



# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space

## THE STORY BEGINS...

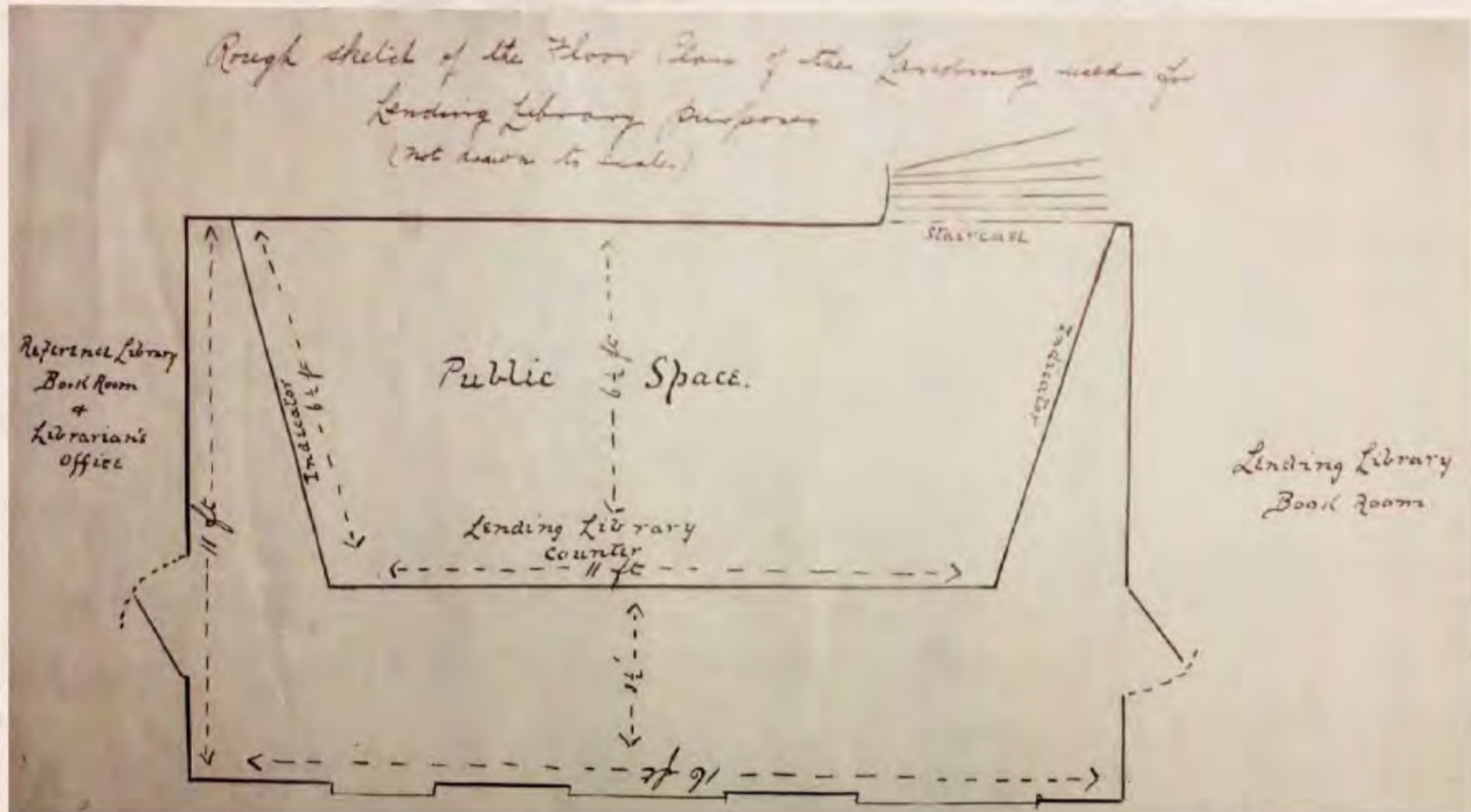
Cork was the first Irish City to adopt The Free Libraries Act in 1855 but no further action was taken until 12 February 1892, when the following order of Council was passed:

*That a Special Committee, consisting of the Mayor... be appointed to consider and report what steps should be taken with the object of establishing a Free Public Library in the City.*

(First Annual Report of the Committee of the Cork (Free) Public Library 1892-93 p.6)

In accordance with this order, the following Committee was ultimately formed, viz. —

THE MAYOR	FRANCIS W. AILEMAN, ESQ.
THE TOWNY CLERK	R. S. BAKER, ESQ.
ALDERMAN BUCKLEY	CAPT. R. PROBY BRAMISH, D.L.
DALE	A. F. SHARMAN-CRAWFORD, ESQ.
ROCHE A.	MAURICE D. DALY, ESQ. J.P.
COUNCILLOR ATKINS	ROBERT DAY, ESQ. J.P.
BARRY	MARTIN FLAVIN, ESQ. M.P.
HALL	WILLIAM T. GREEN, ESQ.
TWOSEY	W. J. LANE, ESQ. M.P.
PRESIDENT UNITED TRADES	J. J. MARONY, ESQ.
SECRETARY	JAMES J. MURPHY, ESQ.
TREASURER	J. W. McMULLEN, ESQ. J.P.
W. J. KNIGHT, ESQ., LL.D.	GEORGE M. MOORE, ESQ.
J. F. McMULLEN, ESQ., C.E.	IGNATIUS HARRINGTON, ESQ.
A. HILL, ESQ., B.E.	PRESIDENT QUEEN'S COLLEGE
W. H. SHAW, ESQ., M.E.	LADLOW A. BEAMISH, ESQ., J.P.
THOMAS CROSBIE, ESQ.	SIR G. COLTHURST, BART.
RIGHT REV. DR. GREGG, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross	W. R. ATKINS, ESQ.
	W. A. MULLIGAN, ESQ.



