library Association of Ireland, in effect, professional recognition is approved, subject to agreed course content and practical experience, as set down by the LAI. Librarianship in Ireland is, *de facto*, in 2008, a graduate profession.

The Association itself has continued to be pro-active in sustaining its role and its key objective to enhance the status of librarians and their professional qualifications. It has gone further indeed, developing and maintaining its status as arbiter of professional qualification in Ireland, offering professional recognition through election to Associateship of the LAI and through offering opportunities, including through research mode, for election to Fellowship. The pro-active nature of its focus can be observed in its examination and revision of Associateship and Fellowship regulations in line with

'Librarianship in Ireland is, *de facto*, in 2008, a graduate profession.'

professional education generally, and equally, through its policy in respect of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and recognition by way of certification, for approved CPD activity. The Association maintains its highest honour through the award of Honorary Fellowship which, I am pleased to note will be conferred on Professor John Dean in 2008, this year of the eightieth anniversary of the Library Association of Ireland.

In tracing over eighty years, the path leading to the attainment of professional qualifications at Graduate level, I have sought to place development within the context of educational access and social norms of the time. Their social reality influenced their operational focus as our contemporary reality influences the way in which we do business. Both realities situate the

participants in a particular mode of professional qualification. The only certainty in 2008 is that the dynamic at work throughout the next eighty years will equally be as different and difficult as it seems, is that which emerges from the efforts of the last eighty. That certainty will require the Association to maintain vigilance in its monitoring of the standards of qualifications appropriate to a continually evolving profession which requires ever changing and enhanced competencies in a knowledge driven society. Given a continuing concern with maintaining standards of professional qualification as reference to annual reports of the Executive Board of even recent years indicates, I would not underestimate to the Association the task of meeting that challenge.

In conclusion, I would emphasise that this tracing of a path towards professional qualification in Ireland is not intended to have a nostalgic dimension nor is it intended to salute the past either at Association or individual level, although it may be perceived as doing both. Rather, it is intended to record the efforts of the Library Association of Ireland to address a key business objective, one which I believe remains the key business objective of the LAI today. That is to maintain the profession at the highest level in the status of a learned profession, with staff properly qualified to deliver service to all. What the record shows, is that of the steadfastness of purpose exercised by the LAI in effecting the highest standards of professional qualification appropriate to delivering high quality service in a changing society. It is that steadfastness of purpose, exercised for the same reason, which the Library Association of Ireland must continue to pursue, in 2008 and beyond.

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Branching Out: A Decade of Achievements, 1997–2007

Norma McDermott



Abstract

This paper presents an overview of public libraries in Ireland following a decade of unprecedented development. It considers the main elements of this development: investment and infrastructure, staffing levels and staff training, enhanced stock provision, improved opening hours, digitization of historical material, electronic resources and ICT provision. All these are discussed in the context of a growing population and of the public library's role in the provision of access to information, culture, learning and knowledge.

Keywords: Public libraries; Social inclusion; Access to information; Knowledge economy; Library co-operation; Ireland



Introduction

Public library authorities in Ireland in the mid-1990s were underfunded as was the parent local government system. Infrastructure and service provision were unevenly developed. The library service was vulnerable when budgets were tight. Individual authorities had shown considerable prowess in addressing deficits particularly in the learning, cultural, information and leisure services. Infrastructure suffered from neglect. Growth in demand and population exacerbated the challenge. Complaints from senior staff centred on the lack of recognition of the actual roles and the potential to address education, cultural, information provision and other cross-cutting public sector agendas. While it was a trusted service, it was taken for granted and invisible. The image was of a worthy, but somewhat dull resource, even if this was undeserved. The essence of the library service was muted. ▶

It was against this background that the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, Noel Dempsey TD, set up a project team to advise on public library policy in 1997. It was the second time in the history of the public library movement that the Minister initiated a review.¹ An Assistant Secretary in the Department of the Environment and Local Government (DoE) led the process with senior representatives of DoE, the County and City Managers' Association (CCMA), the Library Association of Ireland (LAI), the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland, the General Council of County Councils (GCCC) and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna. Supported by a dedicated secretariat in DoE, shaping the report took 13 months.

Public Consultation

DoE advertised in the national and local press seeking the public's views on the development of the service and received 794 submissions. 355 addressed the provision of a library in one location and 439 (350 individuals and 89 local and national organizations) were of general interest. 988 references addressed four concerns: better infrastructure (395); better stock (167); better opening hours (113) and more information technology and access (108) (Ireland 1998:38-43). Further consultation and research ensued.

Branching Out: A New Public Library Service (Ireland 1998), presented a strategic vision and financial arrangements for the service, analysed the roles of the key players and examined the potential to support economic and social progress in Ireland. The Minister accepted the report which included 61 recommendations, directed at the thirty-two library authorities, DoE, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, the Minister for Education and Science, and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. He brought *Branching Out* to Government where it received unanimous Cabinet approval. He published it in November 1998, stating that had he received such a high number of public responses on any other public service, he doubted if the content would have been so supportive. He had validated, through this remark, the public, local and central government's affinity with the service.

Clear Focus

Branching Out highlighted social inclusion and the information society objectives as drivers and aligned them to public library policy at local authority and national government levels. This alignment with the government's *National Development Plan* (Ireland 1993), coupled with the upturn in the economy and the emerging intercultural mix was timely. Such a clear focus led to acceptance of the findings and recommendations among the stakeholders and aligning with the European Information Society requirements for Ireland followed.

Steering Committee

Nominees of the CCMA, LAI, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, GCCC and two public sector agencies – the Information Society Commission (ISC) and the Local Government Computer Services Board were appointed to the steering committee. Nominees from three government departments- Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Education and Science; and Arts, Sport and Tourism – were also appointed. Led by an Assistant Secretary in DoE, work began in 1999.

Local authority strategic policy committees also addressed the development of the information society and specified measures to transcend economic and social disparities in their counties and cities. At the heart of the *Branching Out* drive was the full support of county and city librarians and their staff who saw the opportunities, worked effectively within their local and central government structures and, most importantly, delivered results.

The eight-year term was subsequently extended to nine. The major features and achievements follow.

Investment and Infrastructure

A recommendation on increasing operational costs (by 19.5% for the years 1999 to 2002) should have resulted in an annual increase of €6.98m each year in the library authority combined estimates. The actual investment grew by 58% from €48.39m to €76.46m from 1998 to 2002 (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2004).

For the full programme, estimated expenditure increased by 150% from €47.2m in 1998 to €117.9m in 2007 (Comhairle Leabharlanna (Ireland) 2007b), (see Chart 1 below). Library services represented an average of 2.6% of local government revenue budgets during the full term.

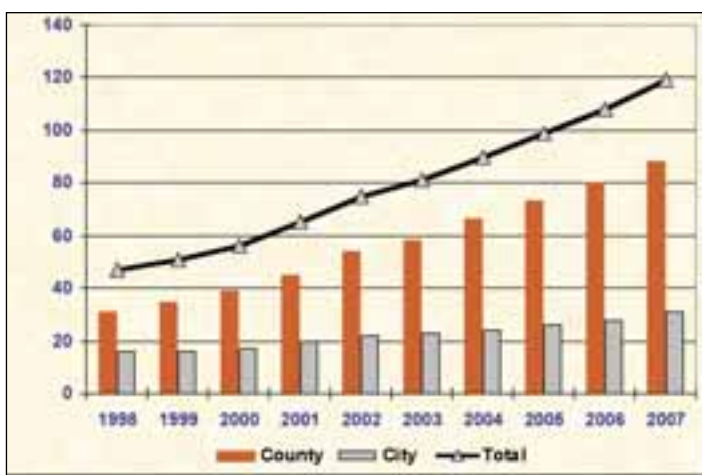


Chart 1: Estimated expenditure on library services, 1998-2007.

The report had acknowledged that 'the quality of the infrastructure was in many places substandard being inadequate in size, poorly located, in a poor condition, poorly equipped, or poorly stocked' (Ireland 1998:64). Local authorities prepared library development plans, as required by



Tubercurry Library

the terms of the *Local Government Acts, 1994 and 2001*. A multi-annual programme of capital investment was announced whereby DoE would fund up to 75% of the capital cost. The involvement of third parties was encouraged. The report recommended that €95.2m should be invested on buildings and ICT over eight years. Of this, approximately 60% would come from the Exchequer i.e. €57.1m, thus doubling the previous capital fund and signalling that some projects would attract a lower portion of central funding.

Local authorities invested their budgets and sourced joint funding.² The Minister agreed to a multi-annual development programme with capital grants totalling €102.5m to assist library authorities in improving the facilities for the public: built, electronic and transport (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2005). Most authorities received between 50% and 75% of the central funding for the projects and all projects received 50% of the stock, fittings and equipment costs. 47 library buildings and nine headquarters were co-funded by local and central government through this programme during the *Branching Out* term.³ DoE provided a total of €91.92m up to 2007. The number of libraries increased from 326 in 1999 to 356 in 2007.

Since 1998, 13 authorities have acquired 21 mobile libraries and fifteen authorities have received 18 delivery vans, fully supported from the same fund. Library authorities fund all operational costs. There are 30 mobiles serving rural and urban users in Ireland, including a specialised mobile providing ICT learning support.

Library design is now more open and flexible. Sustainable options for highlighting books and new media, programmes and zones are well considered. ICT resources, local studies research, cultural programmes, exhibition facilities and reader development are commonplace. Chief librarians and design teams have facilitated joint services in a number of buildings. Examples are detailed under the generating social capital heading below. The image of the service as a contemporary and cool place to hang out derives its origin from the service provision and the exciting library designs developed during this period of unprecedented investment. Several libraries have attracted a range of access and design awards nationally and internationally.⁴

Branching Out: Future Directions (Ireland 2008), launched by Minister John Gormley TD in June, continues to focus on improving infrastructure and investment for the next five years. Given the low density of population in Ireland of 61 people per square kilometre, there is a need to expand the infrastructure and the presence of libraries in more communities. Town and city dwellers remain underserved in many authorities. The announcement of the capital funding multi-annual programme 2008-2012 by Minister Michael Kitt TD for buildings and transport is most welcome.⁵

It is a legal requirement that all public buildings, including libraries, be fully accessible by 2015 under the terms of the *Disability Act 2005*. This will pose particular challenges for heritage buildings. Library infrastructure features strongly in all development plans. Remedies will require increased revenue, capital resources and imaginative collaboration. Population changes will place further demands on library authorities for infrastructural support. (Central Statistics Office 2008).

Content, Targets and Demographics

The library can be a wondrous discovery for exploring knowledge, adventure and captivating content. Every library visitor evaluates the range and quality of books and electronic media according to his/her interests. The report stated that expenditure on stock would have to increase in order to satisfy diverse needs and offer the widest range of content. Spending on stock is vulnerable when budgets are tight. Library managers value the target set in *Branching Out* of €3.17 per capita for annual expenditure on stock (books, journals, software licenses for electronic content, music, new media etc.). The target was increased from €3.17 to €3.27 from 2004. Local authorities increased spending from €1.61 in 1998 to €3.20 in 2007. (see Chart 2 on following page).

1 A previous review was set up by the Minister John Boland TD. *The Public Library Service Review Group Report* was published in 1987. Implementation of the findings, as with other Irish library reviews, was a matter for the various players to address their issues with no central mechanism established to drive progress.

2 Infrastructural developments were undertaken by local authorities throughout the decade. Funding streams ranging

from Peace and Reconciliation budgets, to public private partnerships to central government funded community facilities schemes and cultural access funds, heritage grants, Udaras na Gaeltachta grants, Rapid and Clár budgets for areas of social deprivation and local authority levies were accessed.

