

MONAGHAN COUNTY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 22 • WINTER 2022

MONAGHAN
Músaem Chontae Mhuineachain
COUNTY
MUSEUM



MONAGHAN MURALS: ROSSMORE CASTLE RETURNS TO MONAGHAN!

The Monaghan Murals project launched in 2021 when a mural in Castleblayney, featured in an earlier newsletter, was unveiled in the town. This mural was inspired by the photography of Castleblayney native Dr JJ Clarke. Fast forward a year and three more murals are enlivening towns across Co. Monaghan. The fourth and latest of these was unveiled in Monaghan town this October, and in the dull and dreary winter weather no one could fail to have their day brightened by this new work of art.



Pictured in front of the new mural of Rossmore Castle, L - R are: Liam Bradley, Curator Monaghan County Museum; Emer Brennan, Monaghan Tidy Towns; Frank McEneaney, Owner and Manager Westenra Hotel; Omin, Mural Artist; Cllr. Sean Conlon, Cathaoirleach of Monaghan County Council; John Murray, Director of Housing and Finance, Monaghan County Council; Deirdre McQuaid, Creative Monaghan Coordinator, Monaghan County Library; Councillor Paudge Connolly, Monaghan County Council.

This latest addition to the project features Rossmore Castle and is fittingly located on the back wall of The Westenra Arms Hotel, named after the Westenra family. The Westenra's were the incumbents of the Rossmore title, and the residents of the original Rossmore Castle that was situated just outside the town. Rossmore Castle was built in 1827 by the second Baron Rossmore. It was enlarged in 1858 and over time further

small changes resulted in a building of some three towers and 117 windows! Following World War II, the stately Rossmore Castle was beset with a serious case of dry rot and eventually became lost to the county when it was demolished in the 1970s. Now the former glory of the castle has been recaptured in this mural by the artist Omin, allowing Monaghan's younger generations to once more marvel at its architectural splendour.

Inside:

- More Monaghan Murals
 - Carrickmacross
 - Ballybay
- Peace Campus Preparations
- Filming 'Place'
- Safety First with the Museum Collection!
- What's the Story?
The Direction and Aim of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, 1824
- Museum Events
 - Archaeology Summer Camp 2022
 - Culture Night 2022
 - Halloween 2022
 - Winter Workshop Series 2022
 - Bird Boxes Workshop
 - Collaged Pen Pot Workshop
- National Museum of Ireland Inspection of Loans
- Celebrity Visitor
- Handling Collection



MONAGHAN MURALS

MORE MONAGHAN MURALS



Carrickmacross

In June 2022 the Carrickmacross Monaghan Mural was revealed. This mural features the internationally celebrated poet Patrick Kavanagh, who was born in the nearby village of Inniskeen. The new mural celebrates the literary heritage and creativity of Kavanagh's writing and creates a striking visual focal point in the town. It is also the work of the incredible, talented artist Omin.



Ballybay

In July 2022 the internationally acclaimed muralist MASER completed his spectacular work of art in Ballybay. For this Monaghan Mural the artist drew inspiration from the native plant life found in the local Ballybay Wetlands that supports diverse ecosystems of flora and fauna. Ballybay Wetlands Centre opened in 2008 as a visitor attraction, educational and research resource.

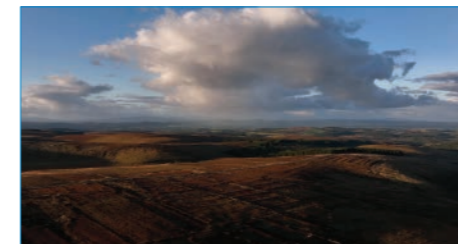
All these murals have been developed as part of a county-wide project. The project aims to support creativity in the community and promote pride of place. Monaghan Murals is an initiative managed by Monaghan County Museum in partnership with the Patrick Kavanagh Centre and funded by Creative Ireland through Creative Monaghan.

