



NEWSLETTER Spring 2019

Welcome to the biannual ISA Newsletter, Spring 2019!

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[The Irish Quaker Archive](#)

Records at the Friends Historical Library, Dublin

Quakers became established in Britain and Ireland in the 1650s at the time of Oliver Cromwell's rule. Calling themselves 'Friends of the Truth', their aim was to reform the Church of England, the official state religion. Various factors prevented this ambition and, within a generation, they had separated themselves to form a distinct denomination. Its official name since the 19th century has been 'The

Religious Society of Friends' but the word Quaker, a nickname bestowed in 1650, was adopted and used from the start.

One characteristic of Quaker belief and practice was that clergy are 'unnecessary', all people being equal in the sight of God. Such beliefs can lead very quickly to anarchy and the earliest Quakers were aware of the necessity for a structure and rules of procedure. In the 1660s they established a hierarchy of 'Meetings', local, provincial and national and open to all members. In place of the divine services of the established church they held weekly 'Meetings for Worship'.



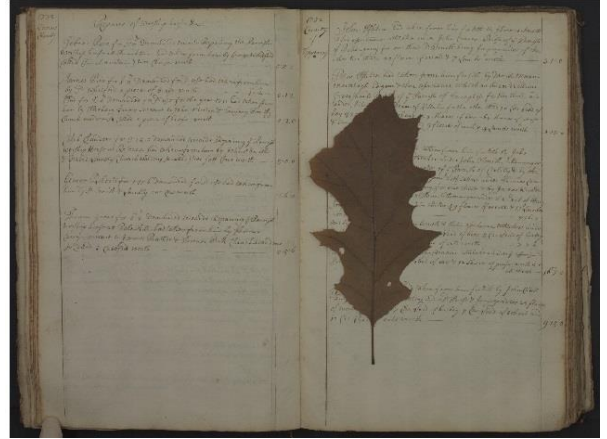
Quakers in Ireland

Quakerism spread rapidly in its first two decades. In Ireland it attracted a following of some thousands of individuals, the great majority being English-speaking settlers in the provinces of Ulster, Leinster and Munster. For the most part, they were well-educated and this, combined with their system of rule by committee, happily led to an obsession with maintaining written records.

In the years 1669 and 1670, two dynamic Quakers travelled through the three Provinces, visiting scattered communities. One was George Fox, the founder of the Society, the other was William Edmundson. He had settled in Ireland and, in 1654, organised the first Irish Meeting in Lurgan, Co. Armagh. Their purpose was to establish a system to record all matters relating to the new denomination. That was when the Quaker Archives as we know them began. Meetings, from the largest to the smallest all recorded their deliberations and progress in minutes and these minutes became the nearest approach to sacred objects that the Quakers ever tolerated. They were kept with great care and handed down from generation to generation. In parallel with them were records of the births, marriages and deaths of all members. The collection also contains a great volume of writings, books, pamphlets and manuscripts, on matters of belief. Other manuscript material included changes of residence, financial records and a remarkable collection of documented 'Sufferings'.

The Sufferings material comprises contemporary details of two sets of afflictions that beset Quakers. The first was their punishment, usually imprisonment, for failure to obey the rigid religious laws of the 17th and early 18th centuries. The second was the sequestration of goods because of their refusal to pay tithes to the Established Church. It gave rise to a lucrative profession of individuals serving as 'tithe mongers' who employed the 'tithe takers' who seized stock from Quaker farmers

and trade goods from merchants and shop-keepers. These records are of particular interest to social historians in the wealth of detail they provide on trade and agricultural practices of the time.



From 'A record of the Sufferings of Friends belonging to Mountmelick mo[nthly] Meet[ing] who for Conscience Sake could not pay Tythes...' 1732 (on Find My Past.ie)

Quakers reacted sharply to the announcement in the 1850s that parish records would be centralised in Ireland, to be deposited in the Four Courts. They arranged for transcripts to be made of all their records of births, marriages and deaths so that these would continue to be locally available. In the event, for reasons unclear, the Quakers were not required to hand over their archive. However their National Meeting decided, towards the end of the 19th century, that completed volumes of national minutes and other records together with those of Leinster and Munster should be held in the Society's head office in Eustace Street in Dublin and those of Ulster at the Quaker school in Lisburn. In 1908 the Friends Historical Library was established in Eustace Street to hold these volumes together with books, pamphlets and personal papers.

