



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh



Hardiman Research Building Exhibitions Group Annual Report 2016

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INTRODUCTION

This is the second annual report of the Hardiman Research Building (HRB) Exhibitions Group and it records an impressive amount and range of activity during the calendar year 2016. The Group represents a range of constituencies, with membership as follows:

Professor Daniel Carey, Director, Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities and Social Studies

Dr John Caulfield, Internal Communications Officer, Marketing and Communications

John Cox, University Librarian, James Hardiman Library (chair)

Ann Cullinane, Library Administrator, James Hardiman Library (secretary)

Dr Conn Holohan, Lecturer, Huston School of Film & Digital Media

Liz McConnell, Director, Public Affairs, President's Office

Ann Mitchell, Head of Operations, James Hardiman Library

Dr John Morrissey, Senior Lecturer, Geography

Highlights from the past year include a major exhibition to mark the 1916 centenary, engagement of new audiences, outreach to other locations, and planning and procurement for a major redevelopment of the exhibition space. There is much to look forward to in 2017 too, including the flexibility offered by the newly configured space, another strong exhibitions programme, continued programming of events around exhibitions and further external connectivity. As in 2016, exhibitions will further enhance the reputation of the University.

All members have been unstinting in their commitment, promoting the exhibitions programme and infrastructure alongside their other responsibilities. The remit of the Group has expanded since its inception in October 2014, and some members have found themselves taking on more responsibility for local and external programming and for logistics than had originally been envisaged. This is unlikely to be sustainable and the Group plans to review its remit in 2017. The emphasis on partnership within and beyond the campus will increase, but, as stated in the final section of this report, a more sustainable resourcing model is needed if the University is to realise fully the potential of exhibitions. The Hardiman Research Building offers an excellent space, openly accessible with high footfall and offering opportunities to showcase scholarship and unique collections. It is important that we ensure continued success by establishing firm foundations.

John Cox, University Librarian, James Hardiman Library (chair, HRB Exhibitions Group)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Hardiman Research Building (HRB) provides the University with a **centrally located, high-footfall, exhibition space**.
- The presence of, and strong collaboration between, the Moore Institute and the Library in this building promotes opportunities to **showcase innovative scholarship and unique collections**.
- Three **major exhibitions** were hosted during 2016: *Yeats & the West*; *A University in War & Revolution, 1913-19*; and *Representations of Jews in Irish Literature*.
- Each attracted local and international academic and lay audiences and was complemented by a **range of lectures and other programming** which facilitated deeper engagement with the content of the exhibitions.
- There was a particularly strong connectivity between many events, notably **seminars and conferences**, in the University's Centenary Programme, *A Nation Rising*, and the *University in War & Revolution* exhibition.
- A notable success in 2016 was the **programme of outreach** which brought the *Yeats & the West* exhibition to Sligo and Thoor Ballylee; lectures related to the other 2016 exhibitions were delivered or are planned for 2017 in the United States, **extending the University's reach and reputation**.
- The **online presence** for exhibitions is being strengthened to attract new visitors and to broaden access.
- The exhibitions programme generated significant **media interest**, including press, radio and online coverage (see Appendix).
- A **major reconfiguration of the exhibition space** is imminent following a detailed planning and procurement exercise, promising a more flexible and better-defined facility.
- While academic, support services and library staff partnered very effectively to create and curate exhibitions and members of the Exhibitions Group invested heavily in event programming and organisation, **a more sustainable resourcing model is needed**.
- Plans for **2017** include maximising the flexibility offered by the new space, hosting another strong programme, continuing to develop events around exhibitions, and connecting the exhibitions with external locations.

CENTENARY EXHIBITION, MARCH-NOVEMBER 2016: A UNIVERSITY IN WAR & REVOLUTION, 1913-19

This was the main exhibition hosted in 2016, running for eight months and representing a major element in the University's programme of events to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising. A group of academic staff, primarily Dr Mary Harris (History), Dr Gearóid Barry (History) and Dr Conor McNamara (1916 Scholar-in-Residence), partnered with Marie Boran, Kieran Hoare and Barry Houlihan from the Library's archives and special collections to create and curate the exhibition. The exhibition comprised fifteen panels, with over 14,000 words in English and Irish and 170 images. It engaged with the disparate voices from the period, including the conservative members of the academic staff, republican activists among the student body and the nationalist majority of students and staff who remained loyal to John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party. The opening of the exhibition on 4 April attracted a large audience, including many from beyond the campus. Those present were treated to a wonderfully insightful and engaging address by Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh.

