



FÉILE NA STAIRE FINE GALL
FINGAL FESTIVAL OF HISTORY

2026

26 MEÁN FÓMHAIR -
11 DEIREADH FÓMHAIR

26 SEPTEMBER -
11 OCTOBER

*The Garristown & Dublin Motor Service.
Starting on its inaugural run.*



Fingal Local Studies Collection



Introduction

This year sees Fingal's tenth annual Festival of History, which will run from Saturday 26th September to Sunday 11th October 2026. **History at the Library Day** takes place on Saturday 3rd October in The Carnegie on North Street, Swords with a number of the talks that day covering our links with Europe and the EU, while Ireland holds the Presidency of the European Community.

We have expanded again this year and will have 19 events, running throughout our library branches, covering such diverse topics the disappearance of Agatha Christie, Ireland's involvement in the American Revolution, the Kennedy Family and Ireland, De Valera's powers of negotiation, Ireland after the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, what Fashion tells us, The diaries of Eleanor Cobbe Corbally, The 1926 Census, Researching Family History, Balbriggan Harbour, Kenure House and Demesne, The Old Schoolhouse, Clonsilla and the La Mancha Murders, Malahide. There will also be 2 heritage tours hosted by Clonsilla & Porterstown Heritage Society (Sunday 4th October) and Rush Tourism (Sunday 11th October).

We hope that there will be something of interest for everyone. All events are free to the public, but places may be limited so booking is advised. Scan the QR code to view the full programme of events or pick up the Festival of History brochure at your nearest Fingal library.

Catherine Keane
Senior Librarian
Fingal Local Studies & Archives



Saturday 26 September @11.00am

Location: Balbriggan Library

Speaker: Joseph Connell



Unfinished Rebellion: Eamon de Valera and the Politics of Negotiation



In this talk Joseph Connell examines de Valera's time in the United States, his return to Ireland, and the language and tactics he used in preparing for and conducting the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations. Working through de Valera's role in the Easter Rising, his time as a political prisoner and his visit to the United States during 1919-1920, Joseph explores de Valera's actions and statements.

These are especially relevant following his return to Ireland in December 1920 as well as the role he played throughout the Anglo-Irish Treaty discussions and subsequent Dáil debates.

Joseph Connell is an American historian with a lifelong interest in Irish history. He is particularly interested in the Easter Rising and the years of fighting that followed while Ireland fought for her independence. He has written a number of books on the topic including *Dublin in Rebellion*, *The Terror War* looking at the War of Independence and *The Shadow War* covering Michael Collins. His latest book *Unfinished Business* is due to be published.



**To reserve a place please contact Balbriggan Library
at: 01 8704401 or email Balbrigganlibrary@fingal.ie**



Monday 28th September @ 6.30pm

Location: Rush Library

Speaker: Niall Gosson



Kenure House and Demesne: A History



Niall Gosson will speak about the history of Kenure House and Demesne and the lives of the families who lived there since it was built in the early 1700s and later rebuilt in 1827 following a fire. He will also examine the role Kenure House played in the lives of the people of Rush. Niall's talk will be illustrated with many images of the house, the granite portico being the only part of it that remains today.

Niall Gosson, who is a former student of St Joseph's Secondary School, Rush volunteers with Rush Tourism and has worked with Fingal County Council to achieve a coastal heritage trail and a Kenure House Demesne heritage trail in Rush. In 2018, while a student in sixth year he, along with 19 others from around Ireland, was awarded a gold medal in the Spirit of the Community Awards for the volunteer work he had done.



**To reserve a place please contact Rush Library
at: 01 8708414 or email Rushlibrary@fingal.ie**



Tuesday 29th September @ 6.30pm

Location: Blanchardstown Library

Speaker: Laura Fitzachary



Declarations through Clothing - moments of Irish political and social history told through what was worn and how one was adorned



From banning certain hairstyles through sumptuary laws in medieval Ireland to Constance Gore-Booth wearing green to Dublin Castle in 1905, explore moments of Irish beauty and fashion history that have been points of contention, resistance and even outlawed. This talk will delve into the reasons why those who adorned themselves in a specific way did so and why they were either penalised for it or using their appearance to send a message.