A team of volunteers was set up to work on cataloguing the documents and of serving readers who made enquiries by mail or came to visit the Library. Currently – and for some decades past – the Volunteers have assembled for one day per week and they open the Library to readers from 11 to 13 every Thursday – with the exception of Christmas Day.



Shirley Douglas and the late Glynn Douglas using the archives at Quaker House

Card indexes and other forms of manuscript were used to facilitate access to the various records. The latter years of the 20th century saw the beginning of a scheme, financially supported by the Heritage Council and Quaker charities, to digitise this information. Current practice is to catalogue accessions and all new information on Microsoft Excel – chosen partly because it proved to be a versatile and convenient system and partly thanks to its popularity and widespread use. Hard copy of the records is also being produced as a matter of course.

A dramatic development in the security and availability of the Irish Quaker records began in 2014. Brian Donovan of Eneclann took a long, hard look at the contents of the Archives Room at Quaker

House and agreed to have all minutes, Family Records and a great many associated papers scanned for world-wide availability on the Findmypast.ie website. 141,000 pages from 970 volumes were photographed. Every page was then read by individuals who compiled an index of the million-and-a-half personal names contained in the documents. As well as the scans, the authors, titles and Library locations of more than 40,000 books, pamphlets and letters are included in the website.

From one angle, the Irish Quaker archive might be considered as of limited interest in its confinement to matters relating to members of a very small religious denomination. In the wider context, it offers a wealth of material relating both to the private daily lives and significant public achievements of many of its members over three and a half centuries. This makes it a major source of detail on history: local, national and international.

Details of the location of the Friends Historical Library, together with a wide range of information on the activities of Quakers in Ireland are available on Quakers-in-Ireland.ie.

Christopher Moriarty (Curator, Friends Historical Library, Dublin)



Home page of Findmypast.ie



World Digital Preservation Day

World Digital Preservation Day at the National Library of Ireland

The Digital Collections team of the NLI hosted its first World Digital Preservation Day event on the 29th November 2018

This event was part of a worldwide observed series of events hosted to create greater awareness of digital preservation. World Digital Preservation Day is organised by the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) and supported by digital preservation networks across the world. The National Library of Ireland joined the Digital Preservation Coalition a number of years ago and one of the first things we learned that has stayed with us about digital preservation is that is it not an activity that can be carried out by any one person or any one organisation. We held the event to get people in the room together, and start a conversation about digital preservation activities in an old fashioned, face to face way.

Our half-day event in the Library promoted discussion and shared knowledge across Irish organisations thinking about getting started in the area of Digital Preservation or those already on the road. For many organisations this

might relate to digitisation activities they are involved in, or for others the event was designed to address issues they might have in relation to the management of their born-digital content, like digital photographs, emails, research data and so on.

The title of the event was 'Get Real! Dealing with the Practical challenges of Digital Preservation', and attendees came from a number of sectors including cultural institutions, libraries and archives from the public, local authority and higher education sectors, media organisations, industry, and specialist public and private sector library and archives north and south. Given the huge danger of loss of digital information, the preservation and management of digitised or born digital content is a very necessary response to ensure access to this information over the longer term, and each of the five speakers focussed on the practical issues arising from digital preservation activities.



Kevin Long (DRI), Della Keating (NLI), Aisling Keane (NUIG), Raelene Casey (IFI), and Lee Hibberd (NLS)

Our keynote speaker, Lee Hibberd, from the National Library of Scotland spoke

humorously about his own journey from Archaeologist to Digital Preservation Officer, and offered encouraging words for those of us who felt and feel overwhelmed by the challenges posed by digital preservation.

He was followed by four short presentations, each representing a different stage in the life cycle of a digital collection. Della Keating from the National Library of Ireland's Digital Collection team gave practical tips on how to help your organisation 'Become a place of greater safety' before you have even acquired or started to manage any digital content. Aisling Keane from the National University of Ireland Galway spoke about the challenges on the ground when devising digital preservation policy, including dealing with different formats, and ensuring organisational buy-in. Kevin Long, from Digital Repository Ireland spoke about the metadata required when you actually get to ingest digital content, and how this 'data about data' has multi-purpose functions not just around preservation, but around 'understandability' and 'reusability'. The morning presentations concluded with an analysis by Raelene Casey from the Irish Film Archive of who exactly constituted the 'users' of the Irish Film Archive when the time came to think about providing access to their collections. She also demonstrated how the theoretical OAIS model for long term preservation of digital material could be applied to Irish Film Archive practice.