Community Engagement

A variety of school groups – both national and secondary – visited the exhibition, along with community and voluntary associations including, active retirement groups, local historical societies, the University's Retired Staff Association, Friends and Relatives of Galway 1916 and several international groups from



Europe and the United States. A number of these tours were provided in Irish or bilingually. Tours were generally preceded with a brief introductory talk in an adjacent seminar room. For younger groups, worksheets designed to stimulate children to

compete in groups to find particular objects, photographs and people listed on the panels were devised to add interest and enjoyment to the visit. The Visitors' Book was signed by 400 people, from a range of counties in Ireland and from Brazil, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Spain, the UK, Turkey, Australia, Egypt, Malaysia, India, South Africa, and Japan.

Academic Impact

The exhibition featured heavily among the many academic events, conferences and seminars held as part of *A Nation Rising* (www.nuigalway.ie/anationrising), the University's programme to commemorate the centenary of the Rebellion. This approach was facilitated by locating refreshment breaks at such events next to the exhibition area and encouraging visitors to explore the site at their leisure. In addition, guided tours of the exhibition were offered at set times for delegates.

Conferences at which the exhibition featured prominently included, *Place, Identity & Conflict* (1-2 July 2016) and *1916-2016: The Promise and Challenge of National Sovereignty* (10-12 Nov 2016).

President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina enjoyed a guided tour during the European Universities Association Conference in April.



Drawing on the research informing the exhibition, the Moore Institute and Heyman Center for the Humanities (Columbia University) collaborated on a one-day conference in New York (1 April 2016) on '1916: The Irish Rising after 100 years' featuring four NUI Galway speakers (Dr John Cunningham, Dr Mary Harris, Dr Conor McNamara, Dr Adrian Paterson) and five US-based panellists from Columbia

University, Cornell, Penn State, and the University of Pennsylvania. The conference presentations can be viewed at <http://heymancenter.org/events/1916-the-irish-rising-at-100-years/>.

Future Developments

The exhibition is currently being transformed into an online display. This will build further on existing online engagement which in 2016 realised 596 visits to the page on the University website for this exhibition, complementing 12,057 visits to the website for the University's Centenary Programme. It is hoped that the exhibition will be published in book format in 2017.

Dr Conor McNamara, NUI Galway 1916 Scholar in Residence, 2016

OUTREACH: TAKING EXHIBITIONS BEYOND THE CAMPUS

Yeats & the West

The Yeats & the West Exhibition closed at NUI Galway in February 2016 after a successful eight-month run. The Visitors' Book, signed by over 700 people with positive comments, recorded addresses from Austria, Macedonia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Munich, Brussels, Helsinki, New York, Portland, Maine, Krakow, Naples, San José, the Czech Republic and Australia, as well as various locations in Ireland. The



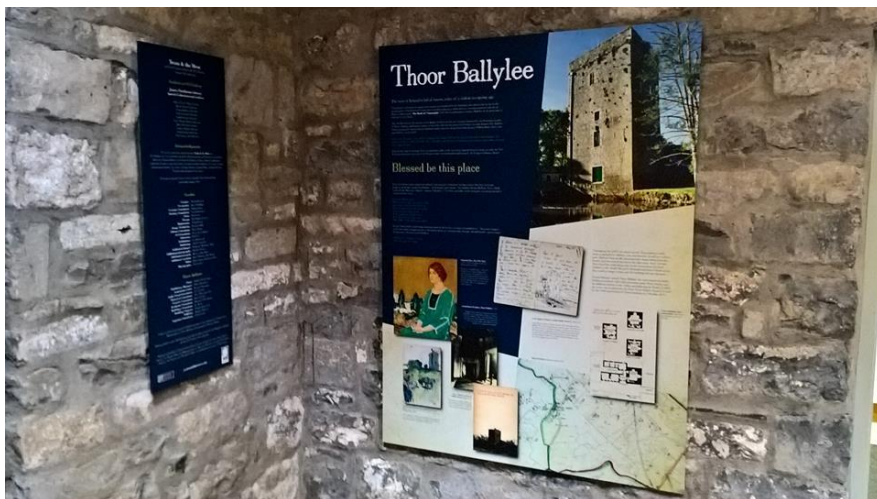
public outreach programme for this exhibition included a project website (yeatsandthewest.org) with extensive blogs and images, which received 4780 unique visitors to December 2016.

