Archives & Records Association
Cumann Cartlann agus Taifead
Ireland/Éire

Memorial No. 1 registered in Registry of Deeds on 25 March 1708

Inside this issue

Page 2: A Word From the Chair

Page 3: Launch of DRI Digital Preservation Terminology

Page 6: Beyond the Grain: Revisiting the Belmont Mills Archive at MU Library

Page 14: The Deeny Papers Collection

Page 17: Locating Limerick Benchmarks, Preserving Heritage

Page 20: The Registry of Deeds and the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland

Page 24: "That's My Mother": Archives on the Syllabus

Page 26: Tackling Barriers to Entry: Major Heritage Council Bursary Announced

Page 28: ARA Ireland Committee Vacancy

A Word from the Chair

Niamh Ní Charra
ARA Ireland Chair

Welcome to this bumper edition of the ARA Ireland newsletter. Whether you follow Ireland's traditional seasons with the 1st of August (Lughnasa) signalling the start of Autumn, or the meteorological season which gives us one more month to call summer, there's no denying that there's plenty of reading to keep you entertained as we face the cooler, darker days ahead.

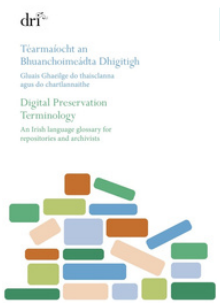
As depressing as the idea of shorter days may be, there is plenty on the archives calendar to keep a smile on our faces and keep us out of mischief. Events taking place in the second half of this year kick off with our Archives Diaspora campaign on 6th of August, followed by the annual ARA conference from 27-29th August. The ARA's first ever hybrid conference will be held in Bristol, with the theme 'Next Generation: Innovation and Imagination in Record Keeping'. If you haven't already registered, the deadline for in-person registration closes 11th August, and virtual registration closes 29th August.

ARA Ireland's training officers and diversity allies have been working together on the new ARA Ireland: Diversity and Inclusion Lecture Series which will kick off at the start of the academic year. This online lunchtime series, promoting the principles of diversity and inclusion across archival collections and the wider record-keeping community, will feature speakers working with a variety of collections who will present their unique experiences and examples of best practice to expand our community knowledge and awareness of contemporary EDI issues.

Finally, this year's Explore Your Archive focus week runs from 29th November to 7th of December, with ARA Ireland's launch provisionally penciled in for Thursday 27th November. Stay tuned and keep an eye out on your inboxes for more on these events!
In the meantime, do read on for articles from Belmont Mills Archive at MU Library, The Deeny Papers Collection, RCSI Heritage Collections, and two projects from Tailte Éireann, see more on the Heritage Council Bursary Announced for UCD Archives Students, check out how archives have featured on the History syllabus this year, and discover new Irish language Digital Preservation Terminology in DRI's recently launched glossary. Lastly, take a look at the outstanding committee vacancy (Honorary Secretary) and please do consider joining us. We're a great bunch, but we need one more to complete us!

Enjoy the rest of the season,

Niamh Ní Charra



DRI launches Digital Preservation Terminology: An Irish language glossary for Repositories and Archivists

The Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI) is delighted to share that along with Gaois, part of Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge at Dublin City University, we have created a standardised set of Irish language terms relating to digital preservation – producing this list as a publication available on open access to the digital preservation community.

The work builds on an earlier terminology project by Niamh Ní Charra with support from the University of Galway and the National Archives, in liaison with An Coiste Téarmaíochta. An initial list of 214 terms was compiled and designated in the Irish language in the original project led by Niamh Ní Charra. The project focused on identifying the most commonly used archival terms which included a small number of those relating to digital preservation.

The glossary is comprised of new and already established terms. These terms have been combined to provide a comprehensive list that encompasses the range of work undertaken by professionals in the digital preservation sphere. Definitions were drafted collaboratively between DRI and Gaois in order to ensure their accuracy. This was particularly important in the case of distinguishing between semantically similar concepts such as "search" and "discovery".
A version of the collection can be accessed as a termbase from Gaois.

The aim of the Digital Preservation Terminology glossary is to facilitate a richer description of digital collections than what currently exists in the Irish language, as well as creating a more extensive Irish language description of digital preservation activities in general. We hope this will encourage more open research in the Irish language.
New terms were created in the case of around fifty concepts from a list provided by DRI.
These included terms for totally new concepts such as "bit rot": "meath giotán" – as well as compound terms made up of existing elements such as "descriptive metadata": "meiteashonraí tuairisciúla'."
After review, these terms were shared with An Coiste Téarmaíochta, the Terminology Committee of Foras na Gaeilge, who are the body responsible for the promotion of the Irish language throughout the island of Ireland. 49 new digital preservation terms were approved in October 2024.
Combined with those terms already approved from the original project, that gives a final list of 68 terms.

Reflecting on this publication, DRI Director Dr Lisa Griffith said:

"The Digital Preservation Terminology glossary is an output from our HEA-funded Legacy Data scheme. We were delighted to work in partnership with Gaois and the Terminology Committee to produce this standardised list of terms for Digital Preservation in the Irish language.
This booklet is a key resource for DRI as an organisation because we are seeking to work more in the Irish language, to work with more Irish language researchers and communities, and to improve the accessibility of our Irish language collections.
We have published this booklet to share the resource with the Irish repository and digital preservation communities more broadly and we hope this booklet will encourage our community to use this list more broadly ensuring consistency and interoperability of digital collections and datasets."

Dr Gearóid Ó Cleircín, senior member of the Gaois research group said:
"This was a really satisfying terminology project to work on because it was building on excellent work carried out on archival terminology by Niamh Ní Charra and the Terminology Committee a few years ago.
In addition, the project team had the ideal blend required for a successful terminology project, with terminologists from Gaois and the Terminology Committee providing the language expertise and the archivists in DRI providing the subject knowledge relating to digital preservation.
Finally, it's fantastic to see the fruits of the labour in the form of this beautifully designed publication."

Digital Repository of Ireland, DCU. Téarmaíocht an Bhuanchoimeádta Dhigitigh: Gluais Ghaeilge do thaisclanna agus do chartlannaithe .Digital Preservation Terminology: An Irish language glossary for repositories and archivists. Text [Type]. Digital Repository of Ireland (2025) [Publisher]. Digital Repository of Ireland [Depositor]. https://doi.org/10.7486 /DRI.cr572260k (Accessed: 2025/06/26)

This work originates from a research data legacy pilot scheme funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). It was led and undertaken by: Úna Bhreathnach, Gaois, DCU; Lisa Griffith, Digital Repository of Ireland; Kevin Long, Digital Repository of Ireland; Niamh Ni Charra, University of Galway; Gearóid Ó Cleircín, Gaois, DCU; Brian Ó Raghallaigh, Gaois, DCU; and Noelia Romero, Digital Repository of Ireland.

A number of Gaois researchers worked on the project including Alma Ní Bhroin, Fírinne Nic an tSaoir, Grace Harkin, Pádraig Flynn and Molly McKenna. We would like to thank the advisory group who provided advice throughout this work including Brian Ó Raghallaigh (Gaois, DCU), Lisa Griffith (DRI), Niamh Ní Charra (University of Galway), Úna Bhreathnach (Gaois, DCU) and Maeve O'Brien (DRI).

This resource will shortly be available on the ARA Ireland website, in a searchable format.

You can view the Digital Preservation Terminology glossary in the Repository. This newly-deposited publication– now preserved for long-term access – complement existing items already published in the Repository including the DRI Citation Policy 2024, the DRI Strategic Plan 2024-2029, and the DRI Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy 2023-2025.

This publication is part of DRI's ongoing commitment to improve the quality of our services in Irish in line with recommendations outlined in the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021. You can keep up with all of DRI's news and publications by signing up to our newsletter.

