



Annual Report of the Director of the National Archives, 2014

10/2015

INTRODUCTION

This report details the work and activities of the National Archives in 2014.

The National Archives continued to accession, preserve and make records available in the reading room and online, and to deliver services to the general public and to government departments and agencies.

- We facilitated over 5,000 visitors each day to our online collections and services.
- We offered a free professional genealogy service in the reading room for those researching their family tree.
- We had over 12,000 visitors to our Bishop Street site, a slight decrease on the previous year, but illustrating a general trend towards the use of online resources.
- We undertook a range of site visits to departments to review records and archives.
- We provided customised training sessions to a range of departments and court offices with regard to their obligations under the National Archives Act
- We project-managed a number of large-scale Wellcome Trust projects looking at hospital and medical records.
- We identified and progressed a number of projects to develop our participation in the Decade of Centenaries.

All of this work was undertaken with the office carrying a critical shortfall in staffing. The period saw the retirement of the Acting Director Frances McGee in June 2014 and the role being filled by Acting Director Tom Quinlan until my appointment in December 2014. I would like to acknowledge Frances' long standing dedication and service to the National Archives and its readers, and to Tom for carrying a significant amount of management work in addition to delivering on his normal responsibilities.

I would also like to thank the Minister and her Department for the additional funding granted to the National Archives in late 2014 which I was able to assign to upgrading our ICT network and data storage to support our commitments to Ireland 2016 and provide capacity for the next three years.

Unfortunately, as a consequence of the staffing shortfall the National Archives was not able to meet all statutory requirements regarding transfers and authorisations of disposals of records in 2014. Plans to develop a new capacity for transfer of digital and electronic records were also put on hold.

These staffing level issues are of serious concern to both myself and my staff. It is hoped that moves underway to address these deficiencies will yield gains in 2015 and beyond and bring the National Archives to a more secure footing regarding critical resources.

Highlights

- 2014 saw a significant transfer of court and embassy files in addition to the records of departments of state.
- Two dedicated projects continued the process of making 1916 financial compensation files and [Civil War compensation files](#) available for public inspection.
- The Archives Storage & Preservation Division worked on the [Dublin Metropolitan Police files](#) for release in 2015 as part of the National Archives' involvement in 2016 commemorations.
- There was substantial progress on the processing of the [Chief Secretary's Office papers](#) which cover the period 1818 – 1852.
- The digitised [Soldiers wills](#) covering World War I and a number from the South African War, 1899-1902 were made available

2014 in Numbers

- 14,854 visits to our Reading Room
- 23,715 items produced for consultation
- 7,127 copies of archives made
- 18 million hits on our main website
- 564,188 unique visitors to our main website
- 146 million hits on our 1901/1911 Census website

Context

In line with the other national cultural institutions, the National Archives proffers a range of services to the public, specifically by making records accessible and available to researchers, academics, and other user groups.

However, unlike other national cultural institutions, the National Archives also delivers a range of services to government departments. The primary service is the annual transfer of records under [the 30 year rule](#). The annual transfer is not a simple movement of records from departments to the National Archives building. Rather it encompasses a range of discrete tasks of identifying record series, training departmental staff, checking records on arrival, often re-housing and conducting preservation work on records, adapting transfer schedules into finding aids and uploading them into our archival management software in order to make them keyword searchable on our website. Only when these tasks are completed are the records made available for public inspection.

The annual transfer is an example of demonstrable accountability and transparency. The act of making archives publically available reinforces democracy and the link of the citizen to the State.



FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The principal legislative basis for the National Archives is the [National Archives Act 1986](#) and the [Regulations made under that Act](#). The National Archives is a statutory body within the Civil Service. When established in 1988, it was part of the Department of the Taoiseach. However, the related function was integrated in the arts and culture portfolio and since May 2011, that portfolio is held by the Minister for [Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht](#).

The Act vests principal responsibility for its implementation in the office of the Director.

The National Archives operates under the control and management of the Director, who is appointed by and answers to the Minister. The functions of the Director are summarised in section 4(1) of the Act. They include the following:

- The control and management of the National Archives;
- The preservation, restoration, arrangement and description of archives in the custody of the National Archives;
- Making archives available for public inspection in accordance with the Act, and providing copies of archives;
- The preparation of guides, lists, indexes and other finding aids to archives, and the publication of archives, finding aids and other material relating to archives;
- The examination and acquisition of Departmental records in accordance with the Act, and the inspection of arrangements for the preservation of Departmental records;
- The acquisition of other records appropriate for preservation by the National Archives;
- Giving advice to members of the Government and public service organisations on the management, preservation and reproduction of records under their control.

