



# GLINT

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## Notes from your Editor

This issue of GLINT has been a long time in coming. The blame lies squarely on my shoulders, but in extenuating circumstances as our Library was very short-staffed during that time. Unfortunately our Production Editor (Lisa Shields) has now retired, so until I have time to add DTP to my other computer skills (or someone else volunteers their services) the production standard may not reach the same high level as before. However, this will not affect the content, which hopefully you will continue to find stimulating and useful. If anyone has any suggestions to improve the content I would be delighted to have them. I can be contacted at Library, Dept of Agriculture and Food, Kildare Street, Dublin 2 (email: doylem@indigo.ie).

Since our last edition of GLINT we have sadly lost one of the stalwarts of the Government Libraries Section - Mary Moore, who died on 24th August 1996. She is a great loss to the GLS as she was an enthusiastic and stimulating Committee member, ever since the first

meeting we held to discuss the formation of a Government Libraries Group. I well remember the evening when at the instigation of Oliver Marshall, then Librarian in the Department of Education and now also left government library circles, Mary, Oliver and myself met over a drink in Buswells to discuss the possibility of forming a group. There followed a few more formal meetings to discuss details, after which we circularised all the government libraries and were very gratified to find over 30 people at our inaugural meeting in Trinity College. The Group has since gone from strength to strength and Mary's work and enthusiasm was a large factor in its success.

Mary was a good friend even before our more formal connection through the GLG and her death was also a great personal loss to me. In this newsletter we reproduce Maura Corcoran's moving tribute to Mary at her funeral, the sentiments of which all her friends in the GLS share.

Mary Doyle, Editor

### Elsewhere in this Newsletter

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## YOUR COMMITTEE 1998 / 1999

Chairman:	Joe Donnelly, Judges' Library
Minutes Secretary:	Mary Doyle, Dept of Agriculture and Food
Correspondence Secretary and PRO:	Carol Flynn, Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Treasurer:	Valerie Ingram, OPW
Committee Members:	
Michael O'Gorman	State Laboratory
Madelaine Dennison	Office of the Attorney General
Denise Duffy	Dept of Agriculture and Food
Sarah Ball	National Botanic Gardens
Monica Wallace	Dept of Public Enterprise

### NEW APPOINTMENTS / DEPARTURES FROM GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Lisa Shields recently retired from Met Eireann.  
She has been replaced by Jane Burns



Other recent appointments:

Eunice Delaney - Dept of Foreign Affairs

Caroline Pfeifer - Dept of Public Enterprise

Helen Bradley - Law Reform Commission

Charlotte Cousins, Assistant Librarian Oireachtas

Denise Duffy, Assistant Librarian, Dept of Agriculture and Food

We welcome all the new arrivals.

## FOI CONFERENCE

The highlight of 1997 was the interesting and informative GLS Conference on Freedom of Information, held in Dublin Castle on the 12th November 1997. There was great interest in the Conference, with over 100 participants and we apologize again to those we had to turn away. We were very pleased to welcome our government library colleagues from Northern Ireland who came as part of an ongoing exchange of visits. Their visit was, in fact, the initial inspiration for the conference.

We were very fortunate to have the use of the Coach House in Dublin Castle, which was such

an excellent venue for the Conference and was made available to us by OPW. As you will see from the summary of the papers below we had a wide range of speakers and we certainly appreciated them giving so generously of their time and expertise. We were also fortunate to receive generous financial assistance from EBSCO, Lendac, Round Hall Sweet and Maxwell and Hodges Figgis Bookshops.

All of the Committee Members of the GLS helped in various ways to make the Conference a success. I must make special mention of Michael O'Gorman, Librarian, State Laboratory,

who was mainly responsible for organising the Conference and coordinating the work of others.

To all these and many others who provided support of one sort or another, the Editors express their appreciation.

The proceedings of the Conference will be published shortly by Blackhall Publishing. Joseph Donnelly, the Conference Chairman, has provided the following brief summary of the papers:

The Conference produced, all told, a varied and thought-provoking collection of papers, which I hope you will find as interesting as I have. They will be accompanied in the book by the full text of the Act and the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum of the Bill, and a select bibliography.

Senator Brendan Ryan was a most appropriate person to deliver the opening address, given his long-standing interest in the subject. He introduced a Bill on Freedom of Information in 1988. He welcomed, with some reservations, the Act of 1997 as revolutionary, while pointing out that it is one part (though a very thorough one) of a continuous process, which will include the extension of the application of the Act and a change in attitudes within public bodies.