Laura Fitzachary is a historian, historical consultant, writer, presenter and host based in Dublin.

With a background in art history and working in luxury fashion, Laura has over a decade of experience working in the museum sector before spending some time in Paris working in fashion.

She focuses on fashion, beauty and cosmetic history in Ireland and beyond. Laura has produced her own podcasts and Instagram stories as well as appearing on national television.



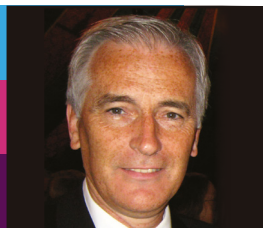
**To reserve a place please contact Blanchardstown Library
at: 01 8905560 or email Blanchlibrary@fingal.ie**



Tuesday 29th September @ 6.30pm

Location: Skerries Library

Speaker: Dr Myles Dungan



The Coming Storm



In this lecture Dr Myles Dungan looks at the background to the Easter Rising 1916 by examining the role of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the vital Irish American input and funding, the IRB Military Council and the efforts to enlist the aid of Germany. He also examines the events of the weeks leading up to the rebellion – including the controversial countermanding order – the role of the Volunteer, Irish Citizen Army and IRB leaders such as Patrick Pearse, James Connolly, Roger Casement, Tom Clarke, Sean McDiarmada and Eoin MacNeill.

Dr Myles Dungan is one of Ireland's best-known and most respected broadcasters on both radio and television for more than two decades. He is the author of a number of popular works including *The Stealing of the Irish Crown Jewels*, *The Great Irish History Book* as well as his latest *Land is all that Matters*.



To reserve a place please contact Skerries Library
at: 01 8905671 or email Skerrieslibrary@fingal.ie

Wednesday 30th September @ 6.30pm

Location: Baldoyle Library

Speaker: Turtle Bunbury



Sons of Liberty: Ireland and the American Revolution



Irish blood ran through every phase of the American Revolution. In this talk Turtle Bunbury explores how hundreds of thousands of Irish and Scots-Irish migrants helped turn a colonial protest into a successful war of independence and, later, a federal republic.

Turtle will bring his audience from the invasion of Canada into the battles of Boston, New York, Saratoga and Yorktown, through frontier war and global struggle in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, to the creation of the Constitution and the White House. Along the way, he showcases a cast of presidents, signatories, soldiers, sailors, spies, merchants and native go-betweens, all with Irish roots, who shaped the new “United States of America”.

Turtle Bunbury is an award-winning Irish author, historian, broadcaster and podcaster known for documenting and preserving Irish history and heritage. Described as ‘one of the most versatile authors of his generation,’ his writing focuses on bringing lesser-known stories and characters from history to light, and he is recognized for his engaging storytelling style, wry humour and meticulous research. Turtle has also contributed to numerous media outlets and has undertaken projects to promote awareness and appreciation of Ireland’s rich cultural heritage.



To reserve a place please contact Baldoyle Library
at: 01 8704401 or email Baldoylelibrary@fingal.ie



Thursday 1st October @ 6.30pm

Location: Malahide Library

Speaker: Flor MacCarthy



The Kennedy Papers



President Kennedy visited Ireland, his ancestral home, in the summer of 1963. As he boarded Airforce One at Shannon Airport, he received a parting telegram from President de Valera wishing him “long life, health and happiness”. JFK replied saying he would “never forget the wonderful reception” he received in Ireland and spoke about how the gifts he brought home were “a little bit of Ireland”. He was assassinated later that year on 22 November 1963. Flor MacCarthy delves into the continuing connection between The Kennedys and Ireland through their correspondence.