Beyond the Grain: revisiting the Belmont Mills Archive at MU Library

by Róisín Berry, Archivist, MU Library

Photograph of Belmont Mills courtesy of the National Built Heritage Service

Introduction

As part of routine work in our Special Collections and Archives Department last year, I re-visited one of our lesser known collections at Maynooth University Library, the Belmont Mills Archive (IE/MU/PP17). Donated back in 2015, this fascinating collection relates to the lives and business interests of the Perry family at Belmont, Lisderg, County Offaly, their family, friends, and community, over the course of a century. Belmont Mills was built on the site of an earlier mill structure and is located in the village of Belmont. A handsome, two-storey, castellated country house, Belmont House was built around 1810 and is situated on a prominent site overlooking the mills. The house and mills formed part of the Belmont (or Bellmount) Estate, purchased by the Perry family in 1859 from Captain John Collins for the sum of £3275. The Perrys were a Quaker family originating in Shanderry near Mountmellick, County Laois, with strong connections in both business and transportation. Under the ownership of the family, Belmont Mills was to become one of the largest flour and oatmeal mills in the midlands.

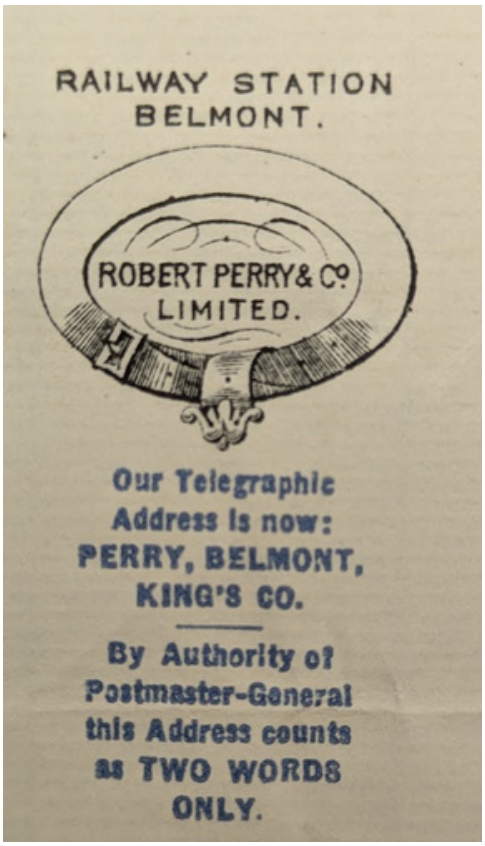
Photograph of Belmont House courtesy of the National Built Heritage Service

Evolution of the Family Business

The family's milling legacy began in Clara, County Offaly. A lease was taken on the Street Mill by Henry Robert Perry who formed the company Robert Perry & Co. in the mid-1800s, naming it after his father Robert. By 1865, the Clara mills were operated by Marcus Goodbody (a Quaker who married into the Perry family), and so the mills at Belmont became known as Belmont Mills or Perry's Mills. Thomas Perry, brother of Henry Robert, ran the mill in the 1860s, taking ownership of it completely in 1878. Many changes followed, including the use of roller mills, and the conversion of unused mill buildings into an oat mill and a granary. Business flourished during this period of transformation, helped by good transport links including the Grand Canal and the Clara-Banagher railway which facilitated distribution.

Belmont Mills experienced several fires in the years that followed, including the year 1879, resulting in a period of rebuilding and modernisation. The business was restructured in 1893 becoming Robert Perry & Co. Ltd. After the death of Thomas Perry, his son Ernest became the new owner of the mills in 1900.

Developments between 1906 and 1909 included a new maize mill for animal feed and a turbine to provide electricity to the mills and the village of Belmont itself. In 1924, Ernest's death led to his brother Wilfred Perry inheriting the mills. A year later the business suffered another fire, destroying the flour and maize mills. Another period of rebuilding took place, and the mills reopened in 1928 under another new name, Robert Perry & Co. (1927) Ltd. It produced wheatmeal, oatmeal, flaked oatmeal, and flaked maize. Wilfred's son Philip took over the business until his own death in 1967 when it passed to his wife, and then their son David (Perry) in 1980. Another fire engulfed Belmont Mills in 1982, but on this occasion, it was demolished apart from the granary. A hydro-power station was installed at the site to generate electricity for the national grid. The maize mill granary continued to produce animal feed until 1997 when the business was finally sold.



Detail from the Belmont Mills Archive

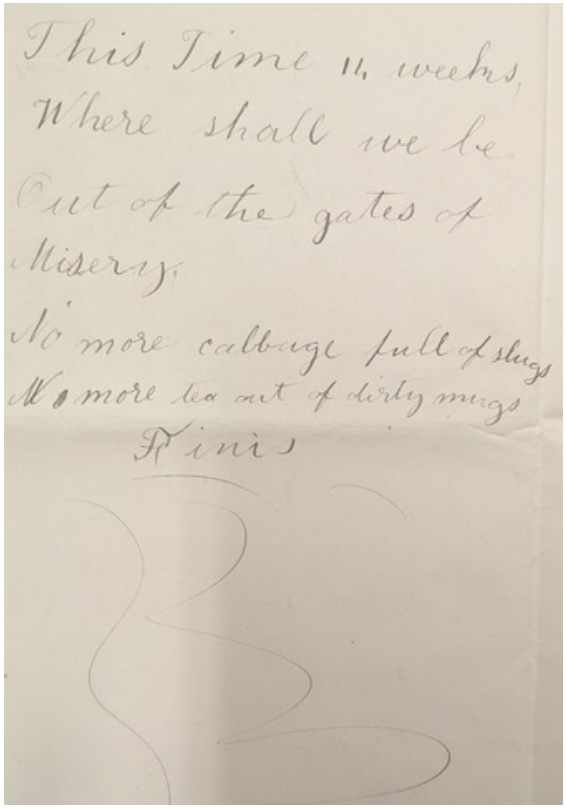
The Belmont Mills Archive

Education and Domestic Life:

The Belmont Mills Archive sheds light on individual family members, including Harriet St. Lawrence Perry (née Drevar) (1840-1924), her husband Thomas Henry Perry (d. 1900), and their children and grandchildren. Other branches of the family tree are also represented in the collection, including the Drevar and Edmonds families. The letters address a range of different subjects, including leisure; education; travel; household management; festive celebrations; farming; births and deaths; and operations at Belmont Mills. Education is a common theme in the correspondence.

A series of letters from Ernest Perry to his mother Harriet during his time at boarding school at Chesterfield, Parsonstown in Birr, County Offaly, capture the young boy's frustration at being separated from his family.

He refers to his 'unkind and cold hearted' family for not having visited him, and notes 'This time 14 weeks where we shall be out of the gates of misery, no more cabbage full of slugs, no more tea out of dusty mugs' (11 September 1881). Not all experiences of education are negative, however, with a letter from Ernest's sister May (Elizabeth Marion Perry) to their mother Harriet discussing her school in England, stating 'I know you and Father wish me to stay here so I will do my best and will look forward next summer to going home an accomplished young lady!!' (16 January 1883).



Extract from Ernest's letter about school, 11 September 1881

Domestic affairs at Belmont are richly documented in the archive. Mildred Perry's letter to her mother Harriet details cutting material for 'the little Duchess chair...there is a good big piece of the material over, enough to make two cushions' (9 December 1904). Wilfred Perry informs his mother of the death of a beloved pet, stating 'poor old Carlew was found dead in the paddock yesterday afternoon, he seemed to have died without a struggle of any sort' (20 April 1914). Ernest playfully recounts maintenance works at Belmont, noting 'it was a good job you were not at home when the plumbers were here...you would have been in a terrible state at seeing the place in such a mess' (30 November 1900). Christmas preparations are also addressed, with Mildred Perry describing making 'two wreaths of holly yesterday...Kathy was busy at them too...household arrangements go on all night' (23 December 1904), and the gifts she received, including 'a gold locket with a pearl device' from Ernest (29 December 1904).

