

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

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Foreword by the Chair, Board of the National Museum of Ireland

The anticipated return to normal, after pandemic interruptions, could not have been more unpredictable. Inflation, energy security and a more localised challenge in talent recruitment and retention were just as tangible in the museum sector, as they were across the wider economy.

But among these disrupters, there were some silver linings. The energy crisis put an onus on the National Museum of Ireland to think deep and hard about its carbon footprint: we asked ourselves questions about the things we need to change to lessen our dependence on fossil fuels to heat and light our buildings, and to help preserve our collections. Now we know the extent of changes that need to be made to journey towards our 2030 carbon targets. It's a tall order, but for a national institution with a role to play in leading climate action and carbon reduction, we have resolved to play our part.

Beyond the energy crisis, in 2022 NMI commenced work on our new five-year strategic plan. Since 2018, the Museum has concentrated on organisational transformation and building capacity to operate more effectively. We have travelled a journey and are now moving to an outward facing strategy in which we will elevate our responsibilities and commitment in the areas of research, climate action and community engagement. Work to finalise this new strategy continued into Q1 and Q2 of 2023.

Building an effective strategy also requires a strong board. Four new colleagues joined our ranks in 2022 bringing with them governance, community and sustainability experience and leadership. Meanwhile, after six years of public service at the NMI, our colleague Declan Nelson retired and his work on governance and oversight was especially appreciated.

As the National Museum of Ireland grows its ambition and reach, the 1997 National Cultural Institutions Act seems less in touch and relevant. Through a sub-committee of the board and executive input, we reviewed how our enabling legislation functions and what needs to change. By early 2023, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media was in receipt of our reflections and recommendations for a more futuristic and appropriate legislative framework.

By the end of 2022, the National Museum's Deputy Director and Head of Collections handed in her notice, reminding the board how fragile our capacity is. With sanction for her second five-year term as Director, Lynn Scarff picked up the surplus workload and continued to go beyond her duties to grow and develop the museum. It reminded us that a workforce cannot be taken for granted, especially when leadership roles are short-term. More generally, the Museum grappled with filling roles across the organisation.

The Museum welcomed the Government's decision to include our leadership and expertise in the development of a centre for remembrance at the site of the Magdalene Laundries at Sean McDermott Street, Dublin City Centre. We also welcomed the increased attention by our colleagues at the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media on our capital investment needs. Such collaboration with partners across the statutory sector is important in maximising the impact of the National Museum of Ireland.

And, as this is my last full-year annual report to oversee as chair of the National Museum of Ireland, I am entirely grateful to my board colleagues – past and present – for their support and hard work; to the executive and full NMI team for their hard work; to the Minister and colleagues at the

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for an open, honest and trusting relationship; and to everyone who engages with the museum. Without people, it is nothing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Catherine Heaney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Catherine Heaney
Chair

Introduction by the Director of the National Museum of Ireland

There are many more successes to be celebrated and challenges we have learned from outlined in this report. All this work is made real by the incredible team at the National Museum of Ireland made up of the staff and Board. I would like to thank them for their unwavering commitment and ambition to grow the impact of our museums to become more accessible, inclusive, and relevant places with each new year.

Reviewing the annual report for 2022, it is clear that it was the year of delivery. Projects that had been on hold, in preparation or stalled due to the COVID pandemic took off in earnest and levels of business returned or exceeded their 2019 levels. While our delivery was high the conditions within which we carried out our work were complicated by an energy crisis, a recruitment shortage and increasing inflationary costs. Yet given these factors, NMI made real progress across strategic capital and operational projects in 2022 with the support of a dedicated and committed team who showed resilience and adaptability throughout.

With recruitment of a new project team, development of the Changing Ireland: Stories from the Collection 1900 – 2023 galleries took off. Scheduled to open in Autumn 2024, this new set of galleries in NMI – Decorative Arts and History at Collins Barracks will use NMI's rich historical collections to examine the last 123 years of Irish history from a social, cultural and political perspective. Featuring many new acquisitions and contemporary material, it will bring to the fore lived experiences and stories that have in the past been under represented in the telling of this period of our history.

After the significant decant of collections to enable the construction of a new platform under the roof of the Natural History building, we were delighted to be in a position to re-open the ground floor of the 'Dead Zoo' in August 2022. Within months, we had welcomed xx number of visitors back to the space. We look forward to realising the upcoming redevelopment and refurbishment of the museum over the coming years. Work on progressing this important capital project continues through 2022, with approval to proceed to the design phase of the Natural History Museum redevelopment expected in 2023.

Through 2023, we worked on the development of our new Strategic Plan. Starting from a wider global perspective and examining some of the key opportunities and challenges emerging over this decade we asked how could the National Museum of Ireland be most relevant to visitors, stakeholders and partners over the next five years. By examining our work across all our departments, we developed a concept of lenses (Community, Planet and Shred Knowledge) through which we could view our operations and in doing so drive for a more accessible, engaged, sustainable and open museum. The Strategy will be finalised and launched in 2023.

As always, our team balanced the delivery of our day to day statutory and operational role as well as moving forward our key strategic projects. From the processing of over 1613 license applications in 2022 to the acquisition of new collections and the delivery of multiple

schools and public programmes across our sites, NMI continued to engage with the wider community in a number of ways. This genuine and embedded connection with community and commitment to our cultural heritage and public service duty is at the core of the NMI and exemplified by the relationship our team have with our visitors, the public we meet and the wider community. It is an invaluable relationship that leads to a sharing of knowledge and a deeper understanding of the role of the Museum in both protecting and making accessible our national collection and very much at the heart of who we are as an organisation.

In the final year of our Building Capacity, Driving Change strategic plan, we continued to consolidate staffing numbers and budget resources, however we still have a journey to go to secure the work force needed to meet our ambition. This will be a core commitment and focus as we transition into our new five year strategy. We also felt the loss of key individuals as they moved to new roles or retired in 2022. As our Chair prepares for the culmination of her term in 2023, it is a reminder that committed, talented people are at the core of our work and it's vital that we carry out strong succession planning to ensure continuity into the future for NMI.

It can be difficult to express the diversity of work within our institution and this annual report gives some indication of the level of collection care and management, engagement, interpretation and research within our museums. It is a great privilege to work with such a committed staff and Board that are all at the core of what we have achieved in 2022.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lynn Scarff', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lynn Scarff

Director

ART AND INDUSTRY

The Art and Industrial Division is responsible for approx. 530,000 artefacts reflecting Irish economic, cultural, social, industrial, political and military history over the last four centuries. Staff in the division also care for collections of Irish, European and Asian decorative arts.

Staffing

2022 was a busy year for staffing in the division. As part of the planning for the 20th Century History of Ireland Galleries, three curatorial researchers were appointed in April via Hays Recruiting, Dr. Siobhán Doyle, Orlaith Styles and Elaine Manley. In October Dr. Doyle was appointed curator of ceramics and glass on a two-year contract, and the vacancy that created for a curatorial researcher was filled by Muiris Wade. In December interviews were held for the post of digital curatorial researcher as part of the exhibition project to work specifically on online collections, and will begin work in January 2023. The successful candidate will commence in early 2023.

Exhibitions

Imaging Conflict; photographs from revolutionary era Ireland 1913-123, was launched in October by Prof. Luke Gibbons. The exhibition, a collaboration with Photo Museum Ireland, is part of the Museum's ongoing contributions to the Decade of Centenaries. *Spoon Garden*, a sculptural silver piece by Annemarie Reinhard, the winner of the NMI/DCCI Covid 19 commission, was installed in the Period Furniture Galleries. *The 18 pounder Field Gun 9168: Lost and Found* which went on display in *Soldiers and Chiefs* in December is a collaborative exhibition with the Irish Defence Forces, who have painstakingly conserved this Civil War era gun. Work continued apace on the *20th Century History of Ireland Galleries*, which will open in 2024. Planning for the exhibition has been a priority during the year, three curatorial researchers were appointed in April and a series of workshops with the exhibition designers/graphic designers have taken place throughout the year.

Collections

Forthcoming structural works in the North Block to facilitate the 20th Century History of Ireland galleries (on the 3rd floor), necessitated a major decant of collections both internally within the North Block and from the North Block to the CRC. A major project was instigated to move the entire reserve ceramics and scientific instruments collections to the CRC. External art handlers and conservators were contracted to carry out the work facilitated and assisted by A&I, Registration and Conservation Dept. staff. Preparatory work for the move of the armoury collection within the North Block stores was also carried out by A&I staff working with Conservation staff. This work has been a priority for the division during 2022.

