

## **LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND**

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### **ANNUAL REPORT 1997**

*This Annual Report will be presented to the Annual General Meeting on 6th March 1998 and will be distributed to members from 6th March on*

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### **CONTENTS**

1. Foreword
  2. Honorary Officers
  3. Executive Board
  4. Public Dimensions: the Public Library Service
  5. Libraries for Learning: Libraries and Education
  6. Libraries and healthcare
  7. Crossing Borders: European co-operation
  8. Representing the Association: Committee, Conferences, Delegations
  9. Publications
  10. Further Education Programme
  11. Annual General Meeting 1997
  12. Groups and Sections
- 

### **HONORARY OFFICERS 1997/1998**

#### **PRESIDENT**

Liam Ronayne, County Librarian, Donegal County Library

#### **VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Fionnuala Hanrahan, County Librarian, Wexford County Library

Agnes Neligan, Deputy Librarian, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

HON. SECRETARY Brendan Teeling, Senior Librarian, Dublin Corporation Public Libraries

HON. TREASURER Nora Buggy

HON. AUDITOR Liam Smith, County Librarian, Meath County Library

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD 1997/1998**

Browne, Kathleen County Librarian, Kerry County Library

Bryan, Leslie Assistant Librarian, Trinity College Dublin

Burke, Dr. Mary Head of Department, Department of Library and Information Studies, University College Dublin

Coghlan, Valerie Librarian, Church of Ireland College of Education

Ellis-King, Deirdre City Librarian, Dublin Corporation Public Libraries

Flanagan, Ruth County Librarian, Cork County Library

Hanrahan, Fionnuala County Librarian, Wexford County Library (Vice-Chair)

Lonergan, Patrick Assistant Librarian, Kildare County Library

Maher, Gerry County Librarian, Wicklow County Library

Neligan, Agnes Deputy Librarian, National University of Ireland, Maynooth (Vice-Chair)

O'Riordan, Gobnait Co-ordinator, National Sports Information Service, Limerick

O'Sullivan, Hanna City Librarian, Cork City Library  
Rabbitt, Peter Assistant Librarian, Galway County Library  
Ronayne, Liam County Librarian, Donegal County Library (Chairman)  
Sliney, Majorie Senior Librarian, Fingal County Library  
Watters, Catherine Information Manager, Coopers & Lybrand  
*The Executive Board met on 6 occasions during the year*

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## **FOREWORD FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Librarians have, to a large degree, become inured to cutbacks and increasing workloads - one wonders if stoicism should not be written into our job qualifications. Dealing with the lack of forward movement is hard enough in times of constraint, but when times improve and other sectors move dramatically ahead, while we seem stuck on the hard shoulder of the information superhighway, our feelings of unease give way to ones of anger, even despair. We welcome the massive investment in the arts, and in technology in education, but it makes the refusal to invest in any meaningful way in public library infrastructure and services all the more unacceptable. Does the government not recognise that there is something unbalanced about putting £250 million into computers and internet connections in schools and colleges when most of our primary and post-primary schools have such poor or non-existent library facilities, when the Department of Education grant allows us to buy the grand total of 1 book for every 3 or 4 pupils? For decades we have soldiered on, accepting the kind words of successive ministers, while the money went elsewhere. We have reacted with wry amusement when report after report has called for 'information one-stop shops' or 'knowledge resource centres' or 'lifelong learning centres', when these wonderful things are already under everyone's noses, but trading under the original name of 'public library'.

During 1997 the Library Association of Ireland began to focus more urgently on how we can make the case for libraries of all kinds. In the body of this *Report* you will read about the very useful Briefing Day for TDs, Senators and MEPs in February, and *Election 97: Irish libraries towards 2000* the briefing we produced for candidates.

In last year's *Annual Report* I welcomed the indication from the Department of the Environment that they were shortly to proceed with a review of public library policy. It is thus encouraging to report that this review process is in progress with substantial input from the Association. One of the issues the review will have to address is the need for a radical increase in the level of investment in library infrastructure. Much of the year was taken up in making the case for an increased grant allocation, with the two Ministers involved, before and after the Election. As members will know we were not successful according to the one measure that matters - the 1998 grant allocation - but at least we received an undertaking that the level of investment will receive attention by the review team, and by the Minister when he receives the finished report.

We were also unhappy that the Association did not receive places on the Information Society Commission or on its working groups, although library and information professionals are contributing to its work.

You will be pleased to read in this *Annual Report* of the progress being made in the consumer health information project. The *Information for health* report, on which this project builds, was one of the Association's most useful initiative's in recent years, and the consumer health information project promises to be equally beneficial. *Young readers; young citizens* the policy on services to children and young people, also discussed in the *Report*, is of special importance. I am also glad to report that we have begun to build relationships with cognate professional bodies in the areas of archives and museums, and I hope that these links will be strengthened and bear fruit in the years ahead.

If the Association is to be successful in dealing with issues at a national level we must ensure that our structures and the way we do business is as effective as possible, and must ensure that we energise and involve members in Association activities. Plans for new policy making structures at Executive Board level are designed to achieve just these objectives.

Tá súil agam go mbeidh rath ar ár gcuid oibre sna blianta atá romhainn: maidir le athbhreithniú na leabharlainne phoiblí, polasaí náisiúnta ó thaobh seirbhísí leabharlainne agus eolais de, an tionscadal eolais sláinte, agus na tionscadail eile. Tá achan ball den Cumann thar a bheith buíoch don Rúnaí agus don Cisteoir agus do baill an Bhoird Fheidhmiúcháin thar cheann an saothar íontach a dhearnadar i rith na mbliana.

**Liam Ronayne**

*President*

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### MAKING LIBRARIES AN ISSUE

The Executive Board endeavoured, during 1997, to bring libraries to the attention of politicians and other opinion-formers. The general election, held in June, provided an opportunity for such action, but preceding the election, the first "briefing day" for public representatives was organised by the Association.

#### *BRIEFING DAY*

The "briefing day" took place at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, on 19th February 1997. Members of the Dail, Seanad, and European Parliament were invited to attend the session which ran from 11.00 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Invitations were issued by county and academic librarians to their local representatives, and these were backed up by a reminder to each invitee from the President. A series of display panels, highlighting various library issues, was produced, and librarians from all sectors made themselves available to meet public representatives, each of whom was given a personal briefing on the main issues. In addition to the display panels, a series of 6 information sheets, each dealing with a key area, was produced and distributed on the day. Euro-Focus on Libraries also provided briefing material and a representative.

The attendance at the briefing day was very good, and the response from the public representatives who attended was positive. The Executive Board believes that this event, the first of its kind for the Association, was very worthwhile, and is a valuable part of what needs to be a broader strategy to raise the profile of the library sector among politicians and other opinion-formers.

#### *THE GENERAL ELECTION*

In order to take advantage of the General Election, held in June, the Association prepared a document, *ELECTION '97: Irish Libraries towards 2000*. This document was circulated to all members, requesting them to raise library issues with candidates during the election. The response of members to this initiative was very positive and the text of the document is re-printed here:

#### *ELECTION '97: Irish Libraries towards 2000*

The forthcoming General Election will elect the Dáil that will take us into the new Millennium. This new Dáil, and the government it elects, will be asked to make decisions on a wide range of issues: among these will be decisions that will affect Ireland's ability to play a full role in the information society.

Public Libraries are a publicly funded intervention in the lives of local communities, set up to achieve objectives in the educational, social and cultural fields, that have the broad support of

society at large. Because of the onset of the information society, libraries have never been so crucial: crucial in achieving equality of access to the benefits of the information society, and in effecting this country's ability to reap those benefits, in competition with other states in the EU and further afield.