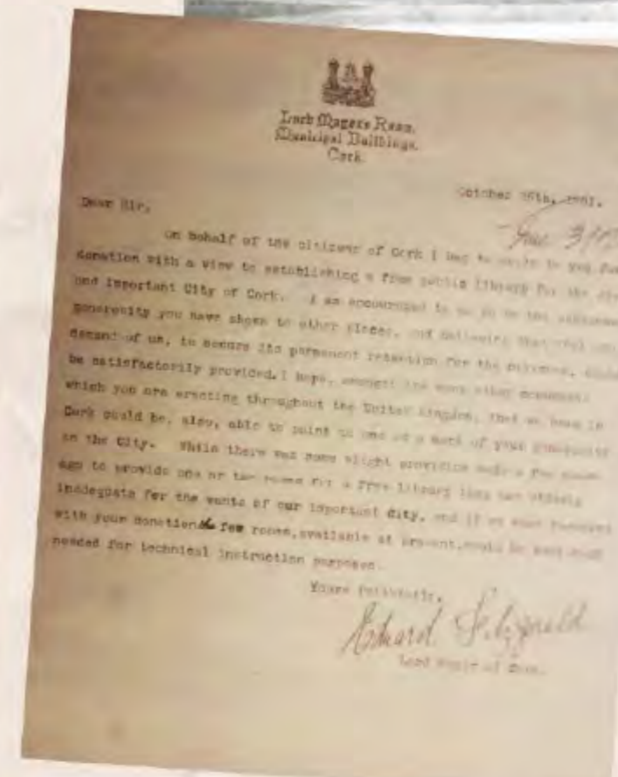
A building at No. 20 South Mall was first chosen as the site for the new Library at an annual rent of £400. Unfortunately, sufficient funds were not available and it was decided that accommodation would be found at the Crawford Municipal Buildings (below; with sketch layout on left).



**Cork's first City Librarian: James Wilkinson**

Fourteen expressions of interest in the post of City Librarian were received by the newly formed Library Management committee. On 15 September, 1892 a Mr. Harrison was elected as City Librarian. He resigned however after just 13 days on 27 September and **James Wilkinson**, who had been Assistant Librarian at Leeds, was then appointed City Librarian – a position he held for the next 41 years.

The newsroom was formally opened by Mayor Alderman Horgan on 21 December, 1892.



Carnegie Library – copy of letter from Lord Mayor to Mr Carnegie.

Mr. Carnegie agrees to pay £10,000

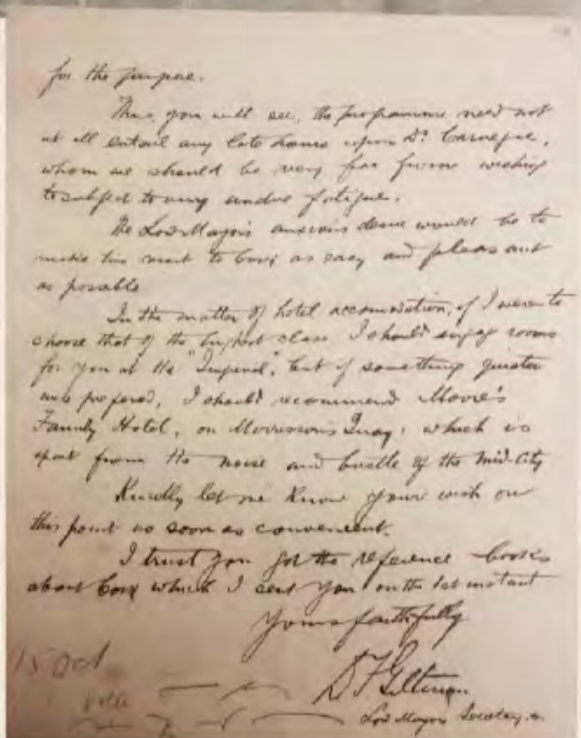


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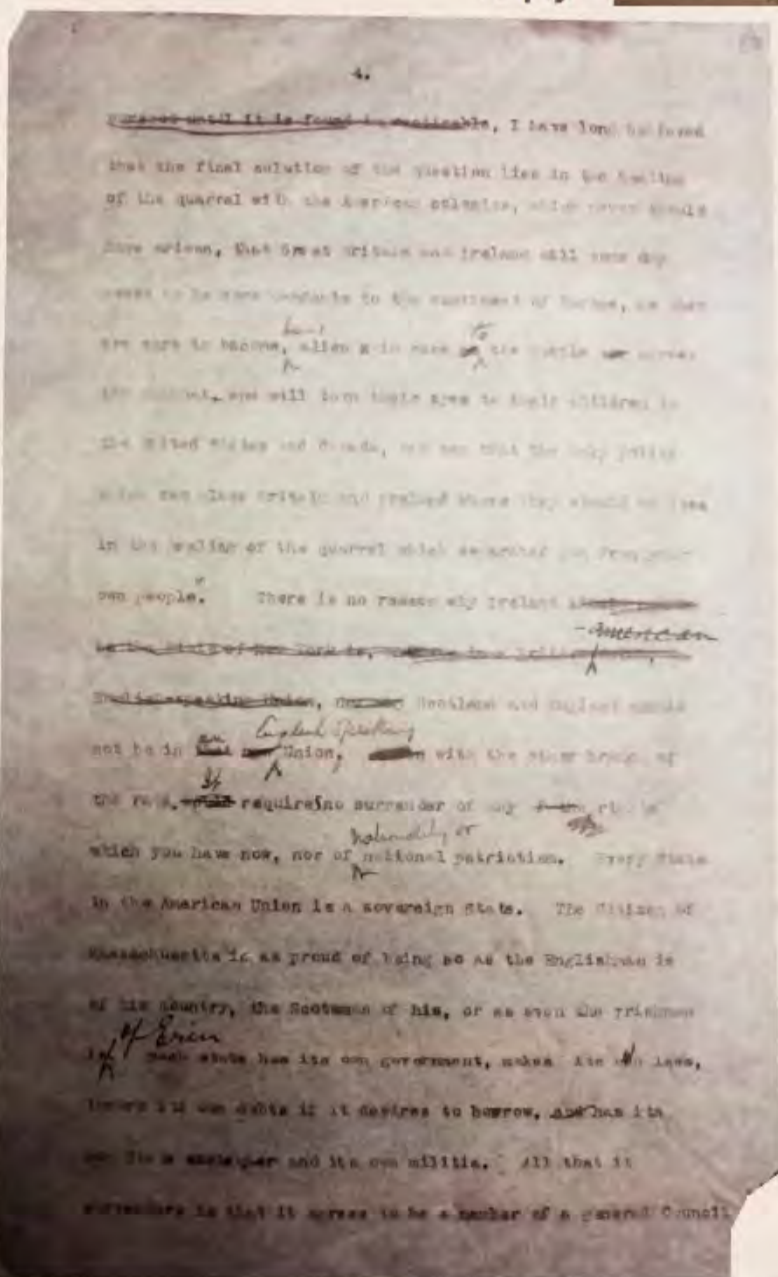
## THE STORY BEGINS... 2