A&I staff working with colleagues in the Conservation Dept. facilitated the completion of the LED lighting project in the early part of the year. Regular documented checks were carried out in galleries and stores around the CB campus in accordance with MSPI. In February the death mask of Michael Collins was removed from display and 3D scanned in order for a replica to be made for the Michael Collins House Museum in Clonakilty. A new flag / banner chest was installed in Block 14 to allow for safer storage of the flags and banners collection. Researchers were facilitated with access to the reserve collections throughout the year.

Loans

The division facilitated a number of loan requests and the return of loan objects during 2022. A small collection of Iranian objects were lent to the exhibition, *Meeting in Isfahan. Vision and Exchange in Safavid Iran* in the Chester Beatty, which ran from February to August, although much of the preparatory work took place in 2021. In October a carved intaglio ring was lent to the exhibition, *First Fragments: Biblical Papyrus from Roman Egypt*, also at the Chester Beatty, the exhibition will run until October 2023. A loan was returned from the Ulster Museum in January, the Maguire chalice was collected from the Fermanagh County Museum in August and Martin O'Meara's Victoria Cross was returned to the Western Australian War Museum following its display in *Soldiers and Chiefs*. A number of long term loans, both outward and inward, were renewed, and the loan of the Carrick-on-Suir gold coin hoard to the Tipperary County Museum was extended for one year.

Acquisitions 2022

There were a number of objects acquired during the year for the A&I collections. Amongst the objects purchased were, *1845: Memento Mori*, a glass installation by Paula Stokes; a French film poster for *The Quiet Man*, 1952; a Rigby Bulldog pistol; LSF sergeant's helmet (Emergency period); and an RPG 7 rocket launcher related to the Troubles, 1970s – 1990s. Also purchased, a recruiting poster for The National Army, January 1922; 1923 (27 April) Anti-Treaty IRA "Suspension of Offensive" order by Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff; and a decorated handkerchief made by a female Republican prisoner in Limerick Prison in 1977.

Amongst the objects donated were, a collection of furniture design and prototypes by architect/designer Tony O'Neill, with associated archive; two 1980s John Rocha outfits and a 1970s outfit by Clodagh; a 1816 Quaker map sampler depicting a map of Europe made in Mountmellick; a small collection of Kilkenny Design Workshops ceramics; a small collection of objects relating to telecommunications; a range of objects relating to the military history collections; and various objects relating to the Contemporary Ireland collection.

Talks/lectures/interviews

A&I staff provided talks and lectures to a range of audiences both in person and online via webinars, lectures, etc. Talks were given to local history and specialist interest groups such as the Rathmichael Historical Society and the Belgian Silver Society. Various student groups were accommodated with talks and tours covering the collections, students from History & Heritage Studies Media at John Moore University, Liverpool; UCC's Museum Studies MA; NCAD's Design and Material Culture MA; UCD's Art History, Collections and Curating MA; and Maynooth University's Design Innovation MA. Interviews were given about new exhibitions and other topics relating to the collections.

Irish Antiquities

The Irish Antiquities Division (IAD) is responsible for the archaeological, ethnographical, classical and Egyptian collections, along with the administration of various statutory functions such as the regulation of licences to export and alter archaeological objects.

Licensing

The Division carried out duties relating to the NMI's statutory functions under the National Monuments Acts. A total of 1613 licence applications were processed and a number of site inspections were carried out in relation to these archaeological works as follows:

Licence to excavate/monitor/detect/dive	1021
Ministerial Consents and Directions	70
Licence to alter an archaeological object	291
Licence to export an archaeological object	231

In 2022, IAD staff liaised regularly with the National Monuments Service (NMS) and advised many commercial archaeological companies on the care and deposition of excavated collections. Staff commenced a major project to process a legacy collection of excavated material in July. This project, which is supported by the NMS, will ensure appropriate care and future accessibility of material from more than 200 archaeological sites. Staff also launched an updated *Standards* document for the treatment of objects from excavations. IAD staff designed and ran an important survey to assess the volume of excavated collections yet to be accessioned to the State's collection to better inform risk, compliance and storage needs.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork relating to archaeological discoveries was undertaken in 20 counties; Antrim, Clare, Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Limerick, Longford, Mayo, Meath, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, and Wicklow.

Acquisitions

A total of 291 annual acquisitions were registered in 2022, including some very significant objects. In February, three medieval bells from St. Mary's, Howth, Co. Dublin, were donated to the NMI by the Gaisford St Lawrence family of Howth Castle. These bells are a rare example of survival of this artefact type. Several important bog butter finds were also made in 2022. Wood surviving in the shaft of a disc rotary quern found at Ballyvaskin, Co. Clare was radiocarbon dated to the tenth century AD, providing an important absolute date for this object type. A set of three carved wooden vessels found in a Co. Longford bog have been dated to the fourth to second centuries BC. An Iron Age horsebit was also acquired. Perhaps the most significant discovery of the year was an Iron Age iron sword contained within its bronze scabbard, which is decorated in the La Tène style. Such discoveries are rare, with only one other known example in the collections of the NMI.

Legal Matters

Owing to the nature of the NMI's statutory functions under the National Monuments Acts, 1930 to 2014, frequent liaison with An Garda Síochána and NMS, particularly on the issue of unlicensed metal detecting, took place. Staff dealt with twenty-seven separate reports of objects discovered by detection devices. Staff also liaised with colleagues in the Dept. of

Tourism, Culture, Arts, the Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, in particular relating to export licences to the UK, post-Brexit. Staff also liaised with the Chief State Solicitor's Office on a number of different issues during 2022.

Exhibitions and Loans

Both national and international loans form a significant part of IAD's work each year.

Ireland

IAD staff continued to improve conditions for objects on exhibition and in the reserve collection across four sites. The *Medieval Ireland* exhibition was re-opened in June following remedial conservation on several objects and work on showcases to improve display conditions.

Local Museums

As part of IAD's remit to work with local and regional museums in Ireland, staff liaised and consulted with museum colleagues all over Ireland. Staff inspected loans to Cork Butter Museum, Down County Museum, Kerry County Museum, Lismore Heritage Centre, Músaem Chorca Dhuibhne, Skerries Mill and Smock Alley. In March staff facilitated a successful one-day loan of the Shankill crosier to St. Matthew's Parish Church, Shankill Road, Belfast. In August, staff installed objects in Tipperary County Museum that had been removed to facilitate the redevelopment of the Museum. In October, a loan of material was installed at Chester Beatty Library for their *First Fragments: Biblical papyrus from Roman Egypt* exhibition. In November, staff re-installed a loan to Waterford Designated Museum at Reginald's Tower following upgrade works to the site.

International

IAD staff couriered and installed a major loan to the *World of Stonehenge* exhibition at the British Museum, which featured many IAD objects including the Knowth Macehead and Gleninsheen Gorget.

Research visits

A major part of IAD's work each year is to actively encourage and support researchers access to the divisional archive and its collections. Staff facilitated 276 visits to the archive and 102 visits to the reserve collections. Throughout the year, staff carried out searches of the database on behalf of researchers who could not attend in person.

Research/Projects

Staff worked on a number of research projects and on publications of recent acquisitions. Staff also supported several research applications to the Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research fund involving research on IAD collections. Research progressed on the Bog Bodies Project, on early medieval vessels, on Iron Age spearbutts and on recently-excavated burials. In November, Dr Aoife O'Brien joined the staff as the first ever curator of Ethnographical/World Cultures collections. Staff provided curatorial support to phase II of the Inventory project.

Representation

Staff represented the NMI on the following external bodies: Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Committee; Designated Museums Liaison Group; Board of Directors of the Discovery Programme; Royal Irish Academy Standing Committee for Archaeology; Council of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland; Editorial Board, Journal of Irish Archaeology; Government's Advisory Committee and Working Group on Climate Change Adaptation. Internally, staff represented the Division on a wide range of policy committees including the Health and Safety Committee.

Public Engagement

IAD staff delivered public lectures and tours to a wide variety of audiences on archaeological and museological topics both within the NMI, across the country and abroad. Public lectures were delivered to the Midlands Science Festival, Sligo Field Club, Carlow Historical and Archaeological Society, Sligo Community Heritage Forum, the Ninth International Insular Art Conference in Durham and the 19th Viking Congress in Liverpool. Staff also lectured/presented to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in UCD, NUI Galway and UCC, including the UCC Museum Studies MA course. Staff responded to numerous media reports and requests for interviews for tv documentaries, podcasts and other broadcasts relating to the collections.