LEGISLATIVE LIMITATIONS

As noted in previous reports the need to update the National Archives Act remains overdue.

There is a pressing requirement for the Act **to automatically include** State-sponsored bodies and have an 'opt out' rather than an 'opt in' clause which would bring bodies established after the Act (such as the Health Service Executive and Irish Water for example) under its remit. The inclusion of such bodies in Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation and not in archival law is of particular concern as, whilst there is a requirement on these bodies to make information available, there is no corresponding obligation on them to preserve their records.

Section 7 of the National Archives Act gives considerable power to the Director of the National Archives to approve **disposal certificates**. This enables Bodies under the Act to apply for permission to dispose of records which in their view, do not merit long-term preservation. However, since inception, the National Archives has been unable to progress many of these due to inadequate staffing levels.

In effect the National Archives' resource limitations have created a bottle-neck for Departments of State regarding the appraisal and disposal of records in their care. This continues to lead to the unnecessary storage of records, often in commercial off-site storage facilities, with a commensurate cost and expense to the taxpayer.

I am not satisfied with this situation and would rather that the National Archives would be able to meet its statutory obligations to offer the full range of archival services as detailed in the National Archives Act. In the current circumstances I must elect to prioritise the annual transfer of records from departments, over the appraisal work necessary to authorise the disposal of records by certificate.

The drive towards public sector reform has placed significant emphasis on improving the efficiencies and effectiveness of government to deliver "positive outcomes for all stakeholders". The National Archives can directly contribute to the reform process in the area of records appraisal and disposal, and drafting records management guidelines.

My predecessors have consistently highlighted the importance of developing best practice for **records management** across the civil and public service. The National Archives receives multiple requests each week for advice on records management and I must reiterate the long-standing and pressing need for Regulations by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in this area, as referred to in the National Archives Act and successive Freedom of Information Acts.

Regulations which are prescriptive and drafted in co-operation with the National Archives would aid and ensure the stream-lining of the information life-cycle across the public service and demonstrate tangible benefits in records discovery, access, and management. The National Archives remains willing to partner with and assist the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in delivering such Regulations and I hope to see a structured path for delivery firmed up in 2015.

RESOURCES

Financial

The financial allocations made available to the National Archives from the Vote of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht were as follows:

Subhead Description	2013 €	2014 €
A.1 (Administrative expenses – pay of permanent staff)	2,110,000	2,160,000
A.3 Current (Grant-in-aid – matching receipts from fees for copies of archives etc.)	53,000	40,000
A.4 Current	910,000	915,000
A.4 Capital	370,000	281,000
TOTAL	3,443,000	3,396,000

The capital allocation was used to upgrade security and fire protection on the Bishop Street site.

Building

In May 2014 evidence of the deterioration of the Bride Street façade was detected with pieces of masonry falling from the façade onto the street below. Staff were removed from offices in the vicinity and the Office of Public Works (OPW) was brought on site to assess damage and building condition and initiate remedial works. At the time of writing this report (September 2015), these works have just commenced and it is hoped that they will be successfully concluded within 12 weeks with no interruption to access to the building for staff or the public.

A government decision was made in late 2013, and announced by then Minister Deenihan in May 2014, to develop the warehouse storage on the Bishop Street site and to provide dedicated archival storage for the National Archives. Plans to progress the redevelopment of the Bishop Street warehouse progressed slowly in 2014 with the indication that the RFT for the design of this new building would issue in early 2015. At time of writing the design team has just been put in place.

In the absence of new on-site storage, the National Archives was forced to explore alternatives for accommodation of the annual transfers given that the Bishop Street site as currently configured has no capacity to store any additional material. Through the OPW, commercial off-site storage was sourced and fitted out for the 2014 transfer. The OPW has entered into a three-year contract for this offsite storage to provide limited storage facilities. The National Archives must cover the costs of recalling and returning material between the off-site facility and the reading room in Bishop Street and there is a time delay in making such records available for public inspection.

Other building works included:

- Renovation of five vaults in the Four Courts repository;
- Remedial work to mitigate damp in the Four Courts repository;
- Removal of an obsolete Land Commission shelving from warehouse;
- Conversion of storage area on floor 3 into new workroom; and
- Upgrade of lightning protection for buildings on Bishop Street site.



