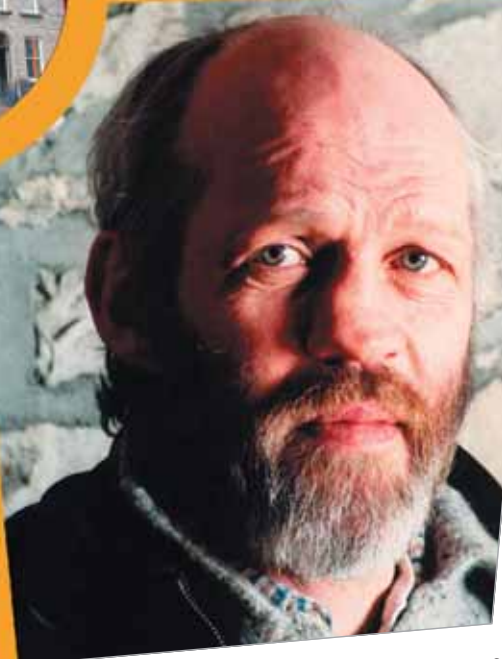


# newsletter

## Monaghan County Council Museum



### IN MEMORY OF PADRAIG CLERKIN 1959 - 2006

Monaghan County Museum staff received the tragic news on Friday, September 15th of the sudden death of Padraig Clerkin, the Museum Research Officer.

Padraig started with the Museum in 1985 and over the last 21 years has worked diligently to research, record and display the history of County Monaghan. He was a valued member of staff, who was respected by all both for his knowledge of history and his warm personality.

Padraig was most importantly a good friend to everyone who knew him. His work took him out into the community and he was one of the main conduits for historical information both coming in and going out of the Museum. He became a part of the streetscape of Monaghan, whose quick wit and cheerful laugh brought a smile to all those who knew him.

He was a great exponent of the Museum and it was through him that the collection acquired many of the objects it holds today. He worked with students of all ages, helping them with their studies and would do whatever he could to track down a piece of information. No job was too small and none were overlooked, everyone got what they were looking for and in many cases were given valuable leads to other sources of information. Another of Padraig's loves were maps of all ages. He spent much time studying the estate maps in the Museum's collection and had only recently finished a project where he had digitally recorded the Museum's full collection of first edition Ordnance Survey Maps of the County dating to the 1830's.

Above all he was committed to the sharing of knowledge. His work in the Museum will benefit students of history for years to come. He will be missed by all Museum and County Council staff; the place will never be the same without him.

Liam Bradley [Curator]

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### MONAGHAN A BORDER COUNTY 40 YEARS GROWING 1965 - 2005

The exhibition 'Monaghan A Border County, 40 Years Growing, 1965-2005' is currently running in the museum gallery. Monaghan born author, Pat McCabe officially opened the exhibition at the end of June.



Theresa Loftus, Liam Bradley, Monaghan Co. Museum; Heather Humphreys, Deputy Mayor of Co. Monaghan; Pat McCabe, Author; Declan Nelson, County Manager; Deirdriú McQuaid, Monaghan Co. Library; Aige King, Director of Community & Enterprise and Karen McKenna, Monaghan Co. Library

This audio-visual exhibition represents over a year's work in a joint project between Monaghan County Museum and Monaghan County Library. A Project Co-ordinator, Deirdre O'Rourke carried out interviews with many different groups in the county including former prisoners, lone parents, older people and people from different ethnic origins. The topics covered were 'Around the Border', 'Emigration/Immigration', 'Technology through Time' and 'Life and Leisure'. Visitors to the exhibition can listen to the stories collected at a number of listening posts. A short video, showing highlights of life in North County Monaghan in the last 40 years plays continually. Artefacts from the museum's collection and photographs, both old and new, add colour and complete the exhibition. This project was funded by the European Union under the Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2000-2004 (Peace II), and part financed by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. The exhibition will run until November and an extended version of the video which features in the exhibition will be on sale in the museum from mid-November onwards.