Natural History

The Natural History Division (NHD) cares for the Museum collections in the disciplines of zoology and geology, which number approximately two million specimens.

Natural History Capital Works

The Natural History building on Merrion Street reopened on 2nd August 2022 after being closed to the public since October 2020 for decant and construction work. The first half of 2022 saw a working platform (referred to as the Crash Deck) installed 2m below the laylight in the Merrion Street building. The work involved the installation of steel beams attached to bespoke steel plates, reversibly inserted between the blocks of the walls, with joisting between the beams to support sheets of plywood and insulation, with the addition of an environmentally sealed upstand wall to help manage issues with dust and weather during roof works. The Crash Deck installation, removal of scaffolding and all associated making good was completed and the building handed back to the NMI on 1st July.

Exhibitions

Displays were reinstated in the Irish Room, in preparation for the ground-floor-only reopening on Tuesday 2nd August, following the previous night's airing of *The Dead Zoo*, a 1 hour documentary following the decant project that took place in 2020-2021. Capacity in the space was limited for fire evacuation reasons, but footfall in the five months between August 2nd and December 31st was 137,000.

Staff worked in partnership with Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) to maintain and improve displays, and support delivery of activities around the exhibition *Down to Earth – Exploring Ireland's Geology* in the Riding School, Collins Barracks.

Collections

A significant amount of collections work was undertaken by staff, which included a full fluid specimen survey and topping-up exercise carried out in Merrion Street along with an ongoing survey of the fluid collection stored in Beggars Bush; the remounting of the skull and repair of the Lough Naglack Giant Deer skeleton in the entrance to the Irish Room; cleaning, repair and redisplay of the entomological displays in the Irish Room as well as significant work on the internationally important insect collections in storage. In collaboration with colleagues in Registration, the Geology Inventory Project started with the appointment of four contract staff to the Inventory Team.

The geology collections were assessed for the presence of radioactive minerals; a plan for housing and handling them is being drawn up. Initial assessments for pyrite decay and for conserving specimen labels were also carried out.

Acquisitions

Several significant Entomological collections were acquired in 2022, totalling approximately 13,000 individual specimens from collectors including Don Cotton (2,500 insect specimens), John Lavery (3,700 specimens), Kenny Murphy (5,310 moths), and Paddy Ashe (1,300 flies). In addition, specimens were acquired of 5 insect species newly discovered in Ireland, generating research publications. A collection of around 200 zoological specimens from a historic teaching collection was donated by the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, Dublin.

Research and Engagement

Staff responded to 554 new enquiries during the year. This included significant research loans of over 240 mollusc Type specimens to National Museum Wales and NHM, London. The Irish Cetacean Genetic Tissue Bank reached over 1,600 samples, including a new record for Ireland, with the addition of the Dwarf sperm whale. Staff engaged with the public on social media, contributed to television, radio and news items, gave a number of virtual and in-person talks, and attended and hosted training courses and seminars online and in person.

Collaboration and Outreach

Staff collaborated with research partners to secure €530,000 in funding from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine for a research project to identify and monitor insect disease vectors in Ireland (2022-2026) and contributed to the training of PhD students as part of the project. The Division provided sector specialist support for a number of organisations including universities and museums in Ireland, England, Wales, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Italy, USA and Australia. Staff continued to serve with other organisations including the National Biodiversity Data Centre, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, the Irish Naturalists' Journal, the Irish Geological Association, the Royal Entomological Society, and the Natural Sciences Collections Association. There was also collaboration with project partners including the OPW, Geological Survey Ireland, the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, UCD, TCD, UCC, National Museum Wales, National Museums NI, and NHM London.

Irish Folklife

The Irish Folklife Division manages the national collection of objects reflective of Irish traditional life, understanding that traditions change and evolve and seeking to reflect that in our collecting policy. The Division continues to work with communities and explore themes for contemporary collecting. The Division is based at the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life, Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. The majority of the Irish Folklife collections are housed at Turlough Park.

Acquisitions

172 acquisitions registered, comprising objects related to religious ephemera/souvenirs, toys, hire-purchase records, furniture, model boats, Irish Traveller material culture. *Some highlights included:*

A wheeled turning spit from Cork was donated as were some model of traditional boats also a souvenir mug representing the Irish diaspora in the U.S.A. Some items purchased were a selection of Travel posters, a hedge chair and a dowry chest, a Galway Shawl, a selection of objects from St Gobnait's Shrine, Ballyvourney, Co. Cork. The 1931 original mixing bowl for making Sudocrem in Dublin was also donated. Traditional objects made by Ukrainian refugees were also donated. A selection of tin and brass items made by Tom McDonnell, a Travelling tinsmith from Dublin. A silver ring made from a silver 10p Irish punt coin.

Exhibitions

Our Irish Chair Tradition Revisited

This continued as the main temporary exhibition on site. It was a collaboration with students from GMIT, Letterfrack, and the 'You Are Here': Tuam chair public art project from 2016. Throughout the year there were related events; talks, a symposium, an opening of new student work, video releases, social media campaigns.

1845: Memento Mori by Paula Stokes

This art installation of 1845 hand-blown glass potatoes remembering the Great Irish Famine, opened in Turlough Park House in November 2021 and closed in July 2022. This art installation was subsequently acquired by NMI.

An Gorta Mór

This exhibit opened in NMI (National Museum of Ireland) Decorative Arts & History on May 25th, 2022, and marked the 175th anniversary of 1847 or 'Black 47', remembered as probably the most difficult year of the Great Irish Famine. It explored themes through five key objects that related to the Famine.

FOLK 21

This series of exhibitions, marked both the new national St Brigid's Day holiday from 2023, and the twenty-first anniversary of the opening of the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life in Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. FOLK 21 showcased four sets of 21 objects from the Irish Folklife collection, with the first of these being a collection of 21 St Brigid's crosses. As the year progressed, there were changing displays for this out of storage exhibition. 21 objects associated with each quarter day - butterprints, penal crosses and Halloween masks were exhibited. The crosses were put on display again at the end of the

year in time for St Brigid's Day 2023. Online galleries were also created to display new photography of the objects.

Making a currach – Michael Conneely

This [online exhibition](#) features the film and still photography taken by the NMI of Michael Conneely making a currach on Inisheer, County Galway, 1968. It follows all the stages of making the boat and illustrates the fieldwork of the NMI. His boat is on permanent display in the Turlough Park galleries.

Polish Folk Art – Beliefs, Colour and Symbols

Curated by the NGO (non governmental organisations), Bardzo Ladnie Foundation this exhibition opened in December 2020 but continued into 2022.

Świdermajer Architecture

Curated by the NGO, Bardzo Ladnie Foundation, the exhibition is on display as part of a nationwide campaign called *Integration Through Culture*. It consists of photographs of Świdermajer villas by Tomasz Brzostek and information panels about the style. It continued until March 2022.

Collaboration & Outreach

Mincéir.ie project initiated and grant application awarded which led to the development of this National Online portal of Traveller Culture material. This resulted in the collaboration with local, regional and national Traveller groups in relation to projects such as item identification, community specific tours, art programmes, community collection events, panel discussions, recordings of community elders in the Suwnie Arás project, being a guest and panel member at Misleór, the international festival of Nomads and the commencement of a photograph scanning project with the Parish of the Travelling People. A series of children's cards with Traveller Trails/ Minceir Keyart was developed.

GMIT Furniture Students worked with the Irish Folklife Division to create chairs for exhibiting as part of the Our Irish Chair – Tradition revisited.

There have been numerous art projects and artists facilitated to access the collection and outreach via tours and lectures. One collaboration was with an art project in Cork, *The Museum of Birds and Bees*.

Ukrainian events organised throughout the year with a focus on cultural connections. On Culture night we hosted an event for Ukrainian refugees. Culture night was 23rd September and was also the harvest festival of [Dozhinki](#), with similarities to Irish traditions.

Research & Engagement

The Division contributed to two research projects in UCD; FOODSEC which looks at grain storage in prehistory and CUPHAT, a tourism initiative for some coastal and upland areas on both Wales and Ireland. Staff attended the Folklife Conference in Biggar in Scotland.

