

newsletter

Monaghan County Council Museum



Inside this Issue

- 1 Attracting New Audiences
- 1 Monaghan's Century of Sport
- 2 Museum Researcher
- 2 The Reference Library
- 3 Easter Traditions
- 4 New Acquisition
- 4 Events Calendar



ATTRACTING NEW AUDIENCES

Monaghan, a Border County, 40 Years growing



No one living in Monaghan in 1965 could have imagined how much life would change in the next forty years. Domestic and farming life in the mid sixties had changed little for decades. Many people were still living without running water or electricity and not everyone had the chance of a secondary education.

Few people had cars and in rural areas the tractor was just taking over from the horse. However, there were many advantages to this life style – power cuts or hikes in oil prices had little effect!! Looking back over these four decades the changes in lifestyle, farming methods, transport, entertainment and education seem dramatic. In reality it was a gradual process, hardly noticeable at times. However, it is important to record people's experience of living through these years and their responses to a changing society. In a joint project, Monaghan County Museum and Monaghan Library secured funding from the European Union through Monaghan County Council led Task Force under the Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2000 – 2004, which was part financed by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006. A project co-ordinator, Deirdre O'Rourke, was appointed and has spent several months examining all aspects of life in Monaghan over the last forty years through a series of workshops. Those who participated in these workshops were from all sections of the community and from all age groups. The stories Deirdre has collected from over a hundred participants, will form an interactive exhibition scheduled to be held in the museum from June this year. All of the stories and life experiences garnered by Deirdre will form part of both the museum and library archive. As part of the project participants were given single use cameras to record a typical day. The resulting pictures were displayed in the museum gallery from 2nd to 31st March in an exhibition entitled, 'Monaghan Exposed, a Day in the Life'. It is hoped that both these exhibitions will appeal to people who would not normally visit either the museum or the library.

MONAGHAN'S CENTURY OF SPORT

Competition has always been a feature of the human condition and nowhere has it been more intense than in the sporting arena.



Liam Bradley, Curator, Barry McGuigan, Sandra McGuigan, Pat Treanor, Mayor of County Monaghan and Declan Nelson, County Manager

In recognition of this, Monaghan County Museum staged an in-house exhibition, entitled 'Monaghan's Sporting Century' from June to December last year. This was a very successful exhibition, which celebrated sport as part of the county's history, and which recognised the contributions made by local sports people, nationally and internationally, over the past one hundred years. It was, therefore, fitting that Monaghan's most famous sporting personality, Barry McGuigan, should officially launch the exhibition. A large audience heard the former World Featherweight Champion praise the exhibition and the diversity of sports featured. He went on to stress the importance of sport, and its character building properties, for young people. Among the many sports included in the exhibition, were tug-of-war, cycling, boxing, soccer, and handball. Hockey and cricket, although no longer played locally, were also highlighted. As would be expected, Gaelic games were given prominence in the exhibition and one section, showcasing the work of the young people of the museum's Public Achievement Group, was devoted to the history of the GAA. The county's newest sporting hero, Kevin McBride, featured along side James Cecil Parke who excelled in many sports, especially tennis, in the first decade of the 20th century. Murals painted by local artist, Brenda O'Reilly Hughes, added depth and interest to the exhibits. The curator and staff of the museum would like to thank Barry McGuigan for launching 'Monaghan's Sporting Century'. They would also like to thank him, and all those clubs and individuals who lent their support as well as their treasured sporting possessions - medals, trophies, photographs, equipment and memorabilia - to the exhibition.

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Support your county's heritage by joining....



In common with many other similar establishments, Monaghan County Museum has its Friends organisation. The Friends of Monaghan County Museum, which was first launched in 1979, was made up of people who cared deeply about the preservation of the county's heritage.

Over the years they have supported the work of the museum by purchasing several expensive pieces of equipment, which greatly assisted the work of the conservator. They also bought some very important artefacts which would have otherwise been lost to the county.

The organisation also has a social side, and in the past several trips to places of historical interest were arranged each year.

The Friends of Monaghan County Museum is seeking new members and anyone who wishes to join should contact museum staff.

The Annual Subscription rates are:-

Corporate €50.00

Family €15.00

Individual €10.00

Student/Senior Citizen/Unwaged €5.00



Padraig Clerkin researching material for books and journals

PADRAIG CLERKIN MUSEUM RESEARCHER

Padraig Clerkin began work in Monaghan County Museum twenty years ago in 1985 when he was employed on a one year FÁS Scheme.