The Library Association of Ireland, on behalf of Irish libraries and the people they serve, makes the following demands:

The incoming government must

1. Formally recognise the role of public libraries as **public information** centres / **knowledge resource** centres, in the context of local government reform and the building of the **information society** in Ireland.
2. commit itself to realistic levels of **investment in libraries**, and increase the allocation for new public library developments over the lifetime of the new Dáil to a level that will enable completion of all projects currently awaiting sanction.
3. take the legislative, administrative, and financial measures necessary to make Irish public libraries **free, open, and accessible** to all.
4. complete, publish, and implement a **national policy** for public libraries.
5. fund the connection of all public libraries to the **Internet**.
6. reduce **VAT** on academic and research periodicals to the lowest possible rate.
7. Give due recognition to the central role of libraries in **education** in the primary, post-primary, and third level sectors.
8. increase the per capita grant for primary **school libraries** to £10.00 per child over the lifetime of the new Dáil, and extend the service to second level schools.
9. implement the recommendations in *Information for Health*.

## **ELECTIONS TO SEANAD EIREANN**

Following the General Election, the elections to Seanad Eireann took place. As in recent Seanad elections the Association nominated Senator Paschal Mooney in the elections, and a leaflet encouraging members to lobby their local councillors on behalf of the Association's nominee was distributed to all members. The Executive Board was delighted to see Senator Mooney re-elected to the Seanad and believes that his presence there will aid the Association in its work on behalf of the library sector.

## **THE LIBRARY IN THE COMMUNITY: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE**

"That the incoming Executive Board make it a priority of their 1997/1998 programme to bring to the attention of the Minister for the Environment, Local Authorities and the media that our public libraries should be free, open and accessible to all." (Annual General Meeting, 1997.)

Members of the Association once again expressed desire for improvements in the public library service at the Annual General Meeting (see page XXX) . Several resolutions adopted at the meeting dealt with public library issues and the Executive Board raised the issues with the Minister for the Environment and his officials. In April a delegation from the Executive Board met with outgoing Minister, Brendan Howlin, T.D. The Minister was unable to provide any further funding for the library sector and disagreed with the Association's policy on library charges.

Following the general election, a delegation met with the new Minister for the Environment, Noel Dempsey, T.D. This meeting gave the Association an opportunity to brief the incoming Minister on the main issues of concern to the library profession. Taking its lead from the Annual General Meeting, the delegation's agenda covered:

1. Funding / implementation of Public Libraries 2000
2. Better Local Government - implications for public libraries

### 3. National Policy on Public Libraries / The Information Society

#### 4. Public libraries: free, open, and accessible to all.

Following the meeting, the Executive Board drafted a document on library charges (prepared by Gerry Maher) for submission to the Minister. The Executive Board believes that the time is ripe, given the current buoyancy in the economy, and in the context of the public library policy review (see below), for improved investment in the public library service, and is committed to pursuing this issue in the coming years.

#### *NATIONAL POLICY ON PUBLIC LIBRARIES*

One of the main developments in the public library service, announced in May, was the Department of the Environment's Review of Public Library Policy. The Association was invited to nominate two representatives to the Policy Review project team, and welcomed the initiative as an important step towards the formulation of a Government policy on public libraries, which the Association has sought for many years. The development of such a policy, which will arise from the review, will provide a context for the delivery of services locally. The Association will work to ensure that the review leads to greatly improved Government funding for the service.

#### *PUBLIC LIBRARIES 2000, PART TWO*

Whereas the implementation of *Public Libraries 2000: A Programme for Development* was one of the issues discussed with the Minister and his officials, the working party on the second part of *Public Libraries 2000* continued its deliberations throughout the year. Submissions were invited from a large range of bodies and agencies relevant to the document and a high percentage of replies received. Expert reports were also commissioned by the working party on various subjects (children's services, consumer health, the Internet etc.) where it was decided a more detailed investigation was necessary: these will form part of the final report. The document is now at drafting stage and the working party will submit a final report in 1998.

#### *YOUNG READERS, YOUNG CITIZENS: POLICY STATEMENT*

"The Child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas ..." (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 13 (1), 1989.)

A working party to draw up a policy statement on services to children and young people was set up on foot of a resolution at the 1995 Annual General Meeting. The working party (the membership of which is given on page XXX) began its deliberations in March 1996 and met nine times up to April 1997. During the earlier meetings the Association's guidelines on the production of the policy statement were considered, and an outline of the approach and procedure to be followed developed. A range of relevant material was circulated and studied by the working party. As the Association's guidelines stressed that the document should be accessible to both librarians and non-librarians, the views of child-care agencies, including Barnardo's and the ISPCC, were sought.

The first draft of the policy statement was prepared in December 1996 and discussed by the Executive Board. Following this discussion the statement was revised by the working party in April and re-submitted to the Executive Board which adopted the statement at its meeting in September. The Policy Statement will be presented to members for formal adoption by the Association at the Annual General Meeting in 1998.

#### **LIBRARIES AND LEARNING**

The Association's *Policy Statement on School Library Services* (1996), grew out of long-held concerns at the poor state of school library services throughout the country. These concerns were

expressed once again by members at the Annual General Meeting in 1997. Despite the very welcome increases in the primary school grant in recent years, the overall level of investment remains scandalously low. The lack of any proper service at post-primary level is also a serious problem. The paucity of library services for children means that we are failing to support a love of reading and a valuable leisure pastime, curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, the development of skills in research, and critical evaluation of information. The increased investment in information technology for schools, while welcome, only serves to highlight the importance of information skills (and of course literacy skills) which are essential for participation in every aspect of adult living in the Information Age.

The Executive Board was unable to secure a meeting in 1997 with the outgoing Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreatnach, T.D., but was pleased to receive confirmation of a meeting with the new Minister, Michael Martin, T.D., which will take place in January 1998.

### **THE INFORMATION SOCIETY**

"The Library Association of Ireland proposes that libraries be designated as key partners in building the Information Society in Ireland, and in particular that all public libraries receive funding for connection to the Internet. We propose that public libraries be designated as Knowledge Resource Centres, and that our vision of the public library as key player in the local implementation of the Information Society be supported as the most effective means of achieving some of the crucial objectives of Ireland's Information Society Strategy." (*Libraries & the Information Society, 1997. Response by the Library Association of Ireland to 'Information Society Ireland: strategy for action'*)

The report of the Government's Information Society Steering Committee, *Information Society Ireland: strategy for action* (ISBN 0 9530379 0 8), was published early in 1997. The Association was disappointed with the report which did not place enough emphasis on the role of the library, as argued by the Association in its submission to the Steering Committee. The Association response to the report, *Libraries & the Information Society*, was submitted to the Information Society Commission, and circulated to the Departments of the Taoiseach and Environment, and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna. The document was also made available on the Association's web site. In *Libraries & the Information Society* the Association argues that of the five key pillars identified in *Information Society Ireland: strategy for action*, namely awareness, infrastructure, learning, enterprise and government, public libraries can be significant partners in building the awareness, learning, and government pillars. The Association also sought representation on the Information Society Commission and on the Commission's working parties.

The Association welcomed the setting up of a Project to Develop a National Policy On Libraries and Information Services, under the auspices of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna. This very important initiative arose from Professor Michael Casey's report for Euro-Focus on Libraries and the Association nominates one member to the Project's consultative council.

### **CONSUMER HEALTH INFORMATION**

As reported in last year's annual report, the Association received a National Lottery grant from the Department of Health for research into the area of consumer health information. The Consumer Health Information Research Project is currently investigating the provision of healthcare information to the public by Government and health organisations, pharmacists, self-help groups, voluntary bodies and charities. The research, being carried out by Jennifer MacDougall, follows on from the LAI's report *Information for Health* (see *Annual Report 1996*), which identified increasing public demand for health information in Ireland and revealed that relevant information was often unavailable or difficult to access. One of the recommendations of

this report was to appoint professional librarians in all the health boards: since the publication of the report 12 new library posts have been created in the health boards.