As part of the boat gallery development, research & engagement continued. Assistance was provided to the Currachaí na Sceirí, an east coast based group of currach builders,

enthusiasts and rowers, in researching their Belderrig currach build. Later in the year, Interviews took place with Breandán Mac Conamhna at Belderrig pier. Staff visited the National Folklore Collection at UCD and attended the National Ploughing Championships and gathered contacts related to coastal boats and staff worked with the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation during the year in identifying gallery themes. Talks were given on traditional boats off the west coast at the 2022 Maritime Heritage Weekend in Rosses Point, Co. Sligo. Engagement with third level institutions continued with visits to the boat gallery from University of Galway Material Culture and Museums students, MA students from UCD, ATU Mayo History & Geography students, the Achill VTOS Coastal Guiding group and designer Peter Sheehan who works with students in various design colleges. Damien Donnellan of Galway City Museum contributed a post to the traditional boats blog on his recently completed MA in Public History and Cultural Heritage. Efforts to acquire Naomh Éanna material and memories included media interviews and engagement on social media. Contact with several boatyard, individuals and rowing clubs continued throughout the year with valuable material (interviews, model boats and support) received.

Research and support work commenced with St Margarets Travelling Community on the Project *Pisoge* and Ballyfermot Traveller Action Group on the project *Steidi*. Two publications of community curated works covering customs, practices, lore and seasonal events due June 2023 and October 2023. Online collections work continued by all Staff.

Staff visited the Museum of Rural Life in Reading, England in November 2022 and staff attended the 2022 Cultural Rights, Cultural Democracy Programme / Digwyddiad Hawliau a Democratiaeth Diwylliannolles as organised by Amgueddfa Cymru /Museum Wales.

Art Projects

Many art exhibitions took place in the Courtyard Gallery.

One day – 40 Sunrises; November 2021 – April 2022.

An exhibition/project by artist Ian Wieczorek, comprising 40 small oil paintings. These images followed sunrise around the world on a randomly chosen day (15th July 2020) based on live webcam feeds accessed via the internet. Originally created as an online project from the Arts Council Covid Response Award 2020.

Beneath/Beofhód; June - September 2022.

A series of photographic prints by Shane Hynan exploring the bogs of the Irish midlands and the culture around them. While the wider body of work dealt with themes of loss, change, duality, resilience and fragility, the exhibition drew specifically upon the theme of tradition and modernity and how they overlap in modern Ireland.

The Fabric of Society; October 2022 – January 2023.

This body of work by Bryan Gerard Duffy reflected on the societal challenges of retaining one's tradition, identity, and ancestral roots in the face of adversity, colonialism, and capitalism.

Conservation

The Conservation Department has predominant responsibility for maintaining standards of collection care and conservation for the extensive NMI collections it holds in trust for the Nation. The main areas of focus of the Conservation Department is to determine and enact the preventative, remedial and investigative care needs of the NMI's Collection.

Preventive Conservation and upgrade of collections

Conservation staff were involved in the decant of the glass, ceramics and scientific instruments from the North Block CB stores to the CRC. This was to facilitate structural work in the armoury and SI stores. There are still some issues with the Low RH room in KS and the BMS system across the CB site. Clothes moth infestations occurred in CB and KS which entailed packing and loading runs of the large freezer in Conservation. A new freezer and cold room were installed in Conservation with shelving units fitted out in the latter; the old cold room was retained as a back-up unit. The archaeological textile collection in KS was rehoused into acid-free boxes, plan-chests for flag storage in Block 14 was completed and a rolled storage unit was set up initiated for TPH. All archived environmental data was transferred to the new Meaco software and maps and documents amended to reflect new logger locations. Gallery cleaning by conservation and curatorial staff took place in the Egyptian exhibition along with a full upgrade of the Medieval Ireland display cases and surrounds. Conservation contributed to the Museum Standard Programme of Ireland (MSPI) accreditation applications for three sites – TPH, CB and CRCS and wrote the Collection Care and Conservation Strategy for the period 2019-2022 in the earlier part of the year. Conservation staff further participated in workshops to discuss and develop the 'Collections Care and Conservation Strategy' 2023-2027. This process began in earnest towards the later end of 2022.

Remedial Conservation

Treatment was undertaken on objects for exhibition and loans, improved storage, publication and research as well as first aid measures for freshly excavated archaeological material. The principal focus was on objects destined for exhibition in the *History of Ireland* galleries that comprised textiles, paper and Decorative arts – this work has now commenced. Ceramics, metal and textile artefacts were conserved for two loans to the Chester Beatty Library (*Ishtan* and *First Fragments*). Conservation was also carried out on core collections including the Schlagintweit life mask collection, archaeological wooden objects from IAD crypt, two significant shrines from the Medieval Ireland exhibition – the Fiacail Pádraig and the Shrine of the Book of Moling, the Lough Kinale shrine, Grattan's carriage in Letterfrack, a selection of weaponry in the Armoury and the Armada gun carriage wheel. External conservators were engaged for specific paper conservation works and in support of the Collection Care and Conservation Strategy development.

Exhibitions and loans

Conservation staff from textiles, paper and applied arts were involved in numerous planning meetings and discussions concerning the *History of Ireland* galleries. Staff were also involved in the loan of prehistoric artefacts of national importance to the *World of Stonehenge* exhibition in the British Museum and the *Ishtan* and *First Fragments* loans to the Chester

Beatty Library. Long-term loans were returned from the Tower Museum, Derry and King John's castle in Limerick while the loan to *Dublinia* was completed. Conservation provided assistance for the *Gorta Mór* and *War Photography* exhibitions which opened in CB.

Investigative Conservation

Examination, investigation and scientific analysis of the collections routinely formed a part of conservation processes. The new Titan X-ray unit is up and running and passed an EPA inspection visit. Radiography of core collections continued along with the service to private archaeological conservators. Particular highlights were the detection of additional relics on the shrine of the Book of Moling and the unexpected decoration on the iron-age sword from Ballymacegan through radiography. Routine xrf analysis of new and potential acquisitions from IAD was undertaken to determine composition and authenticity. This included artefacts destined for loan to the Chester Beatty Library, objects for forthcoming publications on Drumanagh, horse bits, and early medieval vessels and hanging bowls. The case made for the purchase of a portable xrf unit was accepted by management and delivery is expected early in the New Year. Additionally, Conservation undertook or facilitated sampling of artefacts such as crosiers, spear shafts, tool handles and human remains for C14 dating and wood identification.

Fieldwork

This mainly concerned with the inspection or recovery of archaeological material from a variety of contexts in particular numerous medieval artefacts recovered from the River Shannon by divers as well as trips to carry out minor excavations. Conservation staff were also active in inspecting local and county museums (Cavan, Down, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Cork Public museum, Cork Butter museum, Rathcroghan Visitor Centre) and commercial archaeological premises and facilities (IAC, Rathfarnham Castle, Courtney Deery, ABH, Fin O'Carroll). There was also a visit to Hereford Archives to look at passive conditioning of storage buildings.

Research, Collaboration, Engagement & Outreach

Conservation continued to deliver a number of modules to the UCC Masters in Museum Studies and to the NMI *Get to know your Museum* series. As well as serving on a number of NMI sub-committees (Health and Safety, Staff Forum, Diversity and Equality) staff also provided tours of the Conservation labs for NMI staff and other cultural and research institutions. Media involvement included arranging for the safe transport and handling of artefacts for the *Late Late Show* and a Michael Collins documentary. Conservation staff actively participated in numerous online CPD training courses, conferences and seminars (*Plastics Id* training, both online and practical; *Enzyme Cleaning of Decorative Surfaces*, etc.). Collaboration consisted of participation in the CNCI Conservation Working group, providing conservation advice to cultural institutions, researchers, general public, etc. as well as assisting IMMA and Cork Butter Museum by freezing artworks and artefacts.

Registration

The Registration department focuses on developing and maintaining standards of collections management to ensure the integrity of collections information. This involves prioritising the development of procedures and ensuring location control, collection logistics, loans, exhibition support, store management, providing access to information for researchers, behind-the-scenes tours, object and archive digitisation, preparing priority collections to catalogue level and systematically enhancing data and functionality in the various collections management databases.

Inventory

In 2022, much of the focus of the Registration Department was on preparation for upcoming capital development projects in Collins Barracks, Natural History Museum, Irish Antiquities Museum and the new Collections Resource Centre (CRC) and new store at Turlough Park House. This year saw the Registration Team commence a number of projects including the management of an inventory of collections stored in the crypt in Kildare Street, an inventory of the UCD Mineral Collection at the CRC, completion of an inventory of numismatics and continuation of inventory of militaria in Collins Barracks. A programme of retrospective register keying was also commenced to capture all original acquisition information for objects in the permanent collection.