3 As at July, 2008, see www.librarybuildings.ie for details.

4 See www.librarybuildings.ie.

5 DoE Circular Letter LSS 03/06, 9 August, 2008.

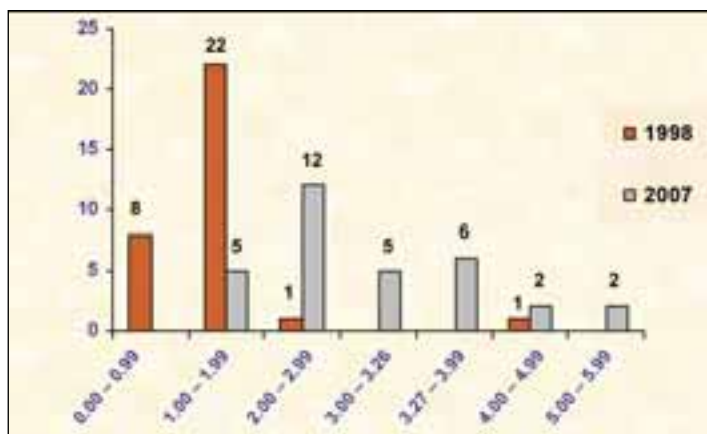


Chart 2: Comparison of per capita expenditure on stock (excluding primary school library grant) between 1998 and 2007.

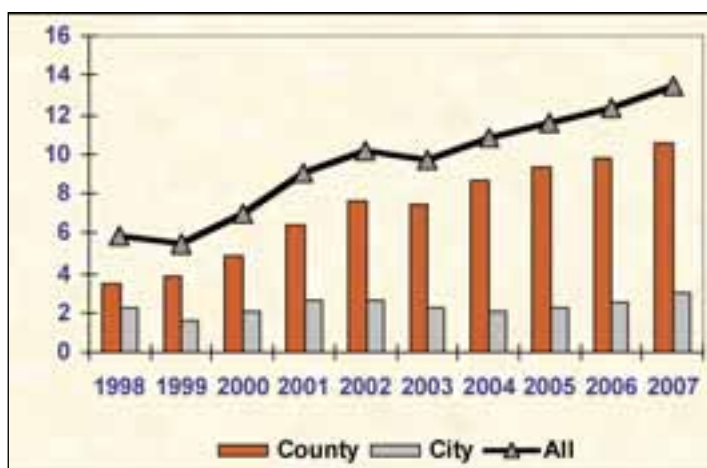


Chart 3: Estimated stock fund expenditure, 1998-2007.

10 authorities reached the target by 2007. Total revenue expenditure on stock increased from €5.8m to €13.6m from 1998 to 2007. (see Chart 3 above).

The report recommended that DoE should provide €4.6m. to improve stock in all authorities. The Minister provided €4.5m. The public demanded better and more stock in the submissions and valued the response (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2003 and 2008).

On the recommendation of the County and City Librarians, the combined catalogues detailing 12.9 million books, music and multi-media held in all 32 authorities were networked and are searchable on www.borrowbooks.ie. Members locate, reserve or order books, music and items through the inter-library system. Libraries loaned 14.52 million items during 2006, an 11.4% increase on 1998 figures (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2000 and 2008a).

The influx of non-Irish nationals, the new Irish, aged 15 years and over increased by 93% from 190,100 in 2002 to 367,200 four years later (Central Statistics Office 2007b). The provision of material in a variety of languages challenged library authorities in terms of budgets, stock selection and sustainability. (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2007a).

Traditionally, teenagers read less than their younger counterparts. The findings of the research commissioned by the Office for the Minister for Children (OMC) on teenage requirements for library services are due to be published soon. An Chomhairle Leabharlanna established the Working Group on Library Services for Teenagers and Young People, in response to an OMC invitation. The working group’s brief is to document good practice in Ireland and further afield on children and young people which would complement the findings, to develop relevant collections for these key age groups and to facilitate developments in the years to come.

Developing collections and exploiting them for all segments of the potential library market requires considerable energy and enthusiasm. The joy of reading and the value of books and other media in fostering ideas, imagination and knowledge are gifts that library staff convey to the public every day. Market investigation, displays, activities, advice, promotion and working with authors bear fruit in terms of reader development and cultural inclusion.

Opportunities for deeper alliances in exploiting library stock will arise in the future with authors, other rights holders and publishers with the establishment of the Irish Public Lending Remuneration Scheme. The scheme establishes intellectual property as a right and attaches a monetary value to library loans. Experience from countries with established PLR schemes indicate that rights holders appreciate the acknowledgement.

The population grew from 3.6 million in 1996 to 4.3 million in 2007 (Central Statistics Office 2007). Given the projection to 2021 of 5 million and the rapidly ageing population structure of those aged 65 and over, projected to grow from 460,000 in 2006 to 1.3 or 1.4 million by 2041, demographic change will continue to influence content selection policies (Central Statistics Office 2008).

From 2008 onwards, the per capita target, set at €3.77 in *Branching Out: Future Directions* will be linked to the Consumer Price Index. This measure supports authorities in their quest to satisfy demands. Barriers to increasing usage, including charges, should be abolished.

Improving Levels of Staffing and Opening Hours

Library authorities should offer longer and better opening hours, invest in staff development and in new service delivery models, the report argued. A quality service would yield significant returns in terms of economic development, social inclusion and cultural participation, if the effort and investment was focused on providing access to every person in Ireland to information, culture, learning and knowledge.

The public demanded better hours in their original submissions (1998). The public repeated this demand in 2002 (Comhairle Leabharlanna (Ireland), 2003). Local authorities increased the hours by 30% (from 7,761 hours per week in 1998 to 10,122 in 2007, excluding mobile libraries). Most libraries now open on Saturdays and in the evening. Staffing grew by 35% from 1,302 to 1,752 from 1998 to 2006 (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2000 and 2008a). A grade of Senior Executive Librarian and a Staff Officer grade were introduced in the library structure to support the County and City Librarians.

Table 1: Public library authorities staff (FTE)

	<i>Professional</i>	<i>Para-professional</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Total</i>
1998	267	828	207	1,302
2006	405	1,130	217	1,752

By 2007, due to increased staffing, professional input and opening hours, annual visits to libraries had grown from 12.2

million in 2002 to 14.3 million (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2003 and 2008b). To enhance access further and reach new and lapsed users, Sunday opening, extra or more appropriate hours and joint activities with a range of partners should be explored in the next phase.

conference to discuss the outcome (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2000). The Standing Committee on Public Library Staff Training and Development, set up to advise the council on the agenda, met regularly to monitor progress on designing and delivering 30 courses during this term. Ten project-related courses delivered to date on the information society role recorded a combined attendance of 1,099. Twenty further courses were designed to encompass the broader *Branching Out* objectives and resulted in a take-up of 890 places. All authorities participated. Disparities existed in attendance levels and further attention to broaden access to training will be a priority in the next phase.

‘... imagination and knowledge are gifts that library staff convey to the public every day.’

Staff development underpinned the *Branching Out* work plan. The capability to recognize, acquire and retrieve relevant resources for all ages and interests, to tailor quality content and programming to particular users, to manage and motivate staff and to cater to public reading and learning imperatives was central to raising service standards.

Most library staff serve the public face-to-face. The release of staff for training from front desk and other public duties and the closure of branches to release staff are concerns. In certain circumstances, closures should be factored into local decision-making to ensure that staff with the appropriate skills and competencies can provide consistently high levels of

Building Capability

Better Local Government (Ireland 1996) noted that ‘there is a need for a structured programme of training and development for local authority staffs at all levels and in all disciplines’. An Comhairle convened a training panel to survey and analyse training needs and formulate the training agenda and hosted a

►



Bishopstown Library



Malahide Library

service. As stated in *Branching Out* 'any minor and short-term disruption to the level of service delivered to the public will be more than compensated by the results of an effective staff development programme' (Ireland 1998: 50).

The performance management development system (PMDS) developed for local authority staff has resulted in demands for further face to face and online courses. Having investigated the *Frontline* reading development course, developed by Opening

The Book (OTB) in the UK, An Chomhairle commissioned OTB to develop an Irish version. The online course was piloted in Mayo and South Dublin County Councils. *Frontline*, co-funded by the local authorities and DoE, will be offered to staff in all library authorities over a three-year period, beginning in July 2008.

Management and agenda-related training will be priorities in the next stage. Redeploying staff and generating capacity to address changing policy agendas will be a feature in the

changing economic climate of the next phase. An Chomhairle will support library authorities in building the capability to develop the *Branching Out* agenda, to link approaches to cultural and social inclusion, to deepen engagement in related strategies and to sustain progress on developing the knowledge economy.

User-Focused Electronic Resources

Investment in ICT infrastructure and innovative services would cost €23.49m, the report estimated. DoE was to provide 75% and library authorities the balance. The Information Society Commission (ISC) recommended that universal access to the Internet should be promoted through public libraries. DoE provided €12.46m to this end. The value of local government investment is not known. However, staff and management support for enhancing electronic access has been high.

European policy underpinned developments. The influential *Bangemann Report* (European Council 1994) had recommended that the European Council (EC) adopt a programme to build, *inter alia*, a more equal and balanced information society with opportunities to express cultural traditions and the creation of a common European framework for its implementation. Member state governments agreed to provide more efficient, transparent and responsive public electronic services, closer to the citizen and at lower cost. Irish National Development Plans for 1994 to 2013⁶ supported these measures.

Branching Out, as a result of these measures, envisaged the service as 'a secure platform of access to information, knowledge, and learning that will be vital to continuing economic, social and cultural development' (Ireland 1998:74). The Department of The Taoiseach, through its Information Society (IS) Steering Committee Report (Ireland & Forfás 1996), promoted 'knowledge resource centres' as conduits. 'The work of front-line providers of information services (would) be transformed in the Information Society. They (would) be empowered to provide citizen-centred services' (Ireland & Forfás 1996: 22).

A recommendation in the same report that DoE should ensure that PCs, Internet access and ISDN lines would be available in every library was helpful. Local authorities provided 597 internet access points in 185 public libraries in 1999. The steering group contended that the public library service would fulfil the role of the knowledge resource centres. The first IS Action Plan (Department of the Taoiseach 1999) led to developments supported by local authorities, DoE and the establishment of the Information Society Fund. The second IS Action Plan (Ireland 2003) reported that 1,400 library Internet access points were in use by 2002. A national training programme for 759 staff and a guide for staff and users followed, with assistance from the Fund.

By 2003, a million or so visitors indicated that they used library services at least once a month (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2003).

The TNS/mrbi survey confirmed that two-thirds of the adult population (over 15 years of age) had been or were then members and 94% of those surveyed found that their last visit was successful.

In October 2005, Minister Dick Roche TD launched the *Changing Libraries* programme to increase access to electronic material, with support from the Information Society Fund. The support covered the digitisation and packaging of content aimed at the general public, specialist users and targeted groups.

The website www.lifesteps.ie included twenty-four *Lifesteps* online guides written by library staff for late adopters to encourage wider use of popular e-services. The topics chosen by public library staff took a lifecycle approach and reflected the most frequent information queries received. The guides were also printed and were well received by the public, leading to a reprint.

Web-based services which unlocked materials only available heretofore in the library were also targeted. This resulted in the development of www.askaboutireland.ie, the co-operative online resource which showcases, through a single point of access, the local studies collections in library authorities. Local studies librarians and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna developed the site. The site contains digitised national datasets including the mid-19th century land record *Griffith's Valuation* and the Ordnance Survey Historic Maps together with local content relating to all areas of the country. Users access this unique material, free of charge, from home, school or any location with Internet access. The inclusion of the full file of *The Irish Times* from 1859 has added further value to the site. Plans are in hand to publish digital books and commercial resources through the *Changing Libraries* programme.

The site hosts networked resources of interest for all ages. Accredited material for the primary school curriculum and teachers' notes is a growing feature. Managed by An



Screen shot of www.askaboutireland.ie

6 See www.ndp.ie.

Chomhairle Leabharlanna and supported by library authorities, the Department of Education and Science (DES), the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the National Council for Technology in Education, the agreed thematic arrangement of material was tested by students and teachers throughout its development. The approach to learning and how children validate information influences both the design of the site and of future content.

‘Sustaining competitiveness is a central national concern.’

The EC provided €432,000 to develop seven library-based *Europe Direct* relays in six authorities which promote access to advice and content on all aspects of the EU and access to specialist expertise.⁷ The service is promoted to the general public, schools and the specialist user.