In March, the exhibition transferred to The Model, Sligo, where it was on display from 24 March to 12 May 2016. After a launch event hosted by University President, Dr. Jim Browne, on 24 March, a series of weekly evening talks took place from 7 April to 12 May. Speakers

included the curators of the exhibition – Dr Adrian Paterson and Mr Barry Houlihan (NUI Galway); Professor Adrian Frazier (NUI Galway); Professor Margaret Mills Harper (University of Limerick and

outgoing Director of the Yeats International Summer School); Dr Ian Walsh (NUI Galway); and Dr Mary Harris (NUI Galway). Each week, one of the curators led tours for the public and students in Co. Sligo, enhancing engagement and supporting university efforts to recruit from this catchment area.

In July 2016, a new version of the exhibition transferred to Yeats's Tower in Co. Galway, Thoor Ballylee,



where it was opened by actress Sabina Coyne Higgins, wife of the President of Ireland. Thoor Ballylee attracts around 4000-5000 visitors annually. Re-imagined and re-designed for the space, the exhibition will make an enduring contribution to the understanding of Yeats in this historic location. Features and interviews

with the curators appeared on Ocean FM, Galway Bay FM, Connemara Community Radio, and Pat Kenny's Newstalk show. Yeats & the West at The Model, Sligo, made [The Irish Times Going Out List](#).

A further instalment of the exhibition, arranged by Prof. Carey, is planned for Tuskegee University in Alabama. Three newly curated and designed panels have been prepared that tell the story of the Abbey Theatre Company tour in 1932 which played at the historic black institution, where Arthur Shields reported they enjoyed their best-ever audience.

Representations of Jews in Irish Literature

The exhibition, created by Registrar and Deputy President Prof. Pól Ó Dochartaigh in collaboration with colleagues at the University of Ulster with a grant from the AHRC, featured 12 panels covering the history



of Irish-Jewish writing and Irish literature about Jews from the medieval period to the present day. The launch took place on 7 December with a talk and reading by the writer Stanley Price.

A seminar series accompanying the exhibition featured talks by Dr Ríona Ní Fhrighil (NUI Galway) on representations of Jews in contemporary writing in Irish, and by Dr Ian Leask (DCU) on the advocacy of naturalizing the Jews by John

Toland (1670-1722) on 18 January and 26 January 2017 respectively, the latter in connection with the annual Holocaust Memorial Day.

On 23 September 2016, Prof. Ó Dochartaigh lectured on the topic of the exhibition at Notre Dame University, Indiana. Panels from the exhibition will be displayed at Columbia University, New York, and a seminar will be held on 4 April 2017, with presentations by Prof. Ó Dochartaigh and by the novelist Ruth Gilligan, author of *Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan* (2016), a work of historical fiction on the Irish-Jewish community. In November, the exhibition will be displayed at Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

The seminar series and American events have been organized by Prof. Carey.

Athbheochan na Gaeilge agus Éirí Amach na Cásca/The Revival of the Irish Language and the Easter Rising

This exhibition, developed by Conradh na Gaeilge's Cuan Ó Seireadáin, was displayed in March 2016.



The exhibition consisted of 12 panels outlining the major role of the Irish language in the political commitment of revolutionary figures like Douglas Hyde, Patrick Pearse, Eoin MacNeill, and a range of others.

Professor Daniel Carey, Director, Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities and Social Studies

ENTICING VISITORS

With the launch of the newly designed website for NUI Galway in late 2015, a new Visitors page (www.nuigalway.ie/visitors) was created to promote the wide range of attractions on campus to the thousands of visitors who come to the University each year. The Visitors page includes information on finding the University and planning a trip to the campus, as well as the museums and galleries open to the public throughout the week.

At the request of the HRB Exhibitions Group, the most prominent banner on the Visitors page has been designated

for publicising the current exhibition. This includes a large space for a banner image, the title of the exhibition, some limited details, and an EXHIBITION button linking to further information. It is hoped that this prominent position will further boost visibility and awareness of the HRB exhibition space to a targeted audience of visitors to campus.

Dr John Caulfield, Internal Communications Officer, Marketing and Communications

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As reported in some detail in our Annual Report 2014/15, plans for an enhanced exhibition infrastructure in the foyer of the Hardiman Research Building had been developed in conjunction with John McLaughlin Architects during 2015, with a view to installing it in early 2016.