The feasibility of a co-ordinated dissemination policy and establishing a Consumer Health Information (CHI) service(s) for Ireland is also under review in the present research. A national database of information sources of benefit to professionals, patients and the public is being developed. The roles of healthcare practitioners, the Department of Health, the Health Boards, medical and public libraries, national, and local and voluntary organisations in increasing access to this type of information are being considered.

The research initiated by the Association has so far involved meetings with well over sixty organisations involved in the provision of healthcare information to the public. There organisations include the Irish Patient's Association, Health Boards, Health Promotion Offices, Irish Cancer Society, Aids charities, the National Social Service Board, Hospital Pharmacists' Association, Mental Health Association, Pavee Point Travellers' Centre, and the Disability Federation of Ireland. The research also involves study visits, literature searches, and a case study.

The wide range of information collected is being assessed and collated and will be presented in a report in 1998, in which recommendations for the development of Consumer Health Information Services in Ireland will be made.

### **CROSSING BORDERS: EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION**

EBLIDA (European Bureau of Library, Information, and Documentation Centres)

The Association remains an active member of EBLIDA, an organisation which can only increase in importance as the role of the European Union expands. At the invitation of EBLIDA, the Association organised a one day workshop seminar on copyright issues, which took place on 14th July at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The workshop, run in conjunction with the European Copyright Users Platform (ECUP) attracted a good attendance and the programme was as follows:

- Introduction to the ECUP+ Concerted Action  
Ms Emanuella Giavarra (EBLIDA copyright advisor and ECUP Project Manager)
- Copyright - the copyright owners' perspective  
Mr Anthony Quinn, Barrister
- Copyright in Ireland - an update  
Mr Sean Phillips (Librarian at University College, Dublin)
- Practical example - the BIBDEL experience  
Mr Alan MacDougall (Director of Library and Information Services, Dublin City University)
- Introduction to the ECUP Position on User Rights in Electronic Publications  
Ms Emanuella Giavarra (EBLIDA copyright advisor and ECUP Project Manager)
- Discussion

The Association was represented at the EBLIDA Council Meeting in Lisbon in May.

Through EBLIDA, the views on the Association on various EU matters, including the Cultural Programmes and copyright, were sought.

The Association noted with concern the actions taken by National Front controlled municipalities in France, including attempts to impose censorship on library collections and the removal of librarians who refused to support such actions. The Association joined with other members of EBLIDA in writing a letter to the Associations des Bibliothécaires Française expressing our support for our beleaguered French colleagues.

*CELTIC CONNECTIONS*

The Association maintained its links with the Scottish and Welsh library Associations as planning for a second Celtic Connections conference got underway. The conference will take place in Ireland in 2001 and was discussed at a meeting during the annual joint conference, in Letterkenny, which was attended by representatives from both the Welsh and Scottish Associations. Representatives of the LAI attended the conferences of the Scottish Library Association, in June, and the Welsh Library Association, in May.

#### *LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (UK)*

The annual conference of the Public Libraries Group of the Library Association (UK) was held in Torquay in September, and was attended by the President and the Hon. Secretary. The Executive Board was represented when Tipperary Joint Libraries Committee and Meath County Library were presented with commendations in the Public Libraries Buildings Awards, 1997.

### **REPRESENTING THE ASSOCIATION**

#### *Nominees and members of committees:*

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna - Deirdre Ellis-King.

Committee on Library Co-operation in Ireland - Leslie Bryan.

Editorial Panel (for An Leabharlann. The Irish Library) - Jess Codd, Fionnuala Hanrahan (joint editor), Anne Murray, Agnes Neligan.

Euro-Focus on Libraries - Marie Reddan.

Consumer Health Information Project - Aidan Beatty (Vice-Chair, Dept. of Health rep.), Alun Bevan (An Chomhairle Leabharlanna rep.), Fionnuala Hanrahan (Chair), Jean Harrison, Gerard Maher, Jennifer MacDougall (Researcher).

Library Staff Training Committee - Julia Barrett, Tom King, Martin Maher, Gobnait O'Riordan.

Local Government Computer Services Board Liaison Group - Damien Brady, Anne Coughlan, Noel Crowley, James Fogarty, Paul Harris, Austin Vaughan.

National Children's Book Festival Committee - Rosemary Hetherington.

National Policy On Libraries and Information Services, Consultative Council - Agnes Neligan.

Newsplan - Brendan Teeling.

North/South Liaison Committee - Jane Alger, Nora Buggy, Deirdre Ellis-King, Fionnuala Hanrahan, Liam Ronayne, Brendan Teeling.

Public Libraries and the Arts Steering Committee - Fionnuala Hanrahan.

Public Libraries 2000 Working Party - Dilys Bateman, Jess Codd, Anne Coughlan, Ruth Flanagan, Liam Ronayne.

Public Library Policy Review Project Team - Deirdre Ellis-King, Liam Ronayne

School Library Development Committee - Valerie Coghlan, Mary Carleton-Reynolds, Fionnuala Hanrahan, Patrick Lonergan, Gobnait O'Riordan, Patricia Quigley, Marjory Sliney, Liz Turley, Rosemary Walton.

Working Party on Policy Statement on Services to Children - Liz Turley (Chair), Brendan Martin (Secretary), Mary Carleton Reynolds, Kathleen Butler, Rosemary Walton, Pat O'Connor.

#### *DELEGATIONS*

To the Department of the Environment, May: Fionnuala Hanrahan, Gerry Maher, Liam Ronayne, Brendan Teeling.

To the Department of the Environment, October: Anne Coughlan, Gerry Maher, Liam Ronayne, Brendan Teeling.

#### *CONFERENCES etc.*

EBLIDA Council meeting, Lisbon, May - Liam Ronayne

Public Libraries Authorities annual conference, Torquay, September - Liam Ronayne, Brendan Teeling



Scottish Library Association annual conference, Peebles, June - Liam Ronayne, Brendan Teeling  
Welsh Library Association annual conference, May - Fionnuala Hanrahan

## **COMMITTEES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### ***EDUCATION COMMITTEE***

Committee P. Lonergan, G. Maher, M. Burke, D. Ellis King

No meeting of the Committee took place.

### ***FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE***

Chairman Peter Rabbitt

Secretary Catherine Watters

Committee B. Teeling, N. Buggy, L. Ronayne, F. Hanrahan, L. Bryan

The Committee met 6 times during the year.

### ***REVISION OF ASSOCIATION STRUCTURES***

Much of the Committee's deliberations centred on a proposed revision of the Association's structures, based on a document prepared by the President. A final document was approved by the Executive Board at its December meeting and a summary circulated to members with their subscription renewal forms. The complete text was made available on the Association's web site, and members were asked to make comments or suggestions on the document. The issue is to be taken up by the incoming Executive Board in 1998.

### ***ARTICLES AND MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION***

Following some difficulty in finalising the revision of the text of the Articles And Memorandum of Association early in 1997, the Committee was able to arrive at a completed version at its December meeting. It was decided to have the text published in time for the 1998 Annual General Meeting.

### ***HEALTH INSURANCE***

Forms inviting interest in a group scheme with the VHI were distributed with the notifications for the 1997 Annual General Meeting. The Committee reported that the number of people interested did not meet the minimum laid down by the VHI. The Committee recommended that the idea be reactivated if further interest from members became evident.

