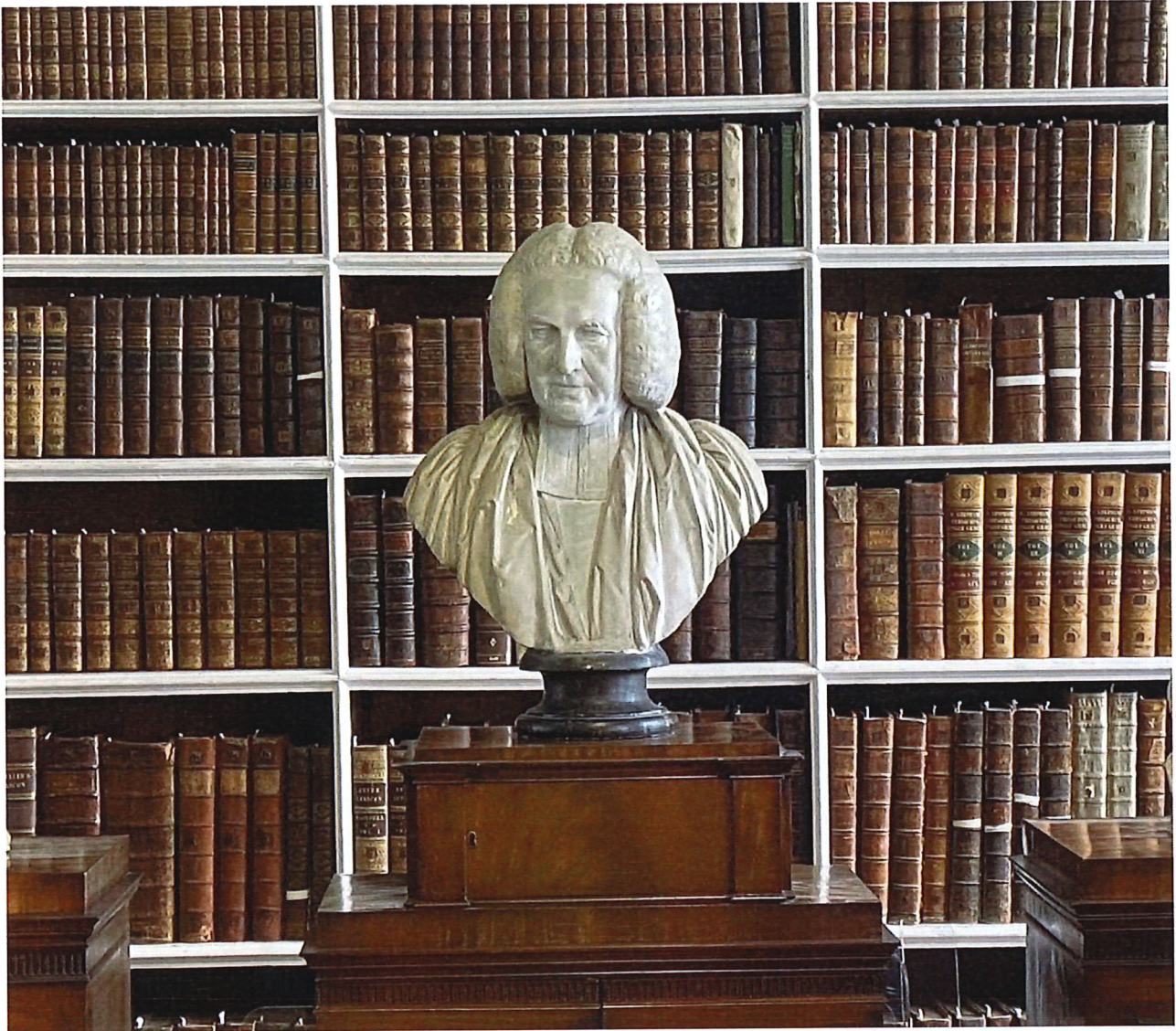


Charity No NIC 101110

# Armagh Robinson Library



## Annual Report

for the Year ended

**31 December 2023**

# ARMAGH ROBINSON LIBRARY

## Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

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# ARMAGH ROBINSON LIBRARY

## References and Administrative Details

**Charity Name:** Armagh Robinson Library

**Charity Registration Number:** NIC101110

**HMRC Number:** XN45495

**Business Address:** 43 Abbey Street, ARMAGH, BT61 7DY

### Trustees:

The Trustees are the Governors and Guardians of Armagh Robinson Library, as prescribed in the Governing Document.

