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Irish Society for Archives Newsletter

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Welcome to the Spring 2023 Newsletter!

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New Archives Buildings (2):

The ESB Archives



Exterior view of archive

ESB Archives was established in 1991 and our role is to collect, preserve and make accessible the records of ESB (Electricity Supply Board). The archive

was housed in an old stationary store and warehouse in Harold's Cross. This building was not fit for purpose as it had no environmental controls and was prone to fluctuating temperatures and humidity throughout the year. There was no reading room onsite for researchers to access the collections and after years of collecting and preserving important records, we had run out of storage on our shelves.

After surveying potential sites and benchmarking visits were undertaken to other archives in Ireland and the UK, the plans for a new purpose-built archive were approved and finalised in 2015. A site adjacent to ESB Networks, St. Margaret's Road, Finglas was chosen to become the new location for ESB Archives.



Accessions room in Harold's Cross

Moving the collection

Once the construction of the new

building commenced in the summer of 2018, we began the preparation of the collection for the move. The first step was to carry out a survey of the collections and to identify different formats and storage requirements of our archives. We also prioritised the appraisal and accessioning of backlogs of our collections. A total of 8,000 boxes and 500 crates of records were surveyed, along with 13 pallets of drawings.

To ensure that all collections were secure for transit, we re-housed thousands of documents, photographs and glass plate negatives from their original storage into archival standard acid free sleeves, folders and boxes. The last stage of our preparation was a final count of our entire archives and the allocation of a specific row and shelf number in either our paper, film or media repository with corresponding dates for the upcoming move.



First day of move of collections at Harold's Cross

The physical transfer of our archives by a specialised removal company began at the end of June 2019. Our paper records were transferred over a 10-day period, of 10-hour days, with an

average transfer of 1200 boxes a day. Our artefacts, audio visual, film and drawings collections followed soon afterward.

The building

ESB Archives moved into our purpose-built archive at the end of July 2019, with the building [officially opened](#) on the 29th January 2020 by ESB Chairman Ellvena Graham OBE.

The archive is a single-storey building, specifically designed to accommodate best practice in archive management, with accommodation arranged to optimise and align with the natural flow of the archive process.

The building includes three repositories, accessions room, isolation room, cataloguing and digitising room, staff offices, reading room, exhibition and meeting room. Our archive adheres to the newest international standards for conservation of cultural heritage, BS EN 16893, which superseded PD5454.



Aerial view of building with green roof on repository and solar panels on office accommodation

The main repository space is isolated from the general accommodation occupied by staff and visitors. The

isolation effect is achieved by largely passive means, using heavy concrete construction to create thermal stability.

This passive sustainable design ensures that the archive repository is maintained at the correct temperatures and relative humidity throughout the year to ensure the permanent preservation of all records.



Interior view of main repository. Pat O'Doherty ESB Chief Executive & ESB Chairman Ellvena Graham at official opening

All our repositories have four-hour fire protection and offer unparalleled security. We continue to look to the future as we have the capacity to preserve 20,000 boxes of archive records in all formats.

The building was designed by an in-house cross-functional ESB team and provides the highest levels of energy efficiency, including an array of roof mounted solar panels. Electricity, through the use of heat pumps, is the primary source of energy for heating and cooling systems.

The building has an exemplary energy performance and has been assessed as achieving a BER A1 rating and has achieved a BREEM (Building Research Environmental Assessment Method) Excellent rating. A green sedum roof

adds insulation to the repository and slows down rainwater leaving the roof as part of a “sustainable urban drainage scheme”.

The design included a dedicated multi-purpose research and meeting facility open by appointment to all researchers, visitors and ESB staff.

We use this space to welcome teams from across ESB as well as externally, providing specialised workshops, events and seminars by unlocking and authenticating ESB’s history.



Interior views of reading room



Settling in

With the onset of the Covid19 pandemic our ‘settling in’ period in our new archive was a little longer than anticipated. As with most new builds the usual snags had to be worked through, however we had to catch up

on the snags over a year later once the team returned onsite.

We also had a large backlog of accessions to work through which came in during this period as other offices closed and staff returned to the new ESB Head Office, Fitzwilliam Street, completed in 2022.

