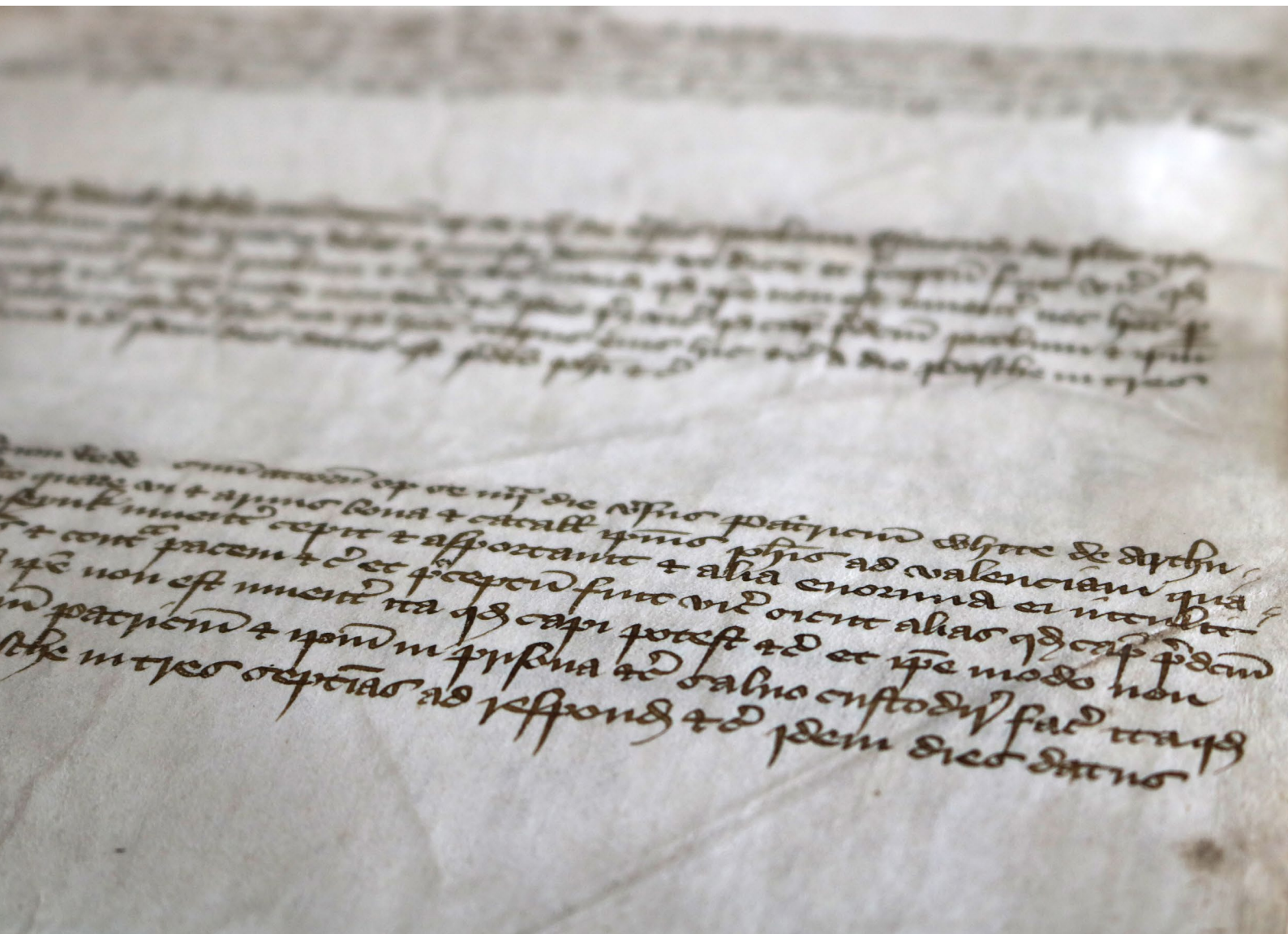




An Chartlann Náisiúnta  
National Archives

# Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016



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Over image: Kings Bench Roll KB/1/2 is a roll from the Kings Bench from the reign of Edward II (1307-1327). The document details pleas of the crown and gaol delivery for the 11th Regnal year (1317-1318).

# Introduction

## Introduction by Director John McDonough

This report outlines the work and activities of the National Archives in 2016.

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



### Highlights for 2016 included:

- Full participation in Ireland 2016 and the Decade of Centenaries programme
- Release of a suite of digitised materials
- Refurbishment of the public Reading Room and installation of air handling system
- Design finalised for warehouse redevelopment project
- Development of Public Service Records Management plan

2016 was an exceptionally busy year for the National Archives. We played a significant role in the Ireland 2016 commemorations and we saw an increase in our staff to begin to address the still significant shortfall in our numbers. We progressed the warehouse development to a phase 2 design stage. We significantly enhanced the public reading room environment.

I would like to thank the Minister and the Management Board of the Department for the additional funding allocated to the National Archives in 2016. Maintaining this level of funding into 2017 in addition to dedicated funding for the initiation of a public service records management plan will assist the National Archives in developing new and enhanced services.

The National Archives remains the only cultural institution with formal services to Government departments and agencies and the need to address deficiencies in record making and keeping by these State stakeholders is a growing concern, particularly with regard to 'born digital' records.

Unfortunately, as in previous years and as a direct consequence of on-going staffing and storage capacity shortfalls, the National Archives was not able to meet all statutory requirements regarding transfers and authorisations of disposals of records in 2016. This is an annual service deficit, but one that I hope to progressively reduce and ultimately close in coming years.

