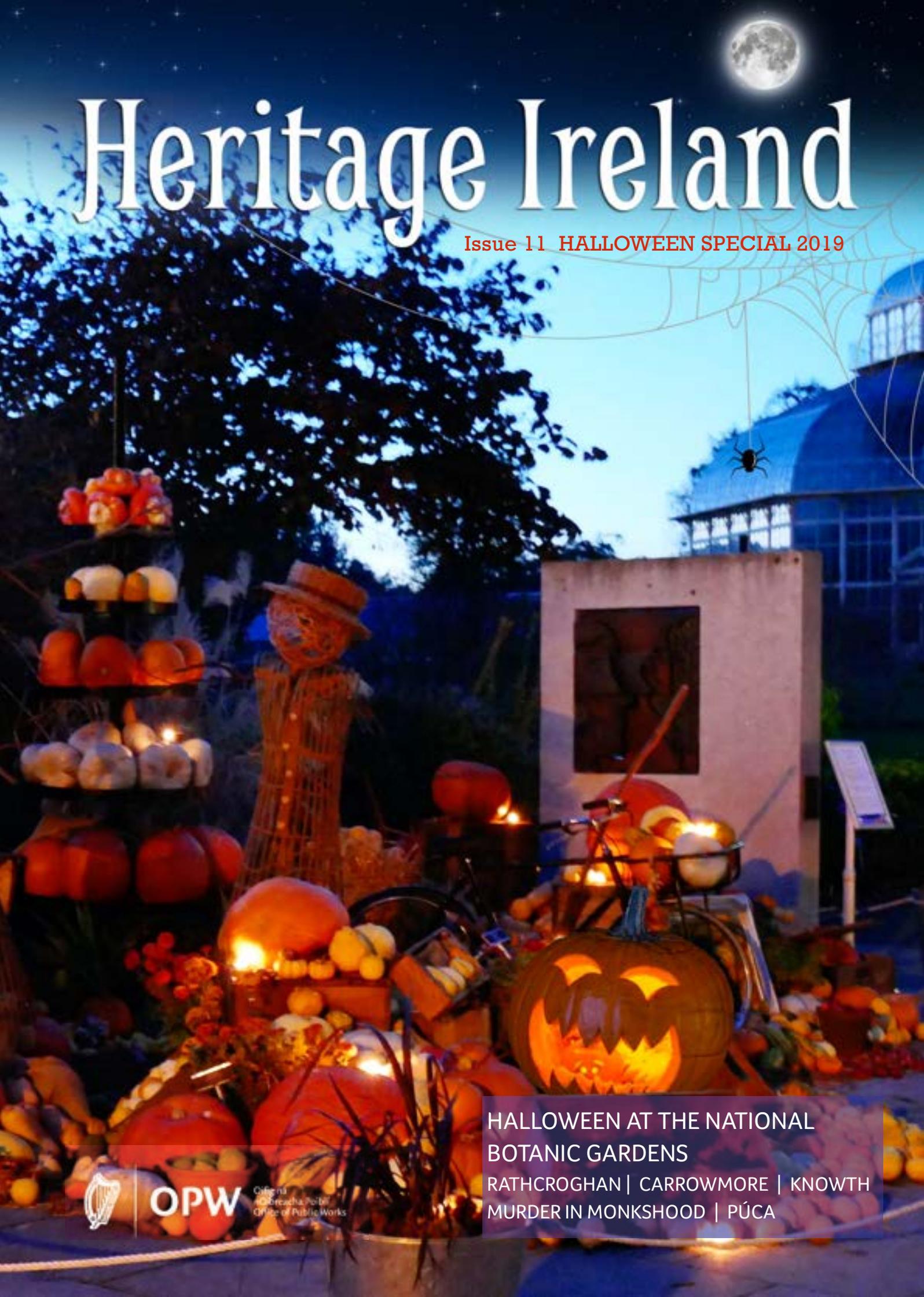




# Heritage Ireland

Issue 11 HALLOWEEN SPECIAL 2019



HALLOWEEN AT THE NATIONAL  
BOTANIC GARDENS  
RATHCROGHAN | CARROWMORE | KNOWTH  
MURDER IN MONKSHOOD | PÚCA



OPW

Cearta  
Ó Breacha, Poiblí  
Oifige de Phoblaíochas

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# Welcome

## Oíche Shamhna Shona Daoibh!

Welcome to this special, spooktacular Halloween issue of Heritage Ireland! This year we've caught the Halloween spirit from our colleagues in Fáilte Ireland and the inauguration of their amazing Púca festival which celebrates Ireland as the birthplace of Halloween and our Samhain traditions. We're delighted that a number of OPW heritage sites will play centre stage to the Púca but remember that we also have a further host of horrifying Halloween events at several scary sites across the country!

On a more serious note this time of harvest inspires reflection on our environment. The OPW is proud to have introduced a number of initiatives to protect and promote awareness of the importance of biodiversity at our sites, from meadows managed for wildlife to bat walks to our swift initiative. This issue provides a timely opportunity to look back at some of this year's biodiversity-focused events and activities.

Many of our sites will be taking a well-deserved winter break from early November so don't miss your chance to visit before then. However, a significant number remain open all year and offer the opportunity to enjoy our very best sites at a slower, less frantic pace. Full details of all sites which remain open year round can be found on our website [www.heritageireland.ie](http://www.heritageireland.ie)



**Maurice Buckley**  
Chairman  
OPW



**John McMahon**  
Commissioner  
OPW Heritage  
Services

Image: Window in the Rock of Cashel © OPW

# Heritage Ireland Ezine Contributors



**Felicity Gaffney** is Head of Education at the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland. She developed the events, exhibitions and education programmes and has managed the guide service at the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin and Kilmacurragh for over twenty years. She is responsible for widening and developing the visitor profile and increasing visitor numbers. In tandem with developing the quality of the visit, by developing an extensive schedule of events, (all supportive of the ethos of the Botanic Gardens), she also has had some success in increasing visitor numbers with a substantive increase in numbers from an estimated 250,000 in 1998 to over 650,000 in 2018. Without doubt, the increased investment in infrastructure and the restoration of the world famous glasshouses encouraged more visitors to the gardens but it also is acknowledged that the unique and innovative approaches taken to widen the visitor profile and encourage the repeat visitor has contributed to make the Botanic Gardens accessible, welcoming and relevant to all.



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



**Caoimhe Creed** is a Tour Guide and Education Officer in Dublin Castle. She has run creative writing classes in the castle inspired by her time volunteering with Fighting Words. She's a fan of Bram Stoker and all things Halloween!



**David Lawlor** is Head Guide at the Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary. He has worked with the OPW since 2001 when he started off as a seasonal Guide at Roscrea Heritage. He has also worked at Kilkenny Castle before moving to Cashel in 2008. One of David's major interests is Irish History and he completed his M.A. in History in 2009. David also is an accomplished musician and Irish music has brought him all over the world.



**Daniel Curley** is currently doing a PhD in Archaeology at NUI, Galway, based on the settlement archaeology of the medieval O'Kelly lords of Uí Maine. He is the manager of the community-run Rathcroghan Visitor Centre in Tusk, Co. Roscommon for the past six years, where they interpret the Rathcroghan landscape for the visitor through their award-winning interactive museum and guided sites tours.



**James Barry** is a native of County Waterford. Currently Head Guide in Reginald's Tower where he has been working as a guide since 2002. Growing up next door to a graveyard sparked a lifelong interest in memorials to the dead.



**Pádraig Meehan** is a writer and researcher; his field of interest is the Irish Passage Tomb Tradition. As a member of the Human Population Dynamics at Carrowkeel international archaeology research team, he has co-authored a recent series of papers. He has also published articles and a book on the topic of the Listoghil alignment. Pádraig works as a guide in Carrowmore visitor centre, Sligo.



**Paul O'Brien MA**, a military historian and author, works for the Office of Public Works and is currently based at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. The author of fifteen books, Paul has written extensively on the 1916 Rising, the British Army in Ireland and a number of local histories. He lives in Santry, Dublin with his wife, daughter and two cats. Stay up to date with the author at: paulobrienauthor.ie

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[www.heritageireland.ie](http://www.heritageireland.ie)



**OPW**

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“AS YOU ARE NOW,  
SO ONCE I WAS”

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

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## THE ANCIENT IRISH FESTIVAL OF SAMHAIN

TEXT BY JAMES BARRY

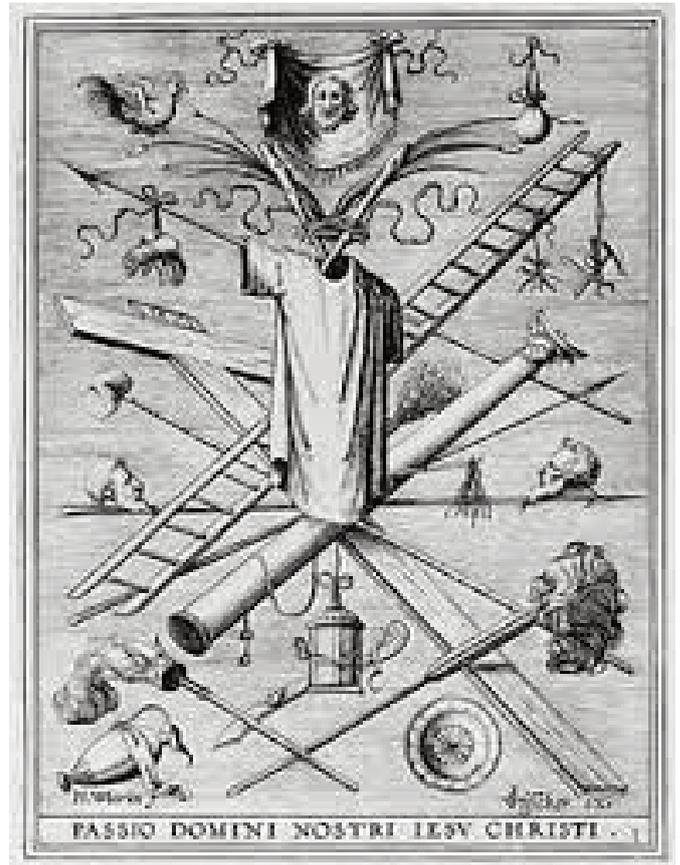
**S**amhain, the ancient Irish festival, marked the end of summer and the harvest season. It was an occasion to celebrate during a time of plenty before the harsh winter months brought shorter days, colder temperatures and a potential shortage of provisions.

Huge bonfires were lit on hilltops in acknowledgement of the power of the ancient gods and in thanks for the bounty that had been reaped from the land. It was a time when the veil between this world and that of the supernatural thinned and could be crossed, an opportunity for portals to the other world to open and allow the supernatural residents found therein to visit our own realm. The souls of the dead could also return to the world of the mundane for a brief period of time on this night.

In more recent times the name Samhain has been replaced by the now familiar term Hallowe'en. Hallowe'en has become the great festival of the macabre, a time for horror and scares, an amalgamation of ancient and modern customs. Although a number of these customs have their origins in pagan traditions, now lost in the mists of time, the actual word Hallowe'en itself has a very different background as its roots lie in Christianity. In the early church the 13<sup>th</sup> May was a feast day designated for the remembrance of all martyrs, those known and unknown. Later this evolved to be a day to honour the memory of all saints and in particular saints that did not have a separate feast day of their own. Evidence for a change of date from the 13<sup>th</sup> May to the 1<sup>st</sup> November for this feast occurs during the reign of Pope Gregory III (731 – 741 A.D.) and in 837 A.D. Pope Gregory IV orders its general observance throughout the Church. So how does "All Saints' Day" transform into the familiar word Hallowe'en? Hallow is an old word for a saint or a holy person, its origins lying in Old English, so All Saints Day was formerly called All Hallows Day, it occurs on the 1<sup>st</sup> November so the close of the day before, October 31<sup>st</sup>, is All Hallows Eve (or Evening) and abbreviated we then have Hallowe'en. All Saints' Day is then followed on November 2<sup>nd</sup> by All Souls' Day a day dedicated to remembering the faithful departed and so these two days have led, for many, to this time of year becoming the primary focus for commemorating the dead.

Of course commemorating the dead is nothing new and has been a preoccupation of humanity since time immemorial. Many of the wonders of the ancient world were built precisely for this purpose. The range in size and complexity of the structures built through the centuries to house the dead or dedicated to the memory of those who have passed is simply mind-boggling. On the one hand we have the pyramids, massive passage tombs or elaborate necropoli while on the other hand we have simple stone-lined cist burials or a standing stone to mark a burial spot. Scattered within the boundaries of many of our National Monuments are memorials to our dead and these take many forms, in shape, size and material used. Depending on the time period, affluence or beliefs of those interred these objects range from simple stone or wood markers to massive, monumental mausoleums. The ones we are probably most familiar with are the standard, stone tombstones that stand silent and stoic in the grounds and graveyards of our ruined churches, abbeys, priories and friaries. The decoration on these memorials can be quite plain consisting of a simple inscription, a name and maybe a date, however many are covered in carvings and decoration, all of it symbolic in some fashion and designed to deliver a message to those who view it.