Subsequently we adapted and retrofitted some of our storage in our main repository for the ESB Art collection which was transported to Finglas from offsite storage at the end of 2021. With sustainability in mind we also repurposed some shelving from a decommissioned building for the accessions room to store some of our new accessions and larger industrial heritage objects.



New art storage

Conclusion

The new archive building has provided an even more visible platform for the archive team to advocate for the archive profession. It has given us the ability to preserve and make accessible our collections in line with international best practice and

procedures. We now have a facility which offers outreach opportunities; allowing us to leverage and showcase the content of our archives to teams across ESB and external partners.

The establishment of our new archive underlines ESB's longstanding commitment to preserving these rich stories since its foundation in 1927 and ensures the continued preservation of our archives for generations to come.

Tanya Keyes (Senior Archivist, ESB Archives)



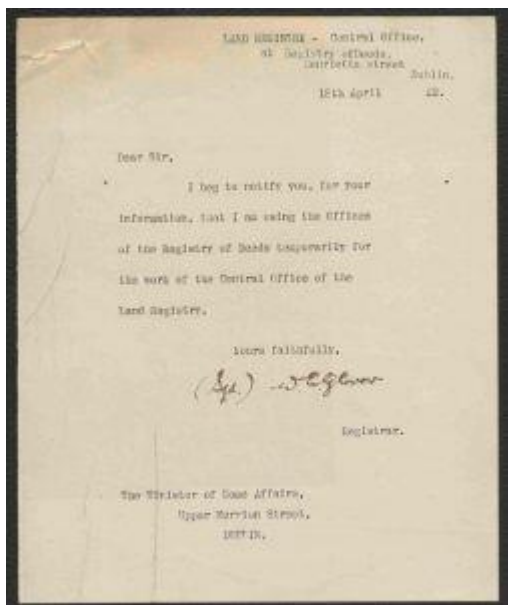
The 1922 Four Courts Occupation & Fire:

Impact on the Land Registry and the Registry of Deeds

This article will draw on records held by Tailte Éireann Registration Services to examine how the occupation of the Four Courts in the opening engagement of the Civil War and subsequent fire impacted both the Land Registry and Registry of Deeds between 1922 and 1923.

On the 14 April 1922, the staff of the Land Registry were faced with an unprecedented challenge when their offices in the Four Courts complex were occupied by anti-treaty soldiers. The Registrar of the time, William Glover, was determined that the work of the Land Registry would continue despite the occupation of the Four Courts. Immediate arrangements were made to relocate Land Registry staff to Registry of Deeds building on Henrietta Street and Coleraine House just outside the park gates on Constitution Hill. The

Benchers Hall in King's Inns, when available, was also utilised by Land Registry. Between Easter and July 1922 nearly 6,000 transactions with registered land were lodged and dealt with in the temporary offices.



Letter dated 18th April 1922 from Registrar, William Glover to the Minister of Home Affairs (PRA-001-006-015)

Shortly after midnight on Wednesday 28th June 1922, troops of the Free State Army began firing on the Four Courts complex. Following two days of fighting, the Four Courts Garrison surrendered, however, not before an explosion occurred in the complex. The explosion destroyed the Public Records Office and damaged part of the Land Registry building.

The Registry of Deeds "Significant Events Diary", maintained by staff at the time, recorded that staff had witnessed the bombardment of the Four Courts on the 28th & 29th June and that the Registry of Deeds building was closed by the Military to staff and public until 6th July. The Military also took over a number of rooms in

Registry of Deeds building in July and August 1922 which created accommodation shortages. Staff at the Registry of Deeds building were also disgruntled at items such as cups, spoons, knives, plates, overcoats and even chairs (some of which were on loan to Land Registry) going missing from the building during the military occupation. Luckily some of the items did find their way back to the office!