Mr. Carnegie travelled to Cork on October 21 1903 for the laying of the foundation stone of the new library. In a letter to the Lord Mayor's office, his secretary outlined requirements for his visit. The Imperial Hotel on Pembroke Street was recommended as being 'of the highest class' (left) by Mr Giltenan, the Lord Mayor's secretary and rooms were reserved there – A sitting room and bedroom for Mr. Carnegie, a bedroom for Mr. Bertram, his secretary and a bedroom for his man-servant.

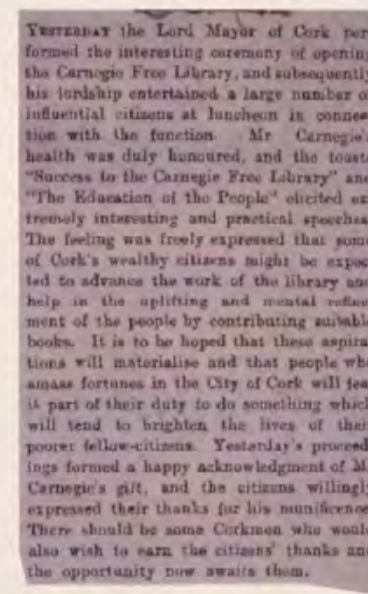


Reply



Mr. Carnegie's speech on the day references Home Rule and expounds on his ideas of where Britain and Ireland should give their allegiances. He suggests that Britain and Ireland should join with the United States of America – 'there is no reason why Ireland, Scotland and England should not be in an English speaking Union with the other branch of the race', an opinion not widely shared in Cork at the time.

The Carnegie Free Library officially opened on 12 September 1905 at 2.30 in the afternoon.



The Carnegie Free Library proved very popular with the people of Cork.

From the Cork Examiner of the day... Elizabethan in style...the beautiful entrance, balcony and tower lend attractive effects...the interior arrangements...ensure the best possible utilisation of space. The vestibule... opening into a large open hall, 30 feet by 20 feet...the floor of which is laid in the class of mosaic known as terrazzo executed by Italian workmen. The carrying out of the contract reflects every credit on Mr. Patrick Murphy, contractor.



# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space

## REDUCED TO ASHES

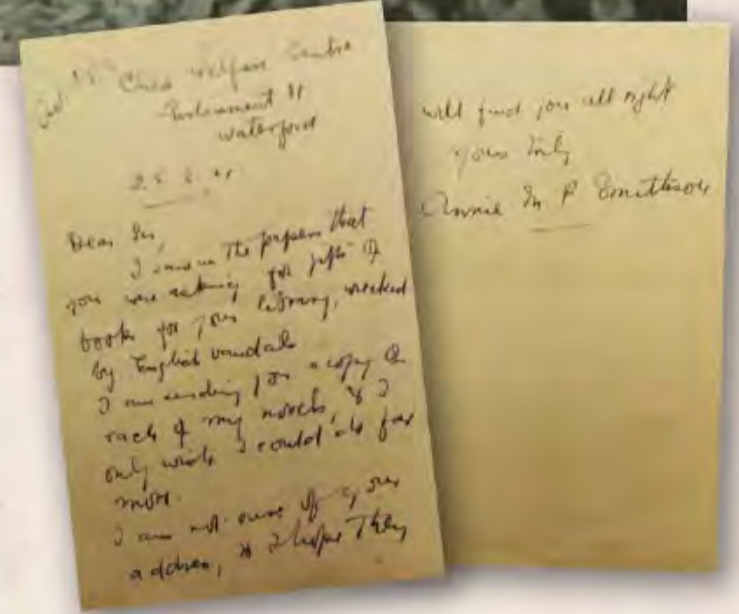
Only fifteen years later, on the night of 11 December 1920, during the War of Independence, the Carnegie Library, along with many other city centre buildings, was destroyed by arson attacks. The Library lost its complete reference collection and all lending stock not out on loan.



