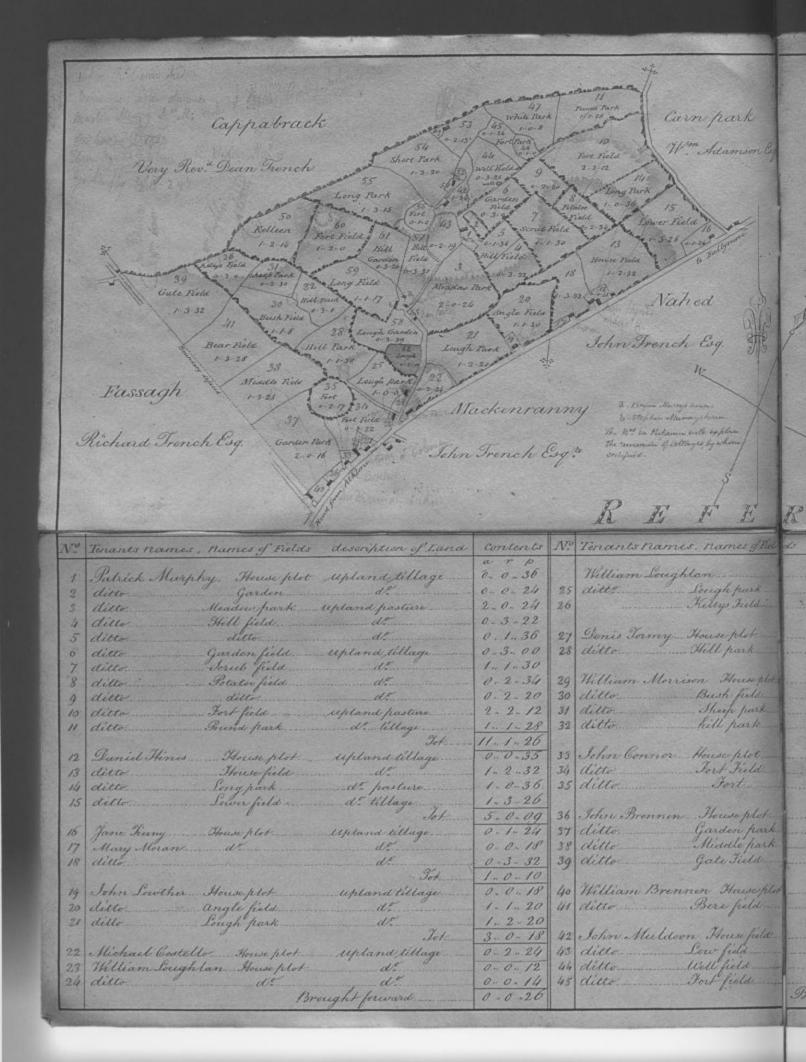




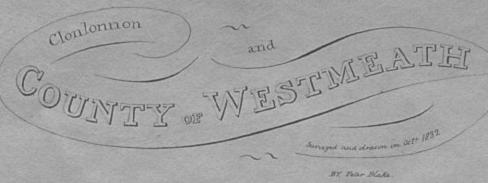
8th Report of the National Archives Advisory Council

1999





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8th Report of the National Archives Advisory Council

# 1999

C Government of Ireland 2000

ISSN:

0791-4601

Pn 8770

Submitted to the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and laid before each House of the Oireachtas in accordance with section 21 of the National Archives Act, 1986.

Published by:

National Archives Advisory Council

Copies available from
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The text of this report is also available on the National Archives web site:

http://www.nationalarchives.ie

Designed by: Ger Garland

Printed by: Nicholson & Bass



above

99/28: Unidentified man with 'Fluff', 1911.

opposite page

99/28: Courtown Harbour, Co. Wexford, 1898.

page 2-3

99/56/10/24/1: Plan of Ballymurray, the property of William Trench, in the Parish of Colry, Barony of Clonlonan, Co. Westmeath, surveyed and drawn by Peter Blake, Surveyor of Estates, October 1832.

page 3

99/28: Group portrait, Thomas family, ca. 1900.

front cover and title page 99/56/10/2: Deed of partition by the Committee of the Adventurers for Land in Ineland for determining differences amongst Adventurers affecting the Barony of Ikerrin, Co. Tipperary, 6 March 1655.

