



IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

# Strategic Development Plan

2012–2016

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Dublin 2  
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Detail on the top of pp 6-18: from the Great Parchment Book of Waterford manuscript  
courtesy of Waterford Museum of Treasures.

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Graphic Design Consultants, e-mail: [djhayes@iol.ie](mailto:djhayes@iol.ie)

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## Foreword

**A**T A TIME WHEN THE REACH OF Irish studies is worldwide and part of an even wider interest in the history and cultural heritage of Ireland, the IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION (IMC) plays an indispensable role as the nationally and internationally recognised publisher of primary sources for Ireland. IMC's remit is founded on the principles of dissemination, preservation and promotion of original source material—in public and private ownership—for the history and cultural heritage of Ireland.

Since its foundation in 1928 IMC has reported on manuscripts and papers of literary, historical and general interest relating to Ireland, and has advised on their preservation and publication. Its principal function is as publisher, in print and digitally, of editions of manuscripts and out-of-print works of historical and cultural significance.

IMC relies on its grant-in-aid from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, together with earnings from its publications. It is important to stress that the membership of the Commission consists of practicing historians drawn from all the universities in Ireland, North and South, as well as archivists, librarians and genealogists. The director of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland sits on the Commission, as do the directors of the National Library of Ireland and the National Archives of Ireland. The members receive no remuneration for their indispensable contribution to the management and peer-reviewing of publications; without this selfless involvement the Commission could not fulfill its remit. Only the chairperson receives an honorarium. This tradition of service to both scholarship and the state has been maintained since the Commission's warrant of appointment was signed on 10 October 1928 by President W. T. Cosgrave. In 2004 a review of the Commission initiated by the Department and carried out by CHL Consulting concluded that **'IMC operates cost-effectively and its functions could not be more cheaply performed by another body'** ('Review of the role and function of the Irish Manuscripts Commission, Interim report', CHL Consulting, March 2004).

This strategic plan for 2012–2016 builds on the Commission's *Strategic Development Plan 2008–2011* which provided a roadmap for IMC development over the past four years (see **Outcomes 2008–2011**).

Like its predecessor, *Strategic Development Plan 2012–2016* emphasises IMC’s principal function as publisher of primary sources, while underlining IMC’s responsibility for promoting public and institutional awareness of the need to preserve, catalogue and make accessible primary sources wherever they are to be found.

I would like to thank all those who contributed in whatever way to the preparation of the *Strategic Development Plan 2012–2016*. The Commission owes a particular debt to the members of its Strategic Review Committee: Professor David Dickson, Professor James Kelly, Dr Michael Kennedy, Ms Máire Mac Conghail, Dr Deirdre McMahon, Mr Donal Moore and Professor Mary O’Dowd. Dr Maurice Manning, MRIA, Chancellor of the National University of Ireland, who generously accepted an invitation to sit on the Committee, made an invaluable contribution.

The *Strategic Development Plan 2012–2016* was formally adopted by the Commission in September 2011.

James McGuire  
Chair  
Irish Manuscripts Commission





## Looking forward



### Vision

The vision of IMC is to promote public and institutional awareness of and access to primary source materials for the histories, cultures and heritage of Ireland.

IMC serves in particular the cultural heritage and academic communities and is committed to supporting the Government's strategic objectives for national revival.

### Strategic priorities for 2012–2016

This plan builds specifically on the outcomes of the *Strategic Development Plan 2008–2011* and more generally on the international reputation gained by the Irish Manuscripts Commission over more than 80 years of publishing primary sources for the histories and cultures of Ireland.