We wrapped up the morning with some questions from the floor, and a desire to capture the positivity in the room. The

Digital Collections team at the National Library of Ireland undertook to follow up with attendees in terms of sharing presentations, garnering feedback and assessing how best to build on the event. We intend holding another event for World Digital Preservation day 2019.

Della Keating (Assistant Keeper, Digital Collections, National Library of Ireland)

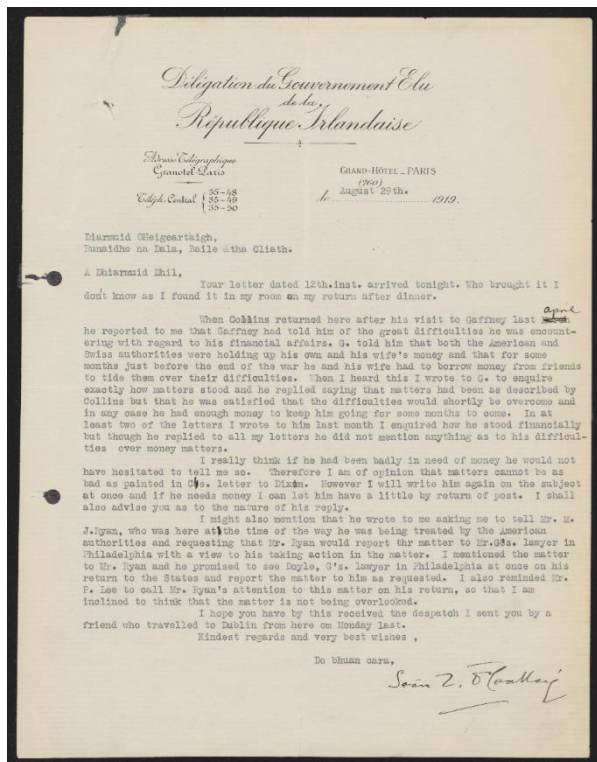


[The Dáil Éireann 'foreign service' and its archives, 1919-1923](#)

News from the Documents on Irish Foreign Policy project

When the first Dáil Éireann met in January 1919 it created four 'departments' to bolster its claim that it was a legitimate government; a Department of Foreign Affairs was one of them. Its establishment was intended to give expression to a key element of Sinn Féin's 1918 election promise to seek recognition of Irish independence from the peace conference due to convene in Paris after the First World War. To that end, in February 1919 the Dáil established in Paris, what was, to all intents and purpose, Ireland's first diplomatic mission. Initially headed by future president Sean T. Ó Ceallaigh, the small Irish delegation tried to highlight the case for Irish independence and admission to the proposed League of

Nations to the international delegates and journalists attending the conference.



Letterhead of the 'elected government of the Irish Republic'

