

**The Chester Beatty Library**

Report to the Trustees 1998

Dublin Castle, Dublin 2

## **Trustees of the Library**

### ***Chairman***

Mr. Justice Brian Walsh (died March 1998)

Dr. T. P. Hardiman (elected March 1998)

### ***Vice-Chairman***

Dr. James White

Sir Marc Cochrane

Mr. Dermot Desmond

Dr. Patricia Donlon (to February 1998)

Mrs. Joan Duff

Professor Seán Freyne (nominated by the Taoiseach)

Mr. Brendan O'Donoghue (Director, National Library of Ireland *ex officio*)

Professor Roger Stalley (nominated by the President)

*1998 was sadly marked by the death of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Justice Brian Walsh, a dedicated champion of the institution for many years. An appreciation by Dr. T.P. Hardiman, his successor, appears on page xx*

## STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

Work proceeded on developing the exhibition design for Dublin Castle. Serious delays were encountered when the Clock Tower Building at Dublin Castle was occupied for other purposes and access became impossible for a number of months. By the end of August 1998 these problems were resolved by the co-operation of a number of Government departments and of Mr. Justice Flood's Tribunal of Enquiry and the Library occupied a suite of offices at the castle from September to December. These were handed back to The Office of Public Works at end December when the building was turned over to the contractor for the fit-out programme. A budget of £5.5 million was approved for the work. The project to develop the building for the exhibition of the Library's collections was inaugurated at a public ceremony on 5 December 1998 by the Minister of State at the Department of Finance, Mr. Martin Cullen, TD. The ceremony which was attended by over two hundred guests, was widely reported in the press.

Work on the exhibition design by Event Communications Ltd. occupied most of the time of the Director and curators during the year. Significant contributions were also made by the Technical Services Manager, Mr. Bagley, on infrastructure, communications, climate control and disaster prevention. Dr. Pollard visited museums in Europe to examine relevant modern exhibitions. Mr. Horton advanced the packing of the reference library and undertook studies of the movement of similar collections. Dr. Wright (who joined the staff on 20 January 1998) devoted the bulk of her time to familiarising herself with the Library's materials and to mounting three exhibitions – one of them at Dublin Castle explaining the collections and giving a foretaste of the new development. The curators paid study visits to new exhibitions in Glasgow, London, Exeter, Limerick and Dundalk. They also participated in a number of successful teacher training visits to the Library.

During the year, the Library took advice from Coyne Associates on developing a public profile.

## EXHIBITIONS AT SHREWSBURY RD.

*Recent Acquisitions*, an exhibition in the Garden Library charting the growth of the collection over the last six years, was mounted by Dr. Wright. A photographic exhibition was also mounted by Dr. Wright at the Clock Tower Building, Dublin Castle, to explain the collections and their history – she was assisted by Ms. Kulkarni. Dr. Pollard and Mr. McLoughlin arranged the exhibition *Beyond the gate, behind the door: scenes of village life in traditional China* which was opened on November 10 by His Excellency the Ambassador of China. In addition the main exhibition *A gift to the people* was overhauled on three occasions and large selections of new material placed on exhibition.

The Library's multilingual CD on the *Chogonka* scrolls was launched by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Ms. Síle de Valera, in June.

## EXTERNAL LOANS

Loans in 1998 included three prints to the Hiroshige Exhibition in the Royal Academy, London and a Simon Bening miniature from the *Rosarium* to the City Museum in Bruges for the exhibition *From Memling to Porbus*. The Library contributed a loan to the Ulster Museum exhibition *Up in arms* to commemorate the 1798 Rising. In addition a loan of Coptic Book-covers to Trinity College continued to the end of the year.