1-2 Hill Street · Monaghan  
Telephone 047 82928  
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comuseum@monaghancoco.ie

Jim Jenkins



friends  
of Monaghan County Museum

It was with a deep sense of sadness that we learned of the death of Jim Jenkins recently. Jim was a founder member of the Friends of Monaghan County Museum and as such was instrumental in acquiring many important items for the collection.

He was a regular visitor to the museum, his cheery "Greetings" heralded his arrival on a weekly, if not daily, basis. No opening night was complete without Jim, and his genuine interest in, and enthusiasm for, our work was appreciated.

Jim was both a gentle man and a gentleman and his passing is a loss both to us in the museum, to the Friends of Monaghan County Museum, to the many other organisations he was involved in and to the wider Monaghan town community.

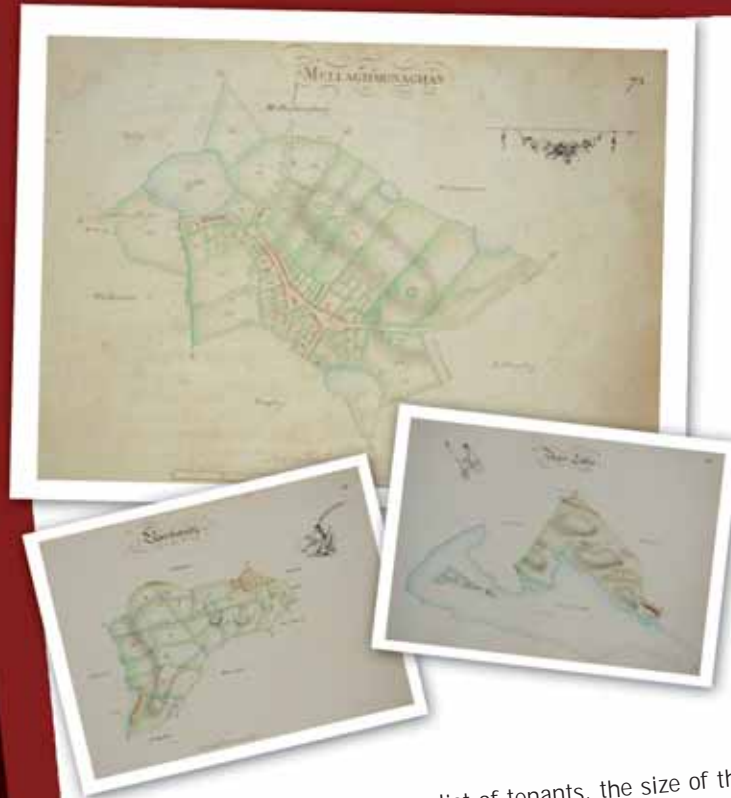
The Annual Subscription rates are:-

Corporate €50.00

Family €15.00

Individual €10.00

Student/Senior Citizen/Unwaged €5.00



### RECENT ACQUISITIONS CLERMONT MAPS

Monaghan County Museum has recently acquired a book of maps, dating to 1791, illustrating the Monaghan Estate of the Earl of Clermont\*.

*\*Sometimes spelt 'Cleremont'*

The book, which is a fine example of eighteenth century cartography, contains over 80 exquisitely detailed maps, each one depicting an individual townland in the Clermont estate.

All maps come complete with a list of tenants, the size of their holdings, the condition of the land and other comments. William Henry Fortescue, the Earl of Clermont, was a landowner in County Louth. However, his marriage to Frances Murray gave him ownership of her lands in north County Monaghan, which then became known as the Clermont Estate. (The Clermont Estate later became the Rossmore Estate). Frances Murray was the eldest of the five daughters of Colonel John Murray and his wife Mary, heiress to the Blayney Estate. The National Library contacted Monaghan County Museum last year to alert them to the fact that the Book of Maps, which was privately owned, was for sale. In response to a request from Monaghan County Museum, The Friends of the National Collection of Ireland donated a generous €5,000.00 to enable the purchase of the Maps. The Friends of Monaghan County Museum contributed a further €5,000.00. This book of maps is one of the most important pieces that the museum has acquired in recent years. It is a valuable addition to our archive and will be of interest to map enthusiasts, researchers and the general public. The curator and staff of Monaghan County Museum would like to express their gratitude to the Friends of the National Collection, the Friends of Monaghan County Museum and to the National Library for their assistance in securing the Clermont Maps. The maps can be viewed in PDF in the Museum Library by appointment only.