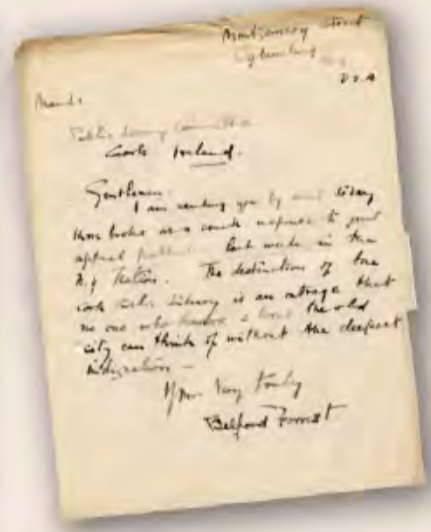
**CORK FREE LIBRARY**  
Appeal for Books  
On the morning of Sunday 12 December 1920, the only Free Library available for the 50,000 citizens of the City of Cork was burnt to the ground - the last victim of the great holocaust in which the City Hall and the principal business houses also perished.  
The destruction of a Library large or small - whether it is in Alexandria, Louvain or Cork - always appears to have a deeper meaning, a violation of the sacred sanctity of the world of letters, art and scholarship. Our little library with its 14,000 volumes, the slow gathering of 20 years, could lay no claim to valuable manuscripts or incunabula, though many of our Irish printed books were very rare. Yet the Library besides possessing a museum containing all the reading papers and periodicals recorded during the past year 100,000 issues of books for reading and reference. Our books are now in a heap of ashes, our Library but four bare walls.  
We have secured temporary premises. But the finances of the City are, for obvious reasons, unable to render so much assistance, and even in normal times our resources from the local rate did not exceed £200. We are, therefore, forced to issue this urgent appeal for books to re-establish our Library, which was practically almost exclusively by working men and women, senior young students, and also school children for whom we had a special Juvenile Section.  
Of the books, large or small, will be very gratefully received. A special bookplate inscribed with the name of the Donor, will be put on every book. As we start rebuild from the beginning, practically every class of book will be useful. Irish Language and History, General Literature and History, Dictionaries and Works of Reference, Religion, Poetry, Drama, and Art, Science, Technology, Fiction, Juvenile Literature, Sports, Travel.  
While desirous of complying in no way with the urgent calls for funds now issued by the Cork Relief Committee, we confidently appeal to all those who, without the destruction of great race or class, wish to help in this humanitarian and educational reparation. We appeal in particular to all those who are members of the great world of Letters and Art - dramatists, poets, authors, editors, scholars, teachers, deans, - to contribute what they can, not only a single volume each, to our peaceful endeavour to re-establish a Free Library in our devastated city. Educational, literary, scientific, and classical books are especially desired, but we are not averse to any books. And since we have very many individual book-lovers who will be only too happy to spare from their libraries a few volumes to contribute to the happiness and education of citizens less fortunate. Books may be sent to the Librarian, (James Wilkinson, F.R.A.), School of Art, Cork. We earnestly request advice especially to bring this Appeal to the notice of their readers.

Leaving the political and military meaning of the burning of his adopted city to historians, on the morning of 12 December 1920, James Wilkinson set about restoring his ruined library.

The international response to the Public Appeal for books was magnificent. Donations poured into the City - some of these donations still form part of the Reference Library stock today (see display cabinet). The correspondence received by James Wilkinson from those who rallied to the City's aid was generous and heart warming - the author Annie M P Smithson (right) writing 'I saw in the papers you were asking for gifts of books for your Library, wrecked by English vandals. I am sending you a copy of each of my novels, and I only wish I could do far more'.



A letter of concern was received from Conrad na Gaeilge in London:  
*'A Chara,  
At a meeting of our Árd Comhairle it was decided to send you some books in response to your appeal on behalf of Cork. Now a rumour reaches us that the military authorities are confiscating gifts of money etc. sent for reconstruction purposes to Cork. Could you let us know if books sent now would be likely to reach you safely - if so we shall send on a few, if not we can store them until a future occasion.'*



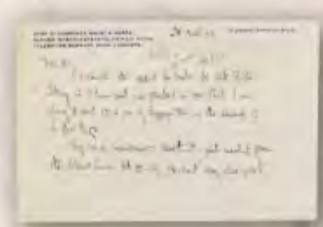
Belford Forrest of New York wrote with his donation - 'The destruction of the Cork Public Library is an outrage that no one who knows and loves the old city can conceive of without the deepest indignation'

Archer Martin's Book "Hudson's Bay Company Land Tenures - still forms part of the Library's collection and can be seen here in the display case.

The Irish Women's Distress Committee in London sent two bales of books to help with the rebuilding of the collection.



Publishers Longmans, Green & Co wrote to say they were sending a set of Canon Sheehan's novels, as well as a set of books by Somerville and Ross, given jointly by Edith Somerville and the publishers - see copy on display here



Another correspondent that January was Alfred O'Rahilly of UCC who wrote 'I have a wooden-case box of books consisting partly of books from Bere Island Internment Camp...' The donation of books from the Bere Island Internees was not acknowledged in the Library Annual Report of 1924/25, perhaps a reflection of the divisions and political bad feeling of that era. Little did O'Rahilly know that in a few short months he too would be an internee on Bere Island - he was arrested on 26 April of that year.

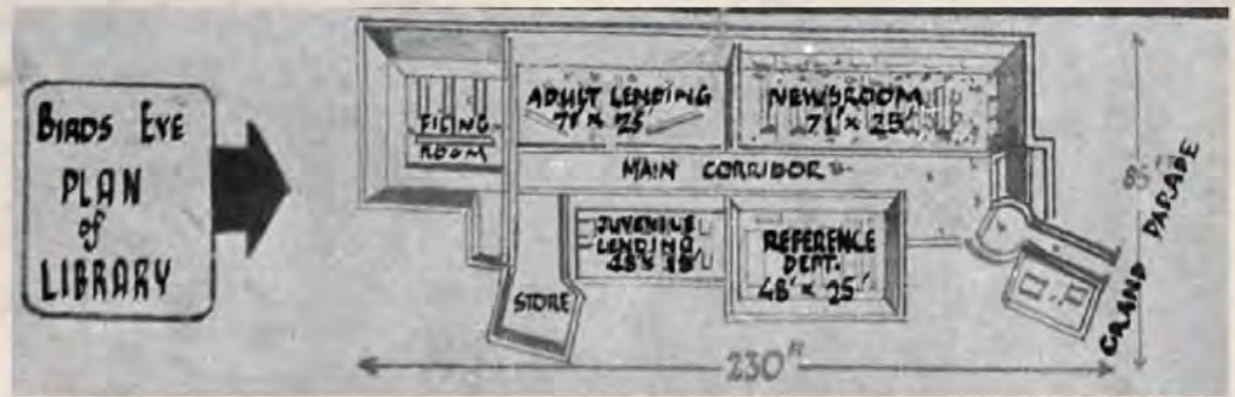




# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space

## NEW STATE, NEW LIBRARY

After the burning of the Carnegie Library, the city was without a public Library service for almost four years, until a lending service was restored in temporary premises at No. 2 Tuckey Street in September 1924. This library issued books between June 1924 and May 1930.