Particularly striking are the tombstones that are decorated with the Arma Christi, the "Weapons of Christ", a collection of the symbols of the Passion. As a grouping of symbols their use dates back to at least the 9<sup>th</sup> century however it is during the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, in Ireland at least, that they appear

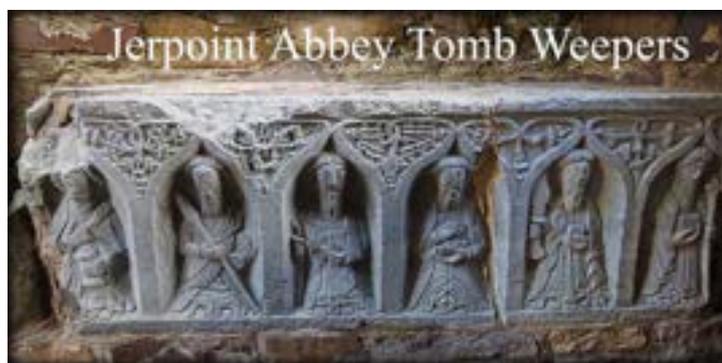


quite commonly on tombstones and a host of symbols can often be found carved on a single stone. Among the symbols commonly seen are a mix of the following: a crown of thorns, a ladder, the column Jesus was bound to when scourged and the ropes used to bind him to it, the scourges or whips, the hammer and nails, the pincers used to remove the nails after the crucifixion, the seamless robes Jesus wore and the dice the soldiers used to gamble for the robes, the spear that pierced his side, the rod with vinegar soaked sponge affixed, thirty pieces of silver, a bell, the rooster that crowed three times, a jar or jug, a lantern, the sword used by Peter to cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant (and sometimes the ear itself is shown!). The sun and moon are often shown along with the Arma Christi and may represent the eclipse that took place on Good Friday or otherwise may be a simple, yet subtle, reminder of the passage of time.

Perhaps the most eye-catching of the medieval tombs that have survived to this day are the effigial tombs; there is something striking about seeing a depiction of a figure, lying in restful repose, dressed as they would have been hundreds of years ago. As to whether the representation is accurate or not is another thing, artistic licence is nothing new! Knights, ladies, ecclesiastical figures, wealthy citizens and merchants make up the majority of those depicted in this fashion, the commissioning of these elaborate memorials requiring a certain level of affluence. The appearance of effigial tombs in Ireland begins following the arrival of the Normans in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, with the earliest surviving examples in the country dating to the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> century. What is probably the oldest tombstone in Ireland with an inscribed date, the inscription records the year as being 1253, now

stands within the 19<sup>th</sup> century chancel of St. Mary's Church in Gowran, County Kilkenny. It depicts an ecclesiastic figure named Radoulfus, shown in his priestly robes, who died on March 19<sup>th</sup> of that year.

Normally a wealth of further carvings decorated the surrounds of these effigies and it is worth keeping in mind that traces of paint have been found on these memorials; originally they were quite colourful unlike the bare stone we are familiar with today. The effigy itself can be situated on a stone box, forming a box or chest tomb, the side panels of which tend to feature images of various saints and other figures, the Arma Christi or heraldic decoration and coats of arms. The figures shown on these side panels are, erroneously, generally referred to as "Weepers"; actual weepers were usually anonymous figures posed in mourning and praying for the soul of the deceased. In Ireland many of these "Weepers" are actually saints, and those sculpted are often depicted with a feature or attribute that allows them to be identified. John for example, the youngest of the apostles is usually depicted without a beard, unlike the other apostles who are shown with an abundance of facial hair, whereas James the Greater usually has one, or all, of the following; a pilgrim staff, pilgrim bag or scallop shell. The scallop shell being familiar today from the Camino de Santiago de Compostela where the apostle himself is reputed to be buried. Fittingly, as we approach Hallowe'en, many of the figures represented on these side panels are depicted with the instrument of their martyrdom



▲ Jerpoint "Weepers" – St. Bartholomew  
"Weeper" – St. Catherine of Alexandria

and many of them met rather gruesome ends. St. Catherine of Alexandria suffered many trials and tribulations before being sentenced to death, through the use of a spiked breaking wheel, before she was eventually beheaded. She is easily recognised on tomb surrounds as she carries or stands beside the spiked breaking wheel. In fireworks the Catherine Wheel takes both its name and form from this legend. Tradition has it that St. Simon was martyred by being sawn in half and so we see him depicted holding a massive saw. St. Bartholomew is said to have been skinned alive, before being beheaded, and is usually depicted with a flaying or fleshing knife in one hand while holding a sheet of his own skin in his other hand.

There have been certain times in history when death and mortality have become preoccupations for populations and subsequently these themes become an integral element of the psyche of succeeding generations. In particular, in the aftermath of cataclysmic events, such as wars and natural disasters there is a tendency for society to focus on mortality and the transience of the ephemeral frame. Perhaps the most catastrophic event to occur in Europe during the medieval period was the "Great Plague" or "Black Death" that struck in the mid to late 1340's. During this outbreak it is reckoned that somewhere between one and two thirds of the population of the continent died (there is great variance in the estimates of the overall percentage of deaths but it is certain that there were massive numbers of casualties). In Ireland, the great plague struck the urban, economic centres of the country hardest, initially being brought from the continent via ship along the primary trade routes to Ireland and subsequently spreading inland, again following the commercial routes. As a result of the outbreak spreading in this fashion the areas worst affected were those where the Norman families had greatest control. John Clyn, a Kilkenny Franciscan, gives a contemporary account of events during the time of the plague. He ends his "Annals of Ireland" with the following poignant wish:

*"So that notable deeds should not perish with time, and be lost from the memory of future generations, I, seeing these many ills, and that the whole world encompassed by evil, waiting among the dead for death to come, have committed to writing what I have truly heard and examined; and so that the writing does not perish with the writer, or the work fail with the workman, I leave parchment for continuing the work, in case anyone should still be alive in the future and any son of Adam can escape this pestilence and continue the work thus begun."*

Friar Clyn's chronicle may have ended with the above plea, and its mix of futility and hope, but there is one further entry in his work, written in a different hand, it says simply: *"Here it seems the author died"*.

Friar Clyn is still known to us today thanks to the survival of his chronicles but the majority of those that fell victim to the plague were buried in mass graves, plots of land whose locations, in general, are now lost to the vagaries of time.



Abbeyknockmoy Wall Painting

The plague did not play favourites and the great and mighty were as likely as anyone to fall into its grip. On the north wall of the chancel of the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey of Knockmoy, in County Galway, is a surviving example of medieval wall painting. To the right of an image of Christ, the martyrdom of St. Sebastian is portrayed, two archers firing arrows into the saint's body. During outbreaks of plague St. Sebastian was venerated and prayed to for protection and deliverance. Above this depiction of the martyrdom are six figures, three are of kings in their prime while the other three are crowned skeletons. These kings and skeletons represent the legend of "The Three Living and The Three Dead", a reminder that death is inevitable for all. The legend also has a moral to convey as the Three Dead confront the Three Living encouraging them to repent and live good lives as their wealth and power will have no benefit in the grave. As James Shirley (1596 – 1666) writes in his poem "Death the Leveller":

*Death lays his icy hand on Kings,  
Sceptre and Crown,  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made,  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.*

Although death may level the field, the wealthy, however, could afford to have a memorial commissioned for posterity. A specific type of effigial tomb is said to have begun to appear in the aftermath of the Black Death and it takes a form that would fit in perfectly with our modern take on Hallowe'en being a festival of fear and a celebration of the morbid. These memorials are collectively known as

cadaver tombs and to us today would appear to be the product of the fertile imagination of a horror writer. There are approximately a dozen known cadaver effigies remaining in Ireland. In the case of cadaver tombs the effigy does not depict the subject at the height of their powers and health but instead they are shown after the mortal coil has been shuffled off and decay has begun its work on the physical remains. Invariably shown with the burial shroud rolled away from the body, emaciated corpses in varying states of decay greet the viewer. As gruesome as this may seem the smaller details compound the overall effect. On the most decorative of the cadaver tombs we find a host of verminous creatures, writhing around the skeletal remains of the deceased, including include beetles, lizards, snakes and worms.

The finest cadaver tomb in Ireland is that of James Rice, now located within Christchurch Cathedral at the heart of the Viking Triangle in Waterford. James Rice was mayor of Waterford on multiple occasions and twice made the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, a perilous undertaking in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the distinct prospect of dying while making the journey he commissioned his



James Rice Tomb, Waterford

tomb in 1482, prior to a planned pilgrimage to Santiago for the jubilee year of 1483. He founded a side chapel of the medieval Cathedral in Waterford, dedicated to Saints James and Catherine, in order to house the tomb (the current cathedral was built by John Roberts in the 1770's following the demolition of the earlier Gothic cathedral). James Rice survived the pilgrimage and is believed to have died around 1488. The tomb itself depicts the knotted burial shroud pulled open, revealing a decomposing effigy lying recumbent, eyes staring sightlessly upwards, one emaciated hand drawing part of the shroud across the body to protect the modesty of the deceased while a frog sits undisturbed atop the lower abdomen while worms crawl through gaps in his ribs. The tomb bears an inscription mentioning both James Rice and his wife Katherina Brown along with the following memento mori:

*“Whoever you may be, passer-by, stop, weep and read, I am what you are going to be, and I was what you now are, I beg of you pray for me, it is our fate to pass through the gate of death”*

Of course cadaver tombs and other memento mori were not directly intended as a means of causing fear but rather the intention was to deliver a message, literally *“remember that you will die”*. They offered the viewer the opportunity to reflect on their own mortality and perhaps resolve to make changes to live a better life. Although the cadaver tombs may have been the height of artistic expression of this philosophy the use of memento mori has continued to the modern day. Down through the centuries various symbols such as hourglasses, skulls and crossbones, upside down torches, the *Danse Macabre*, have been used to remind the observer that time is passing. The *Danse Macabre*, or Dance of Death, was a particularly graphic reminder that no matter a person’s station in life all must answer the call of Death. The earliest known depiction of the *Danse Macabre* was a mural in Paris, completed circa 1425. Typically in the Dance of Death a line or chain, sometimes a circle, of figures are depicted dancing their way to the grave with the living and the dead alternating as they advance hand in hand. All classes, from richest to poorest, are shown and it served as a reminder that all, be they Emperor, merchant or peasant,

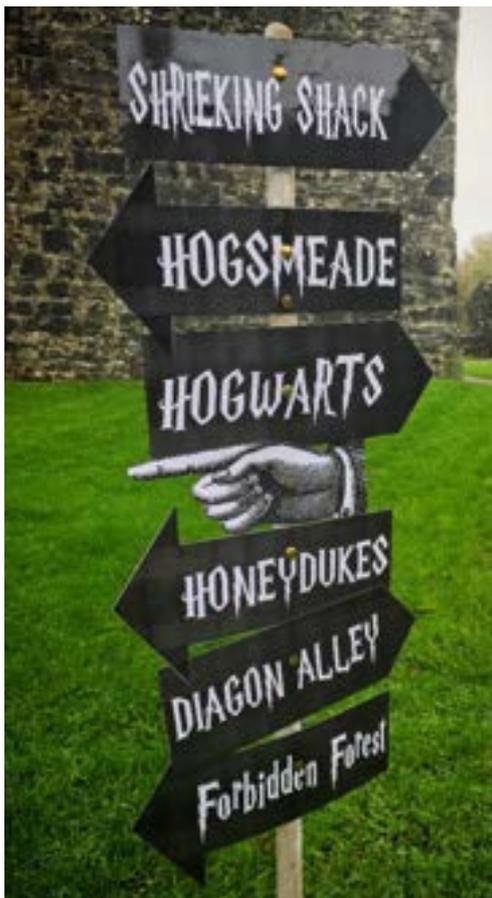
suffer the same fate and all are made equal in the presence of Death.

All memorials, in a sense, can be classed as memento mori. Although used to commemorate the dead they are tangible indicators of what is to come. They are reminders of those gone and in many cases are the only record remaining of those mentioned. It can be humbling to stand amongst the gravestones in an ancient burial ground, read a name and realise that you are possibly the first person in decades or even centuries to speak the name of that person aloud. By taking that moment to read that name you acknowledge that although now gone the person named once *lived*, a fellow human, whose only record of their life may be that which is inscribed on the stone before you. The classic memento mori ends with *“As I am now, so you will be”*, a note of finality, an admonishment that life is transient. However, we should never forget how the saying begins, we are simply the latest in a long line of generations of humanity that stretches back to prehistory, and it reminds us that we today have something in common with those now gone, for *“As you are now, so once I was”*.



- ▲ Above: James Rice Tomb, Waterford
- ▼ Below: Graveslab with the Arma Christi
- ▶ Right: Long Man of Kilfane Effigy – near Thomastown





*Halloween at  
Aughnanure  
Castle*

Halloween has been celebrated as a community event at Aughnature Castle in Oughterard, Co. Galway since 2007. Harry Potter and Dracula are popular themes, bringing the season to an end with a bang! Details of this year's event are posted on the Castle's facebook page: [www.facebook.com/aughnanurecastleopw](http://www.facebook.com/aughnanurecastleopw)





• ROYAL HOSPITAL KILMAINHAM •

# BULLY'S ACRE

DUBLIN'S OLDEST CEMETERY

Bully's Acre Cemetery was a very lively place by day ... **And by night**

Join historian and author Paul O'Brien as he tells the story of the little-known graveyard in the grounds of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham.

He will take you on a unique tour of the (almost) last resting place of **Robert Emmet and generations of Dubliners** - commoners, businessmen, captains and privates ... **even sons of kings.**

This is the story of religion, grave-robbing, poverty and sickness, and is a must for all interested in the history of Dublin itself.

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# “I SEE DEAD PEOPLE” GRAVEROBBERS, ‘SACK’ EM UPS’ AND RESURRECTIONISTS

TEXT BY PAUL O'BRIEN

**B**ully's Acre, located in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, is Dublin's oldest cemetery. Dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, this sacred ground has seen the burials of tens of thousands of Dubliners. Yet as soon as some as them were buried, they were resurrected.

By the end of the eighteenth century the study of medicine was becoming increasingly popular in Ireland. The demand for corpses came from the highest echelons of society, that of the medical profession. New medical halls as well as the college of surgeons needed a regular supply of cadavers for its doctors and students to dissect. The only corpses legally available to surgeons were those of executed criminals. The law stated that only convicted murderers who were condemned to hang and have their bodies dissected were to be used by anatomists. There were between twenty and thirty executions per year and this number did not come near what was required by the surgeons. Body snatching was the only way to meet the demand created by the anatomists and with this many people saw that there was money to be made from the dead. By the early nineteenth century, science had come a long way and doctors had a good knowledge of

Gravestone  
at Bully's Acre  
in the grounds  
of the Royal  
Hospital,  
Kilmainham.



how the human body functioned. Body snatchers, also known ironically as resurrectionists, dug up corpses to sell them on to surgeons and anatomists. The resurrectionists were dealing bodies to anatomists who were dissecting them in medical theatres. Members of the public and medical students would pay to watch a leading surgeon perform. These performances were to prove very lucrative for the medical profession. A doctor would buy a body for twelve guineas. Each student was charged three guineas to watch it being dissected. With an audience of one hundred and sixty students the anatomists could take in four hundred and



eighty guineas a session. In today's money that would be between thirty to forty thousand euro.