Staff support in all aspects of electronic service delivery was particularly effective in changing the image to that of a more responsive, competent, e-literate, inclusive library service. Balancing measures to improve access were introduced. Public library services demonstrated how ICT facilities and approachable staff could encourage late adopters to navigate the wealth of e-resources. The targeted groups included those without Internet access and those who use the Internet less than once a month. In Ireland, library staff focussed on women in the home, the unemployed, people with disabilities, adult literacy students, non-English speaking residents, farmers and agricultural workers and older people. Internet penetration in private houses and in businesses has not militated against the general public accessing the web in the library. In 2006, 1.7million hourly sessions were logged on 1,671 Internet access points, reflecting an increase of 18% usage over 2004 figures (Local Government Management Services Board 2007; Comhairle 2008a).

Looking to the future, increased bandwidth, storage capacity and tailored service provision in line with public needs should underpin the access agenda for the widest public usage. Users’ requirements include electronic facilities, including Wi-Fi, laptop loans, music recording, downloading and practice facilities and online learning support. The public seeks interesting and appropriate material on websites (and on the shelves). Users value their time and will use well designed, relevant and quality- assured content. Attention to website and portal design to allow for easier navigation will pay dividends. The public will use effective services where skilled staffs support their use of new media and content.

Library input to sustaining the knowledge economy and Ireland’s competitiveness with diminished resources will be a priority. Library staff can consolidate their roles as content providers in the learning, cultural and knowledge domains by deepening content and supporting the public’s ICT usage to access it. An Chomhairle Leabharlanna will provide familiarisation and training support to assist library authorities in enhancing staff skills. Libraries are anchored in the community. The opportunities to strengthen the knowledge-based skill sets and to support the excellent County and City Developments Boards and other partners in sustaining economic and community development are there to be grasped.

Generating Social Capital

Local authorities allocate staff and resources to generate social capital. In libraries, staff align *Branching Out* requirements with instruments and funding (for business plans, development levies, public-private partnerships, projects etc.) to those of central and regional authorities, where appropriate. Synergies in relevant environment, community, health, learning, culture, information and leisure services have added value to the local authority roles, library usage and active citizenship. *Irish Library News* has recorded initiatives promoting participation and access. Services to integrate Travellers in the learning environment, bibliotherapy for people with health issues, storytelling for children in an intercultural framework and debates on the *Lisbon Treaty* illustrate the approach.

Branching Out focussed on improving library co-operation with partners inside and outside the library world to meet the demands of users which could not be met by libraries working on their own. *Taobh Tíre*, a project to combat geographic isolation, was an interesting model undertaken by Donegal County Council, which provided various models of delivery in partnership with local activists and mechanisms, supported by research undertaken by the community and enterprise staff of the authority (Donegal County Council 2005). The report on this award-winning project will be published later this year. Mainstreaming models undertaken by a number of authorities to combat disadvantage will be pursued in the second phase.

Sharing facilities is a developing trend. The increasing footfall of the library is a strong selling point when approaching partners and seeking prominent sites. Operating in joint buildings, the facilities range from courts services, arts centres, theatre spaces, museum facilities, citizens information centres, crèches, credit unions, tourist information, archives, family history services, road design, motor tax, waste management environment laboratory, social welfare services to local government area offices and one-stop-shops. Exciting design and clear functionality reinforce the library reach. The development of partnerships with complementary interests continues to flourish in more established branches also.

Libraries promote access to themed activities, ICT resources and community zones and offer a range of services in tandem with partners. Library input into Children’s Book Festival, Heritage Week, Library Ireland Week and Adult Learning Festivals are



South Dublin's Mobile Library

well documented elsewhere. Partners include AONTAS, the Heritage Council, Comhairle na nÓg, childcare committees, Travellers' groups, adult literacy students, representatives of ethnic minority interests, parent and toddler groups, homework clubs, book clubs, music circles, senior citizens and the University of the Third Age. Benefits include economies of scale, strengthening of community ties, improved mutual understanding and shared solutions to user-centred service delivery.

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and The Equality Authority joined forces with library authorities – Dublin City, Cavan, Kildare and Mayo County Councils – to promote equality of access for people with disabilities to library services through *Library Access* (Comhairle Leabharlanna & Equality Authority 2004a) and *Making Access Happen* (Comhairle Leabharlanna & Equality Authority 2004b). Optical scanners, assistive technology, transit wheelchairs, lifts, adjustable desks, shelving at appropriate levels, alternative format material, Braille maps and hearing loops are some examples of the expanded mobile and technology access to library services provided through the support of the National Disability Strategy.⁷



The value of this collective attention and investment from a wide range of supports is obvious to library users. Library patrons have high praise for the staff, hours and the service in the two nationwide user surveys (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2003 and 2008).

Managing access and referrals to publicly-funded library services in other sectors throughout Ireland is a growing focus. A programme entitled Pathways to Learning (PAL) is exploring two approaches. The Committee on Library Co-operation in Ireland (COLICO) is investigating, in partnership with public, academic and hospital library and archive services in the Cork region how to increase public access to health, education and archive services. COLICO is also considering the feasibility of access to music collections. Consulting libraries in all sectors throughout the island of Ireland, the aim is to develop mechanisms

and standards while increasing awareness of the available content for potential users ([www.librarycouncil.ie/colico/pathways to learning](http://www.librarycouncil.ie/colico/pathways%20to%20learning) programme).

Gaps in service provision remain to be filled. There will be a funding demand for library equipment, dedicated programme ▶

7 The relays are based in Ballinasloe, Blanchardstown, Carraroe, Dooradoyle, Letterkenny, Longford and Macroom, see www.europedirect.ie.

8 The strategy was established by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in September, 2004 with funding established in 2005 and provided to local authorities through DoE.

support, reconfigured spaces and services. Relevant services, based on investigated markets, support the right to participation in civil society, including library services, for growing pockets of our population. We must reach and hold people's interests. The local authority service indicators reflect the priority given to improved lending patterns, visits, hours of opening and Internet access. The social capital gain for local authorities in higher usage is a powerful return on library investment.

Empowering the Individual with Learner Support

The public library service has its origins in the need for learning resources and expertise to empower individuals and communities. Resourcing this requirement is a constant challenge.

In relation to the primary schools scheme, library authorities serve 3,144 schools with a pupil population of 486,444.⁹ The Department of Education and Science contributes €2.2m to the stock supply scheme with the balance of costs including staff and transport funded by library authorities. The development of library support to schools is being addressed in the Public Library Research Programme.

The Junior Curriculum Support Programme (JCSP) addresses disadvantage in 30 second-level schools.¹⁰ This is a positive measure for the schools, teachers, the library profession and students concerned. The schools are supported by a professionally-staffed library with structured library and literacy programmes aimed at potential early school leavers. It is based on the premise that all young people are capable of real success in school and that they can have a positive experience of education, if the conditions are favourable. The Minister for Education and Science continues the library enhancement programme in up to 130 DEIS¹¹ schools in all, covering stock and space requirements with funding provided under the *National Development Plan, 2007-2013*.

DES support for the school library service, notwithstanding the JCSP programme and www.askaboutireland.ie developments, is disappointing. We must produce compelling evidence of our value in increasing learning participation and access in the next phase of *Branching Out*, if we are to effect change at a time when the school population is growing and public sector spending is shrinking.

Recent findings of an EC-funded survey are disturbing in respect of library usage, reading patterns and educational attainment. The EC measured public opinion on culture and values in a Eurobarometer study on the Europeans, Culture and Cultural Values in 2007 to discern opinions and behaviours. Participation in the public library service in the 27 Member

States was 35% with Ireland ranking 7th at 47%. 16% of people who left school at 15 or earlier used libraries, compared with 48% of people still in the education system at the age of 20 or older. The highest participation levels were in the Nordic countries. Ireland ranked 13th in the survey, with 75% of those surveyed reading at least one book in the past 12 months. The EU average was 71%. 51% of people who had left school by the age of 16 read a book in the previous 12 months. Of those educated to age 20 or older, 86% read a book in the same period. (http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/sources_info/studies/pdf_word/values_report_en.pdf). The correlation between lower reading levels and library usage must be urgently addressed at primary school level. Early intervention measures by DES could be developed in partnership with library authorities. A model taking into account the lessons learned in the JCSP approach would assist in combating educational disadvantage and lead to a cost-effective library programme for all disadvantaged schools at primary and post-primary level.

Lifelong learning is a key component of library programmes with e-learning initiatives featuring in a growing number of services. A project to develop online courses for the public and based in libraries in RAPID areas is underway in partnership with 14 library authorities, FÁS and An Chomhairle. This e-College, as it is known, provides a range of courses with training support and free access provided by FÁS, the national training and employment authority. Aimed at people with low skill levels, those who are low paid and the unemployed, it was launched in Limerick City's Watch House Cross Library in May 2008. The support which the EU and Dell have given to this project is welcome.

Sustaining competitiveness is a central national concern (Ireland 2006). In the next phase, public library learner support could assist in renewing and developing skills in the existing workforce. 15% of employees in Ireland have no secondary education (Central Statistics Office 2007a). Our older population is rapidly ageing, the level of dependency is set to double in the next 20 years and the retirement age is increasing. The library service has, accordingly, the potential to impact on learners, on a wide range of employees and also help to bring the long-term unemployed back to the workforce and to active citizenship, in partnership with the local enterprise boards, the voluntary sector education and training authorities. The next phase of *Branching Out* will prioritise the further investigation of library support.

Co-ordination and Support

Tracking the work plan required considerable support. A series of publications, a mid-term review in 2002, and conferences and seminars on buildings, training, digitisation and aspects of library co-operation supported *Branching Out*.¹²

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, in line with our co-operation remit, addressed issues in partnership with a range of colleagues. COLICO, the Training committee, Cultural Heritage Panel, the Euro-Focus on Cultural Heritage and the Department of Education and Science's JCSP School Demonstration Project were among the many committees engaged in the partnership.

Electronic networks including *Borrowbooks* and *Culturenet* sustained developments and focused on cohesion. RTE broadcast the *Thomas Davis Lectures* devoting 14 half-hour national radio slots to the public library service in 2002. The series was repeated and the lectures were published. Printed and audio versions were widely circulated (Comhairle Leabharlanna 2003).

Collaboration between the stakeholders and supportive local, state and other partners reaped significant benefits for users. Services to people with disabilities; family and individual literacy support; pedagogical approaches to curriculum-based content; services to isolated communities; inclusive reader development programmes; training and staff development; intercultural services; user and non-user surveys; strategies and channels for information provision – these are but some examples.

The Library Association of Ireland (LAI), its Executive Board, sections and publications took full account of the issues and attendance was high at related events. CCMA and their members individually and collectively valued the capital programme and together with the elected members supported and funded the improvements. The Directors of Services valued the wider roles for libraries in the community. Ministers and officials addressed the policy agenda with vigour and enthusiasm and provided finance.

The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF), the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), the Office for the Minister for Children, RTÉ, the Abbey Theatre, other Government Departments, the European Commission, FÁS and other agencies co-operated and endorsed *Branching Out*. The NESF recognised the value of the co-ordinated approach to improve access and support cultural inclusion and the library structure in reaching a wide cross section of the population (National Economic and Social Forum 2007 and 2008).

Achievements are due to the coherent approach emanating from library authorities, their elected members, managers and, most especially, chief librarians and their staff.

Looking Ahead

In the past decade, a picture has emerged of the public library service as a national network of thirty-two local authority services with more staff providing communities and individuals with access to an expanding range of library resources. The *Branching Out* library service is more closely integrated in the educational, cultural and knowledge-based programmes at national and local levels.

In 2008, library services can proclaim that inclusion is the cornerstone of the service. The distinct individuality underpinning the service of each library authority and the

emphasis placed on understanding the needs and interests of all segments of the population add richness to the offer. More is expected and the necessary supports will be sought. The *National Development Plan 2007-2013* (Ireland 2007) states that the public library service is an essential service and emphasizes that investment will in the years ahead be targeted at the public library infrastructure provision, ICT provision, improvements in the range and quality of stock and improvements in service provision.

The physical and virtual space that is the local library has a powerful affinity with individuals and communities in Ireland. *Branching Out: Future Directions* presents a coordinated blueprint which addresses the public library service challenges of the next five years. For a responsive community asset that represents possibilities and aspirations, is a symbol of civilized interaction, a civic offer to child and adult alike, a recognition of individual rights and choices, a beacon of tolerance, a haven of reflection, a promise of democratic empowerment, a cultural oasis ... exciting opportunities beckon.

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9 Figures supplied by Department of Education and Science for the school year 2007/08.