### ***WEB SITE***

The development of the Association's web site, maintained by Jess Codd, continued with the addition of several new features. These include a policies section, where all LAI policy documents will be made available, and a "what's new" section which will enable speedy dissemination of news to Association members. The National Information Server, managed by HEANet, offered to host the Association's web site and those of Groups and Sections. The Committee welcomed this offer and decided to meet with the Groups and Sections to discuss possible developments. This meeting is scheduled for January 1998.

### ***COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT***

Chair Valerie Coghlan

Secretary Liz Turley

Committee Mary Carlton-Reynolds, Helen Kilcline, Patrick Lonergan, Gohnait O'Riordan, Patricia Quigley, Marjory Sliney, Rosemary Walton

During the 1997 the work of the Committee was focused on the production of a proposed handbook for school libraries. Drafting of the handbook is well in hand and a fund-raising campaign, which has been successful so far, is expected to generate enough sponsorship to meet the costs of the publication. It is hoped to publish the handbook in the latter part of 1998. The Committee re-submitted its application for a research grant to the Department of Education and was informed once again in December that the application was successful.

#### ***NORTH / SOUTH LIAISON COMMITTEE***

The North/South Liaison Committee is a joint Committee of the Association and the Library Association, Northern Ireland Branch, and acts as a liaison between the two Associations. Its 1997/98 Chairman is Liam Ronayne and the Hon. Secretary is Mary Kintner.

#### ***ANNUAL JOINT CONFERENCE***

The main task of the North/South Liaison Committee is the organisation of the annual joint conference, which in 1997 took place at the Mount Errigal Hotel, Letterkenny, County Donegal. The conference ran from 22nd to 25th April and was attended by delegates from throughout the country. The theme of the conference was "Public Information in Private Spaces" and the keynote address was given by Eithne Fitzgerald, T.D., Minister of State at the Office of An Taoiseach, who spoke on the Freedom of Information Bill 1996. The other papers were: "Education and library administration in Northern Ireland", Neil Jackson, Department of Education, Northern Ireland; "Public service - private funding", Pearl Valentine, Chief Librarian, North Eastern Education and Library Board; "Policy and planning for library and information services in Ireland", Professor Michael Casey, University College Dublin; "Government direct: the future for electronic delivery of Government services in Northern Ireland", Kirby Porter, Principal Librarian, Northern Ireland Civil Service; "Libraries and the democratic imagination", Dr. Elisabeth Davenport, Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh; "The Verbal Arts" - forum; "Copyright: preserving the balance", Sandy Norman, Information Manager, The Library Association (UK); "Copyright in history", Dr. Julian Warner, Queen's University, Belfast; "That most precious gift: public libraries and life long learning", Joe Hendry, President of the Library Association (UK). Delegates were disappointed at the inability of the Department of Education, Republic of Ireland, to provide a speaker on the day.

During the conference a special meeting of Donegal County Council's Cultural Committee took place, at which presentations were made to Bill Bell, President, Scottish Library Association, Lawrence Rawsthorne, Welsh Library Association, and Joe Hendry, President of the Library Association (UK). Conference delegates visited the Colmcille Heritage Centre and Ionad Cois Locha and the conference dinner was addressed by Brendan Howlin, T.D., Minister for the Environment. The Conference Secretary was Noreen O'Neill, and the Programme Secretaries Adrienne Adair and Julian Warner.

#### ***AN LEABHARLANN. THE IRISH LIBRARY***

4 issues of *An Leabharlann. the Irish Library* (Vol. 12, 3-4; 13, 1-4) were published in 1997. Contents and abstracts of back-issues were made available on LAI's web site, and this new feature is updated upon publication of each issue.

#### ***COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY CO-OPERATION IN IRELAND (COLICO)***

The Committee looked at the production of the ISBN Region K data in microfiche. It recommended that An Chomhairle publish this data in CD-ROM. It was felt that some subscribers would still need to receive the microfiche version.

The Rules and Regulations for participants in the Irish Joint Fiction Reserve Scheme were reviewed. The problem of transport costs for material provided by the IJFRS was raised. This will be addressed by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna who are willing to reimburse transportation expenses for an experimental period of one year to promote library co-operation. This funding would then be examined in the light of the success of this operation.

A report was done on Serials Information News. 300 libraries and information services were targeted in a mailing list. This has resulted in an increase of subscribers.

It was agreed that COLICO would write to the National Library stressing the importance of Irish Publishing Record and requesting that it would be published within an improving time framework and with the inclusion of audio visual materials. In the interim it urged that the National Library would recommence publication of its Monthly Accessions List.

A sub group has been set up to discuss the future of COLICO in relation to the Action Plan. Areas highlighted have been IRIS, Staff Training and Staff Exchanges.

### ***PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE***

The Public Libraries and the Arts Committee, under the auspices of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the Arts Council, continued its deliberations during 1997. City and County Librarians, and local authorities arts officers were surveyed regarding their understanding of the role of public libraries in the arts, their experiences, and their assessment of the current and future climate for development. Advertisements in the public newspapers invited members of the public to submit their views. Children were involved via an essay competition and winning essays were published in the *Irish Times* and in *An Leitheoir*. An interim seminar was held in Dublin in November. Delegates were introduced to the findings to date, and workshops sought to address areas arising from the research which required further information. Plans for early 1998 include the organisation of a number of focus groups involving professional artists, and a survey of the general public. The report of the Committee is scheduled for completion in early summer 1998.

### ***LIBRARY STAFF TRAINING COMMITTEE***

Difficulties were encountered in organising a meeting of the Committee during 1997, however the Committee continued to monitor the National Certificate in Library and Information Studies, offered at the Centre for Adult and Community Education, National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The course commenced in January 1997 and ran successfully during the year. Members of the Committee reported to the Executive Board that the remit and administration of the Committee would need to be addressed in 1998.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

*Annual Report 1996*. Dublin: Library Association of Ireland, 1997. ISSN: 0791-6248  
*Celtic Connections: proceedings of the conference held at Peebles, 4th-7th June 1996 by the Library Association of Ireland, the Welsh Library Association, LA Northern Ireland Branch, and the Scottish Library Association*. Motherwell: Scottish Library Association, 1997. ISBN: 0 900649 96 8.

### **FURTHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

#### **JANUARY**

Annual General Meeting - Rare Books Group, Dublin, 22nd

The vicissitudes of a manuscript collection ... - Rare Books Group informal talk, Dublin, 22nd

#### **FEBRUARY**

Annual General Meeting and visit to Tallaght Library - Assistant Librarians' Section, 25th

Robert Gibbings - Rare Books Group informal talk, Cork

The Information Millennium: Threat or Promise? - Academic & Special Libraries Section seminar, Dublin.

#### MARCH

Two queens of popular fiction and their attendant royalties ... - Rare Books Group informal talk, Dublin

#### APRIL

Annual General Meeting - Cataloguing and Indexing Section, Dublin, 8th

The Rome Irish printing type of 1676 - Rare Books Group informal talk, Dublin

DDC21 - Cataloguing and Indexing Section seminar, Dublin, 8th-9th

Annual General Meeting - Academic and Special Libraries Section, Dublin, 16th

Public Information in Private Spaces - Annual Joint Conference of the Library Association of Ireland and the Library Association (Northern Ireland Branch), Letterkenny, 22nd -25th

#### MAY

Maps in libraries: a training day - Academic and Special Libraries Section seminar, Dublin, 23rd

Annual outing - Rare Books Group, Waterford, 24th

#### JUNE

Reading matters - Youth Library Group seminar, Dublin, 27th

#### SEPTEMBER

National Print Museum - Rare Books Group visit, Dublin

#### OCTOBER

The Global Library - Assistant Librarians' Section annual conference, Wexford, 3rd - 5th

The National Library of Ireland: a brief history - Rare Books Group informal talk, Dublin

#### NOVEMBER

Classics Old and New - Youth Library Group seminar, Dublin, 27th

The Experience of Reading : Historical Perspectives - Rare Books Group seminar in association with the Economic and Social History Society, Dublin, 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1997**

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Park House Hotel, Forster Street, Eyre Square, Galway on 7th March. Liam Ronayne, County Librarian, Donegal, was re-elected President for a third year. Outgoing Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, Brendan Teeling and Nora Buggy, were also re-elected. In his Presidential address, Mr Ronayne spoke about a number of issues of importance to the Association and to Irish society at large, including: regional imbalances in the levels of services and investment; the prospects for the information society in Ireland; funding for new public library development as an investment in the social and cultural development of all our people; The *National Cultural Institutions Bill* and the National Library; the *Freedom of Information Bill*; the lack of proper investment in libraries in education; and the need for the Association to become a vocal lobby for the library and information profession.