# The act of making archives publically available reinforces democracy and the link of the citizen to the State.

The staffing level issue remains a dominant concern to both myself and my staff. It is hoped that moves currently underway to increase the staffing level will yield gains in 2017 and beyond and place the National Archives on a more robust footing regarding this critical resource.

## 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 delivered is work associated with accepting the annual transfer of records eligible for public release under the 30 year rule. The annual transfer is an example of demonstrable State accountability and transparency. The act of making archives publically available reinforces democracy and the link of the citizen to the State.

To support its activities the National Archives is organised into five business units:

- Corporate Services and ICT
- Records Acquisition and Description
- Archives Storage and Preservation (incl. digitisation)
- Conservation Services
- Reader Services

The Management Team comprises the Director, Head of Administration, and the Keepers of Collection Care & Customer Service, and Records Acquisition & Service Development. (See Appendix I for the organisation chart).

## 2016 in numbers

8,746

visits to the public Reading Room

17,330

items produced for consultation

9,251

copies of archives made

2,688,710

on-line visitors across all  
National Archives websites

17,809

item descriptions added to the  
on-line catalogue

45,588

records received from government  
department and scheduled bodies

4,378

research queries answered

One of the many storage locations in Bishop street →







## Good Governance

A number of actions were progressed under the umbrella of good governance.

### Procurement of services

A number of current contracts were reviewed to inform future procurement. Liaison with the Office of Government Procurement is on-going with regard to the optimum approach to contracting a number of external services.

### Risk Management

The National Archives reviewed and confirmed its risk register in 2016. In particular, the following potential risks were noted:

- Loss of corporate knowledge capacity through retirement / redeployment and delay/failure of timely appointment of replacement staff;
- Inability to acquire records and thereby secure their preservation due to lack of suitable storage space in the National Archives;
- Lack of a comprehensive formal records management policy for the State sector;
- Loss of electronic records and archives or access thereto, due to degeneration of storage media and/or redundancy of operating systems;
- Destruction of or damage to archives in our custody due to substandard storage space;
- 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; or
- Theft of archives.

Many of the identified risks will remain in place in the absence of adequate resources and a consequent failure to develop policy in certain critical areas.

### Priority 1

**Secure the foundation -  
establish a more robust operational footing for the national archives**

### Legislation

The National Archives was asked to comment on or contribute to a number of draft legislative Bills which if enacted have the potential to impact on the preservation of or access to records or archives. These Bills variously address the progression of the '20 year rule', the General Data Protection Regulation, Adoption Tracing and Information and Retention of Records. There is a growing need for dedicated legal and policy advice in relation to 'records' and the National Archives is not currently best placed nor has it the necessary resources to proffer such advice. It is suggested that dedicated legal services are developed to advise on these Bills and to commence the drafting of a review of the National Archives Act 1986 to take into consideration the changes in the information landscape over the past 30+ years.

### **Retention of Records Bill**

The National Archives continued to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills in relation to the Retention of Records Bill being progressed by the Department. Various concerns with the current Bill were raised with the Department.

### **Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill**

The National Archives provided observations on the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016 being progressed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. We expressed our concern that the draft Bill, as proposed, did not bring under the remit of the National Archives Act, 1986 those records which would potentially be acquired and retained by the Adoption Authority of Ireland, in particular those records which are currently departmental records or records of bodies scheduled under the National Archives Act.

### **National Archives (Amendment) Bill**

In October 2015, the Cabinet approved a Memorandum for Government brought by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, to implement a change from a 30 year to a 20 year rule for the transfer of records to the National Archives and their release to public inspection. It is envisaged that this change will be implemented on a phased basis, to commence with transfers from the Departments of An Taoiseach, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Justice and Equality and the Office of the Attorney General. Primary legislation is required to give effect to this change via amendment of the National Archives Act, 1986. Accordingly, implementation is not expected before 2018 at the earliest.

As part of the development of a plan for this phased transition, an implementation group comprising representatives of the four relevant departments of State and the National Archives was established in Autumn 2016. An initial meeting was held in the National Archives on 15 December 2016 and the National Archives compiled a survey form for issue to each of the four bodies to estimate the potential quantity of files for assessment, review and release under the proposed change in legislation.

### **Update of the National Archives Act, 1986**

As noted in previous annual reports, the need to update the entire National Archives Act is long overdue.

The Director continued to represent the National Archives on the Section 1003 committee.



## 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	2014 €	2015 €	2016 €
A.3 Current (Grant-in-aid – matching receipts from fees for copies of archives etc.)	40,000	40,000	40,000
A.4 Current	915,000	1,000,000	1,165,000
A.4 Capital	281,000	351,000	351,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,236,000</b>	<b>1,391,000</b>	<b>1,556,000</b>

### Estates and Facilities

A significant project was undertaken in 2016 to upgrade the environmental conditions in the Reading Room. A comprehensive air handling system, a new ceiling and new LED lighting were installed to provide a more comfortable environment for readers and staff and improved environmental conditions for archives under consultation. In addition, the audio-visual facilities for events and presentations in the Reading Room were fully replaced with new high quality equipment and related services. This project was delivered on schedule and in budget and the improvements achieved will be further complemented by additional planned works in 2017 and 2018.

As in 2015, the Office of Public Works (OPW) was apprised of the poor condition of the windows throughout the Bishop Street building giving rise to significant heat loss, and ingress of dust and moisture impacting on working conditions of staff and contributing to a risk to the condition of the collections. OPW has accepted the case that the windows require attention and is developing a solution that will hopefully be progressed in 2017.