When his term of employment ended he offered to work on a voluntary basis to help with the refurbishing of the building. Initially he was offered short contacts but was eventually made a permanent member of staff. Although Padraig works in all sections of the museum he is principally employed in research, both for the museum and for visitors.

Most recently he researched and planned last year's, very successful exhibition, 'Monaghan's Sporting Century'. Always interested in local history Padraig enjoys helping people with their research. Each researcher and each topic is different. The most popular requests are for photographs and postcards - copies of them make ideal gifts for local people living abroad. The Castleblayney Poor Law Books, which cover the period of the famine, are also regularly consulted; however, the most visited documents are the Marron Papers which cover the War of Independence locally. Although it holds documents from as early as the 17th century, Padraig stresses that the museum archive is continually being added to.

While students and researchers are always welcome to use the archive, Padraig points out that it is essential to telephone first and make an appointment. Over the years, Padraig has assisted many writers in researching material for books and journals and all of them have acknowledged his help with gratitude. Padraig has a special interest in maps and in particular the old estate maps. He is very excited at the recent addition of the Clermont Maps to the museum's collection. (The Clermont Maps will be featured in our next issue.) For the future he would like to see the museum acquiring funding to properly index the archive and perhaps make the map collection available on CD rom.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY

Over the years, Monaghan County Museum has amassed an impressive library of books, periodicals and journals which, due to lack of space, were hitherto housed in several different offices and stores.



Michelle Breslin working in the new museum library

However, the room which became redundant when the conservation laboratory moved to an off site premises in 2003, was redecorated and is now dedicated as a library. Last summer, Michelle Breslin was employed on the Student Job Scheme to begin the work of cataloguing all the material in the library, in order to make it, in modern parlance, 'more user friendly'. A new system was also put in place to ensure that books or journals, borrowed by the staff in the course of their work, could be quickly and easily tracked. Just like the archive, (see above) the library is regularly used by writers, students and the general public for research purposes. The new database will certainly make it easier to locate the required books or articles. Although the library facility is open to anyone wishing to use it, prior appointment is necessary. In her short time with us, Michelle was a very efficient, and very popular, addition to the staff. Unfortunately for us, Michelle left at the end of August to begin her career in teaching. We wish her every success and look forward to welcoming her, and her pupils, back to the museum in the future.



NEW ACQUISITION

Monaghan County Museum has recently acquired a book of maps, dating from 1791 of the Clermont Estate.

The Clermont Estate was later to become the Rossmore Estate, the largest and most prominent one in the Monaghan Town area, and so this latest acquisition is very exciting. The book contains over 100 exquisitely drawn maps with names of tenants and the rents charged. As such it will surely be of great interest to local historians and scholars alike and will become an invaluable addition to the museum archive. Our next issue will feature the Clermont Estate maps.

EVENTS CALENDAR



- 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

If you have any comments about any of the items in this newsletter or have any suggestions for a future edition please email emckenna2@monaghancoco.ie or telephone the museum staff

DENNY LYNCH
RETURNING TO MONAGHAN
(Photographic, Sculpture
in & around Monaghan)

From 6th April -
12th May 2006

**Returning to
Monaghan**

A photographic exhibition
by Denny Lynch



Ongoing - Walking Tours of Monaghan Town

Walking tours of the Monaghan town can be arranged for schools by telephoning museum staff. Group size 25 - 30

Wednesday 17th May
at 8.00pm

Archaeologist - Blaze O'Connor



Will deliver a lecture at the Patrick Kavanagh Centre, Inniskeen. His topic will be The Rock Art at Drumirril. Refreshments will be served.

Tuesday 30th May Vernacular Buildings

A Lecture on The Conservation and Repair of Vernacular Building, concentrating on mortars and renders.

LECTURER Patrick McAfee
VENUE Rockcorry Community Centre

Booking essential - for further details contact Noel Carney on 087 9567016 or museum staff

Wednesday 31st May Workshop

Practical workshop relating to above lecture. Lecturer and contact details as above. Booking essential.

June

Monaghan, a Border County, 40 year growing



A Joint Project by Monaghan County Museum and Monaghan County Library. Official Launch of "Monaghan a Border County - 40 Years growing"

(See article on front page).
Watch local press for details

We apologise to all our readers that due to staff shortages we were unable to bring you our Autumn/Winter 2005 Newsletter. Our next newsletter will be available in September 2006 and will feature a profile of our curator, Liam Bradley. In addition to our promised Halloween article, we will showcase our recent acquisition – The Claremont Maps.