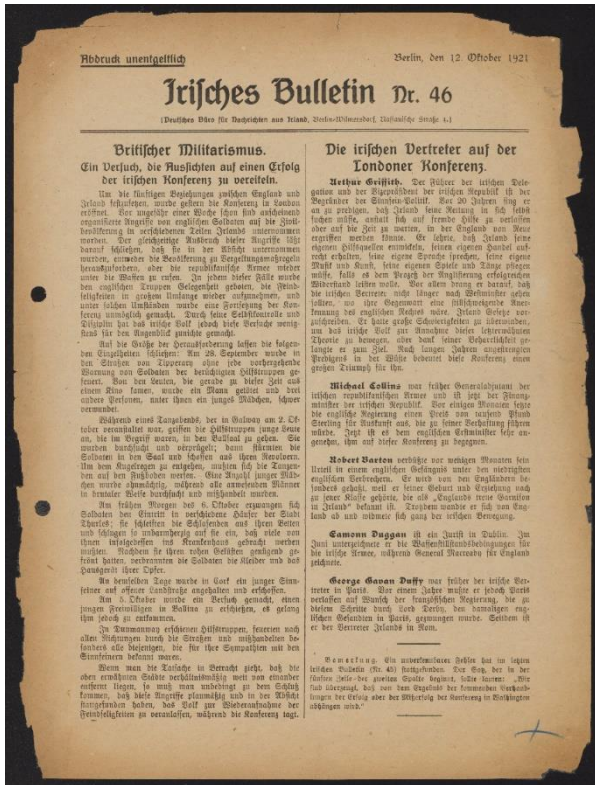
Sympathy for the Irish cause was in short supply amongst the victorious allies, however, and their efforts came to nothing. But while the approach to the peace conference failed, the Dáil and its emerging foreign service began to focus their limited resources on maintaining an international profile. Dáil president Éamon de Valera embarked on a 19-month publicity and fundraising tour of the US in 1919-20 and 'consular agents' were appointed across Europe, Scandinavia and even South America to ensure that attention remained fixed on the situation in Ireland, in the hope of bringing international pressure to bear upon the British. It is a relatively overlooked aspect of the Irish revolution,

and it has left an intriguing documentary trail behind it.

The Royal Irish Academy's *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* (DIFP) series publishes selected documents relevant to understanding the development of Irish foreign policy, beginning with the first Dáil in 1919. The bulk of these documents are from the archives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Department of the Taoiseach (along with their predecessors) held in the National Archives of Ireland, who, along with DFAT and the Royal Irish Academy, are one of the three partners in the project.

By its nature, DIFP prioritises the written word, and the volumes of documents that it publishes biennially carry only a handful of illustrations, in the form of facsimiles of occasional documents. The project was, however, recently tasked with producing an illustrated history of Irish foreign policy, which necessitated uncovering material of a very different nature. And this returns us to the archives relating to the revolutionary period.

Another key repository that DIFP makes extensive use of is UCD Archives, which retain the personal papers of many of the key politicians and diplomats involved in shaping independent Ireland's foreign policy. Likewise, there are extensive collections of personal papers in the National Library of Ireland and the Bureau of Military History Contemporary Documents collection in the Military Archives (there are collections of Sean T. Ó Ceallaigh's papers in both of these).



A bulletin reporting auxiliary actions in Tipperary, Galway, Thurles, Cork, and Dunmanway, and listing Irish delegates to the Treaty negotiations, 1921

These personal collections naturally contain documentation, but they also include photographs, manuscripts and personal effects that would not normally be published as part of the DIFP project: photographs, business cards, propaganda, ephemera such as menus, cartoons, and much else besides. It is the kind of archival material that could easily be overlooked, but such items give a remarkable sense of the 'texture' and material culture of the time, while also containing remarkable and striking levels of detail. A letter can of course give a sense of what a figure such as De Valera was thinking while in the US in 1919-20; a photo of vast crowds turning up to listen to him at a rally in Boston's Fenway Park in June 1919 (held in UCD Archives) gives a sense of how widely the message he put

forth was being received. And the remaining years of the 'Decade of Centenaries' surely offer scope for making use of the visual sources and material culture that the Dáil foreign service left behind it to explore its role in the revolution. A sense of that material can be found in our forthcoming illustrated history, *Representing Ireland*, due for publication in 2019 (the centenary year of the foundation of the Irish foreign service). The book will, however, cover far more than the revolutionary period, and points the way to another strand of exploring Ireland's place in the wider world that we hope to build upon in coming years.

John Gibney (Assistant Editor of Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, Royal Irish Academy)

[Letters from the Great War at the Dublin City Library and Archives](#)

[Raising funds for cancer while commemorating World War I](#)

DCL&A holds the records of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers' Association, relating to the First World War. We have used these intensively over the past four years, in seminars, digitisation projects, Dublin City Hall lectures and in five exhibitions, all of which have been supported by Dublin City Council (DCC)'s Decade of Commemorations Committee. Behind the scenes, our staff carefully catalogue the collections and upload the lists to DCC's website – and this is how Professor Sir Christopher Evans found us. Professor Evans is based in London – he is an engineer, a scientist and an inventor whose discoveries have changed the way

that engineering companies operate world-wide. To mark the centenary of the 1918 Armistice, he decided to raise funds for cancer charities by preparing a tribute to the soldiers of the Great War, in music and words.