The following strategic priorities have been identified for the next five years:

- IMC will further expand and develop its role as leading **publisher** of primary source materials for the histories of Ireland, building on its reputation as publisher since 1928;
- IMC will fulfill its remit as **expert advisor** on issues and policies relating to manuscripts, historical records and cultural objects. It will proactively and reactively provide advice, based on its collective institutional experience and the expertise of its individual members, to the Government, the cultural institutions and other cultural bodies and institutions;







## Strategic Development Plan 2012–2016

- as **promoter of awareness of the need to preserve primary sources** IMC will further develop its strategies. It will provide encouragement and advice to institutions (public or private), the business community, voluntary bodies and individuals on the preservation of records in their keeping, be they current or non-current;
- IMC is committed to producing digital resources. As both **advocate and practitioner of digitisation**, IMC will promote international best practice, pursue the digitisation of its publications, and proactively promote content from Irish cultural institutions on the Europeana cultural heritage portal.



## As publisher



### Leading publisher of primary source materials for the histories of Ireland

The Commission is known internationally for the quality of its publications; each edition is peer-reviewed and produced to the highest scholarly standards, ensuring quality and reliability and the long-term preservation of the primary sources on which these editions are based: 'enlightened subvention, modest enough, has ensured that the Manuscripts Commission has shone like a beacon' ('Textual healing' – *Times Literary Supplement*, London, 8 May 2009).

In the period 2012–2016, IMC will further expand and develop its role as publisher of primary source materials for the histories of Ireland, providing the research infrastructure for those engaged in historical research worldwide.

### Objective

IMC will seek to achieve this priority by publishing in print an average of six volumes per year, as well as publishing electronic editions.

The following actions are required to achieve this strategic priority.

### Publishing programme for 2012–2016

1. For the period 2012–2016 IMC is committed to a major publishing programme of seven multi-volume editions and nineteen single-volume editions of primary sources (see page 11).
2. IMC will seek to publish in digital format certain primary sources not hitherto published by IMC and which, in the view of the Commission, are best suited to electronic publication.
3. IMC will seek collaboration with owners of manuscript collections with a view to publishing the collections online.
4. To coincide with the many centenary commemorations from 2012 onwards, IMC will publish at least one scholarly edition in print format of a hitherto unpublished primary source.

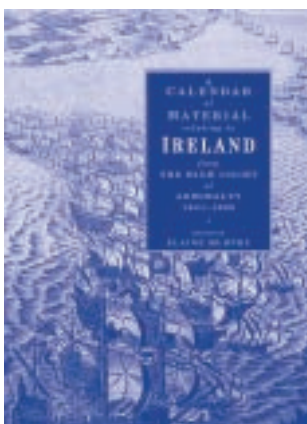


## Sourcing of material to be published

5. IMC will identify unpublished sources of potential value to genealogists and family historians for consideration as future IMC editions.
6. Each year IMC receives a substantial number of publishing proposals. It will continue to encourage proposals for publication submitted independently by individual scholars and members of the public.

## Establishing publishing priorities: financial control mechanism

At a time of diminishing resources the IMC Chair will present to each meeting of the Editorial and Publications Committee a list of approved projects, their likely completion dates and the resources available for publication costs. In the light of this report the Editorial and Publications Committee will make recommendations to the Commission on publishing priorities in the short and medium term.



## As publisher

*continued*

### Promoting IMC publications

Activities designed to underpin the promotion of IMC publications, and IMC's reputation, nationally and internationally, will be maintained and new actions initiated. IMC will:

7. further develop the existing marketing and communications strategy to target scholars, academics, librarians, and students of history and culture, both nationally and internationally, as well as the general reading public;
8. approach directly providers of Irish Studies and Irish Cultural Studies courses worldwide;
9. devise a strategy to promote IMC sales and publications among members of regional and local history and genealogical societies;
10. design and distribute on an annual basis a new catalogue of IMC publications in print and on online through the IMC website;
11. use developing forms of social media to promote IMC publications;
12. review and update biennially the design and content of the IMC web site and the services it offers;
13. seek promotion of publications through broadcast and print media outlets.





## IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION PUBLISHING PROGRAMME 2012–2016

### MULTI-VOLUME EDITIONS

- The proclamations of Ireland, 1660–1820 (ed. James Kelly with Mary Ann Lyons), 5 vols simultaneously, 2012
- The 1641 depositions (ed. Aidan Clarke), 12 vols serially from 2012
- *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* (ed. and translated by Gráinne McLaughlin et al.), 5 vols serially from 2012
- Correspondence of Archbishop Paul Cullen (ed. Colin Barr et al.), 5 vols serially from 2013
- Calendar of state papers, Ireland (general editor Nicholas Canny; volume editors: Steven Ellis and James Murray, Colm Lennon, Ciaran Brady), 3 vols serially from 2012
- A calendar of Irish chancery letters c. 1244–1509 (ed. Peter Crooks), 3 vols simultaneously, 2014
- Correspondence and papers of Bishop Nicholas French (ed. Jason McHugh), 2 vols simultaneously, 2015

### SINGLE-VOLUME EDITIONS

- *Analecta Hibernica* 43 (2012)
- Infanticide and concealment of births recorded in the Crown files at assizes, 1880–1900 (ed. Elaine Farrell) (2012)
- Mapping Ireland c. 1550–1640. An illustrated catalogue of manuscript maps of Ireland, including maps relating to plantation (ed. Annaleigh Margey) (2012)
- Letter book of George, 16th Earl of Kildare (ed. Aidan Clarke and Bríd McGrath) (2012)
- Arrangements for the integration of Irish immigrants in England and Wales (ed. Mary E. Daly) (2012)
- Elizabethan campaign journals (ed. David Edwards) (2013)
- Eighteenth-century minute books of Waterford Corporation (ed. Donal Moore) (2013)
- Manuscript record of the Corporation of Coleraine, 1623–1669 (ed. Bríd McGrath) (2013)
- Religious censuses of the 1760s (ed. Brian Gurrin, Liam Kennedy and Kerby Miller) (2013)
- *Analecta Hibernica* 44 (2014)
- Franciscan account books (ed. Liam Kennedy) (2014)
- *Purgatorium Hibernicum* and other Irish mid-seventeenth century Anglo-Irish poetry (ed. Andrew Carpenter) (2014)
- *Historia* (ed. Jason Harris) (2014)
- Three seventeenth-century Franciscan histories (ed. Edel Bhreathnach et al.) (2014)
- Correspondence of Katherine Conolly (ed. Marie-Louise Jennings) (2015)
- Register of Archbishop Cromer of Armagh (ed. John McCafferty) (2015)
- *Analecta Hibernica* 45 (2016)
- Trustees report arising from the Act of Resumption 1701 (ed. C. Ivar McGrath) (2016)
- Episcopal visitations 1622 (ed. Brendan Scott) (2016)

## As advisor

### Advisory remit

IMC will fulfill its remit as expert advisor on issues and policies relating to manuscripts, historical records and cultural objects.

### Objective

IMC will achieve this priority in the period 2012–2016 by proactively and reactively providing advice, based on its collective institutional experience and the expertise of its individual members, to the Government, the cultural institutions and other cultural bodies and institutions.

### Advising: reactively and proactively

The following actions are required to achieve this strategic priority.

14. IMC will exercise its statutory obligations in relation to the National Archives Advisory Council (under section 20 of the National Archives Act, 1986).
15. IMC will fulfill its responsibilities under section 48 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997, to advise the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht at the Minister's direction (subsections 3 and 5), and it will make recommendations where appropriate to the Minister (under subsection 6).
16. IMC will advise the National Library of Ireland on the acquisition and publication of historical manuscripts relating to Ireland.
17. IMC will identify issues of importance on which it can assist in developing policy or providing advice to policy makers and practitioners in the cultural heritage community.
18. IMC will offer informed advice to Government, and when appropriate to the Oireachtas, on the opening up of records and papers, closed to the research community, held in institutions under state control.
19. Arising from its own experience (see **As promoter of awareness**) IMC will advise Government on the need for a national policy on records preservation.



