

MONAGHAN
Músaem Chontae Mbuineachain
COUNTY
MUSEUM



INTRODUCING

THE WATCHMEN

POLICING CRIME AND
PUNISHMENT IN
MONAGHAN



THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY IN MONAGHAN

In 1867, the Irish Constabulary was renamed the Royal Irish Constabulary in recognition of the force's role in the suppression of the Fenian Rising of that year. The RIC were heavily armed and dressed in a dark green, army-style uniform. It was, therefore, different to the police forces in the United Kingdom, which were unarmed and locally controlled. The RIC's head office was in Dublin Castle.

Small parties of young, unmarried constables resided in barracks throughout the country under the command of a chief constable who was answerable to the district inspector who, in turn, was answerable to the county inspector. A large proportion of the officer class came from the Protestant gentry class, while the majority of the rank and file were Catholics.

The Fenian movement made little headway in Monaghan and there was no uprising in the county. However, there was one minor Fenian incident in February 1868 when Carrickmacross jail was attacked by five men attempting to release Patrick Traynor who was awaiting trial for murder. The keeper of the jail, John Arthurs, fired a shot and the Fenians dispersed.

The leading Monaghan Fenian was James Blayney Rice of Tyholland. In 1864, Rice was visited by Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Patrick Pearse's speech at Rossa's funeral in 1915 was influential in the build up to the Easter Rising of 1916.



The National Army outside Carrickmacross Barracks, c.1922



Monaghan RIC Police Barracks



National Army Ballybay, 1922



RIC Police Barracks, Scotstown c.1914

THE ATTACK ON BALLYTRAIN BARRACKS

In February 1920, the sack of Ballytrain barracks led by Eoin O'Duffy and Daniel Hogan (whose brother, Michael, was killed in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday 1920) marked the start of the War of Independence in Monaghan. The attack was a huge propaganda success as it *'was the first barracks taken north of the Boyne'*, and so made national newspaper headlines in the days after, and was said to have generated a great deal of enthusiasm amongst young men to join the IRA. This was a raid for arms. The IRA had not come to kill RIC men, although Ernie O'Malley, who was at the raid, recalled: *'a policeman who had been praying during the attack was blown by the explosion of our gelignite through a partition wall without injury.'* Those RIC men who were injured were looked after by the IRA medical officer.

During the War of Independence, the RIC were boycotted in an attempt to isolate them in their local communities and prevent them from gathering information. Printed notices were posted throughout the county threatening anyone found speaking to the RIC with the penalty of death. Windows were broken in RIC homes; threatening letters were sent to policemen and their families; RIC employees were kidnapped; and young women had their hair shaved if they were even seen talking to a policeman.

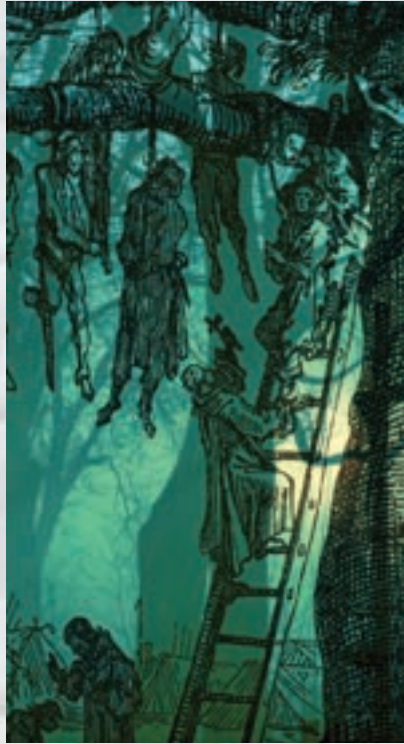
After Ballytrain, the IRA also destroyed the major barracks in villages such as Scotstown, Tydavnet, Emyvale and Smithboro but a later attack on the major town barracks in Carrickmacross was unsuccessful.

In total, five policemen were killed in Monaghan during the War of Independence: one in Ballybay on 1st January 1921; three in Corcaghan later that month; and one between Carrickmacross and Castleblayney on 30th May 1921.