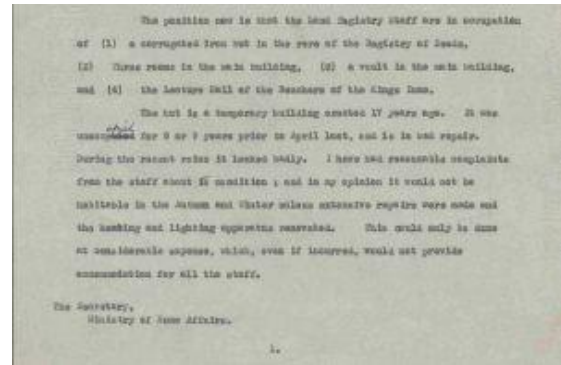
Letter dated 17th July 1922 from William Glover to Ministry of Home Affairs (PRA-001-006-012)

Once it was deemed safe by the Office of Public Works to enter the Four Courts complex, Raymond Smith as a 'trustworthy official' was appointed to assess the damage to Land Registry records and offices, and to remove any items which staff needed to conduct services from Henrietta Street. In a memorandum dated the 20th July 1922, Smith surmised that the Land Registry Building 'to the layman it appears to have sustained less damage than any of the other buildings in the Four Courts, some of which are obviously in a very

dangerous condition'. However Smith was unable to examine the upper floors as the means of access, the staircase, had been destroyed. Smith was informed of a fire at the top floor of the building and potential loss of some records. It was later discovered that Land Registry mapping sheets and instruments for over 7,500 folios had been destroyed. Land Registry Local Offices around the country were asked to supply copies to replace these burnt folios.

Smith also prepared a list of articles to be removed from the Land Registry Office which included tables, chairs and slip desks, along with the Central Office Seal, and Land Registry Records.

The temporary use of accommodation by Land Registry staff at the Registry of Deeds Office continued until July 1923 but was described as 'wholly inadequate'. In a letter dated 4th September 1922 written to the Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, it stated that Land Registry staff were housed in a corrugated iron hut in the rear of Registry of Deeds, three rooms and a vault in the main building, which had no space for furniture and one was merely a passage, and the Lecture Hall of the Benchers of the Kings Inns. They were also loaned tables and chairs by the Kings Inns in order to work. The letter highlights the concern of staff, especially those located in the iron hut as there was insufficient heating or lighting and a fear of further leaks when it rained during the autumn and winter months.

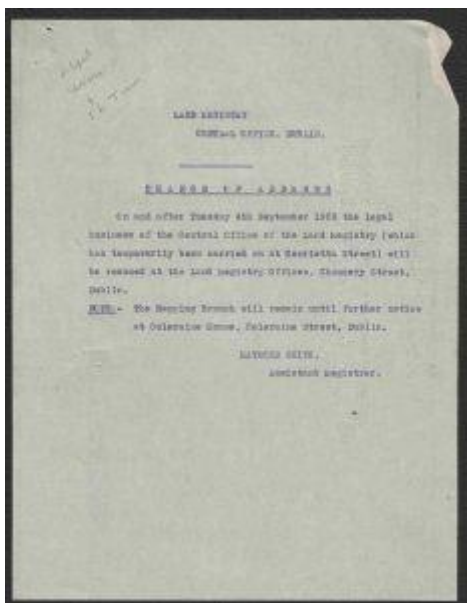


Extract of Letter of 4th September 1922 between Land Registry and Ministry of Home Affairs (PRA-001-006-006)

In a memorandum dated 16th October 1922 from Raymond Smith of the Land Registry to Sir Philip Hannon, Smith outlined the measurements of floor space in use to accommodate 103 of the Land Registry staff with additional descriptive remarks such as 'very bad room' and 'a mere passage'.

Smith's initial analysis that the Land Registry building had sustained less damage than others in Four Courts complex was proven correct. The Land Registry building had been constructed between 1912-1914, and the *Irish Times* reported on 23 August 1923 that 'the condition of this block is a wonderful testament to the value of modern methods of construction' and that 'although the south west corner at the back had been slightly damaged in the explosion which brought great havoc in the Four Courts generally, the main portion of this building withstood the shock of the explosion and outlasted the withering blasts of fire so effectively that when the work of reconstruction was taken in hand it was found that the original walls and floors were in sound condition'.

After almost 67 weeks in temporary accommodation staff returned to the Land Registry Office in the Four Courts complex which had been repaired and refitted. In September of that year the Central Office of Land Registry is relocated back to Chancery St within the Four Courts where it remains to this day.