In September 1930, ten years after the burning of the Carnegie Library, a new purpose-built library was opened to the public at 57-8 Grand Parade (left). To this day this space forms the nucleus of the City Library.

This library remained the only public library in the city for the next 40 years, providing a service which is still warmly remembered. In a time of few other recreational opportunities, borrowing was high – it was not unusual to see queues of people out to Grand Parade, especially on a Saturday.



Early years of the 1930s building (right & below)



# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space



## STARTING YOUNG THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

Cork City Libraries have, from the very beginning, been to the fore of Children's and Young People's services in Ireland. Cork City provided the first collection of children's books in any public library in Ireland in July 1893.



Children patiently waited their turn in long queues, especially on Saturdays.



An extraordinary range of activities has been provided for children over the years by many dedicated staff members. The still continuing expansion of services for children began in the 1970's. The Book Club, with its cultural trips to places of literary interest like London, Belfast, Dublin and around Cork City was extremely popular. Regular monthly on radio and the occasional TV one allowed space for book reviews and lively discussion. The Story Car (left),

fitted with loud speakers and music provided summer open-air readings in areas not served by local libraries.



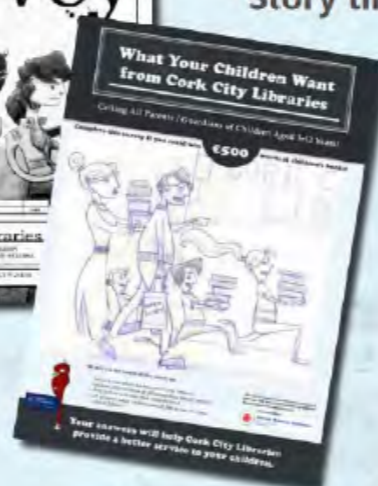
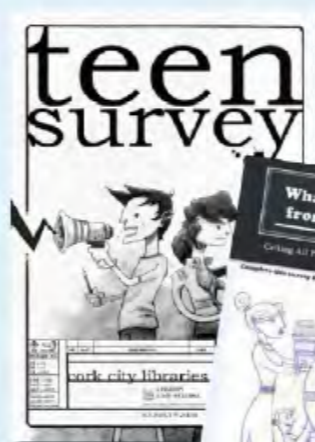
Appearing in costume adds colour to Children's events.



A Children's Library float took part in the St. Patrick's Day parade in 1987 – the float was designed around the theme of the old woman who lived in a shoe and advertised the library as the ideal place for all children. The float won first prize for originality.



Story time is always popular



In 2008 and 2009 opinions were sought about what Children and Young People wanted from Cork City Libraries and the results are used to further improve the library service's offering to the young people of Cork.



The Children's Library mascot was named Red following a hotly contested competition.

From regular colouring competitions on Saturday mornings to creative writing workshops leading to the *Unfinished book* and the production of graphic novels – all age groups and interests are catered for.



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## ALL THE NEWS FIT TO READ

The first newsroom in Cork was opened in the Free Library Rooms of the Crawford Municipal Buildings by the Mayor Alderman Horgan on Tuesday 21 December 1892.

In his Annual Report of 1895, James Wilkinson notes that the average number of visitors to the Reading Rooms has risen from **479** in 1894 to **570** in 1895. He comments that

*"This has brought out in a very prominent way the inadequacy of the present News Room both in point of size and of ventilation...the room is altogether too small for the purpose...crowded as it is every night, and especially on damp evenings, the atmosphere becomes most unpleasant."*

This situation continued until the opening of the new Carnegie Free Library in September 1905. This building had two reading rooms – a general newspaper reading room which according to Library Annual Reports of the time was very busy, with a daily average usage of 922 and a room for Ladies, a 'haven from Library Loafers and Loungers' –



The Ladies Reading Room (Glasgow 1907)



Newspaper Room (Glasgow 1907)

Note: No internal photos survive of the Carnegie Library in Cork. However, the above photographs of the Carnegie Library in Glasgow give an idea of what the interior looked like.



The very busy Newspaper Room from the 1930s.



Thinking on library design had changed by the time the new library on the Grand Parade opened in September 1930 – the building had just one Newspaper Reading room – a very busy place as the photos above & left show.



While there is no longer a dedicated newspaper reading room, a wide range of daily and weekly newspapers are still available in the Reference and Lending libraries.



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## LIBRARIES ON WHEELS

In October 1975, a Mobile library service was launched, providing a service to six areas of the city each week – three on the north side of the river Lee, at Gurrabraher, Blackpool and Mayfield; and three on the south side, at Bishopstown, Ballinlough and Blackrock. This was known affectionately as 'Wanderly Wagon' after a TV programme popular at the time. In the

late 1970s the mobile library issued more children's books than the central children's library or any one of the branch libraries. As three new branch libraries were opened in the suburban locations of Douglas (November 1976), Hollyhill (December 1980) and Mayfield (November 1984), the Mobile service was gradually cut back to only two days per week and was finally retired in 2015.



In March 2007 as a further development of Cork City Libraries outreach programme, Lord Mayor Michael Ahern launched a new van-based library service for people who cannot travel to their local libraries due to age-related conditions, temporary incapacity, reduced mobility or visual impairment. A special wheelchair – accessible van was funded by a grant from the National Disability Strategy. A full-time driver was recruited and staff from Central and the Local Libraries share the day-to-day operation of the service.