### BOG BUTTER

Monaghan County Museum was delighted to accept a donation of Bog Butter from Teresa Connolly, Dundrummons, Scotstown



As bogs maintain a steady cool temperature, they were ideal for storing surplus butter to be retrieved later and used as either food or as a lubricant in the spinning of wool. The age of bog butter is usually ascertained through the carbon dating of the wooden container in which it was buried. However, in this case the outer container has rotted away, but museum staff believe that it may have been a woven material, such as course cloth or basket. A sample of butter will be sent to the State Laboratory to determine what type of milk, (cows or goats) was used and what other ingredients if any it contains. This example was found at Derryarrit, Scotstown. Derryarrit is close to Knockatallon, which means 'Hill of the Salt'. Could this have anything to do with the salting of butter?

The museum is indebted to Teresa Connolly, and to Gene McCarey and Declan Connolly pictured.

### DON JUAN MACKENNA SABRE

A replica of the sabre used by General Don Juan MacKenna, the Hero of Chilean Independence was donated to the museum by H.E. Ambassador, Cecelia McKenna, in June of this year. The sabre is currently on display in the museum, and is a welcome addition to the collection, which already includes a bust and a portrait of the General. The original would have been used for ceremonial purposes.



## HALLOWEEN TRADITIONS

Of all the ancient festivals, Halloween or All Hallows Eve, remains the best known. Halloween marks the end of autumn and the beginning of winter. For farmers, traditionally it meant the end of the working year and a time to celebrate. Potatoes and turnips had been gathered and stored in pits to protect them against the expected frosts of winter. Hay was saved to provide winter fodder for animals and turf was safely stacked and thatched. It was a time of plenty & much of the celebrations and games centred on food, especially potatoes, fruit and nuts.

- In many parts of the country, a spicy pudding was made from potatoes, flour and butter. Apple tarts and bracks would be baked and would include rings or money. The finding of these items would ensure wealth or marriage in the coming year. Young children would try to take a bite from an apple hung from the ceiling, or floating in a barrel of water, without using their hands. However, they were warned not to eat any fruit or berries still unpicked after Halloween as it was believed that Satan, or one of his minions, would foul it with spit.
- In rural Ireland the long dark nights of the winter months was a time to socialise, to visit neighbours, play cards, dance and perhaps meet a partner. For this reason, many of the games played at Halloween centred around divination. Rose Shaw writing in her book *Charleton's Country* describes one method of divination ... "girls made ladders with rushes cut in the Three Counties Hollow and they would hang the ladders above their beds that night - a sure way for girl to see 'himself' walk up the ladder in her dreams." <sup>1</sup>The Three County Hollow referred to is the point in the Sliabh Beagh Mountains where counties Fermanagh, Tyrone and Monaghan meet.
- Just as on Mayeve, there was a need to protect the home and outbuildings against evil spirits. However, the spirits who were afoot on this night were unlikely to be repelled by mere wildflowers! A stronger power was required and consequently, straw or wooden crosses were hung over entrances. Thwarted by being unable to gain entry to buildings frustrated spirits would show their anger in other ways. They would open or steal gates or take the wheels off carts. Many people believed that the souls of the dead once again walked the earth on this night and would perhaps visit their old home. If they did they would expect to find an open door and refreshments waiting for them. <sup>2</sup>Those who had died during the previous year were expected to call on anyone who had wronged or harmed them during their lifetime in order to wreak an unearthly revenge. In the south of Monaghan the young man who successfully captured the 'seed of the fern' as it fell to the ground exactly at midnight would, by carrying the seed in his pocket, become invisible. <sup>3</sup>No doubt he was then able to spy on his neighbours and frighten them without being detected!
- As the belief in ghosts and spirits died out, young people in search of fun took over and played tricks on their neighbours. This practice continues to the present and unfortunately, has in recent years, got out of hand with damage to property and injury to people regular occurrences. This Halloween, as in recent years, many people will block up their letter boxes, bring their pets indoors and wait for the night to be over. Bonfires and fireworks will ensure that the emergency services will be on high alert expecting their busiest night of the year. It is sad that those who celebrate Halloween in this manner are unaware of its importance in the Ireland of the recent past.