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Síle de Valera T.D. Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands

A Aire, a Chara,

In accordance with section 21 of the National Archives Act, 1986, I hereby submit the Report of the National Archives Advisory Council for the year ended 31 December 1999.

As the twentieth century drew to a close the Council looked back on the work of previous Councils and on its own contribution to the developing consciousness in our society concerning the preservation of archival material. The concern expressed by the Council members and by those charged with the care of the Military Archives found a response, Minister, in your own interest in that institution's future and its role in providing a secure home for the records of the Bureau of Military History due to be released in the year 2000.

The Council also notes in its Report that the rapidity with which the state sector is undergoing change gives an urgency to the need to preserve the records of state sponsored bodies. Until such time as the provisions of the National Archives Act, 1986, can be extended to the state sponsored sector, the Council suggests that a clause be inserted in all privatisation bills making it a requirement that an adequate archival system be in place.

The Council reiterates its opinion that until there is a substantial increase in staffing levels in the National Archives the opportunity to extend opening hours and to introduce desirable changes is severely impeded. We record our appreciation of the courtesy and assistance of the staff of the National Archives at all times.

We pay tribute to our secretary, Mr Joe Meleady, and to the staff of your own Department, Minister, for the helpful advice and support extended to the Council when called upon.

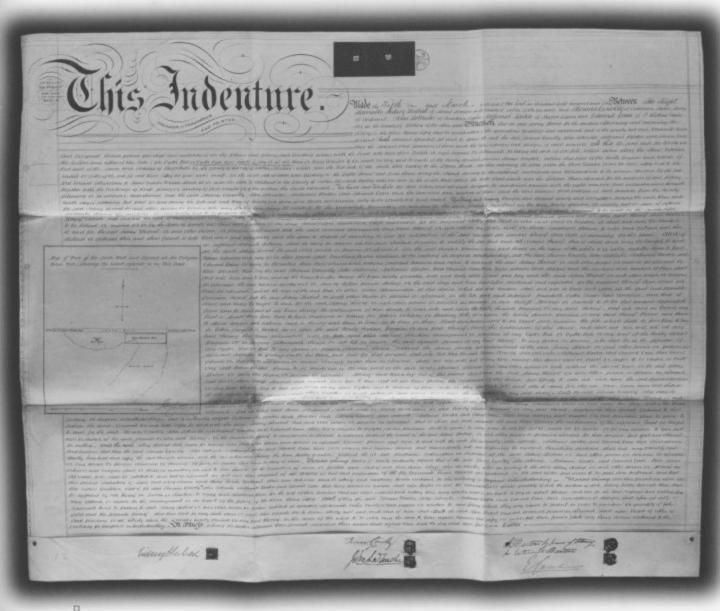
Is mise,

Margaret MacCurtain Chairman October 2000



### 1. The National Archives

- 1.1 The National Archives is the pre-eminent archival repository in the State. Until its establishment in 1988, the acquisition and preservation of public records was carried out by the Public Record Office of Ireland, founded in 1867, and the State Paper Office, established in 1702. The National Archives subsumed both offices in a new institution of national importance. In addition to assuming responsibility for the existing collections of public and private records held by these bodies, the National Archives took on additional responsibilities as a branch of Government.
- 1.2 Under the terms of the enabling legislation (the National Archives Act, 1986) the main responsibility of the National Archives is Departmental records. These must be preserved unless the National Archives authorises their destruction. Subject to certain necessary restrictions, they must be transferred after thirty years to the National Archives to be made available for inspection by the general public.
- 1.3 The holdings of the National Archives provide the essential material for scholars to study the historical evolution of modern Ireland. People of Irish descent from abroad use its resources to trace their roots here and school pupils can explore aspects of their heritage through selective examination of appropriate records. The rapidly expanding field of local studies research depends heavily on the great variety of resources, relating to every part of the island, available in the collections.