Items available include books, both large print and regular print, full-text audio books, music CDs and DVDs. The van is on the road 4 days per week bringing material to people in their homes. It also functions as a library delivery van which brings new stock, requested and returned items to and from Central Library and local libraries as well as deliveries to schools and other institutions where necessary. The service is free of charge.



Visits to housebound readers adds a very personal flavour to the library service.

In 2008 Chambers Ireland in association with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, presented the LibraryLink Service with a National Award for Excellence in Local Government for services to housebound library users.



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## GRAND PARADE EXPANSION



During a three-year period from the mid to the late 1970s the Central Library was extensively refurbished and redeveloped, with a much longer street frontage on the Grand Parade, and much enhanced facilities.



The library was for some years the largest single public library building in Ireland.



Named after the Cork patriot Terence MacSwiney, the library was officially opened by the then Taoiseach Jack Lynch on 12 May 1979.





# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space



## BRANCHING OUT

For its first eighty years, the City Library service operated from just one single city centre location at any given time.

In December 1972, exactly eighty years after the opening of the first news room in the Crawford building on Nelson Place (now

Emmet Place), a branch library was opened in St. Mary's Road, facing the North Cathedral on the north side of the City.



This was the first local library to open after the City authorities decided to develop a network of libraries throughout the city, following the extension of the city boundary in 1965 which increased the city's population from 70,000 to 125,000. This library closed in April 2010 and relocated to its present location in Blackpool Shopping Centre.



The city's second branch library opened at the junction of Lower Friar's Walk and Tory Top Road in July 1974. The 1970's building proved unsatisfactory and was replaced by a new library on the same site in 2005.



The third branch library opened in Douglas Shopping Centre in 1976 and then relocated to its present location in April 2010. Douglas Library is jointly funded by Cork City and Cork County Councils.



Hollyhill library has occupied 4 different buildings since it was first opened in 1980 in Terence McSwiney Community College. Since July 2015 it occupies an award winning, purpose built building on Harbour View Road in Knocknaheeny.



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## THE MUSIC LIBRARY



Joe McHugh, City Manager, Kitty Buckley, Music Librarian from 1977 to 2014, Cllr. Brian Sloane, Lord Mayor of Cork, Seán Bohan, City Librarian, at the opening of the Record Library.

The Music Library, originally known as the Record Library, first opened in July 1978.

It began with just a few classical and Irish traditional records and has grown to become one of the largest music lending collections in the country (right). There are no typical users of the Music Library – they are just people who love music, performers and budding performers browsing through CDs and scores for that all-important audition piece, or a song for a friend's birthday party, members of choirs and choral societies, songwriters, composers, students and teachers.



### Best things in life are free, thanks to Rory

**HAVE** been a member of the Rory Gallagher Music Library in the Grand Parade for more than 35 years and in that time I have seen many changes and borrowed thousands of records (LPs), tapes and of course CDs.

The biggest change is it is now free and I would encourage anyone with or without an interest in music to avail of this fantastic service.

From rock to pop, jazz, indie, blues, country, any decade, and of course a vast range of Rory Gallagher memorabilia to be seen on display, you can borrow up to ten items per visit.

Not many things in life are free so make use of this service and, to the staff, keep up the good work.

Music Lover, Gene Stephens, Hyde Park Mews, Dublin Hill, Cork

Live performances are always popular as are the regular Gramophone circles



Liam Ronayne, City Librarian, Donal Gallagher, Rory's brother and manager, Cllr. Seán Martin, Lord Mayor of Cork, Mrs Monica Gallagher, Rory's mother, Joe Gavin, City Manager.

The music library was renamed as the Rory Gallagher Music Library in 2004 and is now a place where his fans can reminisce, share their memories and feel closest to 'the greatest guitarist of them all'

Best of all, as pointed out by a music lover in a letter to *The Echo* recently – its free





# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space

## LIBRARIES FOR LEARNING

Recent years have seen very exciting initiatives for lifelong learning in Cork. UNESCO's selection of Cork as host of the third International Conference on Learning Cities in 2017 is recognition of the city's current status among members of the Global Network of Learning Cities. This builds on the UNESCO Learning City Award presented to Cork in 2015, one of the first 12 cities worldwide to receive this award, and one of just three cities in Europe, with Swansea in Wales and Espoo in Finland.

Libraries are at the heart of the Learning City, including the Lifelong Learning Festival which has run every year since 2003, but the Libraries' involvement in learning goes back to the days of Carnegie, and indeed to the founding legislation for public libraries in 1855. Libraries encourage and support learning through life – everyone from toddlers to senior citizens use libraries.



Libraries continue to provide an extensive range of resources for formal education, and informal personalized learning, and have very close relationships with primary and secondary schools in the city, and with third-level education institutions. We host basic literacy classes and classes on Basic English in partnership with Welcome English and Altrusa. Our libraries provide basic computer classes in partnership with Solas, Get Ireland Online initiative, and other agencies.



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## OUR CITY'S MEMORY

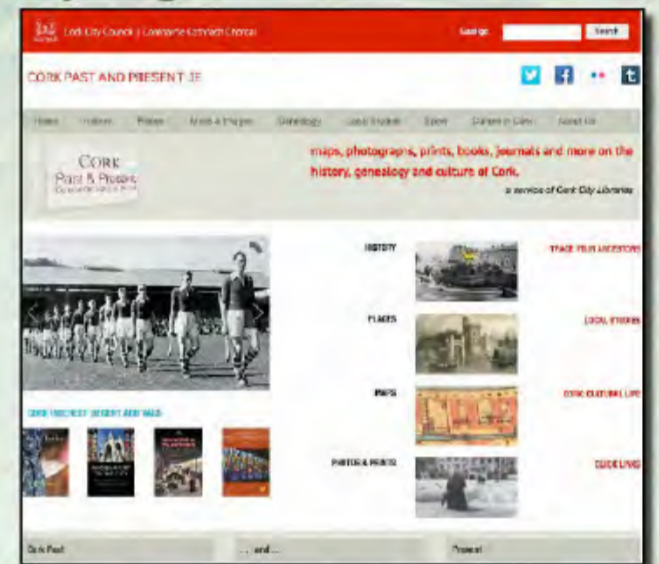
Located right at the top of the City Library building for around 40 years, the Cork Local Studies Library, often called the 'Cork Room', is home to a huge range of material (on paper and in other media) on the history, geography, antiquities, archaeology, folklore and culture of Cork city and county. The collection contains almost 17,000 books, as well as newspapers, journals, periodicals, manuscripts, maps and photographs. The photographic collections of old Cork include the Lawrence collection, the Cork Camera Club collection, and the Michael O'Leary collection which is mainly digital.