Flor MacCarthy is an award-winning author and journalist whose first book *The President's Letters* was shortlisted for Best Irish-Published Book 2021. A former RTÉ News journalist and anchor, she presents political debates on Oireachtas TV, interviewing politicians, academics, and journalists both in Ireland and at the European Parliament in Strasburg.



To reserve a place please contact Malahide Library
at: 01 8704430 or email Malahidelibrary@fingal.ie





HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY

Saturday 3rd October @10.00am

Location: The Carnegie Library, Swords

Speaker: Dr Declan Brady



A Very Long Courtship: Fingal and Europe before the EU



Fingal has a long history of relations with Britain and Continental Europe from the evidence of Roman trading at Drumanagh, near Loughshinny, in the first century AD, through Viking and Norman settlement to its later trading links and travels of its diaspora. Today Dublin Airport, at the heart of Fingal, is a key transport link between Europe and North America. This talk, by Dr Declan Brady, will highlight some of these

economic, social, cultural and political connections from the first century in Fingal to Ireland's EU membership at the end of the twentieth century.

Dr Declan Brady is a research historian, educator, and professional genealogist. He is currently working on a history of politics and local government in North County Dublin for Fingal Local Studies and Archives.



Booking via Eventbrite link below:
<https://fingaleu.eventbrite.ie>





HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY

Saturday 3rd October @11.30am

Location: The Carnegie Library, Swords

Speaker: Dr David McCullagh



50 Years: Ireland and the EU



With Ireland over halfway through its presidency of the European Union, Dr David McCullagh presents this timely talk. He covers Ireland's relations with the EU, the United Kingdom and how the last 50 years of EU membership has changed over time.

Well-known broadcaster **Dr David McCullagh** has a PhD in politics from University

College Dublin and is the author of a number of books on Irish history. He is best known for his formidable two-volume reassessment of Eamon de Valera, the single most consequential Irish figure of the twentieth century – as a leader of the Easter Rising, figurehead of the anti-treaty rebels during the Civil War and later, founder of Fianna Fail and President of Ireland.



Booking via Eventbrite link below:
<https://irelandandtheeu.eventbrite.ie>





HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY

Saturday 3rd October @2.00pm

Location: The Carnegie Library, Swords

Speaker: Claire Bradley



The La Mancha Murders: A Centenary Review



On 31st March 1926, a fire at La Mancha on the Swords Road led to the discovery of six bodies of the McDonnell siblings and two staff members. The McDonnells had come from Galway just a few years before but were already planning to move away from Malahide. Their gardener, Henry McCabe, was ultimately arrested, tried and hanged for the murders. 100 years on, Malahide

still doesn't talk about this terrible crime. In this lecture Claire Bradley will sensitively remember the victims and consider the long-term impact on the town.

Claire Bradley is a local professional genealogist who specialises in Irish family history. She studied History at Trinity and from her research in the repositories of Dublin she gravitated towards a career in genealogical research. Claire completed a Certificate in Family History from UCD and graduated with a Masters in the History of the Family from the University of Limerick in 2021. She is on the Register of Qualified Genealogists.



Booking via Eventbrite link below:
<https://lamancha.eventbrite.ie>





HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY

Saturday 3rd October @3.15pm

Location: The Carnegie Library, Swords

Speaker: Cathal Dowd Smith



Malahide Castle – Fingal’s House of European Culture



The European connections are far and wide and are visible in the architectural fabric of Malahide Castle which drew influence from across the continent. Recent additions to the collections at Malahide Castle reveal many lives spent abroad which are reflected in the castle through the wealth of material objects which returned with the Talbot family from Europe.

This illustrated talk will combine archival and material sources to unpick the European influences of the Talbot family in decorating their castle and will reveal the effect of the many generations spending lifetimes abroad. Over the course of the talk, we will travel from North County Dublin to Copenhagen, Vienna, Naples, Paris, Florence, Sienna, Athens, and Madeira.

Cathal Dowd-Smith is the Curator & Collections Manager of Newbridge House and Farm and Malahide Castle and Gardens. He holds a degree in the History of Art and Architecture and History from Trinity College Dublin.