Staffing

Staffing levels remained a serious problem in 2014. In particular the retirements of the Heads of Administration and ICT left the National Archives without senior administrative officers or the capability or capacity to develop its ICT network and web presence.

Whilst the position of Director remained unfilled in 2014, a series of internal competitions were run in June 2014 to fill vacant roles at divisional and management level and two Keepers and two Senior Archivists were appointed. However the net result of these promotions was the creation of additional vacancies at Archivist level. This had knock-on effects in that promoted staff were forced to retain responsibilities for previous duties in addition to new duties. The National Archives had a head count of 42 in 2014 which represented a marked reduction in overall staffing levels when

compared to 2009 and particularly at archivist grade. This directly impacted upon its ability to meet statutory obligations and develop new services.

ICT

Minimal works were undertaken on ICT in 2014 due to the retirement of the ICT manager. The National Archives attempted to progress digital projects to aid in maximising access to the archives.

Risk Management

The National Archives updated its risk register in 2014. In particular, the following potential risks were noted:

- Impact of public funding cuts on ability to offer planned and expected level of service to the public and government
- Loss of corporate capacity through retirement / redeployment and delays in appointing replacement staff
- Lack of suitable storage space in the National Archives, leading to inability to acquire records and thereby secure their preservation
- Lack of a records management policy for the State sector
- Loss of electronic records and archives due to degeneration of storage media or rendered inaccessible due to redundancy of system
- Destruction of or damage to archives in our custody
- Inability to provide full access on an equal basis to all who wish to read archives
- Misplacement of archives being returned following consultation by readers
- Destruction of or damage to archives and records in transit to, from or between our buildings
- Theft of archives

ACCESS TO ARCHIVES



Reading Room

The National Archives offers access to archives in the reading room Monday to Friday 9.15 – 5.00. This location also supports the genealogy advisory service which provides a free consultation service to people who are exploring their family history. The reading room offers on site access to a number of electronic genealogical resources and facilitates self-service and in house copying of archives subject to deposit agreements and permissions.

Readers

Readers' tickets are issued for a three year period to those who furnish the appropriate forms of identification. In 2014 we had c. 12,000 visitors to the reading room, with a daily peak of 78 readers on 19th February. In line with previous years, the busiest month was July with 1,127 readers.

Productions and Recalls

- 23,715 documents produced in 2014 (decrease on 24,867 produced in 2013);
- 4,668 microfilms produced (decrease on 5,324 produced in 2013);
- 295 recalls by Departments and Offices of State (increase on 215 files ordered in 2013);
- 566 files requested from commercial off-site storage (increase on 363 files ordered in 2013).

Online

We once again saw significant growth in online usage of archival resources which far exceeds footfall to the reading room. The availability of digital versions of complete series of records supports historical, genealogical and other forms of research and facilitates exploration and enquiry. Over 5,000 people visited our suite of websites every day and the National Archives continued to develop and broaden its online content.

The successful document of the month initiative continued in 2014. A more targeted approach was developed to select items of thematic or temporal relevance.

We continued to develop our online genealogical offering with the launch online of Census Search Forms for 1841 – 1851, and pre-1901 Census survivals, 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851. These new online records were well received by the public and the genealogical community.



ACQUISITION OF ARCHIVES

Under the National Archives Act, 1986, the National Archives is legally mandated to acquire archival records from Departments of State and the courts. The office is also empowered to acquire other records and documents where they are considered to be worthy of preservation, where they complement existing holdings of Departmental records or where they are in danger of destruction.

Transfer of records by Departments of State

Records accessioned from government departments during 2014 are summarised in a separate Appendix. These comprise c. 30,830 individual departmental files. Of that amount, c. 25,900 files (comprising two transfers of Irish Land Commission records received from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) have not yet been made available to the public as a direct result of a shortage of storage space in the National Archives.

Transfer of records by the Courts and the Probate Office

Records accessioned from Court offices and Probate Registries are summarised in the separate Appendix. These comprise c. 37,400 individual files and volumes.

During 2014, advice and training on transfer procedures continued to be given to the Courts Service. However, a considerable backlog of records from a variety of Courts remains to be transferred to the National Archives, including records of the Supreme Court, High Court, Dublin Circuit Court, Laois Circuit Court, Leitrim Circuit Court and Waterford Circuit Court. Five large transfers from Cork and Kildare Circuit Court offices were received during 2014, however none of these records have been made available to the public to date, as insufficient staffing complement has prevented their processing within the National Archives.