The Governors and Guardians in 2023 were:

- The Most Revd J F McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland
- The Very Revd T S Forster, Dean of Armagh
- The Revd Canon R J N Porteus, Precentor of Armagh Cathedral
- The Revd Canon W J A Dawson, Chancellor of Armagh Cathedral (retired December 2023)
- The Revd Canon W M Adair, Treasurer of Armagh Cathedral
- The Ven T Scott, Archdeacon of Armagh (retired January 2023)
- The Ven Dr P A Thompson, Archdeacon of Armagh (from February 2023)
- The Revd Canon Dr P A Thompson, Prebendary of Mullabrack (until February 2023)
- The Revd Canon M Hagan, Prebendary of Mullabrack (from April 2023)
- The Revd Canon D Hilliard, Prebendary of Tynan
- The Revd Canon J Moore, Prebendary of Loughgall (retired June 2023)
- The Revd Canon B Paine, Prebendary of Ballymore
- Mr R B Hannam
- Mr J-G Willis

**Keeper**

The Very Revd T S Forster

**Independent Examiner**

WHR Accountants Ltd  
Chartered Certified Accountants  
26 The Square  
Moy  
DUNGANNON  
Co Tyrone  
BT71 7SG

**Bankers**

The Library's primary working account is at:

Danske Bank  
78 Scotch Street  
ARMAGH  
BT61 7DJ

## **TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2023**

### **The Purpose of the Charity**

The purpose of the charity is as defined in an Act of the Irish Parliament of 1773-4, for 'settling and preserving a publick library in the City of Armagh for ever' (George III; Chap. XL).

The Act of Parliament provided for the incorporation and establishment of the Library with funds and collections donated by the then Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, Richard Robinson. The legislation covers the building to house the collections and the Keeper, makes provision for the increase and preservation of the collections, and specifies the constitution of Governors and Guardians to oversee the fulfilment of the Act. Archbishop Robinson provided an endowment of land in the townland of Lisanally, to be held in trust for the Library, which is now represented by a number of properties in the City of Armagh. The rents of these properties support the upkeep and management of the Library.

In accordance with this purpose, the mission and values of the Charity have been established as follows:

#### ***Mission***

To safeguard and share the treasures of the past for the enjoyment, enrichment and enlightenment of the city [of Armagh] and the world forever.

#### ***Core Values***

***Stewardship:*** Safeguard, preserve and conserve the building and collections for future generations by ensuring that the collections are researched, catalogued, and stored in a well maintained and cared for building.

***Sharing:*** Share the collections with a broad audience, facilitating original scholarship in the fields of its collection; making new ideas relevant, enriching, enjoyable and exciting to a broad audience by means of the display of books and collections, as well as outreach, public tours and educational programmes, keeping the stories of the past alive for future generations.

***Partnership:*** Foster a strong relationship with the community; developing and maintaining strategic partnerships, and working with those who can assist the Library to meet its mission and strategic objectives, and whom we can assist to deliver their own mission and goals.

***Developing and Inspiring:*** Develop our skills and expertise to understand, and care for the collections and building, in order to provide a stimulating, and inspiring environment for visitors of all ages.

### **Independent Status of the Library**

The Library is a registered charity and an accredited museum. For the sake of clarity, it should be stated that, although the governing body is constituted primarily by the Archbishop of Armagh and the Dean and Chapter of Armagh Cathedral, the Library is neither owned nor funded by the Church of Ireland and is not under the authority of its central institutions. From its foundation by Archbishop Richard Robinson, the Library has enjoyed a relationship with the Church of Ireland, but it is independent of it, with no religious mission or function. The Library is, in the great tradition of the European Enlightenment to which it owes its foundation, a place of learning and scholarship open to all, irrespective of creed and background.

## Background

Armagh Robinson Library, the oldest public library in Northern Ireland, was founded in 1771 by Archbishop Richard Robinson. He gave his own library as the nucleus of its collections.

The Library was the first of Archbishop Robinson's public building projects in Armagh between 1771 and 1794, including also the Diocesan Registry at No 5 Vicars' Hill, the Infirmary, the Armagh Observatory and the Gaol. His Palace now serves as the mayoral headquarters of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. He laid out The Mall as the civic space that remains to this day at the heart of the City.

The Library building is Grade A listed, in ashlar limestone and classical style, whose oldest parts date from 1771 to the design of Thomas Cooley. Extensions date from 1785 and, by Robert Law Monsarrat, 1845. The building's footprint is of approximately 370 square metres.