Selection of items from the Belmont Mills Archives

Travel and Connections Overseas

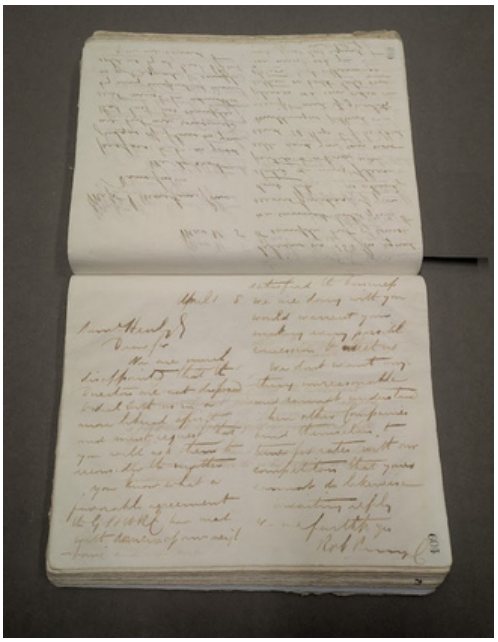
Travel plans feature prominently in the family's letters with destinations including Dublin, Donegal, Cambridge, Manchester, Tenerife, Brussels, and South Africa. After Thomas Perry's death in 1900, his widow Harriet frequently visited their daughter May, her husband Walter Edmonds, and their children in Cape Colony, South Africa. The archive contains letters from May, Walter, and the children writing home to their beloved Harriet, with deep affection captured throughout the correspondence. A letter from Harriet's granddaughter, Mildred (Edmonds), refers to enclosing a pair of mittens, noting 'Jens and I each knitted one, I hope they will be nice and warm for you, it is such nice soft wool' (19 December 1915) and another letter from Mildred's sister Harriet refers to planting snowdrops originally from the garden at Belmont (11 February 1918). The Edmonds family lived on a 6000-acre farm at Komgha with livestock including cattle, sheep, and pigs. This section of the archive provides valuable insights into the daily lives of Irish immigrants in South Africa and their connections to family back home in Ireland. May's letters vividly describe her new life: hatching guinea fowl chicks, making marmalade, the births of her children, sheep thefts, hunting and fishing, health issues, her garden, and their Irish maid 'Kitty' from Sligo.

Of particular interest are the references to regional unrest in the documents. William Drevar's letter to Harriet Perry discusses the South African War (1899-1902) expressing relief that May and Walter were unaffected. William observes 'it is a most terrible war that is raging in Natal and the North of the Cape Colony; and as usual at the commencement of a war the English have made a mess of it; but the great number of troops England is pouring in now must soon bring it to an end' (15 January 1900).

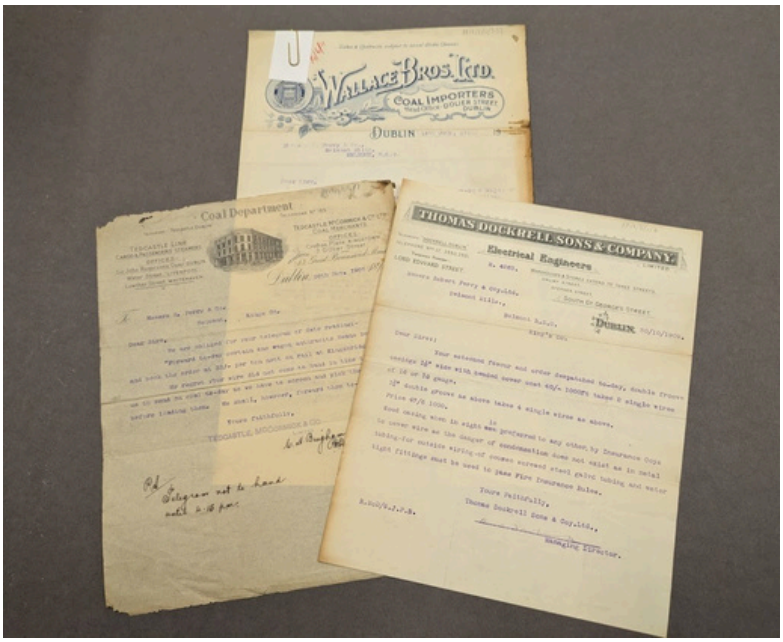
Stanford's New Map of the Orange Free State, the South African Republic, the Northern Frontier of Cape Colony, Natal etc. 1900 (courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Business at Belmont Mills

The archive also contains an extensive collection of documents relating to the administration and operations of Robert Perry & Sons Ltd, Belmont Mills. This includes letters, account books, order books, labourers' books, cash books, wage books, and employee records. Detailed letters from customers, suppliers, transport companies, government departments, banks, and solicitors record the daily business transactions taking place at the mills from the mid nineteenth century up until the doors finally closed in 1997.



Receipt book



Selection of Invoices

A series of letters from Merchants Warehouse Company, Burgh Quay Dublin, to Belmont Mills (1907-1911) detail grain storage contracts, delays in wheat shipments, and the weighing of grain. Correspondence from the Dublin and Provincial Corn Millers Association to Messrs Perry & Co., Belmont Mills (1907-1910), addresses the withdrawal of Belmont Mills from the Association, noting 'I showed your letter to several millers & it was felt that the withdrawal might lead to similar action by other members & might possibly bring about a total disruption' (5 April 1910). Other information can be gleaned from a series of letters from the Tedcastle Line Cargo & Passengers Steamers (1907-1909) regarding settling accounts, a contract for delivery of coal to Belmont Mills, the shipment of wheat to Liverpool, insurance of goods, and additional charges for 'the use of the Liverpool Dock Board Warehouse crane, which landed the grain alongside the ship' (29 April 1911).

The effects of war on the milling industry are also documented, in particular the increased cost of 'War Risk' insurance due to new risks of attacks on British shipments. One letter notes 'owing to the report last week of the depredations of the German Cruiser 'Karlsruhe' it has become exceedingly difficult to get underwriters to entertain fresh risks' (26 October 1914). New milling developments are explored in correspondence from various companies. These include a letter from Comet Chemical & Co. Ltd. in Manchester, discussing a new chemical product, noting 'Wheat Diastase...has a bleaching effect upon the flour when used in bread making' (10 May 1909). The electrification of Belmont Mills is mentioned in the archive, in a letter from Walsall Electrical Co. Ltd. which refers to a successful test conducted on the 'electric lighting installation' at Belmont Mills (1 March 1910). Transportation is also covered in the collection, with correspondence and certificates relating to the purchase, maintenance, and insurance of the vehicles used by the business from 1912 to 1937.

Legal and Employee Records

Legal records in the collection, dating from 1901 to 1979, include correspondence from various solicitors. A letter from Richard F. Barry LLB, Crown Solicitor, details a case of 'Belmont Mills v Cleary,' reporting that 'the defendant's mother...attended at the auction and eventually brought in the pony, cart and harness...to cover your debt and his expenses' (30 November 1909). Legal proceedings against Belmont Mills are also outlined in a letter from Patrick S. Golding, Solicitor, concerning an 'unlawful seizure...your Bailiffs walked into my clients shed and seized a cow [from] his property and took it away' (30 Nov 1901).