Niall Michel was not a speaker at the Conference, but he kindly offered a paper for distribution, and it is reproduced in the proceedings, providing a concise, but useful, overview of the Act and its implications, while also mentioning difficulties which have been encountered in implementing similar legislation in Canada.

Gerry Kearney, who heads the Freedom of Information Central Policy Unit in the Department of Finance, set the Act, and its philosophy, in the context of wider reform in public life. He provided a detailed outline of the implementation of the Act, as well as discussing its impact on public administration and on the citizen.

It was to be expected that Eithne Fitzgerald would be enthusiastic about the Act since, as Minister of State at the Office of the Tánaiste, she steered the Bill along its path to enactment - a path that was not without obstacles.

However, far from delivering a vague statement of support for openness, she showed her deeply felt commitment to a radical re-engineering of the way decision-making is done in public administration. Her enthusiasm was infectious, and equally impressive were her familiarity with each provision of the Act and her interest in the practical workings of the new system. Indeed, her main theme concerns "the next steps" which are necessary after enactment,

and she emphasises in her paper, as she did in answers to questions from the floor, that the Act creates positive duties, to assist citizens in knowing about relevant information, and to make it available appropriately and without delay.

Maeva McDonagh has made quite a study of Freedom of Information legislation in various jurisdictions and is the author of *Freedom of Information in Ireland*, published in September 1998 by Round Hall Sweet and Maxwell. She assessed the possible impact of the Irish Act by looking at related legislation in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, comparing the scope of the Acts, the exemptions, and enforcement measures.

Dr Paschal Preston set the Freedom of Information Act in the broader context of citizenship information in Europe and the role of technology in giving access to governmental information, touching also on moves to promote the sale of government-generated information. He looked at various aspects of citizenship information needs, including information related to rights and to services, as well as accountability and participation. This embraces not only information technology and face-to-face expert advice, but also the commercialisation of information supply (where a "market" can be identified), and the effects of poverty, disability and other disadvantages which influence both the need for information and access to it. Among his conclusions, he identified the importance of public policy initiatives in information by national governments and by the E.U.

Roy Atkinson, with his perspective as Vice-Chairman of the Consumers' Association of Ireland, looked at difficulties which may confront citizens as both information subjects and information consumers, drawing on past experience related to the way information issues have been handled in the context of the Data Protection Act, the planning process, and the Directive on access to environmental information. Issues which have concerned him in the past include identifying the relevant information, knowing where to find it, one's bargaining power and pressure to contract out of one's right to privacy, the cost of accessing information and the difficulties which can arise in obtaining copies. He concluded that the utility of this welcome piece of legislation will depend on how it is operated.

Bernadette Kennedy's paper reminds us that the time does not simply become ripe for an idea. The final outcome and its precise nature are influenced by factors which arise at a very early stage, including the definition of a problem, the agendas (and resources) of various groups, their influence on policy-makers, and decisions about which proposals to consider and which to drop. She showed how events, and decisions, in Ireland in the

1990s gave rise to the current legislation.

This leads neatly to the paper of Michael Foley, media correspondent of The Irish Times. While he was generally very positive about the Act, as a radical step designed to end a culture of secrecy, he nevertheless concentrated on a shift in emphasis towards a private right to information, rather than a public right to transparent government. He

listed, among issues not dealt with in the Act, a "whistle-blower's charter" (implementation of which has been delayed), cabinet confidentiality, and changes in areas of the law of particular interest to the media, such as the right to keep secret a journalist's sources of information and the law of defamation.



## Lisa Shields

Lisa Shields, who retired from the Library of Met Eireann in April 1998, was one of the original members of the GLG and from the first meeting was a constantly active, tireless and stimulating worker on the Committee. She was at various times Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and also our IT expert. She was always very generous in sharing her expertise.

Lisa has many claims to fame, not least the great determination on one of the GLG's social outings, to drive herself to climb to the summit of Lugnaquilla, while lesser mortals fell by the way-side, even though it was the first (and, I suspect, the last time) she ever climbed a mountain. It was doubtless the same determination which made her a self-taught Fortran programmer, who wrote her own library database package.

Lisa enjoys life and has many interests. Since retiring she has had a new grandchild to make further claims on her already busy schedule. Still, she now has plenty of time to further develop her expertise as an uileann piper and concertina player and I am delighted that she is now able to come DAF lunchtime session in O'Donoghues every 2nd Friday. In a moment of madness she also offered to continue doing the GLS Web page for which we are very grateful.

