

Heritage Ireland

Issue 8 SUMMER 2018

CÉIDE FIELDS

INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

also in this issue...

OPW WIN GENERATION APPRENTESHIP PRIZE
| HERITAGE WEEK EVENTS | SKELLIG MICHAEL

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Welcome

Hello to all our *Heritage Ireland* ezine readers and welcome to our Summer 2018 edition.

We have several articles and news pieces in this issue to share with you; these focus not only on the Heritage estate in the care of the Office of Public Works but also on many other aspects of the wonderful aspects of our Culture and Heritage and we hope you will enjoy reading these fascinating insights created by our team of Guides, Historians, Gardeners etc all around the country.

As the peak summer months draw closer, OPW sites are getting busier and more visitors than ever are flocking to these wonderful places all around the country to enjoy Ireland's heritage at first hand. In an effort to share the experience more broadly and to make it easier for people with particular challenges to come and visit, we have this year, as an initiative specially created by our Minister of State, Mr. Kevin Boxer Moran TD, introduced a measure to admit people with disabilities and their carers for free to all our paid admission sites. We are delighted to be able to respond to the Minister's suggestion and offer this concession at OPW sites and we hope that many people will avail of it, mirroring the experience in 2017 when we – again at the Minister's encouragement – widened the complimentary concession at paid sites to all children under the age of 12. If the current initiative is as successful as the Child programme, we will expect a significant upsurge in interest and will be happy to welcome people with disabilities and their carers to our sites in increasing numbers, where we are sure they will have a wonderful experience and derive much enjoyment.

On a broader front, we are also happy to acknowledge the Government's recent announcement in relation to funding for the Heritage sector through the Project Ireland 2040 Programme. This is covered in detail in an article in these pages but as a general comment, we are really delighted to see that a much enhanced funding allocation is planned for the years ahead for our cultural and heritage sector. The National Cultural Institutions feature prominently in this plan and OPW will of course be involved in many of the capital development projects that will begin to flow in the next few years. However, we also note that under the initiative, the Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht have secured funding for Built Heritage and we are really happy to see that this includes enhanced funding for the next ten years for protection and development of National Monument sites in the care of the OPW Heritage Service.

In conclusion, we'd just like to express the hope that all our readers enjoy this small taste of what we have to offer right around the country. We'd love to see you at some of our wonderful properties and we'd encourage you to come and visit us; wherever you are, you can be sure that there's a Heritage site not too far away. Check out our website at www.heritageireland.ie and we'll see you there!



Maurice Buckley
Chairman
OPW



John Mc Mahon
Commissioner
OPW Heritage Services

Heritage Ireland Ezine

Contributors



EAMON RAFTER has 35 years' experience working with National Monuments. He joined the OPW as an apprentice carpenter in 1983 and in his time has worked on many major carpentry conservation projects including the roofing of many monuments such as the Vicars Coral at the Rock of Cashel; Ross Castle; Barryscourt Castle; Killcooley Abbey and the Main Guard. He was promoted to District Works Manager for the Kilkenny District in 2005 and since then has overseen a number of major conservation projects, including the recently refurbished Ormond Castle and Nenagh Castle.



EMERITUS PROFESSOR MUIRIS O'SULLIVAN has published extensively on passage tombs and megalithic art, and is author of *Duma na nGiall* (2005) and lead editor of *Tara – From the Past to the Future* (2013). He directed five seasons of archaeological excavation at Knockree passage tomb.



DR FRANK PRENDERGAST is an Emeritus Research Fellow of the Dublin Institute of Technology. He is a specialist in Cultural Astronomy and provides expert advice to Heritage organisations and related community groups and is a former Head of Spatial Information Sciences.



KEN WILLIAMS is a photographer and researcher from Drogheda in the Boyne Valley, specialising in the prehistoric art and monuments of Western Europe.



GABRIEL COONEY is Professor of Celtic Archaeology in UCD. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy and chair of the Historic Monuments Council of Northern Ireland. He is an Expert Member of the International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM), ICOMOS. His particular research interests are the Neolithic period and mortuary practice in Irish prehistory.



BREDA LYNCH is the Supervisor Guide of a number of OPW National Monument sites in the south-east. A published author, Breda was awarded a PhD in history by Maynooth University in 2008 and since then has conducted extensive research and lectured widely on Irish church history, with particular emphasis on the Cistercian Order.



JENNY YOUNG holds a BA in Archaeology & Geography and a MA in Landscape Archaeology from NUI Galway. She has worked at Aughnacore Castle since 2006 and has developed a passionate interest in medieval Gaelic society. She is currently undergoing research into the medieval Gaelic lordship of Iarchonnacht for an upcoming publication.



MARY GAVAGHAN is a graduate of the School of Geography and Archaeology, NUI Galway and has worked as a guide at Aughnacore Castle since 2016. She has a broad interest in the natural and historical past of the island of Ireland, and is currently nerding out over Tudor and Stuart Ireland with particular reference to Gaelic rule and decline.



NIAMH DONNELLAN is National Heritage Week Project Manager for the Heritage Council. With a BA in Ancient History and Archaeology from Trinity College Dublin and a background in cultural event marketing, she's in her element promoting Ireland's built, natural and cultural heritage. She has previously worked with some of Ireland's largest cultural celebrations including St. Patrick's Festival and Kilkenny Arts Festival.



FRANK SHALVEY works in the OPW Heritage Services managing portfolio and visitor issues related to the National Monuments estate.



CHRIS LOUGHNANE has an honors degree in Archaeology and History from NUIG and has been working in Athenry Castle as a guide for the past eleven years.



CATHERINE BERGIN is a guide at Castletown House (pictured here in costume). Catherine is an historian and archaeologist, qualifying with her PhD in history from Maynooth University.

Please visit our Heritage Ireland website at www.heritageireland.ie

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Céide Fields

Heritage Site in Ballycastle, Co. Mayo
brings home the International
Carlo Scarpa Prize

'A NEOLITHIC RURAL LANDSCAPE EMERGES FROM THE PEAT BOG'

The Office of Public Works was delighted last March with the announcement made in Milan that the Céide Fields had been chosen as the 2018 recipient of the International Carlo Scarpa Prize.

The award is accompanied by an exhibition in Treviso, a book and a TV documentary which forms part of an awareness raising campaign, a fundamental element of the prize. The formal prize-giving ceremony took place in Treviso, Italy on 12th May.

The award was made by the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche, with headquarters in Treviso, which was founded in the 1980s by the Benetton family.

Under its president Luciano Benetton and directed by Marco Tamaro, the Foundation relies on a permanent working group which, with the support of scientific committees composed of scholars and experts of international renown, carries out studies and research in the vast world of landscape and places, the history and culture of games and other cultural activities.

In the field of landscape studies, each year a place "particularly rich in nature, memory and invention" is the recipient of the International Carlo Scarpa Prize for Gardens. In 2018 the Scientific Committee of the Foundation

▼ Below:

Cllr. Richard Finn, Cathaoirleach Mayo County Council; Minister Michael Ring; Prof Martin Downes; Gretta Byrne OPW; Maurice Buckley, Chairman OPW; Marco Tamaro, Director of the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche; Peter Hynes, CEO Mayo County Council; Minister Kevin 'Boxer' Moran; Prof Seamas Caulfield.





selected The Céide Fields, a Neolithic rural landscape emerging from the peat bog. In previous years the Carlo Scarpa Prize has been awarded to places in Egypt, Switzerland, Finland, Syria, Benin, Iceland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Italy, Kazakhstan, Spain.

The purpose of the Prize is to enhance and propagate the culture of “stewardship of the landscape” and “care of places”; it is conceived as an opportunity and an instrument through which a wider public, beyond the community of specialist experts, can be acquainted with the intellectual and manual skills required to manage the changing landscape and to safeguard and promote the natural and historical heritage it embodies.

The story of Céide Fields, the most extensive Stone Age monument in the world, is truly a fascinating one. In the 1930s Patrick Caulfield, a local school master in North Mayo noticed lines of stones in the ground when cutting turf and realised that they must pre-date the bog. However, it wasn't until 40 years later his son, Professor Séamas Caulfield, an archaeologist, began excavating the site with his students to look for evidence of the community that lived there 5,000 years ago. In 1990, the OPW worked with Séamas and the local community to build the award-winning visitor and exhibition centre. The building is designed around a four and a half thousand year old pine tree. The exhibitions in the Centre are arranged around three main themes - the natural landscape, the human imprint on the landscape and the geology of the stunning North Mayo coast. The real experience of the Céide Fields however, is the walking tour with the Visitor Centre guides who bring the site to life by helping visitors to imagine walking in the steps of our ancestors from 5,000 years ago.



NEWS

- ▲ Above (left) : Seamás Caulfield and Gretta Byrne.
- Above (right) : The Guide Team at the Céide Fields Visitor Centre: L-R: Jim Henry, Jacqueline Gilmartin, Gretta Byrne, Ciara O'Connor, Anthony Brogan.
- ◀ Facing page (top): Céide Fields Visitors Centre
(bottom): Belderrig Archaeological Site
- ▼ Centre: Declan Caulfield cuts peat using a traditional sléán.
(bottom): Gretta Byrne, manager of the Céide Fields Visitor Centre celebrates receiving the Carlo Scarpa Prize



Premio Internazionale Carlo Scarpa per il Giardino



Céide Fields Visitor Centre,
Glenurla, Ballycastle,
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Email: ceidefields@opw.ie



Bog oak on display in the Ceide Fields Centre © Fáilte Ireland



ODE2JOY

Challenge accepted and

To celebrate the unique UNESCO World Heritage site of Brú na Bóinne, comprising the great passage tombs of Newgrange, Knowth, Dowth and their wider archaeological landscape, the Office of Public Works invited the RTÉ Philharmonic Choir to sing Beethoven's Ode to Joy at Newgrange.

Newgrange is one of the finest Neolithic passage tombs in Europe, famous for its alignment with the Winter Solstice dawn along with its wonderful megalithic art and architecture. It dates to approximately 3,200BC.

The RTÉ Philharmonic Choir, conducted by Mark Hindley and accompanied on piano by Fergal Caulfield, gathered at the site to sing a wonderful rendition of the familiar music.

The first verse was sung acapella by a small group inside the chamber where the singers were amazed by the wonderful 5,000 year old acoustics. The second verse was sung outside in the open air by the entire choir who waved European and Irish flags in celebration. It was a joyous, once in a lifetime event for the singers and all who heard them.

The performance was enjoyed by many visitors to the site including Mairéad McGuinness MEP, Vice President of the European Parliament who lives close by.

Celebrating European Year of Cultural Heritage at Newgrange is very fitting as passage tombs are tangible evidence of trans-European cultural connections from earliest times. Passage tombs are found in other areas of Europe, but it is in Ireland that they found their most inspired expression. Ireland in the Stone Age was not on the periphery of Europe but was central to a vast Atlantic Europe cultural network.

Building on these 5000 year old connections the Office of Public Works, working with Heritage officers from Co Meath and Co Sligo, is involved in a project to connect communities across Europe who live near passage tombs. Throughout 2018, communities in Co Meath, Co Sligo, Co Armagh, Orkney in Scotland, Anglesey in Wales as well as groups in France and Spain are co-operating together to promote awareness of their local monuments and to share information and photographs.

Photographs by Ken Williams www.shadowsandstone.com



completed!



ODE2JOY
WEDNESDAY MAY 9TH 3PM
Come and be part of the challenge

2018
EUROPEAN PLACE
OF CULTURAL
HERITAGE





GENERATION APPRENTICESHIP COMPETITION 2017-2018

Apprenticeship
Real-life Learning



OPW Apprentices Win Prize at Generation Apprenticeship Competition

Sponsored by ESB and CIF, the Generation Apprenticeship competition challenged apprentices to construct a three dimensional letter A using craft and other materials. The competition aims to highlight the importance and value of apprenticeships as a route to skills development in 21st century Ireland.

In November 2017, employers, including the headline sponsor ESB, further education and training providers and design and production experts gathered at a Generation Apprenticeship workshop hosted by SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, to mark the launch of the first ever Generation Apprenticeship competition.

Key industry bodies, employers and further education and training partners, alongside Ireland's Apprenticeship Council, SOLAS, the HEA and the Department of Education and Skills are collaboratively leading the vision for Ireland's next generation apprenticeships as part of the Government's commitment to expand apprenticeship and traineeship provision in Ireland by 2020.

The competition involved teams of apprentices creating six-foot, three-dimensional A letters using a diverse range of design skills. Materials and techniques used to design and construct the three-dimensional A's include a range of moving parts, electronics, wood, metal, stone, piping, water and electrical circuits. Each team recorded video diaries of their work and posted updates on their progress via social media.

Entries were judged on three criteria – teamwork, creativity and problem-solving.





Finalists

- The Hospitality Training Centre, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
- John Sisk & Son (Holdings) Ltd
- Jones Engineering
- Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board
- Designer Group – Electrical Apprentices
- Kerry Education and Training Board
- Designer Group – Mechanical Apprentices

There were seven finalists overall. Each had to give a presentation on the evening. One overall competition awards winner Designer Group, Mechanical Apprentices.



“I AM SO IMPRESSED BY THE CREATIVITY OF THE WORK THAT IS ON DISPLAY THROUGH THIS COMPETITION.”

Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Education and Skills

All images © Sean Mitchell of Mitchell Kane.

Below L-R: Christy Enright, Asst Manager, Kerry ETB, Tom Cronin, Instructor, Kerry ETB, Tom Little, Instructor, Kerry, ETB, Andy O'Connor, Quilty Stone, Graham Goulding, Merck, Kieran Casey, OPW Killarney, Fred Browne, OPW Killarney, Jim Lacey, OPW Killarney, Darren Enright, Instructor, Kerry ETB, Minister Richard Bruton



Portumna Castle

New Tea Room



Exciting things have been happening in the 17th Century Courtyard buildings at Portumna Castle. Following extensive works the conversion of the former stable building for visitor use is now complete. So why not come and check out the new Tea Rooms, Reception and Exhibition Area at Portumna Castle? You might even try your hand at a game of giant chess! Not to mention the wonderful Castle and Gardens are also there for you to explore.



Portumna Castle, Portumna, Co. Galway, H53 YK27.
Tel. No: +353 (90) 974 1658 Email: portumnacastle@opw.ie



Royal Visit

HRH Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall enjoy a visit to Derrynane House, Co. Kerry in June 2018.

Derrynane is the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell, one of the most celebrated figures in Irish history.

Images: © Julien Behal Photography



Derrynane, the Oakwood of St Fionán, stands at the very tip of the Iveragh Peninsula in Co. Kerry. Sheltered within the woodland stands Derrynane House, the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell, lawyer, politician and statesman, and one of the great figures in modern Irish history.

Many relics of O'Connell's life and career are preserved in Derrynane House, but the house is more than just a museum. Derrynane was one of the great influences on Daniel O'Connell's life as he himself was always ready to admit. For several generations, it had been the ancestral home of the O'Connell's. It had been his own childhood home and, throughout his career, it was his country residence. He and his family spent most summers at Derrynane. It was here that he was host to many guests in the surroundings that he loved and here he indulged his passion for beagling. Many books have been written about O'Connell but one can perhaps gain a greater insight into his character by visiting his home at Derrynane and experiencing the surroundings familiar to him during his life.

Today some 120 hectares (300 acres) of the lands of Derrynane, together with Derrynane House, make up Derrynane National Historic Park, under the management of National Historic Properties of the Office of Public Works. The House was officially opened to the public as a museum commemorating Daniel O'Connell by President Eamon De Valera in August 1967 and the surrounding Park was officially declared open by President Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh in August 1975 to mark the 200th anniversary of O'Connell's birth.





FREE ADMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR CARERS

Kevin “Boxer” Moran T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Flood Relief has welcomed the commencement of free admission to all OPW managed heritage sites, where an admission charge applies, for persons with disabilities and their carers from 1st May 2018.

Speaking at the commencement of the initiative Minister Moran said, *"The OPW is entrusted with looking after wonderful heritage sites and I feel passionately that everyone should be able to enjoy these cultural assets on our doorstep. This includes those with disabilities and I am delighted that the OPW will, at all its paid admission sites, admit persons with disabilities and their carers for free commencing from the 1st of May".*

The is the European Year of Cultural Heritage and Minister Moran indicated that he sees this free admission initiative as a direct contribution to the celebration of Heritage. *"The theme of the European Year of Cultural Heritage is 'Make a Connection'. This theme aims to deepen the connection between people and heritage and build a legacy of increased public engagement over time. I am delighted to announce the commencement of this initiative today so that we can make that connection with those of our visitors who suffer with a disability. I hope that this will mean that they will be able to more easily visit some of Ireland's wonderful heritage sites and they will, like so many other people, get huge enjoyment from the experience".*

The Minister also confirmed that the OPW will be continuing with its progressive approach to the provision of sign language tours for deaf and hard of hearing visitors this year with tours organised in a number of locations around the country right throughout the summer. *"We are very conscious of the recent move to make Irish Sign Language (ISL) an official language and we aim to continue to improve our services in this area. We have provided tours in ISL since 2016 and we have recently announced the dates and venues for our 2018 ISL calendar. This is part of a developing programme and we will, in consultation with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, continue to work to better improve our delivery of excellent services through ISL into the future".*

Minister Moran continued, *"I have continued to champion accessibility to OPW heritage sites since I took office and today's announcement builds on the extremely successful Under 12's Go Free" initiative I introduced last summer. In its first season of operation, a total of 90,325 children under 12 availed of the scheme which demonstrates just what a great appetite children and their families have for history and heritage. I am delighted that the OPW will continue with this initiative at all their fee-paying sites in 2018 and beyond".*



FOCUS ON THE KILKENNY NATIONAL MONUMENTS DEPOT

TEXT BY EAMONN RAFTER

Our National Monuments are an integral part of our cultural heritage and the Office of Public Works has a duty to conserve the heritage of buildings and monuments in its care.

Being in the enviable position of a District Works Manager in the Kilkenny National Monuments Depot, my job entails the project management and allocation of resources for the preservation and protection of some 123 National Monuments in the counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Laois, Offaly, Tipperary, Wexford and Waterford. The area also strays into Wicklow and Kildare! There are five other National Monuments Depots in the country who undertake similar work in their particular areas, based in Athenry, Dromahair, Killarney, Mallow and Trim.