10 As at July 2008.

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12 A select list of supporting reports is available at <http://www.librarycouncil.ie> and in the bibliography of *Branching Out: Future Directions*.



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Joseph O'Connor at National Library of Ireland. Photo by Richard Stokes

LIBRARY IRELAND WEEK 2008

Joseph O'Connor describes the role that libraries have played in his father's life at the launch of Library Ireland Week 2008, National Library of Ireland

Seán, my father, was born in the Liberties of Dublin, the city's oldest neighbourhood, a district of fierce autonomies, near the stern black cathedral in which Swift had thundered the gospel, near Thomas Street church, where Robert Emmet was executed, near the house on Usher's Island in which the family in Joyce's *The Dead* are gathered in the hope of redemption. Dublin Castle, bastion of colonial power down all the long centuries, was a mule's bawl from Francis Street, his childhood home and habitat. The Liffey flowed adjacently, by Wood Quay and the Four Courts, by the steeples of Christchurch and Adam-and-Eve's, a dirty, eddying watercourse serenaded by the seagulls and the calls of the barge-men through its mizzle and stench. Only sixteen years before his birth it had borne into history the last British garrison ever to guard Ireland's capital. The river that once brought them had taken them away, under the conquering gaze of Michael Collins.

A heavy oaten aroma drifted up from the brewery, wrapping itself around his childhood – all Dubliners will remember that evocative smell – and the barges plied the river bringing barrels of Guinness to the world beyond a child's imagination. An inner city boy, he loved animals, especially birds, and he roamed about the Liberties exploring. The grid through which he moved had its landmarks and lighthouses – Saint Nicholas of Myra Church, Francis Street School, Meath Street, the Coombe, Bride Street, Cabman's Alley – and wider latitudes might be glimpsed in the neighbourhood's picture house, and in the stories, or the silences, of relatives living close to him: a separated aunt, a grandmother who kept a butcher's shop, an

old man whose quarters – beside Johnny Rae's ice-cream parlour – had among their rudimentary furniture and general bric-a-brac a tombstone engraved with his name! But the map of my father's childhood had other landmarks too – the libraries of Dublin's inner city.

An email he sent me recently details some of those wonderful places.

'The one most used by yours truly was Kevin Street Library, and it may be still there. It was right beside the site where the tech still stands. There was another one in Thomas Street, around the corner from Francis Street and up a bit. If you were in pursuit of something special your chase would take you to Capel Street library, and

'... books are important, that learning is to be loved and treasured.'

sometimes to Inchicore library or Pearse Street library. They were all run by Dublin Corporation and I visited all of them often, usually in pursuit of something exotic like 'The Cult of the Budgerigar', by an author called D. Watmough, as I recall. The libraries were very much used by children after school, and I can vouch for the rush by a herd of them on the desk whenever the big book of the day arrived. The system was that the children had to have

a guarantor of the return of the books, which were only lent for a few weeks. It worked great for me, with my Uncle Joe as the guarantor until a certain day when I left a book behind me in a shop. I had to face the wrath of Uncle Joe when he got a letter from the Corpo looking for the cost. But all for art, I say!



Pearse Street Library

He grew up a bright-hearted, resourceful, grittily-minded boy, qualities respected by his mother, whom I remember as a personification of them. The people who inherit only their DNA and their values are always the most courageous. And one of the principles he inherited was that books are important, that learning is to be loved and treasured. It is a value shared and respected by many of our people still, up and down the whole country, in every corner of Ireland, and really it is the value we celebrate tonight, for libraries exist to serve it.

Francis Street, nowadays, has antique shops and restaurants, the cappuccino-bars and trattorias and carefully dishevelled bistros that sprouted throughout the city during the era of the Celtic Tiger. Immigrants have come to the area, bringing the vibrancy of new commitment. There are stores offering foodstuffs from Eastern Europe and Asia, there are African hairdressers and internet cafes. There are art galleries and pubs, and there is a theatre, the Tivoli, in which, in 1994, a play of my own was performed. My brother Eoin lives on Francis Street, in a recently constructed apartment block which replaced the very house in which our father was born. He daily walks the space where that baby was cradled as he crosses his living room floor.

In the years of Seán's infancy it was a district of astonishing poverty. He saw barefooted children, parents utterly beyond coping, whole families, usually large ones, in one-room flats. There was a sense of the celestial irrelevance of the poor to the fantasies of the Republic they lived in. In my father's class at the school there were 53 boys, of widely mixed ability – and some of hardly any – all taught by an Arts Student in his very early twenties, Thomas Devane, a Christian Brother. He was a young man who loved poetry, the world of books and learning, and who did what he could to encourage this love in others. In my father he found a child who was open to that world, and so I think of Thomas Devane, and the librarians of Dublin, as among those who changed the course of my father's life – who offered him chances, possibilities.

Seán, a restless, questioning boy, had a facility for English composition. It was an ability fostered carefully by a number of his sisters, beautiful looking girls, singers, readers, great frequenters of libraries. They bought paperbacks when they could be afforded and shared them among themselves. Indeed,

such avidly hungry readers were those gorgeous young Dubliners that when one of them would become impatient for her turn with the paperback, another would tear out a page and pass it across the kitchen table, so that often you had five or six siblings all reading the same book, each of them on a different chapter. An early example of the Readers' Group, perhaps, from the days before Richard and Judy. A magazine, *The Bell*, containing short stories and verse, was often in the house,

and my father availed of it. He was the sort of child who enters contests, learns definitions, tells stories, gets sometimes into fights, remembers details and promises, believes the answer to almost anything can be found in a book and is sometimes impatient as a wasp. I see him in my own sons, in my brothers and sisters. And I see him, as have others, in myself. He was the sort of child who visits libraries out of nothing but love for them, who saw books as a window to the world.

What might be gleaned from books – this was always his interest, as he left school at the age of thirteen and worked to help support his family. It was a curiosity he shared with the girl he would marry, who was always, like my father, a great reader. And Dublin's libraries, after his marriage, played an even greater role in my father's life, as he dived into his books again. He studied endlessly, at night, did exams, worked by day, learned geometry and draughtsmanship and trigonometry and physics, in time qualifying as a structural engineer. He opened a little practise in Dublin and, in time, it grew. He continued to study and read.

Churches, schools, office-blocks, libraries – they formed themselves on the drawing board he kept at the house. Often, when I went to bed, he would be working at that board, in shirtsleeves and tie, his restless eyes wearying. And often in the mornings, as I readied for school, he would be there again – measuring angles, drawing columns – so that it seemed to me, as it may have seemed to him, as though he had stood there working all night. He sang as he shaved, little nonsenses or bits of arias, or the skipping chants learned in his Francis Street childhood, and he asked me the irregular verbs of the Irish language as he drove me to school every day. But he had taught me to read before I ever went to school, and taught me to love books for themselves.

The Sixties and early Seventies saw stirrings of change in the country. And my father worked on, up and down the roads of Ireland, through its vast new estates and its factories in the hinterlands, often driving many hours at the end of the day so that a ritual we had could be honoured. Of such tender observances is fatherhood made. He would read to me a while before I slept.

His taste was for the Victorian, the old poets like Lord Tennyson, to whom he had been introduced by Thomas Devane, in Francis Street School in the Liberties. And the poems and stories he had found for himself in the libraries of his Dublin childhood. He owed much to those wonderful places and to the people who worked in them, and thus, as his son, so do I. I can never read Tennyson without hearing my father's beautiful Dublin voice, its inflections and subtleties, its colour and hesitance, its peakings and fallings away. Calming as the burr of a 'cello on a rainy night, it was a voice that opened worlds, speaking of possibilities, of language, and the counterpane saw empires rise and slowly fall by the power of a father's solidarity. It was how I had learned to read, or certainly why I wanted to; his finger tracing capitals on a yellowed old page, by the light of a lamp that was shaped like a toy soldier, bought by my parents on a London holiday. That I wanted to be a writer one day, I owe to my father – to his stories, but more to his voice. And I believe, without the libraries of his Liberties' childhood, that his life, and therefore mine, would have been different; that I would not be standing here this evening, trying to give voice to my gratitude to everyone who ever worked in a library.

All my life, I have been fortunate to have chances he did not have. I have been able to study in university libraries in Ireland and in England, and in the beautiful building we are in tonight, which was worked in by Joyce and Yeats and Beckett and hundreds of thousands of our people. I have worked at the New

York Public Library, where I had a writer-in-residence fellowship a couple of years ago, and it was there that I wrote my novel *Redemption Falls* – in that magnificent oasis of books and learning on 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. I remember my father coming to visit one day while I was there and wandering around the Rose Room, which contains 20,000 volumes, as happy and contented as ever I have seen him – and who would not be happy, in such a glorious place, surrounded by the riches of learning and literature, available to all, for nothing? What else is there in the world that is really better or more valuable than the generosity embodied by a library? It is open to all, the rich and the poor, the scholar, the student, the simple lover of books, the searcher through newspapers, the compiler, the collector, the family historian, the browser. If the madmen who run our planet ever succeed in destroying us, the beings of the future will excavate the ruins, and perhaps they will tell each other, as they try to understand us: 'At least, they had these places where people could go to read. They were not barbarians; they did not believe all the lies. They believed in something deeper than propaganda and advertising. They believed in the possibility of knowledge.'

He will be seventy this year. He reads every day, without fail. He retired in 2002, from a working life of more than fifty years, during which he had been an engineer, then a barrister at law, then an arbitrator of building disputes. He finished by project-managing the structural design for the new wing of the National Gallery of Ireland, that stunningly gracious building not far from us. I thought he would find it difficult to leave a working life behind, but he has never returned to the office and says he doesn't miss it. He reads poetry, criticism, short stories, the Old Testament, histories, biography, and fiction. And he still believes in a noble idea first taught to him in his Francis Street childhood – that books are beautiful, that they represent what is best in us, our hopes for a better future. That they answer our questions, take us on journeys, and assure us that we are not alone.

My eldest son, aged seven, has a look of my father as a child, and something of what I imagine to have been his outlook. Like my father, he loves libraries and I recently had occasion to take him to one, for he was to be in a school production of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, and wanted to find various versions of the book. He was playing one of the hungry urchins so detested by Scrooge, a role that required a costume of photogenic raggedness, as well as a certain suspension of disbelief. 'It's great fun being poor!' he chirped to me after the final rehearsal, dancing in his tatters, ▶



**Aongus Ó hAonghusa, Director National Library of Ireland, Ann Seidl, Director of film *The Hollywood Librarian*, Joseph O'Connor and Deirdre Ellis-King.
Photo by Richard Stokes**

pointing gleefully to his patches. The perfect innocence of a seven-year-old's laughter. 'Hey Dad, I wish I could be poor all the time!'

I thought about my father, at the age of my son, standing in Francis Street, perhaps with his mother, the ghosts of the past and the future all around them, with the gull-song and the reek of the river. I thought of the comfort and happiness brought to my father by the world of the book and the library. And I thought of a frightened boy, whose name I do not know, who had one day sat beside my father, in Francis Street School, hungry, scared and cold. And other pictures, too, formed

'... and all because a parent took that child to a library and thereby opened up the whole world.'

themselves in my mind – but some of them I pushed away. The performance was about to begin and my son was nervous I would miss the start. A father has to do what he can.

Announcements were made. The lights went down. The children came and went, fluffing lines, missing cues, and the cameras clicked dutifully and the videos rolled, and the teacher wrung her hands as she nervously beckoned, and her charges appeared from backstage. How different are the lives of so many Irish children now. But how deeply they need the library, more than ever. For the challenges they face, the problems they must solve, and simply for the joy of the book.

Dickens, the sentimentalist, believed in the availability of redemption, even to the most twisted and crippled of men. His story of thwarted love turned to hatred of the world is far more complex than it seems. Its resonances sounded quietly through Dun Laoghaire Parish Hall, as my son and the other children masqueraded their hunger with the innocently solemn faces of those who will never know it. The audience was very small; there were rows of empty seats. But as he shuffled and grinned and spoke his few lines, the darkness around me seemed inhabited, watchful; closer than any of us imagines. Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* is a play about ghosts. Perhaps, the ghosts of my son's Francis Street ancestors had come to support one of their own.