Cathal's current research interests are in the Irish country house, and the architectural and landscape histories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.



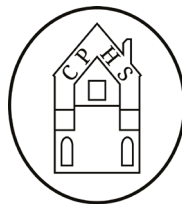
Booking via Eventbrite link below:
<https://bighousefingal.eventbrite.ie>



Sunday 4th October @ 3.00pm - 4.30pm

HERITAGE TOUR

Speakers: Clonsilla & Porterstown Heritage Society



Tour of St Mary's Church & Graveyard (Meet at St. Mary's Church)



Join Clonsilla & Porterstown Heritage Society (CPHS) on a guided tour of St Mary's Church and Graveyard. St Mary's Church of Ireland is an architectural gem, with many interesting features inside, including a stained-glass window by Evie Hone. The current church dates from 1846, however, there has been a religious settlement on this site since 500AD. With lots of interesting graves and possibly the Irish Crown Jewels, you'll leave with many stories to share!



Please stay for refreshments afterwards.

To reserve a place please contact:
cpheritagesoc@outlook.com



Monday 5th October @ 6.30pm

Location: Donabate Library

Speaker: Dr Susan Byrne



In Her Own Words: The Diaries of Eleanor Cobbe Corbally

This talk will share some of the thoughts and experiences of Eleanor Cobbe Corbally and her life at Newbridge House, Donabate in the 1910s and 1920s. Her extensive diaries provide a unique window into the past, revealing her definite views and opinions and her love of a lively debate. In one page, she comments on medical care, revolution, gardening, and the weather, weaving a rich tapestry of life one hundred years ago.



Cyril and Nellie (Eleanor Corbally) Newbridge

Dr Susan Byrne completed her PhD in 2024 where she examined female prisoner's experience of the Free State justice system from 1922 – 1947. She has also been published by the Women's History Review as well as contributing to an essay collection *A Very Hard Struggle* edited by Dr Anne Dolan and Dr Caitriona Crowe. She is currently a Research Fellow on a project titled 'Witnessing War, Making Peace' which is led by Dr Anne Dolan.



To reserve a place please contact Donabate Library
at: 01 8905609 or email donabate.library@fingal.ie

Tuesday 6th October @ 6.30pm

Location: Baldoyle Library

Speaker: Claire Bradley



Family History and the 1926 Census

The 1926 census was released on 18th April 2026, one hundred years to the day it was taken. It was the first census taken in the Irish Free State and as such, it has huge value for social and family historians. Between it and the previous census of 1911, Ireland experienced World War I, the Spanish flu pandemic, and of course, independence and the partition of the island. This talk will discuss the historical context of the 1926 Census, demonstrate how to use it and how to follow on to other genealogical research. Join Claire Bradley as she helps us navigate these incredible resources for family history research.

Claire Bradley is a local professional genealogist who specialises in Irish family history. She studied History at Trinity and from her research in the repositories of Dublin she gravitated towards a career in genealogical research. Claire completed a Certificate in Family History from UCD and graduated with a Masters in the History of the Family from the University of Limerick in 2021. She is on the Register of Qualified Genealogists.



To reserve a place please contact Baldoyle Library
at: 01 8906793 or email baldoylelibrary@fingal.ie