Decant Projects

A decant of the Scientific Instruments and Ceramics Collections from Collins Barracks to the CRC began in October to facilitate 21st Century History of Ireland Galleries and a move of the central library and archive collections to the CRC was also managed by the Registration Team. The Registrar, supporting the Head of Operations, co-ordinated an onsite survey of all NMI sites by a logistic consultant engaged by the museum to inform the strategic assessment report required to secure funding for a new CRC under the public spending code.

Collections Resource Centre (CRC)

In the interim, the implementation of a four year plan to increase capacity in the Collections Resource Centre (CRC) continued. A new wood store was commissioned, trialling a passive approach to the management of its environment. A new human remains store was also delivered and additional shelving was added to the storage area for the storage of decorative arts and history collections. Planning for the fit out of the Natural History Phase 2 and a fourth low humidity store continued.

Documentation

Beyond decants and Inventory, documentation of all NMI collections continued. The Registration Team reviewed and developed a suite of cataloguing standards, protocols and a review of key legal documents in support of acquisition and display. Much of this work fed into NMI achieving full accreditation under the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland and will underpin the research, interpretation and online collections elements of NMI exhibitions. This work is focused on maintaining minimum standards of collections management to ensure the integrity of collections information, logistics, storage and care.

As part of the core work of the Registration Department, Natural History Documentation focused on clearing a backlog of location updates in the CRC as collections continued to transfer in from Merrion Street. Irish Antiquities Documentation focused on tidying excavation data for transfer into Access. Art and Industry Documentation focused on loans with several historical loans resolved and processing of international loans which had to be returned to the NMI during lockdown. An average of 16 loans per month were processed by the Documentation Team and all loans were successfully and safely returned.

The Registration Team led the production of a framework agreement for processing legacy excavations and digitisation services for use across NMI two key projects that support the work of colleagues in the Irish Antiquities Division and alongside colleagues from Irish Antiquities, ICT and photography planned a digitisation project of original registers in line with statutory requirements.

Collections Management Systems (CMS)

The Collections Management System Team worked on a number of projects with NMI colleagues including Conservation, Photography and Registrar to digitalise a number of processes and record activities in Axiell including the management of documentation photography, transport and conservation treatments in the catalogue, enhancing the object records and facilitating the sharing of information across NMI. Documentation staff also continued to provide Adlib training and mentoring for colleagues across departments and several online training workshops were provided by staff and Axiell. Some final stages of the Adlib collections management system upgrade went ahead, focusing on the upgrade of the system and quality and consistency of the data.

Library and Archives

The Archivist and Librarian continued to provide a research service for NMI staff including book orders, archive and library acquisitions. The Librarian renewed journal subscriptions/memberships and Inter library loans. With assistance from Conservation the Librarian also carried out a pilot project to upgrade library storage in Kildare Street. Dr Orla Fitzpatrick co-curated with Brenda Malone, the Imaging Conflict exhibition which opened in November 2022. This exhibition was organised in partnership with Photo Museum Ireland.

Registration staff also provided talks at a range of conference, university and other cultural institution events, provided training, workshops and attended training on a range of subjects using a blended approach of in person and online.

Members of the Registration Team actively contributed to the reestablishment of the Irish Registrars Group (IRG) with the Registrar Chairing an IRG Sub Group on Capital Projects and Storage.

Design & Photography

In May 2022 the Design Department and the Photography Department combined to form a new Creative Department. It is an exciting merger and one which will streamline the Graphic and Photographic services across all four sites in the National Museum. A new reporting structure was also created, allowing for career progression going forward. We also acquired the services of a contract photographer for three years, which will enable us to clear some of the large backlog which has accrued over the previous years. Design staff worked mainly from home due to the Covid-19 restrictions, however a full program of work was achieved.

Exhibitions

'FOLK 21', Turlough Park – *exhibition graphics*

'The Medieval Glendalough LEGO Model Project', Kildare Street - *exhibition style graphics*

'Glendalough timeline through artefacts 500 – 1500AD', Kildare Street - *large format graphic timeline for a 9-14 year old age group*

'Portrait of a Nation: Art, Politics and the Anglo-Irish Treaty' - *conference graphics and programme design.*

Design for Print and Web

Winter Events, Education, Kildare Street – *poster design*

Christmas family fun day, Education, Collins Barracks – *promotional graphics*

Leaving Cert Art History notes (Bronze), Kildare Street – *design and layout*

Print advertising for 'Studio & State: The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty' and

'Glendalough; Power, Prayer and Pilgrimage', Marketing Department

Site-specific *donation box graphics*, Retail

'Standard for the care and treatment of archaeological objects from excavations' , Irish Antiquities Division – *publication design and layout*

Publication support / IAD archaeological sites:

Clonca, Co. Donegal (plans/sections of Cist burial) for B. Mulhall.

Carrowgarry, Co. Sligo (plans/elevations/sections of medieval slab-lined grave) for

M. Seaver. Maps of North America and the arctic were drawn for the forthcoming

publication on the NMI Ethnographic collections. It is hoped this will be published in 2023.

Archaeological Plans, maps and site drawings

Requests for imagery from the archive were supplied for publications. Imagery was scanned for divisional records and future exhibitions (e.g. **Boat Gallery** drawings, Turlough Park. The museum's staff organisation chart was updated and maintained throughout the year to support museum records and business meetings.

The Design Department's drawing and digital archive was maintained throughout the year.

NMI Staff Organisation chart

The NMI's staff organisation chart was updated and maintained throughout the year to support museum records and business meetings.

Illustration

Series of drawings and ink illustrations / Silver Pins/ for M. Seaver (for publication / Irish Antiquities Division). Series of drawings of two Bog Bodies (for the internal record of NMI).

Procurement

A large format printer (**imagePROGRAF PRO-4100**) was acquired for the Design Studio this was procured with the help of the ICT department, and it will enable us to print up to 44in wide. There was also new photographic equipment procured with a view to extending the range of the photographic service to the various Departments/Divisions within the Museum.

Photography

Since October 2022 we saw the photographic department capturing an assortment of objects. These covered an array of materials from paper, glass, ceramics, wood, stone, metal, gold and jewels. These were photographed on site in studios at Decorative Arts & History Collins Barracks and Archaeology Kildare Street Objects ranged in scale from a miniscule 5 millimetre bee to the huge 14 metre Lurgan longboat.

Digital Imaging

Completed 540 requests encompassing 5,644 images prepared and distributed. These included over 300 image candidates for the *Imaging Conflict* exhibition, and over 100 images as part of the NMI contribution to *Digital Benin*.

1,517 new images from 95 photographic sessions reviewed, organised, edited for image quality and metadata content, and added to the Photographic Department Digital Archive and DAMS. Highlights include over 100 images of the Illustrated Catalogue of the Treasures of Yuen-ming-yuen, over 150 images of holy books from Myanmar, and new photography of the Fonthill vase. Trained 13 new users in the operation of the DAMS.

Training courses

Design and photography team attended many Seminars, webinars, training and strategic planning workshops including: Sustainable Museums - Rethinking Exhibition Design by Ruza Leko (Studio Suss Design), Museum Next - Digital Collections Summit. *DAM and Museums - Heritage Collections Management 2022, Digital Collections Summit, IPTC Photo Metadata Conference 2022, Democratising Cultural Heritage With Open Access*. As a member of the CNCI Digitisation & Cataloguing Group, assisted at and attended the CNCI Digitisation and Cataloguing Group Seminar *Increasing Access and Discoverability* at the Chester Beatty Library, Disability Awareness by Stephen Kelly, Planning for Retirement Interactive Course, NMI Strategic Planning workshops by Gerri Moriarty, Risk Assessment training, Cyber Security (IT) training.

Education and Learning

The National Museum of Ireland (NMI) recognises education as an organisation-wide principle, fundamental to our role and purpose and has a dedicated team across the four sites for delivery.

Delivery in the education department is delivered through formal education (in-person and online), public programs (including tours & events), targeted community engagement initiatives and one-off projects. In 2022, the Museum launched the publication *Pathways to Participation* in July which is a key document which records and reflects on the Museum's Engagement and Learning programme through the Decade of Centenaries, with a range of key contributors, highlighting the work of the education team in particular from 2012 – 2019.

Education staff also developed systems to record and analyse audience based qualitative and quantitative data in order to track and evaluate the most efficient way of gathering and analysing the data.

Formal Education

At **NMI-Archaeology**, the team continued to programme both online and onsite school sessions. New tours with the handling collection were developed and rolled out with the help of the new Freelance Panel, these were guided tours onsite for Leaving Cert Art students and Viking Tours for primary.