A call for tenders in respect of the construction and installation of the proposed Exhibition Pavilion, pictured below, was issued in December 2015, with a closing date of Friday 15 January 2016. Unfortunately

the call resulted in the submission of only one response, with a price tag far in excess of that anticipated and well outside the budget available. In light of this development the Group decided to turn its attention in the short term to engaging with the same architectural team in relation to alternative furniture, exhibition cases and easy seating considerations. The aim was to address the main issue of concern relating to the existing infrastructure, namely the use of the exhibition space by students as an informal seating area and collaborative workspace. The Exhibitions Group gave full consideration to a detailed proposal by John McLaughlin Architects for alternative fittings and layout of the Hardiman Research Building foyer. The prevailing view was that the plans could not be guaranteed to produce the required changes in user behaviour and that the existing furniture layout should be retained for the present.

Half-way through the year the Group determined that another attempt should be made to progress the development of the Exhibition Pavilion. Ann Mitchell led discussions with colleagues in the University's Buildings Office and the team at John McLaughlin Architects, resulting in the issuing of a second call for tenders. This generated four submissions, with Burns Construction ultimately being awarded the contract. Given lead times for the procurement of the various elements involved, it is planned that installation of the structure and related floor and light fittings will commence in early January 2017, with a view to it being completed prior to the month's end.

Ann Mitchell, Head of Operations, James Hardiman Library

LOOKING AHEAD: ENSURING QUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

In May 2014 the first exhibition in the Hardiman Research Building atrium, *Performing Ireland, 1904-2014: a digital journey through Irish Theatre*, was created to mark the opening of the building itself. Since then this space, and more particularly the quality of the exhibitions housed within it, has proved itself to be a major asset for the University. These exhibitions have showcased scholarship and collections in the University, attracted a diversity of audiences of all ages and generated very positive media coverage. In 2016 alone there were 37 exhibition-related stories in the local and national press and online (see Appendix).

The Hardiman Research Building Exhibitions Group has played a key role in guiding the exhibitions programme, and members have been very active in identifying exhibitions and making them happen in conjunction with other partners on and beyond the campus. The Group has also guided the imminent redevelopment of the exhibitions space, developed policies and procedures and extended the reach of our events to other locations nationally and internationally.

The President's Office, the Moore Institute and the Library among others have shown their support for the exhibitions programme by partnering to provide financial backing at regular intervals to date. There is great goodwill towards exhibitions in the Hardiman Research Building. This is evident in the huge commitment and skill invested by academic staff, archivists, support staff and others in creating major exhibitions. The end product has been consistently excellent but a major input of time, energy and imagination is always required.

The newly configured space and track record of high-quality exhibitions so far are indicators of a strong platform for the future. However, there is a real concern that the dependence on goodwill is a significant risk. Those who have risen to the challenge to date have done so generously but under time pressures which only continue to increase. Finding others willing to give the time required to turn ideas, research and collections into exhibitions is likely to become more difficult. There are significant opportunities for the University to leverage exhibitions further in partnership with other institutions as recipients of our own creations, with concomitant benefits in terms of reputational gain and recruitment of academic staff and students, especially graduate students. Building strong relationships can result in our hosting exhibitions created elsewhere too. Such opportunities are unlikely to be fully realised through our present arrangements, despite the successes recorded in the Outreach section of this report. The original remit of the Exhibition Group to attend to matters of policy has been expanding unintentionally to include a substantial commitment to operational matters including project management, funding, publicity, and engagement.

The Group's report for 2014/15 drew attention to the need for longer-term resourcing, specifically an annual exhibitions budget to ensure high-quality programming and a member of staff to facilitate the creation of exhibitions by providing end-to-end project management and by developing relationships to maximise impact for the University. To date, individual grants have been made (in support of the Abbey, Tim Robinson, Yeats, and 1916 exhibitions), supplemented by funding from the Moore Institute and the James Hardiman Library. In practice such financial arrangements are time-consuming to put in place and precarious. The Group believes that additional, recurrent resourcing would enable initiatives such as a fund to support related publications (accompanying books, catalogues, pamphlets, marketing collateral); conferences, workshops and seminars together with public-facing events; as well as the

development of a repository through which exhibitions would be digitally available, offering hosting organisations opportunities to view NUI Galway's touring exhibitions.

Ranking systems increasingly take account of reputational reach through international connectivity. The Chair of the Group received a request during the year for information on the number of exhibitions held in the University annually as part of the data gathering for one of the ranking exercises. It would therefore seem timely, if exhibitions are recognised as of strategic value in the Hardiman Research Building and indeed at other locations across the campus, to establish a resource base to sustain and grow this activity.