PEACE CAMPUS PREPARATIONS FILMING 'PLACE'

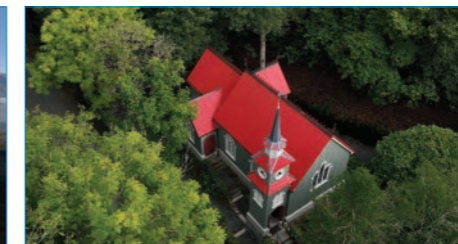
As the preparations for next year's move to the museum's new home in the Peace Campus advance, we would like to share some amazing stills of beautiful County Monaghan from our new film 'Place'. This film explores the borderland areas of Co. Monaghan and will feature as part of the new exhibition 'Bordering Realities' which will open when we relocate in 2023. This project is funded by Creative Ireland through Creative Monaghan.



This stunning shot overlooks Lough Muckno, Castleblayney and east towards Co. Louth



This stunning shot is from the summit of Slieve Beagh, Co. Fermanagh looking south over the border into Co. Monaghan.



Overhead view of St Peter's Tin Church at Laragh, Co. Monaghan.



Monaghan town above the Dawson Monument.



Sunlight through the Penal Cross on Bragan, Co. Monaghan

SAFETY FIRST WITH THE MUSEUM COLLECTION!



When it comes to handling the museum collection, we are always aware of the necessity to protect the objects from any possible damage from handling. However, the reverse is also true and those people working in proximity to the collection must

also be aware of the potential dangers that could lurk within objects and put them at risk!

The museum collection houses a wide range of objects, some harbouring hazardous materials that can pose health risks to people visiting and working in the museum and the objects themselves. The golden rule to follow is that anything collected before 1900 might be contaminated and anything collected before 1960 should be handled cautiously.

Therefore, museum staff are trained to be aware of any potential hazards present in the collection and evaluate the risks they pose to ensure appropriate action is taken. This requires specialist training and recently museum staff attended a course in the safe handling of asbestos.



Museum Registrar Denise Henry and Collections Officer Anna McCann during their recent Asbestos Safety Awareness Training course

Asbestos was frequently used as an insulation material and may not be thought of in relation to museum objects. However, it can be found in museum collections in objects as diverse as historic vehicles, railroad rolling equipment,

and vehicle brake shoes to domestic protective clothing, telephone cables and ironing boards! Asbestos can also be found in gas masks and geological collections. As there is no safe level of asbestos exposure, extra care is needed when handling objects.

Some potential hazards in museum collections can be found in unlikely objects. Cellulose-based plastics may degrade irreversibly, emitting acidic fumes that are hazardous to health. Cellulose nitrate materials used in the manufacture of photographic film, toys, dolls can also produce hazardous gases if they are not stored correctly.



Other objects may contain hazardous chemicals from previous treatments including furs, feathers, and textiles. Chemicals such as DDT, arsenic and mercury compounds were often used directly on objects as insecticides and preservatives so care must be taken when handling these objects and the correct protective equipment must be used.



Mercury was widely used in the past and can be found in barometers, thermometers, medical equipment, artists' materials and reflective coatings for mirrors. During the 18th - 20th centuries, hat makers used mercury to stiffen felt for hats. Hatters worked in cramped spaces inhaling mercury vapours and over time experienced symptoms such as tremors and insanity. This is where the term "mad as a hatter" originated.

These are only some examples of potential hazards associated with museum objects but fear not! Collections care staff are thoroughly trained to mitigate any risks.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The Direction and Aim of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, 1824

Every object in our collection has a story connected to it, and very often its value is enhanced by tales related to its past owners, where it has been and its uses. In the case of the beautiful set of leather bound Ordnance Survey Maps of Ulster in our collection, it is interesting to consider their function when they were first produced in the mid-nineteenth century.

