

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT 2005

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR 2005

TRUSTEES OF THE LIBRARY 2005

Chairman

Dr T.P. Hardiman

Sir Marc Cochrane

Dr Kate Coleman Moriarty

Mr Dermot Desmond

Mrs Joan Duff

Professor Seán Freyne

Ms Elizabeth Maguire

Mrs Louise O'Mahony

Mrs Madeleine O'Sullivan

Professor Roger Stalley

Mr Aongus Ó hAonghusa

Overview

2005 was a year of exceptional activity within the Library with a number of important exhibitions and loans from the collections to significant displays overseas.

Access to additional funding from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism for capital and current purposes, greatly facilitated the exhibition and other programmes of the Library. Work continued on the remounting of many objects in the collection. In the Conservation Laboratory a programme of conservation of Armenian manuscripts was greatly advanced. During the summer, through the generosity of the Contributing Members of the Library, a Conservation Fellow, Mr Abdul Lateef Usta, worked on the remounting of Mughal miniatures under the supervision of Ms Jessica Baldwin. Ms Baldwin curated the exhibition *Keeping the Books: Preservation and Conservation at the Chester Beatty Library*, from 8 February to 2 May, on the theme of enabling continuing access to the collections for future generations. The exhibition was widely reported in the Press and was well attended.

In the autumn, Conservation Fellow, Ms Louise O'Connor, joined Ms Baldwin in the Laboratory for a year's work experience.

The summer exhibition was *Gardens of Earthly Delight*, the second in collaboration with the Graphic Studio. It ran from 27 May to 2 October. The work of thirty-nine contemporary artists responding to the common theme of the garden as a worldly paradise, refuge and a place of spiritual solace were featured. The exhibition was well attended and widely reviewed in the Press.

It will be shown at other venues around Ireland and internationally. The collaboration with the Graphic Studio is very fruitful and discussions on a further joint-venture have begun.

On 9 November, by the opening of the *Albrecht Dürer* exhibition with generous loans from the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin and the Kunsthalle in Bremen took place. The exhibition was curated by Mr Charles Horton, who also wrote a guide published by Scala Books. The exhibition was exceptionally well-received by the public and the media and visitor numbers for the balance of the year were beyond expectations. We can report that by its closure in 2006, the exhibition had received some 78,000 visitors. It was apparent that by the end of the year, the exhibition with some time to run into the New Year would require the reprinting of the guide. The Dürer received generous financial support from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism who sponsored the catalogue and the insurance of the loan exhibits.

The opening of the exhibition was generously supported by His Excellency, the German Ambassador, Mr Christian Frederick Pauls. The exhibition was opened by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism. The support of XCommunications is also gratefully acknowledged. The Library will now produce an interactive CD of its Dürer images for the use of schools and for sale to the public.

During the year significant changes were made to the standing exhibitions, especially in the Islamic area and in the East Asian section. A new range of Indian miniature paintings was placed on display to coincide with the *Gardens of Earthly Delight*. In the Western area and books related to the garden themes were exhibited also to coincide with the event.

A display of Chinese textiles from the Neville John Iröns bequest and the Nichol Campbell bequests were installed in the Artistics Traditions Gallery and amendments were made to the Chinese and Japanese scrolls and print exhibits.

In a sequel to the highly successful conference *Understanding Islam* in 2004 and with the kind co-operation of the Islamic Cultural Centre, the Library presented a series of lunchtime lectures on the personal experience of faith *Being a Muslim*. Later in the year, in mid-summer Professor Joytindra Jain, distinguished founder Director of the National Folk Museum in Delhi, delivered a lecture at the Library as a special event for members and guests.

Dr Shane McCausland in addition to writing for the catalogue of *The Three Emperors* exhibition undertook the Library's representation on a working party of ASEMUS – the museums network of the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF) and in the course of the year visited Beijing and Shanghai.

The constant overhaul of exhibitions, the provision of educational, guiding and other services are achieved on very modest budgets. The level of success however is unsustainable in the medium term without an improvement in staff numbers.

Dr Elaine Wright devoted a considerable part of the year to preparations for the Library's forthcoming exhibition of Mughal miniatures in the United States of America. She is writing the major part of the catalogue and commentary. She is also preparing a book on Islamic sacred manuscripts at the Library.