... 'THE FIRST BARRACKS TAKEN NORTH OF THE BOYNE'

MONAGHAN



MURDERS AT WILDGOOSE LODGE

One of the first times that the PPF was sent to quell disorder in Monaghan was in 1816 following three nights of incessant raids on farmers houses in the south Monaghan parish of Killanny.

Less than a week later, a raid on a farmhouse just across the Louth border, known as Wildgoose Lodge, led to three executions. A revenge attack the following October resulted in the murder of Wildgoose Lodge's eight inhabitants, including an infant child. This led to the execution of eighteen more men captured by the PPF under Chief Constable Samuel Pendleton. The corpses of some of the executed men were placed in chains and hung from trees in Killanny for a year or more.

A REVENGE ATTACK THE FOLLOWING OCTOBER RESULTED IN THE MURDER OF WILDGOOSE LODGE'S EIGHT INHABITANTS INCLUDING AN INFANT CHILD.

INVESTIGATING THE MURDER HE COMMITTED

[Thomas Hartley Montgomery](#) was an official in the Belfast Bank in Monaghan town at the time this photograph was taken (*he is on the extreme right of the picture*). He later left and joined the Royal Irish Constabulary, probably through the influence of his father, who was himself an Inspector of Police. Montgomery rose to the rank of Sub-Inspector and was stationed in Newtownstewart, County Tyrone. It was there, on 29th June 1871, that he stabbed to death his close friend William Glass, the cashier in the Northern Bank. The motive was robbery and the means brutal. Glass was impaled from ear to ear on a filing spike.

The case was even more notorious because for a short time Montgomery actually led the investigation into the murder which he himself had committed. Then his financial problems became known to the police and he was arrested and charged with the crime.

Montgomery was finally convicted after his third trial and sentenced to death. He was executed by William Marwood on 26th August 1873 and was the last man to be hanged in Omagh Jail.

MURDERS

MARY ANNE M^cCONKEY

THE ONLY WOMAN TO BE HUNG AT MONAGHAN GAOL

The 1st May 1841 is the date of the execution of the only woman ever hanged in Monaghan Gaol, which was situated on the site of the present day Monaghan General Hospital. Mary Anne McConkey was the young wife of an old husband, Richard McConkey. Throughout the trial, and right up to her final moments, Mary Anne continued to plead her innocence of the crime. The conviction and sentencing of Mary Anne after a lengthy trial, on what was pure circumstantial evidence, aroused the concerns of the wider community and attracted both national and international interest as well as creating legal history. In her final few days significant efforts were made by many clergy, merchants and major business people to have this sentence stopped, but all appeals failed.

A witness at the time describes Mary Anne's final hours:

As the hour of noon approached preparations were made for the execution and the cries of the pitiful culprit were heard distinctly outside the walls of the prison'.

Arthur Holmes in describing Mary Anne McConkey's final moments on the gallows wrote that:

'She stood for a moment on the fatal drop, the bolt was drawn and the unfortunate being was launched into eternity'

The exact location of Mary Anne's final resting place within the walls of the former prison walls has been lost in time but it is documented that Old Cross Square native John James Holland, who was the gate-keeper at the Co-Infirmery, tended carefully to her grave right up until he retired in the early years of 1900s.

MURDER IN CLONES FOR £80

In April of 1903, John Flanagan, an egg salesman, arrived in Clones with a sum of £80 in his pocket to buy a large amount of produce to be sold in the markets of Belfast. He met a butcher named Joseph Fee that day who agreed to repay a debt of £2, if Flanagan met him at his slaughter house on Jubilee Road in the town. John Flanagan was never seen alive after that day and was considered missing for almost eight months. In the meantime, a large pile of dung had begun to build up in Joseph Fee's yard and he was asked to remove it by the authorities. Fee engaged two local men to carry out the work, instructing them to leave the last few cart loads as he wanted them for his yard. As the men removed the dung, they made the grisly discovery of a boot and then the body of John Flanagan. The unfortunate Flanagan had been struck over the head with an axe and his throat was then cut with a blade, much like one would slaughter a pig. Joseph Fee was arrested and charged with murder but he protested his innocence so much so that it took three separate trials to find him guilty.