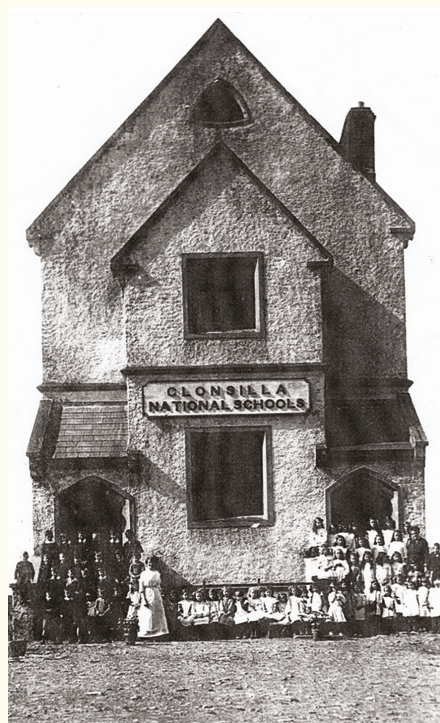
Wednesday 7th October @ 6.30pm

Location: Blanchardstown Library

Speaker: Christine Moore



The Story of Clonsilla's Old Schoolhouse



Clonsilla's National School was the local school, in Clonsilla, for over 100 years. Situated along the banks of the Royal Canal, its origins began as a struggle for religious freedom, between the parish priest and the rector.

With its distinctive Victorian Gothic appearance, generations of children received their education (up to 7th class!) in this unique structure. Join Christine for a talk on the history of Clonsilla's local school.

Christine Moore is chair of the Clonsilla & Porterstown Heritage Society and is founder of the annual Clonsilla Heritage Festival. She has a lifelong interest in history and is advocating that the Old Schoolhouse be restored as a heritage museum.

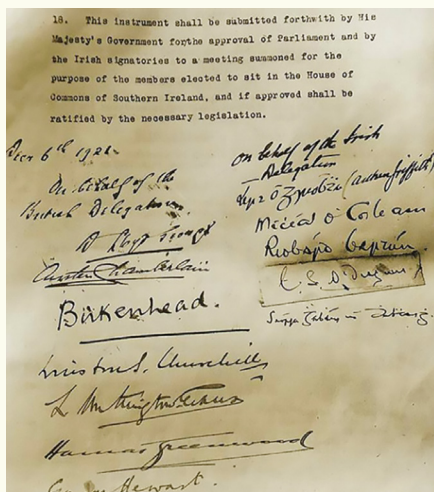


To reserve a place please contact Blanchardstown Library
at: 01 8905560 or email Blanchlibrary@fingal.ie

Speaker: Dr David McCullagh



He is best known for his formidable two-volume reassessment of Eamon deValera, the single most consequential Irish figure of the twentieth century – as a leader of the Easter Rising, figurehead of the anti-treaty rebels during the Civil War and later, founder of Fianna Fail and President of Ireland.



To reserve a place please contact Malahide Library
at: 01 8704430 or email Malahidelibrary@fingal.ie



Thursday 8th October @ 6.30pm

Location: Balbriggan Library

Speaker: Dr David Sorensen



The Building of Balbriggan's Inner Harbour 1818 - 1872

From Stormy Weather to Smooth Water and Security



Currently the town of Balbriggan possesses a relatively modest sized harbour, framed by two piers. While Balbriggan's original pier of the 1760s, with its sweeping curve and iconic lighthouse, tends to capture the gaze of the onlooker, it is, in fact, the construction of the

rather more mundane "New Pier" of the 1820s that brought commercial success to Balbriggan's harbour.

The "old" pier, begun in 1762, provided a modicum of shelter for ships, but it was not until the construction of the "new" pier, in 1826, that Balbriggan possessed an Inner Harbour, which converted the rough seas "from stormy weather to smooth water and security". Dr David Sorensen will outline the how and why of the building of Balbriggan's Inner Harbour, as well as covering some of intriguing "what might have beens" had the original plans come to fruition.

Dr David Sorensen is a long-time Balbriggan local historian. He has given presentations on topics as diverse as the history of national schools within the town, Balbriggan's cotton mills, it's famed hosiery industry, wrecks and rescues off its shores, history of its street names, Loreto Convent and Balbriggan courthouses. He has also led themed heritage walks around the town. With his colleague, Petra Skyvova of the Balbriggan Heritage Group, he has established the Balbriggan Town Heritage Trail. Most recently David has collaborated with a group of local traditional musicians in a book and album of songs based on historical events in Balbriggan's development: *Our People, Our Places, Our Past*.