The following resolutions were passed at the meeting and were dealt with by the Executive Board during the year:

1. That the incoming Executive Board make it a priority of their 1997/1998 programme to bring to the attention of the Minister for the Environment, Local Authorities and the media that our public libraries should be free, open and accessible to all.
2. That this Association request the Minister for the Environment to ensure that proper funding is provided for the public library service in the programme for reform of local government.

3. That this Association request the Minister for the Environment to provide a capital grant to the public library service for the updating of library bookstock, non-book material, and modern technology.
4. That due to the backlog of £36 million of capital projects awaiting sanction, this Association ask the Department of the Environment to provide a realistic annual level of capital funding to allow for the completion of the projects by the year 2002, without prejudice to new projects: and that, in this context, this Association deplores the reduction of capital funding from £3.6 million to £2.68 million.
5. That the Department of the Environment be asked to provide 100% capital funding to complete the automation of library services throughout the country.
6. That this Association welcomes the commitment of the Department of the Environment to the development of a National Policy on public libraries and looks forward to making an input to the document.
7. That, in view of obligations arising under the 1994 Local Government Act, this Association calls on the Minister of the Environment to facilitate the establishment of a central archive in each administrative county/city unit, under the management of the library service and to make sufficient funds available to facilitate this development.
8. That this Association calls on the Minister of State for Commerce, Science and Technology, and Consumer Affairs to reduce VAT on academic and research periodicals to the lowest possible rate.
9. That the Minister for Education be requested to introduce a planned development programme for the Primary Schools Library Service so that, by the year 2000, the annual per capita grant would be equal to the cost of one new book per pupil.
10. That this Association, recognising the work which has been done in increasing the per capita allowance for the provision of library books in primary schools, calls upon the Minister for Education to continue these increases and bring payment to a minimum of £3.00 per child per annum in 1998, which would be well below the allowance of £10.00 per child which is considered necessary by international commentators.
11. That this Association calls upon the Minister for Education to provide comprehensive information services to meet the information needs of students, teachers, school management, and parents in the primary and secondary schools sectors, and that as first steps, support be provided for research on information needs and the nature of current provision..
12. That this Association welcomes the setting up of the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee and commends An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the Arts Council on the initiative. Proposed by the Executive Board.
13. That the Executive Board seeks to ensure that the central role of libraries, in particular public libraries, as centres for the dissemination of Government Publications and Information is recognised by Government and that this role be considered in any proposals for the implementation of Government Policy in the areas of Freedom of Information and open Government.
14. That this Association calls on the Government to utilise the public library network of local service points, numbering over 300 in the country, to facilitate public access to the internet and the information resources available on the World Wide Web in line with stated Government policy.
15. That this Association calls upon the Minister for Health to implement the recommendations of the Information for health research report and in particular that the issues of staffing of information services for Health and the status of health care librarians be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The 1997 Annual Dinner was held in the Old Malt House Restaurant, Galway, on 6th March. The Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner were held in Galway at the invitation of Galway County Library.

## **SECTIONS AND GROUPS**

### ***Academic and Special Libraries Section***

Chairperson Catherine Watters (Coopers & Lybrand)

Secretary Aoife Kelly ( National Policy on Libraries and Information Services)

Treasurer Madeleine Dennison (Office of the Attorney General)

Committee Angela Cotter (Dublin City University), Patricia Ffrench (NUI, Galway), Terry McDonald (TCD), Elizabeth Murphy (NUI, Maynooth), Ann Murray (Dublin City University), Mary Orford (RTC Tallaght), Caitriona Sharkey (Dublin Business School)

During 1997 the Committee met on 9 occasions and the section organised a number of seminars and workshops.

Northern Ireland Visit.

The Section, in association with the Financial and Business Information Group, organised a trip to Northern Ireland. Among the libraries visited were Belfast Central Library, The Linen Hall Library, The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and LEDU.

The Information Millennium: Threat or Promise?

The Annual Seminar was held in Dublin in February and was attended by 80 people. Dr Michael Casey and Deirdre Ni Raghallaigh chaired the seminar and speakers included James Wickham, TCD; David Vernon, NUI, Maynooth; Deirdre Ellis King, Dublin City Librarian; Alison Jago, Instant Library Recruitment; Brid McGrath, Information Consultant; Jennifer Aston, The Law Library and Pat Kelly, University of Limerick.

Maps in Libraries: A Training Day.

This training day was organised to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the use of maps in libraries and special collections. It was held in May and 39 delegates attended from a variety of libraries. The speakers were Julia Barrett, UCD; Catherine Fahy, NLI; Paul Ferguson, TCD; Martin Hayes, West Sussex County Libraries; Karl Magee, National Archives and David O'Hara, OSI.

Annual General Meeting

The Section's AGM was held in the Royal Irish Academy on 16 April. Dr Pat Donlon addressed the meeting and gave some reflections on libraries. The meeting was attended by 30 Section members.

Visit of the Swedish Association of University and Research Librarians, Stockholm/Uppsala Branch

In July, a group of 35 librarians visited Dublin on a study tour. With the assistance of the Section visits were organised to Trinity Library, The National Library, The Chester Beatty Library, The Royal Irish Academy, UCD Architecture and Planning Library, The Smurfit Graduate School of Business Library; The Oireachtas Library; Dublin Corporation Central Library, DCU and RTE Libraries. The Section hosted a reception for the visitors in the Royal Irish Academy.

Project Management: A One Day Workshop.

This workshop was led by Keith Bonson and Beryl Morris of Hudson Rivers, Management and Training Consultants, in November. The workshop was limited to 20 attendees and was fully subscribed. It was aimed at those involved in all types of projects and emphasised practical work and discussion throughout.

***Assistant Librarians' Section***

Chairperson Jarlath Glynn (Wexford County Library)

Vice-Chairperson Teresa Walsh (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries)

Secretary Jess Codd (Tipperary Libraries)

Treasurer Brendan Martin (Offaly County Library)

Committee

Eva Berkery (An Chomhairle Leabharlanna), Tony Cox (Westmeath County Library), Richie Hickey (Mayo County Library), Pat Lonergan (Kildare County Library), Catherine McKenna (Dublin Public Libraries), Dorothy O'Reilly (Kilkenny County Library), Peter Rabbitt (Galway County Library), Bennery Rickard (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Library), Josephine Vahey (Galway County Library)

The Committee met five times in 1997. The AGM of the Section was held in South Dublin County Library on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1997 and was preceded in the morning by a guided introduction by Senior Librarian, Ms. Georgina Byrne, to the new Tallaght Library.