The Long Room (Photograph by Brian Mason)

The Library's Long Room (150 square metres) at first-floor level, with a gallery, is the principal room, and is accessed by a stairway from the public entrance in the east end. The south side and downstairs rooms are mainly used for the Keeper's accommodation. A return on two floors over cellars provides additional administrative and storage space.

The importance of the Library and its collections lies not just in their individual elements but also in the fact that both building and collections remain intact as a very rare example of a once-essential resource for advanced scholarship, a visual dimension of Europe's classical heritage, as part of Archbishop Robinson's purpose to encourage learning among the clergy and people of his day.

## The Registry

No 5 Vicars' Hill was built in 1772 as the Diocesan Registry by Archbishop Richard Robinson. Its octagonal rooms held the records of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Armagh, as well as some public records. While the Diocesan records are no longer kept in the building, some examples are on display, with ancient coins, gems, significant prints, early Christian artefacts and other examples of the collections of Armagh Robinson Library. In 2010–2011 the building was restored with grant aid from the then Heritage Lottery Fund and Northern Ireland Tourist Board and converted into an exhibition area to display some of the Library's non-book collection. It is now known as No 5 Vicars' Hill.



The Robinson Room in No 5 Vicars' Hill

## The Collection

The Library is a reference library of some 48,000 titles with additional collections of fine art, coins, gems and archaeological items. The Library is also an accredited museum whose role is to care for, display and make accessible to the public the collections in its care.

The Library's collections currently consist of the following:

- Approximately 48,000 books, the earliest one printed in 1484;
- 310 manuscripts, of which 23 are from the Middle Ages, the earliest from the twelfth century;
- 7 incunabula, dating from the second half of the fifteenth century;
- 4,500 prints and engravings, from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries;
- 38 maps and atlases, from the seventeenth century;
- 4,000 eighteenth-century gems/sulphurs;
- 400 coins (mainly pairs of Roman coins from the first two centuries of the Roman Empire, with some medieval and eighteenth-century items including some very rare specimens);
- 4,000 items of music from Armagh Church of Ireland Cathedral's collection;
- 6 volumes of eighteenth-century newspapers covering a ten-year period;
- the complete original series of 15 costume drawings for a pageant to mark the 1,500th anniversary of St Patrick in Ireland by the distinguished Irish artist, William Conor;
- prehistoric and historic antiquities of the personal collection of Archbishop Marcus Gervais Beresford, including Bronze Age tools and weapons, some of great rarity;
- two portraits in oils of Archbishop Robinson, one by Angelica Kauffman and the other attributed to the studio of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The Library also houses the Armagh Observatory's collection of the 1835 edition of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, which is of particular interest for local history and genealogical research.

The Library's current acquisition subjects are Local History (Armagh City and County), St Patrick, Jonathan Swift, and Church History. While the material on Church history consists mainly of printed books, journals and pamphlets, the Library also holds the archives of three former Church of Ireland Archbishops of Armagh, namely those of Beresford (1822-1862), Gregg (1939-1959) and Eames (1986-2006).

The Library owns Jonathan Swift's personal copy of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), annotated for re-printing, along with some of his most significant writings such as *A Tale of a Tub* and *A Modest Proposal*. The nucleus of the collection is Archbishop Robinson's personal library which contains 17th- and 18th-century books on theology, philosophy, classic and modern literature, voyages and travels, history, medicine and law. Included in the collection are many rare and valuable books such as John Gerson's *De Praeceptis Decalogi*, printed in Strasburg, 1488; Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, 1614; Fynes Moryson's *Travels*, 1617; Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae*, 1645; Seneca's *Tragoediae*, published in Amsterdam in 1665; Richard FitzRalph's *Defensorium Curatorum*, 1485; and Coryat's *Crudities*, 1611, amongst others. There is also a collection of medieval and 17th- and 18th-century manuscripts. There are over 6,500 items published before 1801 included on the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) and 7 incunabula. The Library contains Robinson's large collection of important and rare engravings, known as the 'Rokeby Collection', which includes examples from the work of Claude Mellan, Robert Nanteuil, Wenceslaus Hollar, William Hogarth and Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

The Irish antiquities span a period of several millennia from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages and include Neolithic polished stone axe-heads, Bronze Age tools and weapons, 8th–10th century ringed pins and late medieval bells.