His record 'One More Yard' was released for streaming and for issue as a CD. Performers included Sinéad O'Connor, Imelda May, Ronnie Wood, Nick Mason and Brian Eno with extracts from the letters of Michael Wall read by Cillian Murphy – part of the RDFA Archive here at Pearse Street. Michael Wall came from Carrick Hill, Malahide, Co. Dublin. During the Great War, he joined the Royal Irish Regiment and served in Belgium. He wrote 94 letters home between 1915 and 1917 and his last letter was written on 5 June 1917 – two days before he went 'over the top' to his death.



Lieut Michael Thomas Wall, to whom Cillian Murphy lent his voice

His letters from Flanders reveal the emotional journey this young man went

through from excitement on enlistment to indifference to regret, anger and disillusionment with war, revealing the regularity of trench life with all its moments of boredom and excitement. There are many interesting topics such as his faith in God, excitement and enthusiasm on enlistment, his animosity towards Sinn Féin and the Easter Rising, disillusionment and factors that fed into such feelings such as striking Irish workers and political events in Ireland which he disagreed with.

This extensive collection has now been scanned and transcribed by a team at DCLA including Cormac McDonnell, Ciara Murray, and Clair Walton. Professor Evans kindly wrote to the Lord Mayor of Dublin: 'I have been working on a fascinating WW1 project which entailed researching letters sent from soldiers at the Front home to their loved ones. I was particularly interested in the Irish soldiers and we contacted Dublin City Library and Archive for assistance. I found them to be extremely helpful ... [archivists] Mary Clark and Ellen Murphy helped us enormously and I am very grateful for their professionalism and efficiency.'

Mary Clark (Dublin City Archivist)

[The Centenary of Wood's Guide to the Public Records of Ireland](#)

An inventory without which the archives destroyed in June 1922 would be truly 'lost'

Herbert Wood was born in London on 6 September 1860, the son of William Wood, an Irish-born surgeon, and Jane Mary Jeffries, a native of Suffolk. Having graduated BA from Oxford University in

1883, Herbert Wood joined the staff of the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI) in Dublin in 1884- the predecessor to today's National Archives which was established by the National Archives Act 1986. The PROI, founded in 1867, was assigned the task of gathering, arranging and cataloguing the official archives of Ireland, which dated from the thirteenth century. Wood was actively involved in the archival work of the repository and specialised in records of the medieval period.



The well-known interior view of the PROI (Courtesy National Archives)

James Mills, Deputy Keeper of the Public Records in Ireland, mooted the preparation of a general guide to the records to aid users of the PROI and Wood was assigned the task. After a delay caused by World War I, Wood's *Guide to the Records Deposited in the Public Record Office of Ireland* was issued in 1919, at which point the author held the post of

Assistant Deputy Keeper. In his introduction, Wood sketched the history of the public records of Ireland, noting the vicissitudes they had undergone, including periodic losses of some records due to theft and fires. Wood concluded proudly that the 'centralisation of the public records in one building has been attended with excellent results'.

Wood's 334-page guide listed the archival riches of the PROI, ranging from patent and close rolls of the Court of Chancery dating from the 14th century, through records of other courts extending to the 19th century, parliamentary records including journals of the Irish Lords and Commons, state papers, ecclesiastical and testamentary records encompassing Church of Ireland parish registers and wills, archives of extinct jurisdictions and commissions, and the census returns of 1821-51.

In what was a well-deserved promotion, Wood was appointed Deputy Keeper of Public Records in 1921. The PROI had fortunately escaped serious damage during the 1916 Rising and the Irish War of Independence 1919-21. During the Civil War which followed the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, the Four Courts complex, including the PROI, was occupied by 'Irregulars' or anti-Treaty forces in April 1922. The new Free State government attacked the rebel forces in the Four Courts in June, and on the 30th of the month a massive explosion (whether intentional or not remains a matter of debate) was followed by the destruction of nearly all the contents of the PROI.