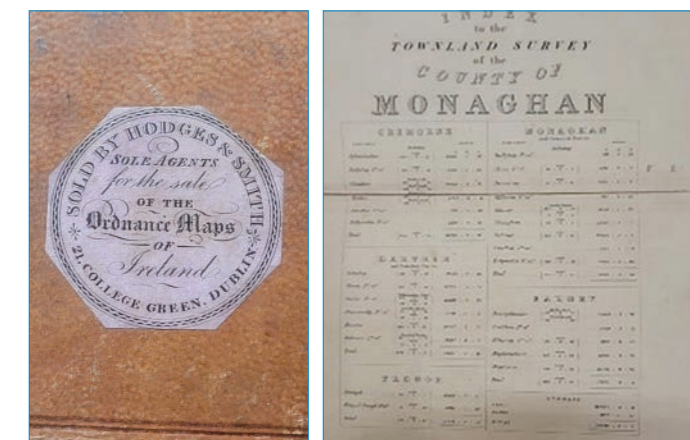
In our twenty-first century lives, we probably most often use maps to find our way from A to B using the virtual Google Maps on our phones. In 1824, when the British government commissioned this survey of Ireland what did they envision the maps to be used for?

Created in 1824, the Ordnance Survey of Ireland was to survey the whole island with the intent of producing accurate high-quality maps to update land valuations and revise land taxes. Between 1829 and 1842 under the direction of Major General Colby, the whole country was mapped at 6 inches to a mile becoming the most detailed mapping of a country at the time.

Attitudes of people to this grand scale mapping of Ireland differed. Despite the inclusion of renowned Irish scholars in the project some nationalists saw the mapping as an act of colonialism. In some cases, clergymen instructed teachers to not comply with requests from the Ordnance Survey. In Monaghan, two schoolteachers refused to become involved citing that working with the Ordnance Survey would conflict with their Catholic beliefs. One interpretation of the Ordnance mapping was as an opportunity to anglicise Gaelic place names and this is explored in the late Brian Friel's play Translations (1980).



The leather cased Ordnance Survey of Ireland maps of the Province of Ulster



The label of publishers and sole agents of the Ordnance Survey Maps (pre 1868) and Sample of the townland survey of Monaghan map in the collection

The Ordnance Survey Maps in our collection cover the nine counties of Ulster. They were published by Hodges & Smith, then the sole agents for the Ordnance Survey Maps circa 1836. This label was in use by the publishers between the late 1820s and the late 1860s after which the company became known as Hodges, Smith & Foster. Whatever the original impetus for commissioning the survey in 1824 and no matter what use the maps have served since, our collection now includes an amazing and invaluable record of the pre-famine landscape of Ulster.

MUSEUM EVENTS

The museum has been busy with the pattering of feet as several successful events have been run over the last few months. It has been heartening to have our building busy with activities as the threat of the pandemic recedes. However, taking what was learned from lockdown, online events also continue offering improved accessibility options and a wider audience. Here are some highlights.

ARCHAEOLOGY SUMMER CAMP 2022



Budding archaeologist enjoying the summer camp in July.

Such was the success of previous camps and to avoid disappointment in gaining a place, it was decided to run two camps over successive weeks in conjunction with the School of Irish Archaeology. Great fun was had by all and reports circulate that the future of the archaeology profession seems in good hands!

CULTURE NIGHT 2022

This year the museum celebrated Culture Night with Peter Crann from WeDrum Ireland who explored drums from around the world. By the end of this fast-moving and humorous workshop participants were able to play an exciting piece of Afro-Brazilian music, complete with dramatic fun breaks and beats.



HALLOWEEN 2022

For Halloween, Monaghan's Horrible Histories treated us to Annie June Callaghan's spooktacular online narration of some folk and fairy tales of the Cauliflower Changeling Fairy, Brigit Cleary, and how she spent several days in a fairy ring dancing. We also heard about Biddu Early's famous but curious fortune telling blue bottle.

Children also enjoyed a Halloween themed drawing skills workshop in the museum, where some great pumpkins were produced!

Pumpkin designs at a drawing skills workshop



WINTER WORKSHOP SERIES 2022

During the month of November, the museum hosted a series of art workshops:

BIRD BOXES WORKSHOP

In this workshop budding crafters learned how to assemble their own bird box. These were decorated with unique designs using markers and paint.