During the year the Library made loans to exhibitions at the Royal Academy (*Turks: A Journey of 1,000 Years 600 -1600* and the *Three Emperors*); to the exhibition in the Vatican to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception and to the Centre for Contemporary Culture, Barcelona, a Turkish miniature to the exhibition *West Portrayed by East*.

During the year, the Education Officer, Ms Jenny Siung, worked with the Digital Hub, the North Dublin Muslim National School, the Muslim National School and Griffith Barracks multi-denominational school and with a team of artists to complete a multi-media book for primary schools based on the collections. She also collaborated with the Ark. The Library lent to an exhibition on science and Ms Siung began arrangements to develop with the Ark a Silk Road educational project for 2006.

Through the volunteer guides, artists and instructors who attend children's' festivals and visit schools, the Library's education programme provides many hundreds of hours of activities and information on the collections to the general public and to school groups. Hundred of contact hours with the public are provided annually. In addition through the holding of festivals to celebrate important dates in the calendars of different faiths and cultures, the Library contributes significantly to the development of multi-cultural understanding within the city of Dublin and in Ireland generally. This year the Library celebrated Shavuot (Pentecost family day) the Bealtaine Festival for older people, the Festival of World Cultures and Diwali. It was represented at childrens' festivals in Galway and Waterford. The Silk Worm Club provides a variety of activities for the young visitor throughout the year. As it is heavily subscribed, booking is essential.

Under the guidance of Ms Janet Sheahan (Administrator) and Ms Paula Shalloo, the Members Organisation gathered strength. Initially established late in 2004 the organisation now totals two hundred ordinary members and a number of Contributing Members. In Spring, Ms Sheahan organised a visit to Antwerp to see museums, art galleries and libraries. This highly successful initiative was the first overseas venture by the Chester Beatty members. A number of other members' events and visits took place in 2006. The annual dinner of the members was held in the Library in November 2005. The contributing members section provides valuable support to the conservation work of the Library and the Trustees express their deep sense of the kindness of the members who have agreed to support our work.

In other headings of the report the activities of individual members of staff are detailed. However, it is important to mention that during the year the collection of essays arising from the Library's conference *The Word and its Beginning* entitled *The Origin and Transmission of the Earliest Gospels: The Contribution of the Chester Beatty Codex P45* edited by Charles Horton was published by Continuum International Publishing Group. The volume brings together the latest research on the origins of the gospels and their transmission and provides the only guide to the Chester Beatty Codex P45 now in print. The work is a substantial contribution by leading scholars to understanding the earliest gospels.

The Director completed his term as President of the Royal Irish Academy in March and was reappointed Chair of the Discovery Programme. He continues to develop with colleagues in Silpakorn University, Bangkok, the ASEMUS Education and Outreach Programme.

The intensive nature of the work on exhibitions, conservation and dealing with public enquiries and researchers has borne in on the Trustees the inadequacy of the staffing arrangements at the Library. With three members of the curatorial staff to cover the vast range of the collections and the increasing demands placed on the Library, it is clear that the provision of extra staff cannot be long delayed.

The Education Section which is key to the outreach policies of the Library is staffed currently by one Education Officer, assisted by a part-time organiser of the Volunteer Programme. This is clearly inadequate and the educational role of the Library must be emphasised and supported by the addition of further staff.

The health of the collections is guaranteed only by constant attention by expert conservators and the Trustees wish to draw attention yet again to the fact that the Conservation Laboratory is sustained almost entirely by voluntary contributions. It received a very welcome sponsorship from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in the additional funding announced by the Minister in November. Care on exhibition and in storage are vital and the Trustees acknowledge the important role of members of the Attendant Staff (Mr Albert Mason, Mr James Curran and Mr John Madden) especially in the work of mounting and boxing. Mr Curran and Mr Mason play a key role in exhibitions mounting.

Funding and Administration

During the year the Library's basic grant-in-aid was €1.796,000 and even with careful management it was difficult to sustain the institution on this allowance.

Happily, the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism very generously sponsored the Dürer Exhibition and provided welcome funding for capital developments within the Library and for certain recurrent expenditure. The net effect was to increase the grant-in-aid to the Library by 25%.

During the year Ms Shalloo's efforts were concentrated primarily on developing the membership programme and achieving some success in obtaining support in an otherwise quite difficult environment for sponsorship for the arts and culture. The work involved in the preparation of proposals and in advocacy for them is very considerable and is not always rewarded with success. There appears to be a general shift away from the traditional visual arts and culture in patterns of sponsorship in Ireland at the present time and despite the rising prosperity of the country this is a worrying trend. The Library has however been successful in raising money from individuals and from foundations to support its work and this effort continues.