# 2. The National Archives Advisory Council

- 2.1 The National Archives Advisory Council was established under the terms of the National Archives Act, 1986 and was constituted in January 1987. Its function was then to advise the Taoiseach in the exercise of his powers under the Act and on all matters affecting archives within the scope of the Act and the use of these archives by the public.
- 2.2 In January 1993 responsibility for the National Archives was transferred to the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, renamed in 1997 the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.
- 2.3 The main function of the Council under the National Archives Act is now to advise the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. In addition, under section 65(6) of the Local Government Act, 1994, the Council may also advise the Minister for the Environment and Local Government on any matters relating to local authority archives. Similarly, under section 92 of the Harbours Act, 1996, the Council may advise the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources in relation to the archives of harbour companies and authorities.
- 2.4 The role of the Council in advising the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands within the scope of the 1986 Act relates primarily to Departmental records and their use by the public. The Minister may refer any matters relating to the operation of the National Archives to the Council for advice. The Council can advise the Minister on matters of that kind of its own motion.
- 2.5 The consent of the Council is required before the Director of the National Archives can exercise his powers under section 4 of the National Archives Act, 1986 to lend archives to another institution, while its concurrence is required before the Director exercises his powers under section 9 of the Act to dispose of archives.



99/56/10/15: Share certificate in Portumna Bridge, [Co. Galway], Joshua Wray Atkinson, 23 September 1795.

### 3. Membership and Secretary

The Council consists of a Chairman and not more than eleven other members. The current Council was appointed on 20 May 1997 for a five-year term.

#### Margaret MacCurtain, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.H.S.

Chairman. Historian; Senior Fellow, Faculty of Arts, University College Dublin.

#### Niall Bradley, B.A.

Kildare County Manager.

#### Mary E. Daly, M.A., D.Phil., M.R.I.A.

Associate Professor of Modern Irish History, University College Dublin; member of the Irish Manuscripts Commission; member of the Board of Visitors of the National Museum of Ireland.

#### John Horgan, Ph.D.

Professor of Journalism, Dublin City University; author.

#### Liam Irwin. M.A., H. Dip. Ed.

Head, Department of History, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick.

#### Charles Lysaght, M.A., M.Litt., B.L.

Academic lawyer and writer.

#### Patricia McCarthy, B.A., D.A.A.

Archivist, Cork Archives Institute; member of the Society of Archivists.

#### Susan Parkes, M.A., M.Litt., F.T.C.D.

Senior Lecturer in Education, Trinity College Dublin; education historian.

#### Peter Rigney

Industrial Officer, Irish Congress of Trade Unions; labour historian.

#### David Sheehy, B.A., D.A.A.

Archivist, Dublin Diocesan Archives; member of the Society of Archivists.

#### Anngret Simms, Ph.D., M.R.I.A.

Associate Professor of Geography, University College Dublin; member of the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

#### John Wilson, M.A., H. Dip. Ed.

Former Tánaiste and Minister.

#### Secretary to the Council

Joseph Meleady, Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.\*

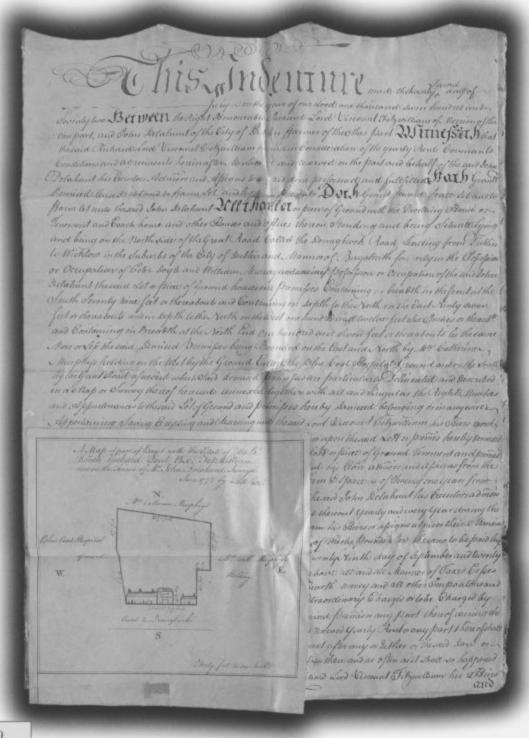
\*William Maher, Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Acting Secretary, July - December 1999.