Transfer of Departmental records by scheduled bodies

The National Archives remains unable to accession large quantities of records due for transfer from many of the 61 bodies listed in the Schedule to the National Archives Act, pending the provision of additional accommodation.

In 2014, records were accessioned from the Office of Secretary to the President; Office of the Attorney General and Companies Registration Office (CRO) and are summarised in the relevant Appendix. These comprise c. 13,052 individual files. Of that amount, c. 11,100 files (comprising a transfer of records of dissolved companies files from the CRO (2013/49)) have not yet been made available to the public as a direct result of a shortage of storage space in the National Archives.

Non-departmental records

The term 'non-Departmental records' covers a wide range of records dealt with by the National Archives which are not covered by the detailed provisions of the National Archives Act relating to Departmental records. These non-Departmental records include the records of State-sponsored bodies, health services and hospitals, as well as records acquired from other public and private sources.

Under the Act, the National Archives may acquire records from State-sponsored bodies and give advice to state sponsored bodies on the management, preservation and reproduction of records under their control. State-sponsored bodies are not obliged to preserve their records and make them available for public inspection, or to transfer records to the National Archives. Very few have either transferred their older records or made other arrangements for their preservation and availability for public inspection in the National Archives. Only a small quantity of such records - additional Coombe Hospital volumes - were acquired by the National Archives in 2014.

Under [Section 80 of the Local Government Act 2001](#), local authorities are responsible for the management, custody, care and conservation of their own records and for making them available for public inspection when they are more than 30 years old. Under [Section 4\(1\)\(e\) of the National Archives Act, 1986](#), the National Archives may give advice to local authorities on the management, preservation and reproduction of records under their control. Town Councils were abolished in June 2014 when the [Local Government Reform Act 2014](#) was implemented and a letter issued from the Acting Director to the chairperson of each outgoing Town Council reminding them of their obligations under the Act to make proper provision for their records.

Records accessioned from other public and private sources

The National Archives may acquire records from other sources, both public and private, by purchase, donation, bequest or loan, in accordance with the National Archives Act. The more important accessions from private sources received during 2014 are summarised in the separate appendix.

Church of Ireland records

During 2014, the National Archives continued to co-operate with the Representative Church Body Library in ensuring the preservation of Church of Ireland parish registers (baptisms and burials pre-dating 1871 and marriages pre-dating 1845) which have the same legal status as archives held in the National Archives. Co-operation also continued regarding permission to index, photograph or reproduce the registers.

Finding aids

One of the key functions of the National Archives is to create finding aids to facilitate search and retrieval of archives by users and staff. These finding aids are made available in both hardcopy in our Reading Room and on our website at <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/search-the-archives>.

The workflow involves the creation of finding aids to previously uncatalogued collections of archives, adapting schedules of records transferred by Departments and the Courts to create new finding aids and converting legacy hardcopy finding aids to electronic format. This work is carried out in accordance with the International Council on Archives' international descriptive standard, ISAD(G), Irish Guidelines for Archival Description and the National Archives editorial style guide.

Adlib (industry-standard cataloguing software) is used to manage the finding aids workflow, including data delivery to the National Archives website. This in turn facilitates data interoperability, enabling the National Archives to participate in the European Commission's APEx project. During 2014, in excess of 71,000 individual catalogue entries were uploaded to the Adlib Archive system and made available for online searching.

In addition to the on-going work of adapting schedules of records transferred annually by Departments and the Courts to create finding aids, retrospective conversion of legacy hardcopy finding aids to digital format continued during 2014 as did further work on the arrangement, listing and boxing of unlisted records already held in the National Archives.

Appraisal of departmental records proposed for destruction

Three authorisations for the disposal of records were issued in 2014 in relation to records of the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Social Protection.

Electronic records

The National Archives was unable to develop any capability in the area of electronic records management. This is at a time when there is growing and vocal need for guidelines on the appraisal, accession and preservation of electronic records such as e-mail, word processing files and databases. The proliferation of electronic records and records created in electronic business systems is regarded as a digital time bomb unless procedures and policies are developed for the management of this material. Whilst the National Archives continued to receive requests from Departments and other bodies for advice and guidance in this area, it was unable to assign resources to this critical task.