While there were many opportunist grave-robbers, others planned raids on Bully's Acre, Dublin's oldest cemetery, in advance. The grave-robbers often watched the graveyard in order to detect where the most recent bodies had been interred. Women were used to follow funerals and mix with the mourners in order to discover the sex and age of the deceased. That night the grave-robbers would return to the graveyard, many carrying specialist tools such as a wooden shovel, a length of rope and a sack all hidden in a handcart. Bodies were not buried six foot deep as they are today and in most cases they were only buried six inches beneath the surface. The bodies generally lay east to west. The wooden shovels were used in order not to cause noise when digging. The earth was tipped on to the sacking so that it could be placed back on the grave after the body had been disinterred. The grave was only exposed at the top end. About a third of the coffin was exposed, to the widest or shoulder section of the coffin. The shovels were used to break open the coffin and the body was pulled out. The shroud was discarded. If the coffin had been buried deep, a large hook was inserted in to the body and it was dragged from the coffin. The body was then trussed up with

the rope –neck to heel and placed in the sack. The sack was lifted over the boundary wall and placed in the handcart and brought to its final destination, a medical hall. The grave-robbers faced many hazards in their work; bodies infected with disease, watchmen with dogs, graves booby-trapped with pistols, angry relatives and the law. However, many thought the risk was worth it. A full size corpse in good condition could fetch six times the average wage. Human teeth were also a valuable commodity. False dentures were made from teeth that had been extracted from corpses and screwed on to whalebone plates by dentists. In many cases teeth were used as currency and exchanged in the backrooms of public houses.

One could be arrested for theft if found in the possession of a shroud. Shrouds were discarded as it was considered property and the body was not. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust, it was considered that the body belonged to the earth. As a child, Walter Thomas Meyler recalled being taken to Bully's Acre to see Brian Boru's supposed last resting place in the early nineteenth century. A horrific sight greeted Meyler. Many of the graves had been desecrated by the sack-em-ups and the graveyard was littered with discarded shrouds, blowing in the wind.<sup>1</sup>

One night, Peter Harken, a demonstrator at Sir Philip Crampton's medical school and a frequent visitor to the cemetery, led a group of students on a grave robbing expedition to Bully's Acre. Having almost obtained a body, they were surprised by graveyard watchmen with guard dogs and were forced to abandon their cadaver. The students



managed to scale the high boundary wall. However, Harken, who was described as a portly gentleman, needed assistance in order to climb the wall. As the students grabbed his arms in order to hoist him up, the watchmen grabbed his legs and attempted to pull him back. A tug-of-war ensued between the watchmen and the pupils. The young students were numerically superior to the watchmen and managed to pull

Harken over the wall and make their escape. Harken died in 1814 and it is believed the injuries he suffered in the incident at Bully's Acre led to his premature death in his early thirties.

However not all body snatchers managed to escape.

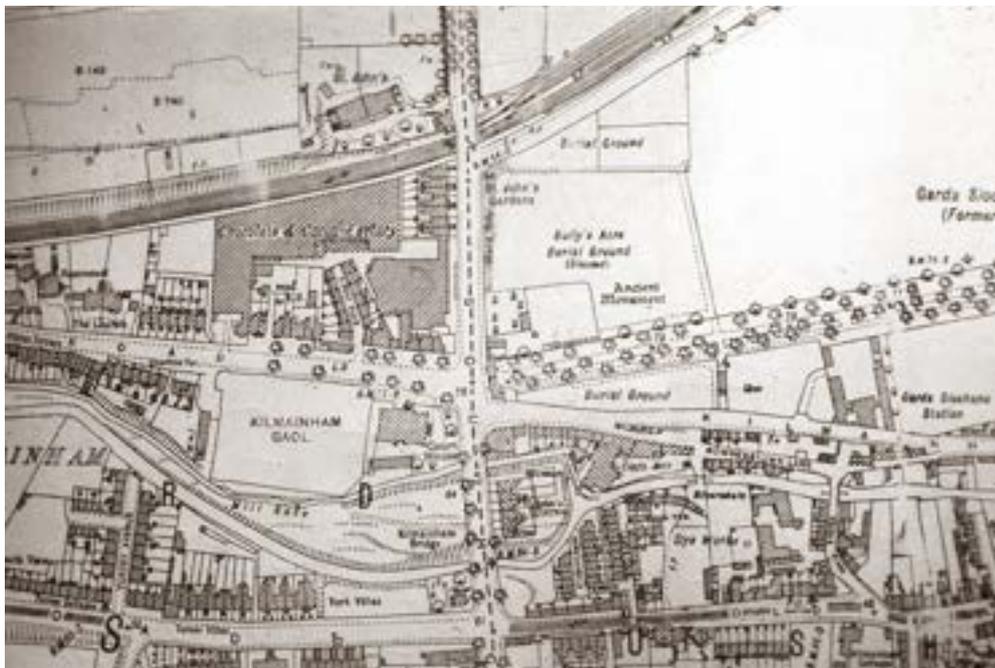
When the cemetery was officially closed in 1832 a number of burials were still taking place.

A memorable story of an incident that occurred after the cemetery was closed portrays vividly the problem of body snatching.

Early on the morning of March 11<sup>th</sup> 1842, a man named Kinsella was making his way to work in a distillery located in Marrowbone Lane near Dolphins Barn. He was stopped by a police constable and requested to participate as a juror at a coroner's court. The body was that of an old man that had been retrieved from the canal. The constable assured Kinsella that he would not be detained too long as there were no visible marks on the deceased and that a verdict of drowning would be found.

Kinsella was sworn in as a juror and brought forward to examine the body as was deemed necessary by law. On seeing the corpse he clutched at the hand of the body and fell to his knees exclaiming, "My poor dear father, we buried him a week ago, decently and well in the fields at Bully's Acre, Kilmainham. What was he doing in the canal and dressed in clothes that did not belong to him?"

The authorities failed to convince Kinsella that he was mistaken and an enquiry followed. The subsequent investigation revealed that the doctor and the coroner were in collusion. Between them, they had disinterred bodies that had been buried in the graveyard, dressed them in old clothes and disposed of them into the canal. The finding of corpses in the canal swelled the coroner's court with inquests thus increasing the workload for



which they were paid handsomely. If the corpse suffered damage due to a collision with a barge or a boat this increased their payments, as a doctor would be needed to perform a post mortem examination.

The enquiry led to a conviction for both the doctor and the coroner and they were relieved from their positions.<sup>2</sup>

Very few prosecutions took place as the authorities turned a blind eye to the grave robbers as they were supplying bodies to powerful and important surgeons. Others believed that a better understanding of anatomy led to better surgery. Backed by these powerful men the resurrectionists were almost untouchable and by 1830, bodies were becoming a serious commodity.

After the case of the resurrectionists Burke and Hare in Britain, many surgeons lobbied the government to bring in a law to stop bodysnatching. The Anatomy Act of 1832 stated that unclaimed bodies from the workhouses could be released and used for dissection. This in effect put a stop to the work of many body-snatchers as the high mortality rate among the poor would keep a steady supply to the medical profession. Bodysnatching still continued in the years that followed the Act but not on the scale that had been witnessed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The graveyard slowly returned to normal.

***If you are brave enough and would like to visit contact paulf.obrien@opw.ie for information on guided tours.***

<sup>1</sup> Meyler, W.T. *St. Catherines Bells: An Autobiography*, 2 Vols. (London & Dublin, 1868-1870)

<sup>2</sup> *By The Sign of the Dolphin* (ed) C. Scuffil (Dublin, Elo Press, 1993)





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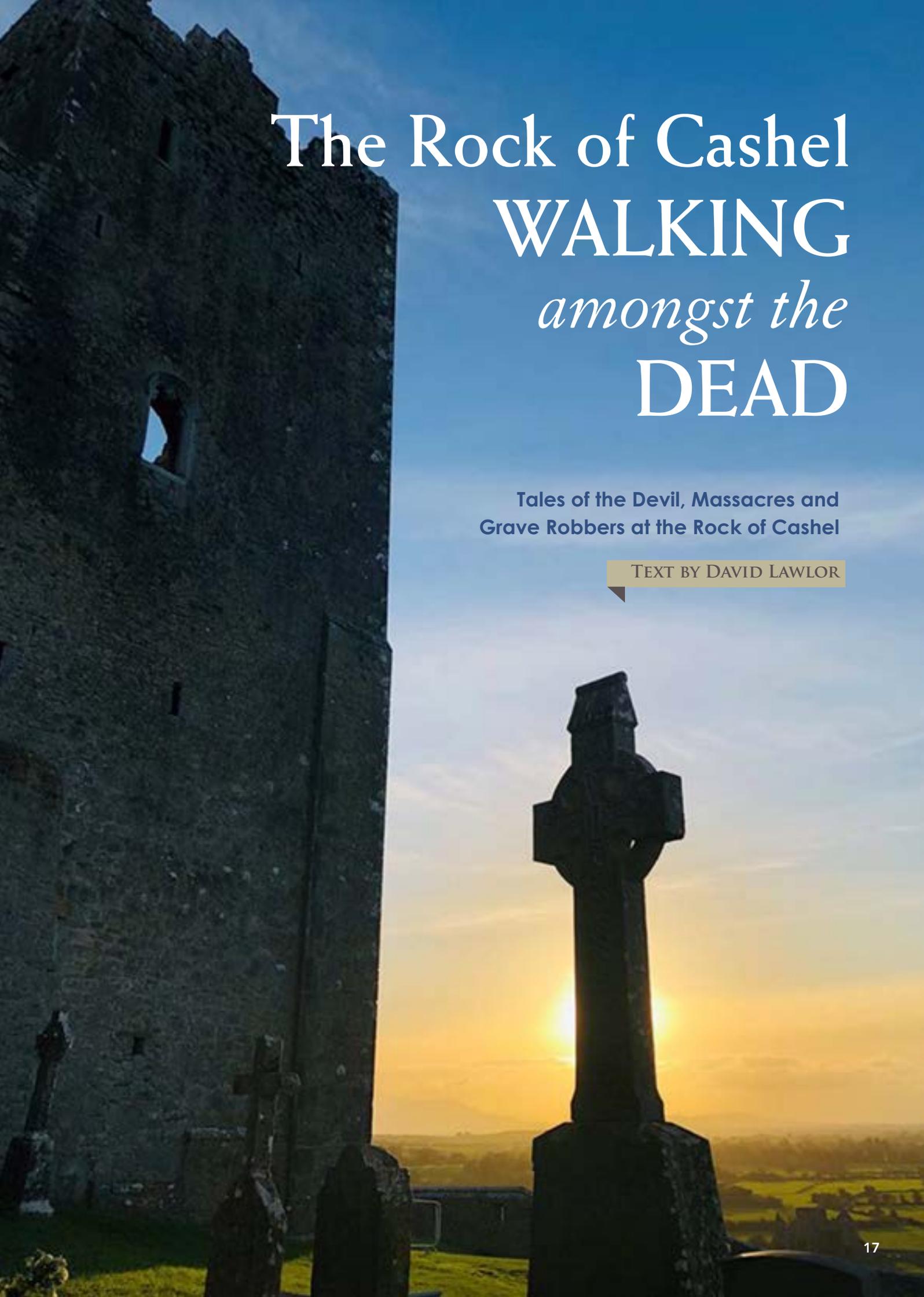


*The Biodiversity Festival and Honey Show was held at the The Phoenix Park Visitors Centre in September, within the magnificent Victorian Walled Garden a two and a half-acre garden set in the grounds of Ashtown Castle, cared for and managed sustainably by the OPW.*

*The festival had something for everyone, talks and tours that could help us all understand the impact our lives have on the world around us and the small changes we can make to encourage plants and animals to survive and thrive.*



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# The Rock of Cashel WALKING *amongst the* DEAD

Tales of the Devil, Massacres and  
Grave Robbers at the Rock of Cashel

TEXT BY DAVID LAWLOR

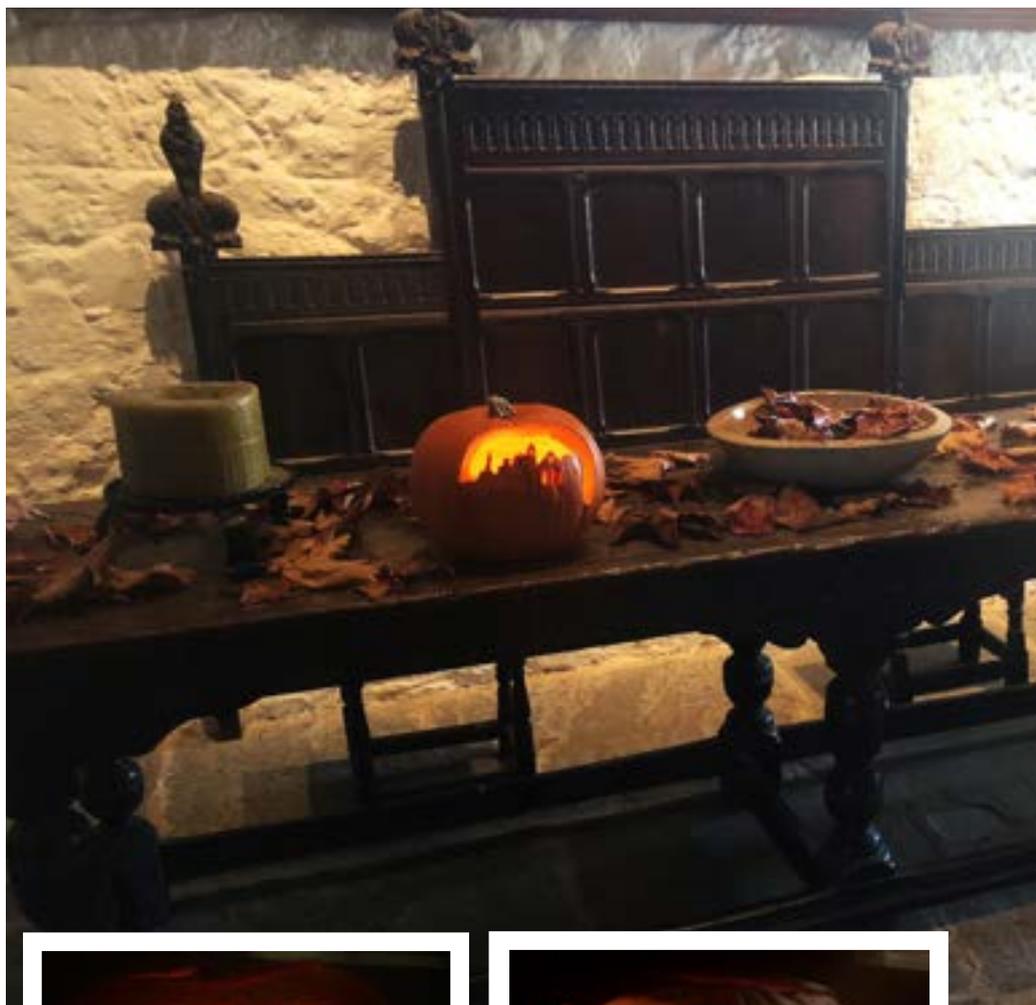
One of the most commonly asked questions on a guided tour of the Rock of Cashel is “Are there ghosts here?” While I myself have never seen or felt anything out of the ordinary there are members of the public who claim to have done so. Let’s face it, with such a mixed and often tragic history, if ever a place was going to be haunted then the Rock of Cashel would surely be a prime location.