Employee records from 1907 to 1956 capture important information about the people who worked in the mills and their terms and conditions. Documents include job applications, employee compensation claims, and employee health insurance records. A poignant document in this part of the archive refers to a tragic death. The letter from Beatrice Le Strange, Killygally House, Belmont, King's Co, addressed to 'Maude', refers to the death of Margaret Davery, noting she 'was drowned when the ocean liner ship Titanic sank at sea on its voyage from Queenstown to New York.' She remarks how Miss Davery had intended to visit her brother and find employment in America (29 April 1912). The issue of workers' wages is addressed in the archive, with notices from the Labour Court: Provender Milling Joint Labour Committee, Dublin, referring to increases in wages for workers 'employed in the manufacture for sale of animal feeding stuffs by any process whatsoever, including the grinding, cutting or flaking of cereals of one substance with another substance', outlining also the specific hourly rates for male and female workers based on age and geographical area (1961-1971).

Conclusion

The Belmont Mills Archive is a fascinating and richly descriptive collection that reflects the lives of members of the Perry, Drevar, and Edmonds families and their domestic, social, and business activities over the course of a century. They shed light on important historical, industrial, and social developments in Ireland and overseas during a time of great change. Further collections of archival material relating to the Perry family and their milling business at Belmont Mills can also be found at Offaly County Archives Service (IE OCAS P68 Records of Robert Perry & Co. (Belmont Mills)), and the National Archives of Ireland (IE NAI BRS OFF/9 Business Records Survey of Perry's Mills).
For further information on the Belmont Mills Archive please feel free to contact us:
library.specialcollections@mu.ie

References

'A Perry Family History', https://perry.ie (retrieved 2 July 2025)

'Belmont House, Bellmount or Lisderg, County Offaly,' National Built Heritage Service, https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/14824006/belmont-mills-bellmount-or-lisderg-county-offaly (retrieved 13 March 2024).

'Belmont Mill brought back to life with fine restoration' in Offaly Independent, https://www.offalyindependent.ie/2008/07/18/belmont-mill-brought-back-to-life-with-fine-restoration/ 18 July 2008 (retrieved 27 March 2024).

Goodbody, M., The Goodbodys: Millers, Merchants, and manufacturers - The story of an Irish Quaker family, 1630-1950, (Ashgate, 2012).

Hamond, F., Belmont Mills, Belmont, Co. Offaly: Industrial Heritage Survey, Offaly County Council Heritage Office (2003)

Harrison, Richard S., A Biographical Dictionary of Irish Quakers (Four Courts Press, 2008)

Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland Newsletter, No. 32, November 2008.

Reilly, Ciarán, 'The Belmont Mills archive: a veritable treasure trove,' 4 August 2021, MU Library Treasures Blog, https://mulibrarytreasures.wordpress.com/2021/08/04/the-belmont-mills-archive-a-veritable-treasure-trove/ (retrieved 27 March 2024).

Shorthall, Lisa, Flour and Fire: the rise and fall of Robert Perry & Co, Belmont Mills, Offaly History blog, https://offalyhistoryblog.com/2018/01/20/flour-and-fire-the-rise-and-fall-of-robert-perry-co-belmont-mills/ (retrieved 13 March 2024).

Wigham, Maurice J., The Irish Quakers: a short history of the religious society of friends in Ireland, (Dublin, 1992).

Related Material:

IE OCAS P68 Records of Robert Perry & Co. (Belmont Mills), Offaly County Archives Service
IE BRS OFF/9 Business Records Survey, Perry's Mills, National Archives of Ireland

The Deeny Papers: Collection News!

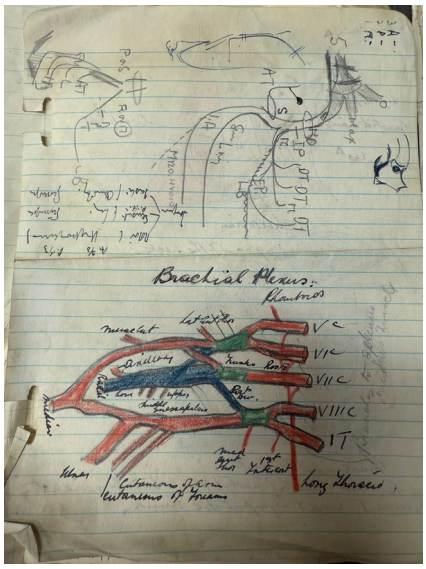
Erin McRae, Project Cataloguing Archivist (RCSI Heritage Collections)

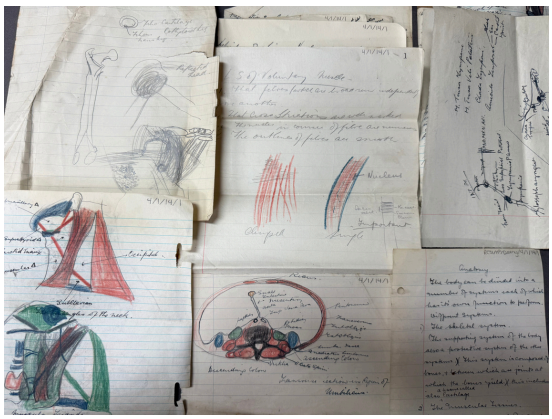
Dr James Andrew Deeny, M.D., FRCPI, MRIA

Recently at RCSI Heritage Collections the papers of Dr. James Deeny (MD, FRCPI, MRIA) have been fully catalogued and made available to researchers. The collection comprises 61 archival boxes and is hugely significant as it provides a view into Deeny's work as the Chief Medical Advisor to the Irish government from 1944 until 1962, his subsequent work as Chief of Senior Staff Training at the World Health Organization (WHO) and his several consultancies with the WHO throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Deeny contributed immensely throughout his entire career and into his retirement to public health in Ireland as well as abroad, spanning a period of approximately 59 years. This article provides a high-level snapshot of Dr. James Deeny's life, his contributions to the medical field both in Ireland and abroad, a brief overview of the collection's holdings and where to access the collection.

The Student Years

Dr. James Andrew Deeny was born on November 7th, 1906, in North Street, Lurgan, County Armagh. After completing his primary and secondary education, Deeny chose to study medicine at Queen's University Belfast between 1923 and 1927, following this he obtained a BSc. in bacteriology, biochemistry and pathology, a diploma in public health and an MD in pathology. After a brief six-month period at the state serum institute in Vienna researching the bacteriology of tuberculosis, Deeny set up his first general practice in Lurgan in September of 1931.