At **NMI-Natural History** as the museum was closed and capacity onsite was restricted there was a focus on online events with 47 sessions to 1,000 students. In the autumn term, the team engaged with audiences onsite at the Wonder Cabinet, using the online resources developed during the pandemic as part of this.

At **NMI – Decorative Arts and History**, The team worked with Mahoo Productions on '*Bonnets, Bandoliers and Ballot Papers*' an online learning resource and virtual tour exploring the changing roles of women at the beginning of the 20th Century in Ireland through key artefacts from the Museum's collections. Linking in with teachers from the PDST (Professional Development Services for Teachers) for History, and Politics and Society was valuable in ensuring that content is targeted and relevant.

At **NMI-Country Life**, one of the highlights was a collaboration with Poetry Ireland entitled *What's the Seal*. Over 650 students from across the country attended events with six of Ireland's premier storytellers to hear stories based around objects in our collections. As part of an MoU with the Irish Architecture Foundation, NMI-Country Life hosted the Architects in Schools Exhibition in May. An exhibition of the students' work in response to themes explored in NMI-Country Life's collections, including Community, Home and Sustainability.

Public Programme

At **NMI-Archaeology** key events included the development of science and archaeology partnerships with archaeologists of Transport Infrastructure Ireland with the team doing outreach during Heritage Week to Waterford, Woodstown Viking Family Day and during Science Week to Tullamore for Midlands Science Festival Partnership.

At **NMI-Natural History** working with GSI, developed an Open Day at the Down to Earth Exhibition in May 2022. Due to congestion in the galleries when the museum re-opened, public tours were not possible but pop-up talks at the Wonder Cabinet continued to be popular. There also were a number of online events, the Rockin Reindeer online and an onsite event with ReCreate artists proving to be very popular.

At **NMI – Decorative Arts and History**, in April, the team collaborated with Hugh Lane Gallery educators on programming a major conference *Portrait of a Nation: Art, Politics & the Anglo-Irish Treaty*. The conference was live-streamed with a live audience onsite and a cumulative audience of more than 500. A programme of online talks was also delivered including talks for the Outing the Past Festival and later in the year, when audiences were ready to engage in onsite events, organised diverse programming for Open House Festival, Eat the Streets and the Bram Stoker Festival.

At **NMI-Country Life**, Calendar Customs events continue to be the focus of the programming with 3,600 visitors booking through the online ticketing system for our Halloween Events. Over 2,500 people took part in either the Pumpkin Hunt in the gardens and woodlands or onsite on the Odious Objects Hallowe'en trail and Autumn Nature Tour with a member of the Panel of Freelance Guides.

Community Engagement

At **NMI-Archaeology** during Science Week, there was a weekend of events based on a project with Glendalough Heritage Forum, UCD School of Archaeology, and Wicklow Heritage Officer. This included displays of work created by families over the summer in libraries in County Wicklow and also work by refugees in Direct Provision at Baleskin National Reception Centre made at the museum. At NMI-Archaeology a programme of work for those in Direct Provision has been agreed and started with the Jesuit Refugee Service, tours and workshops started onsite in the autumn.

At **NMI-Natural History** translation of onsite resources into Ukrainian has commenced. The department are also working with DCU School of Special Education on the use for museum video resources of a new STEM glossary for ISL that is being developed with the Deaf Community. We also worked with the National College of Ireland as part of their Early Learning Initiative, Zoom Ahead Reading Programme, providing an online resource, reading packs and session for 20 families from the north inner city area.

At **NMI – Decorative Arts and History**, highlights include the launch of the neon installation *'We make our own histories'* the artwork which was an outcome of workshops with NMI Decade of Centenaries Artist in Residence Anthony Haughey and young people from the

community around Collins Barracks and a smaller group of young people from Mayo. In May the Dutch artists' collective, Stoereloer, visited Collins Barracks to facilitate a workshop for local young people as part of a celebration for the participants in the *Little Houses* project who couldn't attend the original launch due to Covid restrictions, the Dutch Ambassador was also in attendance. The team facilitated the hosting of a local community festival celebrating multiculturalism in the community. A collaboration with the local Children and Youth Action Group, the event involved more than 20 different cultures represented through food, dance and music, and more than 300 local people of all ages participated in the celebration.

At NMI-Country Life hosted a range of special Community Engagement events to reach out to local Ukrainian groups in the area.

Some items from the handling collection also went on loan to the Museum of Birds and Beasts in West Cork. This was part of their mission to 'engage with participants who are older residents of Community Hospitals in West Cork'.

Education staff developed systems to record and analyse audience based qualitative and quantitative data in order to track and evaluate the most efficient way of gathering and analyzing the data.

Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN)

The NMI and the Heritage Council agreed to jointly support this initiative through a Memorandum of Understanding (2023 – 2028). This strategic partnership will facilitate iCAN's growth and expansion, providing additional resourcing for participating communities. Seven new groups joined the Network and work commenced on the Heritage Cork portal. Highlights included a 3-day international Community Archiving conference at NUIG and collaborations with ATU, IAI and OHNI.

Audience and event/resources data

Data below relates to online and onsite events organised by the Education team in 2022. Attendance onsite and scheduling online was determined by both changing public health guidelines and audience needs. Closure of Natural History from Jan to July end affected data.

Finance

The 2022 allocation received from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media was as follows:

	€
o Pay & pensions	9,988,000
o Non-Pay	5,727,000
o Capital	1,308,000
Total	<u>€17,023,000</u>

During 2022 the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media also awarded amounts totalling **€3,120,737** in relation to grants for specific purposes. Fixed asset expenditure of **€62,127** was capitalised.

The Finance Unit continued to provide assistance and support to the Board's Audit and Risk Committee in carrying out its audit functions.

Financial Statements 2022

The Unit prepared the Financial Statements for 2022 and the accompanying audit file in early 2023. The C&AG audit of the Financial Statements for 2022 took place during April 2023. NMI's accounts in respect of the year ending 31 December 2022 were prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 35 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 and are included in this report. The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022 have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland. The 2022 Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the reporting requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

Procurement

The Unit is responsible for the management of the procurement process of all National and EU procurements. To this end, NMI is building internal expertise in the area of procurement and structured procedures and policies were reviewed and updated in 2022. The NMI appointed a Procurement Officer during 2022.

The Unit is continually seeking to streamline operations, taking advantage of new technologies where budget constraints permit and implementing recommendations from the C&AG and Internal Auditor, to ensure the integrity of the Unit and its function.

On an annual basis, business plans are developed and implemented and regular monitoring of all income and costs is carried out during the year.

Human Resources

2022 proved to be an interesting year in for staff and managers in NMI. It was the first full year post Covid 19 and the impacts of the various public health workplace protocols were both seen and unseen.

The complexities of bringing full teams of staff back to work were challenging operationally and there are significant human and emotional aspects to be dealt with. Individual employees have faced very different experiences and upsets during the Covid-19 public health crisis and NMI strived to support and help safely transition employees back to work whilst managing every day HR challenges of the post pandemic 'world of work'. These include finding the best balance across remote and onsite work patterns, dealing with growing skill shortages in specialist areas, struggling to recruit staff at entry-level grades whilst continuing to provide day-to-day services and support ambitious capital and strategic developments.

The Human Resources Unit provides the full range of HR services including recruitment, administration of staff pay and other terms and conditions, employee relations services and pension services. In addition HR is responsible for developing HR policies, people management initiatives, and learning and development which creates a framework for supporting staff and managers to work together to deliver on the overall mission and ongoing strategic development of NMI. HR activities included the need to support staff adapting to new ways of working, and being mindful of the impacts of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of staff.

Recruitment

Recruitment and retention of high calibre staff remained a key priority for HR, with some notable shifts in patterns of staff turnover due staff making different lifestyle choices, changing attitudes towards travel etc.

The HR Unit managed 31 recruitment competitions throughout the year to fill positions in Education, Design & Photography, Conservation, Human Resources, Retail, Irish Antiquities, Irish Folklife, Natural History, Registration, Facilities and Registration.

Learning & Development

Throughout 2022, HR coordinated on line and onsite learning and development. A robust Disability Awareness Training Programme was undertaken by all staff and participative Dignity and Respect took place locally in certain departments.

Working closely with all staff, to meet the learning and development needs of the Museum, the unit delivered 8 training events. These events included Facilities Management, Procurement, First Aid, SharePoint and Oracle Training. Seven staff members availed of the Refund of Fees Scheme in accordance with Department of Finance guidelines.