*Public Record Office of Ireland, Four Courts
(Courtesy National Archives)*

In an article published in 1930, Wood's evaluation of the destruction of the public records was characteristically calm and measured and marked by a hopeful tone of potential reconstruction. He set out in particular to itemise surviving copies, abstracts and published versions of the destroyed records, drawing attention as well to records in other Irish repositories and in the English PRO. In contrast to his earlier enthusiasm for centralisation, Wood concluded by noting that the 'tragedy of 1922' lay 'in the fact that the method of assembling the public records under one roof was the very means of making such a destruction possible'.

Perhaps understandably, Wood retired as Deputy Keeper in March 1923, and the notice of his departure stated that it was 'in consequence of the destruction of the Public Record Office'. Despite his retirement as Deputy Keeper and eventually a move back to England, Wood maintained his close interest in Irish history and archives and the reconstruction of the PROI. He was an active member of both the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Ireland and the Royal Irish Academy, contributing articles to their journals.

Herbert Wood, who was unmarried, died on 20 June 1955 at Bath in England, aged 94. Wood's guide to the records of the PROI is something more than a catalogue of a lost archive, rather it is a template for archival reconstruction and a warning to guard against a similar catastrophe in the future.



Herbert Wood, 1860-1955 (Courtesy National Archives)

Digitisation, represented by the growing quantity of records being made available online in response to the needs of genealogists and by the Beyond 2022 project based in Trinity College, today provides much more efficient means of archival protection and dissemination than were available to Wood and his colleagues. Wood showed admirable dedication to Irish public records, even after the destruction of the PROI in 1922, and he deserves to be ranked as one of the country's greatest archivists.

To mark the centenary of the publication of Herbert Wood's *Guide to the Records Deposited in the Public Record Office of Ireland* (HMSO 1919), a facsimile edition with a prefatory essay has now been made available at <https://bit.ly/2V5jp3V>.

Sean J Murphy (genealogist and retired Adult Education lecturer, UCD)

What is a Feis Ceoil?

The author gave the ISA Spring lecture in 2018, and is continuing to research the nexus between music, nationalism and pedagogy

The question 'What is a Feis Ceoil?' was posed in a Musical Times article in response to the first Feis which took place in Dublin in 1897. A pertinent question since the Feis Ceoil's early years were, in many ways, contradictory, as its organisers endeavoured to embrace music-making in Ireland to incorporate both classical and Irish music.

Debate regretting the neglected state of Irish music and musicians in 1894 prompted Dr Annie Patterson to propose a revival of ancient festivals of music and literature to the Gaelic League. A committee met in Patterson's home the following year and drew up 'four important objects' which would become pillars of the Association's constitution:

"The Feis Ceoil Association has been formed with the following objects: (a) to promote the study and cultivation of Irish music; (b) to promote the general cultivation of music in Ireland; (c) to hold

an annual music festival consisting of prize competitions and concerts; (d) to collect and preserve by publication the old airs of Ireland."

This suggested the importance of Irish music in the Association's activities; it would be promoted through competition, preservation and composition as well as being further advanced through exhibitions and lectures.



Advertisement for a lecture by Charlotte Milligan Fox, Irish Independent, 20 May 1905 (courtesy NLI)

The answer to The Musical Times' question what is a Feis Ceoil? would appear to be that, notwithstanding its Irish name, it was a dual-purpose festival, to promote and invigorate Irish music-making while embracing an expanded remit for competitive music-making of all types.

Public meetings and lectures promoted the movement in advance of its inaugural festival. The 1897 syllabus was extensive,

encompassing competitions for classical string, woodwind, brass, piano and organ playing, for solo, quartet and choral singing as well as competitions for solo singing in Irish, uilleann pipe-playing and the collection of unpublished Irish airs.



Cover of the Feis Ceoil syllabus, 1897 (courtesy NLI)

Composers' competitions were significant in number and design; they accounted for one-third of the 1897 competitions and with many founded upon Irish airs, resonated with original constitutional aims. A three-concert series was also instituted which, together with competitions, would be held over one week in May 1897; prize-winning compositions were programmed across the series, many of which were large-scale choral and orchestral works. The Association sought to promote both Irish and classical music through this platform but only part of one concert was devoted

to what was called 'ancient Irish music', presenting Irish harpers, singers, pipers and a unison choir.