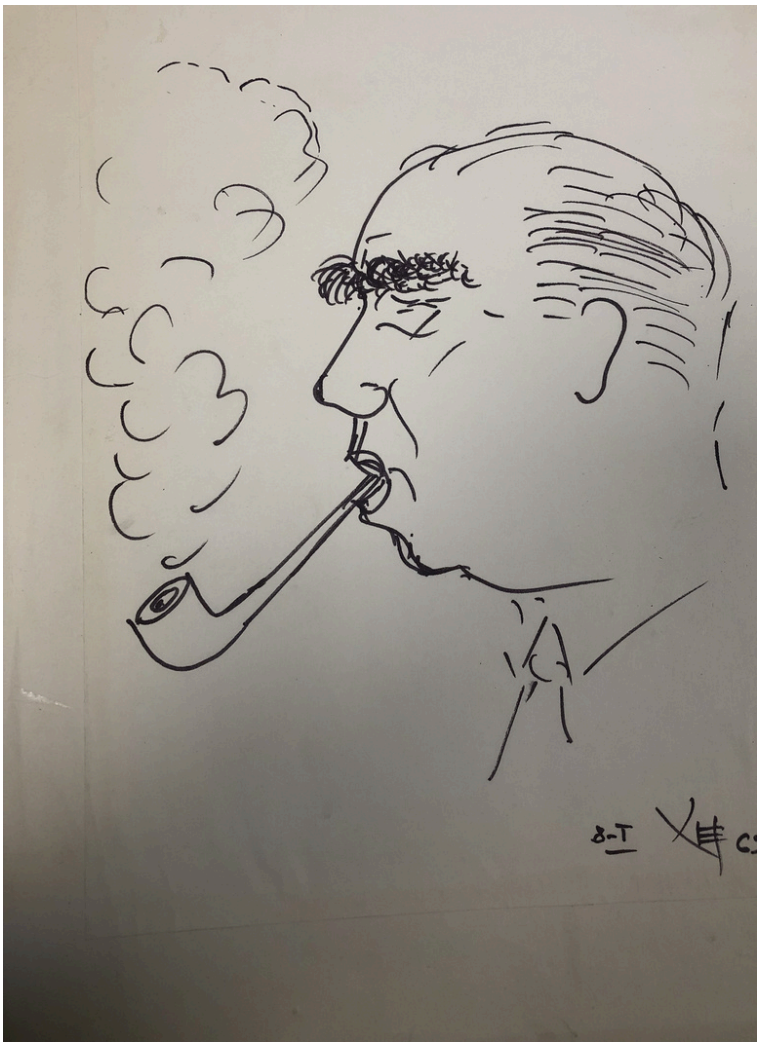




Dr James Deeny, Notes on Anatomy (RCSI/IP/Deeny/4/1/14/1)

Beyond General Practice

In 1944, Deeny was appointed Chief Medical Adviser to the Department of Local Government and Public Health (later Department of Health) for southern Ireland. Between 1950 and 1953 Deeny was seconded to the Medical Research Council as director of a national tuberculosis survey and obtained two leaves of absence to conduct national tuberculosis surveys for the World Health Organization in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1956 and British Somaliland (now Republic of Somaliland) in 1957. From 1958 to 1960 Deeny served as the WHO chief of mission in Indonesia and from 1962 to 1967 he worked for the WHO as chief of senior staff training at their headquarters in Geneva after resigning from the Irish government.



Dr James Deeny, Caricature (RCSI/IP/Deeny/2/1/2/181)

Between 1963 and 1968, Deeny wrote the WHO's fourth report on the world health situation and subsequently performed short-term WHO consultancies in Syria and the USSR and served as the WHO's first ombudsman. Deeny retired in 1975 after serving as a locum dispensary doctor in the Fanad peninsula in County Donegal between 1970 and 1971, as well as after being appointed special scientific adviser to the Holy See between 1971 and 1972. Deeny was very active in his local community in Tagoat, County Wexford (to the west of Rosslare Harbour) after retiring and throughout his life he published widely on topics relating to medicine, demography, social sciences and religion. Deeny in his lifetime was also a member of the Royal Irish Academy, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and held an honorary doctorate from Queen's University Belfast (awarded 1983); he died on April 3rd, 1994.

Pensioner of the Year

The collection provides a clear view into the very long medical career of Dr. Deeny as well as the person behind the stethoscope. Deeny, even during his retirement was a champion of public health and social programming, in 1971 he moved to County Wexford where he reared cattle and became heavily involved in the local community, helping to found the Tagoat community council. This council was engaged in housing programmes, care for the elderly, training for the unemployed, and restoration projects and these demonstrate how committed Deeny was to his work in public health and how closely he valued community. In 1988, Deeny was named Irish Life Assurance pensioner of the year for his contributions.

The Collection

The Deeny Papers were deposited with RCSI Library & Heritage Collections in the mid-1980s but up until recently, the collection had not yet been fully catalogued. Recent work on the collection has allowed for record enhancement of previous catalogue entries and completion of the catalogue entries for the remaining records and sections as well as a fonds level description. The records are arranged chronologically and reflect Deeny's career progression and contains a wealth of correspondence, memoranda, drafts of published works, personal records such as early handwritten notes from Deeny's days as a medical student (pictured above) and a small selection of photographs both from Deeny's medical career as well as some family images. The records are available to be consulted and can be searched on the RCSI Heritage Collections online public access catalogue.

Collection in situ after cataloguing and basic preservation was completed.

References:

Dr. James Deeny Papers. Archives, RCSI Heritage Collections. https://heritage.rcsi.ie/calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=RCSI%2fIP%2fDeeny&pos=1

Deeny, James. To Cure & to Care: Memoirs of a Chief Medical Officer. Dún Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1989.

White, Lawrence William and Diarmaid Ferriter. "Deeny, James Andrew." Dictionary of Irish Biography, last modified October 2009. https://www.dib.ie/biography/deeny-james-andrew-a2499.

Locating Limerick Benchmarks, Preserving Heritage

Tom Lonergan, Senior Archives Officer-Surveying Records

Tailte Éireann provides a property registration system, property valuation service, and national mapping and surveying infrastructure for the Irish State. It was established on the 1 March 2023 with the merger of the Property Registration Authority, Ordnance Survey Ireland, and the Valuation Office of Ireland.

June of 2024 saw the 200th anniversary of mapping in Ireland, which was celebrated by Tailte Éireann. This anniversary brought surveying into the public and academic eye in Ireland, highlighting how the original 6-inch and 25-inch surveys of Ireland created cutting edge technologies and practices upon which many future surveying activities across the world would be based upon. A key element of the 200th anniversary was the OS 200 Project (https://www.irelandmapped.ie/) led jointly by Dr Catherine Porter of the University of Limerick and Professor Keith Lilley of Queen's University.

Part of Ireland's mapping history was the creation of what are known as benchmarks. Benchmarks are physical marks which located the spot surveyors used to get the precise height above sea level of a piece of land. So, for example, if a map has a hill marked as being 350 meters above sea level, this height would originally have been discerned using the benchmarking process. This is known as levelling and indicates the height above mean sea level as it was measured at the time.

Figure 1: Typical Benchmark cut onto stone. This one has the height above sea level engraved with it.

The benchmarks generally take the form of a straight line, which is where the spot height was taken from, and an arrow underneath it pointing at, and locating the line These are known in surveying as "crowsfeet". Sometimes the height above sea level was also carved alongside the benchmark. Hundreds of thousands of benchmarks would have been carved into buildings, bridges, walls and other features across Ireland in the 19th and 20th centuries. How many exactly? The answer to this is not clearly known. It is estimated that there are about 5000 in County Limerick alone

Unfortunately, many of Benchmarks have now been lost through building works, changing landscapes, weathering processes and in other ways.
"Locating Benchmarks, Preserving Heritage" (https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d344785a3c7a427eb61607386fd9e745/page/Home) is a project led by Dr. Catherine Porter and co- and co-funded by The Heritage Council and the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Limerick, and led by UL Geography. Tailte Éireann is delighted to be a partner in supporting the project, along with Limerick City and County Council, Glucksman Library, UL, Digital Repository of Ireland, Mary Immaculate College and Maynooth University.

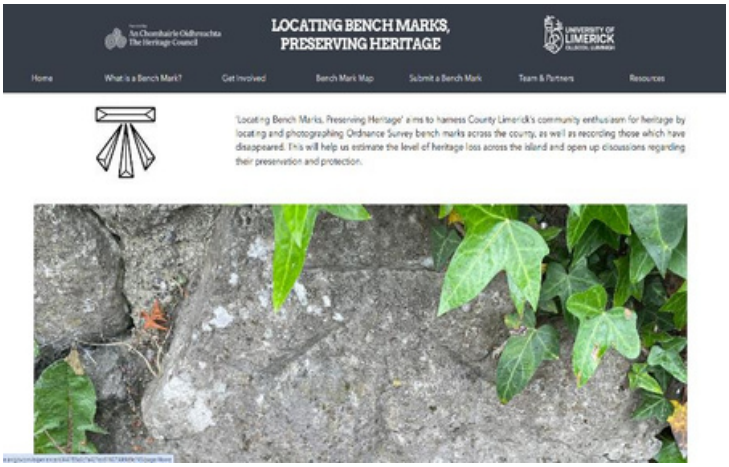
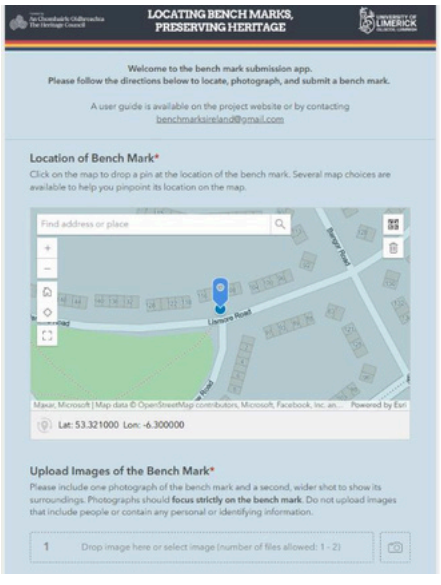


Figure 2: Home page of Dr Porter's "Locating Benchmarks, Preserving Heritage" website.