Change of address notice from Raymond Smith, Assistant Registrar (PRA-001-010-001)

Deirdre Hennessy (Outreach and Preservation Officer, Registry of Deeds Archive Services)



The UCD Archives Exhibition

The Foundation and Development of the Irish Free State

UCD Archives curated an exhibition of documents from our collections exploring aspects of the foundation and development of the Irish Free State, as part of UCD's Irish Free State Conference in O'Reilly Hall, December 2022. The research and document selection were undertaken by archivist,

Orna Somerville, who prepared the text with principal archivist, Kate Manning. It was designed by Catherine Bodey, UCD Library Outreach.



Orna Somerville with the exhibition panels in O'Reilly Hall, UCD.

The conference was opened by then Taoiseach, Micheál Martin. University Librarian, Dr Sandra Collins met the Taoiseach before the conference and guided him through the exhibition panels and display cases in the atrium of O'Reilly Hall.



Mark Rogers, Acting President, UCD; (then) An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin; Librarian, Sandra Collins, James Joyce Library

The exhibition was organised as follows:

- Introduction
- Setting up the three branches of State and the civil structure:
 - Legislature, Executive,
 - Judiciary, Administration.

- State formation and post-war recovery: development post-civil war, the economy and trade.
- Language, culture and society – articulating “Irishness” in an independent state.
- The world from 1922 to 1937: international comparisons and international relations.
- Gender, power and the state: power, authority, the status of women, and the influence of the Catholic Church on political decisions.



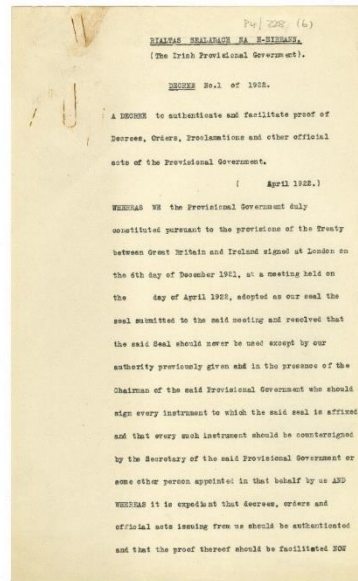
Front of the exhibition panels

Sample documents from the exhibition

April 1922

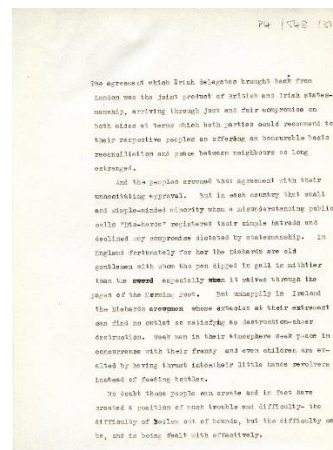
First page of a draft typescript copy of Decree No. 1 of 1922 by the Irish Provisional Government “to authenticate and facilitate proof of Decrees, Orders, Proclamations and

other official acts of the Provisional Government.”



Papers of Hugh Kennedy (UCDA P4/228)

[1923]

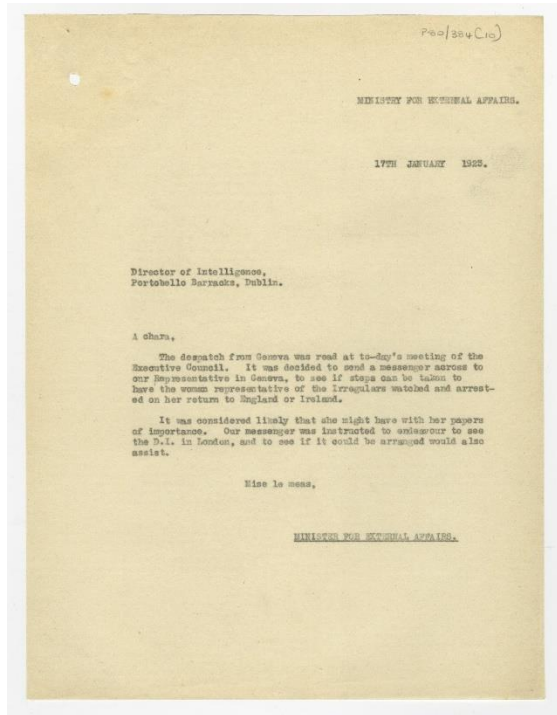


Papers of Hugh Kennedy (UCDA P4/548)