The graveyard at the Rock of Cashel is one of the oldest active graveyards in Ireland. Historically the site dates back to the early fourth century when the Kings of Munster ruled high over the fertile plains of Tipperary, but the word Cashel derives from the gaelic word with the same pronunciation meaning a stone fortress. This suggests pre Christian activity and, naturally, possible burials on the old limestone pedestal. Today, if you’re lucky enough to have had your name listed on the grave register from 1930, when your time finally comes you too could rest for eternity with Kings and Bishops.

Irish mythology has it that the Rock of Cashel was formed after the Devil took a huge bite out of the aptly named Devil’s Bit Mountain twenty miles north of Cashel. There is a large gap in the mountain between one outcrop of rock and another small plateau. This was supposedly done to evade Saint Patrick who was banishing the pagan thoughts and customs that had ruled Ireland for millennia. In biting off this chunk of sandstone the Devil broke a tooth and as he flew south from the mountain he spat out the Rock of Cashel from his mouth to where it now stands. If this theory was to be believed one of Ireland’s most iconic monuments was built on Satan’s tooth!

### The Massacre of Cashel

In the summer of 1647 the Baron of Inchiquin, Murrough O’Brien, the Irish commander of the Protestant army of Cork under the control of Oliver Cromwell, commenced a campaign against the Irish Catholic strongholds in Munster. He met with little resistance and was allowed to make a



major push towards the ecclesiastical centre of Cashel. The attack on the Rock of Cashel commenced on the 15th September 1647. Initially, the Irish defenders managed to protect the Cathedral, holding off the attackers trying to get through the doors, but the Parliamentarians then placed numerous ladders against the many windows in the Cathedral and swarmed the building. For another half an hour fighting raged inside the grounds, until the depleted defenders retreated up the bell tower. In the end all the soldiers and most of the civilians on the Rock were killed by the attackers. The Bishop

and Mayor of Cashel along with a few others survived by taking shelter in a secret hiding place. Apart from these a few women were spared, after being stripped of their clothes, and a small number of wealthy civilians were taken prisoner, but these were the exceptions. Overall, close to 1,000 men, women and children were slaughtered on that night. The bodies were said to be stacked six deep on the Cathedral floor according to one eyewitness.

The Audio Visual Theatre at the Rock of Cashel has been a hotbed of ghostly sightings over the years and the

► 15th Century Hall  
of the Vicars Choral



◀ Facing page: David and Pat at the Rock of Cashel got very creative with Pumpkin carving last year. We wonder what they will get up to this year... Why not visit and find out?



one common dominator is a young shawled child with long dark hair hunched over. Others have claimed to have heard screams and even footsteps following them in that same area. Recently, one lady had to leave the building because of all the negative energy she experienced and described the feeling of being choked by it. Everyone who had an encounter in the Vicar's Choral all agreed individually that they were most definitely not made to feel welcome and that they should leave.

Could this possibly be the ghost of one of the young children put to death by Lord Inchiquin and his Parliamentarian forces in September 1647?

### Grave Robbers at The Rock of Cashel

"You can't take it with you" is an old Irish saying that goes back generations and that is surely true if you are to believe the testament of the George Ryan from Inch, outside Thurles, in Co. Tipperary published in *The Tipperary Gentry*. The Ryan's were a wealthy land owning family in the late nineteenth century and on one of his many trips home from Clonmel, Mr Ryan was passing the Rock of Cashel late at night on horseback with his servant. Looking up to the Rock, Ryan noticed a light shining from the grounds. Determined to

see what it was he halted and told his servant to come with him. The servant was afraid and refused to go but Ryan told him he would shoot him if he did not so, under pressure, he agreed.

There was a woman in Cashel, who made a living from opening the graves of aristocratic ladies after burial, to rob them of their gold rings or any other valuable ornaments buried with them. When Mr. Ryan and his servant appeared beside her at the graveyard, the story is she struck Ryan with a dead persons arm across the face. The terrified servant ran away and Ryan grappled with and overcame the woman. He took out his pistols, marched her to Cashel town and gave her up to the Authorities. There she was later hanged for the robberies.

### Samahain

As we prepare for yet another Halloween we follow in the footsteps of our Celtic ancestors who celebrated the ancient festival of Samhain to usher in "the dark half of the year." Celebrants believe that the barriers between the physical world and the spirit world break down during Samhain, allowing more interaction between humans and inhabitants of the Otherworld.

That can only mean one thing at the Rock of Cashel. It's going to be an interesting night!



► Rock of Cashel Graveyard

# Halloween in Carrowmore

## The Shadow of the Witch

TEXT BY PÁDRAIG MEEHAN

**I**t's all about the 23 degrees. The jolly tilt of our home planet, as it circles the sun yearly, has provided a rhythm in the lives of people, animals and plants—especially at temperate latitudes—since life on earth began.

Over the millennia, and across continents, festivals and gatherings have developed around seasonal turning points. In China, Lidong is the equivalent of Halloween, as is Diwali in India and Martenmas in France. Setsubun in Japan is paralleled by Groundhog Day in the United States, and Saint Bridget's Day in Ireland. Traditionally the four festivals of seasonal transition in Ireland were Samhain, Imbolc, Bealtaine and

Lunasa. Just as the seasons inspired Greek drama, the 'cross-quarter day' festivals are the backdrop to the Gaelic texts. In legend and in folklore they mark the time of great battles or transitions, and moments of inauguration of kings. Samhain, the transition between summer's end and the start of winter at the end of October, is a time of transformation and a festival of the dead. The discovery in 2008 that the central monument in Carrowmore—Listoghil—is aligned on sunrise at two of the critical season crossing dates left us with some interesting questions. For instance; could this design be interpreted as a physical representation of seasonal transits being celebrated in ancient Ireland?



▲ *Top of page:* The Cailleach at Winter Solstice. Photo: Padraig Meehan

◀ *Left:* The Crowd assembles in darkness. Photo: Austin McTiernan



Carrowmore, in County Sligo, is one of the most extensive clusters of Stone Age monuments in Ireland, with approximately 30 sites forming a nucleus at the core of the Cúil Iorra peninsula, all surrounding the central monument, Tomb 51 or Listoghil. On the fringes of this landmass low hills are punctuated on their summits by monuments of the same tradition, the IPTT, or Irish passage tomb tradition. A majority of the small satellite monuments and of the outlying sites are directed into the area at the centre of the peninsula, the location of the central monument.

Today we are in a moment of new discoveries. New work on the bones of the ancient dead—through the scientific techniques of osteology, stable isotopes of various elements and ancient DNA—has yielded a remarkable treasure trove of information about the lives and ancestral origins of the occupants of the Sligo monuments. Further research using lake coring tells us about their farming practices and about the vagaries of climate during a millennium of remarkable change in Ireland, starting with the arrival of the first farmers (about six thousand years ago) and culminating in a second invasion, that of the Beaker Folk at the outset of the Bronze Age. This is the story told by the guides and by the exhibition in the Office of Public Works Visitor Centre at Carrowmore (near Ransboro, about 4 km west of Sligo town). It is an account enriched by myth and legend as well as archaeology. The Neolithic era left a remarkable imprint on the

▲ Excitement builds as sunrise approaches.  
Photo: Austin McTiernan

► Below right: Listoghil Shadow Spear 31  
Oct 2008. Photo: Jean Ryan

landscape of Sligo; including many striking hill cairns, such as Knocknarea (with Queen Maeve's Tomb), Keash Hill (with The Pinnacle on top) and the Ballygawley Mountains. Remarkably, many of these—up to a dozen—have never been excavated. Although folklore and quasi-historical accounts abound, no one really knows what they contain, or where they point to.

Listoghil, at the heart of Carrowmore, is a very different story. Tomb 51, as it is known by archaeologists, was greatly destroyed, probably towards the end of the 17th century. The authority of the Gaelic ascendancy had finally been broken by the arrival of parliamentarian and later royalist armies; this was a time of road building, bridge building and the lining of properties with field walls by landlords and merchants. The great English naturalist, Charles Elcock, accounted in the Proceedings of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club local descriptions of the use of the monument as a quarry, and the resulting discovery of the central chamber. This may have led to Listoghil becoming known locally as 'The Cave'. A table-like dolmen with a mighty roofslab lay swathed in a grass-covered uneven mound of irregular form with occasional boulders protruding.

All this changed in 1996 when the Swedish archaeologist Burenhult began

the excavation of Carrowmore 51. His work revealed a very different monument to the smaller satellite tombs that surrounded it; they were mostly open in their architectural character and had been reused for burial repeatedly over the better part of a millennium. From the available data, it appears that Listoghil witnessed burial rituals over a comparatively shorter time period, perhaps a couple of centuries; then it was closed and covered by a stone mound.



The dead in Listoghil were treated differently, too. In the open boulder-built Carrowmore satellite monuments, cremation was the dominant funerary practice. Although cremations were discovered around some of the Listoghil kerbstones, at least seven people were placed unburnt in the inner chamber. Antiquarian digs disturbed this context, but gold standard (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) carbon 14 dates, including one from bone, gave an indication of a narrow window of usage for the central monument at Carrowmore. Between 5400 and 5600 years ago human bones were deposited. Sometime later, the cairn was built up around the chamber. The builders appear to have constructed a passage—the exact form of which can never be known—to provide (and control) access.



▲ Above: The spear of shadow in the chamber at Halloween. Photo: Steven Rodgers

There was one slightly macabre twist: one of the occupants of Listoghil, a male in his fifties, had been defleshed, possibly one of a suite of funerary treatments marking new innovations in the Irish Passage Tomb tradition (The burial ritual in Listoghil is echoed in Carrowkeel, the other great Sligo passage tomb cluster; Carrowkeel starts to be used for burial around the time of the building of Listoghil. There, bodies were dismembered using sharp stone tools). Another individual, a male in his twenties, was shown by DNA analysis in 2019 to be the father of a man buried in Primrose Grange, a monument located just two kilometres away on the slopes of Knocknarea.

The connections of Carrowmore to the outlying hills were manifested in another way in 2008 when the sunrise at Halloween was first observed in modern times. The central chamber—although the outer cairn is a modern reconstruction, the chamber is still preserved in its original position—has a gable-shaped blocking stone to the front. It bears no weight and the point of the gable is rounded and polished by many hands. When the sun rises in alignment with the chamber, the shadow of this stone falls on the underside of the capstone. While every

detail of this uneven surface stands out in the angled orange sunlight, the elongated shadow reaches over a meter long, like a spike of darkness centred on the belly of the roofslab. Gradually, as the sun rises, the shadow moves to the east and shortens. The effect lasts ten minutes.

Many visitors ask why so much Neolithic architecture in this landscape points towards the centre and towards Listoghil. The survey work in 2007 and subsequent observation sought to address this question. It was as if the monument—despite all its travails—still had something to tell us.

When the sun rises in alignment with the central chamber of Carrowmore it appears cupped in a natural saddle in the Ballygawley Mountains, six km away. Then, over the course of winter, after departing this natural hollow, the position of sunrise edges south as the days shorten. It crosses four rounded hills, each with a cairn on its summit; Aughamore Far, Sliabh Da Én, Sliabh Dargan, and Teach Cailleach a Bhérra, the house of the winter hag, Bhérra. The profile of the hills in folklore is visualised as the hag herself in repose with her head to the

right (A similar figure in Callinish, Lewis in the Outer Hebrides is called the Cailleach na Móinteach). The arrival of sunrise to the top of the ‘head’ of the Cailleach marks standstill. The sun rises in virtually the same position for nearly two weeks as the season turns and the solstice is with us. The following weeks see the position of sunrise travelling back across the reclining witch; and on February 10 the saddle again becomes the setting for the alignment event with Listoghil.