### 4. Activities

4	.1	—The	Council	held	formal	business	meetings	on	six	occasions	during	1999:	
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29 January	73 Merrion Square, Dublin
24 March	73 Merrion Square, Dublin
12 May	Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks
23 June	73 Merrion Square, Dublin
22 September	73 Merrion Square, Dublin
3 November	73 Merrion Square Dublin



#### The Military Archives

4.2

The Military Archives, established in 1982, is located in Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin 6. When the National Archives Act came into operation, the Military Archives was approved by the Taoiseach, under section 14 of the Act, as a place of deposit for the records of the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces. The Military Archives also holds a number of private collections donated by individuals and organisations. It is therefore the custodian of the vast majority of records relating to the military history of the State since 1922.

Given its advisory role, and in the context of the publication of a Strategic Plan for the future of the Military Archives, the Council paid a visit there on 12 May 1999. The Council was welcomed and given a guided tour by the two professional archivists then in charge, the Director, Commandant Peter Young, and his deputy, Commandant Victor Laing. (The Council noted with great sadness the sudden and untimely death of Peter Young later in the year. Commandant Young had been pivotal in the establishment of the Military Archives as the archival repository for the records of the Defence Forces and he had been instrumental in saving many official and private collections for posterity.)

Arising from this visit, the Council sees the shortage of suitable accommodation at Cathal Brugha Barracks as the main problem facing the Military Archives. This problem will be exacerbated with the proposed release to the public of the records of the Bureau of Military History in the year 2000.

The Council strongly recommends that a new purpose-built building be provided, possibly at Collins Barracks, to store these important records, with suitable space for administrative staff. The resolution of this issue is a matter for agreement between the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the Minister for Defence in consultation with the Minister for Finance. The Council urges the speedy completion of this process.



97/46/2/393: Lease for 31 years to Michael Donnelly of "a new built House in said Irishtown bearing the Sign of the Fitzwilliam's Arms", Dublin, with map. 23 December 1761.

opposite page

97/46/2/399: Lease for 21 years to John Delahunt of property on north side of Donnybrook Road, Dublin, with map. 22 July 1772.

### 4.3 — Availability of qualified archivists

The Council wishes to emphasise the importance of ensuring that a sufficient number of trained archivists be available each year to fill the vacancies which arise. The increasing number of new positions being created by local authorities makes this issue particularly relevant.

In addition to ensuring a correct ratio between supply and demand, the Council underlines the need for the provision of facilities for professional development and the acquisition of further qualifications by archivists. The availability of a Master's degree programme is seen as particularly desirable.

The Council urges the Minister to seek support from the appropriate funding agencies to enable the universities to provide such programmes.

### - Artists' Exemption Scheme

4.4

The Revenue Commissioners are empowered under the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997 to grant exemptions from income tax in respect of original and creative work having cultural or artistic merit. The Council is one of a number of listed bodies that the Revenue Commissioners are entitled to consult in making decisions relating to publications based on research using archives relating to Ireland and more than thirty years old. The Chairman was approached during the year by the Revenue Commissioners for advice on a particular case and concern was expressed by the Council about this whole issue. It was agreed that clarification should be sought about the Council's competence to give such advice, having regard to its statutory functions under the National Archives Act. The Council recommends that the Department should obtain the opinion of the Attorney General in the matter.

### 4.5 — Meeting with the Minister

A deputation from the Council, led by the Chairman, was received by Ms Sîle de Valera, T.D., Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, on 25 November 1999 at Leinster House. A wide range of issues of concern to the Council was raised at this meeting. Mr John Wilson addressed a number of general matters affecting the National Archives including the Bishop Street building project, Mr David Sheehy gave a presentation on staffing issues, Professor John Horgan dealt with the question of records of state sponsored bodies facing privatisation and Professor Anngret Simms raised the question of extended opening hours at Bishop Street.