Draft copy of a statement by Hugh Kennedy describing republican opposition to the Anglo-Irish treaty by [Cumann na mBan]. The treaty, described as a ‘just and fair compromise’ was opposed in Ireland by ‘Diehards [who] are women whose extacies at their extremest (sic) can find no outlet so satisfying as destruction. Weak men in their atmosphere seek peace in concurrence with their frenzy

and even children are exalted by having thrust into their little hands revolvers instead of feeding bottles’.

17 January 1923



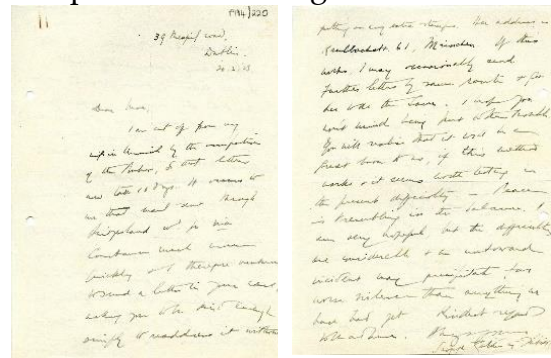
Papers of Desmond and Mabel FitzGerald (UCDA P80/384)

Copy of a note from Desmond FitzGerald, Minister for External Affairs concerning an unnamed anti-treaty propagandist overseas during the civil war. ‘It was decided to send a messenger across to our representative in Geneva, to see if steps can be taken to have the woman representative of the Irregulars watched and arrested on her return to England or Ireland’.

20 February 1923

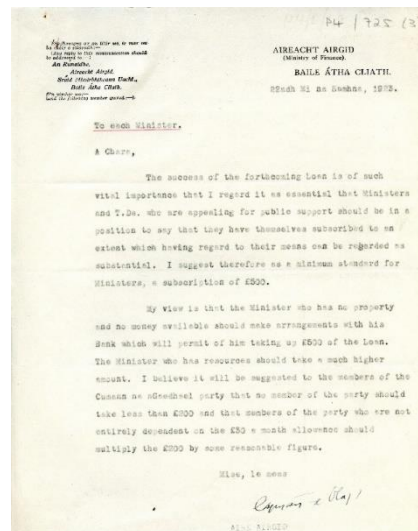
Letter from George Gavan Duffy, Dublin, to Michael MacWhite, Geneva, explaining that he has been cut off from his wife in Munich due to the French occupation of the German Ruhr Valley and asks whether he can route letters to

her via MacWhite in Switzerland. Adds that ‘peace is trembling in the balance.’



Papers of Michael MacWhite (UCDA P194/220)

22 November 1923



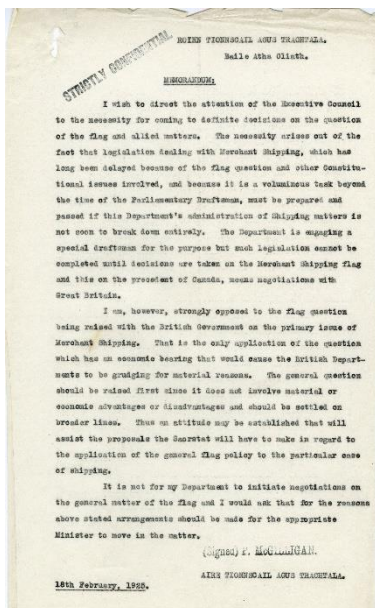
Papers of Hugh Kennedy (UCDA P4/725)

Circular letter to public representatives from Ernest Blythe, Minister of Finance outlining the advantages of supporting the national loan and urging each one to encourage holders of substantial funds in his constituency to invest in it.

20 February 1925

Memorandum from Patrick McGilligan, Minister for Industry and Commerce, to the Executive Council concerning the ‘question of the flag’, the central dilemma being that ‘legislation cannot be completed until decisions are taken on the Merchant Shipping flag and this on the precedent

of Canada, means negotiations with Great Britain,' to which he is 'strongly opposed.'



