

Text and Image from NUI Galway Website

Nicholas Carolan

Nicholas Carolan has achieved a national feat in the last twenty years in the establishment of the Irish Traditional Music Archive.

Arts Minister John O'Donoghue recently opened a new premises for the Archive at Merrion Square in Dublin. It holds and preserves there the largest multi-media collection in existence of Irish traditional music materials: over 28,000 sound recordings, 18,000 books and serials, 10,000 images, and a mass of other materials. It also holds the largest body of information about the music, organised on unique computer catalogues: over half a million items content items in all. The Archive is a public, national and international institution on a cultural and scholarly level. Materials held there are available to visitors for reference, without qualification and free of charge.



In 1987 Nicholas Carolan and others outlined a preliminary plan for the establishment of the Archive which won the financial support of the Arts Council in Dublin and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in Belfast. He was a visionary who commenced work on the task, himself and one secretary. Today the Archive has a staff of ten, and Nicholas continues to build the institution for all those with an interest in the contemporary and historic artforms of Irish traditional song, instrumental music and dance. He is best known to the public for his long-running archival television series, *Come West along the Road* on RTÉ and *Siar an Bóthar* on TG4, and for his extensive public lectures. He has also published a profusion of books and scholarly articles on the subject of Irish traditional music.

This year 2007 will be the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Archive, an appropriate time to honour Nicholas Carolan's service to the nation.