To reserve a place please contact Balbriggan Library
at: 01 8704401 or email Balbrigganlibrary@fingal.ie

Thursday 8th October @ 6.30pm

Location: Rush Library

Speaker: Dr Myles Dungan



The Mysterious Mrs Christie

100 years ago, this year Agatha Christie simply disappeared, sparking one of the biggest nationwide searches in British 20th century history. After ten days, in a plot worthy of an Agatha Christie novel, she turned up in a Yorkshire hotel, registered under the name of her soon to be ex-husband's lover. Fifty years ago, she died after a writing career of six decades.



During her lifetime and in the half century since, she has sold over two BILLION books. In this talk crime writer and historian Dr Myles Dungan, looks at her incredible career and her mysterious disappearance.

Twice a Fulbright scholar at U.C. Berkeley (2007 & 2011), **Dr Myles Dungan** holds a PhD in History from Trinity College, Dublin (2012). He is the presenter of *The History Show* on RTE Radio 1 and has written many books on 19th century Irish history, the American west and the Great War. He is also Programme Director of the Hinterland Festival.



To reserve a place please contact Rush Library
at: 01 8708414 or email Rushlibrary@fingal.ie



Saturday 10th October @ 11.00pm

Location: Balbriggan Library, Swords

Speaker: Brian Kavanagh

BALBRIGGAN & DISTRICT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



50 Years: Ireland and the EU



An introduction on how to begin the journey of tracing your family history. Brian Kavanagh will examine the online resources that are freely available throughout Fingal Libraries and how these can be used in your search. Find out how to make the most of the information available through the censuses – 1901, 1911 and 1926, how to look up church and civil registration records and uncover Griffith's Valuations to make discoveries about your ancestors.

Brian Kavanagh is a Library Assistant at Fingal Local Studies & Archives and is a dedicated history enthusiast with a passion for local history and genealogy. Through his work he helps preserve historical records and artefacts, ensuring the legacy of local communities is maintained for future generations. As an active member of Balbriggan and District Historical Society, Brian promotes the rich heritage of Balbriggan by coordinating historical talks, events and initiatives, fostering a deeper appreciation of local history among residents and visitors alike.



To reserve a place please contact Balbriggan Library
at: 01 8704401 or email Balbrigganlibrary@fingal.ie



Sunday 11th October @ 2.00pm

Location: Meet at the Rush Community Centre

Speaker: John Walsh



1926 Census: The Families of Rush Then...and Now



Step back a century and discover the people who called Rush home in 1926. Using the recently released census records, this fascinating walk explores the families who lived, worked and raised generations in the village - and whose descendants continue to shape the community today. Through the story of one local family, John Walsh will reveal how names recorded in the 1926 Census are still found throughout Rush, illustrating the remarkable continuity of village life. Whether your own family appears in the census or you're simply interested in local history, this event offers a unique opportunity to connect the past with the present. The guided walk will last approximately 90 minutes.

Rush Tourism is a voluntary sub-committee of Rush Community Council dedicated to sharing the story of Rush. Through heritage trails, exhibitions, guided walks, community events and local history projects, they work to preserve, promote and celebrate the people, places and stories that have shaped our village over the centuries. By bringing Rush's rich history and heritage to life, they encourage residents and visitors alike to discover the village's unique character, support local businesses and develop a deeper appreciation of the community and the generations who have called Rush home.



Booking via Eventbrite link below
<https://rush1926.eventbrite.ie>





Fingal Local Studies & Archives are based at 46 North Street, Swords. The service collects, preserves and makes available historic records relating to Fingal and Dublin generally. Outreach includes exhibitions, publications, talks, the Fingal Festival of History and participation in Heritage Week and Culture Night. The service is available to anyone interested in local, social or family history. All researchers are welcome and queries can be made by phone, post or e-mail. As many of our collections are stored offsite, we usually ask researchers to make an appointment in advance by e-mailing:

archives@fingal.ie or **local.studies@fingal.ie**.