We miss Lisa's expertise, and even more her cheerful presence on our Committee. I know all the GLS will join with me in wishing her

## A long happy and healthy Retirement

## VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND

A number of GLS members traveled to Northern Ireland in 1996 at the invitation of our NI government library colleagues. In the morning people went to visit Libraries of interest. I myself went to the Library in the Department of Agriculture (DANI) which was as interesting as my previous visit and as enjoyable, especially the scones.

The visits were followed by a lovely lunch in the Stormont Hotel, where we met NI librarians from other Departments. This was followed in the afternoon by a very interesting talk on 'Charging in Libraries'

We would like to thank our colleagues in Northern Ireland for hosting such an interesting and enjoyable day.

### AFTERNOON MEETING

Speaker: Peter Gill, Chief Librarian, DOE, London

Subject: Charging in Libraries

The following are some notes which I took during the meeting.

The main thrust of Peter Gill's argument was:

If you can avoid charging do, because it is an administrative nightmare and you will spend most of your time doing the related administrative work, instead of providing information. Library services should be seen as an overhead in the same way as personnel, accounts, cleaners etc. It has generally been found to be impracticable to implement in-house charging except in the area of acquisitions.

Various approaches have been taken to charging external users.

Why consider charging?

- to make money and/or
- to ration resources or perhaps
- to demonstrate the value of information

Problem: Government libraries have a lot of valuable resources but a limited clientele, so the resource divided among the limited clientele would seem excessive to them. Staff might try and bypass the service and make use of professional colleagues or other sources for which they would not have to pay and thus limit the information available to them. There would be an invisible cost to the organisation in time spent seeking information by staff not trained in sourcing information and decisions based on inadequate or incomplete information.

External charging could help generate income to fund certain activities. However there was a general resistance to this by library staff.

If you do decide to charge you should

- define your customer base - core organisations, agencies
- clarify the core business - information, IT, translation etc
- consider diversification - take on registries, public inquiry point, reception desk
- clarify the organisation's policy.

Problems with different means of charging.

Itemised cross-charging involves huge overheads in staff. It is not a cost effective proposition. Where it has been introduced it has been rejected.

Consider a levy or subscription by Division?

Not very successful. There tends to be a lot of arguments about the costs or the criteria used to allocate costs. Do you charge on the basis of the number of and grade structure of staff of a particular division?

Some Divisions have more information needs than others, regardless of grade structure etc. Do you then refuse to service Divisions who only have a casual need?

Setting up SLA (service level agreements) with each customer group would help to clarify the core business and what you're supposed to be doing. Tying up payments with the items in the SLA

would be very difficult, but could be useful.

Some charges are easier to allocate than others:

Full cost recovery would be very difficult as it would have to include the following:

Actuals (purchases etc)  
Staff time  
All overheads  
Markup

In DOE they underwent a market test and it was decided they would charge for acquisitions (only the cover value). It would not include a markup to reflect staff costs. (It is DOE policy that all publications and information media should be purchased centrally.)

Among the proposals looked at were:

If the order involved sending for details of a publication, this would be free. However markup cost per item worked out at £9 for a non-urgent or routine item and £35 for an urgent item. The effect was that the Financial Services backed off because they saw this would put the Library out of business. They compromised on charging for acquisitions at the cover price of the publication.

One of the biggest overheads in full charging would be accommodation and storage.

Note: In discussion with Noel Menary of DANI Library earlier in the day he said that they do not charge for Library services in DANI. Cost centre allocation was tried but has been discontinued because of the administrative overheads.

Mary Doyle, Dept of Agriculture & Food



### MARY MOORE

An Appreciation

Mary Moore was too young to die. She was only 45 years old when she passed away on 26 August 1996, after a long and courageous fight against illness.


Mary's whole working life revolved around libraries. A graduate of UCD, she obtained the Diploma in Librarianship in 1975 and, having worked briefly in London and, subsequently in the Dublin Corporation Public Library Service, she spent most of her professional career as Librarian in what is now the Department of the Marine. She held this post from 1980 until 1994, when she joined the staff of the Oireachtas Library.

Dedicated to the development and improvement of library services and the betterment of the profession, Mary was for several years a member of the Executive Board of the Library Association of Ireland as well as a founding member of the Government Libraries Group, where she served for periods as chairperson and secretary. She did trojan work within the Group and was of enormous help and support to her colleagues.

While I had met Mary on several occasions over the years, it was only when she joined us in the Oireachtas Library in October 1994 that she became a great friend, as well as a colleague. I was immediately struck by her great enthusiasm for and, in particular her enjoyment of, her work. Even when receiving treatment for her illness, she astonished everyone, and especially her doctors, by insisting on coming into the office. She was a most stimulating person with whom to work - she was always full of plans and ideas and had a great talent for organisation. I think that what I will remember most about Mary, however, was her unfailing cheerfulness and her great sense of humour. She was like a breath of fresh air and to hear her laugh was better than any tonic!