Papers of Patrick McGilligan (UCDA P35/156)

1928

Photograph of a press conference in the White House, Washington DC, celebrating the implementation of the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact (officially 'The international treaty for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy'). This was the first international treaty signed by the Irish Free State in its own right. Left to right seated: Katsuji Debuchi (Japanese ambassador to US); Sir Esmé Howard (British ambassador to US); Prince Albert Deligne (Belgian ambassador to the US); Calvin Coolidge (former US president); US Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson; president Herbert Hoover (standing), Senator William Borah (chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee); Frank B. Kellogg (former Secretary of State and co-author of the pact); Paul Claudel (French ambassador to the US); Nobile Giacomo de Martino, Italian

ambassador to the US); Michael MacWhite (Irish Free State minister to the US); and Rudolf Leitner, chargé d'affaires of the German embassy.



Papers of Michael MacWhite (UCDA P194/788)

17 October 1930

Commemorative stamp issued for Shannon scheme.



Papers of Patrick McGilligan (UCDA P35d/10)

8 June 1933

Seán Lester was seconded to the League of Nations' Secretariat in 1933. This is the first page of an anonymous letter to Lester thanking him for his League of Nations stance against the oppression of Jews in German Upper Silesia. The writer relates the 'secret whisper' of atrocities against Jews and implores him to keep the world's attention focused on the German government.

Dear Mr. Lester, S. O. S. S.
P203/31(70)

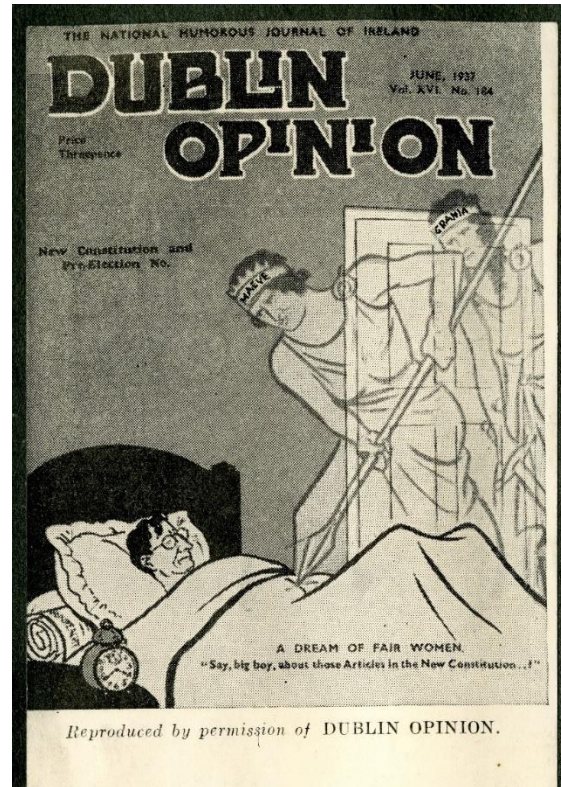
Let me thank you for what you have done for those most unhappy and unfortunate people, the Jews in Germany! Your action has been quick and efficacious in so far as you have been able to arouse many countries to sympathy. This gives me the idea that you are yourself heart and soul in this affair. And I would therefore implore you to follow up your success by trying to get all our laws against the Jews here repealed. It is ~~the~~ legislation which is so inhuman. To see them suffer so, respectable, honest families, that would be a credit to any community, is to break one's heart. Alas! we are chasing them across our frontiers, among them characters so true and high-principled, that makes one understand how it could be possible that once at a time this race was able to produce a Christ. Indeed it is so that those of the German nation that

Papers of Seán Lester (UCDA P203/126)

[1937]

Sample image from an album of press cuttings, circulars and statements concerning the opposition to the draft 1937 constitution. The objection was to three clauses which the National Women's Graduate Association believed to undermine the extent to which women would be allowed to work outside the home. The caption reads: A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN: "Say, big boy, about those Articles in the New Constitution..."

