



The Heritage Council Conservation Internship Scheme

10 YEARS ON

10 years of collaboration between the Heritage Council
and Irish cultural institutions

2007 2017

2018
EUROPEAN YEAR
OF CULTURAL
HERITAGE
#EuropeForCulture

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



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Published by the Heritage Council of Ireland.

ISBN: 978-1-906304-46-1

Publication date: Kilkenny, October 2018.

Photography courtesy of the following institutions: National Archives, Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, The Library of Trinity College Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland, National Library of Ireland.

Cover Image: National Library of Ireland: Paper repair of fragile leaflet 'The Irish Republic', dated 1917, as part of conservation of NLI ephemera for Decade of Commemorations.

Back Cover Image: The Library, Trinity College: Detail from Dublin Royal Charter of Deed Patent Granted by King Charles II to Thomas Lestrangle (MS 2027) after restoration.



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Conservation Intern Elodie Leveque at the National Library of Ireland removing tape from a poster printed in Dublin, 1919.



FOREWORD

The Heritage Council is delighted to launch this publication on its Conservation Internship Scheme during the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

The publication provides a tangible marker of the scheme's success: recording its history and evolution and giving an overview of its benefits to the individual conservation interns and the host institutions. It highlights the skills gain and networking, at the heart of the scheme, and the vitally important work done for the conservation of a wide range of Ireland's patrimony.

From reading this publication, we hope that the reader will also gain a clearer understanding of the public benefits achieved through the conservation of heritage collections. Such work encourages exhibitions, research, the facilitation of loans between institutions, and enables the digitisation of collections, bringing our heritage to an even wider public nationally and internationally.

The Heritage Council is proud of its association over ten years with the conservation departments of the cultural institutions involved in this scheme, the Library of Trinity College, National Gallery of Ireland, National Library of Ireland, National Archives of Ireland, Chester Beatty Library and Hugh Lane Gallery. It is worth underlining, however, the benefits that such a collegial scheme brings in contrast to an individual internship hosted by any one single institution. Such benefits include:

Oversight: A coherence has evolved arising from the Heritage Council's oversight of the scheme. This covers the recruitment and review of the intern's work and experience encouraging a consistency of experience for interns across all sites.

Peer to Peer Learning: Each year's intake can be seen as a cohort. Under the auspices of this programme the interns meet about once a month for stimulating peer to peer learning and to discuss the work and training undertaken. The programme actively promotes the building of such networks among new conservators located in Dublin.

Promoting the work of the conservator to the general public: During the annual Heritage Week all interns are required to present on a project they have worked on during their internship - thus providing the public with an insight in the work on the conservation departments, and allowing the interns an important opportunity, and platform, for public presentation.

International reputation for Ireland: Interns apply to join the scheme from across Europe and further afield, reflecting the reputation of the scheme internationally. The scheme allows one of the rare opportunities to gain experience in a large institution where technical hand skills can be honed and experience gained within the varied functions of a big institution - preparing works for display, for loan, for preservation and the conducting of collection surveys. These internships offer an important chance to receive early career mentoring by internationally regarded, and accredited, conservators and the opportunity to work on significant objects and projects, over a period of up to a year.

Many of those that have completed the Heritage Council internship programme have now gone on to develop significant careers, here in Ireland and abroad, which reflects the value of the experience they have gained in the scheme.

The recently launched Heritage Council *Strategic Plan 2018-2022, Heritage at the Heart*, declares that Ireland will be internationally recognised as a centre of excellence in heritage management, conservation and community engagement. This by now well-regarded scheme fulfils, already, much of that aspiration and may act as an inspiration for others.

The Conservation Internship Scheme is a very effective way to promote programmes that care for Ireland's heritage, while creating high value opportunities for young people to participate in the safeguarding and protection of that heritage.

The spirit of this scheme is central to the intentions acknowledged in the Council's Strategic Plan as well as those of European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

We acknowledge with thanks the work of Dr Hugh Maguire both in his role as the author of the main text of this publication, and his earlier role in the establishment of the scheme in 2006 as the Museums and Archives officer with the Heritage Council at the time.

We look forward to continuing this good work with our partners in the cultural institutions, and the relevant professional staff, at the Library of Trinity College, The National Gallery of Ireland, the National Library of Ireland, the National Archives of Ireland, and the Chester Beatty Library.