The project is community driven aiming to locate and photograph the remaining Ordnance Survey benchmarks in County Limerick, estimate the loss of this important heritage, and move towards better recognition and protection of benchmarks.

A website and easy to use app have been created, using Tailte Éireann maps. The app gives the historic locations of benchmarks across Limerick City and County. Any member of the public can download the app (https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/fa03f3dbeca440a9b43143bc8f2d0219) and then go to location of the individual benchmarks and investigate whether it still exists or not. If the benchmark is in place, the next step is to upload photos of its position and condition to the website/app where it will be recorded. If the benchmark no longer exists, this can also be recorded in the app and will allow for analysis on the number of benchmarks which have been lost.



All benchmark information that is captured by the public and uploaded to the app/website will be digitally preserved by the Digital Repository of Ireland.

Figure 3: Screen shot of mobile app for recording locations of benchmarks.

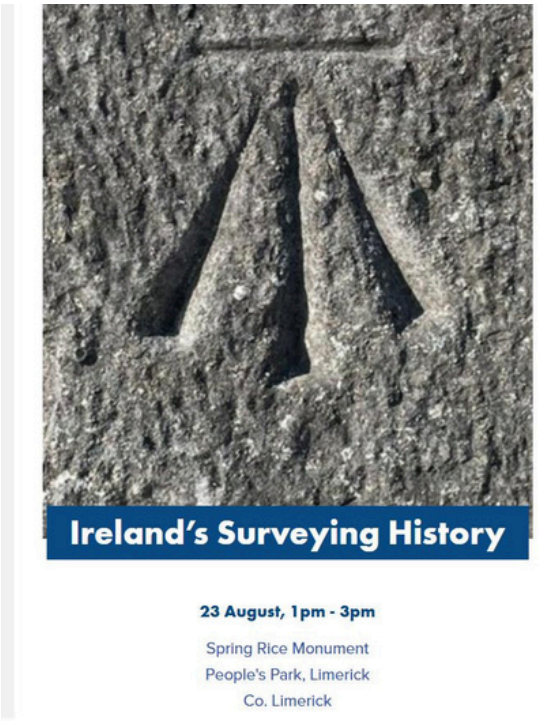


Figure 4: Tailte Éireann Benchmark use in real world demonstration.

There was an online project launch on Friday the 23rd of June 2025. During this launch a history of benchmarking was presented along with details of outreach activities.
As part of the promotion of this project, a walking tour of Limerick City Centre benchmarks will be held in Limerick on 23rd of August, starting in the Peoples Park during Heritage Week. The tour will include a demonstration by Tailte Éireann surveyors to show how benchmarks were used in the levelling process in a real-world setting. (For more information on this event - https://www.heritageweek.ie/event-listings/join-us-at-the-spring-rice-monument-for-a-fascinating-look-at-irelands-surveying-history).

In conclusion, a project like this is one that all people can become involved in. It could be a focus for your social groups such as hikers, photographers, families or as an individual pursuit. Please help us spread the word about this project and if in Limerick City and County, why not join in and try to find some benchmarks. You would be making a valuable contribution to preserving Ireland's unique heritage.

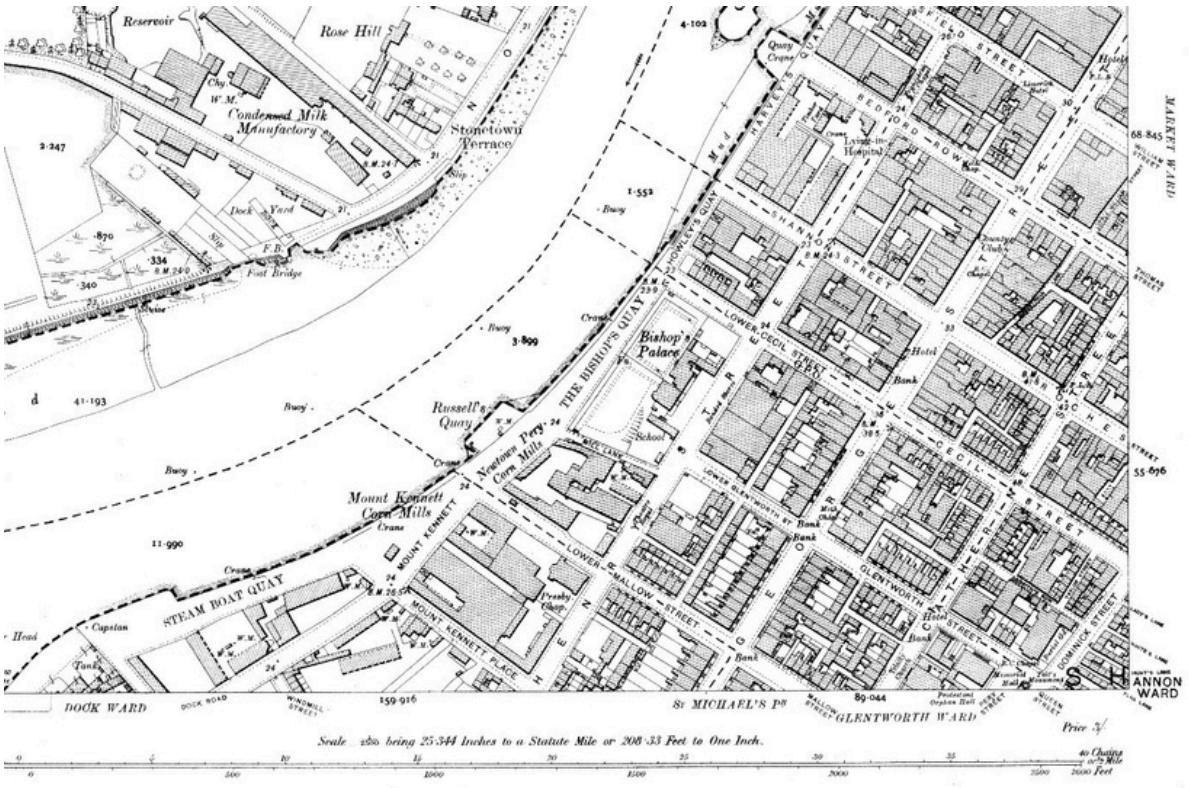


Figure 5: 1:2500 scale map of Limerick City

Tailte Éireann Registry of Deeds and the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland

By Orla McCartney, Tailte Éireann Senior Archives Officer, Digitisation

The devastation inflicted on documented Irish history due to the destruction of the Public Record Office (PRO) on the 30th June 1922 is all too well known a legacy of the Civil War amongst archivists, historians, academic researchers and genealogists. It resulted in the significant loss of Irelands historical record spanning 700 years and a loss that, even in their desperate hope when gathering charred and burnt records from the ashes, the staff of the PRO must have thought could never be replaced. Until the Beyond2022 research project, (now the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (VRTI)), had a radical idea to virtually recreate the PRO building and its lost archival collections. To add to the ambition, they would make the records fully searchable and freely accessible online, truly democratising access.