### **Contemporary Uses of the Library**

The Library is a research library open to academic researchers, and to general visitors free of charge. It welcomes visitors from Northern Ireland and across the world. Current visitors include local schools, both primary and post-primary, university lecturers and students, specialist interest groups, all-Ireland and overseas tourists, as well as local Armagh people.

For all the groups identified above, guided tours are offered to suit the ages, abilities, backgrounds and interest areas of the participants. Programmes for schools are related to the appropriate Key Stage of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Book-handling is an integral part of the experience.

The Library works to promote both its buildings with representatives of Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland, and tourism development representatives of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. All events and activities are promoted on the Library's website ([armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk](http://armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk)), and on other websites, such as the local council's 'Visit Armagh', and those of Tourism NI and the Northern Ireland Museums Council.

The Library's catalogue is available online at <https://armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk/collections/main-catalogue/>. There are separate catalogues for the Rokeby Collection of Prints (<https://armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk/print-collection/>) and the archive of Archbishop John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg (<https://armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk/collections/gregg-archive/>).

### **Staffing**

During 2023, the Library employed six members of staff:

Assistant Keeper - part-time;

Administrative Officer - part-time;

Archivist - part-time;

Cleaning Supervisor - part-time;

Project Officer – part-time from March 2023 for a funded cataloguing project

Visitor Engagement Officer – part-time from September 2023 for a funded community and outreach project.

These posts are overseen by the Library's Keeper, who is also the Dean of Armagh.

## FURTHERING OUR PUBLIC BENEFIT

### Opening Hours

The Library's usual opening hours are Monday–Friday, 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., and 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. Its associated museum at the former Diocesan Registry, No 5 Vicars' Hill, is open for the same hours by prior booking.

Admission both to the Library and to No 5 Vicars' Hill is free. For group tours, the Library charges £3.00 per adult for visits to the Library, and a further £3.00 for visits to No 5 Vicars' Hill. Free tours are provided for school pupils.

### Exhibitions

The following temporary exhibitions were held in the Long Room of the Library:

- January – June 2023: *'Written by Hand'*
- July – December 2023 – *'Who Knows where the Time Goes?'*

Online versions of all but the most recent exhibition are now available on the Library's website, <https://armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk/collections/past-exhibitions-and-displays/>.



Exhibition Launch by Ursula Monaghan, Education and Outreach Officer on the theme *Who Knows where the Time Goes?*

### School Visits

In collaboration with St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, the Library offers an educational programme entitled, 'A Morning on the Hill'. This year the following schools visited the Library as part of this programme:

Date	School	No. of Children/Adults
13/06/23	Royal School Armagh	31
13/06/23	Royal School Armagh	30
14/06/23	Royal School Armagh	29
14/06/23	Royal School Armagh	30
12/10/23	St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh	26
09/11/23	Armstrong Primary School, Armagh	22
22/11/23	St Malachy's Primary School, Armagh	27
24/11/23	St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh	24
30/11/23	Armstrong Primary School, Armagh	26
07/12/23	Armstrong Primary School	26

Primary schools participate in the visit to link with the 'World Around Us' topic on the NI Curriculum.

## **Community Engagement and Collaboration with Other Organisations**

### **Launch of the Shared Island Civic Society Fund**

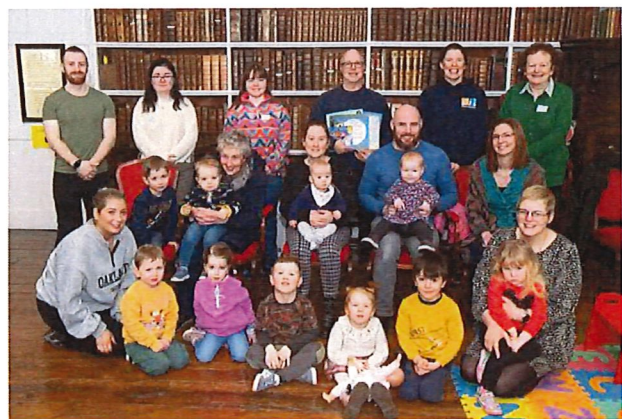
On 12/01/23 the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin TD, launched a new funding scheme in the Library. The Shared Island Civic Society Fund promotes practical North South cooperation and engagement to encourage and support civic society and community organisations to strengthen further existing partnerships. Representatives from the Cardinal O’Fiaich Library and Archive were present and the Tanaiste learned of the parallel project in opening up the Eames Papers in this Library and those of the papers of Cardinals O’Fiaich and Daly in the O’Fiaich Library.



Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin TD received a copy of *Bishops & Buildings*, a joint venture with Armagh County Museum, Cardinal O’Fiaich Library and both Cathedrals.

### **Playful Museums Festival**

The Library and No 5 took part in the 2023 Playful Museums Festival, organised by the Northern Ireland Museums Council in February. The Festival seeks to engage under 5s and their adults with museums and their collections.



Playful Museums Events in the Library and No 5 with children’s illustrator, Paul Howard

### **The City Chapter Partnership**

Working together within the partnership that is ‘The City Chapter’, the Library collaborates with three other libraries in Armagh (Armagh City Library, The Cardinal Ó Fiaich Library and Archive, and the Cultural Heritage Library in Armagh) to deliver events to promote the spoken and the written word. Funding for the National Poetry Day event was obtained from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the John Hewitt Society. This year City Chapter events included:

- 02/03/2023: author Jan Carson celebrated World Book Day in Armagh City Library;
- 14/15/03/2023: storytelling sessions for primary schools as part of Armagh’s Festival of St Patrick;
- 05/10/2023: poets Ruth Carr and Iggy McGovern celebrated National Poetry Day in the Cardinal O’Fiaich Library.



The City Chapter's World Book Day event with author Jan Carson (seated third from left).



The City Chapter's National Poetry Day event with poets Iggy McGovern (seated left) and Ruth Carr (seated right).

### ***Dementia Friendly Museum***

The Library continues to work to become a dementia friendly museum. In April 2023, it was the venue for filming by Dementia NI to create a video for use in a range of health settings. Members living with the diagnosis of dementia were recorded with the aim to encourage health workers to understand their needs. In July 2023, a preview of the video, called 'Hear Our Voice' for use throughout the Health Trusts in N. Ireland was shown in the Library for the Dementia NI members who had participated. Local Dementia NI volunteers were also present for the preview.

### ***Climate Change Project***

The Garden Project, funded originally by Northern Ireland Museums Council, was supported further by volunteers helping to tend the garden and by the gift of spring bulbs donated by members of the United Nations Association for Northern Ireland.

### ***Global Voices, Local Choices Project***

The Library was one of six museums in Northern Ireland which participated in a project called 'Global Voices, Local Choices'. Local Ukrainian families participated in the project with this Library, which involved a visit to the Ulster Museum, a modest exhibition in the Library, a visit to Stormont as a thank-you to all participating members of the projects and finally a special Christmas reception for the County Armagh participants given by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley.



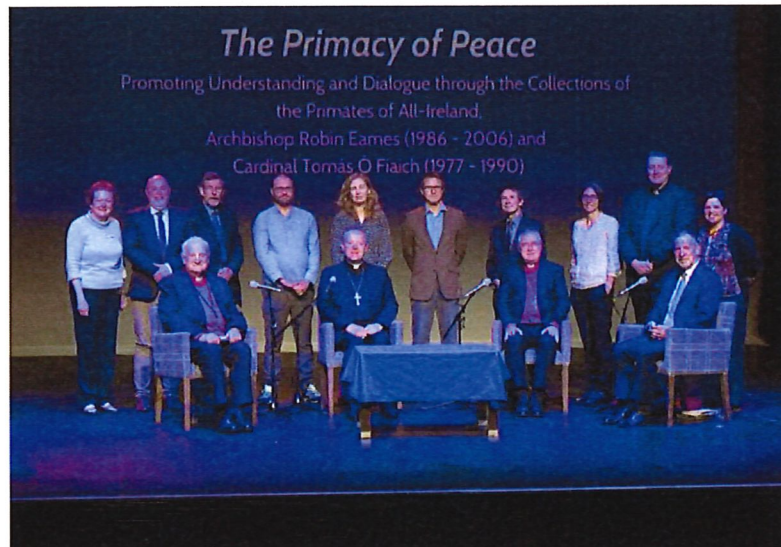
Local Ukrainian families with, seated, the Library's Keeper, the Very Revd Shane Forster, the Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley, poet and creative writer, Maria McManus, and standing centrally, Agrippa Njanina, Community Engagement Officer with National Museums NI

### **Royal Visit**

On 25/05/2023, the Library hosted a royal visit when Her Majesty The Queen visited the Long Room and met three different groups of supporters of the Library: the Library's own volunteers, pupils and teachers from the Drelincourt School, and members, volunteers and staff members of Dementia NI.