Michael Parsons,
Chairman, An Chomhairle Oidhreachta, the Heritage Council

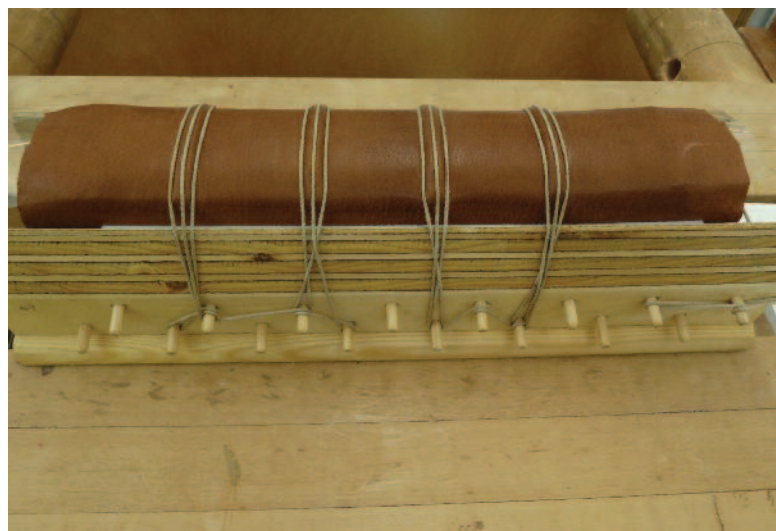
RESPONSE FROM INSTITUTIONS

Trinity College Dublin

“ The Heritage Council internships have been very impactful in contributing to the preservation of the collections at Trinity College Library. Our interns have achieved the conservation of many valuable items that would otherwise have not been prioritised for treatment, thereby ensuring their survival, and making them available for study and enjoyment. The conservation department benefits from the flow of new ideas from recent graduates and supervising staff reciprocate by sharing their expertise on the collections and its materials, and conservation techniques. In this nurturing and inspiring environment the Heritage Council interns are given the opportunity to test their knowledge, put theory into practise, and experience how a professional conservation department serves its institution. Our interns have the opportunity to handle and treat historically important pieces from a world renown collection, an experience that remains with them for life. ”

Susie Bioletti

Keeper of Preservation and Conservation and Bees, The Library of Trinity College Dublin.



Old Library Trinity College Dublin: Before restoration and after lace-in board binding of Rembert Dodoens *A Nieuwe Herball or Historie of Plantes*. Translator from French version to English version: Henry Lyte Esquier (1578).

National Library of Ireland

“ Since 2007 the NLI has had a successful collaboration with the Heritage Council on the conservation internship programme, which hosts recent graduates of specialised paper and/or book conservation courses. The scheme supports the professional development of young conservators and provides valuable support for the NLI Conservation Department in its remit to preserve and conserve the collections of the library. The internship programme has enabled the preservation and conservation of hundreds of unique library items; treatments have ranged from low intervention to undertaking in-depth and often innovative work.

Overall, the internship greatly benefits the NLI, with an annual influx of fresh ideas from young professionals. It demonstrates the value of collaboration, cross-generational skills-sharing and international networks. We are grateful to the Heritage Council for their support for this excellent initiative.”

Sandra Collins

Director, National Library of Ireland

Chester Beatty Library

“ The Heritage Council's internship scheme has proved to be invaluable for both the museum and participating students. For the students it has offered a unique opportunity to develop their practical skills while continuing their technical training; as time is provided to explore new ideas and research. For recent graduates it also gives first-hand experience of working within a busy museum environment; which is essential to their career development.

Conversely mentoring and working with the interns has provided a great opportunity for the Chester Beatty's conservators to continue their professional development. The supervision and training of recent graduates has provided the impetus for extensive discussion on treatment approaches; this has resulted in the development or refinement of conservation practices within the Library. From a practical point of view the interns have had a very significant impact on not only the individual objects that they treat; but also the Collections as a whole, through their involvement in every aspect of work carried out in the busy Conservation Department.”

Jessica Baldwin

Head of Collections and Conservation, Chester Beatty Library

National Gallery of Ireland

“ The National Gallery of Ireland is delighted to collaborate with the Heritage Council on its Conservation Internship Scheme. Over the ten years of the Scheme, the Gallery has gone through great changes with the building development, collection care during this period, and the development of shared conservation services with other cultural institutions such as the Crawford Gallery in Cork and IMMA. At the same time, it has hosted interns from Ireland and Europe. While the interns benefit from the opportunity to continue their professional training with the conservators in our department, they have brought valuable techniques and new approaches which have aided the Gallery during this period of change. Several have remained with the conservation team in the Gallery after the internships.

The public benefit of the scheme has been manifest in recent exhibitions at the NGI: for example the recent exhibition, *Creating History: Stories of Ireland in Art (2016)* contained many paintings on which the HC conservation interns carried out important conservation work over the years. Several important European masterpieces, conserved over the past 3 years by HC interns, are now an integral part of the new permanent display inaugurated with the reopening of the Gallery's historic building in June 2017. ”

Simone Mancini

Head of Conservation, National Gallery of Ireland

National Archives of Ireland

“ The National Archives is delighted to collaborate with the Heritage Council conservation internship scheme, and the Valuation Office. Together the three organisations are working on the *Map Conservation Project* at the National Archives of Ireland which aims to conserve approximately 11,000 land valuation survey maps. A large number of the maps plans are in such poor condition that weak areas are at risk of being torn off and valuable annotated information lost.

It is really important to get these maps conserved as they are a rich resource in for genealogical researchers who might wish to identify the exact location of their family's home during the 1830s-1860s.

This project could not have progressed over the last 5 years without the support of external funding from the Valuation office and work of the interns taken on as part of the scheme.

The scheme benefits both the intern and the institution. The internship provides the intern with the opportunity to refine skills and learn new techniques as well as gaining the experience of working with experienced conservators and the institution gains a trained conservator who is seeking to put their learnt skills into practice.

At the National Archives, the intern develops an understanding of how conserved documents will be used and accessed by researchers in the future. They gain an insight into how that impacts on the treatment solutions and wider collection care issues. ”

John McDonough

Director, National Archives of Ireland



National Gallery of Ireland: Etienne Jeauret (1699-1789), *The Triumph of Amphitrite*. Cat. No. NGI 1656. Before and after conservation treatments by Peggy Reme. Photos © Peggy Reme, courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland.