During the year the Library met all its targets in relation to Part Two of *Sustaining Progress Pay Agreement*. The flexibility by the attendant staff continues in their undertaking of a variety of duties and is noteworthy.

A difficulty which is emerging and is a great concern to the Trustees is the increasing number of areas requiring detailed compliance documents which the Library with its tiny administrative staff is endeavouring to service. While the Library welcomes the move towards greater equality and sensitivity in Irish society it feels that the administrative burden of compliance falls equally on very small as well as larger organisations and some of the documents which the Library is obliged to compile seem to be intended for larger rather than smaller organisations.

The Library is simply unable to nominate specialists within the administration to deal with issues where a dedicated officer is often called for.

During the year the search for a suitable internal auditor proved unsuccessful but the Trustees are now confident that such a person will be in place in the year 2006 and the risk assessment process which will be the first task of the appointee. This process will greatly clarify the position with regard to compliance issues.

During the year the Library achieved extremely satisfactory levels of press coverage in all media and significantly increased its visitor numbers with a very frugal spend on advertising. Visitor numbers in 2005 were 174,000 representing an increase of over 10,500 visitors on the previous year. This is the fifth successive year in which the visitor numbers of the Library have risen.

The commercial activities of the Library include its shop, the hire of rooms by external organisations and the franchising of the restaurant. The restaurant rent and share of its profits is fixed by contract and was effectively static in the year 2005. The shop and hire of the premises process showed valuable increases in earnings over the previous year (2004 had been quite a difficult trading year). There is a clear collaboration between the commercial success of the Library and the success of the exhibitions.

STAFF OF THE LIBRARY

Director: Michael Ryan, MA Ph.D. PRIA FSA

Curator, Western Collections: Charles Horton, MA, Dip. Archive Studies

Curator, East Asian Collections: Dr Shane McCausland MA, PhD.

Curator, Islamic Collections: Elaine Wright, MA, M. Phil, D. Phil

Reference Librarian: Celine Ward, MA, MLIS

Education Officer: Jenny Siung, M.Litt, H.Dip Arts Administration, H.Dip Adult and Community Education

Operations Manager: Derval O'Carroll, MA

Technical Manager: Lorna Tracey, B.Sc.

Finance Manager: Vera Greif

Conservation Manager: Jessica Baldwin

Development Manager: Paula Shalloo

Personal Assistant to Director: June Lattimore

Senior Library Assistant: Olivia Lardner, BA, Dip.LIS

Administrative Assistant: Sinéad Ward, MA, H.Dip. Arts Administration,

Shop Manager: Antonella Barbati

Membership Co-ordinator: Janet Sheahan, H.Dip. Physio., Dip. Arts Administration

Events Co-ordinator: Lisa Fitzsimons, MA

Volunteer Co-ordinator: Rhoda Judge

Curatorial Assistant: Ms Laura Muldowney, MA

Curatorial Assistant: Ms Jill Unkel, BA., MS., M.Phil

Rights & Reproductions Assistant: Ms Catherine Yvard

Shop Assistants

John Synnott

Justina Chmielewska

Aki Tsukioka

Rumiko Tsuji

Attendants

Head Attendant: Anthony Hutchings

Senior Attendants: Albert Mason, Kevin Hackett

Attendants: James Curran, John Madden, Joseph Doyle, Val Kavanagh,
David Holmes-O'Byrne, Michael O'Neill, Tony Gallagher, Frank Hyland, Brendan
Lynch

Tour Guides

Delphine Kelly

Marian Grimes

Margaret Sheehy

Dorothy Dennis

Cathriona Russell

Jack FitzGerald

Ciaran O'Leary

Orla Ryan

Janet Martin

Michael O'Connell

Mary Dowling

Susan Dillon

Heidi O'Rourke

Workshop Assistants

Ida Moloney

Philippa Towers

Triona Langan

Visitor Service Representative

Alan Marshall

Colleen Pixley

Kathleen Hickey

Hiromi Anzai

Mairin Cullen

Margart Brady

Mary Neville

Maura Fennell

Rita Sutton

Tess Lee

Vera Murtagh

Development Assistants

Kathleen Farrington

Education Assistants

Andrea Dodd

Administrative Assistant

Amir Jina

Curatorial Assistant

Lisa Lambert