Together with a skilled workforce of 45, we maintain and work closely with our Visitor Guide Service colleagues, to present these National Monuments to the public. Our main base is in Kilkenny, but due to the geographical spread of our monuments, we operate smaller depots in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary and Tintern Abbey, Co. Wexford. Operational staff undertake the work and our administration staff provide the all-important backroom support to them as well as looking after a seasonal staff of ninety during peak season.

The work we carry out varies from day to day, from installing oak floors in Nenagh Castle to re-roofing the Tower at Kells Priory, using traditional methods and materials. There are many skilled craft persons in-house to work on various conservation projects such as those highlighted here. We encourage staff to take the opportunity to upskill in different aspects of conservation and traditional working techniques. The



Tintern Abbey © Tourism Ireland

OPW Apprenticeship Programme ensures that these skills will survive for many years to come and I am delighted that the Kilkenny National Monuments Depot is involved with this initiative, passing on the knowledge and skills from our existing skilled craftspeople to future generations.

The following is a small selection of some of the works carried out by the Kilkenny National Monuments Depot in recent years.

Nenagh Castle, Co. Tipperary

At Nenagh Castle our works included the repointing of the castle masonry, the insertion of oak floors and the provision of a viewing platform on the top level, which gives a spectacular view of the surrounding countryside. One of the major difficulties we had to overcome was how to divert the rainwater from the viewing platform and bring it to ground level without negatively impacting the aesthetic of the Castle. Our unique solution involves the creation of two internal ducts that run side by side inside the Castle. One was to carry storm water from the viewing platform and the second was to run electrical services to each floor.



Coolhull Castle, Co Wexford

The repointing and consolidation of the masonry

- Above: Coolhull Castle, repointing and consolidation works
- Left & below: Repointing of the castle masonry, the insertion of oak floors and the provision of a viewing platform at Nenagh Castle
- Facing page: Tullaherin Round Tower before and after conservation



Kells Priory Co Kilkenny

At Kells Priory the works involved repointing of masonry, new oak flooring and the tower was roofed using an oak-trussed roof.



Tullaherin Round Tower

The repointing and grouting of the masonry.

Wattle and daub at Tintern Abbey

Training was provided on Wattle and Daub where heavy oak framework was infilled with hazel sticks (wattle) and then caked with mud (Daub). This was left to dry and then lime painted.



Ormond Castle – Full conservation project Lime Mortar Repair

Damaged mouldings can be repaired using lime mortar which is mixed to match stone colour and carefully carved to match the existing stone work.



A photograph showing two workers in high-visibility yellow vests and white hard hats working on a stone wall. One worker is in the foreground, crouching and clearing debris from a stone step. The other worker is in the background, standing and working on a higher section of the wall. The wall is made of large, dark grey stones and is situated on a rocky, mossy terrain.

Skellig Michael

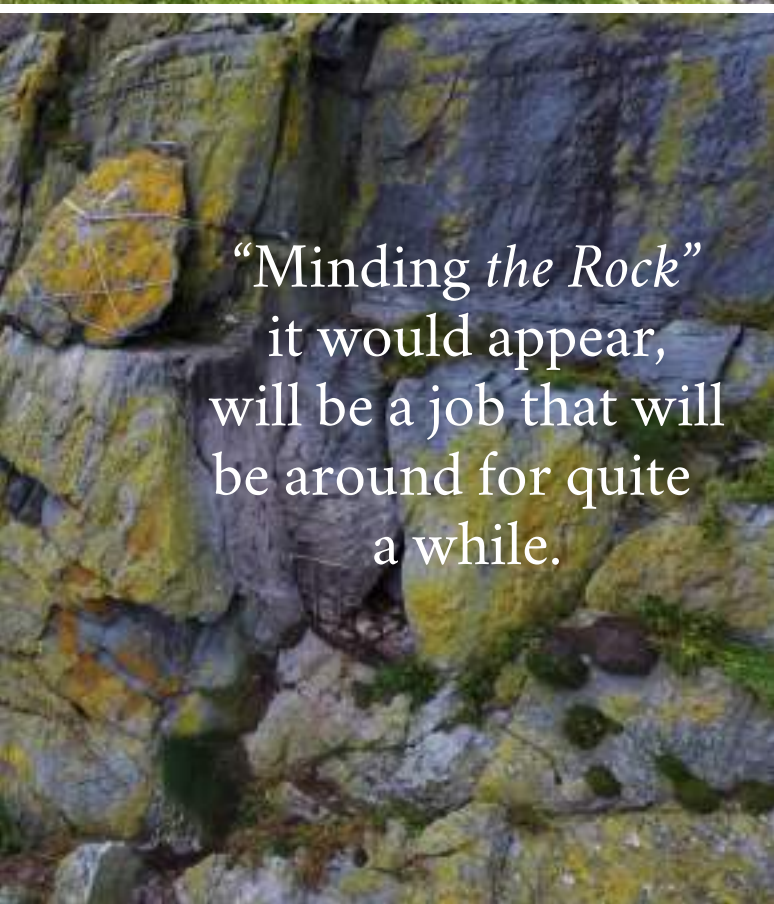
A Very Unusual Commute....

TEXT BY FRANK SHALVEY

For most people, the journey to work on a Monday morning is a mundane everyday experience, punctuated by landmarks along the familiar route and the jostle for space with other pedestrians, traffic lights and marked, for many city dwellers at least, by a hopeful search for parking at the end of the trip.

For some employees of the OPW Heritage Service however, the journey to work – and what they do when they get there – is highly unusual to say the least. Take the men from the OPW's Killarney National Monuments District who, early every Monday morning for several months each year starting in about mid-April, embark at the landing stage next to the Skellig Experience Centre in Portmagee, Co. Kerry and make the 90 minute trip across 12 kilometres of ocean to the rocky island of Skellig Michael. These are the





“Minding *the Rock*”
it would appear,
will be a job that will
be around for quite
a while.



► **Main image:**
James O Donoghue
(foreground) and
Michael O Connor
preparing the
historic Skellig
Michael steps for
the visitor season
2018

► **Centre:**
Work carried out by
OPW staff in 2016
to securely moor
with steel cables a
large rock
positioned over the
Lighthouse Road

► **Above & left:**
OPW staff working
on the landing pier

men from the OPW’s National Monuments District who maintain the fabric on this most exposed and haunting ancient Hermitage and World Heritage Site; in the words of some locals, they are “the lads who mind the Rock...”

Tom Kerrisk, John Lyme, Michael O’ Connor, James O’Donoghue and Foreman Pat O’ Shea have between them probably worked for more than 100 man years on Ireland’s National Monuments in State care in the Kerry District. Their collected experience is huge and their knowledge of the Monuments they look after is extensive. Their District Manager, Maurice Fitzgerald, is also steeped in the tradition of the work, having been himself involved for many years working on the same portfolio of properties and possessing a deep understanding of them and their individual challenges.

For some of the year, the teams’ work involves them in traveling to many of the historic sites scattered on the long southern Kerry peninsulas of Iveragh and Dingle and, compared to the journey to Skellig Michael, getting to places like Loher Stone Fort or Ballinskelligs Abbey is a relatively easy task. Their work in these places involves maintaining the structures of these places, checking for displaced masonry, looking for any unusual movement in the stone or any damage from animals or people perhaps

► Below: Visitors climb the winding pathway to the summit comprising of 618 stone steps.
Photo by Valerie O'Sullivan
© Fáilte Ireland

► Facing page: OPW staff, Michael O'Connor James O'Donoghue and Pat O'Shea working on the Landing Pier on Skellig Michael

► 6th Century Beehive Huts perched on top of the North peak



year, thousands of visitors manage to make their way to this UNESCO World Heritage Site (although many fail to succeed because of the weather and sea) and it is the job of the OPW team to prepare the site for their arrival and try and make sure that conditions for their visit are maintained as safe as possible. Skellig can be a dangerous environment and there have been some fatalities among visitors over the years. Before the start of each visitor season therefore, the team access the site early during the month of April – weather permitting – and begin their tasks of preparing the Island for visitors. This means thoroughly cleaning winter storm debris from visitor areas, removing algae from the pier, checking each of the steps up to the Monastery to make sure they have not been dislodged or loosened by the effects of weather or nesting birds and ensuring that there is no rockfall material preparing to shed from slopes above the road. Access to the Island in this early part of the year can be highly challenging however and so it proved this year, when regular landings proved impossible until relatively late in the month of April. Even when they can land however, the sea can still play its tricks and, as can happen more than occasionally, the men were stranded for an almost 10 day period in early May this year when the weather turned and they could not be taken off on the scheduled Friday. Getting stranded on a remote Island may seem like a romantic idea, but the reality of rainy days and dwindling food supplies is a little different and as Eoin Walsh, OPW's local Boatman who manages the transport arrangements said after the recent delay: "they were a bit thinner when I got them home."

Even though the very act of simply going to work on Skellig Michael presents real hardships – something that most of us would never dream of in our own daily commute to work – it is clear that there is a significant challenge for these men and their colleagues in Killarney in doing what they do and an inherent respect among them for the Island and what it represents. Their commitment to the work and to making sure that Skellig Michael stays the gem that it is speaks volumes for the amount of continuing and persistent effort that is needed to keep not alone this site but all of Ireland's Heritage estate in the care of the OPW in good shape. "Minding the Rock" it would appear, will be a job that will be around for quite a while.

that needs to be corrected before it results in lasting effects. Other tasks will include repairing fencing or boundary walling, cutting grass sward during the season and keeping a vigilant eye for any developing hazards like wayward stones or uneven footpaths that might trip an unwary visitor.

The work they do at Skellig Michael is however markedly different and that's not just down to the unusual – and frequently rather damp – commute. When they get to work on Skellig on Monday morning, it's the first day of a five day stretch for them. Due to the distance from the mainland and the highly variable nature of the weather and sea conditions, they will stay on the Island for the entire week, returning to Portmagee and weekend pursuits of home and families only late on Friday evening. During the week, they have the company of visitors during the day – assuming the weather conditions have been good and landings are feasible – but shortly after midafternoon, they only have each other and the three OPW Guides resident on the Island during the summer for company or perhaps one of their occasional colleagues visiting temporarily from Killarney. And, oh yes, several thousand Fulmars, Manx Shearwaters, Puffins, Guillemots, Storm Petrels, Kittiwakes and Gannets...

Working on National Monument stone structures is a challenging task at the best of times. Remaining faithful to traditional skills means using lime mortar for example; a material that can take days to dry out fully and has to be protected from the elements throughout. Not exactly easy in a rainy Irish climate. These basic difficulties are all magnified however when it comes to Skellig. There is no natural fresh water source on Skellig Michael and every drop of water, every scrap of building material, all scaffolding and other supplies used

has to be transported to the site by boat or helicopter before work can begin – a mix of logistical and weather prediction juggling and problem solving Maurice Fitzgerald as District Works Manager, Killarney has to tackle every year.

The very physical nature of the site itself presents unusual challenges too. When working at the Monastery on the summit, the men have to physically haul all their tools, mortars and building material up the more than 600 ancient steps to the top before they can even start to repair a piece of dislodged stone or attempt to reshape a crumbling wall top. The separate Hermitage structure on the even more precipitous South peak was also conserved by the team in recent years and the challenge involved in working on what is essentially a fragile building perched on a rock outcrop 217m high can only be wondered at. Lower down, nearer sea level, much work in recent years has focused on the reconstruction and repointing of the Lighthouse Road wall – a seaward facing stone barrier built largely by the Lighthouse keepers in the 18th century along the access road that leads from the landing pier right up past the base of the monastery steps and onward to the Commissioners of Irish Lights Lighthouse at the southerly tip of the Island. As the team have worked on this wall in recent years, they have moved slowly along its length, operating from impossible-seeming scaffolding perched outside the wall itself on the cliff face. Safety harnesses, ropes, and climbing gear are the order of the day, all organised by the Safety Contractor, Mike O' Shea who is, at this stage, practically part of the wider OPW family on Skellig, having himself spent about 10 years on the site.

There is, of course, a very public dimension to Skellig Michael. Every



Aughnanure CASTLE

The Year of O'Flaherty

2018 marks the tercentenary or 300th anniversary of the death of Moycullen-born Gaelic lord, historian, scholar and antiquarian, Ruaidhrí Ó Flaitheartaigh or Roderic O'Flaherty (1629-1718). Moycullen Historical Society or Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh, Maigh Cuilinn is celebrating throughout 2018, Roderic's life and works in a year-long festival entitled "The Year of O'Flaherty" which includes an innovative and varied range of events in honour of the esteemed writer. In this endeavour the society is engaging with other local historical societies, the OPW, local schools, academic institutions and many others and offering a broad series of events to suit a range of tastes. Upcoming events this summer include a children's art exhibition with participating Moycullen primary schools in June, a genealogy fair at Aughnasure Castle in July and Heritage Week events in August.

Of Noble Birth

Roderic O'Flaherty was born c.1629 into an aristocratic family at the twilight of the Gaelic order in Ireland. Despite coming of age amid a backdrop of immense





TEXT BY JENNY YOUNG
AND MARY GAVAGHAN



► *Main image (left):*
Aughnacore
Gatehouse
© Jenny Young

► *Facing page below:*
Visitors to
Aughnacore Castle
© Tourism Ireland

► *Above:*
Walls of Moycullen
Castle
© Moycullen Historical
Society

► *Left:*
Sir George
MacKenzie of
Rosehaugh
(1638-91)

social change, rebellion, war and confiscation, he was destined to become a highly educated and enlightened scholar, writer and historian of international renown. Born at Moycullen Castle on the shores of Lough Corrib in Co. Galway he was the son of both a Gaelic chief and a Galway tribeswoman. With “Ferocious O’Flaherty” blood coursing through his veins he survived into old age through some of the most violent periods in Irish history, on the cusp between the collapse of the ancient Gaelic world and the dawn of the Protestant ascendancy.

Roderic was one of the O’Flahertys of Iarchonnacht or Connemara as it is known today, who ruled their vast territory as Gaelic warrior lords for almost four-hundred years, following their expulsion in the 13th century from their ancestral home east of

Lough Corrib. Concealed within the mountains, valleys and rugged coast of Connemara they ruled supreme as Gaelic warrior lords and built a network of small castles or tower houses along the Atlantic coastline and further east towards Lough Corrib from where they ran their prosperous little Gaelic kingdom, far out of the reach of English law. English power was confined to the Pale and Ireland was essentially in a state of disunity with no one authority recognised over the entire island. But as the sixteenth century wore on the expansionary and colonial policies of the Tudor government found a footing in Iarchonnacht and challenged not only the O’Flaherty’s traditional lifestyle and autonomy, but their loyalty to one another.

By Roderic’s birth, the final conquest of Gaelic Ireland was witnessed at the

Battle of Kinsale in 1601 when the English army defeated the Irish confederates led by Hugh O’Neill and Hugh Roe O’Donnell. The result was devastating to the traditional Irish culture and way of life, as the old Gaelic system was finally shattered. But Roderic was still very much a product of Gaelic Ireland, despite its recent conquest. His mother was Elizabeth Darcy (or O’Dorchaidhe), a descendent of the Darcys of Galway, however, his origins through his father Hugh were deeply rooted in the Gaelic world. Hugh O’Flaherty was chief of Gnó Beg or the eastern branch of O’Flahertys, ruling from his stronghold at Moycullen Castle, which guarded the best agricultural land in all of Iarchonnacht. This suited the predominantly pastoral nature of the Gaelic economy, and trade with Galway merchants was booming. However, the fortunes of the Gnó Beg were in decline

AUGHNANURE CASTLE

towards the end of the 16th century and the greater part of profitable lands had passed from O'Flaherty hands to Galway townsmen as a result of direct Tudor influence. This was to have a profound effect on Roderic O'Flaherty as his inheritance disappeared before his eyes. Although they retained their ancient ways into the 18th century, the O'Flahertys lost their power and having been active in the Rebellion of 1641, their lands were confiscated, their territories parcelled out and the era of O'Flaherty rule in Connemra came to an abrupt end. This was the direct effect of Roderic's forbearer's reluctant acceptance of the Tudor policy of "surrender and regrant" which had far-reaching implications for both Roderic and the Gaelic society into which he was born, and the root cause of its eventual demise.

Submission to the King

Henry VIII initiated a policy of conquest and colonisation during the 1530s, pursued by his successors, and introduced a policy of "surrender and regrant" to win back his lost kingdom. To facilitate this, he declared himself King of Ireland and decreed that all lands in Ireland were to be surrendered to the Crown, only to be returned if the owners pledged their loyalty to King and the Church of England. This was to bring about huge social, political and religious changes to Ireland and in 1538 it was to have a direct effect on the O'Flahertys. Roderic's great-great-grandfather, Hugh Óg O'Flaherty travelled to Galway and submitted to the King. In return for his re-granted lands, Hugh had promised to pay 100 crowns annually as tribute for his lands and to provide forty armed men for the King's war. He was the first of the O'Flahertys to make a submission, or any kind of alliance for that matter, to the Crown. This marked the beginning of a new era of struggle and tension in Iarchonnacht, not only between the English government and the native Irish, but between the Irish who chose to submit and those who did not. Tensions flared between the O'Flahertys with the castle at Moycullen being seized by Donal and Bryan O'Flaherty of nearby Aughnaneire Castle and Hugh Óg and



► Moycullen Castle aerial view: photo by Dr. Paul Naessens

four of his sons being starved to death in the dungeon of Moycullen Castle.

One of these ill-fated sons was Muircheartach Mac Aodha, who had an infant son, Rory Ruadh. The young boy was quickly smuggled away to Lee's Island on Lough Corrib and afterwards, sent to England to be "civilised" and educated as a courtier. If this was an attempt by Donal and Bryan to eliminate a weak O'Flaherty branch, it had failed, as the infant child Rory Ruadh survived and succeeded to the inheritance. He later entered into contract with Queen Elizabeth I in 1558, who "provided for his better maintenance of living, and in respect of his good and civil bringinge up in England, he should have letters pattentes of the castle and house of Moycullen, and all other his lands in Gnobegge".

Bitter feuding erupted within the O'Flaherty septs with relations between Murrough na dTuath O'Flaherty of Aughnaneire and Rory Ruadh O'Flaherty of Moycullen being especially tense. In 1584, Rory Ruadh made a complaint to the new Lord Deputy, Sir John Perrot against Murrough that over the past ten years he had driven him from his country of Gno' Beg, despoiled his castle of Moycullen, had burned his corn and houses and murdered his tenants, causing him to lose the total sum of £2,947 and 400 cows. An agreement was ultimately reached and Rory Ruadh rebuilt his castle of Moycullen.