PRESERVATION OF ARCHIVES

Archival boxes and folders

Work continued to improve storage conditions in 2014. As part of this work more than 4,000 archive boxes were purchased for the Four Courts repository to facilitate the boxing of parcels and volumes. Work continued in Bishop Street to re-pack records in older non-archival enclosures into archival boxes and folders. In particular, bespoke archive folders were purchased for the Chancery Pleadings collection.

Location Management

Shelf listing work continued for all new transfers of collections and to amend and update locations as a consequence of building works and re-boxing projects.

Conservation

Conservation on a wide range of collections continued throughout 2014. Preservation in terms of primary fundamentals (surface cleaning and flattening) to improve both the conditions of the collection and improve access to these archives were undertaken. Highly complex and technical conservation treatments, many of which had been developed specifically for our collections (Chancery Pleadings and National School grant application forms) were also carried out.

Priorities lists were generated in consultation with senior management. This facilitated long term planning and effective project management. The more immediate demands for conservation work to enable user access to single or small groups of archives continued to be met with great efficiency. Identifying specific projects and securing external funding (Wellcome Trust, Valuation Office and Heritage Council) were key in achieving a high productivity rate. Conservators on short term contracts carried out all externally funded work under the technical guidance and supervision of our single permanent conservator.

Through the support of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the conservation scholarship programme continued. These one-year placements for recent graduates have enabled a growth in the quantity of material conserved on an annual basis. As recent graduates come from the UK and Europe, this programme has raised the international profile of conservation in the National Archives. We have achieved a favourable reputation for the quality of supervised instruction that is offered.

The Conservation Unit supports many core activities across the National Archives such as specialist training in key preservation skills, handling advice and guidance to our staff, government and external bodies. Outreach has been developed through published articles in print and web format as well as facilitating tours explaining the work of the division to visitors and staff.

A sample of conservation statistics

Valuation Office maps	1, 234 conserved
National school grant application forms	2, 218 conserved
Chief Secretary's Office 1826-1827	1,693 pages
Property Losses (Ireland) Committee files	6,354 cleaned and rehoused
Chief Secretary's Office 1916 correspondence	2,453 prepared for imaging by 1916 Letters Project
Requests from users	124 items prepared for access and pre imaging



Digitisation

With the increase in digitisation the work of the microfilming unit decreased during 2014. While no new projects were begun, work on projects already in process continued, specifically the preservation microfilming of the Ordnance Survey Name Books.

An upgrade to microfilm readers in the Reading Room was carried out. Three new Scanpro machines were purchased and installed to replace older microfilm readers.

At the end of 2014, the National Archives ceased operating its microfilm unit and moved exclusively to digital surrogates as a preservation mechanism. The extant equipment will be retained in case of a future requirement for highly specialised preservation microfilm or the specific need to duplicate microfilm reels.

The reasons for moving to digital surrogates as a preservation mechanism were as follows:

- Compatibility with other media
- Easier to duplicate
- Easier to put into managed storage environment
- Meeting end-user needs
- Scanning can be used as both a preservation and access medium
- No need for specialised equipment to view
- Capable of being put through Optical Character Recognition software to create machine readable text

Digitisation encompasses the daily copies ordered by the public as well as preservation projects. To improve the service new photography equipment was purchased and training provided for staff.

Projects worked on during 2014 include:

- Soldiers wills. In April 2014 the final batch of soldiers' wills for the years 1918-1922 were made available free online. The complete collection of 9,244 wills for the years 1898-1922 are now accessible online. Articles on the project and the collection were published by a number of media outlets including the 'Irish Independent', TheJournal.ie, RTÉ and BBC Northern Ireland;
- Voters Registers. In a joint project with Dublin City Library and Archives we digitised Dublin Voters Registers for the years 1913-14. These 88 volumes are available free online on the Dublin City Library and Archives website.
- ED/1. The applications for grants for the building and equipping of national schools were originally to be microfilmed, however it was decided to digitise this collection and work began on this in 2014.

Copies provided to the public

- 10,183 pages of copies (decrease 10,694 pages 2013);
- 951 certified copy orders (decrease 1,078 orders 2013)



PROJECTS INVOLVING ARCHIVES

Crowley Bequest Project

Following the employment of two archivists in 2013, work continued on cataloguing the records of the Chief Secretary's Office for 1826-28. Also, a cohort of valuable records relating to the Catholic Association in 1828, the period leading up to Catholic Emancipation, was catalogued. It is hoped to highlight these records in 2015.

