Trinity’s Visitors

The President of Ireland, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the head of the IMF, Christine Lagarde, the prime ministers of the Netherlands and Korea, and actors Rupert Everett, Mel Gibson and Amy Poehler were some of the people who visited Trinity this year, while the Book of Kells received a record number of visitors - 1,062,860 - coming from all over the world.

Over two million people visit the university each year and it consistently features strongly on lists of Ireland’s Top 10 visitor attractions. This year almost 6,500 people visited the Zoological Museum to view its unique 200-year-old collection of approximately 25,000 specimens as well as ‘live animal’ displays.

2018 saw Science Gallery Dublin celebrating its 10th birthday with RÉALTA, a performance exploring the stars by the first artist in residence at the European Space Agency, Aoife von Linden Tol. Performers danced and played with fire, setting off a chain reaction of pyrotechnic events in Front Square.

A team of student Welcome Ambassadors worked on campus during the peak tourist season, June to October, promoting the venues and facilities open to the public. This summer, for the fourth year running, they were a real point of difference to visitors who love hearing insider knowledge on Trinity student life.

Trinity hosted 74 visits by international universities including the University of Sydney, Hubei Provincial delegation, China, Taiwan Medical University, China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE), Kyoto University and Thapar University.
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Welcoming Dignitaries

The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins gave a keynote address on ‘Africa-Ireland Relations: Current and Future’ at a special event celebrating Africa Day in Trinity. The university, through the Trinity International Development Initiative (TIDI), partnered with African Ambassadors in Ireland to host the celebration of the official day of the African Union, and the continent’s unity and diversity. The Provost also spoke at the event, along with the South African Ambassador, Ahlangene Cyprian Sigcau, Dean of the African Heads of Mission in Ireland.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle visited Trinity in July on their first official visit outside of the UK as a married couple. Members of the public, college staff and students in Front Square gave them a warm welcome. They visited the Long Room of the Old Library and viewed the Book of Kells. During the Royal couple’s visit, the Provost emphasised the importance of Irish-UK relations for the university sector.

In June the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Christine Lagarde, was guest of honour at a lunch celebrating women in leadership hosted by the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy. Before the event Mme Lagarde met with students involved in Launchbox’s summer accelerator programme.

The Italian President, Sergio Mattarella visited Trinity in February and met with Italian students and academic staff. He viewed the Library’s collection of Italian books and manuscripts, including 15th and 16th century first editions of Dante’s La Divina Commedia, 18th century maps of Italy and Sicily from the Dutch Fagel collection, and Samuel Beckett’s notebook from 1926 when he was preparing for his final Trinity examination in Italian.

Colombia’s Ambassador to the UK and Ireland, His Excellency Nestor Osorio addressed a capacity audience in October 2017 when he spoke on ‘The Colombian Peace Process: Opportunities and Challenges’, organised by the Irish School of Ecumenics and the Centre for Post-Conflict Justice, in conjunction with the Trinity Long Room Hub.

Other dignitary visits through the year included Mr Lee Nak-yon, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea; Mr Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands; Mr Carwyn Jones, Welsh First Minister; Mr Michael Russell, Member of the Scottish Parliament; Mr Wissanu Krea-ngam, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand; and Mr Pavlo Klimkin, Foreign Affairs Minister of the Ukraine.

Among the visitors to the Book of Kells and to student societies were actors Evanna Lynch, Kristin Chenoweth, Helen McCrory, and Marisa Tomei and musicians Alanis Morissette, Charlie Watts of The Rolling Stones, and The Waterboys.

At Trinity’s winter commencements, Irish rugby player, Brian O’Driscoll, journalist and broadcaster Olivia O’Leary, former senior archivist of the National Archives of Ireland, Catriona Crowe, Waynflete Professor of Physiology and Director of the Centre for Neural Circuits and Behaviour at the University of Oxford, Gero Miesenböck, and Emeritus Professor of Astronomy at Leiden University, George Miley were awarded honorary doctorates.

At the summer commencements in June 2018, the former US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, prominent US philanthropist and mathematician, Dr James Simons, president of the Confederation of British Industry, Paul Drechsler, archivist at the Irish Architectural Archive, Ann Martha Rowan, and co-founder of the Young Scientist Exhibition, Dr Tony Scott received honorary degrees.

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