Library Ireland Week, a wonderful idea, has so many valuable aspects that it would be hard to list all of them here. Readings, events, movies, meetings with authors, talks on new technologies, all the new things libraries can offer, and the opportunity to learn from some of the greatest people we have – our magnificent, generous, knowledgeable librarians, who work long and hard and offer all kinds of skills, and I am

deeply honoured to praise them tonight. They do so much for their communities and rarely receive our thanks, but they deserve all our gratitude and appreciation. And the week is also an opportunity for the libraries just to say 'We are here. This is what we do. Come in.' But there is an even deeper value to the library and everything it stands for, and I think we all know what it is. Somewhere this week, in this city, in our country, and in the months and years to come, long after this week is over, a child will realise he or she wants to read, or perhaps would even dare to hope to write a story one day – and all because a parent took that child to a library and thereby opened up the whole world. That child might be Irish – or from a country far away, whose name and customs we do not even know – but he will find in the library all that is best of us, a thing about our people that is to be treasured. For the loyalty given by our librarians every working day of every week quietly changes lives, gives opportunities, new chances – and those wonderful places they preserve for our people are needed more than ever in these times.

I will finish with the words of a great poet and preacher, John Donne, whose work I remember discovering in this very building, one morning thirty years ago, when I was in my teens. An old book of his happened to be left on a desk upstairs, at which I sat down to work. I was researching a school project, many of the contents of which I have long forgotten – but I have never forgotten the power of these words, and the beautiful truth of John Donne's central image, which everyone in this room will understand:

'All mankind is of one author and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated. God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie open to one another.'

Heaven is a library, the place we are translated, as if we didn't know it already. I'm deeply honoured to have had the opportunity of expressing my gratitude to you. And I'm delighted to launch this wonderful week.

Joseph O'Connor is one of Ireland's most acclaimed writers, with a wide-ranging body of work to his name, including short stories, comic essays, stage plays, film scripts and six novels. In 2002, his epic novel *Star of the Sea* was published and it was subsequently translated into 32 languages, winning the Prix Littéraire Européen Madeleine Zepter for European Novel of the Year. His eagerly awaited sequel *Redemption Falls*, set against the background of Irish immigrant participation in the American Civil War was hailed by the Irish Times as 'a brilliant achievement' and by the Guardian as 'a major work of modern fiction from an astoundingly accomplished novelist.'

Cybersocial networks



Screen shots of Louise Farragher's home page, and a sample Books iRead

Facebook

Facebook is a privately-owned social networking website freely accessible to anyone over the age of thirteen who has a valid email address. Unlike other social networking sites like MySpace and Bebo, Facebook has attracted an older demographic of university students, professionals and academics. Facebook itself invites you to:

- Keep in touch with friends and family
- Share photos and videos
- Reconnect with old classmates

Your Facebook account enables you to create a profile about yourself, your interests, where you work, or any other kind of information you choose to disclose about yourself (your age, gender, birthday etc.) Facebook and Facebook users have created a wide range of applications which can be added to your profile, and these applications range from the silly (the 'superpoke' application which allows you to poke or throw objects at other people) to the very useful and clever (the BooksiRead or Librarything applications, which allow you to create a virtual bookshelf to tell others what you are reading. You also have the option to provide reviews or ratings and to see what your friends are reading)

These applications are a means of telling other people about yourself, what you like to read, listen to, what films you enjoy, where you like to visit, and much more.

Your goal in Facebook is to create connections and build relationships with other people, and the basic method of making these connections is by 'making friends.' Friends are at the heart of Facebook because, ultimately, we maintain a profile in order to tell others about ourselves! You can search Facebook to find people you already know and ask them to be 'your friend' or you can invite people who have not yet joined Facebook to join and become your friend. Your 'friends' can be your real friends, family, colleagues and sometimes people you may not know very well. While some users have turned 'friend acquisition' into a sport and have hundreds of 'friends' most of us are happy to limit our friends to people we know reasonably well. I have 43 friends who include my family, real life friends and colleagues from all over the world. A significant number of them are librarians!

One of the more enjoyable features of Facebook is the status function which allows you to tell your friends what you are currently doing. As ever, these updates can be amusing or practical. At the time of writing, my friend Ann 'is at an international librarians' convention in Quebec. Formidable!' and Claire 'is building an ark, just in case.'

Of course, while you may want to share this kind of information with family and friends, you may not want to share it with your employer or strangers. It is important with any social networking tool to become familiar with the privacy settings available to you. Facebook allows you to restrict access to your profile to your friends or people in your network or various other groupings. This means you control who has access to your profile and personal information.

As well as building relationships with friends, you can join or create networks. Networks are geographical (there is an Ireland network) or they can be based around an educational institution or professional associations. To date, CILIP, Medical Library Association, EAHIL, British Library and UCD Library School Alumni have set up networks of members, to name but a few. Members can post information on upcoming events, alert others to interesting links or articles or create discussion groups. The Library Association of Ireland has also recently created a page on Facebook.

Some librarians have suggested that Facebook networks and profiles can be used as tools to engage with library users, but, to be honest, I'm not really convinced that this will work or indeed that users really want to 'be friends' with their local library or librarians. Having said that, Dublin City Public Libraries has 161 fans of their Facebook page!

In addition to developing a Facebook presence, whether personal or professional, librarians are becoming involved in developing new library-related applications for Facebook users. The Worldcat application enables users to search the Worldcat database from their Facebook page. UCD Library has developed a similar application to enable users to search the UCD library catalogue from their Facebook page. If you are really interested in this area of Facebook, you can join the FacebookAppsForLibraries group.

Facebook is just another tool to facilitate communication among people. The quality and depth of that communication lies with the users. I enjoy the fact that I have links to family, friends, and colleagues in an online environment but the main attraction for me is that we share our interests – what is the point of reading books, watching films and listening to music if you cannot share your favourites with someone else?

Louise Farragher, MLIS, is Information Officer, Health Research Board.



A page from the Library Association of Ireland's Facebook entry

Second Life

Second Life (SL) is a 3-D virtual world established by Linden Labs in 2003. There are currently more than 14 million registered Second Life accounts but the size of the active user base of Second Life is a matter of some debate with 30 – 50,000 users usually logged in at anyone time. To start using Second Life, you must create an account at www.secondlife.com, the website where you will also find the SL installer application which is required to enter SL or go 'in world'.

The nitty-gritty of Second Life can get quite complex but a scan of the SL entry in Wikipedia will provide potential readers with a broad range of useful information. I will briefly summarise some key features. Basic accounts are free while there is a modest annual charge for premium accounts (advantages include a weekly stipend and land ownership rights). Key concepts include avatars (the form users take in SL) and objects ('things' created by users). Users can buy, earn and spend Linden dollars. The Linden dollar is SL's 'in world' currency and is one of the key drivers of SL's success as linden dollars can be exchanged for US dollars at the rate of about 1 US\$ to 270 Lindens. Avatars can communicate in a variety of ways including instant messaging/chat and voice. There is certainly some unsavoury content to be found in SL but no more than anywhere else online, or in the real world for that matter, and it is arguably harder to stumble across unwittingly in SL than when using some other online services.

In the relatively short time since its creation, Second Life has undergone some significant changes but one of the constants throughout has been interest in its educational potential. Many universities from across the US, the UK, continental Europe, Asia and Australia have a presence in SL. Harvard, Princeton and Stanford are all active in Second Life. Within this movement academic libraries have been at the forefront of the use of Second Life. There are now over 40 library-related islands (virtual land masses) each with many libraries. For example, there are around 40 libraries in cybrary city which is just one part of infoisland. There are academic and special libraries, public libraries, library suppliers, health information libraries and even themed libraries, e.g. the Caledon branch library where avatars wear Victorian style garb 'in-world'.

These libraries are using SL to provide a range of services. In many cases libraries are using SL to provide an alternative route to existing services. They are using SL to provide reference services, to host book discussion groups and other 'traditional' library activities. SL is particularly suitable when dealing with readers who are a considerable physical distance away from a library's physical location. It is also very helpful when working with readers who are for some reason uncomfortable, unwilling or unable to physically access the



**Above; Avatars assembling for the evening tour of Second Life.
Left: Ann Seidl's talk in Second Life**



library. SL is also especially suited to some disciplines including art, design and media because of the potential of the 3-D interface. This interface is also attractive to a new generation of readers who have grown up using the Internet and playing video games. There are benefits associated with SL for library staff too. Libraries are using SL for training – by recreating in the virtual world some real life scenarios. Another huge benefit of SL is networking – as a result of my own work in SL I have worked with library staff from all over the world.

There are some issues that any Library considering entering Second Life would need to consider. Chief amongst these are technology issues. Access to SL can be problematic. It requires a robust internet connection and quite an open network configuration. Security concerns on the part of IT departments are quite common. If you don't have access to Facebook, for example, Second Life could be regarded with even greater suspicion! There are some issues with regard to the reliability of SL as a platform. The developers were caught out by the speed of its expansion, and it is not uncommon for SL to struggle once US users come online in numbers. Other issues include: ownership (Linden literally owns the world and have in the past removed whole islands when they have deemed this necessary), digital nomads (there are many rival 'worlds' to SL and some are now making gains and winning over users) and cultural concerns (many staff in your library may be uncomfortable with the idea of a presence in SL). While these concerns require careful consideration, the recent success of UCD's Library Ireland Week activities in SL, as part of the virtual venues strand, convinced many of the merits of SL. Over 100 avatars from all over Ireland and the world attended a range of events including a talk by Ann Seidl (Director of *The Hollywood Librarian*), a class by Professor Mary Burke from UCD and two tours of Second Life. See the attached pictures for some

colourful images of these events. Importantly, these events also caught the imagination of the national press and they featured in the *Irish Independent* and on the radio.

Technology consultants Gartner recently estimated that by 2011 80% of internet users will have some form of virtual 'Second Life'. This statistic points to the most striking aspect of SL – its similarity to the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s. There were about 80,000 websites in the mid-1990s. Now there are billions and it would be unthinkable for most libraries not to have a website of some form. Will virtual worlds be the websites of the 21st Century?

Cathal McCauley, BA, MLIS is University Librarian at National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Until recently, he was Head of Reader Services at University College, Dublin.

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Back cover: Students gathering for Professor Mary Burke's lecture in Second Life during Library Ireland Week

CONFERENCE
REPORTS*Conference reports 1*

Beyond the Pale: Planning for the Next

It was my great pleasure to preside over and attend the 39th Annual Study Conference of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) www.biall.org.uk. The conference took place in the Royal Dublin Society (RDS), Dublin from 12th to the 14th June 2008 and was attended by over 400 registrants. In addition to the five main BIALL jurisdictions, delegates from other jurisdictions included Canada, South Africa, USA, Germany, France, and Australia. Practical information and a Guide to Dublin for visitors were provided on the BIALL website. Half-day walking tours of Dublin were also organised. We had a record number of vendors in the very conveniently situated exhibition hall, which was also the location for all coffee and lunch breaks.

In a packed six days we managed to fit in a pre-conference workshop on Cataloguing and Classification (see below), seven plenary sessions, our AGM, twelve parallel sessions, and 'have your say' – an informal open forum for members. It is a daunting task to try to encapsulate such a concentration of events in a short account, and I can only hope to give you a flavour of the experience.

Our keynote speaker Richard Susskind (international legal technology expert) was as engaging and challenging as ever as he gave us a look at the future of lawyers. As he sees an expanding role for non-lawyers in the provision of legal services, our information-handling skills should serve us well in that regard. The Saturday session on the Legal Services Act gave further scope for future gazing. The future of our profession in legal services was also covered on Friday but with the emphasis on changing roles and the importance of both aligning our roles with the firm's strategy and demonstrating value.

Federated searching was the subject of one of the parallel sessions and provoked discussion of both the technical and business issues that arise in using federated search to retrieve from the content of various publishers. 'Implementing an enterprise-wide search tool' described a project to bring together the wealth of knowledge in client-matter documents and of precedents in business units, along with internal catalogues and external web resources.

Web 2.0 was the focus of a couple of sessions covering basic concepts, practical advice, lively discussion, an anthropological video and even a hint at 3.0 and 4.0.