NMI issued a Tender for the provision of a programme to enhance Leadership Development and Management Skills commencing with the management committee. Strong emphasis is placed on the design and delivery of a customised approach that supports managers in their operational and strategic requirements including people management and team development. It is envisaged that the training will commence in early 2023. A small number of facilitated team development processes and individual coaching/mentoring placements also commenced in 2022.

Health and Well-Being

Fostering a sense of wellbeing can increase employee productivity, happiness and engagement. There is now a growing focus on wellbeing among a variety of organisations who want to support employees and strengthen workforces. This is why embedding positive wellbeing in day-to-day routines can go a long way to sustaining healthy workplace cultures.

NMI revised our contract with Inspire Healthcare for the provision of an Employee Assistance Programme/Services (EAP) to NMI. Our EAP is managed by Inspire Wellbeing and they offer a free and confidential support line, which can be accessed 24/7, 365 days a year. Throughout the year NMI staff from diverse roles and locations availed of 33 sessions.

As well as the phone line, the Inspire Support Hub provides access to a range of online resources to support staff wellbeing. The HR dept., kept staff aware of ongoing events and campaigns e.g. Workplace Wellbeing Day, International Mental Health Day, Mindfulness for Men, International Woman's Day etc.

Staff Forum and Museum Council

Constructive work continued with the Museum Council, a forum for industrial and employee relations matters to be raised and discussed under the direction of an Independent Chair. The Council met 4 times over the period of the year.

Relationships were further developed throughout the year, working through issues with Fórsa Trade Union, such as policy development and work life balance initiatives.

HR Policies and Procedures

The HR Unit has a programme of policies and procedures to update/develop and work continued on this. Work commenced on a process of reviewing and updating Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) related policies. NMI has contracted Beo Consultancy, an organisation focussing solely on employee relations and human resources to facilitate staff consultation forums and enable all NMI staff to participate equally in this consultation. Beo brings a wealth of experience and professional knowledge; CEO, Bernadette Treanor, is a former equality officer with the Equality Tribunal (now the Workplace Relations Commission). The two senior practitioners are Olivia Harrington and Vivian Jackson. Olivia acts as General Counsel and Head of Investigations and has extensive legal and investigatory experience, particularly in the area of employment. Vivian has over 20 years' experience as

an Equality Office and Adjudicator in the Equality Tribunal, and later, Workplace Relations Commission. We look forward to this work progressing in 2023, and resulting in updated, best practice EDI policies.

A lot of work was done on drafting new Blended Working Policy for sign-off in early 2023 and the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults policy and Volunteer Policy were completed.

By the end of 2022, it is clear that global employment trends will influence the NMI current and future workforce. Recent [reports](#) have highlighted that between 20 and 40% of employees in the US and UK are considering leaving their current job, a phenomenon that has been dubbed '[The Great Resignation](#)'. It is also hitting Ireland: around 40% of respondents to a [survey](#) of around 1,000 Irish employees by the [Kemmy Business School WorkFutures Lab](#) said they agreed or strongly agreed that 'my future career lies outside of this organisation'. This was regardless of whether they worked in multinationals, indigenous Irish companies, SMEs or the public sector.

Such widespread sentiment appears to be associated with a growing dissatisfaction with work practices and ways of working, resulting in an unprecedented critique of the world of work over the last year. This includes many different dimensions of work, such as employee voice, diversity, wellbeing and flexible working practices to mention but a few. Consequently, in 2023 HR will be working with senior management and the management committee to develop more strategic human resource and workforce planning.

Corporate Affairs

Corporate Governance and Legislative responsibilities

A number of policy and legislative documents were reviewed and updated during the year and a review of all relevant governance documents was carried out in line with the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies*. Work commenced in relation to updating the Protected Disclosures Policy following changes to the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022, which was signed into law in July. The new legislation came into operation in January 2023.

Ethics in Public Office

Staff in designated positions of employment and the Board of the National Museum of Ireland complied with the Ethics in Public Office Acts of 1995 and 2001.

Risk Management

The NMI's Risk Management framework continued to be implemented with the Senior Risk Team continuing to meet on a quarterly basis to ensure any new risks were recorded and mitigated against. Throughout the year regular updates were provided to the Audit and Risk Committee and a review of the risk management policy and overall framework was carried out in Q4 through the Audit and Risk Committee.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit continued with its programme of work throughout 2022. The mandatory review of the Systems of Internal Control was carried out and signed off by the Audit and Risk Committee in March 2022. A review of Cyber Security took place in Q2 of 2022. Implementation of the recommendations from these internal audit reviews as well as the high level audit of Collections Security and Management (that took place in 2021) continued throughout 2022.

GDPR

Work continued in relation to the assessment of the Museum's compliancy around GDPR. As part of the annual programme of work Data Protection policies were reviewed and updated. All departmental and divisional Records of Processing (RoPA's) were reviewed and updated in Q4. Work in relation to the how the overall governance structure for managing data protection at NMI commenced and continued into 2023. Work in relation to Data Sharing Agreements was undertaken with the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

A number of Data Sharing Agreements between the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and National Museum of Ireland pursuant to the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019 commenced in late 2022. The purpose of these was provide for the regulation of the sharing of information, including personal data, between public bodies. Work in relation to these Agreements continued into 2023.

Freedom of Information

Under Freedom of Information Act 2014, 9 FOI requests were responded to during the year.

Parliamentary Questions (PQ's)

A total number of 26 PQ's were received from the Houses of the Oireachtas during the year. The PQ's all related to queries right across NMI in both Operations and Collections areas.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

The ICT department's is responsible for the development and management of all telecommunication, audio-visual and information systems, and to support and enhance the mission of the NMI across all its functions and geographical sites.

During 2022, staffing was constrained due to non-annual leave related absences in the team, however most of the main goals for the year were met.

Highlights

The majority of ICT's time in 2022 was spend in operational support and in support of projects headed by other departments, however, the programme of modernisation of the ICT environment in NMI continued throughout 2022.

A new helpdesk system for user support was implemented in September 2022 and the ICT helpdesk responded to 691 requests through the new system in the second half of 2022

Other key achievements include

- Migration of all users to a cloud based mail and calendaring service, which allowed the removal of out of support on premises Exchange Servers
- Implementation of cloud based email security scanning and filtering, along with a new web security service
- Implementation of new security measures for on prem and remote workers
- Rollout of cybersecurity training for all users, including phishing simulation and reporting
- Procurement of a preferred supplier for the installation of a new AV system in the Ceramics Room at Kildare Street
- Procurement of a contractor to provide the user facing interface for the online collections project

Staffing

ICT is staffed by a small but agile team consisting of 3 area specialists, supported by an administrator and Head of department

Marketing and Communications

Footfall

Visitor Numbers	Year – Jan. – Dec.		
	2021	2022	% Change
Kildare Street	90,430	309,820	+243%
Merrion Street	9,416	137,705	+1,362%
Collins Barracks	101,165	249,932	+147%
Turlough Park	37,465	55,037	+47%
Total	238,475	752,494	+216%

General

The opening of the 4 sites – post pandemic was staggered in 2022 with Natural History being the last site to open in August. Following the re-opening of the sites, a number of launches took place in short succession. Considerable PR was gained for these events.

External Partnerships

The Marketing Department continued to develop ongoing partnerships / networking with a number of agencies e.g. Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and AVEA.

Website

The homepage of the website was refreshed to give greater prominence to the online retail offering and to video content. Features within Google Analytics were organised to give us greater information on demographic data and monthly reports were introduced to monitor performance and identify trends. The Museum gift shop opened online in January and the Marketing Dept. implemented various marketing campaigns across our digital platforms that delivered significant growth. The Marketing Dept. continued the development of the Museum Newsletter, which resulted in strong growth in subscriptions and engagement.

Audience Research

Visitor research was carried out by Martha Fanning & Associates on the four sites. The findings of this research held to inform our communications plans for a wide range of audiences.

Print and Design Tenders

The Marketing Dept. was actively involved in the tender process and procurement of new service providers for print and design.

Exhibitions

The following launches took place across three sites:

- FOLK 21, February 2022,
- Collaboration with Irish Architecture Foundation, May 2022
- An Gorta Mór, 175th Anniversary of Black '47, May 2022
- After The War: A New Europe, 1918-1923, May 2022
- From British Rule to the Irish Free State; the barracks handovers, 1922, July 2022
- The Glass Quilt November 2022
- Shane Hynan, summer 2022
- Imaging Conflict: Revolutionary Photographs, 1919-23, October 2022
- Artist in Residence Neon Art Installation - Anthony Haughey's work , November 2022

These events were provided with strong PR support to inform the public that the NMI was now open to visitors. Two radio campaigns were also developed for Down to Earth and Our Irish Chair through the help of the RTE Supporting the Arts Scheme.