## COLLECTIONS CARE AND MANAGEMENT

The principal features of the year's work were continuing programmes of phase boxing, some mounting of miniatures and drawings with the assistance and supervision of Ms. Susan Corr. Members of the Attendant staff, Mr. Albert Mason, Mr. Kevin Hackett and Mr. John Madden, achieved very high standards of manufacture of phase boxes and a remarkable output was achieved. In addition to boxes, the Library through the efforts of Mr. Mason, has become self-sufficient in mounting materials for the first time. A number of boxes designed to give special support to exceptionally fragile objects were created. Documentation of the collections and archives continued to make progress. Extensive listing of the Persian holdings and a survey of the Qur'an manuscripts were initiated by Dr. Wright with the assistance of Ms. Giltrap and Ms. Schriwer. The inventory of the East Asian material was substantially completed and research programmes on the collections carried out by Dr. Pollard with the support of Mr. Kevin McLoughlin. Considerable progress was also made in listing the Western Collections and completion to inventory stage is expected by Mr. Horton in 1999. During the year the Merton and the Panopolis Papyri were surveyed and researched for exhibition at Dublin Castle. The collections' inventory contains 23,286 parent entries and many dependent illumination and other detailed entries. A survey indicates that less than 3% of the collection remains to be listed to inventory level on the computer system.

During 1998, the 4<sup>th</sup> century vellum scroll of the Letters of St. Pachomius was conserved in Trinity College Conservation Laboratory and work was begun on a series of leaves of an early Qur'an manuscript also on vellum.

Work on the photographic archive by Ms. Kulkarni was brought almost fully up to date in 1998 and the following categories listed on computer: Slides: 4915, colour transparencies: 2731, b&w negs: 274. The balance of negatives held will be entered after the transfer of the database to the new software. Mr. James Curran sorted our holdings of microfilm and began to copy and produce new microfilms of the collection.

## REFERENCE LIBRARY

Ms. Celine Ward (who took up duty as contract Reference Librarian on 1 June 1998) continued the cataloguing of both Reference material and Garden Library books. She has completed cataloguing of library stock in the Reference Library and the curatorial offices. 2,763 titles of the printed book collection have been listed and 5,877 are now entered in the computer inventory. 410 books were purchased in 1998, and 101 were donated.

## ARCHIVE

During the year the press cuttings from 1881 - 1998 were listed and summarised and certificates and objects in the archives relating to Sir Chester Beatty's life were catalogued by Ms. Sinead Ward. The Archive files numbered 1 - 1291 were also listed, dated and numbered. Ms. O'Connor researched the material for information on Sir Chester Beatty's collecting activities.

## VISITORS

There were 6,214 visitors to the Library in 1998. The delay in the Dublin castle redevelopment has led to understandable confusion in the public mind about whether the Library is open for visitors. Advertising has to some extent corrected this and numbers show a slight improvement.

## MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

### ADMINISTRATION

Despite the pressures of preparing for relocation, most of the normal operations of the Library were maintained. Readers were serviced, photographic orders were met and, although the stay in Shrewsbury Rd. was unexpectedly prolonged, the staff arranged at short notice a programme of exhibitions which will continue to mid-1999. As the tempo of work increased, administrative routines became heavier although there has been no increase in staff to deal with them. The Library's day-to-day functioning was made possible by the efforts of a number of volunteers and temporary Research Assistants.

In preparation of the site for sale the Library incurred and accrued exceptional costs in acquiring the freehold of the original portion of the premises leased from Pembroke Estates (purchase, legal costs, stamp duty) and also in obtaining professional advice in order to maximise the return on the disposal of the Shrewsbury Rd. site. These charges have been ring-fenced in an account separate from the Library's operating account which remains in credit. The debt accumulated will be liquidated on the disposal of the premises in autumn 1999.

**Equipment:** further progress was made in the equipping of the Library during the year. Preliminary studies were undertaken for transferring the computer database to a Windows environment and orders were placed for the improvement of the network to accommodate the changes envisaged in the *Information Technology Plan*. New mount-making equipment was acquired and significant progress was made in the

mounting and boxing of the collections. Further additions were made to the system for monitoring climatic conditions and instruments for counting visitors added to it. In addition, much-needed portable climate-control equipment was acquired. All of the purchases were designed for immediate use in the Library but also to be fully transferable to Dublin Castle. The purchases were made possible by a capital grant of £90,000 from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Further grants were obtained for the development of the website and of a design livery for the Library.

