

Newsletter

Spring 2025



Irish Society for Archives
Cumann Cartlannaíochta Éireann

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Edited by Dr Mary Clark

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**Reaching out:
Exhibition: An Damer
a landmark in Irish Theatre**

An exhibition to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge 2025, was presented by Special Collections & Archives at Maynooth University Library, about the Damer Theatre. An Damer was an Irish language theatre operated by Gael Linn in the Unitarian Church, Saint Stephen's Green, Dublin from 1955 until 1981.

It staged many successful amateur and semi-professional productions over its nearly three decades in operation, including the first production of Brendan Behan's *An Giall* in 1958, and Máiréad Ní Ghráda's *An Triail* in 1968.

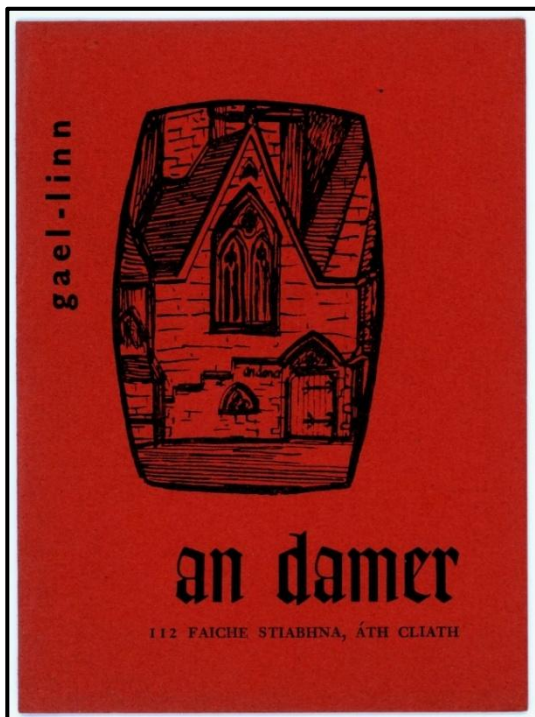


*Programme and ticket for An Giall, 1958
(Maynooth University Library)*

An Damer also helped to start the careers of writers and actors including

Celia Salkeld, Áine Ní Mhuirí, Caitlín Maude and Fionnula Flanagan.

The exhibition is based on An Damer's archive, which is part of the archival collection of Caoimhín Ó Marcaigh (1933-2014), donated to Maynooth University Library in 2022. Ó Marcaigh, a life-long Irish language advocate, was the manager at the Damer Theatre from 1957 until 1960, while also managing a busy career as a teacher, writer and editor of Irish language journal, *Comhar*. He later turned to publishing, taking over *Sáirséal agus Dill* (later *Sáirséal Ó Marcaigh*), in 1981, with his wife Aingeal.



*An Damer membership card
(Maynooth University Library)*

An Damer's archive contains a small selection of administrative documents, including correspondence, lists of

members of An Club Dramaíochta, guestlists, and notes.



*Playwright Brendan Behan
(Open Source)*

The core of the archive is a sizable collection of ephemera including tickets, posters, programmes and newspaper cuttings relating to the many productions at the Damer from 1956 -1965. It also contains a small selection of black and white photographs of rehearsals and performances at the theatre and a scrapbook kept by Ó Marcaigh.

A digital version of the exhibition is available to view here tinyurl.com/AnDamer To view the collection, contact Special Collections and Archives by email to library.specialcollections@mu.ie

*Ciara Joyce
Special Collections & Archives
Maynooth University Library*