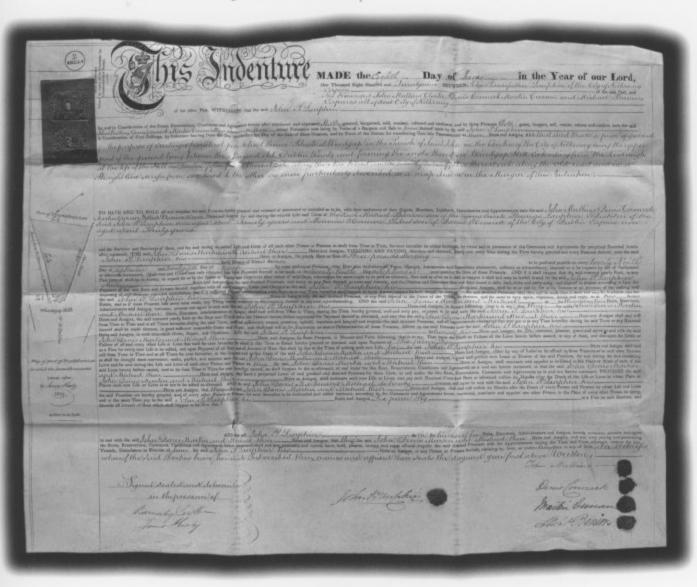


97/46/2/418: Lease for 99 years to James Doyle and Peter Roe "of a piece of Ground on which stands the Old Watch House" and other ground in Ringsend, Dublin, with map 8 July 1782.

opposite page 99/10/2/16 i: Lease to build "a parochial poor school", Kilkenny city, 1829.



- 5.1 Government approval for the adaptation and extension of the Bishop Street premises was announced by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Ms Sile de Valera, T.D., in December 1997 and it was envisaged that the project would be completed by April 2001.
- 5.2 The Council in its report for 1998 expressed concern at the failure to begin implementation of the building programme (see 7th Report 1998 section 5.5).
- A feasibility study from the consultant architects appointed in March 1999 advocated maximising the use of the overall site. They proposed the construction of a new purpose-built archives building to replace the existing Warehouse. This would allow the Office of Public Works to utilise the site to full economic advantage by making the existing Front Block available for other uses.
- 5.4 The Council sees merit in this full exploitation option and recommends the proposal to provide a specifically designed building on the site for the National Archives.
- 5.5 The Council is concerned that the considerable delay already experienced in this matter should not be further extended. The Council strongly urges that a final decision on the use of the Bishop Street site be made as soon as possible and that work on the provision of a building of the highest standards for the National Archives begin without further delay.





#### Staff Levels 6.

- The Council notes with regret the continued failure to improve staffing levels and regards the unacceptably low level which exists as the greatest limitation which the National Archives faces in 6.1 fulfilling its role.
- The Council reiterates its call, expressed in previous reports and in its meeting with the Minister, for a substantial increase in staffing levels. There is an urgent need for more administrative personnel and 6.2 in particular the appointment of a Higher Executive Officer and four Clerical Officers should be made without delay. An Assistant Director, an additional Senior Archivist and the vital posts of Information Technology Manager and Conservator are also key positions that must be filled. The practice of employing temporary archivists on fixed contracts is also unsatisfactory and permanent appointments in this area should be the norm.



99/56/10/23/2: Plan of part of the property of William Tiench in the Barony of Kilconnell, Co. Galway, surveyed and drawn by Peter Blake, Surveyor of Estates, August 1832.

opposite page

99/56/10/23/3: Plan of part of the property of William Trench in the Barony of Kilconnell, Co. Galway, surveyed and drawn by Peter Blake, Surveyor of Estates, September 1832.