Kate Manning (Principal Archivist, University College Dublin Archives)



National University Women's Graduate Association (UCDA NUWGA 1/51)



[Pan Pan Theatre Archives](#)
[University of Galway](#)

The archive of the award-winning Pan Pan Theatre Company has been officially opened at University of Galway Library Archives. Founded in 1993 by Gavin Quinn and Aedín Cosgrove, Pan Pan Theatre Company have received international recognition as one of Ireland's premiere theatre companies, touring throughout Ireland, Europe, the United States and from China to New Zealand. The archive is fully catalogued and available to researchers. A new online exhibition of over 500 digital objects shares the Pan Pan archive with a global audience.



Launch of the Pan Pan archive (L-R) Aedín Cosgrove, Aafke van Pelt, John Cox, Gavin Quinn, Barry Houlihan

The Pan Pan archive consists of annotated scripts, production notebooks, photographs, designs, programmes, posters, and a vast collection of digital show recordings, spanning more than fifty boxes of materials from the last thirty years. The papers document the early years and development of the company led by Quinn and Cosgrove, who have directed and designed the majority of Pan Pan productions. Pan Pan were established in 1993 as “Ireland’s first deaf ensemble”. Pan Pan produced work for and with deaf practitioners and audiences, creating a new space of accessibility for Irish theatre and culture in the mid- and late-1990s. New original works by Pan Pan at this time *Tailors Requiem* (1996), *Cartoon* (1998), and *Standoffish* (2000).

Pan Pan have toured extensively internationally, from Europe to Asia and from Australia to the United States, developing and creating over fifty theatre productions, a major international theatre symposium series, as well as a number of other original theatre and film projects. Today, as one of Ireland’s leading theatre companies, the multi-award winning Pan Pan

Theatre Company have continually pushed the boundaries of form and practice of theatre production from within Ireland, through a cultural and theatrical collision of form, sound, image, and word.

In 1993, Pan Pan premiered a double-bill of *The Crystal Spider* and *The Man With Two Kisses*, performed at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College, Dublin, where both Cosgrove and Quinn had previously graduated. Throughout the 1990s, Pan Pan developed and performed shows which played with the idea of a theatrical language, laying a greater emphasis on the visual aspect and a multi-sensory performance model. The company was committed to touring from their early years, performing widely at international festivals and sometimes even premiering their productions outside of Ireland.



Costume design for MacBeth: 7 (2004)

In 1995, Pan Pan won their first major prize with *A Bronze Twist of Your Serpent Muscles*, which received the Dublin Fringe Award. In the same year, Pan Pan developed the multimedia performance piece, *City*, which took place in a specially designed amphitheatre in Dublin's Blackrock Park, in a collaboration showcasing Pan Pan's engagement between the performance and visual arts.

By 2000, Pan Pan produced and performed over ten new productions and won growing international critical acclaim. Awards included Best Production at the Adelaide Festival, Australia, with *Standoffish* (2000) as well as numerous Irish Times Theatre Awards in production, design, sound and lighting. Pan Pan continued to produce original plays alongside many adaptations, and frequently collaborated with other companies and theatre practitioners from Ireland and internationally.

One of Pan Pan's standout original multidisciplinary works was *One: Healing With Theatre* (2005), an ambitious film project involving 100 actors, 100 rooms, and 100 audience members, this performance piece explored the question, "Why do you think you became an actor?" In addition to the live performance, *One* was published as a photography book and screened as a 14-hour film, directed by Pan Pan's Co-Artistic Directors Gavin Quinn and Aedín Cosgrove. *One* was nominated for a Judge's Special Award at the Irish Times Theatre Awards in 2006, and described in the *Irish Times* as "... in its scope and

freshness of vision it is like nothing Irish theatre has accomplished before. Nor does it try to be".



Ruth Negga and Katy Davis, Amy the Vampire and Her Sister Martina (2005)

In 2004, and now established for over a decade, Pan Pan had made a major contribution to contemporary Irish and international theatre. "At this point", Gavin Quinn stated that, "after ten years in existence I believe there is a great source of accumulated knowledge which we are trying to bring to the attention of the audience for their stimulation. And we hope to invoke a sincerely individual response, which is very important for theatre. Art equips you to deal with life."