The Local Studies collections are an important resource for the study of local history in Fingal and Dublin generally. We hold collections of photographs, postcards, maps and artwork. Additionally, there is an extensive printed collection of local history books, periodicals, directories, reference works and general genealogical and historical books. New publications are regularly added. There is also an ephemera collection comprising military medals, tram tickets, posters etc. The Archives contains records of local government in County Dublin from 1775 to the present day including archives from the Turnpike Trusts, County of Dublin Grand Jury, Poor Law Unions, Rural District Councils, Howth Urban District Council, Balbriggan Town Commissioners, Dublin County Council and a variety of private collections including the Hely-Hutchinson Papers, Holmpatrick Papers and Hone Papers.

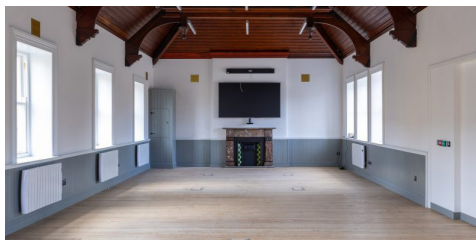
Opening Hours	Monday – Friday 10am – 5pm
Location	46 North Street, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 F6Y3
Telephone	+353 1 8704486



Swords Carnegie

Free Library

Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish philanthropist, provided funding between 1897 and 1913 to pay for the building of about 80 libraries in Ireland. Swords Carnegie Library on North Street is one of the remaining 62 which have survived. Built in 1908 for Balrothery Rural District Council, it was designed by architect Andrew Scott. It featured one large room on the upper floor with timber trusses and timber-boarded



Balrothery Rural District appointed a Library Committee on 9 November 1904 who had responsibility for the promotion and control of the libraries at Swords, Malahide, Skerries, Rush, Lusk and Garristown. They were also responsible for appointing a librarian. The first librarian appointed to Swords Library in 1908 was dismissed not long after when he failed to account for a donation of £10 given to him by a member of the public.

The Carnegie Library continued to provide a library service on a part-time basis to the people of Swords until a new, larger library was opened at Rathbeale Shopping Centre in early 1983. The building was also home to the District Court Office, Swords Boxing Club and to Swords Historical Society and Museum down through the years.

In 2023 the library underwent extensive renovation. It now features a new two-story extension which will enhance accessibility and services. This new space, managed by Fingal Arts Office, will serve as a hub for community engagement, public participation, supporting artists' growth, promoting arts awareness and encouraging innovation as Fingal County Council prepares for the delivery of the Swords Cultural Quarter.



ceilings to produce well-proportioned interiors. Accommodation on the ground floor consisted of 2 rooms with a librarian's counter at the end of the hall, through which the building was accessed. These rooms comprised a reading room and a ladies room/ smoking room. The large room upstairs was frequently used for meetings, dances, concerts and other community activities. Andrew Carnegie intended the library buildings he paid for to be well stocked with books and freely available to all.



Cá bhfuil mo leabharlann is cóngaraí?

Where is my nearest library?

Balbriggan	01 870 4401	balbrigganlibrary@fingal.ie
Baldoyle	01 890 6793	baldoylelibrary@fingal.ie
Blanchardstown	01 890 5560	blanchlibrary@fingal.ie
Donabate	01 890 5609	donabate.library@fingal.ie
Garristown	01 835 5020	garristownlibrary@fingal.ie
Howth	01 890 5026	Howth.library@fingal.ie
Malahide	01 870 4430	malahidelibrary@fingal.ie
Rush	01 870 8414	rushlibrary@fingal.ie
Skerries	01 890 5671	skerrieslibrary.library@fingal.ie
Swords	01 890 5582	swordslibrary@fingal.ie
Mobile Library Service	01 890 6719	mobile.libraries@fingal.ie
Housebound Library Service	01 860 4290	housebound.library@fingal.ie
Local Studies and Archives	01 870 4486	Local.Studies@fingal.ie

Tá Leabharlanna Fhine Gall ar na Meáin Shóisialta

Fingal Libraries are on Social Media |    