Memorial No. 1 registered in Registry of Deeds on 25 March 1708

The VRTI is an 'all island and international research partnership'. The research programme is funded by the Government of Ireland under Project Ireland 2040 through the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport'.[1] It was formally launched on the 30 June 2022, the centenary of the of the Four Courts fire, in Dublin Castle by Taoiseach Micheál Martin. The VRTI has five core partners: national Archives of Ireland (NAI), Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), The National Archives UK (TNA), Irish Manuscripts Commission (IMC), and Trinity College Dublin Library. The project won the Ellis Prize in November 2022 for '...their excellent work in delivering back to the Irish nation and its diaspora more than 700 years of Irish history and culture'. [2] The most recent release took place on the 30 June 2025, the 103rd anniversary of the destruction of the PRO, which saw the addition of 175,000 new records on the VRTI platform.

VRTI Logo

Collections and archives that were not housed in the PRO have gained a new significance as a consequence of the VRTI. The VRTI team began looking at and contacting archives, libraries and museums in Ireland and abroad to facilitate the digitisation of replacement or substitute records destroyed in the fire. One such collection is that of Tailte Éireann Registry of Deeds, based in Henrietta street. The Registry of Deeds archives (1708-present day), housed in the James Gandon (1743-1823) designed building since 1831, survived that tumultuous period of the Irish Civil War (June 1922 – May 1923) intact. It therefore presents as an ideal collection to facilitate the substitution of records lost in the Four Courts fire.

Following the launch of the VRTI in 2022 which included an initial sub-set of Registry of Deeds Transcript Books, work has continued between the VRTI and Tailte Éireann (TÉ) Archives team to add more Registry of Deeds (ROD) records to the online platform. For the 103rd Anniversary, over 9000 images from the ROD Transcript Books series have been added, due to the diligent work of the TÉ Archives team who undertook the digitisation, post processing and metadata creation tasks to prepare the collections for publication on the VRTI.

[1] About the Virtual Treasury - Virtual Treasury (accessed 4 July 2025)
[1] Ellis Prize - the 'Oscar' of the recordkeeping sector is awarded to Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland – Archives & Records Association (accessed 4 July 2025)

Public Room in Registry of Deeds

Transcript Books were created by Registry of Deeds clerks throughout the 18th century and contain transcripts of memorials for deeds that were registered in the Registry of Deeds. When images and metadata have been delivered to the VRTI team, they are subsequently transcribed using Transkribus to make the images fully key word searchable. The records are then published online along with full transcriptions of the handwritten text. Through this collaboration, researchers now have access to a wealth of information about Ireland's land and property past and the people involved in transactions related to same.

As part of the latest release, wills of female testators have been made available, consisting of 507 memorials spanning 124 years. The archival descriptions for the wills were garnered from metadata created by Tailte Éireann Archives and the Irish Manuscript Commission (IMC) three volume publication entitled 'Registry of Deeds Dublin Abstracts of Wills. The volumes, published between 1956-1984 and edited by Eilish Ellis and P. Beryl Eustace, cover wills that were registered in ROD between 1708-1832. The published index provided abstracted information of wills and now thanks to colloboration between the IMC, VRTI and Tailte Éireann are being brought to wider public attention. The wills of male from 1708-1832 will be released later in 2025.

Genealogical Room, Registry of Deeds

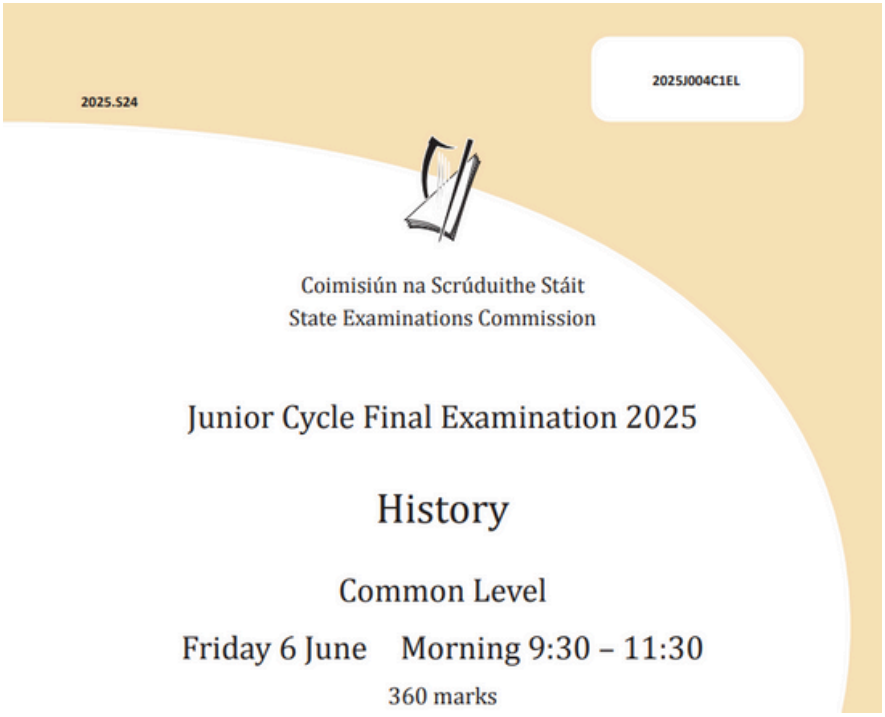
The VRTI and Tailte Éireann have also collaborated with Dr Patrick Walsh and Dr Brendan Twomey to add a 'curated collections' section to the VRTI website. This section contains articles on the origins and history of the Registry of Deeds, its function in Irish society throughout the 18th century, the people that worked there and the content of the records themselves. These curated pages emerged out of a previous research project knows as the Deeds and Sasines project which compared memorials in the Registry of Deeds to Scottish sasines.

For the upcoming Dublin Festival of History, Tailte Éireann will host a talk by Dr Brendan Twomey on the Registrars and Deputy Registrars of the Registry of Deeds 1708-1832. Booking is required, with full details available on the Festival of History website to be launched later in 2025. It is the ambition of Tailte Éireann to make this talk as accessible as possible and an Irish Sign Language interpreter will be provided.

Tailte Éireann Archives team is very proud of the collaboration with the VRTI and Irish Manuscript Commission and we look forward to continuing that partnership into the future.

"That's my mother!!!" – Archives on the Syllabus

Niamh Ní Charra, with assistance from Lisa Shortall (and her son!)


2025.S24

2025J004C1EL

Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Junior Cycle Final Examination 2025

History

Common Level

Friday 6 June Morning 9:30 – 11:30

360 marks

Exam Paper Cover

Cast your minds back to those heady summer days, when you were facing into national exams, be they Junior (or Inter) Cert, Leaving Cert, or whatever exams were the norm, chez vous. Remember the rollercoaster of emotions you were feeling as you sat down to take the exam, and the jumble of thoughts going through your head ("did I do enough?", "did I study the right material?", "did I cram the right stuff last minute?" or "will I even understand the question?"!). Now imagine, as you take a deep breath and turn the page, the shock of seeing that the first question is about....your mother!

That is exactly what happened one young student earlier this month, when he turned the page of the Junior Cert History exam paper and saw a section about his mother, archivist Lisa Shortall, taken from a talk she gave about her work as local archivist at Wicklow Archives. Chatting to Lisa shortly afterwards, she expressed how surreal it was to discover she was actually "on the paper". (I didn't ask how her son got on with answering it!) Lisa, who now works as Head of Research, Learning and Cultural Heritage at the Heritage Council, was very happy however to see archives feature on the paper, which I also think is a very positive step. If any of you want to attempt the question, I do have the full paper!