Institute of Conservator-Restorers in Ireland

“ The Institute of Conservator-Restorers in Ireland (ICRI) congratulate the Heritage Council for having the vision and generosity to fund Conservation Internships for over 10 years. As the only internship programme in Ireland that provides for salaried practical professional training in the conservation of Cultural Heritage, its value to our profession and to the preservation of collections in the country is immeasurable. The internship programme has enabled participating conservation departments to make available post-training opportunities to recent conservation graduates from across the globe, so that they may hone their skills, and put theory into practice within a nurturing working environment. The internship scheme also has helped address a deficit in conservation education in third sector education in Ireland. With the exodus of Irish students interested in conservation education to the UK and continental Europe, it has put the country on the map as a destination for newly graduated conservators. With interns coming from across Europe and beyond, Ireland is now acknowledged for its role in the education of conservators following their formal programmes. Equally the relationships between conservation departments providing internships with conservation teaching programmes is deepening and the Irish experience as an adjunct to formal courses is being strengthened. Similarly the network between interns has created stronger bonds and new connections within the conservation centres in Ireland.

ICRI has seen an increase in student members as most if not all of the interns join us when they arrive, thereby supporting our institute, and participating in the training, networking and conference opportunities we provide. Of note is ICRI's biennial conference which provides a platform for the interns to showcase their skills and reach out to experts in their particular field. This symbiotic relationship has helped ICRI and the conservation community evolve to be the best we can, and to present the profession in Ireland as world-class. ”

Susie Bioletti
Chairperson, ICRI

OVERVIEW OF THE HERITAGE COUNCIL CONSERVATION INTERNSHIP SCHEME 2007-17

DR HUGH MAGUIRE

Introduction

Since its inception in 1995 the Heritage Council has had a wide remit for policy advice on aspects of Ireland's cultural heritage, from landscape through to the built environment, wildlife to archaeology. Underpinned by legislation, the *Heritage Act, 1995*, and over two decades of practice and engagement with local communities, the Council has come to be recognised as one of the standard bearers in promoting the safeguarding of the nation's rich and diverse patrimony. One area of particular concern has been the welfare of Ireland's material heritage - specifically collections, archives and libraries. Through the active support of conservation practitioners along with the commissioning of scholarly reports and surveys, the Council has sought to raise public awareness and to provide practical assistance to the care and welfare of these treasures. Through the promotion of careful custodianship the Council has been encouraging a culture of 'good housekeeping' - minding what we have. Typically the 1997 project on 'Taking Stock of our Ecclesiastical Heritage' sought, among other aims, to give advice on the basic care of places of worship and their contents.

In its promotion of the care of material culture the Council has always been keen to support professional organisations, those at the coal face so to speak. Such bodies include the Irish Museums Association, the Archives & Records Association (formerly Society of Archivists) conservations bodies such as the Institute of Conservators-Restorers in Ireland (ICRI), among many. In the absence of formal training for objects-based conservation the Council has promoted, where possible and for over twenty years, overseas professional training and on-site guidance in collections care - often under the umbrella of the well-established Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.

This programme is the best-known example of the Council's commitment to material culture. Since its launch (2007) it has grown to accommodate the most significant collections in the country, from national institutions to small community-led projects. All have different remits and aspirations. Yet such institutions share a fundamental understanding of the need for collections care - the bedrock of any museum or gallery internationally. The raising of operational standards, and increased professionalism, has been remarkable, and this is no small tribute to the commitment of the Council and programme participants. There is now a greater understanding of the effort needed to care for historic collections - care that benefits our enjoyment as visitors and members of the public as well as safeguarding the cultural inheritance of generations to come, within Ireland and for the many visitors from overseas.



National Archives of Ireland: Part of the Maps Collection of the Valuation Office.

Separately, but complementary, the delivery by the Heritage Council of an annual grants scheme for small-scale conservation projects, and community projects with a conservation component, has resulted in the practical support for the care and welfare of objects. Grant schemes have also helped raise awareness within organisations and within voluntary community groups of the need for best preservation and conservation practice.

Such a scheme has provided an opportunity to support a range of diverse conservation projects, from delicate collections of historic Irish lace to works of fine art and fragile plaster statues at the much-visited pilgrimage shrine at Knock, Co Mayo. Works conserved are both of local and international relevance, from the beautifully delineated estate maps of the Farnham Estate, Cavan (Coll. Cavan County Museum)¹⁵⁷⁵³ or a portrait of the Tuscan architect, Alessandro Galilei (1691-1737), (Coll. The Castletown Foundation)¹⁵⁶³². One of the most significant supports from the Council has been towards the care and welfare of a truly remarkable set of Late-Medieval vestments held in Waterford Museum of Treasures. This set, unique in these islands (having survived the ravages of more turbulent times), is one of the most treasured holdings at Waterford's award-winning museum. It has been the subject of slow meticulous conservation, as funds have allowed, and which the Heritage Council has part supported when possible. While such a project might be seen as 'high-level', and indeed of international significance, others have been more low-key but no less worthy of support. And often an item of little artistic significance may have huge local sentimental or historical value.

Although the actual sums of money were sometimes small the Council's support nonetheless helped to leverage further support funding, at community or local authority level. Importantly this same support helped to ensure, and safeguard, the application of best practice principles, ensuring that conservation intervention was minimal and executed by properly trained conservators, including accredited members of the Institute for Conservators-Restorers in Ireland - ICRI.).

