



Academic & Special Libraries Section

Annual Report for LAI

Committee Officers and Members 2024-2025

Committee Officers:

- Chairperson: Fiona Logan (National Library of Ireland)
- Hon. Secretary: Deirdre McGuinness (William Fry LLP)
- Hon. Treasurer: Genevieve Larkin (Marino Institute of Education)
- Communications Officers: Martin O'Connor (UCC), Eilís O'Neill (DCU), Aoife Murphy (National Library of Ireland), Dimphe Ní Bhraoináin (Griffith College)

Committee Members:

- Susan Brodigan (McCann FitzGerald LLP)
- Nadina Yedid (Children's Health Ireland)
- Marta Bustillo (UCD)
- David Hughes (Education and Training Boards Ireland)
- Christina Celona – *joined March 2025*
- Tina Stagliano (Novartis) – *stepped down in March 2025*
- Joe Peakin (Novartis) – *stepped down in April 2024*

About the Academic & Special Libraries Section

The A&SL Section of the LAI is committed to promoting the role of all information professionals working within the academic and special libraries sector. The group works to ascertain and disseminate best practice within these fields, and act as advocates both to employers and to the wider public. Through our networking events we work to provide opportunities for continuing professional development throughout the year.

Our membership is made up of professionals working in academic institutions (public and private), corporate and business libraries, private libraries, and special libraries, such as those in the voluntary and charity sector.

Collaboration and community building is at the heart of this group, and the committee organises events throughout the year. Our main event in the year is the annual conference which is open to the wider information and library professional community, we also host regular networking events and partner with our colleagues across other LAI groups to share professional practice and knowledge share on current topics and challenges within the profession.

Overview of 2024

2024 was a busy and exciting year for the committee. We saw the return of our annual conference on 21st March in the Ashling Hotel. We also hosted a joint networking event with the HSLG, which was held in the Royal Irish Academy on 17th June. Both events featured thought-provoking talks and provided section members with a great networking opportunity. Along with our in-person events, we held our 2024 AGM on Zoom, which featured a great guest speaker.

Committee meetings and membership in 2024

The Committee met on 12 occasions in 2024. This included 11 Committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting which was held on 23rd January 2024. We have continued to hold most of our meetings online on Zoom, which took place on the following dates: 8th February, 27th February, 6th March, 9th May, 30th July, 26th September, 8th October, 8th November, 2nd December. We also held in-person meetings on 20th February and 17th August.

Joe Peakin stepped down from the committee in April 2024. Tina Stagliano and David Hughes joined the committee in July 2024.

The officer roles remain unchanged from 2023.

AGM 2024

The 2024 AGM was held on Zoom on 23rd January 2024. The agenda included the Chairperson's welcome and introduction, the Secretary's Report - Review of the year, and the Treasurer's Report.

As part of the 2024 AGM, the committee held a talk by Laura Ryan, Assistant Librarian in Special Collections & Archives at Dublin City University, entitled ***Why We Should Preserve Children's Books Even Though We Are So Old and Wise***. Laura presented to the group on the Children's Books Ireland's collection and DCU's wider children's books collections, and why preserving them into the future via a Special Collections is so important. There was also very interesting discussion around the possibilities available through partnership and outreach work surrounding the collections.

**2024 AGM of the
A&SL Section**

**23 January 2024 @ 7pm
online**

featuring
**LAURA
RYAN**
Assistant Librarian in Special
Collections & Archives, DCU

**"Why We Should Preserve Children's Books
Even Though We Are So Old and Wise"**

aslsectionevents@gmail.com

A&SL

A&SL Conference 2024

The A&SL Conference returned in March 2024. The theme of the conference was "*Fair for All: Creating Equitable and Universal Access to Information*".

Two excellent keynote speakers headed up the ASL 2024 conference: Marilyn Clarke (Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London) and David Hughes (Education and Training Boards Ireland). Both are highly experienced and engaging speakers who discussed two very important topics that underpin conversations around addressing equity of representation and access within libraries.

The conference also featured a diverse selection of exciting speakers throughout the day that spoke to many of the current discussions being grappled with across the information profession, and outlined the work they are doing to support users in areas including inclusive technology, open research and universal design for learning. Our line-up of poster presenters offered another range of valuable perspectives that added to the event.

Recordings and presentation slides are available on our website (www.aslibraries.ie).

Reviews of the conference, written by our bursary winners, were published in An Leabharlann and LibFocus.