The idea of cyclicity is built into the Gaelic texts (like Queen Maeve’s cattle raid of Cooley, or the battle of Moytirra, a battle of light and dark forces, fought at a passage tomb cluster at Halloween). Temporal cyclicity is echoed in the symbolism of the antler pins accompanying the dead inside the Sligo passage tombs. The antlers are at their finest at Halloween, which is rutting season; stags deploy them as weapons in fights over females, and are lost in early spring. The mythic life of the Cailleach, who can be seen as a metaphor for a female earth, is cyclical too; she is frightening and dark in the winter and becomes young and fruitful in the spring. Perhaps here we catch a glimpse of the cosmology of the ancients; as John Waddell says there are echoes of these narratives in the

Gundestrup cauldron and even in the cosmology of Ancient Egypt.

Local folklorists added to the background story, in particular the sculptor Michael Quirke. Other details were filled in by William Butler Yeats, who seems to have preserved elements of lore almost lost over the course of the twentieth century.

Such a mortal too was Clooth-na-bare, who went all over the world seeking a lake deep enough to drown her faery life, of which she had grown weary, leaping from hill to lake and lake to hill, and setting up a cairn of stones wherever her feet lighted, until at last she found the deepest water in the world in little Lough Ia, on the top of the Birds' Mountain at Sligo (William Butler Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight*, 1893).

The Ballygawley Mountains are the locations of Sliabh Da Én (the Mountain of Two Birds) and Lough Da Gé (the lake of two geese, a hillside corrie lake, reputed to be bottomless). Yeats' accounts (and those of other folklorists) shows how the cluster of four low hills was seen in totality as the Cailleach Bhérra, though in modern maps only one of the hills carries the name of the famous hag and sovereignty goddess. In a footnote Yeats' observes that doubtless "Clooth-na-bare should be Cailleac Bare, which would mean the old Woman Bare".

The width and depth of these traditions in the greater western European context is impressive. Authors like Cristobo Carrín and Gearoid Ó Cruaíoch describe the Cailleach or Gawres, or La Vieja (the giantess or hag), as virtually ubiquitous as a symbol of nature and seasonality in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Spain. She



rules the winter, and is 'defeated' by the arrival of spring. She is connected in folklore to natural rock formations or ancient monuments. A version of her appears to have been Christianised as Saint Bridget. Traditional narratives and rituals are faintly detectable in modern day myths. We still celebrate witches, divination, and the change of seasons in our Halloween traditions. Even in cultures geographically remote from each other and connected only by the 23 degree tilt of the Earth, similar themes occur. In Japan at Setsubun in February revellers throw beans at a heavily dressed up demon, an equivalent to the winter witch.

The Listoghil phenomenon is shared with another very famous Irish site, Dumha na nGiall, the Mound of the Hostages at Tara. This site was in use around the time of Listoghil, but the chamber and cairn were constructed perhaps two hundred years later. In recent years we have had the opportunity to observe at both sites and compare notes. The chamber of the Mound of the Hostages is aligned to the

distant Wicklow Hills and the island of Lambay. At approximately 7.25 am on the 31 October the sun rises and casts a quadrilateral of faint pink light on the vegetation-covered backstone of DNG. On that date, the sun rises in perfect alignment with the chamber. Meanwhile in Sligo the anticipation is building, and the Ballygawley Mountains are backlit with a deep orange glow. 17 minutes later the planet has rolled on its axis enough, and the solar climb from behind the Ballygawley Mountains is complete. A golden sliver of sun breaks the saddle and the spike of shadow suddenly appears on the capstone underside of Listoghil. Perhaps this congruence is coincidental; certainly it is a remarkable one.

These days the sunrise event at Carrowmore is celebrated by Office of Public Works staff in conjunction with the local community, the Ransboro Development Association. The RDA supply tea and buns, and join visitors and guides in hoping for a clear morning. Even if the sun does not oblige, the atmosphere is enthusiastic and celebratory. The centre opens at 7.15 am and sunrise occurs between 7.40 and 8.00 am. Usually a slide show/talk is conducted in the centre afterwards to wrap up proceedings.

▲ *Top of page:* Sometimes the appearance of patchy cloud can raise the tension.  
Photo: Mark Roddy

◀ *Left:* Sunrise in the Saddle.  
Photo: Jean Ryan



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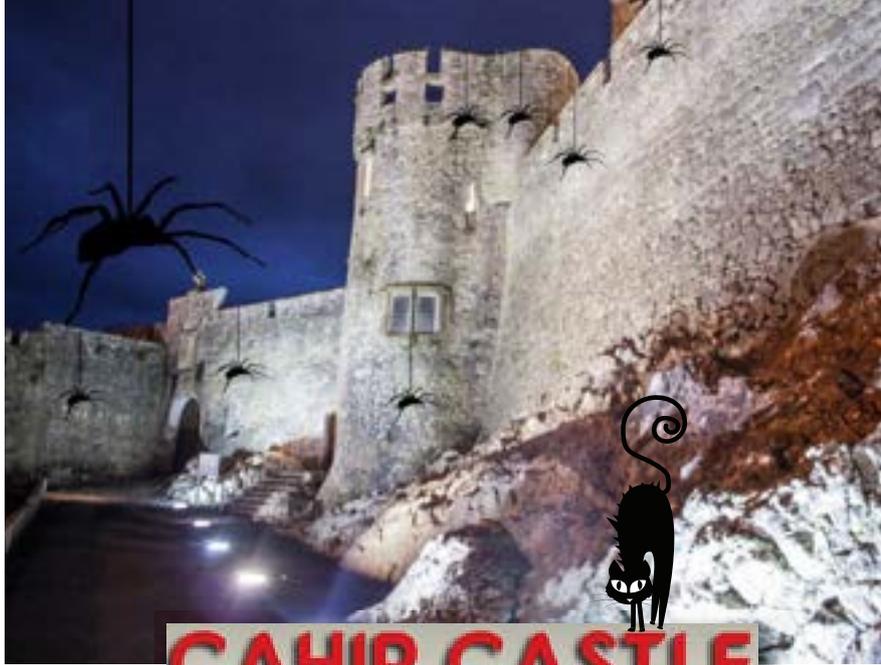


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# CAHIR CASTLE

# HALLOWEEN



# FICHE BLIAN AG FÁS

Muiris Ó Súilleabháin

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Caibidil 7

## ‘Oíche Shamhna’

**B**a ghnách leis na buachaillí agus na cailíní na hoícheanta fada fuara do chaitheamh i bhfochair a chéile im thigh féin, agus is oráinn a bhíodh an ríméad ag fanacht leis an oíche agus ag imirt na seanchleas Gaelach-an fáinne, an dall, póiríní, trom-trom, agus dul i bhfolach,-tine bhreá dhearg go mbíodh teas uaithi ar fuaid an ti, gainimh bhreá gheal ón dTráigh Bháin ar an urlár agus glioscarnach inti ag an lampa a bhíodh crochta os ár gcionn, beirt bhuachaillí agus beirt chailíní i bpáirteacht ag imirt póiríní i gcúinne don dtigh, ceathrar eile i gcúinne eile agus mar sin dóibh.



Na Blascaodaí – Great Blasket Islands,  
Dun Chaoin, Co. Kerry.  
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Monuments Service Photographic Unit

Dob á seo Oíche Shamhna, agus do bhí formhór na mbuachaillí sa Daingean. Dá bhrí sin, do bhí ardoíche le bheith againn nuair a thiochfaidís abhaile, mar go mbeadh a lán úlla, oráistí agus milseáin acu dhúinn ina comhair. Bhí an tinteán scriosta scuabtha ag Máire agus ag Eibhlín, tine chraorac thíos againn agus an lampa lasta agus sinne suite cois na tine ag fanacht leo.

I gceann tamaill, do chualamair an chlismirt agus na gáirí ag déanamh ar an dtigh, agus is garr gur osclaíodh an doras agus seo leis an gcibeal agus leis an ngibris ar fuaid an tí-ba dhóigh leat gur istigh i bpríosún a bhíodar le fada an lá agus gur ligeadh amach an oíche seo iad, leis an ngliondar agus an ríméad a bhí orthu, páipéirí móra úll agus oráistí agus milseán agus gan trácht ar phóiri ag lucht an Daingin.

Seo leis na clis ar siúl. Ceanglaíodh corda anuas ón gcrúpla agus úll mór dearg ceangailte air. Téann duine síos go dtí an doras agus tugann fásadh ruthaigh aníos, léimeann sé in airde ansan d'iarraidh breith ar an úll, ach teipeann air, duine eile ansan, is gearr go mbaineann an tríú duine manta as, agus mar sln dóibh nó go mbíonn na húlta caite acu. Tosnaíonn cleas eile agus cleas eile- beirt triúr ceathrar, bóla mór uisce timpeall na tine acu, iad ag róstadh póirí. Gach buachaill agus

cailín a bhíodh mór le chéile, do dh'fhaighidís dhá phóire, póire beag sin í an bhean, agus póire mór sin é an fear. Chuiridís isteach sa tine an dá phóire, agus nuair a bhídís rósta thógaidís amach iad. Chaithidís síos sa bhóla uisce ansan iad, agus má théadh an dá phóire ar tóin, do bhíodh an-ghrá ag an mbeirt sin dá chéile, agus mise á rá leat gurb shin iad an bheirt a chodaíodh an oíche sin go sásta. Bhíos féin agus Tomás Eoin Bháin ina measc, ach bhíomair róbheag chun aon iarracht a thabhairt féin úll, ach más ea, an buachaill a thugadh leis do léim é, thugadh sé dhom féin agus do Thomás é, sa tslí go raibh póit orainn ar feadh na hoíche ag na húlta agus ag na milseáin.

I gceann tamaill, nuair a bhí na húlta agus na milseáin agus gach uile rud ídithe againn, d'éirigh Pádraig Pheig ina sheasamh. Táim chun beagán cainte a thabhairt uaim, ar seisean, agus tá súil agam go n-aontóidh gach duine liom. Buaileadh na bosa dhó. Aníos ar seisean, is í seo Oíche Shamhna, agus ní fios cé mhairfidh le hí theacht arís, agus dá bhrí sin táim chun seift eile a chur ar bun aníos agus oíche go maidean a dhéanamh di. Is í an tseift í ná gach beirt nó triúr a dh'imeacht ar fuaid an Oileáin le lantaer ag marú smólach, agus nuair a bheidh an timpeall san tabhartha isteach againn, tagadh gach duine anso, bíodh tine mhaith thíos agatsa, a Mháire, agus níl aon bhaol ná go mbeidh rósta na hoíche againn.- An-mhaith, arsa duine. – An-chuimhneamh, arsa duine eile. Bhí gach duine toilteanach aníos. Seo leo ag cuardach buidéal chun an tón a bhaint astu, mar ní bhfaighfeá aon lantaer atá comh compordach leis nuair atá an tón as agus coinneal ar lasadh sáite síos sa scrogall. Is gearr anois go raibh gach éinne ina phost féin, ach amháin mo dheirfiúr Máire agus Máire Ní Shé a dh'fhan istigh ag beiriú aráin agus ag déanmh cácaí milse i gcomhair na hoíche. Beidh sibhse araon in aonacht liosma, arsa Pádraig liom féin agus le Tomás, agus geallaim díbh gur againne a bheidh an tseilg is fearr, cé ná ragham rófhada ó bhaile.

Seo linn i dtriúr agus lantaer mór againn siar chun na trá. Do bhí an



oíche ag cur seaca, na réalta ag glioscarnaigh sa spéir, an Láir Bhán sínte díreach trasna na spéire ó dheas agus an Chamchéachta tharainn ó thuaidh, puth beag do ghaoith anoir ag teacht díreach ó Cheann Sléibhe, gíog-gíog-gíog ag pilibíní míog ins na gleannta, solas anso is ansúd againn le feiscint at thaobh an chnoic ag an gcuid eile. Bhíomair ag déanamh siar aníos ar an Gleann Mór mar is gnách lena lán smólach a bheith ina gcodladh ansúd ins na sceacha. Éistíg aníos, ná bíodh gíog na míog asaibh, arsa Pádraig Pheig, mar do léimfeadh na smólaigh da gcloisfidís an chaint.

Bhíomar ag imeacht linn aníos go ciúin agus Pádraig romhainn amach ar a chorrghíob tríd an ngleann suas. Tá ceann anso ina codladh, ar seisean ag breith uirthi agus a marú. – Ciúnas arís! Ar seisean ag imeacht leis tríd an ngleann agus sinne ina ddhiadh, agus is gearr go bhfuair ceann eile agus ceann eile, nó go raibh an gleann siúlta againn. Bhí seacht gcinn tabhartha as an ngleann aníos againn.

Ní fheadar aníos, arsa Pádraig, ag suí síos agus ag deargadh a pgípe, cad é an áit eile go mb'fhearra dhúinn ár n-aghaidh a thabhairt. – Cad mar gheall ar an nDúimhe? Arsa mise . b'fhéidir nárbh fhearr áit dó, arsa

Pádraig ag éirí ina sheasamh, agus b'sheo linn siar fé dheinna Dúimhche. Bhí na smólaigh agam féin im phóca agus gliondar an domhain ar ar gcroí an rósta a bheadh againn orthu.

Bhíomar ag déanamh ar an nDúimhe anois. Éistíg, arsa Pádraig arís linn, le heagla go músclódh sibh iad. Ní raibh an focal as a bhéal nuair a chualamair gíog-gíog-gíog. Cad é sin, a Phádraig? Arsa mise i gcogar leis. Tá, pilibín míog e sin atá á dhalladh ag an solas. Seo linn á chuardach, agus is gearr go bhfuair Pádraig e agus é luite idir dhá rabhán. Táimid ag déanamh go han-mhaith, arsa Pádraig ag tarrac a phípe amach arís. Dhera a dhuine, beidh ualach asail againn sar a bhfad, má leanáinn dúinn, arsa Tomás. Nuair a bhí a dhóthain caite ag Pádraig, thug sé an phíp duinn féin agus chaitheamair í comh maith le

haon tseanfhear. Sea, nuair a bhíomair sásta dhi, thugamair n-aghaidh siar fé Seir Chuas na Rón, agus bhaineamair ceithre cinn eile amach as scoilteacha na gcloch.