'Law, Crime and Punishment in Bloomsday Dublin' by Mr Justice Adrian Hardiman (Supreme Court of Ireland), with his

Information Generation

BIALL (British & Irish Association of Law Librarians) 39th Annual Study Conference & Exhibition 2008



Above: Delegates at the start of a session at the RDS

Left: The décor for BIALl Conference dinner at the Mansion House

(Photographs by Brian Thomas, BIALl)

very interesting and entertaining insight into *Ulysses* and Dublin at that time, inspired many to return to Joyce with renewed enthusiasm. Developments in the Legal Information Institutes CanLII and BAILII¹ gave us an insight into the future provision of free legal resources for the public and the professions.

The *Pre-Conference seminar* this year was entitled 'Back to Basics: Cataloguing and Classification'. The first session was delivered by Guy Holborn, Librarian of Lincoln's Inn, who looked at common problems encountered in cataloguing legal materials and suggested occasions when it might be best to depart from a strict application of AACR2. The second session was delivered by Christine Miskin, Editor, *Legal Information Management*, who looked at recent developments such as 'folksonomies' and how to select and adapt a classification scheme from the range that is available, including in-house schemes and Moys (devised specifically for legal materials by the late Betty Moys).

In summary, our speakers came from six different jurisdictions and the programme managed to cover issues as varied as are the roles, skills and interests of our members.

One of the very enjoyable elements of our conferences is the presentation of the Association's and our sponsors' awards for

achievement. As a profession we take for granted the fact that we deploy an extraordinary number of skills and undertake an increasingly wide range of work. Unfortunately this commendable strength can be a great weakness and means that we are slow to give ourselves credit, never mind claim much deserved recognition for ourselves or our teams. On Thursday and Friday nights in addition to awards for publishing and service, there were awards recognising our excellence as individuals or teams in several spheres.

As with all conferences, the out-of-session opportunities for learning from and meeting colleagues from different backgrounds were excellent – coffee and lunch breaks in the exhibition hall, two receptions (one of them in that holy of holies for librarians, the Long Room, and the *Book of Kells*), and two dinners.

Next year, the 40th Annual Study Conference (*Locks and Keys: Safeguarding Legal Information*) will be held from 18th- 20th June 2009 in Manchester.

Jennefer Aston
Immediate Past President of BIALl

1. Canadian Legal Information Institute; British and Irish Legal Information Institute.

Future-Proofing the Past

The LAI/CILIP Joint Conference Athlone 2008

Left to right: Katherine McSharry and Aonghus Ó hAonghusa from the National Library of Ireland with Fionnuala Hanrahan, Wexford County Librarian



The Annual Joint Conference of the Library Association of Ireland (LAI) and CILIP Ireland took place from 15–17 April in the Radisson Hotel, Athlone. 157 delegates and trade exhibitors attended.

A full review of the Conference by Siobhán Fitzpatrick, Vice-President of the LAI and Librarian at the Royal Irish Academy, is available in the web magazine, *Ariadne*, Issue 55/April 2008. It can be found at www.ariadne.ac.uk – click on Back Issues for the relevant month and scroll to ‘Future-Proofing the Past: LAI/Joint Conference 2008’



Left to right foreground: Gearóid O'Brien, Linda Houston, Jane Cantwell and Siobhán Fitzpatrick enjoying the speeches at the Pre-Dinner Reception in the Civic Centre

All photos of conference, unless otherwise stated, are by Paula O'Dornan, Westmeath County Council Libraries



Left to right: Mary Farrell, Westmeath County Librarian, John Walsh, Town Clerk, Cllr. Egbert Moran, Deputy Mayor, Alan Hasson, President CILIP Scotland, Barry Kehoe, Director of Services, Gearóid O'Brien, Westmeath County Libraries and Deirdre Ellis-King, Dublin City Librarian. Photo by Paul Molloy of the Westmeath Independent.



Aoife Kavanagh from the Book Nest Library Supply at the Conference trade exhibition in the Radisson Hotel

Simon Cox and Shaun Sibley from W.F. Howes Ltd. at the Conference trade exhibition.



Pat Beech from the Royal National Institute for the Blind Library with Niall Crowley, Chief Executive of The Equality Authority and Breda Gleeson, Kildare County Librarian



Conference delegates at the Civic Reception, including in foreground Mary Farrell, Westmeath County Librarian, Norma McDermott, Director An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and Senator Nicky McFadden. Photo by Paul Molloy of the Westmeath Independent



Joan Ward of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna with Caitriona Crowe, Senior Archivist with The National Archives



Peter Foster of Cengage Learning at the Conference trade exhibition at the Radisson Hotel

Towards a new information space – innovations and renovations

11th European Conference of Medical and Health Libraries 2008

Seven Irish delegates joined over 420 health librarians and information professionals from all over Europe and beyond at the 11th European Conference of Medical and Health Libraries which took place from 23-28 June in the magnificent Finlandia Hall, in Helsinki. The conference was organised by EAHIL-European Association for Health Information and Libraries.

This year's theme was *Towards a New Information Space: Innovations and Renovations*. The conference was opened by Ms. Sari Sarkomaa, Minister of Education and Science. The opening speech, by Professor Leena Peltonen-Pailotie, head of genetics at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, was a fascinating overview of issues surrounding access to data and standards for information exchange for geneticists and other researchers.

The dense conference schedule included eleven continuing education courses, six plenary papers, fifty-four parallel presentations, sponsor exhibitions, product presentations, fifty poster exhibitions and, of course, networking and social events. The conference also included an event for EAHIL first-timers. It is a great way to introduce yourself and develop new relationships, particularly if you are attending the conference alone. This year's event involved training and participation in Nordic Walking!

In terms of the scientific programme, delegates learned about a range of practices and innovations across academic, hospital and research libraries and discovered innovations in technology and virtual library environments. Some presentations that stood out for me included:

Library spaces – new theatres of learning: a case study by Heather Todd, University of Queensland Library. Heather presented an exciting case study on the subject of evolving library spaces and how the new University of Queensland Library provides a range of open and private study and reading spaces to accommodate students. As Todd stated, 'These spaces create theatres for the increasing diverse needs of users.'

The role of the librarian as research collaborator by Fiona Brown and Marshall Dozier, University of Edinburgh. The authors presented an interesting paper on the practical experiences of participating in systematic review projects. They conclude that the role of librarian within these systematic review research groups has evolved from supporter or trainer to that of collaborator.

How to use Web 2.0 technologies in your library instructions by Dorine Kieft-Wondergem, Central Medical Library of the University Medical Center Groningen in the Netherlands. Dorine explained how she uses Web 2.0 technologies, in particular Netvibes, in library instruction and provided a live demonstration.

The Social programme of an EAHIL conference is as important as the scientific programme, and it is at these events that delegates find the time to network and discuss the conference programme in greater detail. Delegates were invited to visit Helsinki's medical and historical libraries, the beautiful Tempeliaukio Church and attend an opening reception in Helsinki City Hall.

Beatrice Doran and Gay Doyle joined me in participating in the conference closing ceremony, where we issued a formal invitation to EAHIL members to come to Dublin Castle on 2-5 June 2009 where the EAHIL Workshop will be hosted by the Health Sciences Libraries Group of the LAI, in association with the Health Research Board. We look forward to seeing you there too!

Louise Farragher, Information Officer, Health Research Board and Chair, Local Organising Committee, EAHIL Workshop 2009, Dublin.



Kate Kelly, Paul Murphy, Gay Doyle, Roz Howard, Niamh Lucey and Muriel Haire at the EAHIL 2008 Helsinki Gala Dinner

Book Reviews



Reading Gulliver: essays in celebration of Jonathan Swift's classic

edited by Máire Kennedy and
Alastair Smeaton. Dublin City
Public Libraries, 2008. ISBN
978-0-964841-92-9. Npg.

This book is an ideal companion and an elegant celebration of *Gulliver's Travels*. The square shape and the quirky typography are aesthetically pleasing. The use of two fonts, one of which is a modern version of an original Caslon font contemporary with *Travels into several remote nations of the world* by Lemuel Gulliver (as this book was called when first published in 1726) was truly inspired.

The contributors to this volume were very well chosen: Ian Campbell Ross, Andrew Carpenter, Mary Shine Thompson, Valerie Coughlan, Celia Keenan, Máire Kennedy and Eibhlin Evans all add considerably and uniquely to the overall value of this volume.

In the first two essays, one is immediately drawn into the world of Swift. Then follows Mary Shine Thompson's clever contribution of which 'the Dane' himself would approve. She puts herself in the fictional shoes of Lemuel Gulliver's fictional son, John Gulliver, taking a rather jaundiced view of his father's travels and, in particular, the treatment of children in his writing.

The next three essays kept me yearning to see (and preferably own) the many illustrated editions of *Gulliver's Travels*. I have promised myself a nice copy to re-read and keep on my bookshelves! The final essay, 'The Influence of Jonathan Swift on Anglo-Irish writing', makes a strong case for the influence of Swift on such diverse writers as Maria Edgeworth, George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce and Flann O'Brien.

If you take Andrew Carpenter's lead and decide to bring *Gulliver's Travel* to a desert island don't forget to pack *Reading Gulliver* – it will greatly enhance the experience. Dublin City Public Libraries (and the book's editors) are to be congratulated on this valuable contribution to Swift studies.

Gearóid O'Brien, Senior Executive Librarian, Westmeath County Library Service

Branching Out: Future Directions

Dublin: Stationery Office, 2008. ISBN 978 1 4064 2132 3.
67pp. Npg. Pbk

The original *Branching Out*, published in 1998, was a major policy document mapping out a development plan for the public library service in Ireland. Ten years on, *Branching Out: Future Directions*, published back to back in English and Irish, provides a new road map for the next five years but also, importantly, sets out the main achievements of the public library service since 1998 and these are impressive: a 25% increase in opening hours, 45 branch libraries and 7 headquarters opened, 1449 public access Internet PCs provided, 132% increase in spend on stock, and development of online public access catalogues and other significant electronic services. Brought together in one well-presented chapter, this track record is a useful point of reference covering all the main developments and enhanced by snapshot sections on specific topics, from the recognition gained for so many of the capital projects through the Public Library Buildings Awards to the awards won by initiatives such as Donegal County Council's library research project, Taobh Tire.

Chapter three of the report is a sobering analysis of the challenges which the service faces. Immigration, with an estimated 86,900 people entering the country in the 12 months to April 2006, is just one of these. But, one wonders whether the timing of the report allowed for the recent drastic changes in the global economic climate. Because of the likely impact on the Irish economy, there are implications for future public service funding as well as for family budgets. It seems reasonable to assume that individuals may make adjustments in how they access books and information. Perhaps people will rediscover the advantages of borrowing books for free and libraries will experience a boost in demand just when library spending power might come under more pressure.

The priorities and recommendations set out in chapter four provide a clear response to the challenges identified and include a mix of hard targets and issues to be reviewed which may lead to the development of specific targets in the future. The way ahead is mapped much more comprehensively than in the Northern Ireland policy document, *Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries*. Infrastructure again features prominently and the Steering Group has produced some important recommendations to improve the bidding and allocation process and to extend the capital programme to include the provision of grant aid for furniture, fittings, ICT and stock in new buildings. The need to enhance the range of information available on the internet and improve the quality of access is also recognised.

Under the quality of service heading, there is also a commitment to examine more appropriate methodologies for measuring use, recognising the limitations of statistics currently collected. Libraries have been grappling with this for years and the possibilities and the challenges are increased in the electronic context. Greater customisation and the use of Web 2.0

applications have the potential to give services a rich source of information about users and usage patterns but will require a high degree of sophistication to ensure their optimum exploitation. But this will be essential both to enable future service development to be relevant and responsive to the ongoing changes in information behaviour and to allow authorities to demonstrate their value and impact effectively.

The last ten years have witnessed the closer integration of libraries with other cultural services expressed both in many new buildings offering a range of different services and a



stronger cultural programming element. This theme is continued in *Branching Out: Future Directions* with priorities identified for libraries to function as resources for cultural expression through their collections, support for learning through all age groups and providers of community cultural spaces.