Few things fascinate visitors to the Local Studies Library more than old photographs, illustrations, and maps of the city. Other popular features include old directories of the city, and magazines which are gateways to the city's architectural heritage such as *The Irish Builder* and *The Illustrated London News*.



### Our Memory Online ~ Cork Past and Present

For more than a decade the very popular Cork Past and Present website [corkpastandpresent.ie](http://corkpastandpresent.ie) has digitized the unique material held in the Local Studies Library. Many important sources from the collection are now available online. Especially popular with visitors to the site are the maps and photographs of old Cork. The section on Cork genealogy is also very popular. Cork Past and Present will continue to add valuable content to the site in the coming years.



Genealogical researches come from all over the world: USA, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, and across the water. Some have travelled in hope for thousands of miles. Some of them, alas, with little background knowledge will find little about their families.

*'Where was your great grandmother from?'*

*'Julia O'Sullivan from West Cork.'*

We have to break it to them gently



**Local studies, local history.** What images do the phrases conjure up to the uninitiated? Dusty tomes and droning old bores half-desiccated with learning? The reality is so different. A posse of children excitedly poring over old newspapers and maps. It is vital, however, to show them how to handle the materials with care, but without damaging their enthusiasm.

**Newspapers** An immense source of information on all aspects of local studies. How to organize it, make it available to people? The old card index was laborious to compile with few points of access. 1996 brought computerised indexing with a kaleidoscope of access points. Nirvana for researchers (and staff!).



### Sport Kieran Burke recalls

A stream of people with immense knowledge of their sports spending hours, days, years reading newspapers, lovingly recording the details of the histories of their clubs and their sports. A fond memory. A colleague with no interest in sport was asked for information on the boxer 'Pakie' Mahoney. Consternation on colleague's face. Probably thought Mahoney was a member of an extremist group. I intervened. "Didn't he fight Billy Wells?" Immediate smile on the face of the inquirer. 'Fair play boy, you're one of our own.'

### Treasures Of Cork City Libraries

- > The mayoral book of Thomas Pembrock from 1733. (A manuscript of Pembrock which includes everything from accounts of Corporation meetings to folk remedies for colds.)
- > The correspondence of Thomas Crofton Croker in six volumes. (Includes letters from Sir Walter Scott, the Grimm Brothers and other 19th century writers and antiquarians. The bindings are in poor shape, we might need to have them rebound.)
- > The illustrations of birds by Richard Dunscombe Parker. (A really handsome book published about 15 years ago. Parker, from Mount Desert, has been compared to Audobon as an illustrator of wild life.)
- > The minute book of the committee for the reconstruction of the city after the burning in 1920.
- > Bound copies of 18th and 19th century newspapers.
- > The Grand Jury map of 1811. (A beautiful map of Cork County in six sections. Probably the best pre-O.S. map of Cork.)
- > The Goad Plans showing the commercial centre of Cork in great detail from 1897 to 1961.
- > Coloured political cartoons from 'United Ireland' covering mainly the 1880s and 1890s.
- > An interleaved and annotated edition of Smith's history of Cork in 6 volumes. The annotations on the interleaved pages are by Thomas Crofton Croker. This book was the foundation for the famous edition of Smith published by the CHAS in 1893 with chapters of notes alternating with Smith's text.



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- > Cork is a small city, one of many small & medium sized cities in Europe.
- > Cork is a city and region on the edge of Europe, one of many on the edge of Europe.
- > In 2005 the main goal was for the various and varied cultures of Europe to be seen through the prism of this small city on the edge of Europe.



## Cork 2005

European Capital of Culture

2005 offered a chance for the library service to re-invent itself as a key cultural resource, in the heart of the city and at the heart of each community. It is fitting that the most popular cultural institution in the City should have played a central role in the city's year as European Capital of Culture. The range of activities reflected the range of activities to be found in a modern public library.

Culture is many things, certainly much more than the 'high' arts with which it is often lazily linked. One of the major,

and in part justified, criticisms of the Cork 2005 programme is that it was preaching to the converted, to the existing audiences for dance, theatre, visual arts, and did not reach out to the public in general. The success of the street events, and the response to e.g. St Patrick's Festival, Ocean to the City, Lee Swim, etc. shows there was an audience waiting to be charmed and entertained.

The Library programme was founded on a much wider definition of what culture is, what culture means.

### Library architecture

What kind of building can a city library be in the 21st century? What kind of building should a library be? The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and Cork City Libraries invited young European architects and architectural students to design an ideal central library for a city of approximately Cork's size. This led to an amazing 400+ entries from all over the world, and some of these ideas have fed into plans for the proposed new City Library on the Grand Parade.



### Music and sport

Cork City Libraries in partnership with The Irish Examiner organised a seminar and exhibition under the banner title 'On the Sidelines' in September on the history and current state of sports writing in Europe and the world.



The Music Library organized three special exhibitions

- 'Listening to the Merry Chimes' on the balladeers & songwriters of Cork,
- 'Remembering Rory' on Rory Gallagher, songwriter, and
- 'Classical Notes' on the classical composers of 19th & 20th century Cork.