The 1997 Annual Conference of the Section was held from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of October under the theme "*The Global Library*" in the Ferrycarrig Hotel, Wexford. Outlining and discussing future trends in public libraries in Ireland were:

- Chris Batt, Borough Libraries & Museum Officer, London Borough of Croyden  
*"The Heart and the Brain of the Information Society: Public Libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"*
- Noel O'Mahony, Assistant Librarian, Cork County Library  
*"SWAP: A Business Information Service to a Rural Community"*
- Helen Fallon, Business Librarian, Dublin City University  
*"Practical Use of CD-ROM & the Internet in Libraries"*
- Anne Kelly, Research Consultant  
*"The Public Library and the Arts Committee"*

***Audio-Visual and Information Technology Section***

Chairman Marie Burke (University College Dublin)

Secretary Tara Doyle (RTE)

Treasurer Michael Foley (National Rehabilitation Board)

Committee Siobhan O'Rafferty (Royal Irish Academy), Gobnait O'Riordan (University of Limerick), Joanna Finnegan (National Library of Ireland), Gerard Flannery (Tipperary Joint Libraries Committee)

The Committee met on 4 occasions in 1997.

An information workshop entitled "The Internet for Earthlings" was held at the ArtHouse Library, Temple Bar, Dublin. The workshop was presented by Valerie Robinson, Health & Safety Authority, and Michael Foley, Arthouse, and was very successful. Further workshops are planned for 1998.

The annual general meeting of the Section took place in An Chomhairle Leabharlanna on 11th September.

***Cataloguing & Indexing Group***

Chairman Peter Guilding (Trinity College Dublin)

Treasurer Jane Gribbon (University of Limerick)

Secretary Barbara McDonald (Trinity College Dublin)

Committee: Kay Butler (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries), Catriona Cannon (University College Dublin), Patricia Dowling (Ameritech), Breda Long (NUI, Cork), Andy Richardson (Trinity College Dublin)

The Committee met four times during the year.

Membership of the Cataloguing and Indexing Group stands at approximately the same level as last year.

Meetings:

The Annual General meeting was held 8 April 1997 in conjunction with the DDC21 Seminar.

Activities:

A two-day seminar was held dealing with the 21st edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification. Ross Trotter and Susie Woodhouse of the U.K. Library Association Dewey Committee addressed 36 people in the offices of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna on the changes in the 21st edition of Dewey. This seminar was highly rated by all of the participants. This led us to survey our membership concerning future seminars dealing with issues such as Marc, AACRII and Library of Congress Subject Headings. We plan to implement a training programme on these topics within the next year.

A visit was also organised to the Allen Library, O'Connell Schools, North Richmond St., Dublin. Brother Tom Connolly and Pat Hawes have implemented an important cataloguing and preservation programme in O'Connell Schools of books and artefacts acquired by Brother Allen and other alumni of the school.

Following contacts made in 1996 at the Under One Umbrella Conference in Manchester, the CIG is planning a joint conference with the Library Association Cataloguing and Indexing Group in June 1998 in Trinity College Dublin. This major Anglo/Irish Study Conference should attract about 100 participants.

Members of the Committee have also been in contact with Ross Trotter, LA Dewey Committee, with reference to alterations in the Dewey geographical tables for the Republic of Ireland. It is hoped that some of the anomalies now present in the geographical tables in Dewey 21 can be changed.

### ***County and City Librarians' Section***

Chairman: Anne Coughlan (Offaly County Library)

Vice chairman: Pat McMahon (Galway County Library)

Secretary: Damien Brady (Limerick County Library)

Treasurer: Liam Smith (Meath County Library)

Three major training events were held during the year.

On 6th March, 1997, a seminar on "The Role of the Library Service in the Promotion of the Irish Language and Culture" was held in Galway. The Seminar examined bilingualism in the Public Library Service and was jointly organised with Bord na Gaeilge. The key note speaker was Micháel Ó Muircheartaigh, Cathaoirleach Bhord na Gaeilge.

From 4th to 11th October, 1997, twenty members of the Section took part in a seven-day Study Trip of Portuguese Libraries. The delegation, which included representation from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, the Department of Environment and the County and City Managers' Association, viewed first hand some of the major new developments which have taken place in the Portuguese Library Service in recent years. The Study Trip, which involved visits to nine separate Library sites in the Lisbon and Oporto areas, was a unique opportunity to view first hand the completely modern Library System which is now developing in Portugal.



The Annual Autumn Seminar was held in South Dublin on the 5th and 6th of November in Association with the I.P.A. The Seminar dealt with the Public Library Policy Review and it afforded a valuable opportunity for all Chief Librarians to have an input into the formulation of the policy document.

During the year, members of the Section participated in a number of important committees in the area of automation, health services, schools service, adult literacy and the Arts.

### ***Government Libraries' Section***

Chairman Mary Doyle (Department of Agriculture and Food)

Secretary Sarah Ball (National Botanic Gardens)

Treasurer Valerie Ingram (Office of Public Works)

PRO Carol Flynn (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment)

General Editor of GLINT Mary Doyle

Production Editor of GLINT Lisa Shields (Met Eireann)

Committee Michael O'Gorman (State Laboratory), Joseph Donnelly (Judges' Library, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform), Celine Ward (Office of Public Works)

The Committee met eight times in the course of the year. The AGM was held on 26th June at the Office of Public Works.

Monica Wallace of the Department of Public Enterprise was nominated to represent the Department on National Policy on Libraries and Information Services in Ireland Consultative Council. She will express the views of the Government Libraries' Section as well as those of her Department.

The Section was offered facilities to set up a web page by the Irish National Information Server and was delighted to avail of the opportunity.

The highlight of the year was a conference on Freedom of Information, held in the Coach House, Dublin Castle, on 12th November. Over a hundred people attended, including a group of Northern Ireland Government Librarians. The conference was chaired by Joseph Donnelly and Senator Brendan Ryan, author of *Keeping us in the dark: censorship and freedom of information in Ireland* (Dublin: 1995) gave the opening address. The other speakers were Mr Gerry Kearney, Department of Finance; Dr Paschal Preston, Department of Communications, DCU; Ms Meave McDonagh, Lecturer in Law at NUI, Cork; Ms Eithne Fitzgerald, former Minister of State at the Department of the Tánaiste; Mr Roy Atkinson, vice-Chairman of the Consumers' Association of Ireland; Mr Michael Foley, media correspondent with the *Irish Times*, and Mr Bernadette Kennedy, MLIS. The Section intends publishing the proceedings of the conference and information on this will appear on the Section's web site (<http://www.heanet.ie/gls/index.html>).

### ***Health Sciences Libraries Section***

Chairperson: Margaret Dillon, Regional Hospital, Limerick

Secretary: Marie Boran, Nursing Library, NUI, Galway (resigned September 1997), replaced by Anne Murphy (Acting) (Meath Hospital Dublin)

Committee: Catherine Breslin (Sligo General Hospital), Muriel Haire (Irish Nurses Organisation), Jean Harrison (North Eastern Health Board), Niall McSweeney (Cork University Hospital), Anne O'Byrne (Dublin Dental Hospital), Ann Tierney (South Eastern Health Board)

Group Meetings & Events

1. The first meeting of the year was held at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland on the 17th January. The speaker was Sile Nevin, a former medical librarian at University College Dublin now living in Eureka, Northern California, where she is librarian to the Kris Kelly Health Information Centre at Humboldt County Main Library. Sile described the work of this

community-based Centre which aims to provide comprehensive health information, appropriate to the needs of the general public and to the health consumer in the Humboldt County region. This presentation of the American experience of consumer health information provision and the issues surrounding it was indeed timely for our many members, who are currently involved directly or indirectly in the LAI initiated Consumer Health Information Research Project.

