

NEWSLETTER

Monaghan County Council Museum



Cross Border Agricultural Exhibition



Noel Breakey and Andy Hogg, MCM; Lesley Simpson DCM; Liam Bradley, curator MCM; Heather Humphreys, Mayor of Monaghan County Council, Mike King, curator DCM; Theresa Loftus MCM; Adge King, Community and Enterprise MCC and Patricia Barbour, MCM.

The Mayor of Monaghan County Council, Ms Heather Humphreys, officially launched the *Down to Monaghan – A History of Farming in Two Counties* exhibition in the gallery on 21st April. The exhibition which has already been showcased in Down County Museum, explores the similarities and differences in the agricultural histories of counties Down and Monaghan. A number of interesting and informative text panels, liberally enhanced with photographs which explain the farming methods of a bygone age line the walls of the gallery. Agricultural tools and equipment from both counties are featured. Sickles and scythes together with spades and shovels evoke a time when such implements were in more frequent use. Other items like the corn fiddle and rope twister as well as the slightly macabre pig killing hook are no longer features of the farming way of life. Until the middle decades of the twentieth century horses and donkeys were vital to the farmer and the accoutrements associated with them are shown. The farmhouse kitchen is brought to mind with an evocative mural showing the lady of the house doing her needlework by the hearth fire as the baby rests in a cradle nearby. A churn, butter bats and earthenware storage jars recall some other aspects of farmhouse work. The centre of the gallery is given over to the larger pieces of farm equipment; a set of harrows, ploughs, turnip masher and a seed barrow all feature. Visitors can take a seat and listen to first hand experiences of farming practises of a bygone age, while birdsong mingling with the sounds of the farmyard adds a restful, atmospheric element.

The exhibition is a joint project between the county museums of Monaghan and Down. The staffs of both museums were ably assisted by

consultants Mervyn Watson and Jonathon Bell, both of whom are experts in farming history and both of whom have written extensively on the subject.

At the launch of the exhibition Mike King, curator of Down County Museum thanked his opposite number, Liam Bradley, for coming up with the original idea and congratulated both staffs on what he hoped was the first of many cross border projects between the two museums. Liam echoed the sentiments saying that he believed that this was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

The exhibition is sure to evoke nostalgic memories for many people, a point made by the mayor as she officiated at the launch. Ms Humphreys noted that as she grew up in rural Monaghan the exhibition brought back many personal memories; she jokingly said that she could probably teach others how to use many of the items displayed. There is no doubt that other visitors will have a similar reaction! *Down to Monaghan – A History of Farming in Two Counties* runs until October. For details of workshops associated with this exhibition telephone the museum.



Visitors Pat and Eithne Murphy at the Agricultural Exhibition

Monaghan County Museum
Museum Contae Muinteara



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1 - 2 Hill Street • Monaghan
Telephone 047 82928
Fax 047 71189
comuseum@monaghancoco.ie
www.monaghan.ie/museum
www.bordermuseum.ie

Eileen McKenna

I was first employed in Monaghan County Museum in 1991 on a FÁS Scheme. When the scheme ended the then curator Mr Patrick Long asked me if I would work on Saturdays and I have been here since. Obviously as I only work one day per week I have limited input into the general running of the museum. However, Saturday is often the only day people, especially students, can come in to do research and I enjoying helping them. As most queries tend to touch on my own areas of interest - modern Irish history, local history and Irish migration, I find that I am adding to my knowledge all the time

I am also responsible for compiling and editing the museum newsletter. Again this is an enjoyable task and if time and money were of less consequence I would love to increase the size of the newsletter to include items of local folklore, lost traditions and customs and general titbits of historical interest.



Presentation to Mr Tony Murphy

The contribution made to Monaghan County Museum by Mr Tony Murphy was recalled on May 18th at a function to mark his retirement from the museum's Advisory Committee. He had served as a member of that organisation for ten years from 1999 to 2009 and was chairman for the last five years. Tony who was appointed County Secretary to Monaghan County Council in 1979 took on responsibility for the museum the following year. His guidance was invaluable when in 1981 the courthouse, which then housed the museum, was badly damaged by fire. Recalling the event Aidan Walsh, who was curator at the time, reported that Tony had been more than helpful then. Later on, he had been instrumental in securing funding to build the gallery at the museum's present premises. The director of Community and Enterprise, Adge King, also paid tribute to the outgoing chairman and praised his ability to solve problems with a measure of good humour.