**Staff Matters:** Dr. Elaine Wright joined the staff of the Library as Curator of the Islamic Collections in January 1998. A number of volunteers and temporary contract Research Assistants (see details below) worked on essential documentation and research projects on the collections and participated in the mounting of exhibitions. During the year members of staff attended the following courses: Chinese and Arabic language, care of collections, stress management (all staff), communications in the workplace (all staff), various personal skills courses, communications and presentation, computer training, customer care and supervisory skills. In addition, the Library appointed a Counselling Psychologist to assist members of staff who wished to avail of the service. The system works on the basis of confidential self-referral.

#### Mr. Justice Brian Walsh

The death in March 1998 of Mr. Justice Brian Walsh has saddened all the friends of the Chester Beatty Library. In his fourteen years as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, he steered the Library through difficult times and he lived to see the final agreement for the new home for the collections at Dublin Castle agreed with Government and approved by the courts. He was a jurist of high international reputation – a distinguished barrister; he became in time the most eminent member of the Supreme Court and a justice of the European Court of Human Rights. His cultural interests were wide, a fine linguist, he taught French in Maynooth University College, he was prominent in the National Theatre Society and his advice and support were widely sought by voluntary bodies and freely given. He was devoted to the Library and always found time for it. A distinguished citizen, his loss is greatly mourned.

#### Staff of the Library

##### Director

Michael Ryan, MA Ph. D., MRIA, FSA

##### Curators:

Mr. Charles Horton BA, Dip. Archive.

Clare Pollard, MA, D. Phil

Elaine Wright MA, D. Phil

##### Personal Assistant to Director

Ms. Vera Greif

##### Technical Manager

Mr. D. Bagley MA

## Security Staff

### Senior Attendant

Mr. A. Hutchings (promoted April 1995)

### Attendants

Mr. A. Mason

Mr. K. Hackett

Mr. John Madden

Mr. James Curran

Mr. Joseph Doyle

### Research Assistants

David Edgar, MA Ph. D.

Ms. Catherine Giltrap MA,

Ms. Sheila Kulkarni, MA, H. Dip. Arts Admin

Mr. Kevin McLoughlin MA

Ms. Charlotte Schriwer MA

Ms. Celine Ward, BA, Dip. Lib.

Ms. Moya Carey BA

### Volunteer Guides

Mrs. Marian Grimes

Mrs. Kate Robinson

Mrs. Delphine Kelly

Ms. Moya Carey

Mr. Charles Aliaga-Kelly

Mr. William Aliaga-Kelly

Mrs. Josephine McKenna

Mrs. Mary O'Sullivan

Mrs. Angela Gaffey

### Consultants

Ms. Susan Corr

Ms. Clodhna Devitt

Mr. John Jackson

Mr. Bill McIntyre

Mr. Nick Artrim

Dr. David Morray

Coyne Associates

### Volunteers

Ms. Emer O'Doherty

Ms. Sinead Ward BA

## Staff Activities

**The Director, Dr. Ryan:** Served as a member of the newly-constituted Council of National Cultural Institutions. A member of the Heritage Council, he chairs its Museums and Archives Standing Committee and a number of its working parties. He was appointed by the Minister for Education to the Interim Humanities and Social Sciences Research Council. In December Dr. Ryan was appointed to an Honorary Professorship at Trinity College, Dublin. During the period he edited *Irish Antiquities: essays in memory of Joseph Raftery*, contributed two sections to the Celtic exhibition catalogue published by Asahi Shimbun in Tokyo, and an essay to *The Encyclopaedia of Medieval England*. Dr. Ryan lectured widely and taught in a number of museum and heritage training courses. He attended the conference of the American Association of Museums in May and the ASEAN-EU cultural conference in Paris in February 1998.