<sup>1</sup> p225, Dannagher, Kevin, 1972, *The Year in Ireland*, The Mercier Press, Cork  
<sup>2</sup> p277, Evans, Estyn, 1957, *Irish Folk Ways*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London  
<sup>3</sup> p216, Dannagher, Kevin, 1972, *The Year in Ireland*, The Mercier Press, Cork



### did you know...

Halloween is an ancient festival also known as "All Hallow's Eve"

It marks the end of autumn and the beginning of winter

Traditionally it was the end of a working year and a time to celebrate

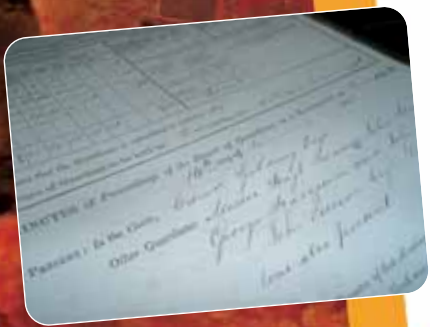


# A SNIPPET FROM OUR ARCHIVE

The following is taken from the Minute Book of Castleblayney Poor Law Union.

State of the Workhouse for the week ending 18th November 1848

- There were a total of 845 inmates in Castleblayney Workhouse on the above date
- 44 males and 55 females in the category 'Aged and Infirm'
- 41 males and 159 females classed as 'Able-bodied'
- 274 boys, 256 girls and 16 children under two years
- 1 'Aged' or 'Infirm' male and one child under two had died during the week.
- In addition to the above there were also 67 inmates classed as 'sick' and 5 of these were in the fever hospital. An additional 7 came under the heading of 'Lunatics and Idiots'.
- A total of £77.7.10 was spend on food and provisions for the following week.
- The shopping list included: 3,400 lbs bread and 2 lbs butter; 5,000 gals buttermilk and 340 gals sweet milk; 1 ton oatmeal and 1 cwt salt, 2 lbs tea and 16 lbs sugar; 20 lbs meat, 2 gals whiskey, 2 lbs starch, 1 cwt bathing soap, 2 lbs washing soap and 30 lbs candles.



- Guided Tours by prior arrangement.
- It is also advisable for schools or large groups to pre-book.

If you wish to book or enquire please contact us at **047 82928** or by email: **comuseum@monaghancoco**

All the exhibitions and events will be advertised in the local press, or if you require further information check out Monaghan County Council Website at **www.monaghan.ie/museum/**

**OPENING HOURS**  
Monday - Friday 11am – 5pm  
Saturday 12pm – 5pm

**ADMISSION FREE**



We would value your **your comments** about this newsletter and would appreciate **any suggestions** for a future editions. Email Eileen at **emckenna2@monaghancoco.ie** or telephone the **museum**



Running until November  
**Monaghan A  
Border County 40  
Years Growing**

*(See article on page 1)*

An extended version of the DVD which forms part of this exhibition will be on sale from the middle of November onwards



## WHATS ON...

From 15th November to 1st December  
**Monaghan Photographic  
Society Exhibition**

Monaghan Photographic Society celebrate their thirtieth anniversary with an exhibition of their work



From 7th December to  
26th January

**An Leabhar Mor**

An exhibition in which the work of over 200 artists, poets and calligraphers from Scotland and Ireland will be displayed. There will be a series of presentations and workshops held during the run of this exhibition.

For further details contact the museum.



From March Onwards  
**National Roads  
Authority Exhibition**

Archaeological discoveries found during the recent road building in the county. More details of this exhibition in our next newsletter.

Our next edition will be available in **March 2007** and will contain a **profile of our curator**, more from the archives, details of exhibitions and events and much more