Ireland has many collections of international significance. And there is certainly much to be conserved! From rare parchment manuscripts in the Old Library at Trinity College Dublin, metal work in the National Museum of Ireland, seventeenth-century paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland, to work by Francis Bacon at the Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane, the wealth and diversity of our publicly-owned collections sometimes surprises us. Conservators and their specific finely-tuned skills are absolutely crucial in preserving these treasures for ourselves and future generations. A range of challenges are acknowledged internationally and are being highlighted by organisations such as the Getty Conservation Center, USA, and inter-governmental agencies such as ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property). Climate change, pollution, pressures from uncontrolled tourism, all compound the risks confronting such objects, over and above sheer age and time itself. It is recognised that conservation and training in this sector is of paramount importance in the preservation battle. So



National Library of Ireland: Conservation of rare posters by Mariam Marco Navarro, conservation intern 2014-15.

while we rely on, and develop, heritage-related tourism we also need to develop training for those who can help sustain the visitor and local interest. As noted (2018) by Jane Colbourne, Programme Leader for Conservation of Fine Art at Northumbria University, Newcastle, the Heritage Council internship scheme encourages ongoing attention to important collections and, especially in the absence of a conservation training school 'shows deep foresight in promoting the preservation of Ireland's unique cultural heritage.'

Fortunately the development of architectural conservation skills is well developed and there are now a range of certified-professional programmes. But for material culture the outlook is less developed, although this will hopefully change in times to come. As noted there is currently no formal training in Ireland for object-based conservation. Nonetheless, there have been successful courses in the past. Between 2001 and 2007 training was provided in furniture conservation at the National Centre of Excellence for Furniture Design and Wood Technology, GMIT, Letterfrack. The three-year intensive Bachelor of Science Programme in the Conservation and Restoration of Furniture and Wooden Objects was completed by four cohorts of graduates. Conservation Letterfrack itself has had an internship programme in place since 2004 and has attracted students from the University of Amsterdam, the Fachhochschule [University of Applied Sciences] at Cologne, Potsdam and Hildesheim, as well as the University of Helsinki and West Dean College, England.

In spite of the lack of formal training, but as a corollary of its promotion for preventive conservation in general, the Heritage Council has provided, since the late 1990s, ongoing small-scale support for object-based conservation training through grants administered by ICRI. This is in addition to training on care of collections as part of its Museums' programme. Those interested in pursuing the challenging, lengthy and demanding course of study which leads to such a stimulating career must, by necessity, study abroad, usually in the United Kingdom. Through such grants for training it became obvious over time that support itself was something of a one-way mechanism. Trainees were studying at colleges such as Camberwell College of Arts and Northumbria University, and obtaining well-regarded qualifications. But their newly-forged skills were being lost to Ireland. Essentially there was nothing structured to come back to. The experience required to work in an organisation was hard to come by. The few organisations with equipped and professional conservation laboratories obviously needed trained, but experienced, staff. Where to get such experience? It was recognised that there needed to be some sort of internship programme, firstly to encourage these new graduates to gain experience in Ireland itself but also, and importantly, for Irish collections, and professionals, to benefit from the latest ideas and techniques, for which, one might presume, the teaching institutions would be to the fore.

With the support of a range of Dublin-based institutions a pilot internship training scheme was initiated in 2006. Its success ensured a subsequent roll out of the scheme. With little fanfare but with due dedication and diligence the scheme has secured its place in the State's conservation infrastructure. It can only now grow to something even more significant. It already has an international reputation among the forty-plus participants in the programme, who have come from across continental Europe and as far afield as Australia. A mere ten years on it has also become part of the recognised norm of the wider conservation training sector, is advertised on professional career listings internationally, and attracts world-class candidates. An effective example of institutional collaboration it reflects well on all involved and illustrates how collaboration can lead to effective outcomes. Above all it is providing professional experience to a new generation of conservators, it is improving Ireland's reputation in the sector internationally, and it is contributing to the safeguarding of our precious heritage resources.

Practically, and from the outset, the scheme could only operate in an institution with an equipped conservation laboratory. Such a facility is not exactly commonplace, requiring significant capital investment by the parent body. For example, at time of writing only one Local Authority museum has the advantage of a professionally equipped conservation laboratory. Of course the many private conservators have facilities appropriate to their discipline. But these are often small scale and equipped for solo use. So it was not anticipated that the internships would work with private conservators, although over time and with appropriate resourcing that too might change.

The collections in each of the five participant institutions (six if we include Dublin City Gallery: the Hugh Lane, as part of pilot project) have benefitted from the scheme. Stretched resources wise, as so many cultural institutions are - especially in what was a period of severe economic challenge from 2008 onwards, it is inevitable that another pair of hands on deck, so to speak, is a considerable asset. On top of additional support in the studio all the while applying skills to save Irish collections we can acknowledge the positive consequences of new personalities in the workplace, fresh blood, new ideas, enthusiasm, keenness to learn and other energies.

In practical terms the internships represent a creative partnership between the Heritage Council and other National Cultural Institutions (NCI). The scheme underlines the benefit of shared initiatives promoting the Council's agenda for the protection for our material heritage. Practical day-to-day management of the scheme is, of course, devolved to the partner institution. But as co-sponsor the Heritage Council engages with the selection process and thereby ensures that the Council's own remit is promoted.

Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane

Across host institutions the internships provide front-line care and intervention to protect international, national and local collections. They also provide invaluable training and career experience to the recipient - experience not always easily obtained in the classroom environment. The initial pilot project partnered with Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane. A survey of its collection highlighted the manner in which modern conservation is no longer based just on manual skill sets but requires a knowledge of technical databases and an ability to create such resources. The survey assessed the condition and construction of every painting in the collection, in all their technical and historic diversity. The core data acknowledged what future interventions might be necessary to secure and stabilise the work - a useful tool in a gallery with such a busy exhibition schedule. The data allows a rapid response to whether a work can, or should, be allowed on loan, a crucial element in acknowledging the merit of collections mobility nationally, an objective of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Such a survey reminds us of the cultural significance and wealth of the Dublin City collection and in general contributes to our overall knowledge of an art work and artist's output. Significantly a large number of paintings were found to have additional, undocumented paintings and sketches on the reverse sides of their canvases (many of which had been hidden by old backboards etc.).

The exhibition, Hugh Lane: 100 Years (2008-09), arguably the most significant in the gallery's history, was aided by the internship with interventions including repairs and structural support to works such as the

portrait (c. 1904) of *George Russell* (1867-1935) by Count Casimir de Markievicz (1874-1932), husband of Constance (1868-1927). Interventions on a painting such as *La Dame aux Perles* (1901) by Sir John Lavery (1856-1941) was more technically complex and ethically demanding - assessing and altering where deemed necessary the work of earlier conservators. Addressing the physical composition of more contemporary loan items, such as *Das Ende Des Alphabets* (1989) by Martin Kippenberger (1953-97), posed more complex challenges but nonetheless added to the training and skills set benefit of the internship.

Trinity College, Dublin

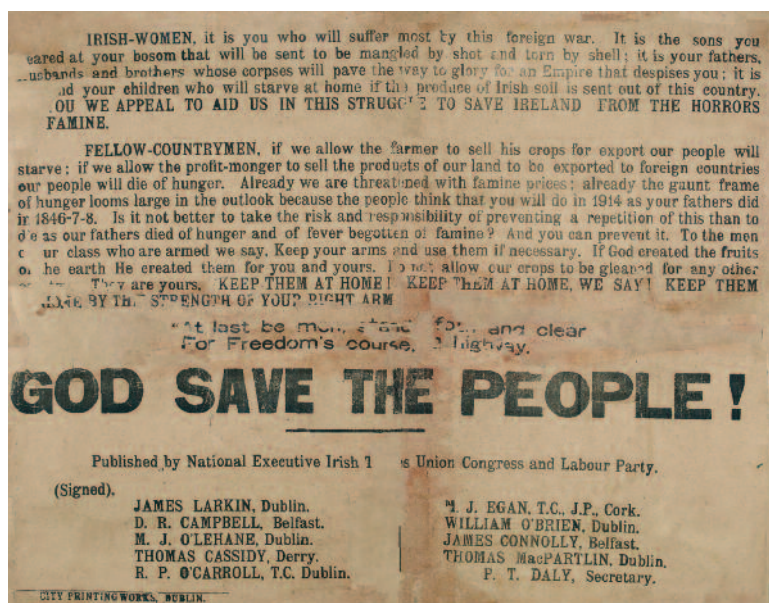
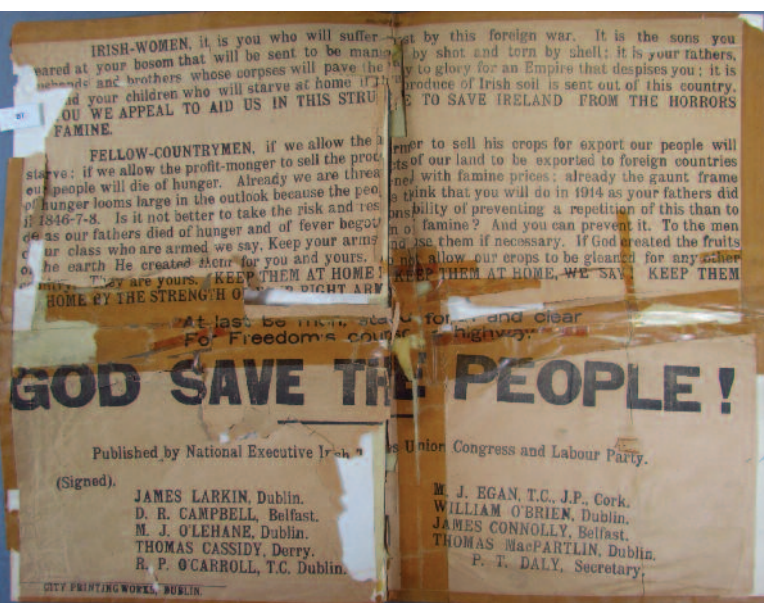
Such contemporary issues do not readily spring to mind when one thinks of historic university collections, such as those at Trinity College, Dublin. But while Trinity holds huge collections across disciplines, scientific, digital and artistic, it is of course the great historic Old Library that is best known; the Library attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. Such success brings its own pressures and the conservation team has the challenge of maintaining access while preserving what is inherently fragile and vulnerable. The Heritage Council - supported internship is complemented by a training support system which exposes the recipient not only to the demands of a busy conservation laboratory but to issues specific to the University's needs where preservation serves a practical use, allowing scholars, for example, to obtain facts and figures from any given material. Over the years some of Trinity's interns have worked on behind-the-scenes collections including material from World War I, such as watercolour sketches from the Captain Beresford Munday Collection (MS 3420A/1-7 C). Complementing his diaries, also in the collection, the sketches were created during his war-time captivity (1916-18), following the infamous Siege of Kut-el-Amara (1915-6). Camille Dekeyser (intern, 2015) worked on an overlooked collection of photographs of



The Library, Trinity College Dublin: Royal Charter of Deed Patent Granted by King Charles II to Thomas Lestrange (MS 2027).
Before and during conservation.

students from the School of Medicine who fought in the same conflict. She also had the chance to work on material acknowledging the complex inextricably-linked histories of Ireland and Great Britain at this time such as the papers of Robert Erskine Childers (1870-1922) and his wife Mary Alden Childers (née Osgood), better known as Molly Childers (1875-1964). The material included Molly's work for various war relief charities, for which she received an MBE from King George V in 1918, along with Erskine Childers diaries during his attendance at the Treaty negotiations and his role in the Civil War (1922) until his last entry on 3 November of the same year.