Tá a fhios agamsa áit, arsa Pádraig, go mbeadh fiche ceann againn as, dá raghaimís ann. Th'anam 'on diucs, a Phádraig téimís ann, arsa mise. Ach an-dhrocháit is ea é, arsa Pádraig arís agusé ag féacgaint ar an lantaer fé mar a bheadh duine go doimhin ag smaoineamh. Cad é an áit é, a Phádraig? Arsa mise. Thíos i gCuas na Rón, ar seisean ag déanamh smiota gáire. An rabhais riamh ann? Ar seisean agus an da shúil aige á gcur tríom féin. Ó is minic a bhíos, arsa mise. Bhíos-sa leis, arsa Tomás. Bainfeam trial as, mar sin arsa Pádraig ag imeacht leis suas agus sinne ina dhiaidh nó gur thánamair go dtí barr an chuasa.

Ba dhiamhair an chuma a bhí ar an gcuas an uair sin i gcorp na hoíche. Ba



dhóigh leat go raibh idir bheo agus marbh thíos ann leis an bhfothram a bhí ag na tonnta ag briseadh isteach i measc na gcarraigeacha agus feadaíl ag an saile ag imeacht suas trí sna scoilteacha. Ansan do scúdh an tonn síos arís, agus ba dóigh leat go raibh na carraigeacha móra, go raibh daichead tonna meáchainn i gcuid acu, á stealladh i gcoinne a chéile ag neart na dtonn. Do bhriseadh tonn mhór eile isteach a chlúdaíodh béal an chuasa leis an aoirde bhíodh inti, agus déarfá go raibh an cuas go léir fé bharr Iasrach ag an dtine ghealáin a bhí ag imeacht san uisce. Do stealladh sí isteach i gcoinne na gcarraigeacha arís agus chuireadh streancaí in airde sa spéir. Ó a Phádraig, arsa mise, nach diamhair an chuma atá air. Dhera a dhuine, níl, ar seisean, dá mbeifeá thíos. Tháinig saghas eagla orm féin dul síos. Ná bíodh aon eagla ort,

arsa Pádraig; beir thiar ar eireaball casóige ormsa agus beireadh Tomás ar eireaball casóige ortsa.

Seo le Pádraig tríd an strapa síos go socair agus greim an duine bháita agam féin air agus an greim céanna ag Tomás orn féin, gan focal ar beith againn ach anois is arís a deireadh Pádraig. Tógaig go breá réidh é, ná bíodh aon eagla oraibh.

Bhíomair thíos anois ag bun an strapa nuair a bhris tonn mhór eile isteach, agus ba sheacht mheasa dh'fhéach sí dhúinn toisc sinn a bheith thíos. Do réab sí léithi isteach agus lasracha aici a chur in airde sa spéir, do réab sí i gcoinne na gcarraigeacha, agus ní raibh aon chuimhneamh againn ná go raibh an cuas titithe i ngabhal a chéile leis an bhfothram uafásach a dhein sí.

Ná bíodh aon eagla oraibh, arsa Pádraig arís agus na bíodh focal asaibh anois go raghaimíd ar an bhfód san thall, mar tá scoilt mhór ansan go mbíonn siad ina gcodladh gach oíche. Seo leis agus sinne ina dhiaidh, agus tinneas im cheannsa leis an bhfothram. Seo linn sall go dti an scoilt. Do sháigh Pádraig siar a lámh agus tharraig aniar smólach. Do sháigh siar a lámh arís agus tharraig aniar smólach eile. Bhí ó cheann go ceann aige nó go raibh cuig cinn déag againn.

Is é an áit go raibh an obair anois conas a raghaimís ar barra. Chuamar go dtí bun an strapa agus bheireas féin ar eireaball casóige ar Phádraig agus Tomás mar an gcéanna orm féin. Seo linn ó strapa go strapa nó gur bhaineamair barra amach. An raibh aon eagla oraibh? Arsa Pádraig an riabhach eagla, arsa Tomás an bhfuil a fhios agat a Phádraig, arsa mise, cad a bhí ormsa, ar seisean, mar is áit an-uaigneach é leis, agus is minic a dúirt m'athair liom gur chualathas daoine ag caint thíos ann. Ó éist a Phádraig arsa Tomás, ná bí ag cur eagla orainn. Is maith an scéal ná dúrais thíos é arsa mise, mar is dócha ná tiocfaimís aníos go deo 'ár mbeathaidh as.

D'éirigh Pádraig ina sheasamh. Tá comh maith again bheith ag baint an tí amach, mar is dócha go bhfuil said go léir tagaithe romhainn. An mó ceann anois again? Ar seisean arís ag iontú orainne. Tá, arsa mise, ocht gcinn fhichead agus pilibín míog. Ó th'anam 'on diucs, ar seisean, tá rósta na hoíche again mar sin.

Níor dheineamair stad na staon nó gur shroicheamair an tigh agus comh luath agus a bhíomair isteach an doras: Cé mhéid ceann agaibh? Ar said go léir d'aonghuth. Cé hé an fear is mó go raibh aige? Arsa mise. Mise, arsa Tomás an Phoncáin. Cé mhéid ceann a bhí agat? Arsa Pádraig, ta ocht gcinn fhichead againne. Sin é an uair a hbí an húrlamábúrla agus iad go léir ag bualadh bos dúinn féin.

Caitheadh amach ar an mbord ansan iad go léir, agus bhí céad ceann ar fad ann nuair a bhí a chuid féin ag gach éinne.

Bíodh gach éinne ag priocadh anois, arsa Séamas Ó Duinnlé, agus seo le gach éinne ag priocadh an chlúimh dóibh, ach amháin mo dheirfearacha Máire agus Eibhlín, Cáit Ní Shé agus Cáit Pheig, a bhí ag obair go cruaidh ag róstadh agus ní na n-áraistí agus mar sin dóibh.

Ba ghleoite leat féachaint ar an dtigh an uair sin, gach éinne go gealgháiritheach, Seán Ó Criomhthain suite in aice na tine ag seimint an mhelódion, ceathrar amuigh ar an urlár ag déanamh na ríleach, cuid eile ag cócaireacht, cuid eile ag ithe, agus fé mar bhíodh ceathrar ullamh don mbia, do shuíodh ceathrar eile chun boird nó go raibh gach éinne sásta.

Bhí Mícheál Bán ina shuí ag ceann an bhoird agus é go cúthail, mé féin ag breithniú air, mar do bhí an dá shúil aige á chur trí Cháit Shéamais ar feadh na hoíche. Cailín deas ab ea Cáit, níl éinne ná go dtitfeadh i ngrá léi. Lena linn sin, éiríonn ceathrar buachaillí amach chun set a dhéanamh. Ghlaodar ar cheathrar cailíní, agus bhí Cáit ar dhuine acu, ní nárbh ionadh. Bhí súil an chaít agam féin ag faire ar Mhícheál ar feadh an ama so, agus deirimse leat gur dheacair do Cháit cor ar deiseal ná ar dtuathal a thabhairt i gan fhios dó.

Nuair a bhí an set déanta acu, cad a dhéin Cáit ach suí ar ghlúin Thomáis an Phoncáin. Choimeádas féin mo shúil ar Mhícheál, agus comh luath agus a chonaic sé an chuma go raibh sí, tháinig

coinneal ina radharc, tharraig trí nó ceathair d'osnaí móra croíbhristeach, bhain cúp; a searradh as féin agus dhein méanfach ar nós duine a bhaedh tar éis dúiseacht as a chodladh. Ar mh'anam mhuisse, a Mhíchíl, arsa mise im aigne féin, go bhfuil gatháí Chúipid dulta ionatsa, a bhuachaill.

Ní fada gur tharlaigh do Cháit a lámh do chur tipeall muineál Thomáis. Choimeádas féin mo shúil ar Mhícheál i gcónaí, agus nuair a chonaic sé é sin, do thochais a cheann go dóite agus doscúigh a fhicla leis an dtochas san. I gceann tamaill d'éiríos. Níor ligeas faic orm. Do bhuaileas sall go dtí Mícheál. Do shuíos ar a ghlúin.

Sea, a Mhíchíl, arsa mise, nach cúthail atánn tú ansan? Ambaiste, a Mhuiris, ar seisean, ná fuil aon ghnó ag duine a chathaoir a dh'fhágaint, mar dá bhfágfadh, ní bhéadh sí arís aige. Cogar, a Mhíchíl arsa mise arís. Sea, ar seisean, agus thug stracfhéachaint eile sall ar Cháit. Ar chualais riamh cad a dúirt Piaras Feirtéar? arsa mise. Cad dúirt sé? ar seisean. Dúirt, arsa mise, oíche a tháinig sé isteach i dtigh go raibh a lán daoine bailithe i steannta chéile, agus go mórmhór an cailín go raibh taithneamh aige dhi, chonaic sé suite ar ghlúin fir eile í. Le linn an focal san a rá dhom, d'fhéach Mícheál orm idir an dá shúil. Tharraig osna mór fada. Bhraitheas mé féin ag dul in aired san aer leis an neart tógála a bhí ins an osna san. Mhuisse, cad dúirt sé? ar seisean arís go leanbhaí. Thosnaíos féin:

*An bhean dob ansa liom fán ngréin*

*Is nárbh ansa léi mé chor ar bith*

*Ina suí ar ghlúin a fir féin.*

*Ba mhór an cēim is mé istigh.*

Ó, a Mhuiris, ar seisean, cá bhfuairis an bhéarsa san? Óm athair críonna, arsa mise, an maith leat é? Is maith liom go mór é, ar seisean, mar tá a fhios agamsa go maith conas mar bhí Piaras an uair úd. Ba dhóigh le duine ort, arsa mise, gurb é an galar céanna atá ort féin.

Bhuail sé a cheann fé ar feadh leathnóiminte. Thóg a cheann agus d'fhéach sall ar Cháit. D'fhéach orm arís go truamhéileach: T galar san ormsa leis, a Mhuiris, ar seisean. Th'anam 'on diucs, a Mhíchíl, arsa mise, abair liomsa



cé hí, agus b'fhéidir go meallfainn chugat í. Dhein sé gáire agus thug stracfhéachaint eile sall. An bhfuil an cailín anso istigh anois? arsa mise. Tá ar seisean. Fan anois, féach an gcuirfínn amach í, arsa miseag féachaint timpeall. Cáit Pheig, arsa mise. Ní hí, ar seisean. Cáit Shéamais, arsa mise. Bhuail sé a cheann fé. Ó, a Mhíchíl, is í, is fuirist aithint ort é. Agus an bhfuil a fhios aici go bhfuileann tú ina diaidh? arsa mise i gcogar leis. Níl a fhiosa, ar seisean. Th'anam 'on diucs, canathaobh ná déarfá léithi é?

Lena linn sin, tagann Eibhlín chughainn aníos: Anois, a Mhíchíl, ar sise, iontaig isteach ar an mbord, tú féin agus Muiris. D'iontaigh beirt againn isteach, agus bhí cúpla pláta do smólaigh rósta os ár gcomhair amach. Bhí a fhios agam féin nár tháinig Cáit Shéamais go dtí an mbord fós, agus dá bhrí sin chuas chúichi sall agus bhuaileas mó lámh anuas ar a guala. A Cháit, arsa mise, tar liom sall go dtí an mbord anois. Tagann beirt again anall. Suigh ansan, a Cháit, arsa mise, in aice le Mícheál.

Féachann sé ar Cháit, tugann fé labhairt léi, ach caileann an misneach air. Tugann arís fé, ach teipeann glan air. I gceann tamaill eile labhrann Cáit: Sea anois, a Mhíchíl, ar sise, an bhfuil aon scéal nua agat? D'fhéach uirthi go tapadh, agus sara raibh deireadh na ceiste ráite ag Cáit, bhí freagra tabhartha uirthi ag Mícheál. Féachann orm féin agus lasadh ina ghnúis, liopaí a bhéil ar crith le racht áthais.

Lá arna mháireach do chuala ó bhean go ndúirt bean léi gur chuir Mícheál Cáit abhaile an oíche sin, agus dá bhrí sin do bhí sé an-mhór liom ina dhiaidh sin.



Right: Holding a replica of the Knowth macehead. Next time you visit Knowth, you will be able to do the same.



# Knowth Exhibition

Knowth, although less well known than Newgrange is probably even more impressive. Half as big again as its sister monument, not only does Knowth have the two biggest passage tombs ever found, it also has the world's largest collection of Neolithic art. Visitors don't go inside the passages at Knowth but they can climb on top of the great cairn to get spectacular views. Now, for the first time visitors are able to experience in virtual reality the interior of one of the great tombs at Knowth.

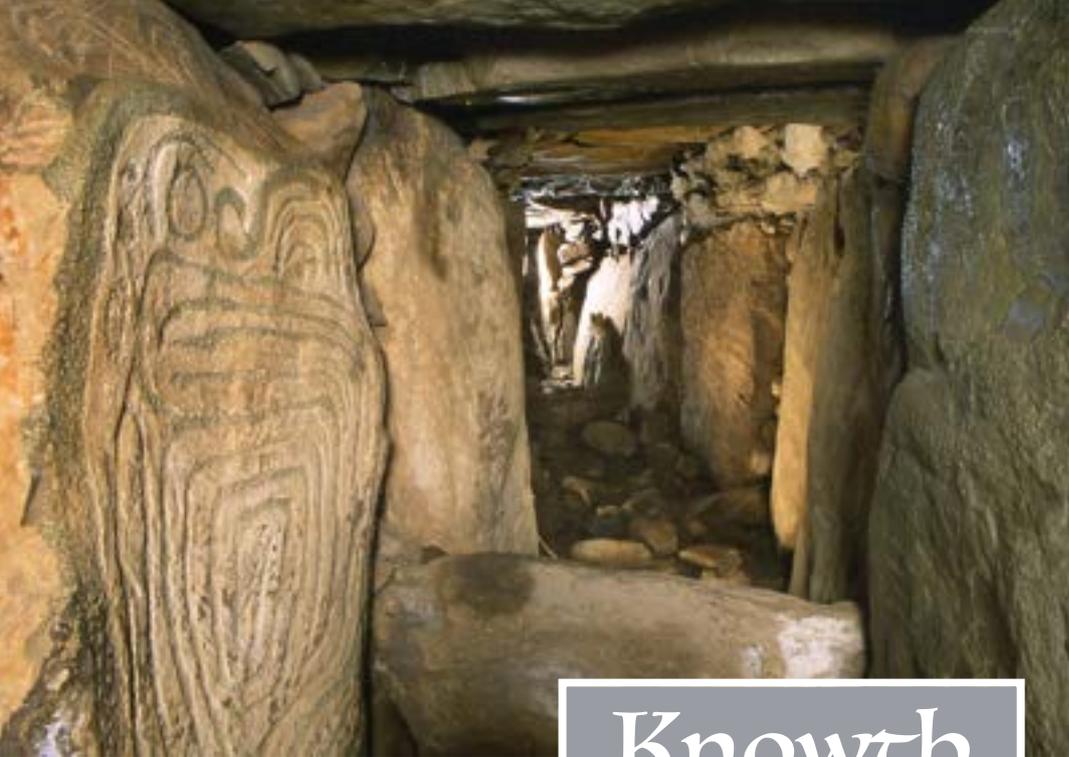
All access to Knowth is through Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre and by guided tour only.

Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre  
Donore, Drogheda, Co. Meath, A92 EH5C  
Tel. +353 (41) 988 0300  
Email: [brunaboinne@opw.ie](mailto:brunaboinne@opw.ie)

*Right: The eastern recess at the Great Mound of Knowth.  
Image by Ken Williams.*

**W**e are delighted to share with you these first images of the wonderful new facility at Knowth celebrating the megalithic art at the site. This stunning state of the art exhibition explores how the art was produced as well as its significance. It also contains photographs and film footage from Prof George Eogan's 50 year archaeological campaign at the site.





# Knowth

Top: West Passage, Knowth

Right: Ceremonial Carved Mace Head, 3300-2800 BC

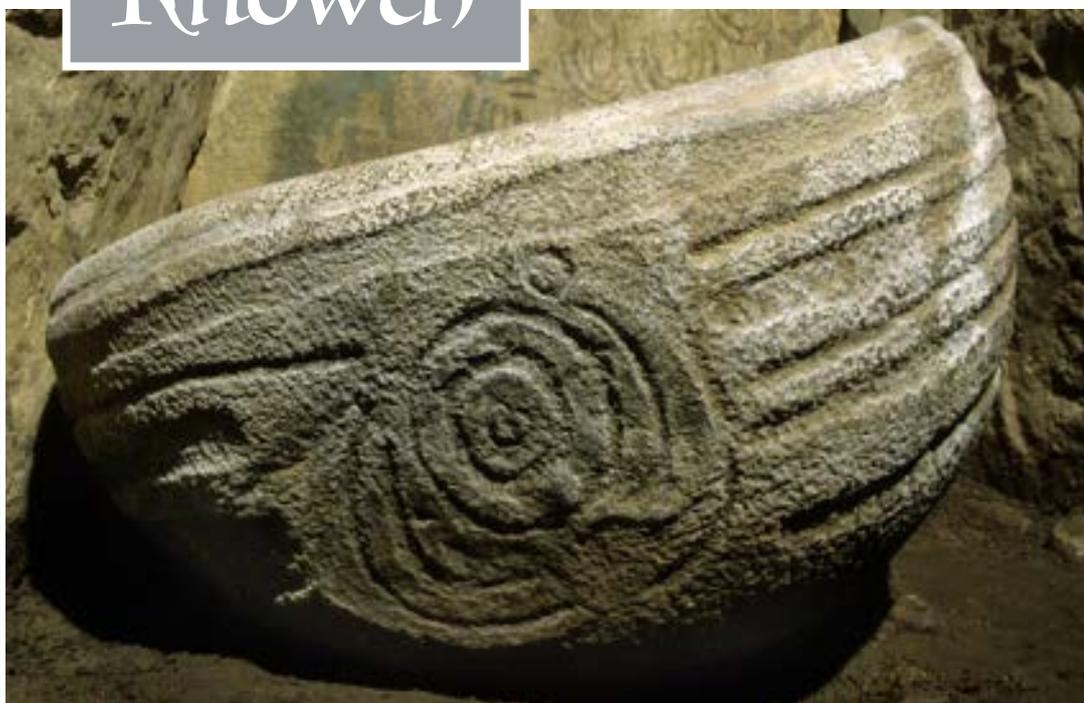


Above: Looking down the passage of the Eastern tomb at Knowth.

Centre: Stone Basin, East passage, Knowth Passage Tomb.

Right: Aerial view of Knowth.

All images © Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit.





# Bram Stoker

## BRAM STOKER

**DRACULA**, published in 1897, is considered a masterpiece of the Gothic horror genre and established many conventions of subsequent vampire fantasy. It has been immortalised in films, stage productions and popular culture for years. Author Bram Stoker had never been to Romania, so where did he get his inspiration for Dracula? We like to think that a number of our heritage sites have links to the tale.

Read on to learn more

*...if you dare...*

# HALLOWEEN ADVICE TO CIVIL SERVANTS: FROM DOG LICENCES TO CREATIVE LICENCES



Text by  
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“HOW DO I GO  
ABOUT GETTING A  
CREATIVE LICENCE?”

– Bram Stoker at Dublin Castle

**S**toker was born in 1847 at 15 Marino Crescent, Clontarf. He attended Trinity College Dublin from 1864 until March 1870. In 1866, at the age of nineteen, he started his twelve-year career as a civil servant in Dublin Castle, where he served as a clerk at the Chief Secretary’s Office (located at the north-east corner of the upper castle yard), in the “Department of Fines and Penalties”, renamed in 1868 “Department of the Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks”.

In 1877 or 1878, he was promoted to the post of Clerk of Inspection, which involved frequent travels around the country. His own father had worked for fifty years in the Castle administration, where he finished as senior clerk in the Chief Secretary’s Office.



Stoker’s civil service stint may, at first, seem at odds with his later career, but writing was a substantial part of his work as a clerk and, in his last two years in Dublin Castle, he undertook the task of writing a manual entitled *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland*, which was published in 1879, the year after his resignation and move to England.

The manual covers a wide range of administrative subjects, amongst them advice and guidance on how to deal with the public and with debtors, how to record detailed information on assaults and thefts, or how to issue dog licences and collect the licence duty. According to Stoker’s biographer Barbara Belford<sup>1</sup>, this manual “opens a window through which mid-nineteenth-century Ireland can still be viewed”.

The availability of Bram Stoker’s first literary effort is today very limited, the National Library being the only institution in the country to definitely hold a copy; and that is a “photographic facsimile presented by the Swedish Film Institute in 1968. The flyleaf records that the facsimile was made from an original copy, then said to be housed in the Home Office library in London.” (W.N. Osborough, p 233)

Regarding the possible connections between Bram Stoker’s work at the Castle and his subsequent literary career, W. N. Osborough<sup>2</sup> suggests three areas of influence:

1. Stoker drew on his experience as a travelling *Clerk of Inspection* in rural Ireland. *The Snake’s Pass* is a case in point, “peopled with a GAA stalwart, an innocent colleen and a gombeen man, and featuring a shebeen, a shifting bog, folklore and tales of the 1798 Rebellion, and everywhere, always, threatening, the dampness and the unstopable rain.”<sup>3</sup>
2. A first hand knowledge and familiarity with the “endless official formalities and eccentricities of the civil service”<sup>3</sup> witnessed by the character of Arthur Severn in the same novel, would also be a legacy from that period.



Again, the experience Stoker acquired whilst amassing material for inclusion in *The Duties* could have taught him useful lessons on organising himself and structuring the work when carrying out research into topics as diverse, for example, as vampirism (*Dracula*), Egyptology (*The Jewel of Seven Stars*), and mediaeval legend (*The Lair of the White Worm*)."

W. N. Osborough<sup>5</sup> quotes Stoker calling his manual "dry as dust" in his *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*. However, much of his later creativity and imaginative verve can be traced back to these formative years spent in Dublin Castle, a place where today we welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors, with lines not unlike the ones spoken by Dracula:

"Welcome to my house! Enter freely. Go safely, and leave something of the happiness you bring!"

Thanks to Professor W.N. Osborough of University College Dublin for permission to use his article<sup>2</sup>.

Sources: Barbara Belford: *Bram Stoker: a Biography of the Author of Dracula*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1996, p 77

W.N. Osborough: *The Dublin Castle Career (1866-1878) of Bram Stoker*, in *Gothic Studies*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, Dec 1999, pp 222-241

(<http://journals.mup.man.ac.uk/cgi-bin/pdfdisp//MUPpdf/GOTH/V1I2/010222.pdf>)

Op. cit. p 234

Op. cit. pp 233-234

Op. cit. p 233

All images, Dublin Castle © OPW / PM Photography (top left & right) / Fiona Morgan (below)

3. His use of the Law as a background on his fiction, for example as an occupation for some of his major characters (such as the young solicitor Jonathan Harker in *Dracula*), as well as a context for conversations, plots and lines of reasoning, probably also drew on his experiences during that period.

In addition, W. N. Osborough<sup>4</sup> suggests possible influences relating to the literary technique and the research experience of Bram Stoker: "The fact that the characters in his stories are found regularly keeping diaries or scribbling memoranda for themselves could owe something to Stoker's recollection of routine office life in Dublin Castle.



# BRAM STOKER at Dublin Castle

Text by Caoimhe Creed

**D**ublin Castle has had many functions, from being the seat of English and later British rule in Ireland, to now being the hub for celebrating milestones such as the recent referenda.

This was once the epicentre of social life in Dublin, where the elite would gather for The Social Season, and in modern times has hosted such lauded guests as John F. Kennedy, Queen Elizabeth II and Pope Francis I. Among these luminaries, it stands to reason that one might forget the presence of a lowly clerk of the petty sessions. But this civil servant is, in fact, one of Dublin Castle's most famous former employees.

Abraham 'Bram' Stoker's haunting *magnum opus*, *Dracula*, is one of the cornerstones of Gothic fiction and has lost none of its popularity since its first publication in 1897. *Dracula* has spawned countless interpretations in literature and film and is the source of many, if not most, vampiric tropes found in modern fiction. Like the book's antagonist, Stoker's masterpiece seems to be immortal.

While some may be quick to draw comparisons between the vampires of Stoker's story and the taxmen he worked with, we can certainly say he drew inspiration from his surroundings for his earlier work.

Still going by Abraham at the time, his first published book, *The Duties of Clerks of the Petty Sessions of Ireland*, was based on his experience as a civil servant here in Dublin Castle. This collection of duties included the salary



Bram Stoker © National Portrait Gallery, London.

and working conditions of a clerk, fines and lists of regulations and was essentially a guide for his fellow civil servants. While perhaps not as riveting a read as *Dracula*, it would be true to say that Stoker made his literary *début* here in the Castle.

Stoker began work in Dublin Castle in August 1871, following in the footsteps of his father, later surpassing him to become Inspector of Petty Sessions. In this position, he oversaw the magistrates' courts that tried all cases down to the most minor crimes, the surviving records of which provide valuable insight into the minutiae of Irish life at the time.

In light of this background, the Gothic fantasy of *Dracula* may seem far removed from Stoker's mundane work life. It is generally accepted that the character of Dracula was inspired by Vlad III Dracula, more famously known as Vlad the Impaler, a prince of Wallachia in the fifteenth century. However, Stoker never visited Romania and does not appear to have researched the life of Vlad *Dracula* so it seems that the only commonality between the Wallachian prince and Stoker's Count is the name. There is, however, also a fancy that Vlad the Impaler drank the blood of his victims, which, admittedly, should not be overlooked.

Nevertheless, we may find parallels in the life of Bram Stoker and the fictional world he created that go beyond the bloodsucking tendencies of nineteenth-century tax collectors in Dublin Castle. Born in Dublin in 1847, at the height of the Irish Famine, Stoker was a sickly child whose mysterious

illness kept him confined to his bed in his early years. During this time, his mother would tell him gruesome stories, truth and fiction, to keep him entertained. She had lived through the cholera epidemic, during which victims were rumoured to have been buried alive to prevent the disease from spreading. Such victims lay in a graveyard close to Stoker's childhood home in Clontarf.

As a famine survivor, Stoker no doubt heard stories, too, of the starving masses – the walking dead – making their way through the streets and roads of Ireland, while huge banquets were held in his future workplace of Dublin Castle. The original title of Stoker's manuscript was, in fact, 'The Undead'.

Add to this that a popular Victorian 'treatment' for a variety of illnesses was bloodletting by lancet and by leech. Young Bram Stoker was likely subjected to this regularly during his illness to remove the 'bad blood' from his body. Against this backdrop of the writer's own blood, ghost stories and Ireland's horror at the time, it is possible that the bones of the novel *Dracula* were formed long before it was published in 1897. Meanwhile, Stoker honed his literary skills during his time in Dublin Castle. His first short story, 'The Crystal Cup', was included in a literary magazine just one year after he began working here. It tells the story of an artist, trapped and unable to create.

"So I rush to my work; but to my brain and hand, heated alike, no fire or no strength descends. Half mad with despair, I beat myself against the walls of my prison, and then climb into the embrasure, and once more gaze upon the ocean, but find there no hope."

Whether this is a metaphor for Stoker as an artist trapped in a job which stifled his creativity or a simple fiction, we may never know, but what we do know with certainty is that his career as a writer began here in Dublin Castle. However, had Stoker not left this job in 1878 for theatrical life in London, pop culture today might look very different. Buffy the Tax Collector may be dominating our screens, while *Twilight* would tell the story of a mild-mannered court clerk who fell for a voluntary Justice of the Peace.