European commission and APEX

In 2012, the National Archives joined the **Archives Portal Europe** network of excellence (APEX) – a framework for European archives to collaborate for enhanced access to their online content. APEX is funded by the European Commission and during its lifetime (2012–2015), membership of the portal, content and functionalities have been increased and enhanced on a regular basis.

Wellcome Trust Projects

Grangegorman Hospital Archives: Wellcome Trust project, years 1 and 2

Two grants were awarded by the Wellcome Trust in 2012 and 2013 to fund work on the archives of Grangegorman Hospital. The work was carried out by a project team consisting of an Archivist, a Conservator, a Project Assistant and a Preservation Assistant. Excellent progress was made in the cleaning, arrangement, listing and conservation of the collection and the project was completed in September 2014.

Grangegorman Hospital was founded as the Richmond Asylum in 1814 and became the largest and most important psychiatric hospital in Ireland. The archives are the most voluminous collection of hospital archives known in Ireland. We are grateful to the Wellcome Trust and to the management team in Grangegorman Hospital (St Brendan's) for their support.

Dublin Hospitals Archives Project: Wellcome Trust project

A grant was awarded by the Wellcome Trust in 2014 to fund work on the archives of eleven Dublin city hospitals currently held by the National Archives. The work is being carried out by a project team consisting of an archivist and a preservation assistant. The duration of the project is expected to be 12 months. It entails the archival arrangement of the collections, the creation of finding aids consistent with international best practice, the preservation cleaning and housing of the records and the preparation of an initial conservation grading exercise of the records to identify items for selective conservation repair.

Due to the sensitive personal information contained in the records of both Grangegorman and the other Dublin hospitals; access issues arising in the course of the two projects (including Freedom of Information requests and requests for privileged research access to more recent records), have informed the drafting of a research access policy for hospital records in the care of the National Archives. This access policy is being prepared for submission to relevant authorities for approval.

The National Survey of Hospital Records

The National Survey of Hospital Records is the third Wellcome Trust project. The basic aim of the survey is to establish what types of records survive for hospitals and healthcare institutions, the date ranges of the various series of records which exist and their overall quality. The cut-off date for records examined is 1970. A comprehensive county by county list was created and contact names and details for all locations were collated. At the end of the survey there will be a comprehensive report, on a county by county basis, with listings of records that exist in each hospital and healthcare institution in each county, its location and administrative history. The end date of the survey is 18th of December 2015.

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht funded Projects

In 2014, the National Archives was allocated funding by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for work on commemorations-related projects. €75,000 was sanctioned by the Department in early 2014 for preservation and cataloguing work on archives of the Property Losses (Ireland) Committee and of the Department of Finance's War of Independence and Civil War Compensation Schemes. The additional sum of €28,800 was sanctioned in June 2014 to permit digitisation work on the records of the Property Losses (Ireland) Committee to be undertaken. The funding was used to retain the services of several individuals on the basis of contracts for services to undertake various elements of the work within the two projects.

Records of the 1916 Property Losses (Ireland) Committee (PLIC):

The Property Losses (Ireland) Committee was established to assess applications for compensation for damage to property in Dublin city and county that occurred as a result of the 1916 Easter Rising. The 1916 'PLIC' collection in the National Archives comprises 6,565 individual files, originally housed in 167 archival boxes. Despite its immense potential research interest, the collection has never been made available to the public as until mid-2014, it remained uncatalogued and largely unknown.

Archival preservation and cataloguing work on the 6,565 individual case files was completed in June 2014. Digitisation of the records began in September 2014 and it is hoped that work will be completed by December 2014/January 2015.

Finance Compensation files

As part of its Decade of Commemorations projects, the National Archives is currently listing the Finance Compensation (post-Truce) file series (FIN/COMP/2) which deals with claims made under the Damage to Property (Compensation) Act, 1923 for compensation for loss of or damage to property that occurred as a result of military action during the period 1921–1923. Using these files, a detailed picture of every incident causing loss of, destruction of, or damage to property during the Civil War can be established.

During 2014, 7,845 files for eight counties were cleaned by project and preservation assistants, re-housed in archival boxes, listed and made available for searching on the National Archives website.

DECADE OF COMMEMORATIONS PROJECTS

The Head of Special Projects was active on a number of committees relating to the decade: the Steering Committee for the projected GPO Museum; the Irish Times Steering Committee; the ICTU Steering Committee; the Military Service Pensions Files Steering Committee; Century Ireland Advisory Board; Letters of 1916 Advisory Board.