Despite a niggling doubt about whether the report fully recognises the impact that ICT developments will continue to have on information behaviour and, by extension, on the use and perceived relevance of public libraries, *Branching Out: Future Directions* provides a robust statement of policy and a clear way forward for development which may well prove to be a source of envy for public library practitioners in other jurisdictions. One of the strengths of the Branching Out model

is its bringing together of all the key players from the outset so that the published report and the priorities identified have the level of sign-up they need from the Department of the Environment, the Library Council, County Managers and library services to give the programmes the best chance of success. This approach has clearly been effective over the past decade and provides a strong foundation for the next stage. To the congratulations which are due to all involved in producing this report, should be added everyone's good wishes for a fair wind in taking the recommendations forward.

Linda Houston, Director, LISC (Northern Ireland)

Working for five star libraries: international perspectives on a century of public library advocacy and development

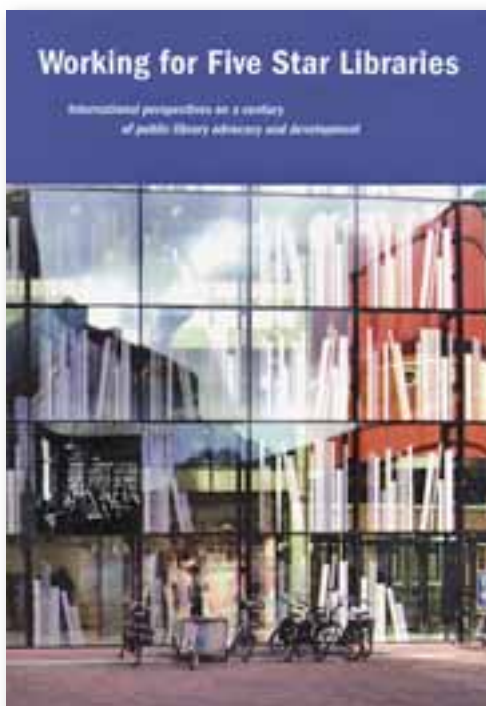
Marian Koren, editor, Den Haag/The Hague: Vereniging Openbare Bibliotheken, 2008.
ISBN 9789054838296, 128p, colour and black and white photos; npg, pbk.

As we celebrate the 80th birthday of the LAI, along comes this collection of essays marking 100 years of public libraries in the Netherlands. The Vereniging Openbare Bibliotheken (VOB) traces its roots to the decision by six Dutch public libraries to form the 'Central Association for Public Reading Rooms & Libraries' in April 1908. The VOB, although a sister organization of the LAI in EBLIDA, has a different role – it represents libraries rather than librarians.

The volume is edited by Marian Koren, arguably Netherlands' greatest gift to international library co-operation, who also took many of the attractive photos of libraries included in the book. However, it's not easy to relate the title to the content: what we have here are accounts from six countries looking back over 100 years and they are most interesting for what they say about how public libraries have been shaped by particular social developments in each country.

Paul Schneiders writes of the distaste that Dutch librarians in the first half of the 20th century felt for 'light reading' and how they sought to distance themselves from 'people's' libraries, charitable institutions which lent fiction. Similar sentiments were at work in Britain, as outlined in Alastair Black's paper on reading rooms in early British public libraries.

Black disputes the widely-held notion that the latter were primarily forms of social control, in buildings that were drab and unwelcoming.



Ilkka Mäkinen's contribution is a surprisingly enjoyable account of the importance Finnish librarians have placed on statistics, and how changing trends in library use reflect that country's evolution and its continuing commitment to education and personal advancement.

Magnus Tortensson's paper brings home how much more politicised libraries are in Sweden, perhaps Europe's archetypal social democracy. This is a very readable story, but the same could not be said for Laura Skouvig's contribution on Denmark. The latter is poorly translated, and Peter Vodosek's chapter on Germany suffers from the same problem: what is one to make of 'the reception of 'Bibliothek 2007' took place from political side until present day only hesitantly'? A pity, as Vodosek's account of public libraries' struggles and achievements from the time of the Reich, through the Weimar Republic, Nazism,

and the GDR to the present day, is the most interesting in many ways.

Liam Ronayne, Cork City Librarian

Leslie Bryan 1951–2007

Leslie Bryan's contribution to Irish librarianship crossed many boundaries. While all his professional life was in the Library of Trinity College Dublin, his wider view of the importance and lasting value of libraries was demonstrated in his involvement across many sectors of the profession and its activities in Ireland, Northern Ireland and internationally.

On graduating from the University of Dublin in 1974, Leslie took his professional qualification at the National University of Ireland, Dublin the following year and his Masters in Library and Information Studies in 1981. His first appointment at Trinity College in 1975 was to manage the Book Repository in Santry. Later, he moved to the Accessions Department where he held a succession of posts, ultimately with responsibility for the Accessions operations. The control and monitoring of the intake to a Legal Deposit Library is a complex operation requiring sophisticated and robust procedures which Leslie successfully developed and enhanced.

It is in the area of Legal Deposit of Irish material that future scholars will have particular cause for gratitude to Leslie Bryan. He fervently believed that the work of Irish authors and publishers could best be preserved through its inclusion in the Legal Deposit system. In this mission, Leslie developed strong relations with a wide range of Irish publishing houses and individuals by articulating the benefits of ensuring long-term preservation and access to this material. His success in ensuring the deposit of publishing output is a demonstration of his professional skills and his warm and persuasive personal attributes.



Leslie was elected to the Executive Board of the Library Association of Ireland for a number of years, serving on its European and International Affairs Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee. He was an enthusiastic and diligent member of COLICO, the Committee for Library Co-operation in Ireland, as representative of the LAI (1996–2007).

He also served on CONUL working groups, was Treasurer to the Acquisitions Group of Ireland and had been Secretary to the Standing Committee of the UK Legal Deposit Libraries.

Outside his professional life, Leslie maintained his abiding interest in the Irish language and was Honorary Secretary of Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise. He was a keen angler, bibliophile and a club man.

Leslie's courtesy, professionalism and his commitment to the highest standards earned him the respect and gratitude of colleagues in the library and publishing communities.

His endearing character and the warmth and loyalty of his personality won him deep friendships and will continue to be a source of many happy memories for those who knew him.

It was all well done.

*Robin Adams
Librarian and College Archivist
Trinity College, Dublin
August 2008.*

Máirín O'Byrne 1919– 2008

Many of us would have known Máirín O'Byrne primarily as a supreme professional Librarian who, over many decades, made a significant contribution to the development of libraries and librarianship in Ireland. However, while listening to the Celebrant speak at Máirín's funeral and subsequently listening to Máirín's family speak of the woman they knew as aunt and grand aunt, listening to neighbours speak of her love of garden, friends speak of her love of conversation and skill at cooking, and everyone speak of the love she had for her dogs, I was conscious of the many different roles she adopted and pursued with ease. As with all of us, there were many different dimensions to her life. She was a family member, a carer, friend and neighbour as well as being a librarian, and it was these aspects of her life of which people spoke as they remembered what she meant to them.

That private life tells so much of what was important to Máirín. Her memory will be held close by all who knew her at a personal level. But there was also the public life which reflects other values, these being inextricably bound up with a certainty of the value of public service.

As one who as a young librarian was first exposed to the vibrancy of her beliefs, she radiated to me from the outset a certainty that what she did as a public librarian mattered to the people of Dublin. In that certainty lies the motivating factor which underlay her many public achievements.

The facts speak for themselves. With a career spanning some forty years, beginning as an Assistant in Dun Laoghaire, she moved to Bray as Borough Librarian in 1948 and then in 1961 to Dublin Corporation, as it was then known, as City Librarian. In 1967 she assumed responsibility as Dublin City and County Librarian, her remit covering both City and County until her retirement in 1984. Her career was punctuated throughout by many achievements within the Dublin Authorities. The extent of building development in Dublin City and County during the late 1960s and 1970s is particularly worthy of note as Máirín, with typical drive and energy, took advantage of the then embryonic Public Libraries Grant Scheme enacted in 1961. Looking at her career from the perspective of time, however, particularly her influence within the profession as a whole, it is her involvement with the Library Association of Ireland which I believe holds the key to the extraordinary influence Máirín exerted at national level. Becoming Honorary Secretary of the



Association in 1954, a position she held until 1962, she was part of a bridging generation who worked with librarians who had been instrumental in forming the LAI in 1928. She knew, in the early days of her career, the difficulties of working with limited resources. She knew particularly the importance of professionalism, a topic which often drew her into passionate and forceful debate at Executive Board meetings and on the occasion of delegations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government. Indeed, her pre-occupation with professional standards and competencies required of library staff to deliver on a high quality public library service could be said to define her contribution to the profession overall.

The Association honoured Máirín by electing her to its highest office as President in 1966/1967. It is no small measure of the esteem in which she was held that Máirín, on the nomination of the LAI, was also appointed to An Chomhairle Leabharlanna / The Library Council by several different Ministers during the years 1967-1982. Máirín was also a member of COLICO (1978-1980) and a Trustee of the National Library of Ireland from 1987-1992. The value of her contribution at national level can also be gauged by several Ministerial appointments subsequent to her retirement: to the Public Library Review Group which she chaired in 1985, to the RTÉ Authority in 1985 and to the Public Service Advisory Council in 1987. Recalling Máirín's contribution to librarianship and to library development in Ireland, she is with certainty assured of a place in the highest ranks of the history of the profession for all time. As she continues her life journey, I am reminded of the words of Louis MacNeice's 'Thallassa':

By a high star our course is set.
Our end is Life. Put out to sea.

May she, a dynamic and dedicated public servant, follow that star.

*Deirdre Ellis-King,
Dublin City Librarian
August 2008.*

Library Association of Ireland: Presidents 1929–2008



Year	Name	Affiliation
1929–30	Dr Robert Lloyd Praeger	RIA
1930–33	Dr John F.W. Howley	UCG
1934	James J. O'Neill	UCD
1935–41	Dr John F.W. Howley	UCD
1942–49	Professor Felix E.W. Hackett	UCD
1950–51	Eugene Carberry	Cork City
1952–54	James Barry	Retired (ex Dublin Municipal)
1955–57	Desmond J. Clarke,	RDS Library
1957	Patrick J. Stephenson	Dublin City
1958	Christina A. Keogh	ICLS
1959	F. MacMurchadha (Fergus Murphy)	Waterford County
1960	James E. Gaffney	Dún Laoghaire Borough
1961	J.T. Dowling	Dublin County
1962	Dermot Foley	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
1963–65	Daniel Doyle	Limerick County
1965–66	Mary K. McGurl	Meath County
1966–67	Máirín O'Byrne	Dublin City
1968–69	Rev. Sean Corkery	St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

First President recorded on Presidential Chain of Office was Seamus Ó Conchubhair. Chain created in 1972

1970–71	Seamus Ó Conchubhair	Kildare County
1972–73	F.J.E. Hurst	University of Ulster
1974–75	Robert J. Casey	Dublin City
1976	Michael Flanagan	Clare County
1977–78	W.D. Linton	QUB
1979	Sean Bohan	Cork City
1980–81	W.R.H. Carson	SELB
1982–83	W.P. Smith	Meath County
1984–85	I. O'Deirg	ITE
1986–87	Nodlaig Hardiman	Dublin City
1988–89	Noel Hughes	An Foras Forbartha/ENFO
1990	Kathleen Browne	Kerry County
1991–1993	Deirdre E. Ellis-King	Dublin City
1993–1995	Beatrice Doran	RCSI
1995–1998	Liam Ronayne	Donegal County

Above recorded on Presidential Chain of Office

1998–1999	Beatrice Doran	RCSI
1999–2001	Patrick McMahon	Galway County
2001–2003	Marjory Sliney	Fingal County
2003–2005	Gobnait O'Riordan	University of Limerick
2005–2007	Ruth Flanagan	Cork County
2007–date	Deirdre E. Ellis-King	Dublin City

References:

LAI Annual Reports; Brief Biographies in *An Leabharlann* (1953), 11(4): 103-106; Hughes, N. 'The LAI: the first sixty years' in *Libraries of Dublin*. Dublin: LAI, 1989: 1-16; Presidential Chain of Office.

Compiled by Deirdre Ellis-King using above sources. Additional information provided by Alun Bevan.

News from the stacks

Library Association of Ireland

Cumann Leabharlann na hÉireann



The logo features the number '80' in a large, elegant, brown script font. To the right of the '0' is a smaller 'th' in a similar script. Below this, the words 'Anniversary Dinner' are written in a clean, sans-serif font.