Where possible, and in keeping with its hands-on training philosophy the Trinity internship promotes flexibility playing to the intern's strengths and developing specialism, from parchment through to photographs. Projects can address the practical and aesthetic with material from across European cultural traditions. Interns have worked on Greek manuscripts (MS 373/1-3; MS 27), a 16th-century Psalter (1537) and a Royal Charter (MS 2027) from 1666 - where the parchment had become brittle over time and the heavy impressive seal an encumbrance. This 'Deed Patent' was granted by King Charles II (1630-85) to Thomas Lestrange. The delicate cleaning and practical rehousing of the now-stabilised seal allows a document like this to be consulted in the first instance but also displayed - if needs be. Its aesthetic elements, fine calligraphy and decorative embellishment speaks to us in a way that the now archaic prose may actually appear alien or strange. Of less grandiose form but of huge social interest the extensive photographic collection of the Islandbridge-based University Boat Club provides the viewer with a fine record of a significant University club, allowing us to wonder at the changing conventions of photography, fashion, male attire, and even gender politics.



National Library of Ireland: Before conservation treatment by Gabrielle Vergnoux, conservation intern 2013-14, this rare 1913 poster from trade union movement, was brittle and illegible. After meticulous treatment, the poster is stable and the text is legible.

It is now digitised and available to readers online.

The National Library of Ireland

In close proximity to Trinity and with a holdings of similarly international significance the National Library of Ireland has partnered with the scheme from the outset. One of our key national repositories, its holdings are integral to the national memory, with over 10 million items. The internship scheme complements the Library's existing menu of educational and traineeship programmes such as its research studentships offering recent PhD graduates the opportunity to work on the Library's huge holdings of primary source material. Similarly the Heritage Council-supported internship allows a recent graduate of a recognised conservation training programme to work on this same collection. Not only is the recipient acquiring necessary professional skills, such as project management and team work, but the results of their endeavours are contributing to the Library's efforts to maintain and care for the national collection. The preparation of material for photography and digitisation purposes of course has the added benefit of contributing to wider national agendas on digitisation and public accessibility.

As with the other partner institutions interns have come from all over Europe; the Library scheme typically attracts some twenty applicants annually. This wider recognition is noted by training institutions staff and professionals. As recently as the 2017 Oslo Meeting of IADA - Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Archiv - Bibliotheks Und Graphikrestauratoren (International Association of Book and Paper Conservators), the National Library's was scheme and the internship programme in general was noted as a distinctive benefit to the wider European training agenda for young professionals

The Library's holdings pose distinctive conservation challenges. In addition to the thousands of books, much material is particularly fragile and vulnerable - items such as newspapers, playbills, election posters, often as not printed on the cheapest of mass-produced papers. From the outset the interns have worked on this diversity of material and receive hand on training and experience in assessing the relevant treatments and care - often working within tight budgets and even tighter timeframes. Other projects might typically include colourful illuminated parchments from the Office of the Chief Herald or recently, a suite of sketches by William Brocas RHA (1794-1868), where the intern helped to alleviate the serious damage caused by previous inappropriate storage and interventions.

The National Gallery of Ireland

With most of its significant works on public view the National Gallery of Ireland, perhaps more than other institutions in the scheme, reveals the work of conservators to public scrutiny on a daily basis. The most valuable and interesting objects are generally on view. While the climatic conditions can be controlled, the public display of art brings its own risks - potentially, and thankfully in rare circumstances, malicious attack. The Gallery internship benefits particularly from the experience of assessing a complex array of conservation priorities with the needs and wishes of the visiting public, ensuring, along with curators, that works can be enjoyed but also preserved for generations to come.

Under the supervision of senior staff interns work on an array of works from the collection - both from the Irish and international collections. Franziska Stold (intern, 2012-13) worked on *Patrons Day at the*



National Gallery of Ireland: William Turner de Lond (1767-1826), *George IV, King of England entering Dublin* (1821).

Cat No: NGI 1148. Photo © National Gallery of Ireland.

Seven Churches, Glendalough (NGI 4587) by the little-known Maria Pillsbury Taylor (1776-1820), while more recently Corrie Tubman (intern, 2015-16) worked on the well-known *George IV, King of England, Entering Dublin* (NGI, 1148) by William Turner (1767-1826), in advance of the rearrangement of the Gallery's 'hang' for its reopening in 2017. In considering the potential of shared services for National Cultural Institutions, especially in the area of conservation, Corrie was seconded to carry out work on the collections of the Crawford Gallery, Cork, and the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). This had the benefit of providing further training and experience and of course allowing insights into the efficacy of such shared service initiatives now or at some future date. Such diversity of experience, not available in a private studio, the over view of different collections and project management, have encouraged her to set up her own conservation studio where she has executed work for the National Trust, Northern Ireland, as well as Hillsborough Castle, Co Down. As she has noted the internship:

“... had a positive impact on my career on the whole... the National Gallery is the only place in Ireland where Irish [painting] conservators can come back to, to get relevant work experience in a renowned institution that will provide us with a solid grounding to look for future work (particularly in Ireland)... The Heritage Council internship has helped many conservators from many different countries but I think it's particularly crucial for Irish conservators who are starting out and who may want to come back to Ireland, like myself, and set up business.”