Confiscation of Estates

Rory Ruadh's son was Hugh of Moycullen, Roderic's Father, who died in 1631 when Roderic was not even two years old. The estate, approximately 500 acres of farmland, was held directly of the Crown by knight service so Roderic became a ward of the Crown until he came of age. He was educated as the heir to Moycullen and had an excellent knowledge of both Latin and English and went on to become a man of considerable learning. But following the upheavals of the 1640s and through the policy of confiscation and transplantation under Cromwell during the 1650s, Roderic lost the greater part of his ancestral estates.

Not long after his marriage to the daughter of his kinsman Col. Murrough na dTuath O'Flaherty and the restoration of the monarchy under King Charles II in 1660, Roderic appears to have returned to Moycullen and recovered a further small part of the lands of which he had been dispossessed, including an estate in An Pairc, just over three kilometres east of Spiddal, Co. Galway in the townland of Derryloughaun West. However, he lost almost everything when King William III's government began to assert control over Galway in 1696, yet was hardly destitute; he was still well able to support himself and his family as well as finance his love of manuscript collecting. In his writings he refers to his own misfortunes after the death of Charles I, and laments that the



Aughnacloy Castle:
photo © Jenny Young



▶ Left:
Ogygia, a learned book on early Ireland written in Latin: 'Ogygia: Seu rerum Hibernicarum chronologia (1685)', by Roderick O'Flaherty.

had on society at the time. Therefore the ability to maintain links with a learned community and put pen to paper to produce any scholarship at all, is remarkable.

Out of numerous writings by Roderick O'Flaherty, the three published works within his lifetime are as follows, *Letter on the Chronology of Irish History* (1665), *Ogygia: Seu rerum*

Hibernicarum chronologia (1685), and *Verses on the birth of James Edward Francis Stuart, prince of Wales* (1688). Three further posthumous publications also worthy of note are *Ogygia Vindicated* (1775) published by Charles O'Connor of Ballinagare, ninety years after its original publication, *Ogygia or a chronological account of Irish Events: Collected from very Ancient Documents, faithfully compared with each other, and supported by the Genealogical and Chronological Aid of the Sacred and Prophane Writings of The First Nations of the Globe* (1795) Translated to English by Revd James Hely and published one hundred and ten years after the original. And the third, *A Chorographical Description of West or Iar-Connaught, written 1684* edited by James Hardiman and published in 1864, which today is arguable the most well known of works by or related to Roderic.

It is the second publication, that of *Ogygia* that is probably the most well known within 17th and 18th century literary circles. Roderic O'Flaherty, was the first scholar to research, collate and write a Chronology and History of the island of Ireland from the earliest held records. Nollaig Ó Muraíle (2015) refers to Roderic as 'the great Galway

scholar...a protege of Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh and most noted as the author of the *Ogygia*, a very learned book on early Ireland written in latin'. It is therefore somewhat of a shame that Roderic himself and his works are not more widely known or acknowledged by the general populace.

Ogygia is the first scholarly attempt in early modern Irish history to research, document and publish the origins of Irish history from time immemorial. *Ogygia*, is an Island mentioned in Greek mythology, in Homer's *Odyssey*. It gets its name from the mythological figure Ogyges and is associated with the Ogygian deluge or flood so much so the the word Ogygian can mean 'primeval' or 'at earliest dawn', referring to the first deluge, the beginning of *Ogygia*. Roderic uses *Ogygia* as an allegory for Ireland in his book of the same title. This alone illustrates to us the individual's learned background in not just his own texts and manuscripts pertaining to Ireland as an island, but also the classics of Greece. The publication of the *Ogygia* was not without controversy. Roderic's work included the king lists of ancient Ireland and Scotland. With the former predating the lesser, making the island of Ireland the foundation place for the ancestors of the 'royal' line of all the kingdoms. One particular Scotsman rebuked his work and questioned its scholarship, Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh (1638-91). Mackenzie was a lawyer, Lord Advocate and an essayist accredited with writing the 'first Scottish novel', *Aretina 1660*, like Roderic he has been acknowledged as a learned and renowned scholar. Shortly after the publication of *Ogygia*, Mackenzie publishes a work entitled, *Antiquity of the Royal Line of Scotland* (1686), almost certainly in response to Roderic's work in *Ogygia*. Roderic had written a vindication of the *Ogygia*, however it was never published within his lifetime. It would take another ninety years for *Ogygia Vindicated* (1775) to be published. Roderic was deceased nearly sixty years, when Charles O'Connor of Ballinagare had it published with his notes accompanying the text to guide as justification for Roderic's arguments. Charles O'Connor

restoration of the monarchy in England had not the effect of redressing his wrongs: "I live a banished man within the bounds of my native soil; a spectator of others enriched by my birthright; an object of condoling to my relations and friends; and a condoler of their miseries".

Later Life and Works

Despite his disinheritance, during his later life Roderic appears to have maintained an involvement at a distance with the world of books and learning in Dublin and Oxford. He mixed with people of wealth and standing in Dublin and rubbed shoulders with some of the British Isle's great academic and cultured minds including scribe and genealogist Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh, Sligo poet Seán Ó Gadhra, Irish philosopher William Molyneux and his son Samuel, as well as Welsh lexicographer Edward Lhwyd. And as we have read, Roderic lived, learned and wrote in a time period considered one of the most turbulent time periods of Irish History. Civil war, land confiscations and the introduction of the penal laws all happened during his lifetime, Roderic and the O'Flaherty family did not escape the great impact these events

thought highly of the scholarship of Roderic not just in ensuring his work was published but commenting that 'Mr O'Flaherty, who has treated the subject (Irish history) more diffusely, and with greater knowledge...then all his predecessors' O'Connor (1775). Charles O'Connor further comments in the preface of the vindication that O'Flaherty 'turned his thoughts from the misery of his own days, to its prosperity in better'. These remarks shed some illumination of the late 18th century perception of a truly turbulent time in Ireland's recent past and for those living through it. The first publication of the *Ogygia* in English was not until 1793, when the Revd James Hely translated the Latin original and with the help of subscriptions the work was published in English. It can only be recognised as a testament to Roderic's learned scholarship that in the following century after his death his work acted as a guide and inspiration to the leading antiquarians of the time.

It is therefore with a tinge of sadness we have record of his friend William Molyneux visiting his house at An Pairc in 1709 and being quite disturbed to see his old friend living in what he deemed were miserable conditions: "I went to visit old O'Flaherty, who lives very old, in a miserable condition at Park, some 3 hours west of Galway in Iarchonnacht." Here the great and sometimes controversial scholar undoubtedly wrote some of his most famous works aforementioned and lived until his death in 1718, aged 89 years. According to tradition he was buried within his house at An Pairc at the request of his son Michael.

James Hardiman describes the house in 1846: "The house is about sixty feet in length with one little chamber off it to the west. Immediately to the south of the house is a low rock, covered with a green mossy sward, commanding an extensive view of the sea, the three islands of Aran, and a considerable extent of the northern coastline of Clare".

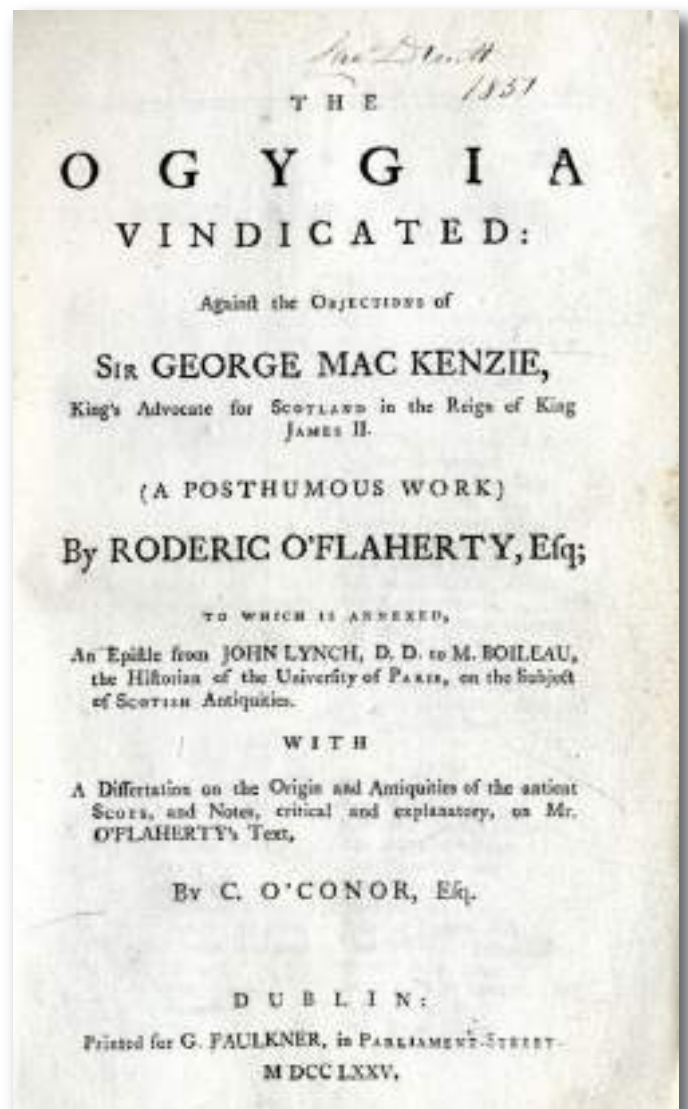
Michael, after a lengthy legal battle with his father-in-law Richard Martin, Esq., eventually had a portion of the family estates restored in 1736. Michael and

Richard's daughter Anabelle had no children with whom to leave the estate so it was bequeathed to Michael's step-son, Richard Fitzpatrick, Esq. Richard's descendents still retained the property into the mid 19th century. Today, sadly the house lies in ruin but we are very fortunate that so many of Roderic's writings including copies of his books and letters have survived for future generations of scholars and enthusiasts to be used to either gain an insight into the writing of the not too distant past, or simply to enjoy.

So this year if you find yourself in the West of Ireland, why not take in one of the many events happening in Galway to be a part of the celebration of one of Ireland's least celebrated scholars!

Visit the Moycullen Historical Society website at moycullen.galwaycommunityheritage.org for up to date information on what's on. You can also find information through our facebook page at facebook.com/aughnanurecastleopw.

► Above right:
A posthumous publication also worthy of note is *Ogygia Vindicated* (1775) published by Charles O'Connor of Ballinagare, ninety years after its original publication.



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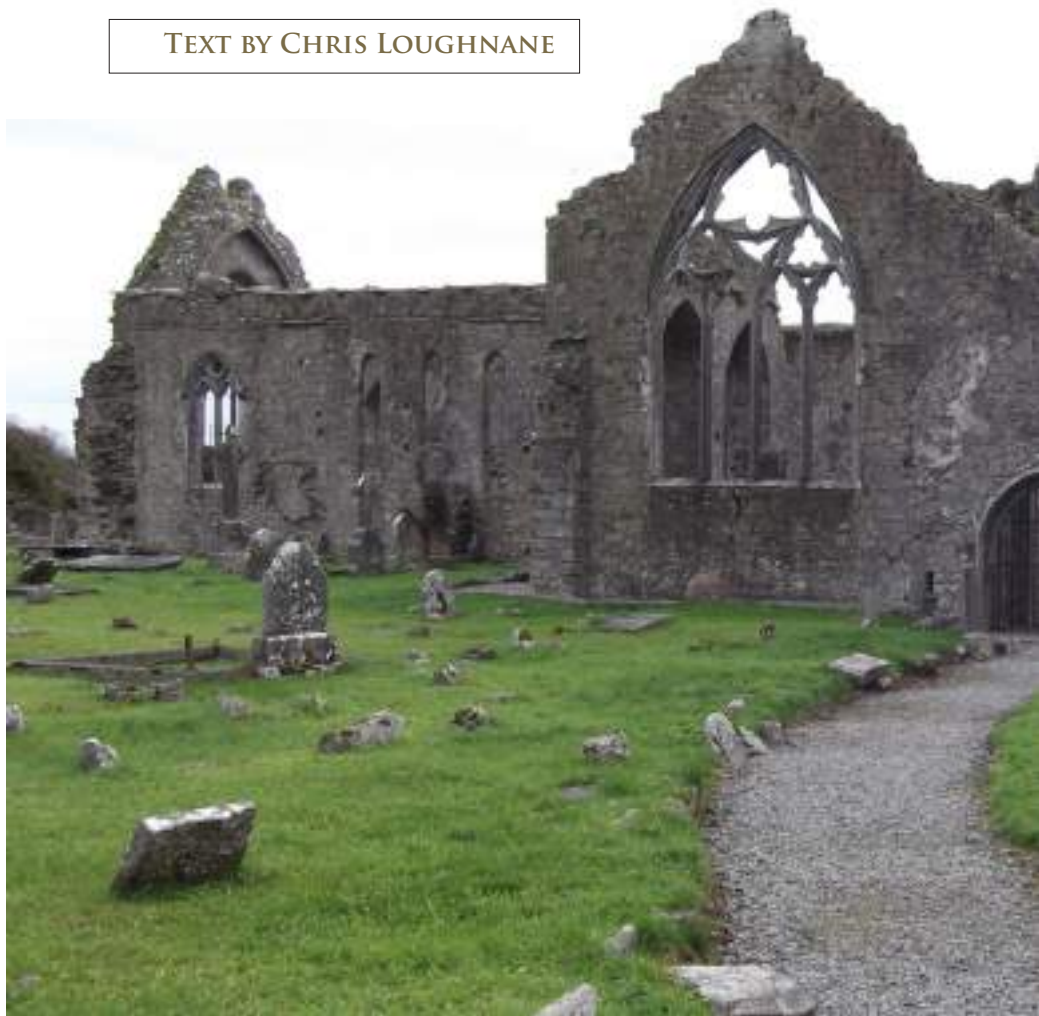
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THE DOMINICAN PRIORY of ATHENRY



The story of the Dominicans in Ireland began in 1224 when the Anglo-Norman, Maurice Fitzgerald, introduced the order to Dublin, building another house in Drogheda that same year. In 1241, Meiler de Bermingham, 2nd Baron of Athenry, invited the Dominicans to Athenry where together with sponsorship from the native Irish, the Priory of SS. Peter and Paul, the first Dominican Priory in Connacht, was built. But who were these Dominicans and where did they come from?

TEXT BY CHRIS LOUGHNANE



► Ruin of Athenry Dominican Priory

The order was established by the Spanish priest St Dominic de Guzman in 1216. In 1215, Dominic saw the need for a new type of organisation to address the spiritual needs of the growing population of the new cities in Europe and, along with six followers, founded a religious house in Toulouse, France.

Dominic's ethos was a combination of dedication and systematic education; a more organised way of monastic life. Dominic along with his companions subjected themselves to the rules of prayer and penance, later gaining permission to preach throughout Toulouse. That same year, 1215, Dominic went to Rome to secure approval by Pope Innocent III. Between December 1216 and January 1217 he was granted written permission by the new pope, Honorius III for a new order to be named 'The Order of Preachers'.

The Priory of Athenry, started in 1241, has such a rich history. Meiler de Bermingham bought the site from Sir Robert Breynach-Breathnacht (Walsh) for 160 marks. He also gave an additional 160 marks towards the building, supplied wine, English cloth and horses for drawing stone. His knights and soldiers were encouraged to help with the construction of the monastery. When Meiler was killed in a battle near Cashel, Co Tipperary in 1252, monks from the priory carried his remains back to Athenry. With great

honour and ceremony he was interred near the high altar.

Dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, the monastery got off to such a great start, a provincial chapter was held there in 1242. Both native Irish and Anglo-Normans co-operated in sponsoring the construction. The priory was completed in 1261.

In 1324 the building was enlarged. Later, in 1400, Pope Boniface IX granted a Bull of Indulgence to those who visited the priory on certain feast days as well as those who contributed alms towards the building and the upkeep of the monks. In 1423 the priory was accidentally burnt down, and Pope Martin V granted another Bull of Indulgence which was renewed by Pope Eugenius in 1445. At this time there were thirty monks in service. Their daily life was based around the three main vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They spent their days and years dedicated to worship, education, providing hospitality to pilgrims, and looking after the poor and sick. The monastery escaped suppression under Henry VIII and in 1644, during the Confederation of Kilkenny, the priory became a University for the Dominican order.

During the Cromwellian period the priory was attacked. Most of the monuments were destroyed or damaged. By the time of the penal laws

of 1698, the monks had fled.

Within the priory today there are the remains of grave-slabs tombs and wall plaques. It is suggested that the earliest grave marker is that of Meiler de Bermingham, the founder. This grave-slab can be described as a long, low, house-shaped slab with a cross carved in relief at either end. Some of the grave-slabs of 17th century date show tools associated with the person's profession in life; in many cases farm workers. One of the most impressive grave-slabs is of a blacksmith called Tannian, from 1682. Depicted on his grave-slab are bellows, an anvil, a horseshoe, a claw-headed hammer, pincers and an augur.

The tomb of Lady Matilda de Bermingham is clearly seen there today, located in the chancel. It was erected when she died in 1788 at the early age of twenty years and ten months. The fourth daughter of Thomas, Earl of Louth, Baron of Athenry, and premier baron of Ireland, she was the last in the line. The stucco decoration of the tomb is made of Coade stone specially imported from London at the time.

Another special tomb that has survived is that of the De Burgh family, of Galway city and later Portumna. This impressive tomb was repaired by Ulick John Marquis of Clanricarde, in 1885. Their coat of arms is displayed with the family motto *un roy une foy and une loi* (one king, one faith and one law).

Medieval barons, bishops, and even blacksmiths have all been laid to rest in this rich national monument.



▲ Above: Remains of a grave slab

The priory was taken into state-care on the 19th November 1892 and still today is an important landmark for the town of Athenry.

The priory is opened to the public free of charge on Saturdays and Sundays and during the week the key is available from Athenry Castle reception for a refundable deposit.

For further details please contact:
Athenry Castle, Athenry, Co. Galway.
Tel. No: +353 (91) 844 797
Email: athenrycastle@opw.ie



► Detail of stone carvings and interior tomb of Athenry Dominican Priory



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- **Dublin Castle** 21st October at 3pm



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TEXT BY FRANK SHALVEY

▲ Above: Tim O' Neill and Imogen Stuart, Artists, with Marie Heaney, wife of the late Seamus Heaney with the €1 stamp celebrating the 1,400 anniversary of St. Kevin at Glendalough.