Other A&SL events during 2024

Summer social and networking evening: Joint HSLG and A&SL network event, June 2024

A joint networking event held by HSLG & A&SL groups in The Royal Irish Academy. This evening of networking featured a talk by Deirdre Madden, Assistive Technology Outreach Co-ordinator, Disability Support Service, UCC. Deirdre Madden gave the audience a fascinating, interactive talk about the useful and free assistive technology tools that are at our fingertips.



Attendance at LAI Executive Board Meetings and LAI Council Events in 2024

Deirdre McGuinness attended the LAI Groups and Sections meeting on 4th October and the LAI CPD colloquium on 11th November.

Nadina Yedid (in her role as Chair of the CDG) attended the LAI Groups and Sections meeting on 4th October and the LAI CPD colloquium on 11th November.

Attendance and Presentations at Conferences and Training Events in 2024

Outside of A&SL events and activities, the committee were also attended the following events:

- **Dimphne Ni Bhraonain:** Dimphne attended the event *Pride in Higher Education: Empowering LGBTQIA+ People and Community* at the Griffith Conference Centre. This panel discussion explored how higher education institutions can be spaces where equality, diversity, and queerness thrive, emphasizing the importance of these settings in fostering awareness and acceptance for LGBTQIA+ individuals. She joined *Open Repositories Ireland (ORI)* after attending their official launch in December. Additionally, she is a member of the HECA Library Committee, which represents academic libraries within the Higher Education Colleges Association.
- **Deirdre McGuinness:** Deirdre attended the CDG event *Media Literacy for Librarians: skills, strategies & awareness* and the Open Scholarship Group webinar *From Archive to Access*.
- **Nadina Yedid:** During 2024, Nadina was Chairperson of the Career Development Group of the Library Association of Ireland. In this context, she organised and attended the events: *Job Application and Interview Tips: by library professionals for library professionals*; *Media Literacy for Librarians: skills, strategies & awareness*; and *Library Insights Using ChatGPT: tips & takeaways*. She attended the HSLG Annual Conference *Who's afraid of the big bad wolf*, and the webinar *AI-tools and their use for systematic searching/systematic reviews*.
- **Eilís O'Neill:** Eilís attended the UKeig *Better Social Media for Libraries* course. She took part in Erasmus Library Staff mobility week in June week 23-28 June and is completing the *Gramadach gan Stró* Irish grammar course with Gaelchultúr. She delivered a talk at the A&SL conference about implementing UDL practices in DCU Library. She also delivered a talk at the CONUL Conference on the DCU Library-led *History in Your Hands* project. Eilís is a member of the Libfocus blog team, which

provides an online space where library and information professionals can share ideas and develop relationships.

- **Martin O'Connor:** Martin O'Connor attended a number of CILIP events: *CILIP Members Fest: Allies and conspirators, by and for LGBTQ+ Library staff and Allies*, the UKeiG CPD Zoom Course: *YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and beyond: video marketing for libraries and cultural organisations* (presented by Ned Potter) and UKeiG CPD Workshops: *Data Visualisation for librarians, information and knowledge professionals*, *Better social media for libraries and cultural organisations - next steps in a post-Twitter world*, and *Better Social Media for Libraries*. He also attended a number of UCC run courses: *Creativity in the Workplace* and *Effective Employee: Effective Team Working - Your Role*, and he joined the EDI Committee at UCC Library. Martin is a member of the Libfocus Blog Editorial Team.
- **Genevieve Larkin:** As a member of the Library Acquisitions Group of Ireland (AGI), Genevieve attended a meeting in February 2024 and the AGI AGM in November 2024. She co-presented a poster about enhancing library collections for inclusive education alongside colleague Anne Poenot at the A&SL Conference in March 2024. In November 2024, she attended the inaugural EBSCO FOLIO UK & Ireland User Group Meeting. In early 2025, she joined an e-resources Community of Practice (COP) hosted by UCD and participated in an online meeting in January. She also attended an Accessible and Inclusive Library Design webinar, hosted by the American Library Association in January. In MIE as Head of Library Services, she sits on the Marino Ethics in Research Committee and an Autism Friendly Campus initiative.

Communications

Sign up to our mailing list on <https://listserv.heanet.ie>

If you already have a HEAnet account you can link directly to the ASL list here <https://listserv.heanet.ie/cgi-bin/wa?A0=ASL>

Websites

<https://aslibraries.ie/>

<https://www.libraryassociation.ie/academic-and-special-libraries-section/>

Social media:

Bluesky <https://aslibraries.bsky.social/>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/aslibraries/>

LinkedIn: [Academic & Special Libraries Section of the Library Association of Ireland](#)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ASLIBRARIES>