2. We had a large attendance at our second January meeting - held in the Dublin Dental Hospital on the 31st January - a Seminar on the "Information Needs of Physiotherapists". We were particularly happy to welcome among our audience and speakers members of the physiotherapy and the library professions alike. The speakers included Jennifer MacDougall, Researcher, LAI, Juliette Hussey from the School of Physiotherapy in Trinity College, Mary Riordan from the Medical Library, UCD and Jean O'Connor from Queens' University Medical Library, which has been contracted by the Northern Ireland Department of Health to provide a formalised library & information service to the professions allied to medicine (PAM's) including physiotherapists in the NI Health Authority regions. Much useful discussion of needs/demands on the one hand versus services/resources on the other was exchanged between the professional groupings following the formal presentations by speakers.

3. The third meeting of the year was held on March 14th in the Nurses' Education and Library Centre at the Irish Nurses Organisation, hosted by the newly appointed INO Librarian, Muriel Haire. There we had a demonstration of the new *British Nursing Index (BNI)* by Janet Lamki, Subject Librarian at the Institute of Health & Community Studies, University of Bournemouth. The BNI is the new nursing & midwifery database, which incorporates *Nursing Bibliography*, *RCN Nurse ROM* and the *Nursing & Midwifery Index*. It is available in hard copy format, on CD-ROM and accessible via the Internet. The meeting also included a stimulating presentation by Hugh Brazier, Deputy Librarian at the Mercer Library, RCSI, based on his published paper (*J Adv Nurs* 1996, 24(4), 868-75) entitled "*Selecting a Database for Literature Searches in Nursing: Medline or CINAHL ?*".

In August the Section was proud to launch the new edition of the *Irish Healthcare Libraries Journals Holdings List*. This is the Union list of the Irish healthcare libraries inter-lending cooperative, which facilitates access by its members to c.2,500 journal titles held in the 43 participating libraries. This is the only interlending co-operative of its type among libraries in Ireland. The launch was held on the sunny afternoon of August 13th in the pleasant surroundings of the garden and Mews, former home of the writer Mary Lavin and now the INO Professional Development Centre.

### ***Munster Regional Section***

Chair John Mullins (Cork City Library)

Vice-Chair and acting Secretary Ann Riordan (Cork City Library)

Treasurer Mary Corcoran (Cork City Library)

Committee Dolores Casey (Cork City Library), James Cashman (Fexco), Virginia Conrick (NUI, Cork), Kate Coveney (Cork County Library), Niamh Cronin (Cork County Library), Valerie King (NUI, Cork), Eamonn Kirwan (Cork City Library), Patricia Looney (Cork City Library), Niall MacSweeney (NUI, Cork), Marie Morgan (Cork City Library)

The Annual General Meeting was held on 25th March and was preceded by a visit to RTE Cork Local Radio's new premises.

On 13th May 1997 Mr Tony O'Neill, Architect, gave an illustrated presentation on 'the Architect's role in promoting library services'. This was attended by 22 members.

The Section hosted its annual training seminar in UCC on Monday 29 September 1997. The seminar was called **Putting the customer first**. Mr Sean Kelly, Vice President, Marketing, SIFCO Ireland, spoke on **Customer service: fact or fiction?** Virginia Conrick and Dillys

Bateman, UCC Library, spoke on the 1997 **Libra** survey of academic and research staff as users of UCC's library service. Dr J. S. Walsh, Lecturer, Department of Management & Marketing, UCC, spoke on **Creativity at work: designing and delivering superior customer service**. The final session consisted of workshops conducted by Dr Walsh. Fifty-eight delegates attended this seminar.

On 19 November 1997, the Co. Waterford-born writer, Thomas McCarthy, presented a talk entitled **A poet in the library**, in Cork City Library.

The Christmas social event brought library staffs together for an evening of indoor ten pin bowling, in the Grand Central venue in Cork.

### ***Rare Books Group***

The AGM was held on Wednesday, 22nd January 1997 in Marsh's Library. Copies of the Secretary's and the Treasurer's reports were given out, and were accepted by the members without alteration. Maire Kennedy, as chairman, made a short address, outlining the year's activities. In addition to the usual talks, on a variety of topics, and visits, the Rare Books Group had held a well attended Book Collectors' Circle meeting in Cork. The Chairman hoped that this new development would be expanded during the forthcoming year, and that perhaps meetings could be held in other parts of the country as well. In another first, the proceedings of the 1994 seminar had been published in October, and had been well received. She concluded by thanking the committee for their work during the year, and Marsh's Library and the Boole Library for providing venues for the meetings.

The new officers and committee were then elected, as follow:

Chairman Maire Kennedy (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries, Gilbert Library)

Treasurer Valerie Seymour (NUI, Maynooth)

Secretary Sarah Preston (Marsh's Library)

Committee Charles Benson (T.C.D.), Fionnuala Byrne (NUI, Galway), Helen Davis (NUI, Cork), Joanna Finegan (N.L.I.), Charles Horton (Chester Beatty Library), Gerard Long (N.L.I.), Muriel McCarthy (Marsh's Library), Ide Ni Thuama (R.I.A.). (Fionnuala Byrne was subsequently forced to resign from the committee due to ill health.)

The committee met six times during 1997.

Gerard Long thanked all the contributors to the publication, *Books beyond the Pale*, and proposed a vote of thanks to the committee for their work. Sherry was then served. After the business of the AGM, Dr. Alf Mac Lochlainn entertained a large gathering with his lecture "The vicissitudes of a manuscript collection: Maurice Lenihan, author of the history of Limerick".

### Talks

There were three informal talks in Dublin during 1997, and one in Cork. In March, Professor Dennis Duffy, Craig Dobbin Professor of Canadian Studies, U.C.D., gave a fascinating lecture entitled "Two queens of popular fiction and their attendant royalties: the case of L.M.

Montgomery and Mazo de la Roche", two popular authors of Canadian light fiction in the earlier part of the century. In April, Dr. Dermot McGuinne spoke of his excitement in tracing "The Rome Irish printing type of 1676", which was interesting both for its subject matter and as a detective story. In October, Gerard Long gave us some sidelights into his workplace, in "The National Library of Ireland: a brief history".

Following the success of Julian Walton's lecture in Cork last year, there was another Book Collector's Circle meeting held in Cork in the spring. In February, Cal Hyland spoke about Robert Gibbings, in conjunction with an exhibition on him, to a gathering of 25.

### Outings

On 24th of May, a smaller than usual group visited Waterford for the annual outing. The first

stop was Christchurch cathedral, where we were given lunch, and shown around the cathedral by Rev. Harrison, followed by an interesting audio presentation on the history of the building. After stopping to see the Catholic cathedral, very unusually built by the same architect, but twenty years later, we went on to St. John's College, the diocesan seminary, where Julian Walton showed us the books both from its collection, and those from Christchurch, which were currently being housed there, while undergoing conservation work.

In September, the group visited the National Print Museum, and not only learnt a great deal, particularly about printing and typesetting in the 19th and 20th centuries, but managed to get their hands dirty, inking up and printing an engraving of Clonfert Cathedral. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the staff there, all volunteers with experience in the printing industry, added much to the afternoon's enjoyment.

#### Seminar

For the 1997 seminar, the Rare Books Group joined forces with the Economic and Social History Society, to hold a full day's lectures on the theme "The Experience of Reading : Historical Perspectives", which was held in the Irish Writers Museum on the 28th November. 92 people attended a fascinating day, with lectures ranging from Bible reading in the 17th century, 18th century women readers, and the way in which 19th century national schools taught reading. The speakers were as follows: Dr. Raymond Gillespie (NUI, Maynooth), Dr. Maire Kennedy (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries, Gilbert Library), Dr. Toby Barnard (Oxford), Dr. Mary-Louise Legg (London), Dr. John Logan (UL), Dr. Rolf Loeber (Pittsburgh), Dr. Elizabethanne Boran, (TCD) and Dr. John Killen (Linen Hall Library, Belfast). It is hoped that the proceedings will be published at a later date, and everyone agreed that the combination of the two organisations and their compatible interests worked very well.