### Preserving records for the future

Taking into account the absolute necessity of preserving and improving access to primary sources of whatever kind for Irish histories and cultures, IMC will further develop its awareness and advice strategies among professional historians, archivists, educational and vocational institutions, the business community, and the community at large.

#### Objective

IMC will achieve this priority by providing encouragement and advice to institutions (public or private) and to individuals on the preservation of records in their keeping, be they current or non-current; IMC will seek to develop awareness that such records may already be or soon will be primary sources for Irish history and culture.



### Raising awareness

The following actions will be pursued in order to achieve this strategic priority:

20. A Preservation and Access Awareness Committee (PAAC) will be established by IMC and its task will include liaising with like-minded statutory and voluntary bodies (including NAI; city and county archivists; Archives and Records Association, Ireland; Local Authority Archivists' Group) and, where possible, devising joint awareness campaigns and the development of a national policy. The PAAC will report twice-yearly to the Commission.
21. The PAAC will be responsible for devising a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section on IMC's web site that will offer advice about preserving records, particularly business records and the records and papers of voluntary bodies, and will provide follow-up links to specialist institutions.
22. Building on the phenomenal success since 2008 of IMC participation in Culture Night (held each year in September), IMC will use these occasions in 2012–2016 to (a) showcase the work and publications of IMC, and (b) highlight the relevance and value of preserving records of all kinds.
23. IMC will establish a biennial lecture, to be known as the Eoin MacNeill Lecture, which will be held in alternate years from autumn 2012. These lectures will be broadly concerned with analysing the ways in which historians draw from or interpret primary sources and the importance of preserving primary source materials.



## As advocate and practitioner of digitisation



### Best practice in producing digital resources

IMC is committed to promoting awareness of and co-operation in the digitising of resources by fostering communication between the stakeholders (academic, technical, cultural, commercial partners and policy-makers), and encouraging the use of international best practice. In April 2007 IMC held a seminar on best practice in digitisation attended by representatives from across the cultural institutions, policy makers and academics. A policy document, with input from international practitioners in the area of digital humanities and preservation, was subsequently published on IMC's website (<http://www.irishmanuscripts.ie>).

IMC will pursue the digitisation of its published work—past, present and future. It will make the primary sources it publishes accessible online to the widest possible audiences free of charge. It will proactively promote digital content from Irish cultural institutions on the Europeana cultural heritage portal.

### Objectives

IMC will seek to publish online an enhanced digitised edition of a major primary source whose value for historians, genealogists, and place-name experts is proven.

IMC will continue to make its existing print editions available in digital format.

IMC will advance the use of best practice in the digitisation of cultural heritage objects and the long term preservation of those digital objects.

IMC will promote and encourage the addition of digital content from Irish cultural institutions to Europeana, as well as other suitable national and international portals, and will continue to act, at the request of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, as national aggregator for Europeana.







## Digital publishing and promoting digitisation initiatives

The following actions will enable the realisation of the strategic objectives on digitisation in the period 2012–2016.

24. IMC will seek collaborative funding to facilitate the publication online of an advanced digital edition of the seventeenth-century Books of Survey and Distribution, a major primary source whose value for historians, genealogists, and place-name experts is proven. This edition will incorporate advanced search options and a user friendly web interface.
25. The publication in digital format online of certain primary sources (such as registers and tabular data) not hitherto published by IMC and which, in the view of the Commission, are best suited to electronic publication (see As publisher).
26. The digitisation on an annual basis of tranches of IMC editions already available in print.
27. IMC will seek to facilitate the development of protocols for digitisation that are compliant with international best practice and will seek to promote awareness of metadata that is interoperable with emerging national and international cultural heritage portals. IMC will seek to raise awareness of existing national research work on the long term preservation of digital objects.
28. IMC will seek closer collaboration with the cultural institutions in encouraging and promoting the addition of digital content from Ireland on the Europeana portal.



