



Internship

MARSH'S LIBRARY

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3. YEAR OF TRAINING | PLACEMENT PERIOD: 25/7/2022-16/9/2022

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General information

Marsh's Library is the first public library of Ireland. It was built by Narcissus Marsh and designed by Sir William Robinson. In 1707 the library was formally incorporated by an Act of Parliament called "an Act for settling and preserving a public library forever". Most of the collections are still kept on the shelves allocated to them by Marsh and the first librarian Elias Bouhéreau. The library is one of very few 18th century buildings that's still being used for its original purpose.

Organisation

The library is managed by the Director of Marsh's Library, at the moment Jason McElligott. The Deputy Director, Sue Hemmens, is managing the staff, finances, and the practical, day-to-day running of the library. They answer to the trustees of the library, which were established with the Act in 1707. The trustees, called "Governors and Guardians of Marsh's Library", are individuals who serve because of their position in the spheres of law, learning and religion. The library is funded mostly by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media.

To organise everything the library has weekly staff meetings, an annual meeting with the Governors and Guardians as well as sporadic meetings with the people from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports, and Media.

Aims and Priorities

The mission of Marsh's Library is to preserve and maintain their rare books and manuscripts. They also want to acquire similar media by donation. The second goal is to cherish the distinctive building heritage as a cultural and intellectual hub for visitors, students, and scholars. They work with the vision of securing the place of Marsh's among the great small libraries of the world. Their values are to be welcoming, dedicated, dynamic, ambitious, and collaborative.

Staff

The library has a director and deputy director, an education and outreach officer, as well as one assistant librarian, a book conservator, a library visitor service supervisor, and a visitor service manager. In addition to that they also employ tourism staff and a lot of volunteers from all over the world. Someone looks after the gardens, and they get help from interns. There will be interns in the reading room who help the assistant librarian with retrieving and reshelving books, as well as supervising readers. There are also interns helping in the tourism field by supervising visitors and help with any question related to the library.

The staff has constantly the opportunity to take part in courses and participate in conferences for further training.

Location and Building

The library is located next to the St. Patrick cathedral in Dublin, Marsh's Library St Patrick's Close Dublin D08 FK79 Ireland. The building has a "L"-shape and two floors. On the ground floor there are all the offices, the reading room, gift shop as well as a kitchen and a lecture room. The first floor holds the actual library. The first part of it is called 1st Gallery, after that you'll find the old reading room that was used till pandemic. From the old reading room, you can enter the 2nd. Gallery. At the end of the second gallery, you'll find an area with cages, from there you can make your way down to the gift shop. Next to the library building you will find the conservatory/book bindery where the book conservator is doing her work.

Library type

It is a public library that also functions as a museum, that showcases the old libraries. It was and is a reference library, where people can do their research. To do you research you have to make an inquiry to the reading room.

Budget

The library has roughly a budget of 450,000€ per year. This budget is dived in restricted and unrestricted funds. The restricted fund has a certain subject for which they can be used, i.e.,

Fellowships. The unrestricted fund is much smaller but can be used for what ever the library feels like.

Holdings and services

Holdings

Marsh's Library holds more than 25.000 books from the 15th – 18th century. In addition to that they have around 300 manuscripts and 75 incunabulas. The four collections belonged to clergymen, and all contain many bibles and theological works, but also books about law, science, mathematics, music, travel, and surveying.

Electronic media

The library doesn't hold electronic media. Due to covid they had a few online exhibitions which you can find on the website. Within you'll find a lot of additional information and description about certain books or manuscripts. You also have the opportunity to see some pictures from the pages and the books. Sadly, the books are not digitised yet.

Services

The library has several different services to offer. From the "museum" with a Marsh's minifigure hunt over school tours to the research with the books. The self-guided tour through the library (museum) is available in several languages, such as English, Irish, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Polish and Portuguese. In addition to that they have multilingual staff who lead group tours and can answer visitor questions. In the library you can to a Lego Minifigure Hunt to get to know the library a bit better, it is an adventure for children and adults. They also offer tours for primary and secondary schools. The program within the tour will vary from the topic the teacher chooses.

For readers they provide the opportunity to work with the actual books from the 15th-18th century. Therefore, you have to make an inquiry in which you roughly state what purpose your research has.

The library takes part in many culture events i.e., culture night, explore your archive, heritage week and many more. The library also provides private tours for groups and people that are interested.