In 2010, Pan Pan produced an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* at the Dublin Theatre Festival, entitled *The Rehearsal, Playing the Dane*, and which later toured Ireland, America, Australia, New Zealand and China. The play won Best Production and Best Set Design at the 2010 Irish Times Theatre Awards.

Pan Pan did not limit their scope to Europe, however; in 2006, the company produced John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in Mandarin, with an all-Chinese cast,

which was performed in the Oriental Pioneer Theatre in Beijing.



Cast of Mandarin language production of The Playboy of the Western World, Beijing (2006)

In the following years, Pan Pan produced two more plays with an all-Chinese cast: *Do Di Zhu (Fight the Landlord)* in 2010, and *The Good House of Happiness* in 2017.

Pan Pan has established a reputation for innovative performances of works by Samuel Beckett. In 2011, Pan Pan produced Beckett's radio play, *All That Fall*, at the Project Arts Centre in Dublin. Beckett's works have featured in Pan Pan's repertoire numerous times since, with *Embers* (2013), *Endgame* (2019) and *What is the Word* (2020), a "sensory journey" into Beckett's poems as part of an instillation at the Museum of Literature Ireland (MOLI).

The new digital exhibition provides an overview of Pan Pan's many highlights and achievements since their foundation in 1993. It showcases the unique style and aims of one of Ireland's most exciting and daring companies. The Pan Pan digital exhibition and archive was launched by Willie White, director of the Dublin Theatre Festival at a symposium at University of Galway in November 2022.

View the digital archive exhibition [here](#), or read more about the Pan Pan Archive in this *Irish Times* article – '[30 Years of Pan Pan's noise and people comes to Galway](#)'.

Dr Barry Houlihan (Archivist, University of Galway)



[Guide to the Memorials and Transcripts of Deeds](#)
Published by the Registry of Deeds



Tailte Éireann was established on 1 March 2023 as a new State entity, to bring together land and property information services in the State, including registration, valuation, and surveying services. It merges the Property Registration Authority (PRA), the Valuation Office (VO) and Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI).

The Registry of Deeds, which consists of a large, unique and very significant body of historical records relating to property transactions in Ireland, dating from 1708 to the present will be now part of the Registration Services of Tailte Éireann.

In October 2022 a new **Guide to the Memorials and Transcripts of Deeds**

in the Registry of Deeds by Dr Patrick Walsh was published which aligns with the strategic vision to make the Registry of Deeds collections more accessible and user friendly.

The publication is one of the tangible outputs from the Deeds and Sasines Research Project, a collaborative research project which ran from Sept 2020 to June 2022 and was funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Irish Research Council. The project brought together the archival expertise of the Property Registration Authority and National Records of Scotland with historians and digital humanities experts from Trinity College Dublin, University of Glasgow and Beyond 2022.

The Guide contextualises Registry of Deeds records by outlining the purpose and prevailing land legislation in eighteenth century and the processes for registering a deed in Ireland. It then identifies the main categories of deeds which were registered at Registry of Deeds, their key features and associated legal terminology. As articulated by Dr Walsh, our hope is that this Guide will help 'demystify' the Registry of Deeds. We trust it will be a useful reference companion for researchers and will encourage use of Registry of Deeds records to uncover the history of land, people and places in Ireland in the eighteenth century.

A launch event was held in October last during Dublin's Festival of History, with Dr Patrick Walsh delivering a talk about the Deeds and Sasines project at the Registry of Deeds. A podcast of the

talk and the Guide are free to download [on our website](#).

Ellen Murphy (Archives Manager, Registry of Deeds Archive Services)



ISA News

Our next lecture will be delivered by Killian Downing, Archivist, Dublin City University: 'Politics in a changing Ireland: an introduction to the Charles J. Haughey Collection at Dublin City University Library.' It will take place at Dublin City Library and Archives on Thursday, 9 March, 6pm. All welcome!

How to become an ISA member

Please apply to the honorary membership secretary
Deirdre O'Connell at
ISAsubscription@gmail.com
or by post c/o National Archives,
Bishop Street, Dublin 8

Rates

Individual €30
Institutional €45
Student/Retired €15

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