OPW and An Post celebrate the 1,400th Anniversary of ST. KEVIN OF GLENDALOUGH

The OPW and An Post celebrate the life of St. Kevin of Glendalough with an exhibition in Glendalough Visitor Centre, Co. Wicklow, while An Post's latest €1 stamp marks the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St Kevin.



Post which is based on the same St. Kevin theme. Also present was Marie Heaney, wife of the late Nobel prize winner Seamus Heaney, whose evocative 1996 poem provided the initial inspiration for the work.

The An Post stamp is based on the same legend that earlier inspired both Imogen Stuart and Seamus Heaney. The legend says that one day, St. Kevin was deep in

prayer, with arms outstretched. The space being confined within his tiny cell, he knelt with one arm stretched out of the window. A blackbird came to rest there and laid an egg in St. Kevin's upturned palm. Rather than interrupt the flow of nature, the legend says that St. Kevin remained

in this position, deep in meditative prayer, until the chick hatched and flew away.

The Stuart / O' Neill artwork and the stamp launched recently are both based on an earlier woodcarving by Imogen Stuart which depicts St. Kevin and the mythical blackbird who, according to the legend, nested in his outstretched palm. This woodcarving drew its inspiration from both the ancient story and the Heaney poem and portrays St. Kevin's extraordinary closeness to nature. For the artwork, the calligrapher and historian, Tim O'Neill wrote the poem on vellum (calfskin parchment), the same material that is used in early Irish manuscripts and the script used is based on that used in Ireland from the seventh century and which is best seen in the world famous Book of Kells.

St. Kevin studied for the priesthood in Cill na Manach (Kilnamanagh), moving to the seclusion of Glendalough, where he spent the rest of his life and chose to practice solitude and prayer, surrounded by nature. He established two known sites near the upper lake; St. Kevin's Bed, a manmade



- ▶ Top: An Post's latest €1 stamp marks the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St. Kevin.
- ▶ Left: Aileen Mooney An Post, Imogen Stuart Artist and Tim O'Neill Artist.
- ▶ Above: Aileen Mooney, An Post and Frank Shalvey, OPW

Images © Maxwell Photo Agency

The monastic site at Glendalough in County Wicklow is one of the most popular visitor sites managed by OPW Heritage Services and the ancient monastery, and its stunning surrounding mountain landscape, have inspired a number of significant artistic endeavours. One of these was the famous Seamus Heaney poem, "Saint Kevin and the Blackbird" and this has now been interpreted in a new artwork by Imogen Stuart & Tim O'Neill which was recently put on display in the Glendalough Visitor Centre. To mark the occasion and to highlight the artistic connection, the OPW

and An Post recently joined to celebrate the life of St. Kevin of Glendalough with the launch of An Post's latest commemoration stamp marking the 1,400th anniversary of the death of the saint in 618 AD.

St. Kevin and the Glendalough site continues to inspire artists and thinkers more than 1,400 years after it was founded in the sixth century by St. Kevin and the latest of these, sculptor and artist Imogen Stuart and calligraphist Tim O'Neill were present recently in the Glendalough building when their work was viewed for the first time alongside the launch of the latest commemorative stamp from An

cave, and St. Kevin's Cell, near a mountain stream. In a way that strongly demonstrates the wonderful cross connections between the place and the art that was inspired by it, the earlier Imogen Stuart wood carving of the Saint and the blackbird was subsequently redone in stone and now sits at the Monastic site close to St. Kevin's cell, making the link between the legend, the Seamus Heaney poem and the Monastery where the memory of St. Kevin, the "Irish St. Francis" and his love of nature continue to provide a haven of peace and reflection for visitors centuries after his death.

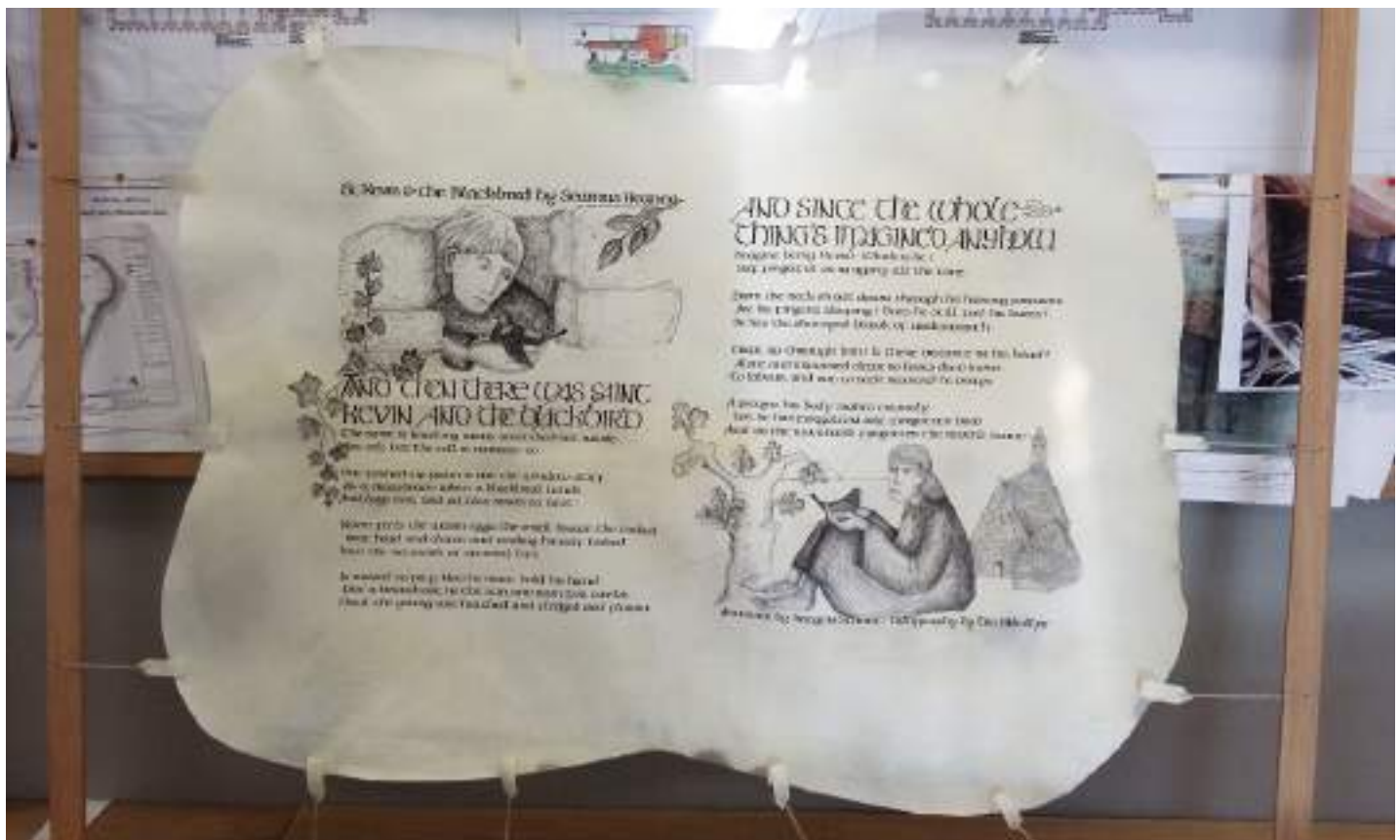
The life of St. Kevin continues to be a draw for artists, nature lovers and those who believe in the power of retreat and prayer. Seamus Heaney described his poem "St Kevin and the Blackbird" (The Spirit Level, 1996) as 'a little meditation' and he often referred fondly to Glendalough where he was himself a frequent visitor. At the recent event in the Visitor Centre, his wife Marie Heaney described how she and her late husband would often come

to the site from their home nearby in Ashford to wander among the monastic ruins and walk by the Upper Lake, enjoying the beauty and tranquillity of the site.

St. Kevin is reported to have died on June 3, 618 and was canonised in 1903 by Pope Pius X. Launching the stamp alongside Aileen Mooney of An Post, the OPW's Manager at Glendalough George Mc Clafferty reminded the audience that there was in fact a theory that St. Kevin did not die until 619 and that we might indeed have to return next year to perform the ceremony again! However, he also reminded the audience that, whatever the date, the memory of St. Kevin remains strong and, under the OPW custodianship, Glendalough will continue to offer visitors a place of outstanding natural beauty for peace and reflection in the modern world.



Glendalough © Fáilte Ireland/Neal Houghton



May 31, 2018: The OPW and An Post celebrate the life of St. Kevin of Glendalough. The OPW will permanently exhibit the artwork St. Kevin and the Blackbird in Glendalough Visitor Centre, Co. Wicklow, while An Post's latest stamp marks the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St. Kevin. The €1 stamp is available in the GPO, in selected post offices nationwide and online at irishstamps.ie Images © Maxwell Photo Agency



CHILDREN'S EXHIBITION AT CASTLETOWN HOUSE

TEXT BY CATHERINE BERGIN

This year, inspired by the guides, Castletown House is hosting a 'Children's Exhibition' focused on style and design in the eighteenth century.

The idea for a children's exhibition came from the 'living history tours' which are now an integral part of the guiding season at Castletown House. In the dining room, 'Lady Louisa' or 'Master Tom' inform the children that in order to create this dining space, Lady Louisa, at great expense to poor Tom, had a supporting wall removed... nearly knocking the house! Surrounded by the opulence of the dining room, most of the children agree with Lady Louisa that, 'yes it was worth it'. However, that opinion quickly changes when they see what the removal of this wall has done to the rooms above the dining room, and to one room in particular, Lady Louisa's bedroom. As one little girl said when she saw the bare walls, the re-used bricks and the beams added to stop the wall collapsing, 'Oh Lady Louisa, what have you done!' Obviously not impressed with the damage, the children proved eager to re- design this


room for Lady Louisa and these designs, carried out by local schools, have impressed the guiding team to such an extent that it was considered important to showcase the fruits of this labour in an exhibition.

The idea for designing the room came from one of the guides, Stephen Baxter, who asked children on one of the school tours if they could design the room. Stephen asked this school group to bring these ideas back to the classroom and perhaps design wallpaper for the room. Since then, the guiding team at Castletown have increasingly incorporated design elements of the house into their school tours. One of the guides, Dr Catherine Bergin, helped to develop the idea with particular attention to the needs of the school curriculum. Both Stephen and Catherine, supported by their management team, Head Guide, Sandra Murphy, Supervisor Guide, Pauline Kennedy, Estate Manager Liam Murphy, Dr Dorothea Depner and Mary Heffernan, went to the local schools with this idea and encouraged local teachers to come on board. Equally important has been the support

from other staff at Castletown House, whether in costume or not, all of whom have helped make the living history tours and art exhibition work. The results have reflected these efforts and the children have produced amazing art creations full of Greek key and egg and dart patterns. One local school even designed mirrors, chairs and a quilt! This is living history at its best with children not only participating in the tour but taking these ideas back to the classroom, interpreting them and turning all these ideas into art!

The fruits of this artwork will be on display in Lady Louisa's bedroom at Castletown House from July through to the end of August.





'FACING THE SUN'

This article first appeared in the Winter 2017 issue of *Archaeology Ireland* (Vol 31: 4, issue no 122) and is reproduced here by kind permission of the authors and Archaeology Ireland.

Frank Prendergast, Muiris O'Sullivan, Ken Williams and Gabriel Cooney discuss an extraordinary seasonal phenomenon.

Introduction

At this time of year, attention focuses on the orientation of Newgrange towards sunrise at the midwinter solstice. For many people this prehistoric phenomenon, dating back over 5,000 years, has become linked with the celebration of Christmas and the turning of the year. In 2016 there was media coverage of the suggestion by Michael Gibbons that the alignment of the roof-box at Newgrange, through which the sun shines to illuminate the passage and chamber at winter solstice sunrise, was the result of the reconstruction of this feature by the late Professor M.J. O'Kelly, who excavated and restored the monument.

While there are aspects of the Newgrange reconstruction that are open to debate, notably the quartz wall flanking the entrance, there is widespread agreement, as first scientifically described by Jon Patrick and Tom Ray, and argued by Geraldine Stout, that the original and authentic purpose of the roof-box was to capture the beam of winter solstice sunlight and direct it to the back of the chamber. Equally important in understanding the wider significance of the Newgrange alignment is that it is not unique. Deliberate solar orientation is a

recurring element of the passage tomb tradition, in Ireland and further afield. In the Boyne Valley the sun illuminates the southern tomb at Dowth at winter solstice sunset and Townley Hall passage tomb at summer solstice sunrise. Cairn T, the central tomb in the Loughcrew passage cemetery complex, is orientated towards sunrise around the time of the spring and autumn equinoxes. Further afield, the passage tomb of Maes Howe in Orkney is illuminated at sunset at the winter solstice, and the passage tomb at Bryn Celli Ddu in Wales is aligned towards summer solstice sunrise.

It seems timely to focus on this important element of the cultural practices surrounding the construction and use of these monuments during the Neolithic period and to ask the specific question of why solstitial and, in a few cases, orientations close to sunrise and sunset near the equinoxes were incorporated into passage tomb architecture.

Positional astronomy and solar alignments

Solstices and equinoxes are four events that predictably reoccur as the earth makes one revolution of the sun in 365.2422 days, a

period known as the tropical year (Fig. 1). Winter and summer solstices can happen at any time within 21–22 December and 20–22 June respectively, while the vernal and autumnal equinoxes can similarly fall within 19–21 March and 22–23 September respectively. Relatedly, the next winter solstice will occur on 21 December at 16:28 UTC (Coordinated Universal Time, the time-scale available from broadcast time signals). The solstices and equinoxes also conveniently divide the year into quarters, each with an average duration of c. 91 days.

When thinking about the observed sky in prehistoric times, we first need to consider briefly the aspect and motion of earth's axis in space. It is currently tilted at $23^{\circ}.4$ and this creates the four seasons, giving associated weather patterns and diurnal and seasonal differences in light levels. Crucially, axis tilt also causes very noticeable changes in the direction of sunrise and sunset throughout the year. These reach a limit in the south-east and south-west in late December, and in the north-east and north-west in late June, on what are known as 'solstice days'. On those, and for a period lasting for about five days on either side, the naked eye cannot perceive significant

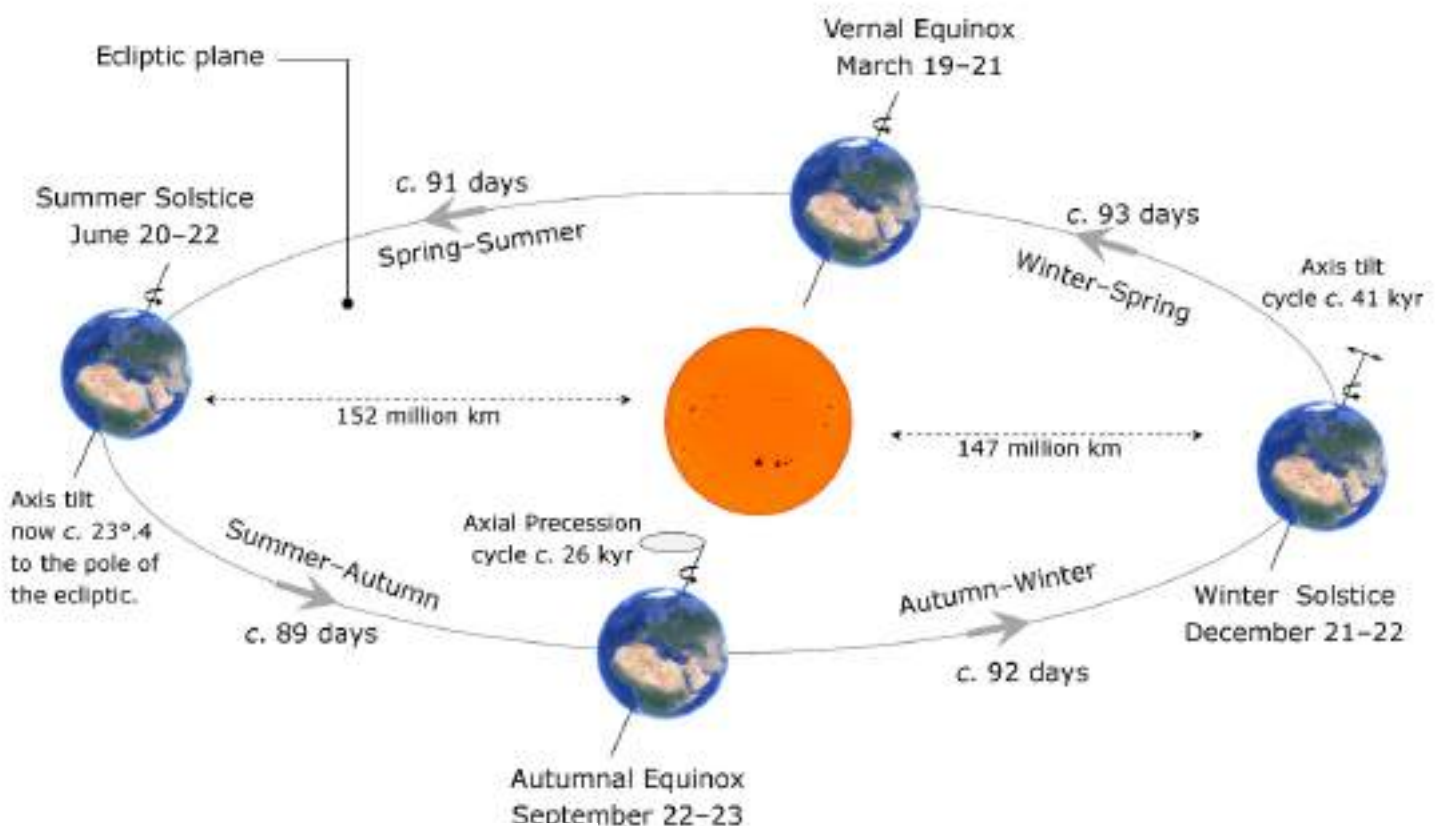


Fig 1: Earth's Cycles and Seasons

change in the rising or setting position of the sun when referenced against horizon markers. This explains 'solstice', a term derived from the Latin words for 'sun' (*sol*) and 'to stop' (*sistere*). In Ireland, the apparent angular movement of the sun from solstice to solstice is about 84° , thus making our nearest star an obvious and practical target for tracking time, anticipating seasonal changes and planning festivals. Since the Neolithic, when the tilt of the axis was about 24° , the limiting directions of the sun on the horizon at the solstices have contracted and will continue to do so for many millennia (see Fig. 9).

