

Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library & Archive Trust

Activities Report 2022-23

Governance

Throughout the year the Trustees have met regularly to oversee the running of the Library & Archive Trust in accordance with the Deed of Trust, with reports of activities being provided by the Director.

Collections

During the year two new major collections were acquired for the Library & Archive. These were the Collection of rare books on Irish Quakers from Mr Ross Chapman of Newry and the papers of the late Andrew Stephen of Belfast which were at serious risk of loss. The Andrew Stephen papers represent an important contribution to the documentary history of local sports and pastimes.

More than 700 items were added to the library catalogue across the year with particular emphasis placed on the books of the late Jim Blaney of Lurgan.

Almost two hundred items were catalogued belonging to the papers of Mgr Denis Faul and an extensive digitisation project on the papers of the Catholic Hierarchy during the period of Partition was completed with about 4,000 pages now available to search and read via the Library & Archive website.

A new cataloguing project was begun during the year addressing the papers of Cardinal Ó Fiaich during the Northern Ireland Troubles. This will be completed during 2023

Engagement and Outreach

The Library & Archive staff worked with partners in the City Chapter, PRONI and Local Councils to deliver a number of events in 2022-23. Talks and course were held in Belfast, Bellaghy, Bessbrooke, Coagh, Crossmaglen, Donaghmore, Downpatrick, Draperstown, Lissan and Maghera.

A series of spring lectures were delivered online to support the digitisation project on the Church and Partition.

Networking

The Director continued to participate in meetings of the PRONI User Forum and with the partner libraries of the City Chapter. Advice was shared with the Springhill Community archive on the development of their resource in Belfast.

Events and Activities

The CÓFLA continued to provide a meeting space for local groups during the year, particularly the Armagh branch of the U3A. A community Art class was held in the autumn and Spring of 2022 and 2023. A joint exhibition with the Armagh Harriers AC was hosted to celebrate the history of the National Athletics and Cycling Association. User numbers a gradually returning to pre-Covid levels.