Joseph Fee was sentenced to death by hanging, a sentence which was set to be carried out on Thursday, December 22nd 1904 in Armagh Gaol. The hangman employed by the Sheriff of Monaghan to carry out the sentence was one of the infamous Pierreponts. Regardless of his experience Pierrepoint confided later that he had his own reservations of Fee's guilt such was his insistence of innocence when he prepared him for the noose. However just as Pierrepoint was about to pull the lever, Fee was reported to have said "Executioner! *Guilty!*"



POST YOUR MUG SHOTS



THE
WATCHMEN

POST YOUR MUG SHOTS TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Monaghan County Museum



LIKE AND SHARE US
ON FACEBOOK



PATRICK WALSH

FROM RIC TO AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

Patrick Walsh
(Deputy Commissioner, An Garda Síochána)

Patrick Walsh (1871 - 1957) was born in Carrickaduff, Co. Monaghan, in 1871, the same townland as Eoin O'Duffy. In fact, he was a cousin of O'Duffy. Walsh joined the RIC in 1890. By 1911, he had reached the rank of District Inspector in Letterkenny, County Donegal.

However, Walsh retained strong nationalist sympathies and it has been claimed that during the War of Independence he acted as one of Collins' network of spies.

On the 7th February 1922, Walsh received a personal invitation from Collins to help in the organisation of the new police force. Walsh subsequently worked closely with M.J. Staines in the formation of the Civic Guard and was appointed assistant commissioner.

Walsh subsequently became Eoin O'Duffy's right-hand man when the Garda Síochána was formed the following year. O'Duffy later wrote in praise of Walsh to Kevin O'Higgins:

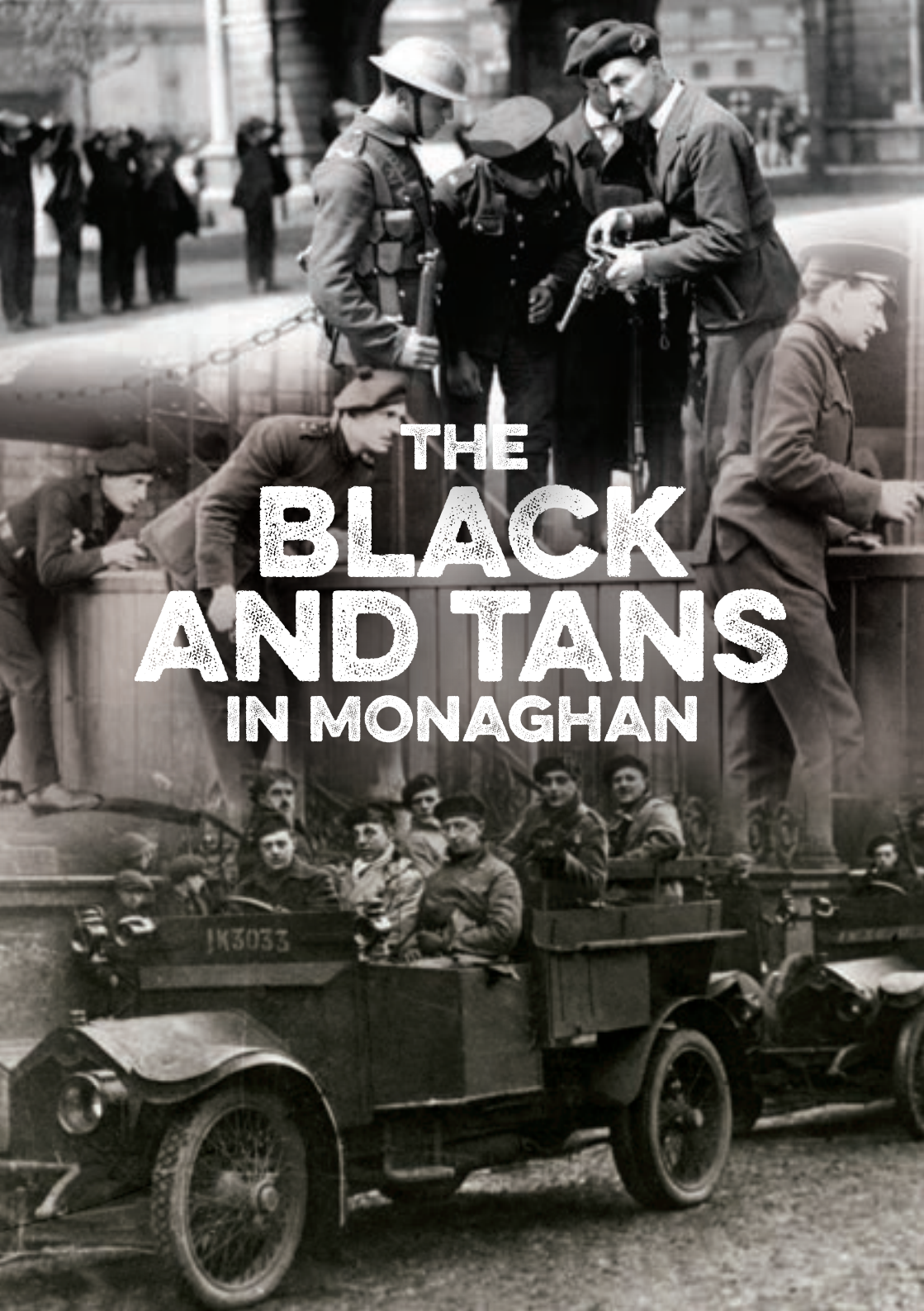
'Since I became Commissioner, he was indispensable to me. His sound judgement and hard common-sense stood the test every time. The Garda Síochána has turned the corner, and no small share of the credit goes to Mr. Walsh.'