The distances between the earth and the sun in June and December also differ by about 3%, with the earth being closer to the sun in December owing to the elliptical rather than circular nature of its orbital path. That difference causes the solar disc to seem fractionally larger in midwinter and explains why the phenomena of sunrise and sunset at that time can seem noticeably brighter and more spectacular.

The changing skyscape through the year

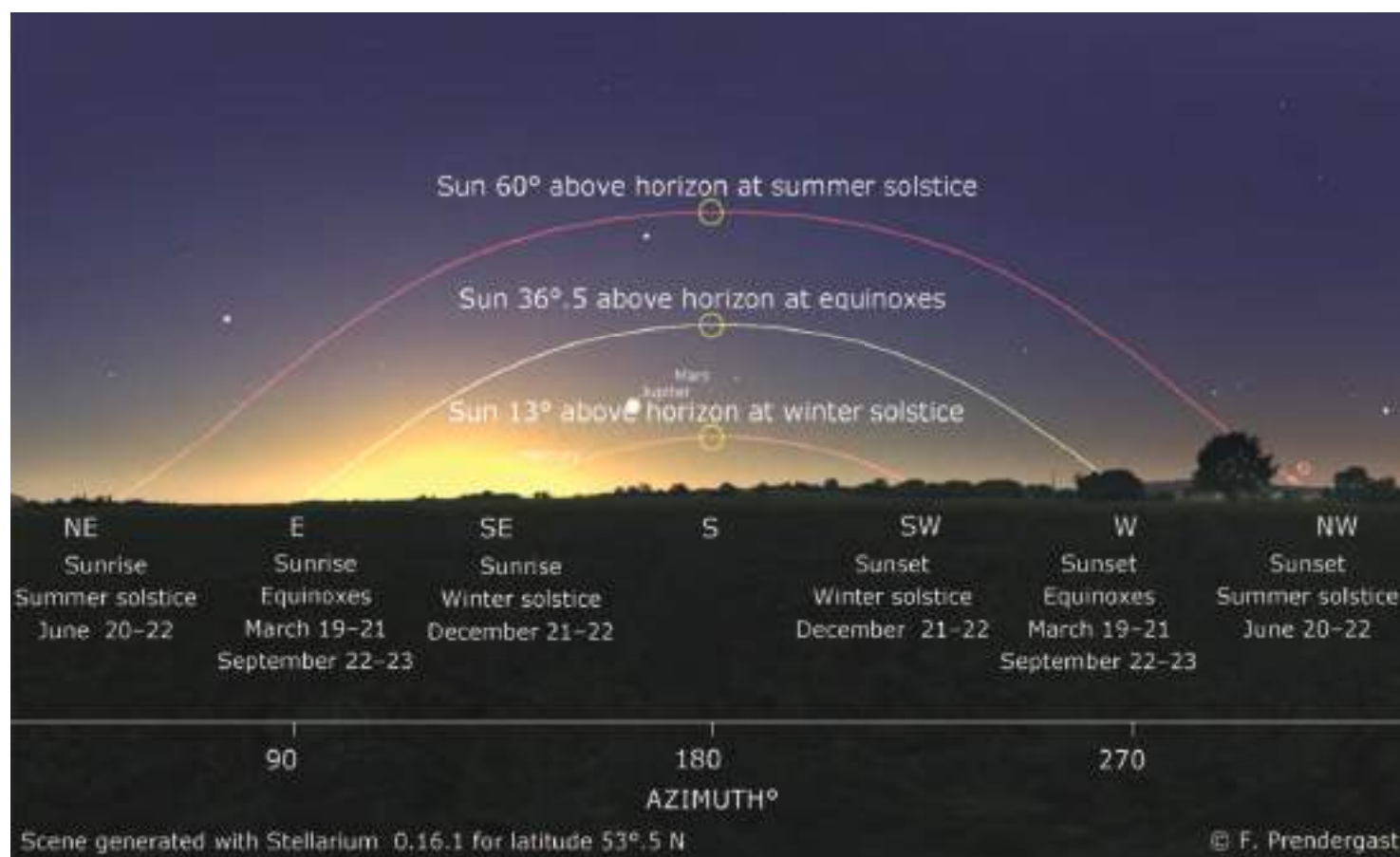
Those who regularly watch the sky can hardly fail to notice the changing directions of sunrise and sunset—if not from day to day, then certainly from week to week. It would also be apparent that the rate of change is variable from month to month—greatest around the equinoxes in March and September and least around the solstices in June and December. The cyclical phenomenon of reversal, or turning, would be obvious too—a dazzling example of nature's greatest U-turn (Fig. 2). Immediately afterwards, the sun appears to move northwards after the winter solstice and southwards after the summer solstice. Less obvious would be the dates of sunrise and sunset midway through this cycle. These are the equinoxes, when the hours of daylight and darkness are approximately equal and sunrise and sunset are diametrically opposed due east and west, provided that the horizons have the same level. Solstices, by comparison, are those days when the differences between the hours of daylight and darkness are at their most extreme. Practically and intuitively,

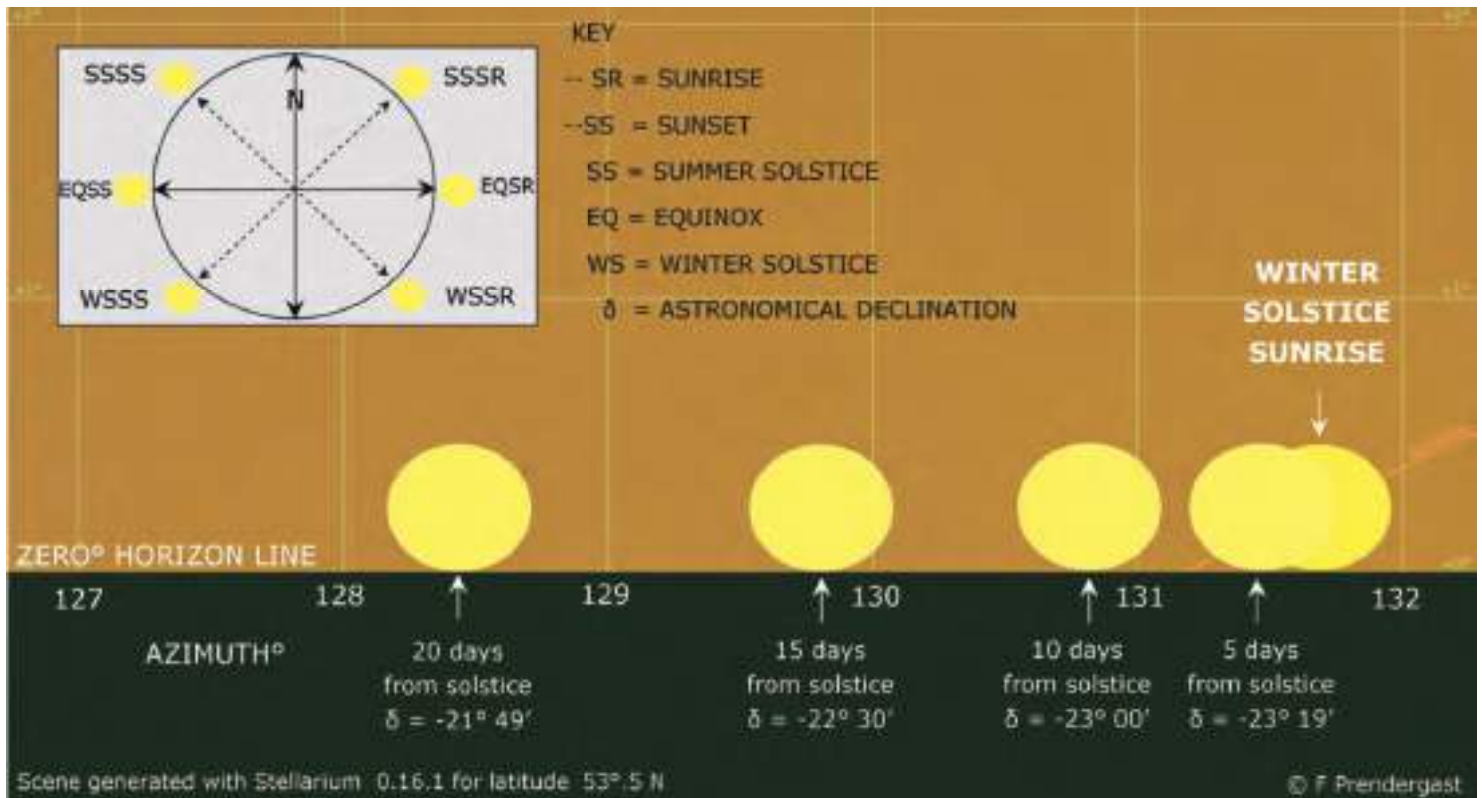
the limiting direction of the sun at solstice is easily determined by simple observation. That is not the case for the equinoxes.

The sun at solstice

Solstices have profound temporal significance and associated ritual meaning across many cultures and chronologies. The reasons are not hard to find. For an observer located in either hemisphere of the globe, it will be obvious that the daily change in the apparent direction of sunrise and sunset after the time of equinox begins to slow down. The effect is more pronounced the further one is north or south of the equator. As an example, we show the changes for repeated five-day intervals at sunrise shortly before and after the winter solstice (Fig. 3). Notice how the width of the angular gap between any pair of adjacent solar discs reduces as the solstice is neared, even though the number of days remains a constant. Also, for a period of about five days on either side of the solstice itself, there is little perceptible change to the naked eye in the direction of sunrise. If the azimuth scale (true bearings) is disregarded, Fig. 3 is also valid for

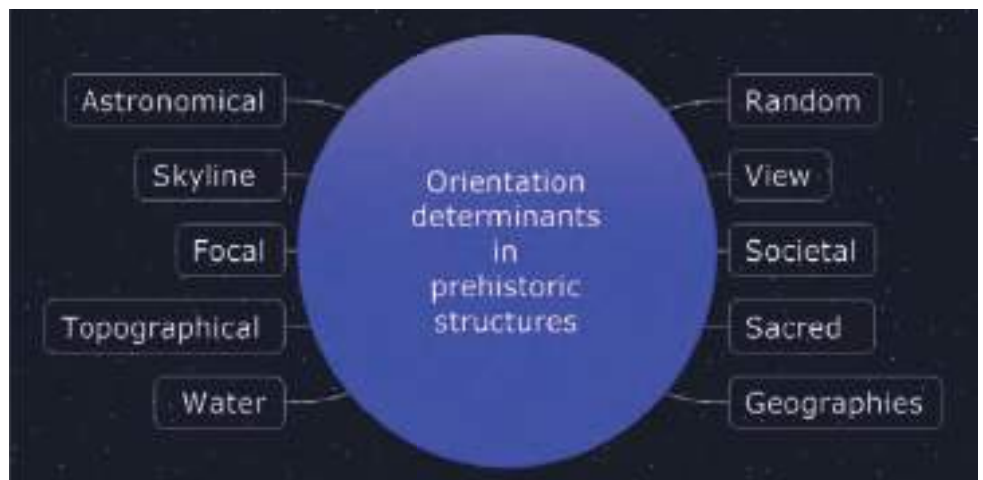
Below: Fig. 2—Annual apparent motion of the sun on the horizon.





Above: Fig. 3—Apparent motion of the sun on the horizon at five-day intervals close to winter solstice. Declination (δ) is the celestial equivalent of latitude on earth. Inset: limiting directions of sunrise and sunset at the solstices valid for Ireland.

Right: Fig. 4—Interpreting orientations in megalithic structures.



summer solstice sunset and, if reversed, for summer solstice sunrise and winter solstice sunset.

Important inferences and conclusions can be drawn from Fig. 3. Solar risings and settings at the solstices are unique, predictable and discernible. Interestingly, the actual day of solstice can be inferred by halving the number of observed days that elapse from the sun transiting and next returning to a fixed horizon marker positioned well away from the actual reversal point. It can be further shown by experimentation that distinctive topographical features on any horizon are easily memorised and serve as natural reference markers to predict an approaching solstice and turning point of the sun. In other words, there is no need for any artificial or technological aid in this task.

Solstitial alignment in Irish passage tombs

National archaeological records list 220 extant passage tombs on this island, with 136 of these having passages in sufficiently good condition to allow the character of their orientation to be measured and analysed. Interpreting these is fraught with difficulty, since we do not know the intentions of the builders. Nevertheless, if orientation data are considered from the broadest range of landscape, anthropological and cultural perspectives, meaningful interpretations compatible with the material culture of the tombs can be hypothesised (Fig. 4). It is prudent to

consider astronomical hypotheses only after other alignment alternatives have been examined.

There are 22 Irish passage tombs with extant passages and chambers indicative of intentional alignment on the sun at seasonally important dates in the solar cycle (Fig. 5). Their occurrence is well distributed throughout the island but is only a relatively small sample (16%) of the 136 measured orientations. The list includes seventeen examples of alignment on solstices, with little significant difference between those facing the sun at summer solstice (seven) and winter solstice (ten). The remaining five cases indicate an

orientation on sunrise or sunset at the period of the year approximately midway between the solstices, most notably at Cairn T in Loughcrew, Co. Meath.

Although we cannot eliminate the probability of chance to explain such claims, the following examples spectacularly capture the enduring phenomenon of solar illumination over the period of a solstice at selected sites. To witness these is a profound experience and links us with our Neolithic ancestors, who likely observed the same immutable astronomical phenomena.

Slieve Gullion passage tomb

Slieve Gullion (South Cairn), Co. Armagh (SMR: ARM028:007), has an octagonal corbelled chamber with an end recess reached by a 3m-long lintelled passage. Its elevation of 575m above sea level gives this tomb a commanding view of several counties. For a period of several days centred on 21 December, the rays of the setting sun flood the passage and chamber with light (Fig. 6). Interestingly, when viewed from within the chamber, the solar disc simultaneously sets behind the passage tomb complex at Loughcrew, some 60km distant in the same direction.

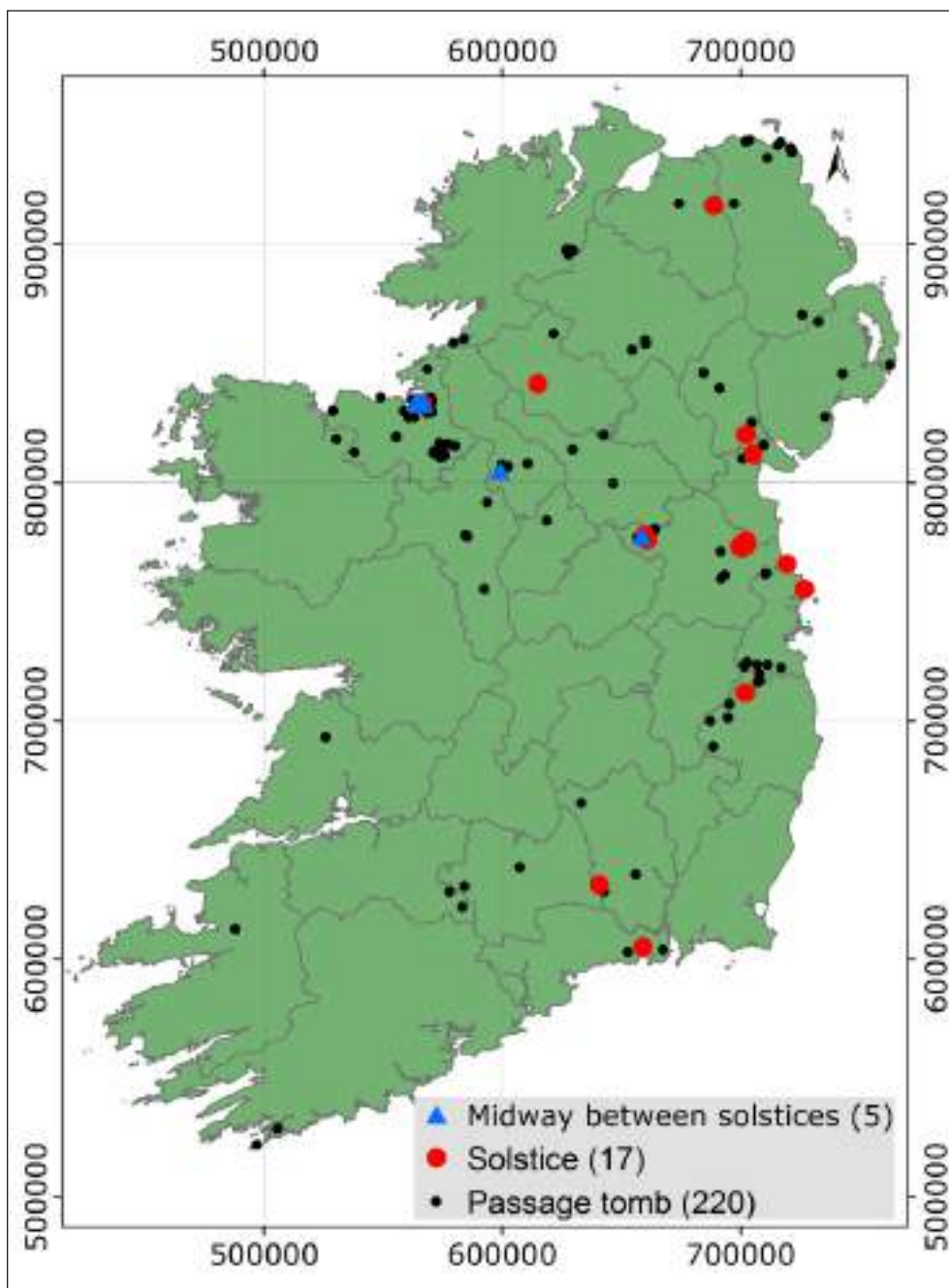
Thomastown passage tomb

The ruined passage tomb at Thomastown, Co. Meath (SMR: ME015-111), lies in an apparently inconspicuous location in a field 3km south-east of Cairn T (the highest tomb in the Loughcrew complex). A line of twelve boulders running north-west/south-east delineates the remains of a probable passage. Field surveys undertaken previously at the site indicate an obvious orientation towards Cairn T, on the summit of Carbane East in the north-west, and, simultaneously, towards the setting sun at the summer solstice (Fig. 7). This replicates the dualism recorded at Slieve Gullion and amplifies the symbolism of both alignments.