## Outcomes 2008–2011

The following outcomes were achieved in the period covered by the *Strategic Development Plan 2008–2011*:

**publications:** IMC published the following editions in the period 2008–2011:

- *Analecta Hibernica* 41 (ed. James Kelly);
- *Analecta Hibernica* 42 (ed. James Kelly);
- *Calendar of state paper, Ireland 1566–7 and 1568–71* (ed. Bernadette Cunningham), 2 vols;
- *Council Book for the province of Munster c. 1599–1649* (ed. Margaret Curtis Clayton);
- *Proceedings of the Irish House of Lords, 1771–1800* (ed. James Kelly), 3 vols;
- *World War I and the question of Ulster: the correspondence of Lilian and Wilfrid Spender* (ed. Margaret Baguley);
- *Papers of the Dublin Philosophical Society, 1683–1709* (ed. K. T. Hoppen), 2 vols;
- *Calendar of the Rosse papers* (ed. A.P.W. Malcomson);
- *Charlotte's Brooke's Relique's of Irish poetry* (ed. Lesa Ní Mhunghaile);
- *The Clements archive* (ed. A.P.W. Malcomson);
- *The Conolly archive* (ed. Patrick Walsh and A.P.W. Malcomson);
- *The Irish Defence Forces 1940–1949: the Chief of Staff's reports* (ed. Michael Kennedy and Victor Laing);
- *The correspondence of James Ussher 1600–1656* (ed. Elizabethanne Boran), 3 vols;
- *Pauper Limerick. The register of the Limerick House of Industry, 1774–1793* (ed. David Fleming and John Logan);
- *Calendar of material from the High Court of Admiralty, 1641–1660* (ed. Elaine Murphy).

**high-profile projects:** IMC committed to six high-profile projects in the period 2008–2011:

- Correspondence of Archbishop Paul Cullen: a comprehensive and definitive multi-volume edition of Cardinal Cullen's correspondence;
- Proclamations of Ireland, 1660–1820: an edition listing all proclamations issued over a period of 160 years, and publishing in full the content of all surviving proclamations;
- *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*: publishing for the first time a full English translation of the entire Commentarius, originally published in Latin only;
- *Historia*: establishing the text and publishing for the first time a transcription from the Latin MS and a full English translation of a major but little known source for seventeenth-century Ireland;
- 1641 depositions: publishing a fully edited print version, county by county, of contemporary depositions taken following the outbreak of hostilities in Ireland in autumn 1641;
- Irish chancery letters c. 1244–1509: publishing a major multi-volume edition based on the TCD project.



**publication approvals:** by autumn 2011 twenty-four projects stood formally approved for publication by IMC.

**new proposals:** submissions of publishing proposals for IMC editions have tripled in the period 2008–2011.

**contract for editors:** a contract for editors of IMC editions, covering copyright and republication issues, was approved in the wake of legal advice.

**catalogue:** a new-style IMC catalogue in booklet format has been issued annually since 2010.

**web site:** the IMC website was redesigned in 2010 to allow for more services, including delivery of digitised versions of out-of-print IMC editions (available free of charge) and the latest version of the IMC catalogue.

**digitisation:** 43 of the most popular out-of-print IMC titles were digitised and made available worldwide to any user on the IMC web site.

**Europeana:** At the request of the Department, IMC acted as national aggregator of content for cultural institutions in facilitating the preparation of metadata for inclusion in the Europeana portal.

**eightieth anniversary celebrations:** IMC marked the eightieth anniversary of its establishment by the publication of a full scale scholarly history — Michael Kennedy and Deirdre McMahon, *Reconstructing Ireland's past: a history of the Irish Manuscripts Commission* (2009).

**Culture Night:** since September 2008 IMC has participated enthusiastically in Culture Night, achieving 148 visitors in 2008, 750 in 2009, 770 in 2010 and 846 in 2011. Visitors were shown examples of IMC publications, provided with a short lecture on IMC's activities (repeated at 30 minute intervals) and extolled to be archives aware.

## Organisation chart

The following diagram illustrates the organisation of the Irish Manuscripts Commission as of September 2011.