Culture Night

The museum sites remained open until 9pm to mark Culture Night. A number of programmes were developed for this occasion from discovering what life was like from Stone Age to Medieval Ireland, through to the folklore and traditions of 19th and 20th century Ireland. In addition, the Country Life site hosted an event for approximately 150 members of the Ukrainian community in Mayo to exchange cultural traditions around the harvest festival.

National Museum of Ireland – Country Life

The National Museum of Ireland - Country Life achieved good national and regional print and broadcast media coverage throughout 2022. Some of the main exhibitions and programmes promoted were: the FOLK 21 programme; Architects in Schools; Our Irish Chair/ATU partnership; the Samhain night-time economy event; A Breath of Fresh Air – The Keep Well Glass Quilt; and the 'What's the Scéal' storytelling series in partnership with Poetry Ireland.

Digital Marketing

In 2022, there was more alignment in programming to match key calendar dates and events organised at a national level e.g. Open House, Spring Midterm, Heritage Week, Science Week, Dublin Festival of Literature, Pride, Samhain, St Brigid, and Guided Tours. This provided opportunities to structure and schedule digital campaigns with matching budgets to targeted audiences resulting in increased promotion and engagement. It also allowed cross-promotion and advertising on national platforms – St Patrick's Festival. The advancements made in the development of the NMI fortnightly Newsletter has generated an increase in the creation of rich 'News Item' content that also featured across social media and YouTube channels. The relaunch of the NMI website homepage, the production of new vibrant imagery and video content has also contributed to the steady increase in engagement, followers and online traffic across all NMI digital channels.

NMI maintained a strong presence across all digital platforms (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram and YouTube). All platforms showed consistent growth with the NMI's Newsletter, YouTube channel and Instagram platforms showing the biggest % increase.

Digital display adverts featured regionally and nationally e.g. Irish Times, Irish Arts Review, Military History Matters, and The Connaught Telegraph.

Social Media Followers/Subscriber Growth 2022

	January '22	December '22	Growth
Facebook	57,759	63,231	9%
Twitter	48,381	50,818	5%
Instagram	17,944	20,993	16%
YouTube	1,550	2,350	41%
General Newsletter	6,523	8,747	29%
Schools Newsletter	1,285	1,338	4%

Radio interviews promoting the work of the museum and the launching of new exhibitions are now recorded and made available on our YouTube channel.

Commercial Development and Retail

Events at the Museum sites

Following two years of disruption, and against the backdrop of a changed corporate world, the Commercial Development Department continued to establish its events spaces in the Irish corporate and governmental markets throughout 2022.

Over the past year we've been as busy as ever, generating €160k in venue hire fees, and hosting a number of events with strategic partners in keeping with our museum policy, bringing a wider awareness of the museums and our collections to the public. We explored new ways to make the collections accessible at events, working with the Education department on tours and handling sessions to tie in with the theme of events like *Bram Stoker Festival* and *Eat the Streets!*

We were delighted to be in a position to host a full calendar of large-scale outdoor events in Collins Barracks this year, aimed at growing our visitor reach. With overall 2022 attendee numbers of over 75,000, these hugely successful spectacles included *St Patrick's Festival Quarter*, *Mother Block Party* and the *Wider than Pictures* concert series.

We were also engaged by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media to run a pilot event for the Nighttime Economy Task Force in Turlough Park, to test the viability of nighttime events in a rural setting. We received €100k in funding to run the *Samhain Creepy Crawl*, a free, family-friendly Halloween trail and light show. The event was well attended and well received by the public, and gave many insights into the challenges and opportunities that the grounds of Turlough Park has for future large-scale commercial events.

We assisted our colleagues in hosting some VIP events for dignitaries such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Welsh Government. We also hosted *Seanad 100*, attended by over 250 present and former Government and Seanad members to mark their centenary in 2022.

Looking externally, we supported our curatorial colleagues in the installation and launch of *After the Great War*, a travelling outdoor exhibition on Clarke Square that focused on the turbulent years after the First World War.

Finally, we concluded the year by supporting a community photography exhibition to promote greater understanding and empathy around homelessness in collaboration with *Focus Ireland*.

Café

After completing the tendering process to appoint new Museum contract caterers in 2021, we have been working with the Office of Public Works on the all-encompassing

refurbishment of the Museum café space and Palatine Room kitchens, due to be completed by 2023 year end. To provide an offering for our visitors in the interim, we've engaged temporary outdoor catering offerings in Clarke Square, working with the *the Daily Grind*, *Le Beret*, and presently, *Currabinny*.

Development

We successfully secured another €24k for the next stage of the Digital That Delivers initiative, funded by Fáilte Ireland, for the development of a Bookable Experience.

Commercial Development formed an interdepartmental working group to tender for a provider who could assist us in the development of a Bookable Experience that improves the digital interpretation of our collections. The tender went out in 2022, and we are now initiating the development of a 'pilot' tour, to be launched in 2023.

Donations

In 2022, we began taking online donations directly from the Museum website for the first time. We developed fully branded National Museum contactless donations boxes, which were rolled out in 2022, firstly in Collins Barracks, and then to all sites by quarter one in 2023.

Retail

2022 saw a return to normal trading conditions, as the capping of visitor numbers lifted from the beginning of February, and travel restrictions ended at the beginning of April. The temporary relocation of the Kildare Street shop from the rotunda to the old café space became a permanent move, and work began at the end of the year on a redesign process which will continue into 2023. The shop at Natural History continued to remain closed throughout the year. With the return of normal trading conditions we saw a significant return of growth and sales rose by 200% on the 2021 figure.

Online Shop

The online shop continued to operate in tandem with the reopening of our retail sites. A review process began in quarter four as we moved from a Covid response strategy to a post-Covid strategy, to enable us to combine the benefits of both our online and physical presence.

Rights, Reproductions and New Photography

The distribution of over 2,320 images from over 341 requests from staff and the external market were administered throughout 2022 by the Rights & Reproductions Officer. 94 New Photography projects were coordinated for key Museum pieces, resulting in 1,616 additional images of NMI artifacts stored digitally in the data access management system.

Ticketing

Online ticketing for general admission ceased at the end of January as restrictions lifted. The ticketing system remains in place for groups and educational bookings.

Facilities (Accommodation and Security)

Despite the many challenges which were encountered, 2022 ended up being an immensely positive year for the department.

Since we opened our doors and welcomed visitors back to the Museum following on 10 May 2021 our Visitor Service and Facilities teams played a leading role in ensuring that all of our visitors, staff and collections remained safe and secure, and that our premises were maintained in a condition befitting of the Nation's premier cultural institution. In the face of many evolving challenges their dedication and adaptableness was remarkable.

The Facilities department worked closely with our colleagues in the Office of Public Works on a number of key capital projects. These included significant CCTV and security system upgrades, the construction of a new geology exhibition in Collins Barracks and the refurbishment of public toilets and staff facilities in Kildare Street. A major project to conduct roof repairs within the historic rotunda in Kildare Street commenced in late 2021 and was completed in December 2022 and the Rotunda. In the Museum of Country Life, construction works on the refurbishment of the public entrance were completed in June 2022 and have greatly improve access and facilities for our visitors at the site. Major roof works commenced in 2022 at the Collections Resource Centre, Swords.

The local BMS sections within the OPW carried out hundreds of individual tasks across NMI sites in 2022. The Museum appreciates greatly the ongoing support from the OPW which is indispensable in keeping the premises functioning for our needs.

2022 was a busy year for the department with regard to health and safety management. The management of the pandemic related matters continued into 2022 and Covid-19 Lead Worker bi-weekly meetings continued. Online training for first-aid and safe pass and on-site training in manual handling, fires safety and health and safety induction were roll out by the facilities team during the year. A review and audit of the Museum's safety policies and procedures was carried out by an independent contractor, and a programme of works to improve elements of the Museum's Safety Management Systems is ongoing. The facilities teams played in a vital role in managing the health and safety and security requirements for large scale events that took place in Collins Barracks as follows:

- St Patrick`s Day Festival event March 2022
- Mother Block event June 2022
- Wider Then Pictures event August 2022.

The ongoing training and development of Facilities staff remains a priority for the Museum. And the focus in 2022 was on health and safety training. One colleague was promoted during this course of 2022 Robert Berigan who took up the post of Front of House Manager.

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