Walsh retired in 1936 with unbroken service of 46 years in the R.I.C. and An Garda Síochána.



HIS SOUND
JUDGEMENT AND
HARD COMMON-SENSE
STOOD THE TEST
EVERY TIME

Eoin O'Duffy
(Commissioner, An Garda Síochána)



THE BLACK AND TANS IN MONAGHAN

During the War of Independence, the RIC was supported by recruits who acquired the nickname the *'Black and Tans'* because of the colour of their makeshift uniforms. The first Black and Tans arrived in Monaghan on Christmas Eve 1920, where they were stationed at Hope Castle in Castleblayney. They immediately went on a rampage in the town. When a reporter of the Dundalk Democrat visited Castleblayney, he found the people in a state of terror.

In June 1921, Carrickmacross publican William Daly noted in his diary, *'a good night'*, until a brawl broke out after he refused to serve Black and Tans any more drink. He experienced *'20 minutes in the wild west'* as pistols were pointed and the row spilled out onto the street.

In February 1921, Patrick McCabe of Rockcorry was arrested by Black and Tans and subjected to brutal treatment while in custody:

"He was maliciously beaten with the butt ends of rifles, his ribs broken and his body left a mass of bruises. His boots were stripped off and he was made walk through the village of Rockcorry with a Union Jack wrapped round his head."

It was aggressive actions such as these by the Black and Tans that were responsible for long-held memories of their atrocities and their infamous reputation.



Hope Castle, Castleblayney



Group of Black & Tans, Carrickmacross 1922

'HE WAS MALICIOUSLY BEATEN WITH THE BUTT ENDS OF RIFLES, HIS RIBS BROKEN AND HIS BODY LEFT A MASS OF BRUISES. HIS BOOTS WERE STRIPPED OFF AND HE WAS MADE WALK THROUGH THE VILLAGE OF ROCKCORRY WITH A UNION JACK WRAPPED ROUND HIS HEAD.'