Overall the year was a very successful one. Membership of the group has now risen to over one hundred, and the attendance at the AGM and the seminar were particularly high. The interest shown in having meetings outside Dublin in 1996 has also grown. Sales of *Books beyond the Pale* have also been steady, and it is hoped that it will not be long before it has recouped the cost of publication, and enable us to repeat the experience.

#### ***Western Regional Section***

Chair Bernie Lally (Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology)

Secretary Petrina Mee (Galway County Library)

Treasurer Margaret Waldron (Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology)

The 1997 Annual General Meeting took place in the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology on Wednesday 5th March. The attendance of over twenty people gave a warm reception to the lecture given by the Association President, Mr. Liam Ronayne. He spoke of the challenges and opportunities facing the Association and the profession.

The Section held its Annual Study Trip on 2nd July. The venues were the National Library and National Archive. The fifteen members attending were given a tour of the Library including the catalogues and manuscripts. Members found the conservation and restoration of maps section of particular interest. In the National Archive, members were given a talk by Ms. Aideen Ireland and a tour of the Archive.

The Committee hopes 1998 will be a more active year for the Section; our 1997 Seminar did not go ahead, as members will know. The Section would like to congratulate the Mayo County Library team who won the first Western Regional Book Quiz. We look forward to this inter-library quiz becoming an annual event. We continue to encourage library staff throughout the region to join and become involved in the running of the Western Regional Section.

**Youth Library Group**

Chairperson: Rosemary Walton (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries)

Secretary: Breid Ryan (South Dublin County Libraries)

Treasurer: Cathy McKenna (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries)

Committee: Susan Flood (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries), Adrienne Gilmartin (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries), Kirsten Hove (Mount Anville Secondary School, Dublin), Rita O'Brien (Wexford County Libraries), Pat O'Connor (Dublin Corporation Public Libraries), Siobhan O'Neill (South Dublin County Libraries).

The committee met 9 times during the year. The Annual General Meeting was held on 27th February 1997 in An Chomhairle Leabharlanna. Prior to the meeting author Michael Scott spoke about his work.

1996 Youth Library Group activities were:

- "Reading Matters" - Summer seminar
- "Classics Old and New" - Autumn seminar
- Children's Book Festival
- Miscellaneous activities

**Reading Matters.** This seminar was held in the Dublin Writers Museum on 27th June 1997.

Professor Declan Kiberd discussed the subversiveness of Children's Literature and what constitutes a children's book from an historical perspective.

Many of the books that became children's classics were deeply subversive. Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* posed moral questions which society did not want to face so the book was "dumped" on children. *The Wizard of Oz* was regarded as a radical tract and denounced by American Librarians.

Julia Eccleshare, children's book reviewer and editor, posed the question, "What constitutes a good children's book?". It is hard for children to judge, therefore it is the responsibility of adults to select the best books for children and to introduce them to authors they do not already know. There is an assumption that quality books are more difficult to read when the opposite is true. Much critical acclaim is given to "issues" books and, as a result, many excellent books without overt messages are being overlooked.

Tom Richards, author of the popular "*Hotfoot!*" books, gave an entertaining talk about writing for children and making them laugh.

Marjory Sliney, Senior Librarian with Fingal County Libraries, provided some very practical advice on how to explore the secrets of the Junior Library through effective publicity and marketing. Our responsibility as branch librarians is to convince children that reading matters. In 1995 the Library Association of Ireland adopted the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994 which states that public libraries should stimulate "the imagination and creativity of children and young people". We ignore publicity at our peril and risk losing the next generation of readers if we do not promote the services, events and resources in our Junior Libraries.

**Classics Old and New.** The venue for this seminar was the Irish Writer's Centre on 14 November 1997. Celia Keenan discussed the challenge of writing about the Irish Famine for children. Many writers shy away from this topic in the belief that it is too difficult a subject for children. Many novels abandon the famine early in the story to write about emigration. The family usually survives intact or is reunited in North America. Love, marriage and prosperity (in the U.S.) are popular themes in these stories as they provide the prospect of a happy ending. The political implications of the famine are generally avoided. Marita Conlon-McKenna's "*Under the Hawthorn Tree*", one of the best-known famine stories, is a little classic. The simple narrative

stays with the famine all the way through. There are no unbelievable adventures, gifts or magic and the children survive due to their loyalty to one another. Famine stories present a challenge to all writers and the effort to deal with them is a valuable and interesting one.

Jeremy Strong spoke about his childhood experience of books and the importance of humour in children's literature.

Illustrator Finbar O'Connor gave an illustrated talk about his work on a new collection of Irish myths and legends for Poolbeg Press, which will be published in March 1998.

Philippa Milnes-Smith, editor of Penguin Children's Books, discussed classic publishing for children and the founding of Puffin Classics. Its aim was to be the biggest and best classics publisher and it is now the market leader. In 1994 the list was re-launched with re-commissioned covers, reset text and a short introduction about the author and setting of each book. Puffin Modern Classics concentrates on the main contemporary authors whose works have been best-sellers for at least 15 years. This list is aimed at 7 to 13 year olds and each title has a specially commissioned after-word. Collectability and marketability are important features of both lists.

Tom McCaughren discussed his award-winning 'Fox' books and whether they can be considered classics. A classic is something of acknowledged excellence which will stand the test of time. It also needs an indefinable magic that lights it up and draws young and old to reread it again and again. McCaughren is not convinced that Ireland has produced any children's classics yet.

Children's publishing is in its infancy here in comparison to other countries, so it may take 100 years, but we will eventually catch up with the wider world of classic children's publishing.

**Children's Book Festival** was launched in the National Library on 3rd October by Barry McGovern. This year the festival ran for the whole month of October with a wide range of activities taking place in branch libraries, bookshops and art centres throughout the country. Children's Book Festival was run by Children's Books Ireland with support from the Youth Library Group, Booksellers Association, Cle and the Irish Children's Publishers. Adrienne Gilmartin and Breid Ryan represented the YLG on the festival organising committee, and they co-edited "*Best Books!*" the recommended reading guide of the festival, with Claire Ranson and Sarah Webb from Children's Books Ireland. Individual YLG members contributed many of the reviews to the annotated guide. Distribution of the festival packs to libraries nation-wide was co-ordinated and organised by Cathy McKenna, with assistance from Rosemary Walton, Susan Flood and Pat O'Connor. The Youth Library Group also held a Children's Book Festival information meeting for branch libraries in Dublin city and county which was attended by publishers who spoke about forthcoming publications and author availability for the festival.

**Miscellaneous Activities.** The YLG provided bibliographies, advice and information to various individuals and organisations on request during the year. The Group was represented on the LAI sub-committee on School Library Development by Rosemary Walton. YLG committee members attended a preliminary meeting with Children's Books Ireland and other interested bodies to discuss group membership of IBBY.

## MEMBERSHIP

On 12th December 1997, membership stood at 635. 151 are elected as Associates.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Association is grateful to:

- An Chomhairle Leabharlanna for making facilities for meetings available to the Association and for use of an office and correspondence address at 53, Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2;
- Dublin Corporation Public Libraries for making facilities for meetings available, and for administrative support.

The Report of the Executive Board, and Report of Committees, Sections and Groups of the Association, as approved by the Executive Board, at its meeting in January 1998 is signed on behalf of the Executive Board by:-

*Liam Ronayne, Chairman*

*Brendan Teeling, Honorary Secretary*

Cumann Leabharlann na hÉireann, The Library Association of Ireland

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