**Mr. Horton:** in connection with the relocation visited the British Library to study the movement of collections, supervised the loans to the Ulster Museum and to Bruges. On 1 June he was joined by Ms. Celine Ward who undertook the work on the Reference Library. He supervised the conservation of the manuscript of the Letters of Pachomius in Trinity College Conservation Laboratory. The bulk of his time was taken up with matters relating to exhibitions in Dublin Castle.

**Dr. Pollard** Arranged a number of major changes of the East Asian displays and with Mr. McLoughlin worked on the exhibition *Beyond the Gate, behind the Door*. She lectured in Trinity College, Dublin and University College, Dublin. In May Dr. Pollard attended the conference 'Rimpa Arts: Transmission and Context', at SOAS, London. In September she gave a paper at the 'Interpretation of Texts, Sacred and Secular, History and Theory' Conference, Budapest (Parody in the Floating World: Interpreting Japanese Mitate-e prints in the Chester Beatty Library) Dr Pollard also teaches Japanese art for TCD History Dept. (The Arts of the Edo Period). In February she paid study visits to museums in Holland, Germany, Hungary and Austria. In September while on a study visit to Japan, together with the Chairman she visited the publishing company that will produce annotated facsimiles of some of the finest CBL Japanese albums and scrolls. Dr. Pollard was also invited to join the panel of judges for Heinz Kaempfer Fund Essay Contest

**Dr. Wright:** Attended the conference on Safavid Art and Architecture, the British Museum, 26-28 March 1998 and Care of Collections course at Marsh's Library in May. She was appointed to the Consultative committee on Biblical and Near Eastern Studies of the Royal Irish Academy and to the Outreach Sub-Committee of the Council of National Cultural Institutions. She mounted the exhibition, Recent Acquisitions of the Chester Beatty Library, 1 May-21 December 1998 and the photographic exhibition of works in collection, Dublin Castle 3 December 1998. She also prepared a number of thorough-going re-arrangements of the Islamic exhibitions bringing much new material to exhibition for the first time and pursued the documentation of the Persian collections and oversaw the boxing programme. She also conducted detailed research for the Dublin Castle exhibitions and engaged in detailed briefing of the designers.

**Ms. Greif:** Served on the AHGI Committee for marketing the National Cultural Institutions, worked on the implementation of the national pay awards and on the development of computer-based procedures for tracking salary adjustments and for financial reporting, made the case for special funding for the design of a corporate image for the Library and assisted in the preparation of the composite Report 1992-1997.

**Mr. Bagley:** Served as a member of the Committee of the Irish Museums Association and the AHGI Committee on marketing the national cultural institutions. He was appointed to the IT sub-committee of the Council of National Cultural Institutions. He co-ordinated work on the development of the Library's website – for grant-aid for which he made the case. He developed a strategy for converting the existing collections management database to a new system (implementation to be piloted in 1999), made numerous improvements to the Library's climate control and computer systems throughout the year and supported the varied functions of the Library.

#### ACQUISITIONS

Additions to the collections were modest in 1998. One donation of an interesting Chinese costume added a welcome counterpoint to the collection of dragon robes. In addition, a credit was obtained with Kraus in New York by exchange of surplus stock of our printed *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts* whereby valuable early printed Reformation materials were purchased for the Library.

1998:1 A traditional Chinese skirt was presented by Mrs. Pauline Cadell.

1998:2 Printed book: Luther Martin, *Die zrvo (sic) Episteln Sant Peters ...*, Augsburg 1522 (purchase)

1998:3 Eck, Johann and Luther, Martin, *Disputatio domini Johannis Eccij et Pa. Martini Luther in studio Lipseni futura*, Leipsig, 1519 (purchase)

1998:4 *Confessio oder Bekanntnus des Glaubens etlicher Fursten und Stedte, Uberantwort Kaiserlicher Maiestat auff Dem Reichstag Behalten*, Ronneburg, 1557 (purchase)

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1998