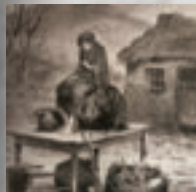
POLICING THE FAMINE

Within less than ten years of being established, the Irish Constabulary found itself faced with a major challenge, dealing with the crisis of the Great Irish Famine (1845-51). Initially, the police in the localities had to begin by reporting on the state of the potato failure. In October 1845, Sub-inspector Robert Fausset reported from Clones that *'the distemper in the potato crop in this district is most prevalent and that the worst consequences may be dreaded.'*

As conditions deteriorated, they were faced daily with having to report on multiple deaths, overcrowding in the local workhouses, the wretchedness of the starving and dying, and the spread of disease. In October 1845, Sub-inspector Thomas Barry called for the closure of the distilleries in Carrickmacross because the vast quantities of corn used by them *'will be the only food for thousands in case of a scarcity of potatoes.'* In July 1849, Constable McLaughlin and others were called to Clones workhouse to put down a riot; the offenders were expelled and set adrift upon the world.



The Irish Famine, scene at the gates of a workhouse



A famine eviction scene

Scene from a series of images called McCabe Death Rallies



POLICING THE BORDER

After independence, Monaghan became a border county: neighbouring Armagh, Fermanagh and Tyrone were all part of the new state of Northern Ireland. A whole new way of life developed, not least of all a culture of smuggling. There was also the continued threat of violence as the IRA renewed its border campaigns at various times. All of these brought added challenges for the Gardaí in towns and villages adjacent to the new boundary (and, indeed, for the police forces in Northern Ireland.) However there were lighter moments, as this description of a cockfight along the border, near Tyholland, in June 1926, illustrates:

The mains were timed to begin at 7 a.m. The Gardaí were alerted and when a crowd of about 200 assembled ... ten Gardaí from Monaghan, under Inspector J.J. Murphy arrived. The ring had just been made between two birds representing Armagh and Monaghan. On the approach of the Gardaí, the crowd stampeded across the border.... Preparations were being made for a second [fight] when the RUC arrived and the crowd scattered again.

After a few hours the enthusiasts assembled in the Free State at Emyvale. By this time the Gardaí had been reinforced and the match had not begun when a large crowd of Gardaí arrived and the crowd scattered again. This time they headed in the direction of the Aughnacloy area. When they began again, the RUC came and chased them into the Free State. The evening was spent crossing and re-crossing the border...

Cock fighting images, c.1950's (MCM Collection)



Monaghan Customs Post at Tyholland, burned during the H-Block unrest, 4th August 1981. (Photo: Donal McEnroe Collection / MCM)



THE INFAMOUS SAM GRAY OF BALLYBAY

In Monaghan in the 1820s many of the criminal disturbances had their roots in sectarianism. The struggle for Catholic Emancipation led to party affrays between Daniel O'Connell's supporters and the local Orangemen. In 1828 O'Connell's Catholic Association attempted to organise a meeting in Ballybay under Jack Lawless. Thousands gathered at Ballintra chapel ready to 'invade' the town. They were opposed by Orangemen led by Sam Gray, the local grand master of the Orange Order and owner of the York Hotel on the Main Street in Ballybay.

Faced with such numbers there was very little a small force of Constabulary could do if the opposing forces were to clash. However, Major-General William Thornton dissuaded Lawless from entering the town and a major sectarian riot that might have had far-reaching repercussions throughout the province was averted.

Sam Gray's public house in Ballybay.
Note the William of Orange sign above the shop, c. 1890's



During his lifetime, the notorious Gray was acquitted on a number of occasions for murder and other offences; his influence and the fear he instilled in locals made it extremely difficult to get witnesses to his crimes or a jury that would convict him. Eventually, in 1841, the authorities managed to pack a jury that found him guilty of a minor offence. They then used all in their power to turn his supporters against him. Gray died in relative obscurity in 1848.

THE SCOTT MEDAL

In October 1922, the first ten Gardai arrived to take up duty in Ballybay. They were: James Bagnall, Patrick Purcell, Charles Coen, Michael Burke, Patrick Ryan, Edward Dunne, R. Purcell, D.J. Roughen, Edward Gallagher and Michael Garvey. Like many stations all over the country, the accommodation was inhospitable and inadequate.