### **Primacy of Peace Joint Conference**

The organisation of the joint conference with the Cardinal O'Fiaich Library involved the whole team at the Library. Over 100 people attended the event, which was held in the Market Place Theatre, Armagh on 24/10/2023. A-Level History students from the Royal School Armagh and St Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh were present. The conference was recorded and can be found on: <https://armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk/recording-primacy-of-peace-conference/>



Guest Speakers and Library staff members at the Primacy of Peace Joint Conference

### **Armagh's Georgian Festival**

The Library has always participated in Armagh's Georgian Festival held annually in late November. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council funds the Library's Rokeby Lecture which is held each year on the Thursday before Georgian Day. This year the guest speaker was Professor Karen Corrigan, Director of Research in Linguistics at Newcastle University. The title of her lecture was 'The Language of this Country Being Always Upon the Flux: Swift and Sheridan as Guardians of English Nouns and Verbs'.



Professor Karen Corrigan, guest speaker for the Rokeby Lecture, with Archbishop John McDowell, Chairman of the Governors and Guardians, the Very Revd Shane Forster, the Library's Keeper, Mr Brett Hannam, Governor and Guardian, and staff members of the Library, Ms Ursula Monaghan, Education and Outreach Officer and Ms Carol Conlin, Assistant Keeper.



The Library and No 5 were also open to welcome visitors on Georgian Day, held on 25/11/2023 with caricaturist, John Farrelly and the Living History Interpreters from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. We also welcomed back some of the Ukrainian families

### **External Exhibition**

#### **‘Researching the Rokeby Collection of Prints at Armagh Robinson Library’ Project (Funded by the Paul Mellon Centre and the Association of Independent Museums)**

This project was brought to a successful conclusion following the launch of the exhibition of a selection of the prints from the Rokeby Collection. It was a pleasure to welcome to the launch a representative of one of the project’s funders, the London-based Paul Mellon Centre. It was also a pleasure to welcome the newly elected Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley, for whom this exhibition launch was her first public engagement. Armagh County Museum kindly hosted the exhibition which ran for the month of June, after which the prints were safely returned to the Library. The exhibition was as a result of meticulous research of the Library’s print collection, undertaken separately by two Curatorial Research Fellows – Dr Max Bryant and Ms Ella Letort, and brought together by the Library’s Archivist, Ms Thirza Mulder.



Present at the print exhibition launch were Mr Sean Barden, Curator of Armagh County Museum, Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley, Archbishop John McDowell, Chairman of the Library’s Governors and Guardians and the Very Revd Shane Forster, the Library’s Keeper

### **Room Hire**

To assist its financial sustainability, the Library's published charges for the hire of the Long Room are as follows:

Long Room: Capacity 50 (seated)  
Half day (9.00-13.00): £100  
Full day (9.00-17.00): £200  
Evenings (17.00-22.00): £150

For charities, and for bookings of two or more days, a discount of 20% applies. The Long Room is not available for daytime private hire during the months of July and August.

### **Academic and Cultural Connections**

To further the implementation of its memoranda of understanding with universities, the following have agreed to act as co-ordinators for their institution:

Queen's University Belfast	– Professor Moyra Haslett
Ulster University	– Dr Frank Ferguson
Trinity College Dublin	– Dr Robert Armstrong (Academic)
	– Dr Lydia Ferguson (Library)

### **University Placements**

Stranmillis University College – Final year student, Ms Laura Grant, worked on the updating of school visits for Year 10 pupils and helped with the promotion of the Playful Museums Festival events as part of her Alternative Placement.

Ulster University - PhD Student, Ms Grainne McMenamin, began her studies with the Rokeby print collection. Based at Ulster University, she will visit the Library at intervals to consult the prints.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council continues to involve the Library and No 5 in tour operators' visits, all with the intention of encouraging tours to the Armagh area.

### **Donations**

The Library continues to accept suitable donations that fit the criteria set out in its Collections Development Policy. During 2023 twenty-one donations were received. All the donations have been catalogued and are accessible to members of the public.

### **Adopt A Book / Adopt A Shelf Scheme**

The Adopt a Book/Adopt a Shelf scheme was supported throughout 2023. This was the idea of the Chairperson of the Development Advisory Committee, Mr Brian Acheson, who worked with the Library's team to further the fund-raising of the endowment appeal. In addition, a special reading was given by poet Michael Longley in his role as a patron of the Library's appeal. The deadline for the matched funding provision with the National Lottery Heritage Fund was reached on 31 August 2023.

### **Care of the Collections**

The Library provides searchable summary catalogues of its book and print collections, as well as the Gregg Archive, on its website [armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk](http://armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk).