**@NARIreland** 30 Sep 2016

Air Con unit being lifted into place to make the Reading Room a more comfortable place for researchers.



### Offsite storage

The Office of Public Works currently rents additional off-site storage in a commercial records storage facility to meet demand for archives accommodation which can no longer be met onsite at Bishop Street or in the Four Courts repository. A second storage vault for use by the National Archives in this commercial records storage facility was developed in 2015 and is now in use. While going some way to addressing the shortage of space for the accommodation of archives, these are unsatisfactory in the long term as a means of managing the storage of archives effectively.



@NARIreland 30 Sep 2016

Wonderful to have our Minister  
@HHumphreysFG here today to launch  
redevelopment project....



### Staffing

The National Archives submitted a revised Work Force Plan in early 2016. This indicated a minimum staffing requirement of 60 full-time equivalent staff. The National Archives had a head count of 49 in December 2016. 7 new staff were allocated to the National Archives and there were 3 departures from the office during the year.

Whilst the increase in staffing allocation is welcome and has enabled the progression of certain statutory functions, the overall staffing shortfall, particularly at Service Officer and Archivist grades directly impacted upon the National Archives' ability to meet statutory obligations and develop new services.



2016 saw the retirement of Aideen Ireland and Catriona Crowe, both Senior Archivists in the National Archives. Aideen and Catriona were very much to the fore in raising awareness of the collections of the National Archives and in bringing access to the collections to a wider audience. Other staff changes were as follows:

- Patrick Ellard transferred on promotion to the Revenue Commissioners.
- Felix Meehan, Temporary Archivist, resigned and took up alternative employment
- Muirne Lyons and Sarah Cashen both COs were appointed to the National Archives.
- Bernard Reilly was appointed as Service Officer from an extant panel.
- The extant panel of Archivists created in 2015 was used to draw down further appointments and Dolores Grant and Louise Kennedy were appointed to the National Archives during 2016.
- Archivists Vera Moynes and Nigel Johnston joined the Crowley project to catalogue the 1818-1852 registered papers of the Chief Secretary's Office.
- Brian Donnelly was promoted to Senior Archivist from an existing internal panel created in 2014.

The under-filling of posts deemed critical within the workforce plan continues to leave the National Archives unable to progress a number of its statutory roles, including archival listing, records appraisal and the review and transfer of records to the National Archives.

### **Ensure the integrity of collections in our care**

#### **Conservation**

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 and external government bodies. This includes an active programme of housing government files to archival standards as part of the annual transfers.

Work on a range of both internal and external projects relating to the events around the Easter Rising in 1916 and the Decade of Centenaries programme were also central to the work of the Unit in 2016. Work on material to facilitate research of on-line 1916 resources continued. Preparation of the Dublin Metropolitan Police reports and newspapers for digitisation was a key project.

Material linked to the Document of the Month pages on the National Archives website was on display in our exhibition cases; highlights were the portion of our 1916 Proclamation, compensation files from the Property Losses Ireland Committee (PLIC) collection and fragments of the flag flown over Jacobs Biscuit factory during Easter week. Also included was material from the Soldiers Wills collection to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in July.

An extensive 5 month conservation project to conserve the Department of Justice “H221” Emergency Travel Certificates (2014/94) was undertaken. The emergency certificates from 1920s-30s were issued to individuals who had lost their passport, or to women who had originally travelled to the USA on their husband’s passport, and were returning to Ireland but did not have their own passport. As many of the 3027 photographs attached to the certificates are nearly 90 years old, many of the images are actively deteriorating. This programme of work has prepared the collection for preservation digitisation.

The installation of a ductless fume cabinet in one of the conservation workrooms enabled work on mould damaged records to be carried out and ensured that health and safety concerns were met. Two more units were purchased at the end of 2016.

Conservators on short term contracts carried out externally funded work under the technical guidance and supervision of our single permanent conservator. Through the support of the Heritage Council and the Valuation Office a conservation intern began work in August. This one year programme for recent graduates enabled progress to be made on the project to carry out conservation work on 19th century Valuation Office maps.

A student placement from the West Dean College, England for 3 weeks in January was also facilitated.

Outreach about conservation activities continued through published articles in print and web format, presentations at conferences and workshops, as well as facilitating tours explaining the work of the unit to visitors and staff.

## Priority 2

### Improve the visibility and accessibility of our services

In addition to continuing to provide access to the archives in our care and to ensure the acquisition of archives from departments of State and other bodies, we undertook the following:

#### Annual Transfer

The streamlining of procedures for the annual transfer continued in 2016 with the closure of the Reading Room in advance of the media preview to ensure sufficient resources could be assigned to this vital task. The annual transfer of 30-year old government records remains the highest profile event in the calendar for the National Archives with representatives from print and on-line media attending to review the records to be released. Media coverage of events 30 years ago is a familiar topic in the New Year. The media preview in early December facilitates this timely New Year coverage. Selected items from the 1986 transfer were digitised and published on the National Archives website to publicise and raise awareness of the public release of the records.

#### Social Media Strategy

The National Archives social media profile increased with over 2,000 followers on Twitter by the end of 2016. Our approach to social media was developed in 2016 to better integrate with other initiatives. In particular, publicising weekly release of Dublin Metropolitan Police secret files from the run up to Easter 1916 now held in the National Archives. Twitter was also integrated more fully with the document of the month to present both off and on line access to the document.

#### Review the approach to the open day

The overall approach to the National Archives' other public facing initiatives was reviewed in 2016. As a consequence there was no dedicated open day in 2016. The National Archives utilised the resources and awareness of Culture Night to offer tours and talks late into the evening on 16th September.

