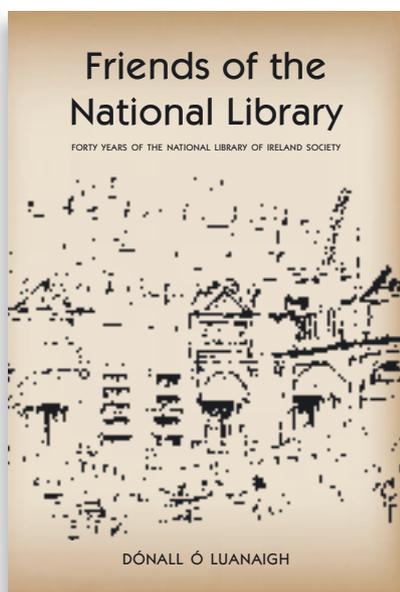


# *Friends of the National Library of Ireland*

Dónall Ó Luanaigh



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*The National Library Society is a model of its kind. Formed by disinterested enthusiasts who are properly informed and satisfied to help to promote the Library and its objects without seeking to obtrude themselves upon the actual working of the institution by the staff, they give an example which could well be emulated in other fields.*

*Irish Times, 25 October 1976*

- The National Library of Ireland Society is an association of 'friends' of the National Library established in 1969 to increase public awareness of the Library, promote its interests and support its staff and readers. This book is a history of its first forty years.
- The initiative for the establishment of the Society came from Dr Patrick Henchy, Director of the Library from 1967 to 1976. He recognised that the Library fell far short of its international equivalents in terms of adequate staffing and storage, purchasing funds and conservation. The need to alert public opinion to this unfortunate situation, and to demonstrate the public's support for remedying it, was the immediate reason why the Society was founded.
- Matters have, of course, greatly improved in the intervening years. As this book shows, the Society has played its part in that process and continues to make a vital contribution by providing a forum in which scholars and others can interact with the Library and with each other.
- The membership has included some of the most significant figures in Irish life in the past forty years, most notably Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh (Chief Justice, later President of Ireland), Senator Michael Yeats, Professor Patrick Lynch, Professor John J. O'Meara, Dr Margaret Mac Curtain, Dr Muriel McCarthy and Fr J. Anthony Gaughan.
- An appendix contains a full list of the lectures which the Society has arranged in the forty years of its existence. Details of the Richard Irvine Best Lectures and the John J. O'Meara Lectures are given in separate appendices. This information will be a particularly important reference resource for scholars. These lectures, and the Society's other events, have contributed greatly to the cultural and literary life of this country.

**About the author:** Dónall Ó Luanaigh retired from the staff of the National Library of Ireland in June 2006 after forty-three years' service as a professional librarian. He held a number of senior positions in the Library, his last being that of Keeper of Collections. He was Honorary Secretary of the National Library of Ireland Society from 1983 to 1991, and so is uniquely qualified to write about its history.

**Intended readership:** Libraries and similar institutions, and general readership interested in the intellectual and literary life of Ireland in the last half-century.



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