Knockroe passage tomb

In search of the sun

Unpredictable weather was surely just as much a part of the midwinter experience in Ireland around 3000 BC as it is today, making every solstice a unique occasion in terms of weather, solar visibility, cloud patterns and the location of the moon and various stars. The constant was the



movement of the sun, visible or not, as it travelled its predictable route.

On the morning of 21 December 2015 heavy rain was falling at Newgrange, which meant that the solstice festivities took place without the famous solar beam—*Hamlet* without the prince! Several hours later and some 140km to the south, Knockroe passage tomb, Co. Kilkenny (SMR KK034-019001), was bathed in winter sunshine and a large crowd stood spellbound as the setting sun descended to the horizon and sank out of sight in line with the western tomb. Conversely, on another midwinter day a few years earlier, an obliging morning at Newgrange had been followed by a strong

media presence at Knockroe later in the day—and a disappointing blanket of cloud. In 2016 it was another fine day, and as the solar spectacle played out at Knockroe the evening star was already visible just above the setting sun like an observing sentinel.

A notable double

Knockroe has a unique solstice distinction. It is the only known passage tomb with two solar alignments on midwinter days. In the morning, as a large crowd assembles at Newgrange, a few hardy souls gather at Knockroe to watch the sun rise from behind the hills beyond Tullaghought in line with the eastern tomb. It is more an event than a

spectacle: not only is the entrance to the tomb set back almost 2m from the kerb but also there is only a relatively short passage to provide a sight line. And yet, standing behind this tomb today, we can see that it opens to the spot on the horizon where the midwinter sun rises (Fig. 8).

The setting sun at Knockroe is easier to appreciate and the solstice spectacle currently attracts a crowd in the region of 100–200 people. There is no roof-box, not even a roof, and the chamber could hold no more than one or two people at most. Perhaps by way of compensation, however, the denuded cairn allows the entire crowd to stand in an arc behind the tomb and marvel at the spectacle, as the evening sun sinks behind the high ground of

Clashnasmut on the opposite side of the valley.

Newgrange roof-box

The illumination of Newgrange passage tomb (SMR ME019-045) at winter solstice sunrise is widely known and well documented. But a recent high-accuracy survey of the chamber and roof-box undertaken by one of the authors reveals that, contrary to popular belief and published imagery, only a portion of the sun's disc is now visible from the chamber. This is due to the combination of inward-leaning orthostats in the passage close to the chamber and a change in the tilt of the earth's axis since the monument was constructed. In Fig. 9 we show that, from a viewpoint taken in the centre of the burial chamber at floor level, the disc of the risen sun at winter solstice was central in the roof-box during the Neolithic and very likely lit the chamber more brightly and for more

days than is now the case. The direction of sunrise has already moved northwards by about two solar diameters since that time. This unstoppable drift will continue in the millennia ahead and will result in the onset of permanent darkness inside Newgrange beyond c. AD 5000. This cycle (obliquity) will reverse in c. AD 12,000 but the chamber will remain darkened until c. AD 19,000. Thereafter, the sun will again illuminate the interior of the tomb with direct sunlight. A cosmic catastrophe for Brú na Bóinne and future generations? Perhaps!

Waiting for the light

Other than at winter solstice, the climactic moment of each tour within the chamber of Newgrange begins when the lighting is dialled down and the orange glow of an electric lightbulb shines a streak of golden light on the floor of the chamber, in a manner similar to the solstice dawn. It is a

Below, left and right: **Fig. 6—Winter solstice sunset at Slieve Gullion passage tomb, Co. Armagh** (photo: Ken Williams). Local sunset begins c. 16:00 UTC.





Left and below: **Fig. 7—Summer solstice sunset behind Cairn T and Carnbane East, Co. Meath, viewed from Thomastown passage tomb (Cairn T is clearly visible in the bottom image) (photo: Ken Williams). Local sunset begins c. 21:27 UTC+1.**

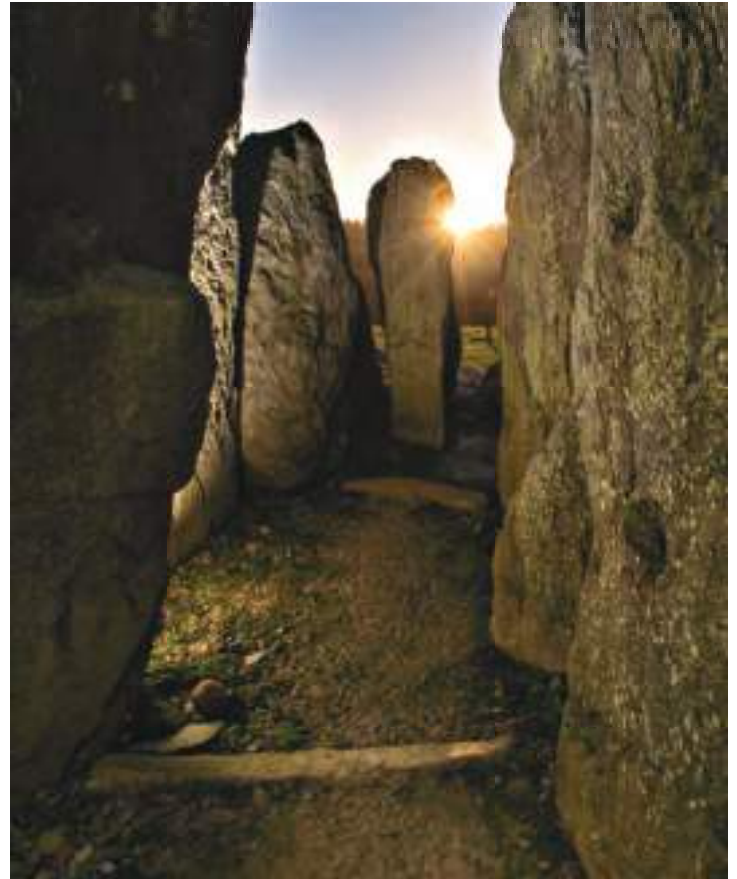
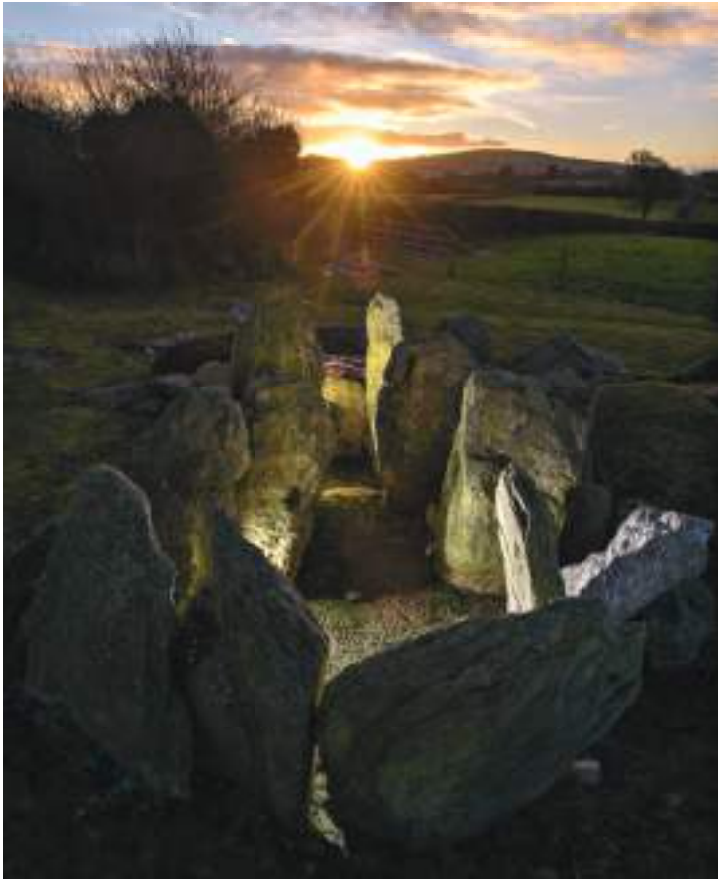
poor substitute for the real thing, the guides remind the visitors, and this is hardly an understatement. For those lucky enough to witness the blazing sun enter the dark chamber of a passage tomb, the experience is far more dramatic, and sometimes intensely emotional. Waiting in the dark, eyes become accustomed to the gloom, and then the first dagger of light burns through the dark, almost laser-like in its intensity. The simulation cannot convey how the widening beam of light animates the stone skeleton of the passage and chamber, illuminating the dark corners and casting slowly shifting shadows as the sun tracks its course above the horizon. Along the passage, the dust raised by the feet of the visitors and the moisture in the air swirl hypnotically within the beam.

To catch these moments on camera is a privilege and a challenge. The low entrances and narrow passages of the typical passage tomb ensure that, even on the rare occasions when the weather is amenable, the passing of the light is fleeting. The chambers can accommodate only a very small crowd, and only the most patient and determined observers will witness such events firsthand. As simple a tool as the camera is, the photographic record of these moments in the way the Neolithic builders experienced them, with their eyes their most complex instrument, contributes to our understanding and appreciation of these phenomena much more than measurements and statistics.

Conclusions

Writing about Newgrange in the context of religion in later prehistoric Ireland, the late Dáithí Ó hÓgáin recognised that a critical element of the transformation of Newgrange in later belief into the home of the father deity the Daghdha, his consort Bóinn and son Aonghus, and the burial place of the kings of Tara, was a recognition of its connection with the rising sun as a metaphor for rebirth. It is plausible to link this with the powerful presence of the remains of the dead originally placed in passage tombs during the Neolithic. This cosmological perspective appears to be the





best explanation of the focus placed by the builders on facing key passage tombs towards the sun at critical times of the year. Thinking more broadly, the marking and turning of the seasons and the agricultural cycle provide a critical underpinning of later Christian and other major religious systems.

At this remove we can only speculate on the significance of Neolithic interest in the solstices. It may have reflected basic concerns around the seasons, or perhaps an indication that the sun was seen to be itself a living being. These broad explanations do not sit easily, however, with the subtlety of passage tomb thinking as we know it from the art, architecture and funerary rites practised by those responsible for the passage tombs. They appear to have been a people who dealt in nuanced and complex references, some of them developed across

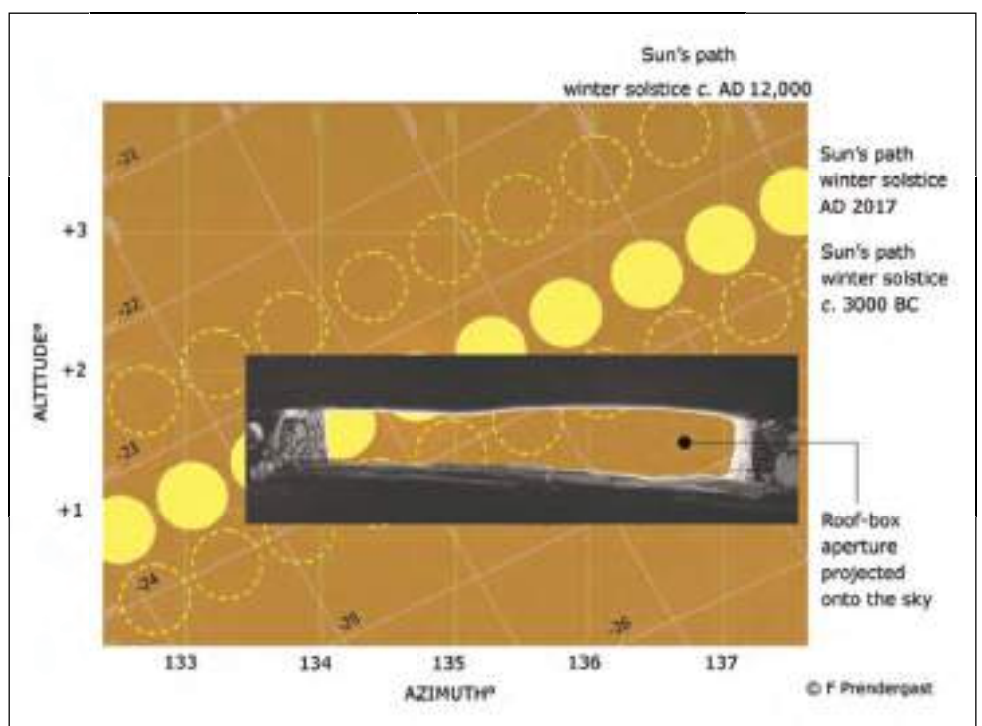
other parts of north-west Europe and even the Mediterranean region. This suggests that it is more likely that the sun was not so much an object of adoration in its own right but rather a symbol for something metaphysical in the mythology of the time.

It should not be surprising, then, that the orientation of passage tombs should have a particular resonance today for

people who are seeking a reconnection with prehistoric monuments as expressions of elementally based religious systems. At the same time, we have to be careful not to confuse cosmological beliefs grounded in a particular and complex cultural world-view during the Neolithic with our beliefs and knowledge of today. What we can share is this extra-ordinary seasonal phenomenon. ■

Above: Fig. 8—Winter solstice sunrise at the eastern tomb (left) and sunset at the western tomb (right), Knockroe, Co. Kilkenny (photo: Ken Williams). Local sunrise at the eastern tomb begins c. 08:30 UTC; local sunset at the western tomb begins c. 15:06 UTC.

Right: Fig. 9—Simulated view from the floor of Newgrange burial chamber through the roof-box.



Project Ireland 2040



TEXT BY FRANK SHALVEY

Ireland 2040 Plan sets out ambitious investment to come for Heritage sector.

On 10th April last, at an event in the National Gallery of Ireland HQ on Merrion Square in Dublin, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, accompanied by Ministers for Public Expenditure Pascal Donohoe and Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht Josepha Madigan, together with Minister of State for the Irish Language Joe Mc Hugh, set out the details of a Government investment plan in the broad heritage sector for the next 10 years, outlining spending on various strands of Ireland's cultural life of up to a total of almost €1.2 billion by 2027.



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

**Infheistíocht inár gCultúr,
inár dTeanga & inár nOidhreacht**
Investing in our Culture,
Language & Heritage
2018-2027





The Government have decided, as one of the overall strands of the broader *Project Ireland 2040* plan, to focus a particular attention on the culture, heritage and language sector, reinforcing the strong view that it possesses significant potential for wealth and job creation, as well as sustaining and enriching vibrant parts of our national cultural identity.

Plans for spending are divided across four main areas:

- Spending on capital development works for our National Cultural Institutions will amount to €460 million over 10 years.
- The arts will receive €265 million with an investment in a cultural and creativity programme.
- €285 million will be provided for natural and built heritage assets.
- €178 million will be provided for the Gaeltacht, the Irish language and the Islands.

The Government's commitment to provide this level of investment in capital funding for culture, heritage and language over a ten year period represents a major step-change in the State's approach to cultural investment. Combined with the commitment to double expenditure on the arts over the next seven

years, the vision set out in the *Culture 2025* policy and the *Creative Ireland Programme*, this represents a highly significant commitment to culture.



▲ Above: National Library of Ireland

The Plan is designed with three broad objectives:

- To enhance cultural participation for all citizens,
- To promote and celebrate Ireland as a centre of cultural excellence, a source of rich natural and built heritage and the home of one of Europe's oldest and richest languages,
- To ensure that Ireland reaps the economic rewards of our rich resources of cultural creativity.

▲ Facing page: Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Minister for PER Pascal Donoghue & Minister for CHG, Josepha Madigan at the launch of the Heritage & Culture strand of Ireland 2040 project April 2018.

▲ Above left: Natural History Museum, Dublin

▲ Above right: Ross Cattle as approached

The vision behind these choices was first articulated in the Creative Ireland Programme launched after the 2016 Commemoration Year, where the core proposition stated that participation in cultural activity drives personal and collective creativity, with significant implications for individual and societal wellbeing and achievement. What the Government wants to achieve therefore is to ensure that everyone,

wherever they live, has the opportunity to participate in some type of cultural activity, to develop their own creativity and to deepen their sense of belonging. It is well understood that a sense of belonging and the Irish people's deeply felt sense of place are core national values; something that becomes more apparent perhaps in a fast changing and globalised world and the spending proposals are designed to make these choices, and participation in them, better and more easily accessible to citizens.

The Heritage and Culture strand of *Project Ireland 2040* which was addressed at the National Gallery event has a central focus on both valuing existing assets and in making new places and experiences; investing in infrastructure that enhances our cultural wealth, celebrates our built and natural heritage and supports our unique language and traditions. The Government believes that Cultural, heritage and language institutions and organisations all around the country have existed through the recent downturn, when they continued to work with communities with imagination and innovation, sustaining the cultural life of the country in difficult times. Now, with the economy recovering, the Government have decided to make a multi-annual investment commitment, with substantially increased funding over the next ten years for key spending priorities. This will allow various Departments and Agencies working within these areas – including the OPW – to plan and deliver major investments in our culture and heritage, and deliver significant enhancements in the range and quality of public engagement opportunities with our rich cultural heritage.

The breakdown of proposed spending is as follows:

Though there are a clearly a broad number of areas where the investment will touch on, two strands of the Plan in particular will have a direct relevance to the Office of Public Works in the coming years.

Investment in National Cultural Institutions	€460m
Caring for our National Monuments	€30m

Investment in our National Cultural Institutions

Under Pillar 3 of the *Creative Ireland Programme*, the Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht will, in the years immediately ahead, support individual Cultural Institutions in an ambitious development and improvement of our key cultural infrastructure. Many of these Institutions are housed in historic buildings which are in the care of the OPW and, while they add significantly to the cultural experience for citizens and visitors, significant investment is needed to bring them up to modern international standards. This is now critical for display and performance but also for fundamental health and safety and universal access reasons.

The investment plan therefore envisages a significant increase in investment in the National Cultural Institutions to revamp and modernise their facilities both in terms of visitor experience and storage of our national collections – one of the largest single commitments to investment in our cultural institutions in the history of the State.

Over the period 2018 to 2027, the Government intends to invest €460m in a significant number of capital projects in our National Cultural Institutions.