#### Genealogy Advisory Service

Since 2003 the National Archives has provided a Genealogy Advisory Service where members of the public may consult a professional genealogist about use of sources relating to their family history. This service is provided free of charge. In 2016 1,516 people visited the service. A new contract for this service was implemented in 2016 and it expanded to a full-time rather than a half day service. The inclusion of extra hours helped meet increasing demand and was particularly timely during this important year.

As a means to raise awareness of its holdings, the National Archives was represented at a range of historical and genealogical events, including *Who Do You Think You Are? Live*, *The National Ploughing Championship*, *Back to Your Past* and *The Genealogy Event*.



## Policies

In 2016, the National Archives developed and published its statement of services for government departments.

### Review of enquiry handling











The National Archives reviewed its approach to enquiry handling and, in line with business process improvement, identified a need for an enquiry management system. The development of such a system was included in the 2016 business plan and a system was selected. Preparatory works to its implementation included a review of query categories and workflow and the system will be operational in Q1 2017.

### Access to archives

#### Productions and Recalls

- 17,330 document productions;
- 1,720 microfilm productions ;
- 387 recalls to Departments and Offices of State; and
- 853 files requested from commercial off-site storage.

The downward trend in the number of visitors to the Bishop Street building can be largely attributed to the closure of the Reading Room for 8 weeks to facilitate the upgrading of environmental controls and conditions. It is appreciated that as part of the overall National Archives Strategy the investment in digitisation and provision of digital content saw a marked increase in on-line visitors (See below).

	Country	Sessions	% Sessions
1.	Ireland	1,220,275	 39.38%
2.	United Kingdom	869,056	 28.04%
3.	United States	580,598	 18.74%
4.	Australia	179,148	 5.78%
5.	Canada	119,964	 3.87%
6.	New Zealand	32,634	 1.05%
7.	Spain	12,566	 0.41%
8.	France	11,228	 0.36%
9.	Russia	9,870	 0.32%
10.	Germany	7,880	 0.24%

Global visitors to [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie) by country of origin 

## Archival Listing

### 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 hardcopy in our Reading Room and digitally on our website at <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/search-the-archives>.

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 2016, as did further work on the arrangement, listing and boxing of unlisted records already held in the National Archives.

### Crowley Bequest Project

Following the employment of an additional two archivists in 2016, work continued on cataloguing the records of the Chief Secretary's Office for the 1830s. The team undertook a review of their workflows and also identified material from the 20th century within this collection which could be listed and made available under the umbrella of the Decade of Centenaries. It is expected that this work will be progressed further in 2017.

### 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 2016 are summarised in a separate accessions report. These comprise c41,105 individual departmental files. One transfer of records of the Irish Land Commission (c30,398 files), received from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, has not been made available to the public due to the shortage of storage space in the National Archives.

### Transfer of records by scheduled bodies

As stated in previous Directors' reports, the National Archives remains unable to accession large quantities of records due for transfer from the majority of the 61 bodies listed in the Schedule of the National Archives Act, pending the provision of additional accommodation and sufficient staffing.

In 2016, records were accessioned from the Office of the Secretary General to the President; Office of the Attorney General and the Companies Registration Office. A total of 4,483 individual files were received from scheduled bodies. These are summarised in a separate accessions report.

The annual transfer of records of dissolved companies from the Companies Registration Office (2,472 files) along with the 2014 and 2015 transfers of c12,531 files, has to remain unavailable to public access, as a result of a shortage of staff and storage space in the National Archives.

#### **Transfer of records by court offices**

Following a meeting in September 2015 with representatives from the Courts Service, it was decided that the courts would temporarily cease to transfer records to the National Archives until a decision was finalised on releasing records with Data Protection issues for public consultation and the Courts Service had the opportunity to consult the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. As a result, no transfers of court records were received during 2016.

In 2013, the National Archives began initial listing and preservation work on a series of files from the Office of the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy. Between August and December 2016, listing and rehousing of 2,776 individual Bankruptcy Office case files, covering the period c1895-1983 was completed by an archivist working under a contract for services. The first tranche, covering the period c1895-1940, will be made available to the public following necessary preservation and conservation work (pending the provision of sufficient conservation staff).

#### **Records accessioned from private sources**

The National Archives acquired a number of accessions from private sources in 2016. These collections complement our existing holdings or are of national significance. A number of these accessions are summarised in a separate accessions report.

#### **Authorisation of records proposed for destruction**

One authorisation for the disposal of records was issued in 2016. The authorisation related to specific classes of accounting and financial records of the Office of the Attorney General for disposal on an on-going basis.

There are many outstanding requests from departments seeking permission to destroy records not worthy of permanent preservation as archives. However, due to a lack of staff and resources, appraisal reports to assess these records could not be prepared.



**Recall Service**

The recall service was used extensively in 2016. However ongoing challenges in managing the service were reviewed in late 2015 and a new pilot approach to recall service will be implemented in 2017.

**Annual Media Preview**

The annual preview of 30-year old records for journalists representing print and broadcast media organisations took place in the National Archives from 7-9 December 2016. A total of 22 journalists attended the preview, representing 13 organisations.

In total the National Archives received c 8,437 files in 1,310 boxes from five departments and one scheduled body, between 30 June and 2 December 2016 and these records were made available during the three days of the media preview.

Selected items from the 1986 transfer were digitised and published on the National Archives website to raise awareness of the public release of the records.