John Cox, University Librarian, and Liz McConnell, Director, Public Affairs, President's Office

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF MEDIA COVERAGE

Source	Media	Headline	Date
Galway Advertiser	PRESS	The Centenary Conversations, Galway	10-Nov-2016
Irish Independent Special Supplement	PRESS	NUI Galway is pleased to host this challenging national conversation'	05-Nov-2016
Irish Independent Special Supplement	PRESS	BINGE AT THE FRINGE	05-Nov-2016
galwaynews.ie	INTERNET	Thousands to attend Culture Night events across Galway	16-Sep-2016
galwaybayfm.ie	INTERNET	Thousands to attend Culture Night events across Galway	16-Sep-2016
connachttribune.ie	INTERNET	Thousands to attend Culture Night events across Galway	16-Sep-2016
advertiser.ie	INTERNET	War and revolution in the west of Ireland	30-Jun-2016
Galway Advertiser	PRESS	War and revolution in the west of Ireland	30-Jun-2016
Tuam Herald	PRESS	Yeats Exhibition in Thoor Ballylee	29-Jun-2016
Clare Champion	PRESS	Yeats exhibition opens at Thoor Ballylee	24-Jun-2016
advertiser.ie	INTERNET	After a wet winter, sun shines on Thoor Ballylee as Sabina Higgins opens Yeats exhibition	23-Jun-2016
Galway Advertiser	PRESS	After a wet winter, sun shines on Thoor Ballylee as Sabina Higgins opens Yeats exhibition	23-Jun-2016
Galway Advertiser	PRESS	After a wet winter sun shines on Thoor Ballylee as Sabina Higgins opens Yeats exhibition	23-Jun-2016
Clare Champion	PRESS	Higgins to open Yeats exhibition	17-Jun-2016
Sligo Champion	PRESS	Yeats day party goes off in style	14-Jun-2016
Galway Advertiser	PRESS	Dear Thoor Ballylee Friends and Supporters...	09-Jun-2016
Sligo Champion	PRESS	Inaugural Nora Niland Lecture	07-Jun-2016
Independent.ie	INTERNET	Why did Maud Gonne hate Yeats's 'Easter 1916' masterpiece? We're about to find out	02-Jun-2016
Sunday Business Post Property	PRESS	Events Calendar	08-May-2016

Source	Media	Headline	Date
Irishtimes.com	INTERNET	An Irishwoman's Diary on Máire Ní Cillín, Maud Gonne and 1916	02-May-2016
Sligo Champion	PRESS	PERFECT TEN	26-Apr-2016
Sunday Business Post Property	PRESS	Events calendar	24-Apr-2016
Sligo Champion	PRESS	EntertainingSligo	19-Apr-2016
sligochampion.ie	INTERNET	Top 10 happenings in and around Sligo 1 Davy and Leo - A special night of acoustic music is... Entertainment	16-Apr-2016
sligochampion.ie	INTERNET	Top 10 happenings in and around Sligo	09-Apr-2016
Irish Times Ticket	PRESS	THE TICKET SEVEN DAYS	08-Apr-2016
Irish Times Ticket	PRESS	ART	08-Apr-2016
NewsTalk	BROADCAST	Discussion about some good things to do tonight.	04-Apr-2016
sligochampion.ie	INTERNET	Top 10 happenings in and around Sligo 1 Davy and Leo - A special night of acoustic music is in store for Sligo as two Irish Music Icons, Davy Carton and Leo Moran of The Saw Doctors bring their tour to SIXTH on Teeling in Sligo on Friday April 1st.	02-Apr-2016
Independent.ie	INTERNET	Top 10 happenings in and around Sligo	02-Apr-2016
galwayindependent.com	INTERNET	Marking 1916	30-Mar-2016
advertiser.ie	INTERNET	Children of the Revolution	30-Mar-2016
NewsTalk	BROADCAST	Discussion about some good things to do tonight.	30-Mar-2016
Galway Independent	PRESS	Marking 1916	30-Mar-2016
oceanfm.ie	INTERNET	Yeats and the West launches at The Model	24-Mar-2016
Sligo Weekender	PRESS	NUI Galway brings Yeats exhibition to The Model	24-Mar-2016
Leitrim Observer	PRESS	Yeats & The West Tour	23-Mar-2016
Sligo Champion	PRESS	Exhibition celebrating Yeats and the West opens at Model	22-Mar-2016