### Books and reading

One of the main projects organised was a celebration of books and reading on World Book Day, a celebration that began on Friday morning 22 April and carried through the night until 5:30 on the Saturday, 23 April which is UNESCO World Book Day. This gave birth to the Cork World Book Fest, which has taken place every year since, and enjoyed its 13th edition in 2017.

2005 also gave birth to the Unfinished Book project, carried on by young people every year since.

### Other highlights

Libraries have always been a 'safe haven for the word' to paraphrase the city's own motto, and many libraries have suffered for it. 'The Word Endures', a seminar with an accompanying exhibition, brought together speakers from Europe and the Middle East to discuss this still relevant topic.



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# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space



## A SAFE HAVEN FOR THE WORD *STATIO BENE FIDE VERBUM*

Readings, book launches, and visits from authors - both children's and adult writers – are now a well-established feature of what the library service offers.

The public have come to expect these events as their due. But why?

Cork City Libraries see events which promote reading and creative writing as an integral element of the service. The goals are threefold.

### To get people reading

- > encouraging people, young and old, to read by highlighting interesting books and subjects;
- > promoting a range of books on topics of interest, e.g. travel writing, personal development, classics, new and exciting writers of poetry and fiction;
- > promoting a range of books to coincide with festivals in the city, or with national promotions: e.g. Heritage Week, Bealtaine, etc., 'International Year of ...';
- > fostering and facilitating book clubs in each Library.



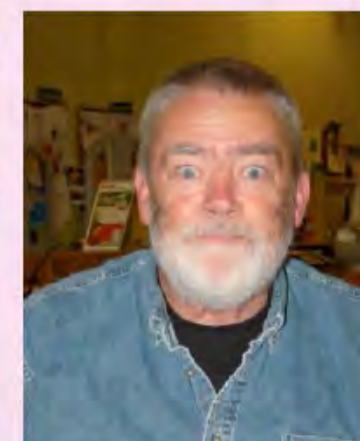
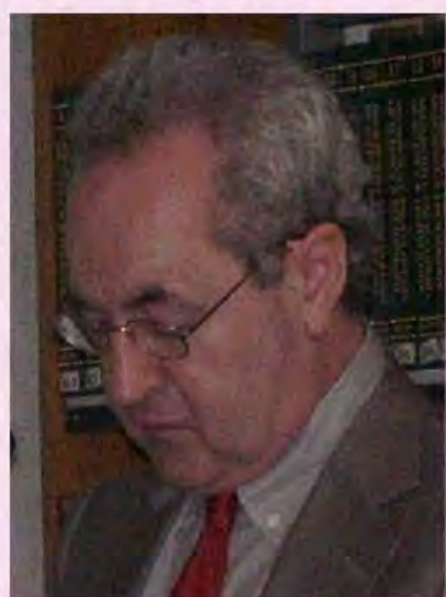
### To connect writers with their readers

- > bringing writers of the highest international standard to read in Libraries in Cork;
- > giving writers from Cork a regular platform to read their work for local audiences;
- > organizing regular series of talks and exhibitions on writers;
- > organizing and/or hosting book launches.



### To encourage new writing

- > encouraging budding writers from Cork to write their own material;
- > organizing and hosting workshops for creative writing, for both existing and emerging writers.



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# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space



## AT YOUR SERVICE

In a time of utter turmoil, the first City Librarian James Wilkinson almost singlehandedly rebuilt the collection after the destruction of the Carnegie Library.



The dedication to service shown by Wilkinson has been echoed over the 125 years by generations of library staff, many of them shown here.



# From Borrowed Space to Cyber Space



## 125 YEARS ON... ...NEW BEGINNINGS

125 years have passed since the City Library first began to serve the people of Cork. What's next? Much remains to be done – buildings, services, technologies.

In recent years, the Library Service has seen greatly increased demand for both borrowing and use of library spaces and facilities. Demand for study spaces, classes, attendances at events are all on the rise. While heartening, and indicating the value of a library service, this presents obvious challenges to the Library Service. The digital revolution impacts on libraries in three main ways:

*Firstly*, the move from printed materials to eBooks, eJournals, Apps, etc.; we 'rent', not 'own' digital journals;

*Secondly*, major shifts in the media ecosystem: e.g. merger of major publishing houses, so that three or four conglomerates now publish ca 80% of books, closure of small bookshops, and the virtual disappearance of record shops;

*Thirdly*, the demand and expectation on the part of the public that we must provide a range of digital services, online maps, music downloads, web videos, etc.

### A NEW CITY LIBRARY

The big challenge in terms of library infrastructure is the replacement of the City Library building, most of which dates from 1930. This building has served the city well, but it is accepted by both the public and the City Council that the building is no longer fit for purpose.

The City Council is currently preparing plans for a new City Library which would be a place of fulfilment and joy, for young and old, for people from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.



An architect's impression of what the new Library might look like.

This is an opportunity for the people of the city to have a City Library which will be a symbol of Cork's commitment to information, ideas, knowledge and growth, a Library large enough to properly serve the city and to nourish its cultural, social and educational life. Cork is a city which is thriving and preparing for regeneration on a number of fronts; it needs a City Library which is consistent with that ambition.

Another objective of the City Council for its Library Service is a purpose-designed building to serve the areas of Blackrock and Mahon.



People are and will remain our greatest strength: the people who use the service, and the people who provide the service.

Despite the changes libraries will remain first and foremost community facilities, an intervention in the lives of individuals and communities to foster reading and learning in all its forms. Modern libraries provide a home to a variety of groups – many of whom had no home before – enabling activities to happen which would otherwise not take place, and providing for the enrichment of society. This community focus will become stronger in the years ahead.

One of the great challenges for public libraries, indeed all public services in the 21st century, is how to strike a creative balance between the traditional ways of doing things, on the one hand, and on the other hand using the potential of a variety of technologies and new ways of working to improve service delivery. *Routines, technologies and procedures, can and must continue to allow for creative interaction between staff and public.*



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