### Priority 3 Transition to Digital

#### ICT Network

To support its activities the National Archives has its own dedicated IT Unit. The Unit further progressed a programme of renewal of network hardware initiated in 2015 to improve the capacity and robustness of the National Archives IT network and the associated services carried on it. Specifically, the programme of works delivered in 2016 included:

- Air handling, ceiling and lighting for main server environment were overhauled with new equipment and finishes.
- Electrical services were upgraded; moulded-case circuit breaker (MCCB's) and new distribution board installed.
- Comms racking replaced with 42U floor rack – all switches, routers and patch panels transferred, full cable management solution delivered.

#### Other

- IT Comms cabinets on floors, 2, 4 and 5 upgraded and full cable management solution delivered. Extension leads replaced with power distribution units (PDU)
- Network ethernet link upgraded to new fibre link
- Installation of a 2nd firewall in the RDC in order to provide redundancy and enhanced security for the National Archives websites
- Streamlined current Active Directory users and groups
- Procured 15 Windows 10 PCs

#### Review of National Archives website

The content and structure of the National Archives website was reviewed with a view to updating the site in 2017. A new Decade of Centenaries microsite was launched with a number of on-line exhibitions hosted on this dealing with specific issues of the 1916 Rising.

### **Digital Imaging Unit**

A review and stock-take of the images created and held by the National Archives was undertaken.

#### **Archives imaged by the Digital Imaging Unit in 2016:**

- Continuation of ED/1 National School Applications;
- Chief Secretary's Office, Crime Branch: Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) Movement of Extremists, 29 May 1915-20 April 1916;
- Cabinet Minutes and selected departmental files for 1986;
- Selected items for document of the month section of website;
- Selected departmental files for the CAIN (Conflict Archives on the Internet) project;
- Selected images relating to the Decade of Centenaries;
- Selected images for Century Ireland project; and
- Selected images of Chief Secretary's Office records for the Crowley Bequest project.

### **Property Losses 1916 Ireland Committee**

The National Archives developed an on-line database to host the 6,500 claim files of the Property Losses Ireland Committee, which relate to the processing of compensation claims for loss of or damage to property during the Easter Rising, 1916. This database was launched by the Minister in May 2016.

### **Books of Survey and Distribution**

The Books of Survey and Distribution were compiled by government at the end of the 17th Century to establish a reliable record of landowners in Ireland for the purpose of establishing liability for quit rent. The National Archives holds sets of the Books of Survey and Distribution, which incorporate information collected during earlier surveys (the Stafford, Civil and Down Surveys) and provide the names of proprietors who forfeited their land under the Cromwellian Settlement of 1641 and the amount and quality of land they held. The names of those to whom this land was granted under various Acts between 1662 and 1703 is also given. In 2015, a project was undertaken jointly with the Irish Manuscripts Commission to digitise these books which was completed in May 2016. These preservation scans will be used as the basis of a project with TCD to provide enhanced on-line access to these important records.

### **Electronic records**

The National Archives was unable to develop any capability in the area of electronic records management during 2016. This is at a time when there is growing and vocal demand and an identified 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. The transfer to and preservation of electronic records by the National Archives has yet to commence.





Home page of new National Archives' Decade of Centenaries microsite. [↑](#)

## Priority 4

### Develop our people

In progressing our on-going commitment to invest in and develop our staff, the National Archives developed a number of initiatives. An initial skills audit of staff was undertaken and a plan progressed to identify and target the areas for up-skilling or staff development. This was done in cooperation with the D/AHRRGA Training Unit. A number of meetings were held with Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland) to identify archival skills and plan courses to be held in the National Archives during 2017.

#### **Training Events and conferences**

Staff attended a wide range of training programmes and conferences and The National Archives sponsored and co-hosted a number of training events.

#### **Training undertaken and conferences attended by staff included:**

- Appraisal training;
- Archive legislation and records management symposiums;
- Axiell users' conference (Adlib archival software);
- Digital Preservation Coalition: Getting Started in Digital Preservation & Making Progress with Digital Preservation;
- Excel Intermediate course;
- Freedom of Information training;
- International Council of Archives (ICA) Congress;
- Management and leadership development programme for Assistant Principal/Equivalent Grades;
- Project management;
- Records management principles and practice;
- People management;
- Conservation of Digital Photographs;
- Integrated Pest Management;
- Symposium of Conservation and Identification of Vellum.

The Director is a member of the EU European Archives Group (EAG) and European Bureau of National Archivists (EBNA). He also represents the National Archives at the International Council of Archives.

In 2016 he attended meetings and conferences from these bodies in The Hague, Bratislava and Seoul. In the latter he presented a paper on the National Archives cooperative CAIN project.

## Priority 5

### Develop collaboration

In line with its priority to develop collaboration, the National Archives continued to partner with and co-operate in a number of national and international initiatives and continued to undertake outreach and engagement activities and participated in a variety of 1916 commemoration activities.

The highlight of these was the Easter Monday commemoration of the occupation of the Jacobs' biscuit factory (now the home of the National Archives on Bishop Street, Dublin 8), and a speech made by the Hon. Justice Peter Charleton, former Chair of the National Archives Advisory Council.

### Records Management

In 2016 the National Archives continued to provide advice and guidance on general records management matters to government departments and bodies. Observations on the records management document presented by the International Division of the Department of the Taoiseach were also provided.