### 7. Reader Services and Outreach

- 7.1 The Council hopes that the objectives in the Strategic Plan, 1996-2001 in relation to user and outreach services by the National Archives can be advanced. The Council is keen in particular to have longer opening hours for the reading room to facilitate the increased numbers of people interested in research and those whose full-time occupations restrict their use of the facility at present.
- 7.2 The exhibition policy of the National Archives is a valuable aspect of the outreach service. The Council extends its congratulations to the National Archives and particularly to archivist Catriona Crowe on the exhibition of documents mounted to mark the centenary of the reform of the local government system in Ireland.

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- The Council held a one-day seminar Local Government Archives in an Information Age in Cork on 19 8.1 November 1999. Over 50 people from local authorities, libraries and archives throughout the country attended.
- The seminar was structured in three sessions devoted to housing, managing and using archives. Dr 8.2 David Robinson spoke on the Surrey History Centre, Mr Mervyn Taylor, Exselan Computer Systems, presented a paper on e-government and the citizen and Dr Trevor Parkhill, Ulster Museum, discussed the linkage between archives, archivists and researchers.
- The seminar offered the Council an opportunity to establish contact with the creators, users and 8.3 managers of local authority archives throughout the country. For local authority members and staff who attended, the seminar provided a forum in which to consider how their obligations under the Local Government Act, 1994, can be met in a manner that provides enhanced services to the public.

### ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir S. 9361 L

Taoisgach (on return),

At the request of Mr. Edward McAteer, N.F., the Leader of the Nationalist Farty in the Six Counties, I saw him here on Thursday afternoon last, the 2nd instant. He had earlier that day, again at his own request, been received by Mr. J. Brennan, the Minister for Social Welfare. Both requests came through the Private Secretary to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs (our long-established contact with the Six-County Nationalists) without any precise indication of the subject matter to be discussed - although this was pretty obvious from the recent Press-cuttings in this folder, commencing with the report on the speech delivered by the former Taoiseach, Mr. Lemass, at the New Ireland Society of Queen's University, Belfast, on the 23rd ultimo.

Mr. Maateer said that the main purpose of his present contacts with us was - not to make any protests but - to express his concern at the widening guif that seems to exist between the South and Nationalists in the Six Counties and to suggest some practical measures by which this situation could be remedied. He was not thinking in terms of the establishment of any formal machinery for this purpose but, rather, of informal contacts. He would be greatly disturbed if the members of the Government shared some of the views which Mr. Lemass is reported to have expressed in his recent speech.

The specific measures suggested by Mr. McAteer were:

- (1) conducted tours for members of Stormont (Unionists as well as Nationalists) of such places as Bord na Mona undertakings and the Shannon Industrial Estate;
- occasional (but not very frequent) meetings between you and Mr. MaAteer in regard to which he suggested that you should have taken the initiative. On this latter point, I suggested as a purely personal view that, having regard to your respective positions, the initiative might more appropriately have come from him; he conceded that I might have a debating point there but still felt that the initiative should have come from you "as the bigger man"; and
- (3) that Ministers visiting their opposite numbers in Belfast might, ON occasion, make contact with Mr. McAteer and his colleagues.

Mr. McAteer said that the Nationalists feel that they are now nobody's children. They see Press reports of exchanges of visits by Ministers on both sides of the Border and Press speculation on the prospects of your meeting Captain T.0'Neill the Six-County Prime Minister, but they see no reports of contacts between their Leaders and the Government here. On this I ventured to express the view that contacts between the Nationalists and ourselves - in so far as they are necessary at all - might be taken for granted and are hardly news, whereas contacts between us and the Unionists are, of their nature, very definitely news. Mr. McAteer said that the Nationalists feel that they are

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## 9. Transfer of Departmental Records

- 9.1 Details of the transfer of Departmental records to the National Archives in 1999 are given in the Report of the Director for 1999.
- 9.2 The Council notes the transfer of backlogs of older records from the Department of Enterprise,
  Trade and Employment (formerly Industry and Commerce), the Department of the Environment
  and Local Government, the Office of the Attorney General and An Gúm (from the Department of
  Education and Science).
- 9.3 The Council reiterates its concern at the failure of some Departments to transfer records as required and in particular at the continuing failure of particular departments to clear the backlog of pre-1960 records.
- The Council is anxious to liaise with the Certifying Officers in the various Departments who are responsible for the transfer of archival records to the National Archives. After an initial impetus in the early stages of the operation of the National Archives Act, certification does not now appear to be given a high priority. The management of current records has improved due to the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, but the situation in regard to records created before the Act is unsatisfactory in some Departments. The records of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are a matter of particular concern. For logistical reasons it was decided to defer the proposed meetings with Certifying Officers until early 2000.