Acquisition and familiarisation

Acquisition

The library continues to acquire books on a small scale, including reference works that support study of the collections. Books contemporary to the collections are purchased sporadically at auction or from rare book catalogues. The collections they have are donated from Marsh and the first librarian Elias Bouhéreau and are still at the shelves with their original shelf marks. Marsh bought the collection of Edward Stillingfleet and included it in the library in 1705. It is the largest collection in the library with almost 10.000 books. In 1745 John Stearne bequeathed 3.000 of his books to Marsh's. From there on the library rarely bought books, they mostly got donations. Nowadays donations that are made are works that refer to Marsh's holdings.

Familiarisation process

Whenever there is a donation or a new book coming to the library it will be catalogued in koha. Therefor you open the Cataloguing page and create a new record. Then you go into Marsh's Framework to have all the necessary fields for cataloguing. After that you fill out all the Fields that are required in MARC and save the catalogue. You'll get redirected to a page where you can fill out which collection the book belongs to, the shelf mark and the call number, as well as other important information to find the book. This is also the moment when you determine the shelf mark which you'll have to take out of a spreadsheet because the system doesn't have any type of number generator.

Classification and Shelving

The shelving is held pretty simple all the bookshelves are the same height and stand the same length apart from each other. Every shelf has two sides, except the ones at the end. In the first gallery each shelf has a letter and 2 numbers on it to determine which side of the bookshelf is meant. All shelves have a number from 1 at the bottom up to 8 or 9 at the top. This was a typical classification for that period and very similar to the one that was used in Oxford. In the second gallery the bookshelves have 2 letters for each side and one number to determine which side of the room the bookshelf is located.

The Collections are in the library from the time it was opened and that is what determined their location on the shelves. In the first gallery you'll find the Stillingfleet collection. The Reading room holds the Bouhéreau collection, and the second gallery holds Marsh's and Stearns collection. Usually, you will find the big and tall books on the first and second shelf within a bookshelf and the higher it goes to the top the smaller the books get.

A specialty in the second gallery is that you can sit in between the bookshelves. You have a bench to sit on and a table attached to the bookshelf. In the past, if you were new to the library and the librarians weren't sure if they can trust you they locked you in the cages, to make sure you wouldn't steal a book. This practice is no longer used.

Use of the library

Opening hours

The library (museum) is opened for the public from Tuesday - Saturday

Tue – Fri: 9:30 am- 5 pm

Sat: 10 am – 5 pm

The reading room is opened to readers by appointment from Monday – Friday

Mon – Fri: 9:30 am – 1pm; 2 pm – 5 pm

Terms of use

The entrance fee for the library is 5 € for adults and 3 € for students. For the museum the only rules that exist are that you are not allowed to take pictures with flash, don't eat or drink and don't touch the books. Other than that, you can enjoy the exhibition and see how an 18th century library looked like.

If you want to consult the collections, you have to book an appointment in the reading room. Therefore, you send a request with your research topic and the staff will get back to you. If you have an appointment in the reading room, you have to sign the "regulations for consulting manuscripts and rare books in MARSH'S LIBRARY". If you want to take photographs of items, you'll have to fill out another form for taking photographs. If you'll want to publish the photographs in a book or Journal, you'll have to fill out another form. The reader will get a quick introduction on how to handle the books and has to sign the readers register. After that they can work on the books.

To research in the collections, you can use the frontend catalogue on the home page of Marsh's. In addition, you can use databases like the ESTC (English Short Title Catalogue), ISTC (Incunabula Short Title Catalogue) or MEI (Material Evidence in Incunabula). The library provides you with other additional literature in the reading room, such as reference books to watermarks or the history about printing.

Conclusion

The library is amazing, if you want to work with rare books and help readers/researchers with their work. The colleagues are amazing, helpful and you will work in a friendly, welcoming surrounding. You start of easy in getting to know the books and the handling of rare books. After that you get to show readers how to handle the books in the reading room and get the opportunity to get requested books from the shelves. After you learned all that you can

supervise the readers on your own. You will get tasks to do while supervising the readers, like creating spreadsheet for different topics, cataloguing donations or other items as well as changing records if something got moved. You have plenty to do and can learn so much from the readers and the librarians.