In February 2016 the Director and the Keeper (Records Acquisition and Service Development) visited the National Records of Scotland (NRS) to meet with Tim Ellis, CEO and Laura Mitchell, Deputy Keeper, NRS to discuss the implementation and operation of the Public Records (Scotland) Act, 2011 (PRSA). The Act came into force in 2013 and requires named public authorities to prepare, implement and keep under review a records management plan which sets out clear arrangements for the management of public records created or held by an authority. Discussions were also held with staff from the NRS Digital Archiving and Electronic Records Unit regarding the NRS's approach to electronic and born digital records.

### Public Service Records Management Plan

Previous Annual Reports have consistently highlighted the importance of developing best practice for records management across the civil and public service. The National Archives receives multiple requests for advice or guidance on records management, or to review and approve draft records management policies and procedures, and I must reiterate the long-standing and pressing need for providing solutions in this area.

## The National Archives have consistently highlighted the importance of developing best practice for records management across the civil and public service.

The National Archives proposed an initial three year plan based on developing a Public Service Records Management (PSRM) framework for both paper and electronic based records. A memo was drafted for Cabinet and is expected to be approved in 2017. The National Archives received funding from its parent department to progress a number of pilot projects in 2016. These focussed on the development of a departmental records management policy, file plan and retention schedule, and a survey of electronic records management in a government department. The outcomes of these pilots in Q2 2017 are intended to significantly contribute to developing and advancing the overall 3-year plan.

### **Records Management Symposium**

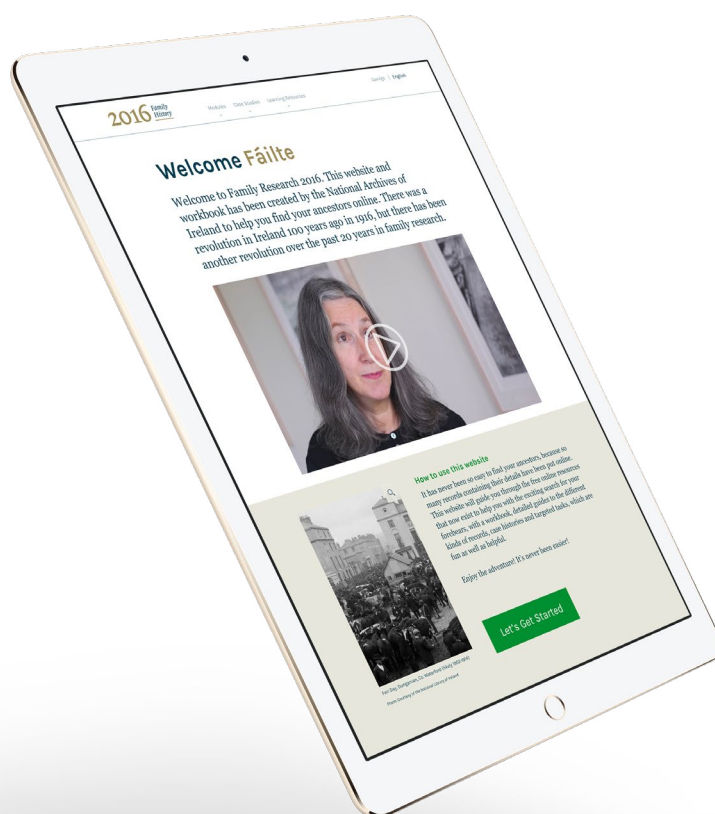
In order to raise awareness of the issues surrounding electronic records management, a half day records management symposium, organised by the National Archives, was held in Department of Justice and Equality's atrium on St Stephen's Green on 21 October 2016. Over 115 archivists, records managers and staff from 38 departments and agencies attended the event. Speakers included Bruno Longmore, Head of Government Records, National Records of Scotland; Hugh Campbell, Head of Information Systems, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and Owen Harrison, PO, OGCI, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.



## Decade of Centenaries activities

The National Archives was involved in several steering committees, including the GPO Museum Steering Committee, the Tenement Museum Steering Committee, the Military Service Pensions Project Steering Committee, the Moore Street National Monument Advisory Group and the Inspiring Ireland Steering Committee.

Under the Ireland 2016 programme, the National Archives began work on an on-line genealogy tool, Family Research 2016, which is primarily aimed at transition year students, but also at the general public, to help users understand and negotiate the plethora of genealogical source material now available on-line, much of it from the National Archives. The website was launched in late 2016 and was shortlisted for an eGovernment Award 2017.



Home page for Family Search 2016 [↑](#)

Staff in the old Public Record Office before its destruction in 1922 [→](#)







### **APEX / APEF**

The participation of the National Archives in the APEX (Archives Portal Europe network of excellence) project ceased on project completion in 2015 and a decision was made in 2016 not to be initially involved in APEF (Archives Portal Europe Foundation, the successor project to APEX).

### **Collaboration with School of History, University College Dublin**

The National Archives provided a number of collections to the School of History, UCD for archival students to list. Students' descriptive work conforms to the national and international standards used by the National Archives. Collections included the private papers of Professor PF Purcell of the College of Science, Dublin and records of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland.

### **Commission of Investigation (Mother and Baby Homes and Certain Related Matters)**

A Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and a representative sample of County Homes, was established by Order of Government in February 2015. The National Archives has liaised with the Commission and its researchers throughout 2016, providing access to records held by the National Archives and managing a project (funded by the Commission) to catalogue c50 boxes of records of the former Department of Local Government and Public Health. This cataloguing project began in July 2015 and was completed in March 2016.

### **Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs project funding**

#### **Finance Compensation files**

Since 2013, the National Archives has been listing and undertaking preservation work on a series of files relating to the processing of compensation claims made by individuals and organisations for loss of, or damage to property that occurred as a result of military action during the period 1921-1923 as part of its Decade of Centenaries project programme.