### **Protection of the Collections and the Public**

The Library maintains the following facilities under annual contract:

- Intruder alarm and CCTV coverage
- Central heating, including the annual servicing of the boiler
- Fire alarm system, including twice-yearly professional maintenance and testing
- Fire extinguishers

The Library's electrical system is checked and certified every five years, and its portable electrical appliances checked and certified as required.

For the protection of children, the Library and No 5 Vicars' Hill close to other visitors during school visits. All staff have been the subject of a criminal record check by Access NI (or its predecessor organisation).

## THE LIBRARY'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

### Visitors

Visitor numbers to the Library and No 5 Vicars' Hill are recorded on automatic people-counters. The figures for 2023 are given below, along with those of previous years.

	Library		No 5 Vicars' Hill
2023	8,254	2023	2,959
2022	6,058	2022	5,478
2021	995	2021	1,185
2020	478	2020	499
2019	8,060	2019	4,426
2018	8,209	2018	3,965
2017	8,075	2017	3,252
2016	8,276	2016	4,149
2015	7,959	2015	3,582
2014	7,713	2014	3,876
2013	7,086	2013	3,755

The reduced number of visitors during 2020 and 2021 were due to the closure of the Library and No 5 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The reduced visitor numbers in 2023 to No 5 was due to a staff shortage, with No 5 open only by prior appointment.

### Group Visits

Two-fold visits were booked with St Patrick's Cathedral and the Library until the temporary employment of the Education and Outreach Officer from September 2023, enabling the inclusion of No 5 Vicars' Hill as part of the Morning or Afternoon on the Hill experience. Group visits during 2023 were as follows:

- 15/03/23: Belfast Bible Group (20)
- 26/03/23: Familiarisation Tour organised by the Tourism Department of the ABC Council (27)
- 14/04/23: Vibe Church Group (9)
- 18/05/23: EIL (Intercultural Learning) Group – Library/No 5 (22)
- 15/06/23: EIL (intercultural Learning) Group – Library and Cathedral (20)
- 20/06/23: Craigavon 'Health in Mind' Group (22)
- 29/06/23: Group tour of Goodenough College Students (8)
- 06/07/23: EIL (intercultural Learning) Group – Library and Cathedral (22)
- 10/07/23: EIL (intercultural Learning) Group – Library and Cathedral (18)
- 22/07/23: Group of Building Conservation Specialists (14) – Library and No 5
- 18/08/23: Southern Health Trust Group for People with Learning Difficulties (14)
- 24/08/23: EIL (intercultural Learning) Group – Library and Cathedral (19)
- 08/12/23: Causeway University of the Third Age - (34) – all three buildings

## **Research**

Research queries were answered by Library staff throughout the year. 22 research queries were logged before the end of the year. Topics researched included the works of Jonathan Swift, correspondence with Walter Harris and the Physico-Historical Society of Ireland, Armagh Corporation Records, women and the Ulster Plantation.

## **Website and Social Media**

Visitor interaction with the Library's website and social media in 2023 was recorded as follows:

### Website: Users

Quarter 1: 1,966 (including 1,829 new users)  
Quarter 2: 2,055 (including 1,947 new users)  
Quarter 3: 1,865 (including 1,833 new users)  
Quarter 4: 1,857 (including 1,775 new users)

### Facebook: Page Visits

Quarter 1: 868 ↑ 2.1%  
Quarter 2: 858 ↓ 1.2%  
Quarter 3: 809 ↓ 5.7%  
Quarter 4: 1,300 ↑ 66% (Georgian Day posts and Santa posts drew a great number of visits)

### Twitter: Number of new followers:

Quarter 1: 1  
Quarter 2: 10  
Quarter 3: -3  
Quarter 4: 0

## **Quality Grading**

The Library and No 5 received further notification that their four-star rating in Tourism NI's Quality Assurance Scheme will continue until further notice. This is because, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tourism NI has decided not to carry out assessments at the present time.

## **Museum Accreditation**

The Library's accredited museum status was re-confirmed in February 2018 and remained valid throughout 2022 and 2023. The Library was invited to submit a request to seek museum accreditation renewal. A fresh submission was made in December 2023 to the Arts Council of England via Northern Ireland Museums Council and a response is awaited.

## **Visitor Response**

The Library and No 5 both take great care to provide a friendly and personal service to visitors. The quality of the service is evident from the positive reviews received from platforms such as TripAdvisor.