Despite the poor conditions of the early years, the new force became an outstanding success. At an international police conference in New York in 1923, Eoin O'Duffy was approached by Colonel Walter Scott, a wealthy American philanthropist, who had taken a great interest in the success of the unarmed Garda Síochána. *Scott proposed to endow a fund to provide for the presentation of a gold medal for bravery on an annual basis.* In 1924, O'Duffy commissioned John Francis Maxwell to design the medal to be struck in solid gold. Maxwell had already designed the Garda badge. Over time, silver and bronze medals were added to the awards.

One of the first Scott medal recipients to have been born in Co Monaghan was Michael Brady. He was born on the 29th of October 1903 on Monaghan Town's High Street. He was a labourer before joining the Gardai in 1927. On the 17th of November 1932, Brady foiled an armed robbery in Edgeworthstown in County Roscommon and was awarded a bronze medal. He died prematurely at the age of thirty-eight in 1941.



EOIN O'DUFFY

FIRST
COMMISSIONER
OF AN GARDA
SÍOCHÁNA



EOIN O'DUFFY IS GENERALLY
REGARDED AS THE FOUNDING
FATHER OF THE MODERN
POLICE FORCE IN IRELAND.

He was born near Castleblayney on 28th January 1890, the youngest of seven children of a small farmer. He was educated by his uncle at Laragh national school. A very bright student, he secured a position as a clerk in the county surveyor's office in Monaghan.

In 1912, O'Duffy was introduced to the GAA in Monaghan by Patrick Whelan from Newbliss, then president of the Ulster Council. O'Duffy became secretary of the Monaghan county board that September, and two months later secretary of the Ulster GAA council. He was a young man of remarkable energy and organisational ability.

In the pre-independence period, O'Duffy managed Monaghan footballers and hurlers to Ulster titles (including the double in 1914). He is also to date one of Ireland's most successful Olympic coaches.

It was well known that whenever O'Duffy got a chance to transfer good footballers into County Monaghan he did so. These included Paddy Kilroy, the only Monaghan player to have captained the county in an All-Ireland Senior Football Final (1930). Kilroy had already won a Connaught title with Galway in 1922 (and yet played with Dublin in the final that year), and a Leinster title with Wexford in 1925.

O'Duffy became leader of the IRA in Monaghan during the War of Independence. His success at local level led him to several promotions; by January 1922 he had risen to the position of chief of staff of the National Army. From 1921 he was also TD for North Monaghan.

**IN 1923, O'DUFFY WAS APPOINTED
COMMISSIONER OF THE NEWLY-FORMED
GARDA SÍOCHÁNA, AN UNARMED
POLICE FORCE THAT QUICKLY BROUGHT
A RETURN TO PEACE AND STABILITY.**

According to Liam McNiffe, O'Duffy at all times 'campaigns vigorously on behalf of his men for any cause that he believed was right.... [He] was very popular among the rank and file of the force.' O'Duffy died on 30th November 1944 in a Dublin nursing home. He is the only Monaghan person to date to have received a state funeral.

THE WATCHMEN

This haunting display is based on an exhibition by the National Museum of Country Life entitled Preserving the Peace - Policing on the Island of Ireland 1814 - 2014, which chronicles the national story of a police force in Ireland and its evolution over two centuries. This nationally important exhibition has formed the core for our story of Monaghan. Please enjoy this captivating display which sifts through the evidence of two hundred years of policing, crime, revolution and final punishment in County Monaghan.



AN EXHIBITION INVESTIGATING THE STORY OF POLICING,
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN THE COUNTY FOR
OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS.

exhibition design & production: www.ph7.ie

MONAGHAN
Músaem Chontae Mhuineacháin
COUNTY
MUSEUM



POLICING CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN MONAGHAN

Based on the exhibition 'Preserving the Peace
- Policing on the Island of Ireland 1814 - 2014'
by the National Museum of Ireland, Country Life

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CONTAE MHUINEACHÁIN



www.monaghan.ie/museum