Anniversary Dinner

To celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Library Association of Ireland, a special dinner will be held in The Oak Room in the Mansion House on Thursday 23rd October 2008. This is a unique occasion to mark an important milestone in the history of the Library Association of Ireland.

The event will commence at 6.30pm with a reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, followed by dinner at 7pm.

In addition, it is hoped to include a photographic exhibition highlighting events, activities and personalities associated with the Library Association of Ireland over the years.

The first meeting of the Library Association of Ireland was held in the Mansion House on 28th October 1928 so it is most fitting that we return to the same venue in 2008.

It is expected that there will be a great deal of interest in this event so please check www.libraryassociation.ie to download the official Booking Form. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis so don't miss out on this special occasion.

Copyright – proposed term extension to recorded sound

The Library Association of Ireland responded to the public consultation on the proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive amending Directive 2006/116/EC on the term protection of copyright and certain related rights.

The Association objects to the proposed extension of copyright protection for sound recordings (and performances in them) from 50 years to 95 years (IP/08/240). This stance is in line with our sister associations and with EBLIDA.

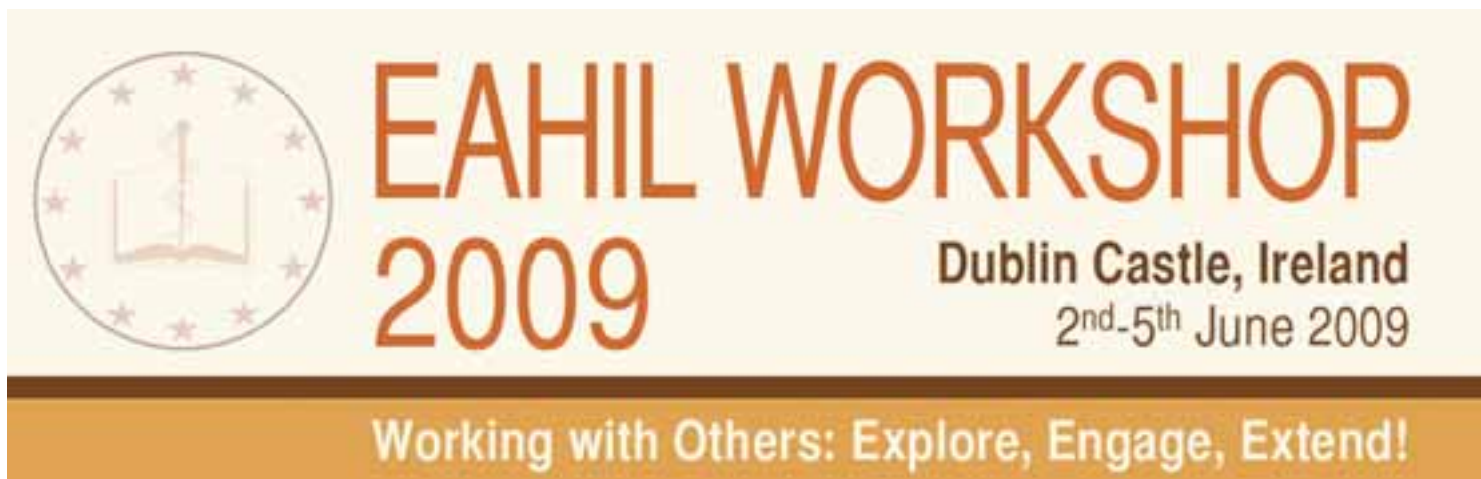
It would seem that there are three main consequences to such an extension:

1. Any extension would result in restricted access to sound recordings as the release of these recordings to the public domain would be delayed. The public domain is an essential source of inspiration for later creators, performers and companies.
2. The effect on spoken word recordings, audio records etc. Libraries purchase spoken word and other recordings for patrons who are unable to read print material for a variety of reasons- visual impairment, literacy problems. It is possible that there may be an increase in the costs of these.
3. It would undermine mass digitization projects.

The Association believes that to date no credible evidence exists to support the proposal. Both the Gowers Review (UK) and research from the Institute for Information Law (University of Amsterdam) indicate that copyright for recorded sound should remain at 50 years

HEA and OPEN ACCESS

The Higher Education Authority has recently adopted a policy in relation to the open access of published research where such research is funded in whole, or in part, by the HEA. Details are available at www.heai.ie/files/file/Open%20Access%20pdf_pdf



The Health Sciences Libraries Group of the Library Association of Ireland, in association with the Health Research Board, has the honour of inviting you to the EAHIL Workshop in Dublin Castle, 2-5 June 2009.

The theme of the workshop is *Working with Others: Explore, Engage, Extend!* Join us in the historic setting of Dublin Castle, as we *explore* the theme of collaborative work, *engage* with other health information professionals and *extend* our skills and knowledge as we learn to work beyond the borders of the health library.

The International Programme Committee now invites you to submit papers and posters for the Workshop.

We seek to develop the Workshop programme within a framework of interactivity and debate and we invite research papers, reports of innovative practice and cases which discuss these and related topics:

- Collaborations and partnerships with specific groups and communities
 - In education, learning and curriculum support
 - In clinical and allied health practice
 - In research
 - In healthcare, patient education and outreach
 - In special interest groups or networks
- Cooperation in services & resource sharing
 - Issues in liaison, partnerships and outreach programmes
 - Coordination in information and knowledge management
 - Regional, national, international co-operation
- Collaboration and communication in virtual and emerging spaces
 - Facilitating online collaboration and interaction
 - E-science and distributed collaboration networks
 - Tools, techniques, technologies including Web 2.0

- Information gathering, analysis, evidence and response
 - Assessing needs and evidence
 - Healthcare informatics
 - Customization and localization of information service

Further Information

- Paul Murphy, Chair International Programme Committee, pauljmurphy@rcsi.ie
- Louise Farragher, Chair Local Organising Committee lfarragher@hrb.ie

Abstract Submission Instructions

Abstract submission for papers and posters will be online only at www.eahil.uio.no/cop_index.html

Abstract submission will be open from Friday 15 August 2008 to Friday 17 October 2008. Both EAHIL members and non-members may submit abstracts. Abstract length should not exceed 2500 characters.

Full details on abstract submission are available on the EAHIL Workshop website
<http://www.eahil2009.ie/component/content/article/29-programme/48-call-for-papers.html>

BUILDINGS DATABASE: NEW IRISH WEBSITE CELEBRATES THE NATION'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Cllr. Mark Dearey, Chairman of The Library Council, has launched www.librarybuildings.ie, a new website showcasing the development in public library buildings over the past number of years. The website provides information about public library buildings in Ireland and aims to promote best practice in library planning and design. As well as full details of the buildings, the site includes photographs of each library and an interactive map showing their locations. [Librarybuildings.ie](http://www.librarybuildings.ie) concentrates on libraries opened in recent years and libraries in heritage buildings.

The launch took place in Dundalk library, chosen as the venue as it is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first local authority public library in Ireland – a brief history of the development of Dundalk public library is included on the website.

100 libraries have so far been added to the website, which was designed by Dublin-based Xcommunications. Amongst the buildings featured are Offaly County Council's library in the converted convent in Birr, and the multi-award winning Johnston Central Library in Cavan. Birr Convent was built between 1846 and 1856 and is considered one of the gems of Birr's Architectural Heritage. Designed by Pugin, its architecture is of national significance and international interest. The Johnston Central Library in Cavan received one of four inaugural National Disability Authority Excellence through Accessibility Awards in 2006. The library's commitment to accessibility was also recognised by an O2 Ability Award for 2007 and it took the prize for accessibility in the 2007 Public Library Buildings Awards UK and Ireland.

[Librarybuildings.ie](http://www.librarybuildings.ie) is managed by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) and funded by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. For further information: Alun Bevan, Research & Information Officer, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council). Telephone 01-678 4905; e: abevan@librarycouncil.ie



Dunlavin Library, Market House, built ca.1743, Co. Wicklow (converted for library use in 1979) and Watch House Cross Community Library, Limerick

PEOPLE

Best wishes to colleagues who have retired from the library coal-face in the last 12 months or so. These include Mary Conneely (Dublin City), Noel Crowley (Clare), Beatrice Doran (RCSI), Nigel Macartney (UU), Agnes Neligan (NUIM), Muiris Ó Raghail (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown), Eileen Phillips (RCSI), and Sean Phillips (UCD). Colleagues from UCD SILS who have retired include Professor Michael Casey and Noreen Hayes – both known to students over many years.

Congratulations and good luck to those who have taken up new appointments in the last twelve months: Kate Kelly (RCSI), Cathal McCauley (NUIM), Mairead Owens (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown), and Patricia Quigley (Trinity College, Dublin).



Professors Mary Burke and John Dean with Noreen Hayes at Noreen's retirement party in UCD's School of Information and Library Studies



Seán Phillips, Ann Seidl and Cathal McCauley at UCD

Associateship

of the Library Association of Ireland ALAI

Recognising Achievement
Promoting Professionalism

Continuing Professional Development in a dynamic information environment

The Library Association of Ireland is the professional association for librarians in Ireland and represents librarians working in all types of libraries and information centres. The Association aims:

To promote a high standard of education for librarianship in Ireland by evaluating and giving recognition to degrees, diplomas or other professional qualifications in librarianship, and by conducting courses of study, setting examination to test the proficiency of candidates, and issuing diplomas

What is Associateship?

Associateship is open to members of the Association who satisfy the requirements in relation to academic qualifications in Library and Information Studies and relevant post-qualification practical experience.

What would the ALAI mean to me?

Advantages of Associateship include:

- Professional recognition of relevant academic courses
- Evidence of continuing professional development
- Evidence of personal achievement
- Election to Register of Associates
- Inclusion as Associate in annual Professional Register
- Use of post-nominals ALAI

Who can apply for ALAI?

Application is open to any personal member of the Library Association of Ireland who:

- Has been a personal member for at least one year
- Is a personal member in good standing at the time of application
- Holds an academic qualification in Library and Information Studies which is recognised by the Library Association of Ireland
- Has at least two years post-qualification relevant experience

How can I apply?

Applicants should submit the following to the Education Committee

- Completed Application Form
- Outline of continuing Professional Development (not more than 500 words)
- Supporting relevant documentation
- Fee of €100

Full details are available on the LAI website at:
www.libraryassociation.ie

Or contact: The Secretary, Education Committee,
Library Association of Ireland, 53 Upper Mount St., Dublin 2

Email: education@libraryassociation.ie

Library Association of Ireland Education Committee

2008 Membership Application Form

Name

Address

Professional/Academic Qualifications:

Where employed:

Position/Grade:

E-Mail or Daytime Phone Number:

1. What Section/Group do you wish to join?

- Academic & Special Libraries Section
- Cataloguing & Indexing Group
- Digital Libraries Group
- Genealogy and Local Studies Group
- Government Libraries Section
- Health Sciences Libraries Section
- Irish Language Group
- Munster Regional Section
- Prison Libraries Group
- Public Libraries Section
- Rare Books Group
- Western Regional Section
- Youth Libraries Group

Subscription rates, listed in next column, include membership of TWO special interest sections/groups. Membership of additional sections/groups is at a rate of €5 per section/group.

2. How do you wish to pay?

A. Personal Members (Local) whose annual salary or income:

1. does not exceed €20,000 pay €20
2. is between €20,000 and €29,999 pay €45
3. is between €30,000 and €39,999 pay €55
4. is between €40,000 and €49,999 pay €75
5. is €50,000 or over pay €95
6. Unemployed or Retired members pay €20
7. Students (of recognised LIS course) pay €10 and a discounted personal members rate of 75% for the first two years of continuous postgraduate membership

B. Personal Members Overseas

(i.e. Members who work outside the Republic of Ireland and are also members of a sister Library Association) pay €55

I enclose a cheque for payable to the
Library Association of Ireland

Please charge my credit card for
Visa Mastercard

Card No

Expiry Date /

Billing Address

Signature

Date

3. Do you require a receipt?

Yes No

For Office Use Only

Monies Received
Ex B Ratified
Database Updated
Membership No

N.B. post application to

Secretary
Library Association of Ireland
53 Upper Mount Street
Dublin 2



Library Association of Ireland, CUMANN LEABHARLANN NA HÉIREANN,
53 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2.
www.libraryassociation.ie