

# *The Library of Trinity College Dublin*

*Librarian & College Archivist. Helen Shenton, B.A., M.A., F.R.S.A., F.I.I.C.*

The Library's history dates back to the establishment of the College in 1592. Today it has six and a half million printed volumes with extensive collections of journals, more than half a million maps and very large collections of manuscripts and music reflecting over four hundred years of academic development. More recently, it has established a collection of over 140,000 electronic journals, providing access to 55 million articles, and over 420,000 electronic books. It is the largest library in Ireland and has been a legal deposit library for Ireland and the United Kingdom since 1801.<sup>1</sup> The Library has access to 10 million journal articles and 800,000 monographs through the UK electronic legal deposit. The Library continues to add to its collections through purchases, private donations, acquisitions and as a library of legal deposit.

The Library serves the needs of the College's teaching, learning and research activities of the undergraduate and postgraduate students and of the academic staff. It is a research library of international repute, making available much rare material to scholars from all parts of the world; and in addition it provides an information service to government departments, to research organisations and to technical, industrial and commercial bodies within Ireland. The Library's [Digital Collections](#) is making many of Trinity's unique materials available to scholars in digital format through an ongoing programme.

Six of the Library's buildings are located on the College campus. The Old Library, completed in 1732, now contains the Department of Manuscripts, the Department of Early Printed Books and Special Collections, the Long Room, The Colonnades and the Treasury. The Library<sup>2</sup> (1967), Lecky (1978) and James Ussher (2002) Libraries form a linked complex of buildings which functions as a single library housing collections in arts, social sciences, business studies, law, nursing, geography and geology. It also contains the [Glucksman Map Library](#) and [Conservation Department](#), the Library's main service and administrative areas and a closed access bookstack. The Hamilton Library (1992) houses collections in science, engineering and systems sciences and health sciences. The 1937 Reading Room serves as a study centre for postgraduate students and the Stearne Medical Library is at St James's Hospital. Less heavily used material is stored in a book repository at Santry.

The Library's online catalogues give access to all the modern collections and the majority of the historical collections. Catalogues covering manuscripts collections and digital archives are in development and cover much material. All the Library's catalogues and further information on services and facilities are available from the Library home page at [www.tcd.ie/library](http://www.tcd.ie/library).

## *Admission of readers*

Members of the College staff and students of the College may be admitted to the Library on production of a current College Identity Card or Trinity authorised identity.

Holders of an ALCID<sup>3</sup> card may apply for a visiting reader card on production of a current Identity Card from their home institution.

Other persons engaged in study or research may be admitted as readers, with the approval of the Librarian, who shall also determine the period for which their admission shall be valid.

---

<sup>1</sup>The privilege was first given in the year 1801 (41 Geo. III, c. 107). The latest act for British books is of the year 2003 [Legal Deposit Libraries Act](#) (2003, c. 28). By the [Industrial and Commercial Property \(Protection\) Act](#) of the Irish Free State 1927, the copyright privilege of the Library was continued in respect of books published in Ireland. It is continued under the terms of the [Copyright and Related Rights Acts](#), 2000 and 2004.

<sup>2</sup>Named by the Board as the Berkeley Library in 1978 and denamed by the Board in 2023.

<sup>3</sup>The ALCID scheme (Academic Libraries Co-operating in Ireland) provides library cards for postgraduate students and staff members of fourteen academic institutions in Ireland.

## The Library of Trinity College Dublin

All readers are required to observe the terms of the Library declaration and the other Library regulations as set out under the *Calendar*, PART II - GENERAL REGULATIONS AND INFORMATION.

### *Hours of opening — reading rooms*

The opening hours of the Library's reading rooms are available on the Library's website at: [www.tcd.ie/library](http://www.tcd.ie/library).

Generally, during term, the reading rooms are open Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday mornings with some extensions for student access at weekends.

Out of term, the reading rooms close at 5 p.m. and are generally closed on public and other holidays.

Opening hours and service levels are subject to ongoing review and details are maintained on the Library's website.

Kinsella Hall in the Ussher Library has swipe card access for overnight study for all Trinity staff and students when the Library is closed.

The 1937 Postgraduate Reading Room is available on a 24-hour basis by swipe card access for postgraduate students.

### *The Old Library — admission of members of the public*

The areas of the [Old Library](#) which are open to the public are the Treasury, where the Book of Kells and other manuscripts are displayed; The Colonnades, a gallery for temporary exhibitions; the Long Room, and the Library Shop. There is a charge for admission to areas other than the Shop. The Old Library is open to the public as follows:

Mondays to Saturdays (October to February)	9.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.
Mondays to Saturdays (March)	9 a.m. – 6.30 p.m.
Mondays to Saturdays (April)	8.30 a.m. – 7.30 p.m.
Mondays to Saturdays (May to September)	8.30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Sundays and public holidays (October to February)	12 noon – 5 p.m.
Sundays and public holidays (March to May)	10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Sundays and public holidays (June to September)	9.30 a.m. – 7.30 p.m.

Last admission to the Old Library is 60 minutes before closing time.

Opening hours on public and other holidays are given on the Library's website.

### *Donations*

The Librarian is indebted to the many governments, international agencies, universities, libraries, firms, societies, private persons in various parts of the world, and to members of the College staff who have presented material during the year.

### *TRINITY CLOSET PRESS*

Trinity Closet Press is a hand press run by members of the Library's Department of Early Printed Books. It was founded in 1973 as a teaching tool to give students and staff first-hand experience of book production methods in the hand-press period. In the past, it has provided practical work for M.Phil. students in early modern history and in textual and visual studies. The Press is housed in the basement of the Printing House.

**The Library of Trinity College Dublin**

*FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY\* <sup>4</sup>*

*President.* Linda Elizabeth Doyle, B.E., M.SC., PH.D., M.R.I.A.

*Chair.* Peter Costello, B.A.

*Hon. Secretary.* Elizabeth Louise Fleeton

*Hon. Treasurer.* Noel Costello, B.A., M.SC.

The society known as the Friends of the Library was founded in 1945 to promote an interest in the general welfare of the Library and to provide an income for the purchase of books and manuscripts. The annual programme of the society includes lectures, meetings and a summer outing. The minimum subscription is €35 per annum. Gifts and bequests of appropriate books or manuscripts are welcomed by the society.

*THE TRINITY LONG ROOM HUB*

See under RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND CENTRES.

---

<sup>4</sup>Societies which are recognised by the College but in respect of whose activities the College does not accept any responsibilities are marked with an asterisk. They are listed in this section for information purposes only.