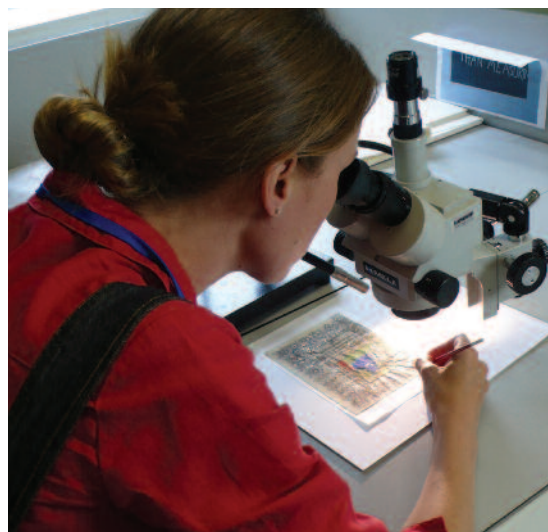
The Chester Beatty Library

The Chester Beatty Library has been to the fore in promoting the internship scheme, being part of the initial pilot the success of which encouraged the role out of the wider scheme; it has also received generous support from the Library's Patrons. As with all of the institutions, a core part of the Chester Beatty's mission is to train and mentor newly-graduated conservators for the duration of the internship. The time and commitment implied by such mentoring can all too easily be overlooked and yet it is the hands-on, daily engagement, between intern and mentor that brings crucial benefits to the programme. Of all Irish collections, national, local and private, the Chester Library's holdings are perhaps the most cosmopolitan, ranging across centuries, cultures and continents, from Mughal India to Imperial China, Edo Japan to early twentieth century Paris; from satirical prints (1790s) on the subject of the French Revolution (1789), to mezzotints by the Irish printmaker Thomas Frye (1710-62).

The richness and complexity of the collection, with many requests for items on external loan, ensures interns are exposed to the demands of tight time frames and the exhibition pressures of far-flung overseas institutions such as the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore. Preparing works for exhibition, domestically or internationally, the interns are typically encouraged to engage with a wide array of external expertise at institutions such as the British Library, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, or the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Such consultations, both intellectually and operationally, allow the intern and staff to review the conservation methodologies utilised elsewhere encouraging an informed opinion for decisions being taken in Dublin. Similarly the intern helps promote the Chester Beatty's digitisation agenda, complementing ambitions for Ireland's digital profile but also that of overseas organisation. In 2017 the then intern worked on the digitisation of a *Life of Alexander Newskij* (CBL - W 151) - a project shared with the St Petersburg State University, Russian Federation as well as a printed version of *Cihan - numa* (*Mirror of the World*) by the Islamic scholar Mustafa bin Abdullah (1609-57), sometimes known as Hacı Halife.



Chester Beatty Library: Alice Derham (Conservation-Intern 2017-180) repairing a damaged late eighteenth-century miniature painting.



Chester Beatty Library: Rachel Sawicki consolidating friable pigments on a Book of Hours folio from France.

The National Archives

Although unable to take part in the early stages of the programme the National Archives has benefited from the experience of other cultural institutions. Rather than a sequence of varied projects the Archives' Conservation Department has, instead, one very large-scale targeted project, underway since 2013. This is in partnership with another State organisation - the Valuation Office. Its vast collection of nineteenth-century valuation maps (1830s-74), forming part of the extensive Griffith's Valuation - the survey for taxation purposes executed under the supervision of Sir Richard Griffith (1784-1878) - is now housed in the Archives. Under the direction of the senior conservator, Zoë Reid, the project aims to preserve and consolidate this collection of some 11,000 maps to allow for greater access and digitisation. The ambitious, and challenging, programme benefits from a dedicated project conservator as well as an intern - in an arrangement co-funded by the Valuation Office and the Heritage Council.

The Valuation Office collection covers the twenty-six counties of the Republic of Ireland; the balance of the collection resides in the Public Records of Northern Ireland (PRONI). It consists of large Ordnance Survey printed planographic maps (98cms x 67cms) on linen backing. But what is of great interest is the annotation added by surveyors at the time. This complements a series of other information sources supporting the survey such as field and house books addressing, as implied, the valuations for fields and houses. The securement of this data is the key benefit of the programme. But even at the rate of one map a day, and that would be a considerable pace, such a project would take decades. So inevitably the project has had to initiate ambitious and time-effective methodologies to expedite the project, ensuring the safety of the collection while opening it up to research. Some maps need superficial cleaning; others, reflecting previous damage or sometimes neglect, clearly need more intrusive intervention. The interns have had opportunities to test the most effective treatments for damaged maps, which might include reconciling treatments of some technical complexity for the diverse components - paper and linen, which may need different treatments. It is of considerable benefit to the Heritage Council interns, removed from the academic environment, to address projects on this scale and to observe and learn from the workings of a small team needing to make decisions in a prompt and effective manner.



National Archives of Ireland: Maps Collection of the Valuation Office before, during and after undergoing treatment.