The dual ambitions apparent in the early years are clearly demonstrated when Patterson resolutely turned her attentions to an alternative festival and took no part in the first Feis Ceoil. As early as August 1896, plans for the Oireachtas were passed by the League who desired the endeavour to be 'as truly Irish as it can possibly be' and believed that the Feis Ceoil festival would not cater exclusively for native traditions. The Oireachtas, held simultaneously with the first Feis Ceoil, was much closer in design to Patterson's philosophy and fostered a more nationalistic approach. A celebration of Irish poetry, drama and literature through competitions and concerts, it was a manifest imitation of a Welsh Eisteddfod festival, an original model for Patterson. Could the Oireachtas, therefore, fulfil Patterson's vision of an Irish musical festival? It would not be surprising if music in the Oireachtas took a different path to the Feis Ceoil given the apparent irreconcilable differences between them and Patterson in 1897.

The first Oireachtas included competitions for song composition and collection, as well as a concert which featured uilleann pipers, harpers, solo singers and choirs. The musical arm of the Oireachtas was supplemented with solo singing competitions the following year and in 1901 musical activity expanded with the introduction of competitions for harp and uilleann pipes, plus an

unpublished airs competition and a prize offered for the making of the best chanter, that part of the instrument which the tune is played on, for uilleann pipes. The syllabus was also significantly extended to include solo singing at multiple age levels, vocal quartet and choral competitions for both school and adult mixed-voice choirs.

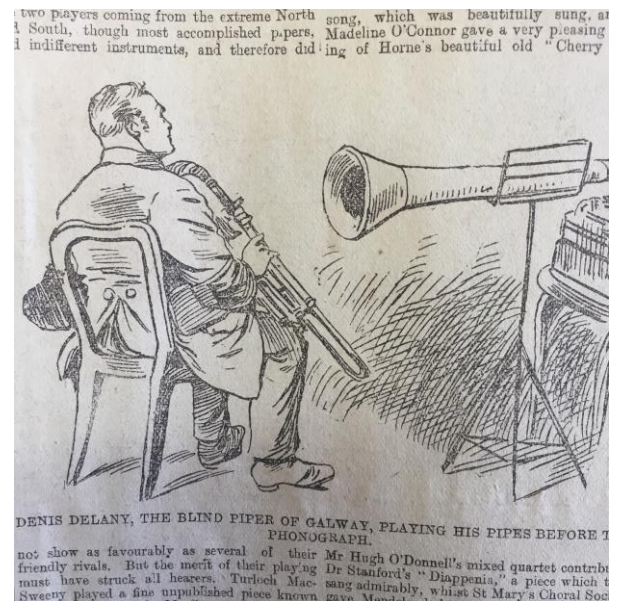
Ideological differences prompted separation in 1897, but commonalities between the Feis Ceoil and the Gaelic League's Oireachtas are swiftly revealed, most notably when considered through the lens of choral activity. As music within the Oireachtas expanded, commonalities became greater; the festivals shared concert artists including harpist Owen Lloyd and Harriet Rose Byrne, for example, who featured in the inaugural concert for both festivals. They shared committee members, efforts to preserve and collect Irish airs which included phonograph recordings of competitors such as uilleann piper Denis Delany and both festivals publish newly produced works.



Today's Feis Ceoil home page

Choral competitions founded on Irish airs or language were almost interchangeable

between the two festivals; arrangements of Irish airs with English words for choirs featured on Feis Ceoil syllabi from 1898, choral competitions as Gaeilge were introduced in 1906 and, coupled with similar expansion in the Oireachtas, competition design demanded increased compositional output in this sphere.



Article on Feis Ceoil proceedings, Saturday Herald, 22 May 1897 (courtesy NLI)

By 1903, the League had published a series of arrangements for four-part choir, many of which frequently appeared as test pieces in the Feis Ceoil choral competitions, and the Feis Ceoil had published over sixty prize-winning compositions. The Oireachtas also expanded its composers' competitions, many of which would sit comfortably within any Feis Ceoil syllabus. Both provided stimulus in preservation of Irish music and publication of new arrangements and original composition through commissioning and competitive platforms, indeed repertoire was the common thread which bound composers,

conductors, choirs and competitions together across the two festivals.