The National Archives accepted digitised versions of the Irish Trade Union Congress printed annual reports for the period 1901-25, and constructed a website to house them with context and images. It is expected to be launched in 2015.

The Head of Special Projects initiated a collaboration between the National Archives, the National Museum at Collins Barracks and ANU Productions to create an immersive on-site theatre piece in the Barracks in 2015, to reflect the experiences of some of the Dublin Fusiliers who trained there in 1915 prior to being sent to Gallipoli, where many of them died. The production will be launched in February 2015.

Documents on Irish Foreign Policy

Volume IX of *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, 1948 -51*, was launched in November 2014 in Iveagh House by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. The project is a long-standing partnership between the National Archives, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Royal Irish Academy. The vast majority of the documents transcribed in the volumes come from the National Archives collections. The project has a significant online presence at www.difp.ie, where previous volumes from 1919 onwards are available free to access.

Exhibitions

The Head of Special Projects project-managed and created a major graphic exhibition on the Irish in the United States, *Fame, Fortune and Sweet Liberty*, which appeared at *ifest*, a cultural and trade fair held in Boston in September 2014. The exhibition was accompanied by lectures from experts, including Professor Joe Lee and journalist Fintan O'Toole, and by a programme of Irish film relevant to the topic. The footfall at the *ifest* event was ca. 12,000 per day, and a large number of people saw the Irish exhibition and came to the films. It is hoped to move the exhibition around the consulates in the United States, starting with the New York Consulate in 2015.

Outreach

The National Archives also participated, along with the other national cultural institutions, in the Digital Repository of Ireland initiative, *Inspiring Ireland*, which created a showcase website for Ireland's State-owned cultural treasures. The website won three Ireland eGovernment Awards.

There were numerous presentations on matters other than genealogy throughout the year, at venues including the Irish Museums Association annual conference in Waterford, the History Festival of Ireland in Carlow, the Hay Festival in Kells, County Meath and the Little Museum of Dublin. Targeted workshops on sources were provided for history postgraduate students from University College Dublin, University College Cork, National University of Ireland Galway National University of Ireland Maynooth Trinity College Dublin, and the University of Limerick.

Numerous radio and television interviews took place predominantly on the subject of the decade of centenaries.

National Archives staff facilitated a variety of tour groups, lectures, demonstrations, advice and professional development activities in 2014.

The National Archives held its annual Open Day on September 11th

Conclusion

In 2014 the National Archives continued to proffer a range of statutory and other services to government departments, agencies, academics, researchers and the general public.

It continued to make archives available for reproduction and private study and to assist other institutions in publication and promotional offerings.

That it did so with the resources assigned to it at the time was, and is, a testament to its staff, and their sense of professionalism and commitment to service delivery.