H. 9. 4 Batt. J. R. A. Ex. Sgt. Haughey Clarenbridge In consequence of your activities on behalf of the enemy during the recent war in reland, you are hereby ordered to leave the country within a period of 5 days of your receiving the being drastically dealt with. Signed D. Karno Commedt. P. S. you will communicate to the O.C. Clarenbridge. 19. Kearis.

99/46/2: Letter to John Haughey, ex-Sergeant, RIC, from the IRA advising him to leave the country, 23 June1922. (He died a year later in London.)

opposite page

99/1/76: Dept. of the Taoiseach: memorandum to the Taoiseach from the Secretary to the Government on a visit from Eddie McAteer, MP, 2 November 1967.

# 10. Records Transfer and Media Preview

- At the media preview in December it was noticed that parts of a file from the Department of the Taoiseach dating from 1969, which was due for release in January 2000, were not available. The Chairman of the Council, acting on information from the Director that they had not been transferred, publicly expressed concern. It was subsequently discovered that they had been in the National Archives for safekeeping since 1996 but were not included with the rest of the 1969 material for the media preview.
- Apart from the human error involved and the need for internal systems review within the National Archives, this issue raises the wider question of the timing of records transfer and the media preview. The certification and transfer of records from the Departments to the National Archives needs to be completed long before the end of year deadline to allow for proper checking and cataloguing in advance of release to the public.
- The Council also recommends that the media preview should be held in early December so that any discrepancies that might be discovered could be dealt with in good time and while the embargo on publication and broadcasting is still in force.

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-1 1				

99/54/2: Notice for concert to take place in the New Club Room, Castleisland, Co. Kerry, 29 September1892.

opposite page

99/3/307: Dept. of Foreign Affairs: report from Sean Morrissey, Ambassador to Switzerland, on a lecture on James Joyce given by John Garvin in Zurich on Bloomsday 1966, 17 June 1966.



- The trend towards privatisation in the semi-state sector makes the need for an archival policy for such bodies of critical and pressing importance.
- 11.2 The Council suggests that a clause be inserted in all privatisation bills making it a requirement that an adequate archival system be put in place. The Local Government Act, 1994 provides both a precedent and a model for the legislative protection of archives.
- The situation in regard to bodies which have already been privatised needs to be examined and any deficiencies remedied.
- The archival situation in semi-state organisations not facing imminent privatisation also needs to be investigated and proper archival procedures established where they are absent or inadequate.

Ref. 255/1-192

17th June, 1966

The Secretary, Department of External Affairs.

I have the honour to report on the lecture by Mr. John Garvin arranged in the University of Zürich on 16th June 1966, in commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the death of James Joyce. Your reference is 339/124.

The occasion was not devoid of excitement since Mr. Garvin's plane which was due at 1.25 p.m. was several hours late, and he only just made Zürich in time to deliver the lecture.

The lecture entitled "Portrait of the Artist in Pinnegans Wake", was greeted with immense interest and appreciation and as several of those present remarked afterwards, it was a revelation to foreign readers to hear even a few passages of Pinnegans Wake read as their author would have read them, with an Irish voice and with the enjoyment and understanding of one familiar with the Irish literary and folk background of which they were generally a parody. The lecture was frequently interrupted by laughter and it would not be too much to say that many of the students and other people present were fascinated by Mr. Garvin's virtuosity and erudition.

There was long and vigorous applause at the conclusion and Professor Straumann suitably expressed his thanks.

Attached is a copy of the text of Mr. Garvin's lecture. As regards your request for a photograph it is regretted that, although we contacted four Zürich newspapers and also asked the Aer Lingus office in Zürich if they knew of any-

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