Considering these shared connections, it is probable that musicians and competitors viewed both the Feis Ceoil and the Oireachtas not as conflicting ideologies but instead as opportunities. Indeed, even Patterson who had so decisively rejected the Feis Ceoil surely recognised its capacity to further music-making in Ireland and the making of Irish music given that just two years later, in 1899, she re-emerged as a member of its Central Executive Committee.

Helen Doyle (music teacher, choral director, and researcher)

[Archives of the Upper Leeson Street Residents' Association](#)

[Five decades of campaigning to preserve a neighbourhood](#)

Having celebrated fifty years of tireless work to preserve the character of the Upper Leeson Street area, it should come as no surprise that the local residents' association ULSARA should also choose to preserve the records of their work. In 2018, they contacted Dublin City Library and Archives with a view to depositing their collection there. The Association still exists and continues its work, so while further accruals remain a possibility, the collection currently consists of approximately twelve boxes of material (now preserved and catalogued), dating from 1968 to 2018. This is the second collection of records belonging to a Dublin residents' association to have been added to the archive, the first being the archive of

Belmont Avenue and Mount Eden Road Residents' Association.

The Association was founded in 1968, in response to Dublin Corporation's Development Plan of the same year, which provided for the re-zoning of the Upper Leeson Street area for 'mixed commercial/residential' use. For a number of years, residents had been dismayed by careless development in the area, and this Development Plan was the last straw. Carmencita Hederman, who served on Dublin City Council from 1974-1999 and was Lord Mayor from 1987-1988, was one of its founding members.



[ULSARA home page](#)

ULSARA set out to 'promote the conservation of the residential character and amenities of the neighbourhood, including the maintenance of green spaces, as well as the distinctive Georgian and Victorian architectural features of this area of Dublin, and to encourage the development of community life in the area.'

The Association's geographical remit includes Upper Leeson Street, Leeson Park, extending to an area bounded by the Grand Canal, Upper Baggot Street, Pembroke Road, Herbert Park and Ranelagh Road. It also includes Appian Way, Dartmouth Square, Elgin Road,

Mespil Road, Morehampton Lane, Northbrook Road, Pembroke Lane, Raglan Road, Warner's Lane, Waterloo Road, Wellington Road and Winton Road.



From a series of postcards: 'Hot tip' by Thomas J Ryan (c.1993, courtesy ULSARA)

Since its conception, ULSARA has involved itself in a variety of issues and this involvement is recorded in its archives. It opposed the proposal to use the Grand Canal as a motorway route, and the proposal to build an oil refinery in Dublin Bay. Its successes included the campaign to have 22 Leeson Park maintained as a residential building, and fighting ICTU's proposed four-story building on Raglan Road.

Another battle that might be remembered is the fight for Dartmouth Square. The Residents' Association had first become involved in 1987, when Dublin City Council were persuaded to revive the park, which had become overgrown and a little uncared for. When it transpired in 2005 that the park had been bought by business man Noel O'Gara some years previously, local residents fought tirelessly to have it returned to public use. In 2006, O'Gara locked the gates, and attempted to operate the park as a car park, but residents blocked access to the

park. The Association's archive chronicles the long battle, and their attempts to persuade the council to act on a compulsory purchase order, their tireless correspondence with local councillors, and their work maintaining the park. In 2012, the park was finally purchased by Dublin City Council, with a generous contribution of €32,000 from the residents, and returned to public use.

The collection contains a large body of material relating to planning applications and developments in the area, as well as correspondence and administrative material.

The Association's newsletters provide summaries of their activities, and photographic material provides an interesting insight into how the area has developed over the years.



From the same series: 'Canal' by Seán Mooney (c.1933, courtesy ULSARA)

The collection is testament to the remarkable difference that a residents' association can make in an area, and is fascinating from an architectural –as well as a local and social history– perspective. While much of the material in the collection contains personal information,

and as a result will remain closed for the foreseeable future, the Association itself made excellent use of it, and have produced a book entitled 'Cherishing Heritage– Preserving Community'.

Stephanie Rousseau (Assistant Archivist, Dublin City Library & Archives)

ISA NEWS

- The tour to Birr Castle (13 April) is booked out.
- *Irish Archives* 2019 will be based on talks given at the 2017 seminar 'Hidden Pages of Irish Sports History', and new papers. Watch out for news in the autumn!

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