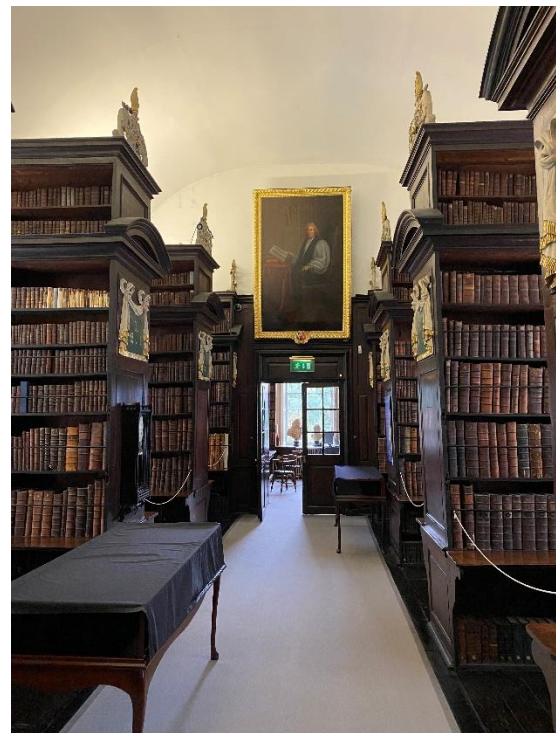
You day usually starts at 9:30 am and end at 5 pm, because you are interning in the reading room you will work from Monday to Friday. You will be supervised by the Assistant Librarian and get plenty of information to do your work. If you got used to everything you will get little projects to work on by yourself. All the tasks you get you will be able to do on your own.

I loved every single minute of the time in the library and there was no task I disliked. I especially enjoyed working with readers and helping them figure things out.

Impressions from the library



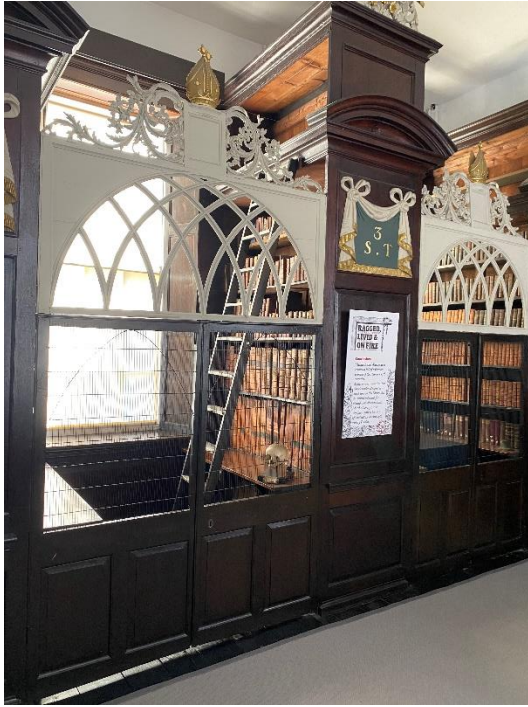
Entrance into first gallery



First gallery and picture of Narcissus Marsh



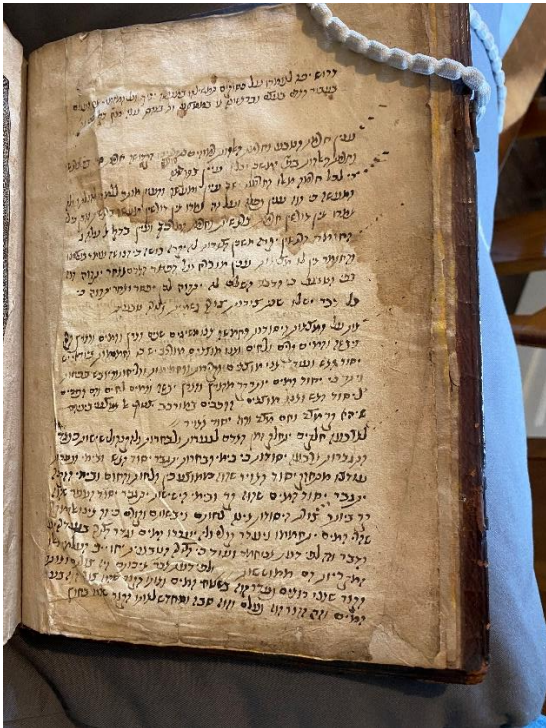
Old reading room



cages



shelf mark example



old manuscript in Hebrew



book with bullet hole from 1916 rising