This instance wasn't the first time archives featured on the history syllabus. Prior to the start of the academic year, last September, I was interviewed about archives in general and my work as archivist for the Conradh na Gaeilge and Mary Robinson archives at the University of Galway, by the History team at Oide, a support service for teachers and school leaders, funded by the Department of Education and launched on September 1, 2023. This interview, carried out in Irish, is now part of a suite of resources available to history teachers nationwide.

It is currently available here on the Irish language version of their resources page. They edited an hour-long interview into a short 6-minute clip, so if you're interested, it shouldn't take up too much of your time! The plan is for this interview to be transcribed and captioned, in both English and Irish, and to be made available on both English and Irish web pages before the start of the next academic year. Other interviews include with historian, Liz Gillis, and Commandant Daniel Ayiotis, Officer-in-Charge, The Military Archives.

Question 1

This question deals with archives and the work of an archivist. Read the sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 1: Information from a talk given by archivist Lisa Shortall, Offaly Archives.

- Archives contain records which are unique, irreplaceable and of long-term value.
- Correct storage conditions protect archival records from fire, damp, light and heat.
- The archivist cleans and sorts incoming documents, and removes items that damage documents such as elastic bands, staples, and paper clips.
- Sometimes, documents have been damaged and need expert conservation.
- Archives are catalogued and packed into acid-free folders and boxes. The archivist gives each item a description and a reference code in the catalogue.
- Historians consult the catalogue and request files to be brought to the reading room. The archivist returns the files to storage when the historian is finished with them.

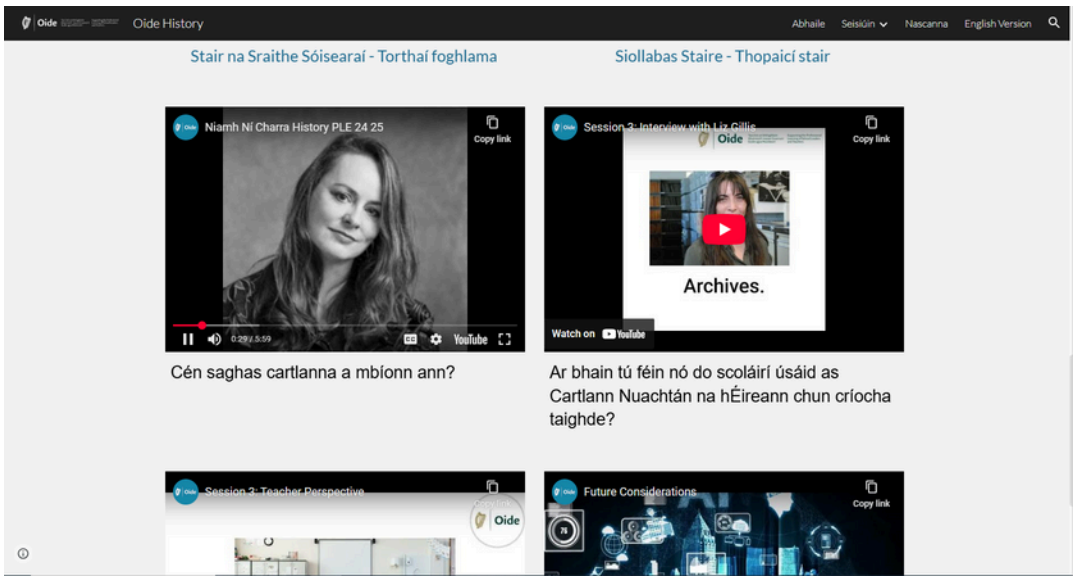
(a) Why are the records contained in archives important, according to **Source 1**?

(b) From **Source 1**, how can damage be caused to archival materials?

(c) From the illustration, what is the web address of Offaly Archives?

Junior Cycle Final Examination 2025 4
History – Common Level

Exam Paper Question



Oide

All in all, a very positive step to have the importance of archives presented for study, as part of the history syllabus.

Tackling Barriers to Entry: Major Heritage Council Bursary Announced for UCD Archives Students

(l-r) Dr Elizabeth Mullins, Director MA Archives and Records Management, UCD School of History; Virginia Teehan, CEO, The Heritage Council; Lisa Shortall, Head of Resarch, Learning and Cultural Heritage, The Heritage Council; Professor Catherine Cox, Head of Department, UCD School of History

The Heritage Council, in partnership with the School of History at University College Dublin (UCD), announced last month a new bursary to support students undertaking the MA in Archives and Records Management.

The bursary will cover 75% of tuition fees—amounting to €8,850—for one student enrolled in the professionally accredited MA programme, the only one of its kind in Ireland. The bursary is open to students who have already secured a place on the programme and may be used for either full-time or part-time study, offering flexibility for those with caring responsibilities or who wish to gain additional practical experience.

Virginia Teehan, CEO of the Heritage Council, said:
"This bursary reflects our commitment to fostering a more inclusive heritage sector. By reducing financial barriers, we hope to support individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue careers in archives and records management. This aligns with our DEI policy, which recognises that a diverse heritage workforce is essential to preserving and interpreting Ireland's rich and multifaceted past."

The bursary responds to growing concerns about the lack of diversity in the archival profession. The high cost of training, which is based in Dublin, has also been identified as a significant barrier to entry for many prospective students around the country who are unable to take up their places on the course due to the accommodation crisis and the high cost of rent.

Dr. Elizabeth Mullins, Director of the MA in Archives and Records Management at UCD, welcomed the initiative:
"*This bursary is a game changer. It will enable talented individuals who might otherwise be excluded due to financial constraints to access professional training. A more diverse cohort of archivists will enrich the profession and help ensure that the archival record better reflects the full spectrum of Irish society.*"

Professor Catherine Cox, Head of the UCD School of History, added:
"*We are delighted to collaborate with the Heritage Council on this important initiative. The bursary not only supports individual students but also strengthens our collective ability to preserve a more inclusive and representative historical record.*"

Applications for the bursary will open in June to students who have been accepted into the MA programme for the upcoming academic year. The selection process will be overseen by a committee within the School of History, and the successful candidate will be notified in July.

This bursary is part of the Heritage Council's broader strategy to support equity and access across all areas of heritage practice in Ireland.

ARA Ireland Committee Vacancy

Following on from our recent AGM in April, the ARA Ireland Committee advertised two committee vacancies. We are delighted that one of those, our second training officer, has been filled by the lovely Katie Connick. We do, however, still have one outstanding vacancy to fill, that of Honorary Secretary. If interested in joining the committee and taking up a role as our Honorary Secretary, please feel free to get in touch with ARA Ireland Chair Niamh Ní Charra.

Joining the committee is a fantastic opportunity to enhance your communication skills, organisational skills, interpersonal skills, IT skills and public speaking skills. Committee Officers would ordinarily serve a term of at least one year with ARA Ireland, with the norm being a 3 year term. The role is voluntary.

The below information provides an outline of the responsibilities for this role.

Honorary Secretary

The main role of the Honorary Secretary of ARA Ireland is to monitor emails to the committee, answer queries received (with assistance of other committee members), circulate job advertisements to ARA Ireland membership, and liaise with short list of representatives of sister organisations ahead of ARA Ireland committee meetings, to share updates.

Main responsibilities:

- **To schedule at least three committee meetings over the year, prepare and distribute agendas, review and circulate minutes, and circulate papers.**
- **Maintain an up-to-date regional membership list.**
- **Help with writing/distributing reports as and when required.**
- **Call for updates from specialist interest groups.**
- **Organise the regional AGM.**
- **Maintain ARA Ireland email accounts and deal with correspondence.**
- **Circulate events/opportunities to members.**