



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin
Monaghan County Council

Monaghan County Council Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021

Boundary Commission Research Project

Working in collaboration with Maynooth University, we will carry out a research project for period from the truce in 1921 to the Boundary Commission in 1925 in Monaghan. This information will be used to inform to develop a display and accompanying booklet in 2022 – 2023.

The research will be ongoing throughout 2021 with information finalised by end of the year and handed over to the Museum.

The target audience will be the general public once the information is utilised to produce a booklet/display.

The positive outcomes of this research are that visitors to the exhibition will become more aware of what happened during this period, from hearing the testimonies from local communities as to what state they should belong to the work of the Boundary Commission board. This will allow for a better understanding at local level of how the boundary line was devised.

Artefacts relating to partition

The museum will commission a project to record objects relating to partition both from within the museum collection and around the county. This will be developed into an exhibition in 2022 – 2023.

During the first half of 2021, the Museum will do a public call to the community to record what/if objects are around the county in people's homes or community centres. This will engage a specialist to record the objects, photograph, provide description etc.

Covid Plan B: We will request people to either (a) bring the object to the Museum to be recorded or (b) the specialist meeting the people in venues such as libraries, community centres on specific dates adhering to all health and safety protocols.

This will be a valuable project to add to the other elements being developed for the overall exhibition in 2022-2023.

As we are in the process of building a new Peace Campus in Monaghan which will host both the County Museum and the Ulster Scots, having added other unknown or never seen before objects to the exhibition will be invaluable.

The positive outcomes are providing an opportunity for the community and the Museum to work together, where the community will feel more involved in the development of the exhibition for the new Museum and Peace Campus. This will enable us to build good

relationships at a local level which should allow for future partnerships and projects to develop.

The target audience is the general public to get involve in the initial project but also when the exhibition is finished and on display for everyone to see the fruition of their work.

Creative Practitioners' Response to Partition

Working with creative practitioners in County Monaghan, we will commission them to create their own response to the impact of partition in the county through various mediums. This will be developed into an exhibition in 2022 – 2023.

A public call will be facilitated to creative practitioners living or working in County Monaghan in the first quarter of 2021, to provide proposals as to how they would respond to the impact of partition using whatever creative art medium. They will be given a deadline of producing their piece by end of October 2021.

Once the piece of work is finished it will form part the Museum exhibition for 2022-2023 which will target everyone in the community.

The positive outcomes from this project is the engagement of creative practitioners who will interpret this period into an art format which should encourage discussion and reflection by our community who visits the final exhibition. It will complement the other work being carried out by the Cultural Team of the Council in developing an exhibition for 2022-23. By including artistic expression, this will give added value to the exhibition and target a wider audience such as the cultural and artistic community to engage in history.

The Word on the Street is.... Newspaper Podcast Series

For 2021, we will be working with Michael Fisher, who has 45 years' experience working mainly in the public service broadcasting (BBC and RTE). He covered politics and other events in Northern Ireland for RTE News in Belfast for 26 years before retiring in 2010. He is currently a reporter for the local newspaper The Northern Standard.

Michael is going to research the Irish Times and Northern Standard archives for 1921 and analyse and present the news from a national and local context. A series of podcasts will be produced based on Michael's research which will include discussions with historians on topics in the newspapers highlighted, as to how much of the national events had an impact at local level or vice versa. He will also do several 'Beginners Guide' talks with local people who are not aware of what happened during this period using the newspaper archive.

This will create an archive which can be listened to at any time after it is finished. It will engage people locally to learn about what was happening locally but whilst being made aware of what was happening on the national stage.

Ireland's Poetic Strive to Independence – Poets of the Rising and the Revolutionary Period Project

For 2021, we will continue to work with local award winning poet Ted McCarthy and our project 'Ireland's Poetic Strive to Independence' which will include the monthly gathering for interested people to read and discuss a series of Irish poets and their poetry relating to Ireland during the period 1913-2022. These will take place via zoom or in person depending on the Covid restrictions.

Ted McCarthy who will again expertly lead the group through works from the war of Independence with special insight into the following areas:

- The relationship of poetry and poets to the emerging state.
- The relationship of church and state. Dissenting voices, particularly Patrick Kavanagh, Austin Clarke and the young Brendan Behan.
- Poets writing as Gaeilge during the early years of the Free State.
- The development of the education system; the role poetry plays in the curriculum.
- Irish poets in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century - Joyce, Beckett, Denis Devlin, Brian Coffey, etc.
- Northern/Unionist poets in the years after partition. MacNeice, W.R. Rodgers, Cecil Day Lewis among others.

During each session participants will be encouraged to share their opinions on the pieces and encouraged to engage with the artwork of the time. The facilitator will help participants to understand the political situation of the time and how this came to influence the poets we examine.

The plan for 2021 is to either record several of the discussions, production of written work and/or podcasts on the subjects discussed which will be made available on the new podcast page on council website.

The outcomes of this ongoing project include a sense of community involvement during a time of social isolation; intellectual stimulation; forging friendships; an increased understanding of how art reflects societal and political change and developing the participant's writing skills

One Book One County Initiative

Since 2013, as part of the Decade of Centenaries Monaghan County Library Services has coordinated a community reading initiative called One Book One County where everyone in the county is invited to read the same book and join the community conversations. We have been reading a series of books which deals with Irish history in the early 1900's up to 1923.

For 2021, we will be reading 'Katie's War' by Irish author Aubrey Flegg. Summary of the book – caught in the Irish Civil War, Katie has divided loyalties, her shell-shocked father fought in the First World War and wants peace, but others still want to fight for a united Ireland.

When Katie's father returns from the Great War, he is shell-shocked, his personality destroyed. Now, four years later he has more or less recovered, but another war is breaking out, this time at home in Ireland. The Treaty with the British has been signed by Michael Collins, but many disagree with it and want to continue the war for full independence. The country is on the brink of civil war. There are divided loyalties in Kate's family, and she has to choose whom she will support. Finally, she and the Welsh boy Dafydd make a bold plan to destroy an arms cache...

A series of workshops including online book discussions and multi-media workshops will take place exploring the themes of the book. We hope to have a series of Q&A's sessions with the Author, which in previous years has proved very positive as everyone learnt how the author researched this period of history, the facts they found out and how they transformed this into a piece of literature.

All primary and secondary schools, book clubs and individuals are invited to participate in the programme each year. This year we are inviting schools from Northern Ireland, notably in Fermanagh and Armagh to participate in the project from September to November.

The project will run from the 2nd quarter to November 2021. The project can run within all levels of Covid restrictions as books are delivered to the schools, groups or individuals and most of the programming will take place online as described above.

This programme to date has been extremely positive year on year with more and more schools and individuals wanting to partake. It aligns with school curriculums thus making it easier for schools to partake. The discussions and project work produced each year has been overwhelming, with the children and young people enthusiastic and engaging in all elements of the project.

Autumn Lecture Series

For the autumn of 2021, we will be working with academics and local historians to provide an autumn series of talks dealing with Partition and other events of 1921.

We are aiming to have 5-6 talks in the County Museum or if restrictions do not allow physical event, we will have online talks. We are aiming to have speakers to talk on topics relating to both sides of the community. Speakers envisaged include Dr Terence Dooley, Diarmaid Ferriter, Fearghal McGarry, Ulster Scots speaker.

This series will allow the community to hear and learn about aspects of 1921 from both a local and national context. It will allow for all sides to have equal opportunity to tell their story and for all communities to hear this story.