



For immediate release: Thursday, 5 March 2020

## A Moving Royal Visit for the Museum of Literature Ireland

**Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge paid a wonderful visit to the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI), on the evening of Wednesday 4th March, 2020. The new museum, a collaboration between University College Dublin and the National Library of Ireland, welcomed the Duke and Duchess, both passionate readers, as part of their historic visit to Ireland.**

Dublin's newest museum is located in the beautiful Newman House on St Stephen's Green. The Duke and Duchess were welcomed this evening by Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney T.D.

They were received in the museum by Professor Andrew J Deeks (President of University College Dublin), Dr. Sandra Collins (Director of the National Library of Ireland) and Simon O'Connor (Director of MoLI.)

The couple spent time walking through the beautiful buildings that were the original home of UCD, hearing of the University's founding by the British theologian, educationalist and now Saint John Henry Newman. The house exemplifies the shared history of both countries; as well as Newman's own contributions to educational, spiritual, and literary life in Ireland, the Duke and Duchess heard how the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins lived and wrote in the house as a Professor of Classics at UCD, how James Joyce was a student in the house as well as many other renowned Irish writers such as Maeve Binchy and Flann O'Brien.

The museum's Director, Simon O'Connor, explained to the Duke and Duchess the importance of the role of female and Irish language writers in our literary heritage, and the huge focus the museum places on child education and involving children from disadvantaged backgrounds in our literary culture.

The Duke and Duchess were guided to some of the museum's most innovative displays, including the "Riverrun of Language", a beautiful immersive artwork that presents Irish writing – in both Irish and English – from the earliest times to the present day. Colette O'Flaherty, Keeper of Special Collections at the National Library of Ireland, presented the Royal couple with an opportunity to see what is regarded as one of the most significant treasures in the Irish State collections - the famous 'Copy No.1' of James Joyce's Ulysses, the very first copy printed and handed to Joyce on his birthday on February 2nd, 1922.

The Duke and Duchess met with various political leaders as they walked through the museum, to attend a private reception in the 'Aula Maxima', MoLI's enchanting contemporary exhibition space located in the University's converted Victorian assembly hall. Speeches were followed with a music performance by Maija Sofia Makela, Meabh McKenna and Clara Tracey. The Duke and Duchess completed their visit with a walk through some of the older historic rooms of Newman House – one of the great Georgian gems of Dublin – before departing for Galway.

## **MoLI – Museum of Literature Ireland**

UCD Naughton Joyce Centre, 86 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

[moli.ie](http://moli.ie)

## ENDS

For images, interviews and more on MoLI, contact Ailish Cantwell [ailish@syncandswim.ie](mailto:ailish@syncandswim.ie)/  
087 699 9159



## About the Museum of Literature Ireland

The Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI) is a new landmark cultural institution in the heart of Ireland's capital city. Picturesquely located on the southside of St Stephen's Green in some of Dublin's finest historic houses, MoLI's cutting-edge exhibitions explore Ireland's incredible literary heritage. Set amidst beautiful gardens, Dublin's newest museum is an inspirational oasis for visitors to the city centre.

The museum celebrates Ireland's internationally-renowned literary culture and heritage from the past to the present, inspiring the next generation to create, read and write. Immersive multimedia exhibitions, priceless artefacts, lectures, performances, free-to-access children's education programmes, historic house tours, digital broadcasting, research facilities and a courtyard café set in one of the city's most beautiful and tranquil gardens make the Museum of Literature Ireland a major contribution to the local and international literary landscape.

Irish literature has been hugely influential the world over, and to dedicate such a significant historic site to telling the stories of our writers has attracted attention from across the globe. Many Irish writers studied in our buildings – James Joyce, Maeve Binchy and Flann O'Brien and many others have passed through these rooms. We look forward to welcoming you to MoLI, and inspiring you to start your own creative journey.

MoLI is a major partnership and creative alliance between University College Dublin (UCD) and the National Library of Ireland (NLI), supported by The Naughton Foundation and Fáilte Ireland.

Forthcoming exhibitions on writers at MoLI include "Somebody: Nuala O'Faolain" (curated by June Caldwell) - March 25th, 2020; Chris Haughton - October 2020; Brendan Behan (curated by Patrick McCabe) - Spring 2020; Peig Sayers - Summer 2020.