Conclusion

This summary is merely the tip of the iceberg in noting the diversity of hands-on experience obtained by a generation of young conservators. Not only have they obtained unparalleled experience and expertise but their efforts, and collaboration with existing staff, has helped secure many treasures from the State's patrimony; much is now better secured and persevered than might otherwise have been possible.

Over the years there has been a consistency of excellence in applicants: all meeting the main criteria of having graduated within the last two years from a recognised programme. Typically the MA in Conservation of Fine Art at Northumbria has for many years had a fruitful association. As noted by team leaders the scheme itself is 'highly regarded by... staff and students.' It is recognised in the wider sector that opportunities of this calibre where on-site training is combined with experience is rare. Professor Irene Brückle of the Staatliche Akademie des Bilden Künste Stuttgart has recently emphasised how internships of this type are crucial to institution work and a really important part of conservation education ... [benefitting]...both the conservation student or graduate and the institution.

While in Dublin interns obtain an insight into the working of a large, and often complex, institution. Each year there is a welcome freshness, responding to the ever-evolving and varying operational needs of each institution. Who knows what work may be called on for a loan? Who knows what exhibition may be in the pipeline? Across all institutions the intern is afforded a chance to fine-tune skills which may only have been considered briefly, if at all, on previous training regimes.

All are encouraged to take part in, and present, at public events. The National Library and the Chester Beatty Library typically encourage the making of brief public presentations as part of the wider public engagement activities notably during the annual national Heritage Week, itself another Heritage Council administered initiative. Unanimously interns speak favourably of their time in Ireland and the benefits to their careers. By this measure alone the scheme is a marked success. While institutions may have existing short-term schemes one considerable benefit of this programme has been the recognition that there is a wider body of young conservators across cultural intuitions, all part of a shared and coherent wider Heritage Council supported programme. The same programme has, of course, ensured an across institution level of excellence not only in body of applications but also in supporting shared initiatives between institutors. One notable benefit has been the collegiality between interns across the city-based institutions. They are actively encouraged to meet and socialise with their peers, and to experience the range of collections and conservation approaches at diverse institutions, all within walking distance of each other. The scheme benefits thereby from peer to peer learning as the cohort of interns learns from each other and builds on the experience of those in the scheme previously. Practically such contacts often as not, have benefits in the practical arena of easing accommodation and other support issues. But they also create a fluid network of contacts across the professional sphere internationally, contributing in this way to the safeguarding of a wider European heritage.

As again Professor Brückle emphasises:

“internships are one important avenue of furthering internationally, interdisciplinarity and inter-institutionality a cross-fertilization that benefits both sides, the student or graduate conservation intern and the conservation departments at institutions, and thus there are synergistic effects to be expected for both sides.”

Promoted consistently and collaboratively by the Heritage Council, and founded on principles of training and safeguarding our common heritage, this programme has successfully attracted a generation of young conservators to help safeguard Irish national collections. Many participants who have completed the Heritage Council programme are now gainfully employed or engaged in advance research and study. Typically, at time of writing Rachel Sawicki (CBL, 2009-11) works at the National Library of Australia, Canberra; Fiona McLees (CBL, 2011-12) works at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Others are contracted to work in diverse locations from the Royal Collections Trust at Windsor Castle to the Antarctic Heritage Trust, Christchurch, New Zealand.

It is imperative that we sustain our historic collections for generations to come. They belong to all of us. They are part of Ireland's unique cultural offering, a treasure for locals and an attraction for visitors alike. Conservation itself, as a word, is not too distant from conversation. Proper conservation does just that in allowing a conversation with our past. Digitisation of collections for increased public access, engagement and learning is only one side of the equation. The material digitised, print, map, historic record or painting, needs first of all to be in a state fit to be digitised. Digitisation itself may well help preserve an original object from over use. But as has been found elsewhere, more online accessibility can often encourage more visits and more users wanting to see and experience the distinctive quality of actual original object. Embracing technological innovation as we do Ireland we need also to ensure long-established manual skills are provided for and encouraged. In its own low-key way the Heritage Council's internship programme is preparing for that process.

APPENDIX ONE

CONSERVATION INTERNS

Year	Trinity College Dublin	National Gallery	National Archives	Chester Beatty Library	National Library of Ireland
06/07	-	-	-	Rachel Smith	-
07/08*	-	-		Rachel Smith	Keiko Furomoto
08 /09	Catt Baum	-	-	-	Ketti Angeli
09/10	Simona Cenci	Peggy Reme	-	Rachel Sawicki	Rebecca Regan
10/11	Brannah MacKenzie	Maria Canavan	-	Rachel Sawicki	Elodie Leveque
11/12	Amy Baldwin/ Krystyna Olczyk	Margarita Soto	-	Fiona McLees	Elodie Leveque
12/13	Rebecca de But	Franziska Stoldt	-	Julia Poirier	Audrey McGinley
13/14	Emmanuelle de Largeteau	Carrie Tubman	Sarah Graham	Josefin Bergmark-Jiminez	Gabriele Vergnoux
14/15	Camille Dekeyser	Gina Grond	Amanda Camp	Puneeta Sharma	Mariam Marco Navarro
15/16	Lucilla Ronai	Gina Grond	Ellen McKeever	Cecilia Duminico	Nicole Devereux
16/17	Erica D'Alessandro	Giulia Campagnari	-	Dorothea Müller	Claire Dantin
17/18	Benjamin Kirschner	-	Joanna Shuker	Alice Derham	Janay Laudat

* In 2007-8 Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane took part in the Conservation Internship Scheme and hosted Sarah Maisey as an intern for 12 months.

[illegible]