Indicative investment levels for key projects are:

Investing in our Culture, Language &

National Library of Ireland
National Archives
National Museum of Ireland
National Concert Hall
Crawford Art Gallery
National Gallery of Ireland
Abbey Theatre
Irish Museum of Modern Art
Chester Beatty Library
Essential maintenance and remedial works in

Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027

Investment in National Cultural Institutions	€460m
Investment in local arts and culture infrastructure nationwide	€40m
Investment in the digitisation of our National Collections	€10m
Investment in Media Production and Audio Visual Industry	€200m
Galway European Capital of Culture	€15m
Investment in our National Parks and Nature Reserves	€50m
Caring for our Historic Environment	€85m
Celebrating and Investing in our Built Heritage	€60m
Caring for our National Monuments	€30m
Protecting our Natural heritage and Biodiversity	€60m
Investment underpinning the Gaeltacht Language Planning Process	€33m
Investment by Údarás na Gaeltachta in job creation	€105m
Investment in Irish Language Networks, in Gaeltacht Service Towns and in a	
Dublin City Language and Cultural Hub	€13m
Investment in islands and island marine infrastructure	€27m
Total	€1,188m

These projects will entail substantial capital investment projects being performed in each location and will require a major effort combining vision, planning and coordination by a significant number of the parties centrally involved. The full role of the OPW in respect of these has yet to be fully determined but it is certainly clear that the potential is being created for one of the single most important capital development programmes in the sector which, managed properly, will have the potential to significantly improve a range of public access facilities, curatorial and research provision and the infrastructure for exhibition and interpretation in these buildings where OPW has a key asset management responsibility.

Heritage 2018 – 2027	
	€23m
	€22m
	€85m
	€78m
	€22m
	€54m
	€80m
	€36m
	€20m
these historic buildings.	€40m
Total	€460m

Caring for our National Monuments (€30m)

The policy background for the proposals within the Plan for investment in our Culture, Language and Heritage are set out in a number of recent strategies:

- Éire Ildánach - Culture 2025 the Government's cultural framework policy;
- Clár Éire Ildánach - the Creative Ireland Programme
- The 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030;
- Heritage Ireland 2030, a new National Heritage Plan which is being developed;
- The National Parks' Tourism

Interpretative Masterplan currently being developed;

- The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021.

The priorities also support other key economic and policy framework analyses:

- Realising our Rural Potential - the Action Plan for Rural Development;
- The National Development Plan and Ireland 2040 – The National Planning Framework;
- People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025.

The planned funding for the National Monuments estate managed and maintained by the OPW Heritage Service sits directly within the Government's priority area and is set to benefit from this key funding support. Ireland has thousands of unique archaeological monuments which represent over 7,000 years of settlement on this island. They are in every locality and community and provide tangible links to our ancient past, a sense of place for communities and focal points for both social enjoyment and economic regeneration. With over 780 of the most prominent National Monuments and sites in state care, investment over the most recent years of the economic downturn has been limited to maintenance operations for the most part and small scale conservation works have only been possible on a strictly prioritised basis. To protect and enhance our heritage estate, the Government has firmly indicated that it will, over the course of the Development Plan, increase investment in Ireland's National Monument sites and work with the OPW to ensure that these sites are conserved and presented to the highest quality. Where feasible, additional sites and monuments will also be acquired and access for the

public improved. The quality of the visitor facilities will also be improved throughout including enhanced animation of the sites, improvements to interpretation facilities and upgrades to the visitor infrastructure at all of our primary national monument sites. Key projects included in the planned improvement works programme will be at Brú na Bóinne, Tara, Céide Fields, Clonmacnoise, Skellig Michael, the Rock of Cashel and other key ancient sites right around the country.

The Government view is that carefully planned investment in our heritage estate and the visitor infrastructure which supports it, represents a significant boost not alone for the fabric of these historic places, but also strengthens the capacity of these sites to support the tourism economy. Recent Fáilte Ireland initiatives such as *Ireland's Ancient East* have proven that there is a huge appetite among foreign tourists for Ireland's historic past and, as the economy continues to improve, a strategic investment in this estate will ensure that our culture and built heritage takes its proper place at the heart of Ireland's social and economic regeneration and helps position Ireland as an internationally renowned centre of excellence and quality. *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027*, sets out a modern and progressive approach to developing and protecting our culture, language and heritage and the provision of funding to support the needs of the National Monuments estate in particular is a key part of the Government's response.

It is clear therefore that key parts of the Heritage estate, whether it is the stock of significant Listed buildings used for Cultural Institutions, National Historic Properties and Gardens or National Monuments in either ownership or Guardianship, are set for a major boost in the years ahead. Clearly, the Conservation mission of the OPW remains core to all that we do, but it is also apparent that this development offers a major opportunity to make some defining choices in relation to this unique estate in the period immediately ahead which will allow it to continue to flourish and adapt to the needs of Irish society and visitors for many years to come.



CASTLETOWN HOUSE

Accredited for
Excellence in Customer Service
by Fáilte Ireland



Castletown House, Celbridge, Co. Kildare Accredited for Excellence in Customer Service by Fáilte Ireland, May 2018

The Programme is aimed at helping tourism attractions and businesses reach the highest standards in customer care, which can result in major benefits such as business growth, additional repeat business, increased visitor spend and positive recommendations.

Pictured Pauline Kennedy, Castletown House and Kevin Brown, Fáilte Ireland with staff from Castletown House.

Picture by Shane O'Neill, SON Photographic

Castletown House in Cellbridge has become the first Visitor Attraction Centre in Kildare to complete Fáilte Ireland's Accredited Services Excellence Programme. The Programme is aimed at helping tourism attractions and businesses reach the highest standards in customer care, which can result in major benefits such as business growth, additional repeat business, increased visitor spend and positive recommendations.

Speaking at the presentation of the accreditation to Castletown House, Martina Bromley, Head of Enterprise & Hospitality at Fáilte Ireland said that the Programme is an important aspect of Fáilte Ireland's business development and training supports.

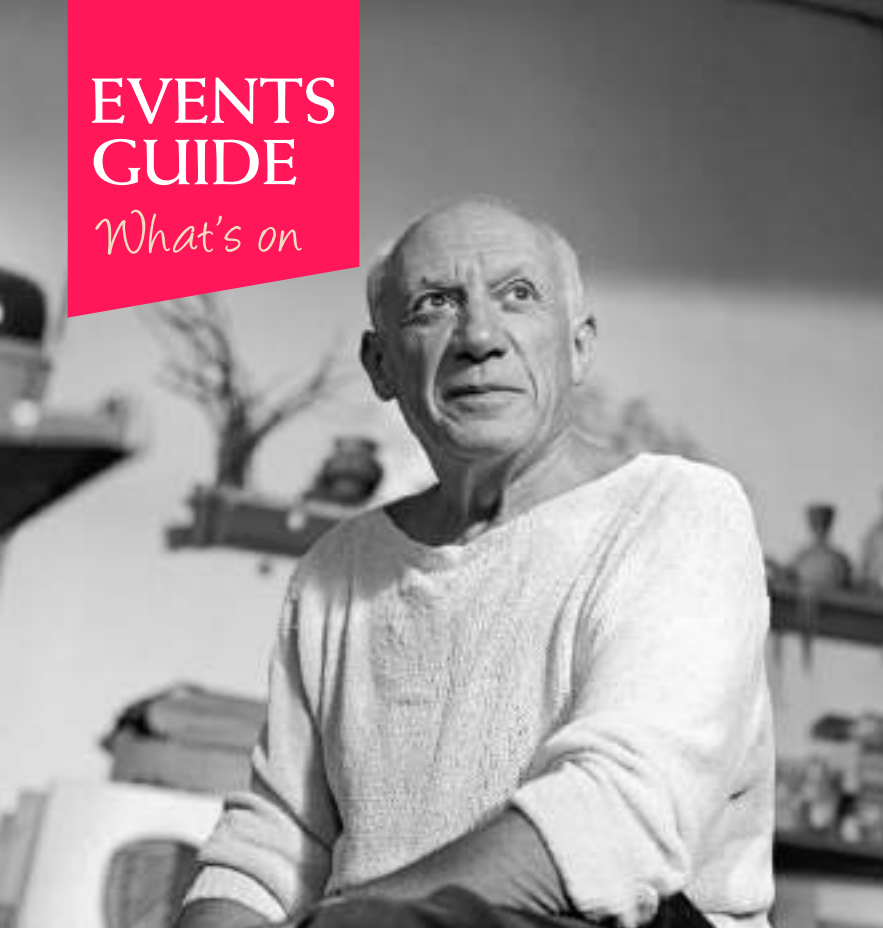
"The Accredited Service Excellence Programme is aimed at helping tourism businesses strengthen competitiveness and to help differentiate Ireland from its international competitors as a location where the customer is at the centre of everything a business will do. It provides an opportunity for the Irish tourism industry to be recognised for 'best in class' customer service and great visitor experiences and we are delighted to present Castletown House with its accreditation."

Pauline Kennedy, Supervisor Guide at Castletown on accepting the Award said that the presentation of the accreditation was recognition of the dedication of the guiding team from the OPW at Castletown House to maintain excellence in customer service.

"This accreditation from Fáilte Ireland is testament of the hard work and dedication of our knowledgeable and professional team of guides. At Castletown House, we have always considered the public to be at the core of everything we do. The awarding of the accreditation will help ensure that our customer service continues to deliver excellence and ensures that every customer has a memorable experience when they visit."

► Kildare's Castletown House Accredited for Excellence in Customer Service
Pictured are Pauline Kennedy, Castletown House and Kevin Brown, Fáilte Ireland. Picture by Shane O'Neill, SON Photographic





MY FRIEND PICASSO:

125 photographs by Edward Quinn

EXHIBITION:

4 May – 2 September

Castletown Gallery, 2nd Floor

Discover the world of one of the greatest modern painters – Pablo Picasso – through the lens of Irish-born photographer Edward Quinn at Castletown House this summer. A testament to the friendship that developed between the two men in 1951 and lasted until Picasso's death in 1973, the exhibition is an unmissable opportunity to see Quinn's works for the first time in Ireland.

Edward Quinn was born in Dublin in 1920 and settled on the French Riviera in 1949, where he worked as a photographer, capturing the era's greatest stars in unstaged, enchanting images. His friendship with Picasso greatly influenced his work and resulted in 10,000 photos, several books and films about the artist. Collaborations with other artists followed, including Max Ernst, Georg Baselitz, Francis Bacon and Salvador Dali. Quinn's affinity with artists encompassed the works of his compatriot James Joyce, to whom he dedicated the volume *James Joyce's Dublin* (1974) and which garnered Samuel Beckett's praise for "capturing the atmosphere, humour and essence of Joyce's Dublin."

Carefully curated by Jean-Louis Andral of Musée Picasso in Antibes, the photographs in this exhibition beautifully illuminate Picasso's personality and record his life and work on the Côte d'Azur in the 1950s and 60s. Here are photos of Picasso in his ceramics and painting studios as well as glimpses of his family life, starting with intimate family shots of him and Françoise Gilot with their children Claude and Paloma. As the years progress, a new muse enters, Jacqueline Roque, who became Picasso's second wife and can be seen at his side until the end. The last photographs are highly evocative still lifes of Picasso's studio in Mougins, a year after his death.

This is your chance to see the exhibition that has already charmed visitors in Antibes, the Danubiana in Bratislava and the Kunstmuseum Pablo Picasso Münster in one of Ireland's most magnificent country houses, a mere stone's throw away from Dublin.

To coincide with this exhibition, we have organised a mini film festival entitled 'Art & Love' in July and a special tour of *My Friend Picasso* with David Davison, one of Ireland's most acclaimed photographers on Sunday, 15 July. During Heritage Week in August, photographer Mark Reddy will run a photography workshop in Castletown for those keen to learn the tricks of the trade.

Admission to the exhibition is included in your ticket to Castletown House.



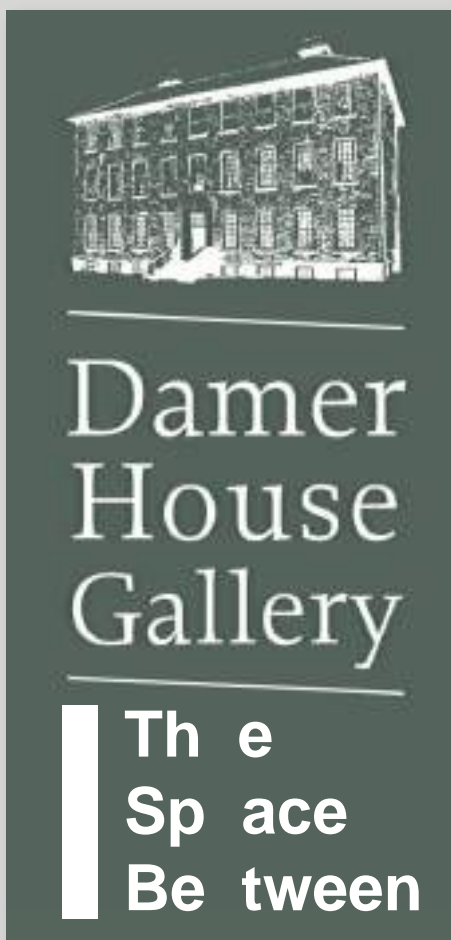
Castletown House is open from 16th
March to 4th November 2018,
10am to 6pm daily
www.castletown.ie

Musée Picasso, Antibes





- Above:
Picasso and Jacqueline
with Esmeralda, the goat
he received from
Jacqueline. La Californie,
Cannes, Christmas 1956.
Photos Edward Quinn,
© edwardquinn.com
- Far left:
Edward Quinn, Leica III
- Left: Picasso playing the
trumpet



The Space Between – Exhibition

The Space Between exhibition is in Damer House Gallery at Roscrea Heritage Centre until 1st July. This annual joint touring exhibition of artworks from the collections of the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the Republic of Ireland and the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) of Northern Ireland features 38 artworks from these public collections, north and south. The exhibition was curated by 12 undergraduate students studying on the BDes Graphic Design and Illustration course from Belfast School of Art, Ulster University, working with the curatorial teams in the Department of Finance, Belfast and the OPW, Dublin over two days to select artworks from their respective public art collections.

The title of the exhibition reflects the students' approach to the process as their discussions and debates on the final selection of artworks reflected 'The Space Between' – the space between the disciplines of graphic design and art and also between each student's initial instinctive preferences and the decisions made as a group to create an interesting exhibition with a strong visual dynamic.

Entrance to the exhibition is free.

Roscrea Heritage Centre - Roscrea Castle and Damer House,
Castle Street, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary

T +353 (0505) 21850 E: roscreaheritage@opw.ie



The Space Between



► *Top, L-R:*
Elinor Sherwood
Michael Craig-Martin
Sam Le Bas

► *Right:*
Lucy McKenna

'Unsundered spirits': The prison writings of Dorothy Macardle

TEXT BY BRIAN CROWLEY

The Irish writer Dorothy Macardle was among several hundred women imprisoned for their support of the Republican/Anti-Treaty side during the Irish Civil War.

Arrested in November 1922, Dorothy Macardle spent six months as a prisoner in Mountjoy Prison, Kilmainham Gaol and the North Dublin Union. This period of what she described as 'complete enforced irresponsibility' allowed her the opportunity to explore her interest in creative writing and resulted in a collection of nine ghost stories which she published the following year under the title *Earth-bound*. Dorothy Macardle and her prison writings form the subject of Kilmainham Gaol Museum's latest exhibition - *"Unsundered Spirits": The Prison Writing of Dorothy Macardle*.

Dorothy Macardle was an unlikely revolutionary. Her father was Sir Thomas Macardle, a wealthy brewer from Dundalk in Co. Louth, while her mother, Minnie Lucy Ross, was a member of an upper-class English military family. Unusually for a woman at that time, Macardle secured a university degree. She lived and worked for several years in Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare where she was ran a conference for teachers of English as part of the annual Shakespeare Festival. She returned to Dublin in 1917 in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising and became a teacher in her former



An exhibition in Kilmainham Gaol Museum
17 April – 30 September, 2018

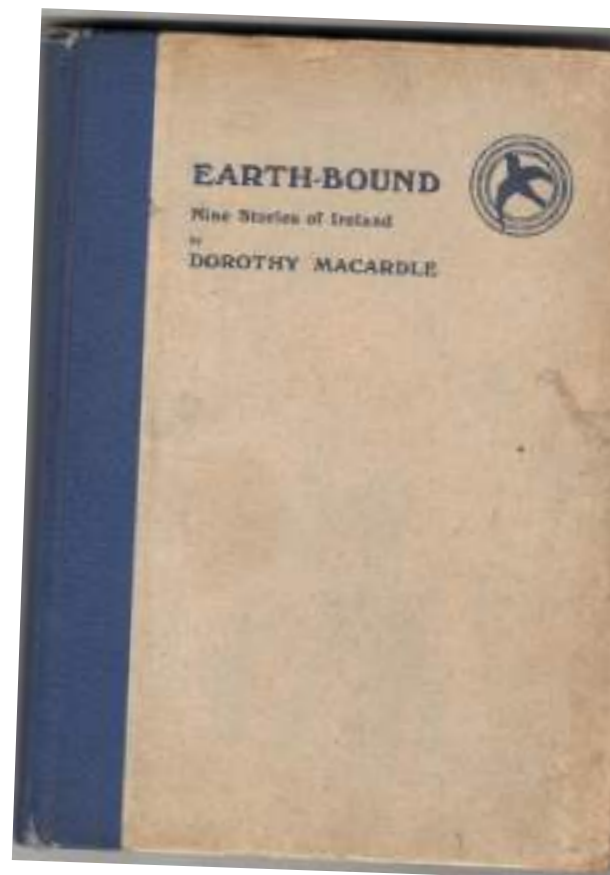
kilmainhamgaolmuseum.ie
facebook.com/kilmainhamgaolmuseum/

school, the prestigious Alexandra College. Despite the school's support of British rule in Ireland, Macardle became involved in the Irish revolutionary movement. She was particularly influenced by prominent and charismatic Irish Republican Maud Gonne MacBride whom she had first met through Irish literary circles. She eventually rented rooms in her home at 73, St. Stephen's Green and assisted Gonne MacBride with her political activities during the Irish War of Independence.

Dorothy Macardle took the Anti-Treaty side during the Irish Civil War and wrote political articles for Republican newspapers. She was a frequent visitor to the Sinn Féin party's Dublin headquarters on Suffolk Street and on 9 November, 1922 she and several other women were arrested there during a raid by Free State forces. She joined several other female political prisoners in Mountjoy Prison, including Mary MacSwiney who was on hunger strike. Macardle's early weeks in prison were dominated by caring for MacSwiney and trying to publicize the serious state of her health in the outside press.