During 2016, final work was completed on the Finance Compensation (post-Truce) file series (FIN/COMP/2). During the three-year project, 19,084 files were cleaned, listed and boxed in 586 archival boxes and the lists for 23 counties and two cities were available to search on [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie) by year-end. The finding aids for the three remaining counties will be made available on the website in early 2017 bringing the total to 28 counties/cities.

It is hoped that further specific funding from the Department will enable the digitisation of the files for all 26 counties. This work would facilitate detailed research into the loss, destruction or damage to property caused by the Civil War throughout the country.

## Wellcome Trust Projects

### Access to Hospital records

The National Archives developed an access protocol and procedures for hospital records acquired by the National Archives. Implementation is at a preliminary stage, with a disappointing level of engagement by hospital authorities. Unfortunately this precludes the application of a coherent and systematic approach to access these vital records.

### The National Survey of Hospital Records

The National Survey of Hospital Records was a project aimed at establishing the nature, and scope of records pre-dating 1970 that survive for Irish hospitals and healthcare institutions, the date ranges of the various series of records that exist and their overall quality. The principal findings of this report were published on 15 November 2016 at a launch event with speakers from the National Archives, the HSE and UL.

## Dublin City Council Culture Connects

In 2016, the National Archives began collaborating with Dublin's Culture Connects as part of The National Neighbourhood initiative. The Out of the Box partnership aims to link people from communities in the Dublin City Council region with resources and support for research at the National Archives. Several group visits took place, introducing the work of an archive to those who were unaware of the wealth of material available and had never used the service before. The Head of Conservation provided guidance on planning and creating a time-capsule for personal or community memories.

Having sparked their curiosity, the National Archives supported a number of researchers in investigating local and family history, providing advice on sources and approaches to research. Their research journeys have been captured on film by documentary filmmaker Wissame Cherfi, and on the 'Out of the Box' blog. The partnership is set to develop through 2017.

### Documents on Irish Foreign Policy

This is a partnership project between the National Archives, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFA) and the Royal Irish Academy. The project publishes a selection of documents relating to Irish foreign policy every two years and Volume X, dealing with the years 1951-54 was published in November 2016.



### Valuation Office project

The archives of the Valuation Office in the National Archives consist of manuscript maps and books created by the work of valuing property in Ireland between 1830 and 1865 approximately, for the purpose of levying rates. Comprising house books, field books, tenure books, quarto books and mill books, the surviving records provide invaluable information on landholding in Ireland in the early to mid-19th century. Funded by the Valuation Office, work commenced in July 2016 on the interpolation, arrangement and cataloguing of various accessions of valuation books received in the National Archives. Of a total of 12,952 valuation books held, 5,371 books remained to be sorted, arranged and listed as of 31 December 2016. The work is expected to conclude during 2017.

## Conclusion

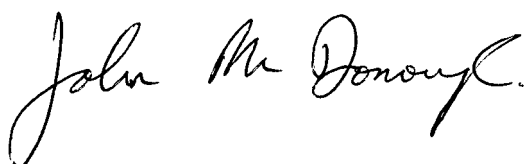
In 2016 the National Archives continued to proffer a range of statutory and other services to government departments, agencies, academics, researchers and the general public.

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

The on-going delay in more fully progressing the warehouse redevelopment project was disappointing. However the up-dated design does facilitate addition of greater holding capacity at the Bishop Street site and therefore offers an improved long term solution. The progression of the PSRM plan through the two pilot projects was very welcome and early feedback from departments identified and reiterated the critical need for national government direction in this long neglected area.

It is hoped that in 2017, through the development of identified systems and processes, greater efficiencies can be realised in the National Archives and incremental progress can be made in the development of new services here.