Crafters at work

COLLAGED PEN POT WORKSHOP

Under the guidance of Tracey Owen-Griffiths from Flossy Fluke, participants created their own collaged pot for pens or brushes in bright Japanese papers. Ideal for personal use or a gift for someone special!



Some of the amazing finished pen pots

DRAWING SKILLS WORKSHOP

This workshop was run over three-days. It offered participants a chance to improve their art skills and to take their drawing skills to a whole new level by learning how to use the principles of art, line, shape, tone, colour and texture.



Some wonderful works of art produced in the Drawing Workshop

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND INSPECTION OF LOANS

Monaghan County Museum plays a vital role in preserving the archaeological heritage of the country and under Section 68 (2) of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 is legally entitled to retain archaeological objects on behalf of the State. To reach a wider audience and increase public access to its collections, the NMI lends objects from its collections to designated museums. Monaghan County Museum has

several objects on display that are on loan from the NMI including the late bronze-age Lisdrumturk Cauldron, bronze swords, weapons and a Viking sword.

Recently, the museum welcomed Isabella Mulhall, Assistant Keeper of Antiquities and Dr Paul Mullarkey, Conservator from the NMI as they undertook their most recent site inspection.

As a result of their visit, the NMI were satisfied that the physical and environmental standards at the museum were being monitored and maintained correctly and were happy to extend the loan of these objects for a further three years.



Lisdrumturk Cauldron, on loan to the museum from the NMI



Dr Paul Mullarkey, Conservation Department, NMI inspecting temperature and relative humidity levels in display case

Isabella Mulhall - Assistant Keeper - Irish Antiquities Division NMI makes a visual recording of the condition of loaned item

CELEBRITY VISITOR



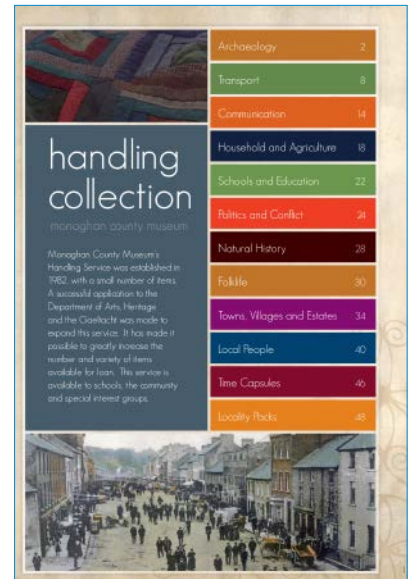
Cameron Monaghan with huge fan Registrar Denise Henry on his recent visit to Monaghan County Museum.

You never know who you may rub shoulders with when visiting the museum.....You may even meet a Monaghan in Monaghan, and a celebrity Monaghan at that! This September, California born actor Cameron Monaghan was spotted enjoying a visit to our museum. He is famous for his roles in the US series Shameless on Showtime and as the Joker in Gotham. His visit certainly made the day for Museum Registrar Denise!

HANDLING COLLECTION

Did you know that we have a handling collection available to schools, community, and special interest groups? For more information and to see what is available, the full handling booklet is available to view on our website. <https://monaghan.ie/museum/> or call the museum on

047 82928



VISITING WITH CHILDREN?

Checkout the Kids' Activity Trail booklet which will help guide them in a fun way through our Collection while they learn. Pick one up at reception!

HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS OF MONAGHAN TOWN

These popular tours are available with prior booking and weather permitting

GUIDED TOURS BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT

It is advisable for schools or large groups to pre-book. 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 check out Monaghan County Council Website at **www.monaghan.ie/museum/**

PLEASE CHECK MUSEUM WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION AND UPDATES

www.monaghan.ie/museum/ and Facebook page or call us on 047 82928

@MonaghanCountyMuseum Twitter:@museum_county Website: <https://monaghan.ie/museum/>