Macardle primarily turned to writing as a way of coping with her time in prison. While she

composed some poems and a play during her time in Mountjoy Prison and Kilmainham Gaol, she mainly concentrated on writing the stories which went on to form *Earth-bound: Nine Stories of Ireland*. While some of the ghost stories in *Earth-bound* reflect traditional Irish folk beliefs and mythology, others are set against the backdrop of the recent War of Independence. Macardle also drew inspiration from her experience of being in prison. One of the stories, 'The Prisoner', is set in Kilmainham Gaol and tells of a modern-day Irish revolutionary who is haunted by the ghost of a prisoner from the time of the 1798 Rebellion. She dedicated each story in the collection to one of her fellow female prisoners, using only their initials to identify them. To coincide with this exhibition, a special display on these nine women has been also been created in the Civil War section of the main Museum. Each woman is represented by an object related to her from the Museum's collection, including a chair leg used as a bat by Sighe Humphreys when playing games of rounders in the prison



► Below left: Maud Gonne MacBride, Charlotte Despard and Dorothy Macardle inspect the ruins of the hosiery factory in Balbriggan, Co. Dublin which was burnt down by British forces on 20 September 1920.

► Above: *Earth-bound: Nine Stories of Ireland* was published in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1924.

yard, a spoon and knife smuggled out of Mountjoy Prison by Eithne Coyle, and a detention order for Teresa O'Connell, signed by General Richard Mulcahy in 1923.

Following her release from prison, Dorothy Macardle became a full-time writer. *The Tragedies of Kerry*, which she published in 1924, was based on her investigation into atrocities carried out by Free State soldiers during the Civil War. A close friend of Eamon de Valera, she was a founder member of his political party, Fianna Fáil, and became a theatre and film critic for his *Irish Press* newspaper in 1931. She also wrote on social and economic issues, particularly those which affected women and children. *The Irish Republic*, her history of Ireland from the 1916 Rising to the Civil War, appeared in 1937.

Concerned about the rise of fascism in Europe in the 1930s, Dorothy



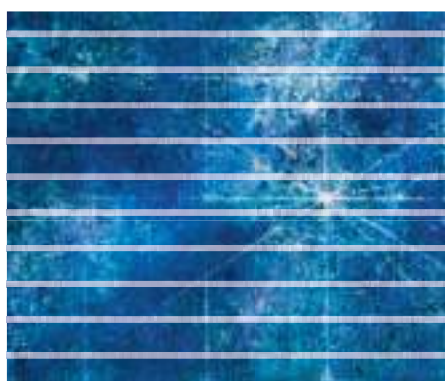
Macardle moved to London during World War II to support the war effort through journalism and humanitarian work. After the war she wrote *The Children of Europe*, a devastating account of the impact of the Nazi regime on the lives of children. She also continued to write plays and stories. Her lifelong fascination with the paranormal, which she explored in the *Earth-Bound* stories, was reflected in the plot of her first novel, *An Uneasy Freehold*. This gothic tale of a haunted house in the English West Country was adapted into a Hollywood film under the title *The Uninvited* in 1944. She returned to live in Ireland in 1945 and her next novel, *Enchanted Summer* (later renamed *The Unforeseen*) was a supernatural story set in the Wicklow mountains. Other books followed including her final work, *Shakespeare, Man and Boy*, which was published three years after her death in 1958.

***Unsundered Spirits: The Prison Writings of Dorothy Macardle* runs at Kilmainham Gaol Museum until Sunday, September 30th.**

► Right: Illustrated card made by Lily O'Brennan in Kilmainham Gaol on 29 April 1923 featuring 'Captivity', a poem by Dorothy Macardle.



Image of the exhibition



PATHWAYS TO THE COSMOS

Dublin Castle 15 September 2018



This one-day conference is organised by Archaeology Ireland on behalf of the National Monuments Service at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Office of Public Works to mark European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.



PATHWAYS TO THE COSMOS

—the alignment of megalithic tombs in Ireland and Atlantic Europe

PATHWAYS TO THE COSMOS—the alignment of megalithic tombs in Ireland and Atlantic Europe is a one-day conference exploring the connections between Ireland and Atlantic Europe and the likely role and meaning of the dark sky to our prehistoric ancestors as a response to the growing interest in astronomical heritage and the importance of the 'Dark Sky'. It also illustrates the importance of this heritage and of megalithic tombs for communities and for cultural tourism.

An interdisciplinary gathering of eminent scholars and practitioners will explore connections between archaeology and cultural astronomy, linking the physical evidence and more intangible aspects such as the cultural ideas, beliefs and ceremonies of Neolithic and Bronze Age societies, with a focus on the seasonally changing skyline.

SPEAKERS WILL INCLUDE:

- Professor Richard Bradley (University of Reading)
- Professor Gabriel Cooney (University College Dublin)
- Professor Jane Downes (University of Highlands and Islands, Orkney)
- Roisin Fitzpatrick (Artist, www.roisinfitzpatrick.com)
- Professor Muirís O'Sullivan (University College Dublin)
- Dr Frank Prendergast (Dublin Institute of Technology)
- Professor Clive Ruggles (University of Leicester)
- Professor Chris Scarre (University of Durham)
- Dr Fabio Silva (UCL Institute of Archaeology and University of Wales Trinity Saint David)
- Clare Tuffy (Office of Public Works, Brú na Bóinne)
- Ken Williams (Photographer, <https://blog.shadowsandstone.com>)

DATE: 15 September 09.15–17.30

VENUE: Hibernia Conference Centre, Dublin Castle

COST: €25 incl. tea/coffee and light lunch (soup and sandwich). Early booking advised

CONCESSIONS: €20 Students | Seniors | Archaeology Ireland subscribers

Eventbrite: (www.eventbrite.ie/e/pathways-to-the-cosmos-tickets-45383757039)

Or contact the Archaeology Ireland/Wordwell office to book
00 353 1 2933568 | email Helen@wordwellbooks.com

Face to Face

Anthony Palliser's Irish Portraits

The portrait is disappearing now, wrote the French poet Yves Bonnefoy in 1991, 'a bad sign for the future'. The portrait hasn't disappeared, any more than the landscape, but it would indeed be a bad sign if it did. It would mean we had lost interest in the unique human life with its unique vision, such a vision as is celebrated here with devotion and skill of the first magnitude." - Derek Mahon (2009; Preface to the Anthony Palliser exhibition catalogue, Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, USA).



Browne, Garech

Over sixty portraits of more than thirty renowned Irish cultural figures, completed over a sixteen-year period by the Anglo-Belgian painter Anthony Palliser, will be on display at Farmleigh Gallery, in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, from Friday 1st June until Sunday 2nd September. The exhibition is being presented by the Office of Public Works and the British Council, as a major contribution to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

Featured in the exhibition will be paintings and drawings of individuals who have, over the past fifty years, contributed significantly to the development of Irish cultural life and its international reputation and appreciation. These include Seamus

Heaney, Derek Mahon, Thomas Kinsella, Edna O'Brien, John Boorman, Colm Tóibín, Nuala ní Dhomhnaill, Brian Friel, Bill Whelan, John Banville, Sinead Cusack, John Montague, Paul Muldoon, John Hurt and the Honourable Garech Browne, amongst many others. To be unveiled at the exhibition will be Palliser's recently-completed portrait of President Michael D. Higgins.

Anthony Palliser was born in Brussels in 1949, the son of Sir Michael Palliser and Marie Marguerite Spaak. His paternal grandfather was Admiral Sir Eric Palliser, an important British naval officer during the Second World War, and his maternal grandfather was Paul-Henri Spaak, the Belgian statesman and one of the founding fathers of the European Union.

Having received his early education at the Catholic Downside school, Palliser briefly attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and went on to graduate from New College Oxford, after which, in 1971, he moved to his beloved Paris, where he still lives with his wife, Diane Lawyer.

Forever working and tackling different themes, Palliser has produced many first-rate portraits of a wide variety of internationally recognised personalities and friends from the worlds of the arts and politics, including Marianne Faithful, Kenzo Takada, Kristin Scott Thomas, Sir Michael Howard and Charlotte Rampling, to name but a few. His masterful portrait of Graham Greene hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in London.

Palliser's selection of Irish subjects began in 2002 with a painting of the poet Derek Mahon, to whom he was introduced by Garech Browne of Luggala. A long-time friend of Browne, it was through him that Palliser developed his contacts and relationships with many of the individuals who are featured in this exhibition.

The art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon recently compared the portrait to a time machine. It is in exactly this context that Palliser's exceptional paintings and drawings work so well,

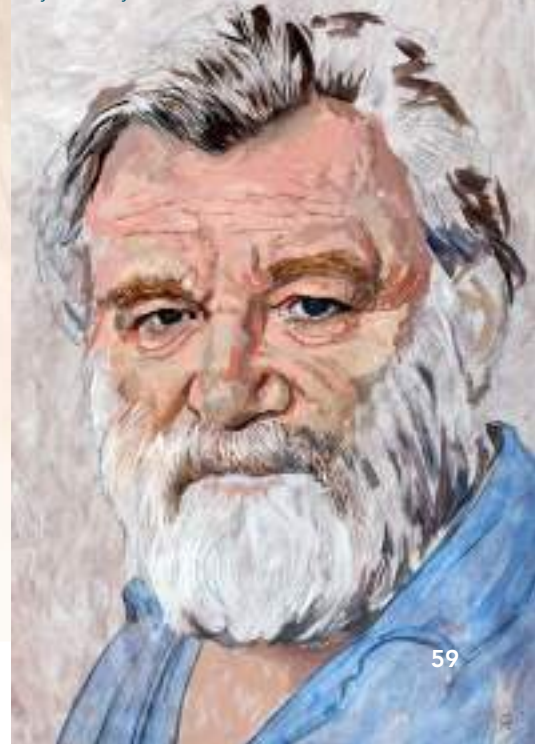
capturing each sitter at a particular moment in time, usually at the peak of their artistic powers and standing, and, in this case, especially in regards to the widespread recognition that they have received, at home and abroad, for their contributions to Irish culture.

Through his brush, pen and pencil, Palliser has distilled, to the fundamental spiritual level, the character of each of his subjects. The result is a peeling away of the outward, self-protecting layers of each person's public persona and the laying bare, for all to see, face to face, of each sitter's inner, private world. From the drawing of a simple line, their essence and dignity has been gently revealed.

This exhibition has been curated by Kieran Owens, on behalf of the Office of Public Works. It is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue, containing essays by John Boorman, Lara Marlowe and Sophie Gorman. The Exhibition was launched on the 31st May by Sean Rainbird, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland.

'Face to Face - Anthony Palliser's Irish Portraits' runs at Farmleigh Gallery, in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, from Friday 1st June until Sunday 2nd September 2018.

Portrait below: Gleeson, Brendan
by Anthony Palliser





NATIONAL HERITAGE WEEK 2018 18-26 AUG

The Heritage Council is inviting everyone in Ireland to share their stories and make new connections during Heritage Week 2018.

From 18 to 26 August we celebrate our natural, built and cultural heritage with over 2,000 events happening across the country.

TEXT: NIAMH DONNELLAN

Coordinated by the Heritage Council, Heritage Week is Ireland's most popular cultural event and this year over 550,000 people are expected to take part. Through Heritage Week, the Heritage Council raises awareness of Ireland's rich heritage and encourages people to remember the value and beauty of heritage in a time where so many other issues and events compete for our attention.

During Heritage Week, take the opportunity to learn more about built, cultural and natural heritage. Find out more about Ireland's heritage through tours, walks, talks, exhibitions, outdoor activities and much more. From castle tours to storytelling for children, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Most Heritage Week events are family-friendly and free of charge so that Ireland's heritage can be accessed and appreciated by all.

Two very special days take place during Heritage Week 2018. Wednesday 22 August is Wild Child Day and is dedicated to wild children everywhere with hundreds of great events planned. Children can become history detectives, explore nature trails and lots more.

Sunday 26 August is Water Heritage Day in partnership with the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office. Celebrate water, our most precious natural resource, with events based around (and on!) rivers, canals, lakes and seas. Communities the length and breadth of the country will share local stories, traditions and songs through waterside walks, talks and activities.

Heritage is the fabric of our lives and societies. It surrounds us in the buildings of our towns and cities and is expressed through natural landscapes and archaeological sites. It is not only made up of literature, art and objects but also by the crafts we learn, the stories we tell, the food we eat and the films we watch. Heritage brings communities together and builds shared understandings of the places we live in. The digital world too, is transforming the way we access heritage.

Heritage Week 2018 is a highlight of Ireland's celebration of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, an initiative by the European Commission coordinated in Ireland by the Heritage Council. It is part of a year of events, activities and celebrations all around Europe.

Heritage Week is part of European Heritage Days. These are a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Union in which over forty countries participate each year. The main aim of European Heritage Days are to promote awareness of our built, natural and cultural heritage and to promote Europe's common cultural heritage. Every year millions of Europeans visit historical monuments and sites throughout Europe on European Heritage Days. In Ireland we celebrate European Heritage Days with a full week of events throughout National Heritage Week.

Across the country, the Office of Public Works will be taking part in Heritage Week with an incredible variety of indoor and outdoor events for all ages. Many other national organisations and hundreds of local community organisations participate in Heritage Week. The diverse programme of events highlights the abundance of great work that is carried out in all communities in Ireland to preserve and promote our built, cultural and natural heritage.

Our heritage belongs to everyone so get involved, share a story and make a connection during Heritage Week.



► Below: Heritage Week at Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre.

► Above right: Doe Castle, Donegal

► Above: Heritage Week, Tintern Abbey, Wexford



National Heritage Week:
18-26 August 2018.

For more information and event
listings, visit www.heritageweek.ie

20 FREE THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER!

TEXT BY BREDA LYNCH

Come with us on a journey, through Ireland's magical past! This summer follow in the footsteps of princesses, witches and knights and take a trip to some of our country's best kept secrets.

Follow in the footsteps of Patrick Pearse and visit the location where the teacher and poet planned rebellion. Explore the only remaining medieval Parish Church in Dublin and learn about the guilds of the city. Find the connection between a monkey on a shield and one of Ireland's greatest families at Maynooth Castle.

Explore the origins of Europe's largest enclosed urban park at the Phoenix Park. Take some time to relax or play at the People's Flower Garden before you check out the tower house and display at Ashtown Castle. If you visit on a Saturday you may even get to visit the residence of the President of Ireland at Áras an Uachtaráin and marvel at the collection of gifts received by our presidents on behalf of the nation.

With over 15,000 plant species the National Botanic Gardens are a crowded place. We still have space for you though! Be sure to try out the tropical climate in the great palm house and take some time to smell the roses or join a tour and find out much more about the huge collection.

Enjoy a quieter pace in county Wicklow where you can wander through the dappled light at Kilmacurragh Gardens; all the while imagining what it was like to live on the estate and then travel the world, bringing back many of the plants you will see on your visit.

At Ferns Castle you can climb the same steps once used by lords, ladies and knights. At the top of the castle look out across the fields and mountains, knowing you are looking at the same fields where the

Normans advanced ... Drive some of that route through the beautiful Blackstairs mountains to visit the Templar chapel at St Mary's where you can take a selfie beside a knight in armour! Or try on some armour yourself at Ballyhack Castle. Transport yourself back to the medieval banquets once held at Desmond Hall and discover how to survive a siege at Listowel Castle.

At Kells Priory surrounded by walls, towers and river you can imagine how the defenses kept the enemy out. While enjoying the sound of birdsong and the splash of an otter you might be lucky enough to see a kingfisher flash by as you take the river walk to the 200 year old mill nearby.

The mighty power of rivers was harnessed to turn mill wheels used to grind corn for bread making. At Newmills in Co Donegal you can watch as one of the largest millwheels in the country still turns the corn-grinding equipment, just as it did 400 years ago.

Iron Age people constructed roadways before our history books were even written! You can see these very roads for yourself at Corlea and try to figure out how, over 2,000 years ago, our ancestors made roadways without any machinery.

Over time rebellion, sieges and banquets gave way to a different way of life. Find out more about law and order when you visit the 17th century courthouse in Clonmel. At Dungarvan Castle you can cover centuries of Irish history in moments, step from medieval castle to police barracks in just a few short steps.

If you thought pictograms, and emogies are new then think again! Before written words were used to communicate our ancestors used images to tell their stories. Tall tales and fantastic stories are part of who we are.

At the top of Meath's highest hills are some of our oldest monuments. Lying on The Hills of the Witch stories handed down through centuries, tell us the Loughcrew Cairns were formed by stones falling from a witch's apron.

Thousands of years have passed but the art of storytelling lasts. Visit any and all of these monuments and our guides, the custodians of the sites, and carrier of their stories will transport you back in time.

Admission is free of charge. Good footwear is recommended. Your imagination is essential.



Entry to all of the following sites is FREE:



**Corlea Trackway
Visitor Centre,**
Kenagh, Co Longford



**Kilmacurragh
Arboretum,**
Kilbride, Co. Wicklow



Loughcrew,
Corstown, Oldcastle,
Co. Meath



Maynooth Castle,
Maynooth,
Co. Kildare



**Newmills Corn
and Flaxmills,**
Churchill Road,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal



Desmond Hall,
The Square,
Newcastle West,
Co. Limerick



Listowel Castle,
The Square, Listowel,
Co. Kerry



Ballyhack Castle,
Ballyhack, Co. Wexford



Dungarvan Castle,
Castle Street, Dungarvan,
Co. Waterford



Ferns Castle,
Ferns,
Co. Wexford



Kells Priory,
Kells,
Co. Kilkenny



St. Mary's Church,
Gowran,
Co. Kilkenny



The Main Guard,
Sarsfield Street, Clonmel,
Co. Tipperary



Áras an Uachtaráin,
Phoenix Park, Dublin 8
(Saturdays only)



Scattery Island,
Kilrush, Co. Clare
(Entrance to the site is free but a charge for
the ferry is imposed by the boat operator.)



**Phoenix Park - Peoples
Flower Gardens,**
Phoenix Park, Dublin 8



**Phoenix Park Visitor
Centre
- Ashtown Castle,**
Phoenix Park, Dublin 8



**National Botanic
Gardens,**
Glasnevin, Dublin 9



Pearse Museum,
St. Enda's Park,
Grange Road,
Rathfarnham, Dublin 16



St Audoen's Church,
Cornmarket
(near High St.), Dublin 8



Visit and enjoy Ireland's Historic
buildings and Heritage sites