## **Statement of Compliance**

The Governors and Guardians of the Library have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities entered into during the year have helped to achieve the Library's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit.

## **Private Benefit**

There is a continuing private benefit to the Keeper in the provision of living accommodation within the Library building. This is an incidental and necessary benefit, deriving from the Library's founding Act of Parliament.

There is also a private benefit to the Keeper in that the Library pays to the Church of Ireland Diocese of Armagh 10% of his approved stipend, employer's pension contribution and expenses as one of the ordained clergy of the Church of Ireland, by agreement with the Diocese of Armagh and the Armagh Cathedral Board, this payment being part of, not additional to, the stipend, pension contributions and expenses as determined annually by the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland and the Diocese of Armagh. This is an incidental and necessary benefit, deriving from the provision of the Act of Parliament that the Keeper 'be a Presbyter of the Church of England or Ireland as by Law established', and the present conjunction of the positions of Keeper of Armagh Robinson Library and Dean of Armagh. The amount paid by the Library to the Diocese in 2023 was £5,992.

### **Financial Review**

The net result for the year 2023 was an operating deficit of £69,601 compared with a deficit for 2022 of £45,553.

The continuing weakness in commercial rents in Armagh City Centre remains unchanged and core income from rental properties continued to decline (2023: £92,691; 2022: £97,001). The Library's investment income rose by 0.06% due to the markets starting to stabilise again in the last quarter of the year.

Expenditure for 2023 was similar to the previous year (£262,160; 2022: £263,277). Repairs works (2023: £68,540; 2022: £18,233) which were necessary repairs to the Library's rental properties. There was also an increase in professional fees (2023: £23,225; 2022: £10,050) mainly for new rental leases for the properties.

The Library is benefitting from an Endowment Grant of £1,091,900 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Of this, £1 million is to match whatever the Library can raise from private or corporate sources up to £1 million by 31 August 2023. The remainder is a grant of £91,900 (incl. VAT) towards the cost of a fundraising campaign, to be matched £1:£1 by the library. By the end of 2023 the invested NLHF Endowment Fund (inclusive of match funding) stood at £899,105.

### **Going Concern**

The Governors and Guardians are satisfied that there are adequate funds in place to ensure that the Library can continue its activities and that the financial statements for the year 2023 can be signed off as a going concern.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

### ***Governing Document and Constitution of the Charity***

The Library is governed by an Act of Parliament of 1773-4, for 'settling and preserving a publick library in the City of Armagh for ever' (George III; Chap. XL)

In accordance with the provisions of the Act, the governance of the Library is entrusted to its Governors and Guardians. Its day-to-day management is the responsibility of the Keeper, who reports to the Governors and Guardians. The Governors and Guardians are the Charity Trustees.

The Governors and Guardians met four times in the course of 2023, on 30 March, 22 June, 26 September and 23 November.

### **Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

The Library's Act of Parliament specified that the Governors and Guardians should be the Archbishop of Armagh, the Dean and the members of the Chapter of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh at that time, and their successors. The Chapter consists of the Precentor, the Chancellor, the

Treasurer, the Archdeacon of Armagh, and the Prebendaries of Ballymore, Loughgall, Mullabrack and Tynan, eight members in all. The Act also provided that they might elect two persons from the Diocese of Armagh to be joined with them as Governors and Guardians.

The Archbishop of Armagh is elected by the other bishops of the Church of Ireland, when a vacancy occurs in the See. Until 2016, the eleven such bishops were required to elect one of their own number. They may now elect a bishop from another Province of the world-wide Anglican Communion.

The appointment of the Dean and of all the members of the Cathedral Chapter is the responsibility of the Archbishop. The members of the Chapter are appointed from among clergy serving in the Diocese of Armagh, and hold their stalls in the Cathedral until they retire or move to serve in another diocese. The Dean, who is resident at the Cathedral, may be appointed from among the clergy of the Church of Ireland, from the Diocese of Armagh or elsewhere, and holds office until resignation or retirement.

The two lay persons from the Diocese of Armagh permitted by the Act of Parliament are elected by the Archbishop, Dean and Chapter meeting as Governors and Guardians of the Library.

**Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

The Governors and Guardians are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report, the statement of receipts and payments and statements of assets and liabilities in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The Governors and Guardians are responsible for keeping accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Library's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the assets and liabilities of the Library. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Library and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**Signed on behalf of the Governors and Guardians**

Trustee 1 ..... *+ John Keegan!* .....

Trustee 2 ..... *Shane Forster* .....

Date ..... *20. 6 2024* .....