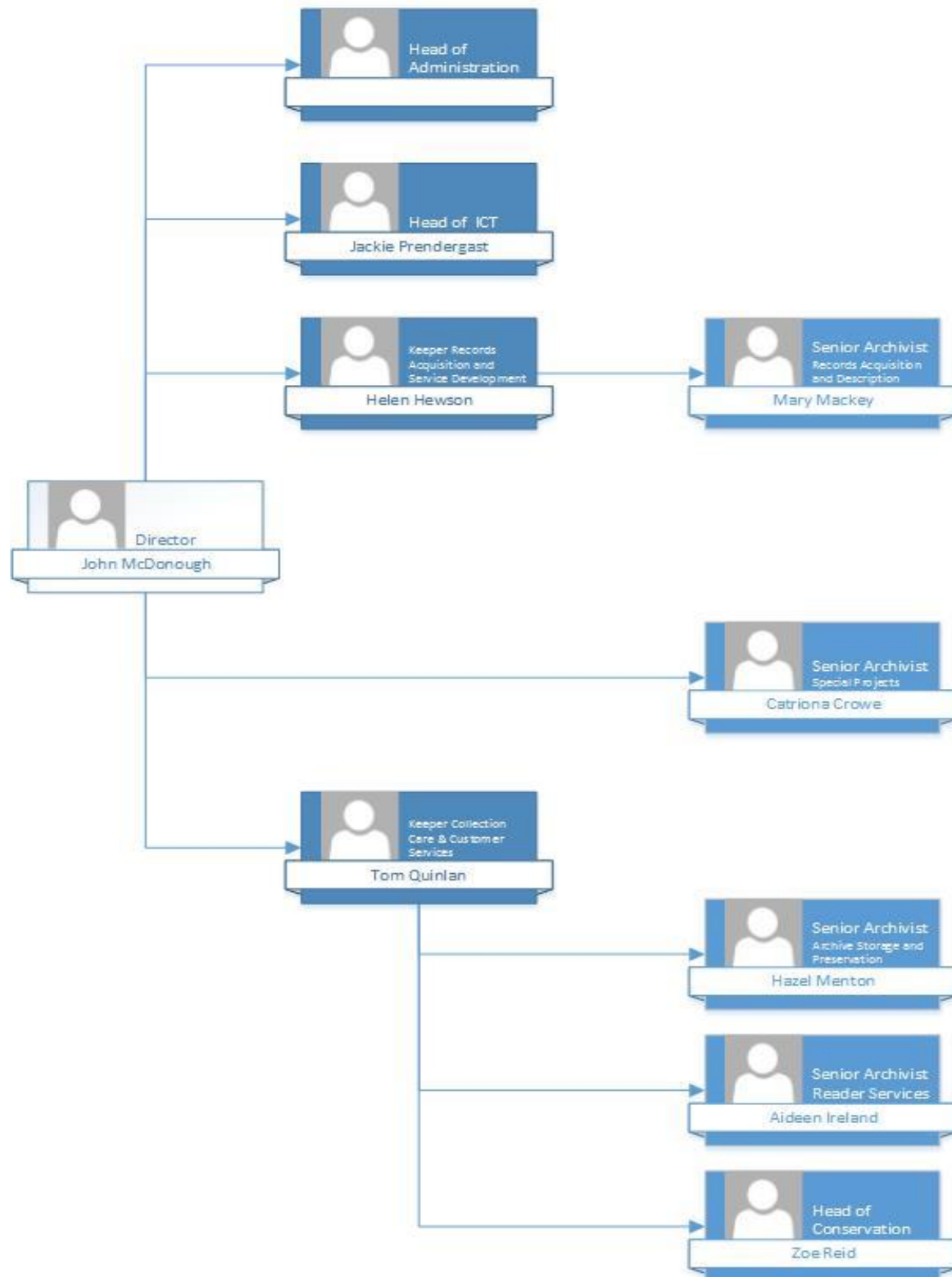
I hope that future reports will be able to indicate improvements in the allocation of additional resources to support the National Archives to develop its services to better meet its responsibilities and continue to deliver positive outcomes.

John McDonough

Director

APPENDIX I – ORGANISATION CHART

National Archives Organisational Structure December 2014



APPENDIX II - 2014 IN NUMBERS

Footfall	TOTAL
Readers	11,230
Visitors - groups, 9.15 - 5.00	283
Visitors - groups, 5.00 - 7.00	164
Visits - Open Days etc.	91
Reader's Tickets issued	3,644
Genealogy Service	1,935
Duty Archivist - telephone calls	1,306
Research enquiries answered	2,800 ¹
Productions	
Items requested	23,715
Microfilm Requested	4,668
Recalls	295
Commercial retrievals	566
Copies	
Number of certified copies	620
Number of Uncertified Copies - overall	700
Number of Testamentary Copies	546
Number of certified copy orders	951
Number of pages for certification	3,056
Number of instant pages copies	2,871
Number of copy orders	218
Number of pages copied	4,256
On-line	
Hits in total (Parent Site)	17,960,810
Visitors in total (Parent Site)	564,188
Hits in total (Census Site)	146,135,936
Visitors in total (Census Site)	1,537,055

¹ Figure based on average number per month

APPENDIX III - ADVICE AND TRAINING

The National Archives continued to provide records management advice and training to government departments and Courts services during 2014 on issues relating to their compliance with the National Archives Act. Training of Court services and Departmental staff was combined with visits to Circuit Court offices, staff resources permitting.

Advice and assistance was given to individuals and to a wide range of bodies, including:

- Department of the Taoiseach
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Health
- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Department of Justice and Equality
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Courts Service, particularly the Supreme Court
- An Bord Pleanála
- Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse
- Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and Certain Related Matters
- Companies Registration Office
- Garda Síochána Complaints Board
- Health Service Executive
- Inter-Departmental Group on the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes
- Irish Traditional Music Archive
- Lloyds Banking Group Archives
- Military Archives
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the Inspector of Prisons
- Office of Public Works
- Residential Institutions Redress Board
- St Brendan's Hospital Grangegorman
- St Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe
- St Davnet's Hospital, Monaghan
- State Laboratory
- University of Ulster – Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN project)
- Valuation Office