Mary had a great capacity for friendship and will long be remembered by her many colleagues and friends. Knowing her has enriched our lives immeasurably. To her heartbroken family, in particular her mother, sister and brothers, we extend our deepest sympathy.

Maura Corcoran, Librarian, Oireachtas Library



## Government Libraries and the National Policy

In June 1998 the GLS made a submission on the proposed National Policy on Libraries and Information to An Chomhairle Leabharlanna.

The following is the contents page of the submission

### INTRODUCTION

The Government Libraries Section  
A National Policy

### PART I: AN UNDERSTANDING OF LIBRARIES

The Problem of Perception  
Libraries  
Librarians  
Relationships to other Groups  
IT Unit  
Training Unit

### PART II: INFORMATION SOCIETY

Key Issues and Opportunities  
IT; Costs; Expertise of  
Librarians  
Preparedness  
Depositories of government information;  
Co-operation; Computerization; Print-based  
Resources; Obsolescence of hardware and  
software; Resources; Information Author-  
ity; National Bibliographic Control; Legal  
Authentication; Copyright Law; Storage of  
Government Documents on CD-  
ROM; Continuing Importance of Librari-  
ans.

### PART III: PARTICULAR CONCERNS

Government Libraries as Information  
Resources  
Research  
Training and Professional Development  
in LIS  
Marketing  
Funding  
Copyright  
Freedom of Information Act 1997  
Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997  
Government Libraries and the National Policy

### SUMMARY

The position of Librarian must be recognized as that of a *professional* and a *manager*.

The expertise of librarians lies in the effective utilization of information, *in all media*, and employing the most appropriate technology. This handling of information includes *identification, acquisition, analysis and evaluation*,

velopment) might have a rôle to play in formulating a definition of how libraries and IT Units within Government Departments relate to each other. Were an Information Authority to be established, it could also facilitate a co-ordinated approach to this relationship which is potentially productive but often misinterpreted. The rôle of libraries as a crucial component in the "Information Age" should be recognized.

A strong Public Relations rôle for professional bodies is required, not solely for the benefit of workers in librarianship, but also to ensure that the potential of libraries is fully recognized and exploited.

A central Information Authority (or Ministry) could co-ordinate the work and development of government libraries, and their relationship to other bodies (such as IT units). It might also have other rôles in relation to Information Policy, for example as one of the Sectoral Consultative Committees working in conjunction with the permanent Library Policy Implementation Executive envisaged in *Casey: Libraries and the Information Society: Towards the Formulation of a National Policy for the Republic of Ireland. Euro-Focus on Libraries, 1996*, at 3.6 Policy Implementation. The National Policy should comment on how a lack of a policy for government libraries and the haphazard development of individual government libraries, as well as inadequate staffing levels, are obstacles to the participation of government libraries in the Information Society.

The potential of government libraries to be made more widely available as information resources for the country as a whole, where appropriate, should be investigated.

It should be part of the National Policy that every government department have a library, staffed by an appropriate number of professional librarians (as well as non-professional staff), whose terms of employment should recognise their professional qualifications, experience, duties, and number of staff.

Co-operation between government libraries should continue, particularly in the area of access to catalogues.

## SMI AND GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

The SMI process (Strategic Management Initiative), as it has affected Public Sector information management, has revealed the need for an overall policy on the publication of official documents to take on board the problems and opportunities generated by the arrival of the Information Age.

### Customer Focus

Those who generate official publications in government departments often have a focus restricted to their immediate Departments. Guidelines are currently being prepared to give assistance to Government Departments to develop a customer focus and show greater awareness of the needs of the wider public. The principles of Quality Customer Service should, as appropriate, apply as much to the preparation and dissemination of publications as to the provision of schemes and services.

### Dissemination

Official documents are published to inform the public through the widest practicable dissemination possible. They should, therefore, be easily acquired when in print, remain available to the public when out of print, be easily comprehended (as far as the subject matter allows) and their layout should help them to be easily read.

Most official publications are sold to the public through the Government Publications Sales Office (GPSO) on subscription or through postal sales. The GPSO does go some way towards bringing these official publications to the attention of the public if they are for sale. The GPSO does not 'market' publications in the sense in which a commercial publisher might do. It is important, therefore, to consider how such publications might be brought to the wider public.