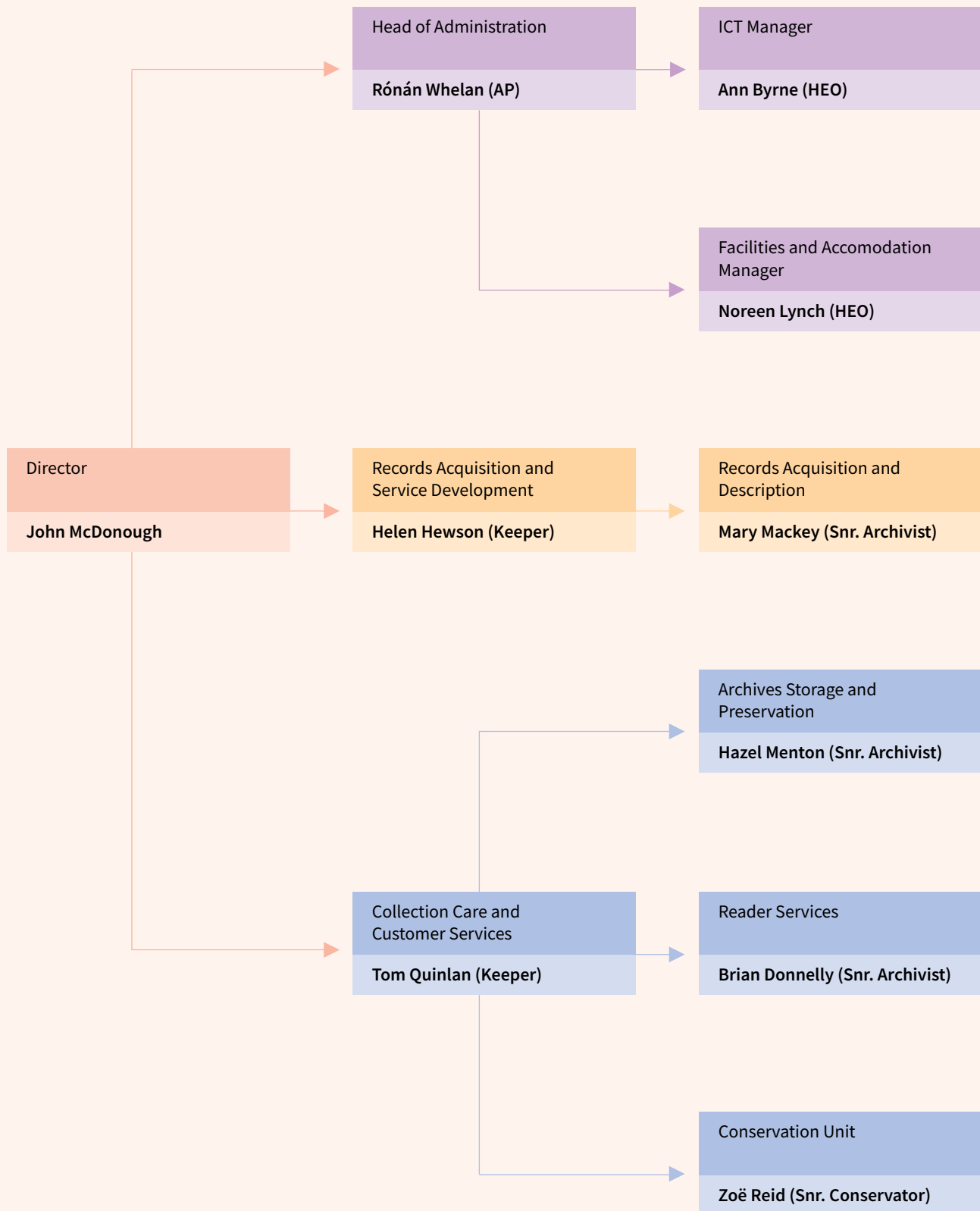
The National Archives expects to be an active participant in the Creative Ireland initiative and its emerging 5-year programme. We will design and develop plans for public-facing services both on-site and on-line, and to further enhance and develop services to government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John McDonough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John McDonough  
Director

## Appendix I

### Organisation Chart



## Appendix II

### 2016 in numbers

Footfall	Total
Readers	7,558
Visitors - groups, 09:15 – 17:00	216
Visitors - groups, 17:00 – 19:00	71
Visits - Open Days etc.	200
Reader's Tickets issued	2,209
Genealogy Service	1,750
Duty Archivist - telephone calls	1,271
Research enquiries answered	4,378

Productions	Total
Items requested	17,330
Microfilm Requested	1,720
Recalls	387
Commercial retrievals	853

Copies	Total
Number of certified copies	752
Number of Uncertified Copies - overall	504
Number of Testamentary Copies	330
Number of certified copy orders	1,310
Number of pages for certification	4,142
Number of instant pages copies	2,444
Number of copy orders	484
Number of pages copied	7,996

On-line	Total
Hits in total (Parent Site)	13,181,563
Visitors in total (Parent Site)	376,407
Twitter Followers	1,945



## Appendix III

### Advice and Training

The National Archives continued to provide records management advice and training to Government departments and the Courts Service during 2016 on issues relating to their compliance with the National Archives Act. Training of Courts Service 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 Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Finance
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Department of Justice and Equality
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Department of Social Protection
- Department of the Taoiseach
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Central Bank of Ireland Archives Service
- Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse
- Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and Certain Related Matters
- Companies Registration Office
- Digital Repository of Ireland
- Dublin City Council Culture Connects Project
- Health Service Executive
- Law Reform Commission
- Military Archives
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- Office of the Inspector of Prisons
- Office of Public Works
- Office of the Revenue Commissioners
- Office of the Secretary General to the President
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland
- Property Registration Authority
- Representative Church Body of Ireland Archive
- St Brendan's Hospital Grangegorman
- Trinity College Dublin
- University of Ulster – Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN project)
- UCD Cultural Heritage Advisory board
- TUSLA – Child and Family Agency

*Evening Herald and  
Saturday Herald  
Dublin Nov. 7 1917*

*My Dear Curtin*

Will you accept from me as a  
little souvenir of our many chats  
together on the political situation  
here a small portion of the Sinn  
Fein flag that floated over  
Jacob's Biscuit Factory during  
the Rebellion of Easter Week  
last year. This is the last  
fragment I have left and I  
guarantee it is the real goods  
and it is a pleasure for me

to have it to give to such a  
genuine friend of the old  
sod.

May God be kind to you  
all the way through. Or as we  
put it in the old tongue

*Go Dia tu slán --*  
(godhia thu slán) in other words,  
God give you health.

Now to our next merry  
meeting.

Yours very sincerely  
Thomas A. Grehan



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

The National Archives  
Bishop Street, Dublin 8  
D08 DF85, Ireland

Phone: + 353 (0)1 407 2300  
Lo Call: + 353 1890 252424  
Fax: + 353 (0)1 407 2333  
Email: [mail@nationalarchives.ie](mailto:mail@nationalarchives.ie)



A letter from Thomas A Grehan, employee of the Evening Herald, to a friend, Mr. Curtin, enclosing a fragment of the "Sinn Féin flag that floated over Jacob's Biscuit Factory during the Rebellion of Easter Week last year." The flag appears to have been cut up by Mr Grehan and distributed to various favoured individuals in November 1917. (NAI, BRS/2005/168)