Tony's successor as chairperson, Ms Maeve Hackett, thanked him for the important part he had played in the expansion of the museum's services. Commenting on his quiet and unassuming nature she praised the guidance he gave to the committee during his tenure. She added that while no one was more deserving of retirement than Tony Murphy, his presence on the

Advisory Committee would be greatly missed. Mr Liam Bradley, curator, referred to Tony as a good friend and confidant who had greatly assisted him in his work. In particular he appreciated Tony's help as the museum staff worked towards achieving full accreditation under the Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.

One of the most important additions to the museum's collection in recent years was the 1791 Clermont Book of Maps and Tony had been involved in its acquisition. It was, therefore, fitting that he was presented with a framed image of his own townland, taken from that book, by the curator on behalf of the museum and the Advisory Committee.

In a short speech Tony thank the museum staff and the advisory committee for the gift and for organising the event. He reminisced that just before he took up the post in 1979 he brought his family on a visit to Monaghan. While he was busy his children went to look around the town and when they came back they told him all about the really good museum they had found in the courthouse. Tony noted that this was the beginning of his long relationship with Monaghan County Museum. Extending good wishes for the future of both the museum and the committee he said that he was looking forward to visiting the museum for many years to come.

We wish Tony a long and happy retirement and assure him that he will always be a welcome visitor to the museum.



Tony Murphy with curators past and present, Liam Bradley and Aidan Walsh

The 'Friends' recently donated this beautifully decorated Dessert Compote inscribed *Monaghan Militia* to the museum. The Monaghan Militia was a local reserve force founded in 1793. In 1881 they were incorporated into the Royal Irish Fusiliers as the 5th Regiment.



Hidden Heritage

The Story so Far



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future

In our last newsletter we had a short article about *Hidden Heritage*, a joint project by Monaghan County Museum and Monaghan County Library. The aim of the project was to mentor four community groups from different parts of the county enabling them to research a piece of local history from their own area. Staff from the museum and the library would offer guidance and assistance.

All four groups are now all working at their projects and have attended a number of workshops, courses and site visits which it is hoped will equip them with the knowledge to carry out their research.

All four groups, who met for the first time at the end of last year when the programme was launched came together again recently and travelled to Dublin. There they enjoyed a guided tour of the National Museum of Ireland (Archaeology) and the National Library. It is hoped to bring them all together again later in the year to visit the Ulster Museum and the Linen Hall Library in Belfast.

The groups have all benefited from attending a series of workshops designed to help them in their research. Courses in digital photography, creative writing and genealogical research have been completed. The latter

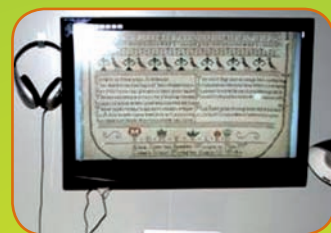
course included a visit to the County Library to examine the records held there. Some of the groups also received training in interviewing and recording techniques and have put this training to good use in collecting local history and folklore. Basic training in archaeological excavation, recording and photographing has also taken place; old photographs have been collected and storytelling sessions and heritage trails have been arranged. So far this project has increased awareness of local history and heritage and those taking part have acquired the knowledge needed to collect, record and accurately describe the hidden heritage of their own areas.

The groups will collect and collate all of their research and prepare it for an exhibition to be shown in the museum early next year. Our next newsletter will have more details of that exhibition.

This project is part financed by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund through Peace III Programme funded through Monaghan Peace III Partnership.

Accessibility

Monaghan County Museum's premises are a lovely pair of late 19th century townhouses - in many ways the ideal setting to showcase artefacts from the county's historical past. However, accessibility to the first floor has always posed difficulties for those with mobility problems. With this in mind we have now installed a HD screen which allows the visitor to virtually tour the first floor rooms without having to negotiate the stairs. Headphones allow the visitor to listen to descriptions of the items shown.



One of the most interesting items acquired by the museum in recent years is the 1791 Clermont book of maps. The maps which feature the townlands in and around Monaghan town are a great example of the cartographer's craft and deserve to be seen and studied. However, too much handling would cause damage so each map has been digitally photographed and displayed on a HD screen. The book itself is also on show.

Both of the above projects were funded by the National Disability Strategy.