Some official publications are published by Departments to be distributed free of charge. These are not accepted for distribution by the GPSO except in the most exceptional circumstances. In the case of publications which are not for sale it is particularly important to ensure that they receive the attention necessary to bring them to the attention of the public and to

make them available to members of the public.

Electronic publishing raises specific problems in relation to conflict of interest between the GPSO's commercial remit and Departments' needs for the widest dissemination of official information.

### International Standard Book Number (ISBN).

The international organization which issues ISBN's, Whitakers Standard Book Numbering Agency, has designated the GPSO to be their Irish agency. The GPSO now accepts that it has a responsibility to issue ISBNs for the publications of Departments which are published free of charge (not yet operational).

### Cataloguing of publications.

A very useful minimum service which could be provided would be a listing of not-for-sale official publications (or departmental reports) in the GPSO's catalogue, say on the back pages. We understand GPSO is willing to do this, but it needs to be coordinated at Department level.

### Indexing

Indexing of publications is an important issue for longer documents and also for certain serials such as the *Iris Oifigiúil*. As the *Iris Oifigiúil* is not indexed it should at least be made available in machine readable form. The *Dail Debates* are currently available and searchable on the Internet. I believe the Oireachtas is hoping to encourage people to use the *Debates* in this format by trebling the subscription price to the printed edition!

### Checklist

Best-practice publishing guidelines for all departments, in conformity with the needs of the GPSO is something which has long been required. Mairead Mullaney and Stephen Lalor of the Department of the Taoiseach drafted such a checklist and finalised it in consultation with the GLS. It is expected that this will form part of the Customer Service guidelines to be issued under the auspices of the SMI in the near future.

Mary Doyle, Department of Agriculture and Food



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## CONSERVATION, REILLY'S AND ST KEVIN

On 22nd April 1998, a day of driving rain, a group of people from various Government libraries visited Reilly Bookbinders in Wicklow. The GLS had organised a previous trip to Reilly's in 1993, but this visit came about more informally. Sophie Carcenac from the IUT Paul Sabatier in Toulouse came to the Office of Public Works Library on a two month student placement and had chosen as the subject of the project which she would present on her return to France, "The conservation of library materials". [Here let me thank publicly the staff of the National Library and the Patents Office who gave valuable time to show her how they were using microfilm and CD-ROM respectively in order to preserve the originals of documents which would otherwise be destroyed by heavy usage]. In the OPW Library we were concerned about the conservation of many of our nineteenth century leather bound reports. Leather dries out with time and becomes brittle and bindings can then fall apart when the books are handled. In some cases all that was necessary was cleaning and treatment with leather dressing, which we could do ourselves, but other volumes had to be professionally restored or if they were in a very poor state, rebound. Obviously economics came into this too - it looks more beautiful and it is desirable to preserve leather bindings but compared with buckram, it does cost more! Sophie was involved in preparing both the nineteenth century material and also some modern journals to send to the binders, so it seemed like a good idea to let her see what actually happens at a bindery. When I asked at the GLS AGM if anyone else was interested, there was an enthusiastic response from people who had not been around for the previous visit, and when I phoned John Young at Reilly Bookbinders, he said we would be very welcome. So to get back to where I started, on a very wet day we set out for

Wicklow ...

First we were shown samples of the different types of work which can be done: book rebinding and paperback reinforcing, journal, newspaper and microfiche binding, book restoration and paper conservation. Then we were brought on a tour of the bindery, a large, rectangular, noisy, factory style room, with piles of books sitting around in an apparently haphazard fashion. In fact there is a very great discipline in the way the volumes are processed. Records are also kept of details of work which has been done in the past so that, for instance, lettering on the spine of a journal will be placed at exactly the same level as it was on the previous volume. All material removed from journals (covers, ads etc.) is kept for six months and can be retrieved if required. It would be difficult to describe in detail all that we were shown. People who would like more information or details of prices should telephone Reilly's at 0404 67955. At the point when we were becoming footsore, John Young took us off to a pleasant lunch in the local hotel.

Then it was time to go home - except for the four of us from the OPW and National Botanic Gardens libraries who had been given a special dispensation to visit a heritage site on the way. After battling through the deluge and getting rather lost in Rathdrum, we reached Glendalough where we were given V.I.P. treatment at the visitor centre. And then the heavens were kind and it stopped raining, almost, and we were able to visit the churches and round tower and even walk along the Upper Lake far enough to peer across at St. Kevin's bed. I get the impression that I'm wandering off the subject. Maybe not too far - I'm sure St. Kevin would be pleased if he thought that a manuscript copied by the monks at Glendalough was being preserved by librarians of the twentieth century ...

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