Some images from the Hidden heritage Programme

snippets from the Archive.

An advertisement from the Northern Standard Centenary Supplement April 7th 1939

cunard white star
New York World's Fair
Atlantic Holiday Excursion Fares from
£28 return (third class)

ROSSMORE estate papers

Corporation Estate
Church Square Monaghan

Name	1897 Yearly rent
John Warner	£20.0.0
Peter Deighan	£22.0.0
Reps of J. M. Ross	£6.5.0
Reps of J. M. Ross	£32.13.2
Reps John McLaughlin	£0.5.0
Reps of Jas Moyna	£5.9.1
Dr Rush	£16.16.0
Hibernian Bank	£8.8.0

If you wish to book a tour or enquire about an exhibition, event or workshop please contact us at 047 82928 or by email: comuseum@monaghancoco.ie

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

Opening Hours

Monday - Friday 11am – 5pm
Saturday - 12pm – 5pm

Admission Free

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

up coming events

Hidden Heritage Summer Camp - July.

As part of the Peace III funded Hidden Heritage Project (see page 3) a four week summer camp for 4th, 5th and 6th class pupils has been organised. Participants will discover what it was like to be a soldier in times gone by, how to using a printing machine and may learn how to play African drums. The camp which will run throughout the month of July will be held in the four areas the Hidden Heritage Programme is in place - Magheraclone, Tydavnet, Clones and Latton. The camp will include historical tours of each of the areas mentioned.

Heritage Week

August 21st – 29th

During Heritage Week which this year runs from August 21st to 29th a photographic exhibition of the above mentioned Summer Camp, its activities and participants will be on show in the County Library, Clones. The exhibition will be launched at 6.30pm on August 23rd. Refreshments will be served and the entertainment will include historical re-enactments and traditional music. As always – everybody welcome!

Heritage Day - 25th August

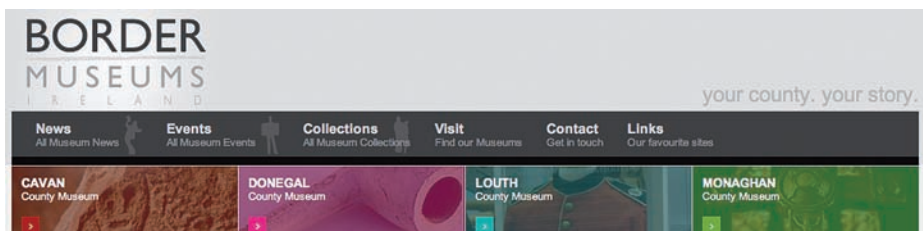
To celebrate the museum's current exhibition *Down to Monaghan – A History of Farming in Two Counties* (see page 1) a special day devoted to farming practices of a bygone age will be staged in Monaghan Harps' Complex. Staff from the museum will be on hand and demonstrations will include threshing, saddle making and, especially for the ladies, lace making. This promises to be a fun day out for visitors and museum staff alike.

A series of workshops has been planned to run with the agricultural exhibition which remains in the museum until the end of October 2010. For details contact the museum.

Seen But Not Heard – A Century of Childhood in Ireland - October

This travelling exhibition was commissioned by the thirteen members of LAMN (Local Authorities Museums' Network) and explores the different experiences of childhood in Ireland over the past one hundred years. It is an interactive exhibition which features personal reminiscences, photographs, toys, books and other memorabilia associated with childhood. A series of workshops will accompany this exhibition.

Border Museums' Webpage



A new website featuring the four border County Museums of Cavan, Monaghan, Louth and Donegal has recently gone online. The home page greets the visitor as follows:

"Welcome to the Museums of the Border region - your county, your story
Welcome to the border museums' portal site. Here for the first time the historical experiences of counties Cavan, Donegal, Louth and Monaghan have been brought together. Featuring displays and artefacts dating from the arrival of the earliest settlers through

to the terror of the Vikings; the impact of the wars of religion and the development of industrial activity a visit to these museums provides a unique, informative, powerful and, indeed, personalised insight into some of the most important events in Irish history. The story of this fascinating tale is just a click away."
Within the site each museum has its own webpage, which is updated regularly, under the headings of: News, Events and Collections. It also gives general information - contact details, opening hours etc. The new website can be found at www.bordermuseums.ie and is well worth a visit.