# ABE'S STORY

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1.00pm - 2.00pm  
Tickets: €11  
(incl. €1 booking fee)

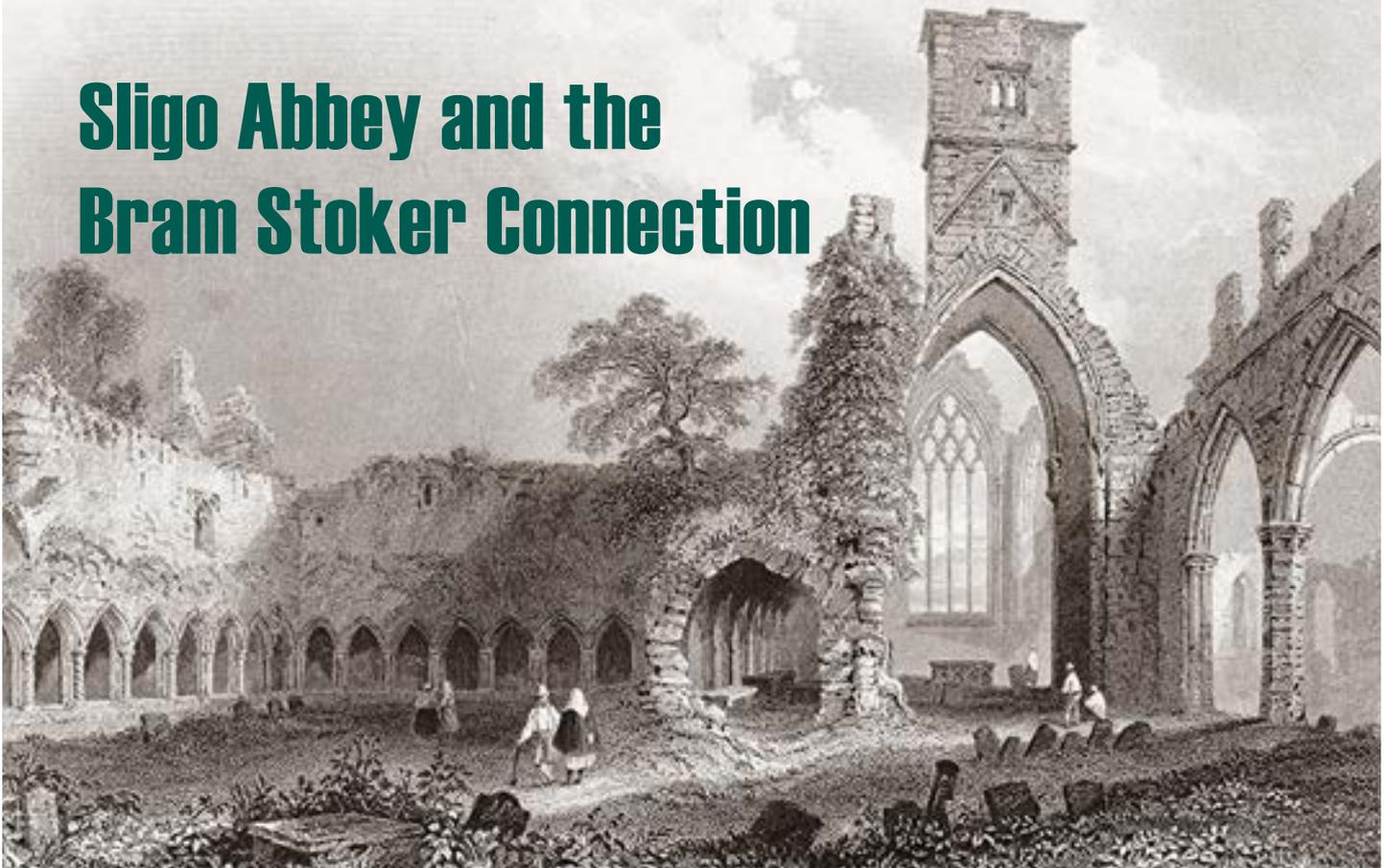


Photos: (above) Abe's Story film set (top) Bats in the Chapel Royal at Dublin Castle

The suitably gothic and opulent Chapel Royal in Dublin Castle, Bram Stoker's workplace for over a decade, will play host to an exclusive screening of the award-winning animated film *Abe's Story* by award winning animator and director Adam H. Stewart. Telling the story of an overworked writer, Abe, who is inspired by his day job in the theatre to create a bloody brilliant novel in Victorian London, it won the Best Animated Sequence in a Short Film Award at this year's Galway Film Fleadh.

The screening will be followed by a discussion with the film's director and acclaimed Bram Stoker biographer Paul Murray, on the influences that helped shape the greatest horror novel of all time; *Dracula*. Venue Support in association with the Office of Public Works. Suitable for ages 12+ (under 18's to be accompanied by an adult). Some blood and flashes of light (but not strobing) in the animated film.

## Sligo Abbey and the Bram Stoker Connection



**S**ligo Abbey Visitor Centre will soon display excerpts from an unusual document: *Charlotte Thornley's Diary*. Charlotte Thornley was the mother of Bram Stoker; her father was an RIC Sub-Inspector stationed in Sligo during the cholera epidemic of 1832. In the diary, Charlotte describes the desperate conditions as "the living struggled to bury the dead." Stoker's famous vampire novel is said to have been inspired by his mother's stories of the cholera epidemic in Sligo.

Charlotte wrote a first-hand account of what she witnessed in "Experiences of the Cholera in Ireland." Bram later compared her stories with other accounts of the epidemic in Sligo written by local historians William G. Wood-Martin and Terence O'Rorke.

'Asiatic' cholera, from the East, had swept through Europe, eventually reaching Ireland in 1832 where it struck Dublin, Belfast, Limerick as well as a number of smaller towns. The first victim of the cholera epidemic in Sligo died on August 11. Wood-Martin wrote

▲ Above: A drawing of Sligo Abbey from close to the time of the cholera epidemic. The Abbey became the site of a mass grave for cholera victims. It stands around the corner from the site of Charlotte Thornley's house.

▼ Below left: Cloister with Love Knot Stone.

that this event was preceded by an unusual storm, with "thunder and lightning, accompanied by a close, hot atmosphere."

This is mirrored in "Dracula," whose arrival from the east is preceded by a great and sudden storm, and he claims his first victim on English soil on August 11.

During many epidemics, bodies are piled atop other bodies when room runs out. In Sligo, it is said that bodies were piled atop the Abbey's 15th century high altar. Charlotte called Sligo "a city of the dead" and heard of cholera victims being buried while still alive, of people dropping dead in the street and of whole families being wiped out within hours. There were sickly smells from the decomposing dead.



Charlotte says it was believed cholera travelled as a mist over land. Dracula too can change into a mist. When the epidemic eventually ended there remained a terrible smell in the town for months after. In Dracula places associated with the Count have a rotting smell and there is the concept of the undead, vampires who are living while dead.

Charlotte noted that Sligo's Catholic clergy seemed somehow immune to cholera and suffered few casualties while continuing to tend to victims. In "Dracula," Stoker, a Protestant, casts the symbols of Roman Catholicism, such as holy water and the crucifix, to fight against vampirism.



- ▲ *Top right:* O'Crain Tomb 1506, Sligo Abbey.  
© Copyright Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit
- ▲ *Above left:* View from the South West Sligo Abbey.  
© Copyright Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit
- ▶ *Above right and below:* Sligo Abbey at night.  
© Sligo.ie / Donal Hackett





# COUNT DRACULA, HIS FEMALE VICTIMS AND CASTLETOWN HOUSE

TEXT BY CATHERINE BERGIN

**W**hen one thinks of the stately Palladian mansion, Castletown House, the words Bram Stoker and *Dracula*, rarely, if ever, spring to mind! Yet thanks to Monaghan scholar Fearghal Duffy a connection between this stately neo Palladian mansion and Bram Stoker has finally come to light and like all great discoveries this one occurred quite accidentally!

It happened over a cup of tea in Monaghan with one of Duffy's friends who also happened to be a guide at Castletown House, Catherine Bergin.

Duffy was surprised to note that Bergin possessed a good degree of local knowledge on Monaghan town, or more particularly, the local Protestant ascendancy family, the Westenra's or also more commonly known as the Rossmores (Lord Rossmore). This knowledge would not come as a surprise to the guides at Castletown House considering a significant amount of the Rossmore art collection is on loan to Castletown House. And this is where the conversation between historian and folklorist got interesting. Thriving on discovering real life connections to literature and folklore,

the name Westenra drew Duffy's attention and pausing for a moment as only a folklorist struck by a new light can, observed that the Lords Rossmore bore the surname Westenra, the same surname of one of *Dracula's* main female victim, Lucy Westenra.

Of course, as a historian and also as a guide at Castletown, Bergin could not rest until such a link had been investigated and it is safe to say the preliminary results are in! Indeed, one did not have to look far to find that this link has already been made



The Dining Room at Castletown House



Bram Stoker 1847-1912

► 'The Parting Gance'  
monument in Monaghan to  
Mary Ann Rossmore by Thomas  
Kirk. Photograph via  
Monaghan County Museum



by others notably, Frank McNally, a journalist for *The Irish Times*. According to McNally's article, it is possible that Stoker knew the Rossmore's. Stoker may also have been familiar with and particularly struck by a memorial to Mary Ann Westenra, wife to the second Baron Rossmore, Lord Warner William Westenra in St Patrick's Church, Monaghan. The couple married in 1791 and had three children.

Devastated by her death in 1807, her husband commissioned a memorial to her.

<sup>1</sup>This memorial known as *The Parting Gance* is credited to Thomas Kirk. And how is this all linked to Bram Stoker? Stoker worked for a number of years as an Inspector of Petty Sessions, a job that took him all over the country, including Monaghan town.

According to local Monaghan tradition, it is believed that it was on such a trip that Stoker encountered Kirk's work, *The Parting Gance*, a carving which depicted Lord Warner William Westenra's last moments with his wife, Mary Ann before her death. Locals claim that this carving held something of a fascination for Stoker and the tradition continues that this scene affected Stoker to the extent that he recreated in *Dracula*. The scene is said to have inspired Bram Stoker's description of Lucy Westenra's last moments with her husband before her death. Further reinforcing the connection, William Warner Westenra's mother, Harriet Murray, may



have been the inspiration for the name of Stoker's main heroine, Mina Murray (married name Harker).

And what has this has all this to do with Castletown House and Parklands? Among the collection of art in Castletown are the images of Mary Ann Westenra and Harriet Murray, in the Blue Bedroom and Dining Room respectively.

This interesting connection has shed new light and renewed interest in these wonderful portraits! In order to see these treasures come to Castletown, entering freely and of your own will...

► Picture 1:  
Harriet Murray  
(portrait attributed to  
Robert Hunter)

▲ Picture 2:  
Mary Ann Westenra  
(posthumous portrait by  
William Brocas)

Images © OPW  
/Castletown House

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.geni.com/people/Mary-Walsh/600000009735577416> [12 Sept. 2018]



# Halloween at Portumna Castle & Gardens Sunday 27th October

**Come to Portumna Castle and Gardens this Halloween Bank Holiday for a screamingly good craft workshop making Leaf Ghosts and Conker Critters.**

**Join Annie in our events area upstairs from the Tea Rooms on Sunday the 27th October from 11am-12.30pm and 2.30pm-4pm. She'll be showing the children how to make ghastly ghosts, spooky spiders, blood thirsty bats and ...cuddly hedgehogs!**

**Then why not enjoy a walk through the castle and gardens and see our Petrifying Pumpkin Patch display. It's one way to keep your little monsters happy this Halloween!**



# Rathcroghan

The Irish Otherworld and the Home of Halloween



TEXT BY DANIEL CURLEY



**T**he Rathcroghan archaeological landscape, County Roscommon, is a collection of 240 identified archaeological sites contained within a 6.5km (725ha) area in mid-Roscommon. Located on an elevated plateau of Carboniferous Limestone, this vast and impressive collection of monuments represent the remains of continuous settlement on this fertile plain for the best part of 5,000 years, from the first farmers of the early Neolithic period (c.3,200BC) through to the late medieval period (16th-17th century). This is the prehistoric and early historic royal site for Connacht, the western *cóiced* (fifth) or province of Ireland.

This landscape is replete with numerous prehistoric burial mounds, standing stones, massive linear earthworks, early medieval ringforts and enclosures and more, all crowned on the high-point of a glacial hill by a complex, multi-period ritual monument known as Rathcroghan Mound.

Our historic record of Rathcroghan tells us that this was a focal point in the region for millennia, as a political and symbolic place of importance, a place



▲ Above: Cross-section of Oweynagat Cave (image courtesy of Kevin O'Brien)

▲ Top of page: Ogham inscription photograph and cave entrance photograph (image courtesy of Rathcroghan Visitor Centre)



to bury the now forgotten prehistoric kings and queens of Connacht, and a place of celebration and feasting in the form of the *óenach*, the seasonal communal assembly. Connected with this, Ireland's unrivalled early medieval literary collection, including the intoxicating mythology that we are proud to be able to read still today, places Rathcroghan as a pre-eminent location of residence and mustering for the legendary kings and queens, gods and monsters, that toiled and warred, lived and died, in Ireland's mythological realms. These names are known to us still today, Queen Medb of Cruachan, her husband Ailill, Cú Chulainn, Fráoch, Ferdia, the Mórrígan, Conor Mac Nessa, and more!

The coupling of these last two themes, assembly or fair activity and mythology, enable us to better understand the most enigmatic monument in the Rathcroghan landscape, the cave of Oweynagat. Known in Irish as *Uaimh na gCat* (the cave of the cats), this cave is of considerable interest for a number of reasons. It is composed of a natural limestone cavern, complete with small stalactites and other interesting calcite deposits, so from a geological perspective, Oweynagat is fascinating. More than this however, a formal entrance is constructed to access the cavern, in the form of a *souterrain*, a passage that can be dated to the early medieval period. This entrance passage houses two *ogham* inscriptions, a rare monument to be found in Co. Roscommon. The legible example of the two actually goes one step further, in that it records the names of Medb and the Connacht warrior Fráoch, these being the earliest recorded mentions of these two legendary figures in any literature. Already, a picture is beginning to emerge for this site!

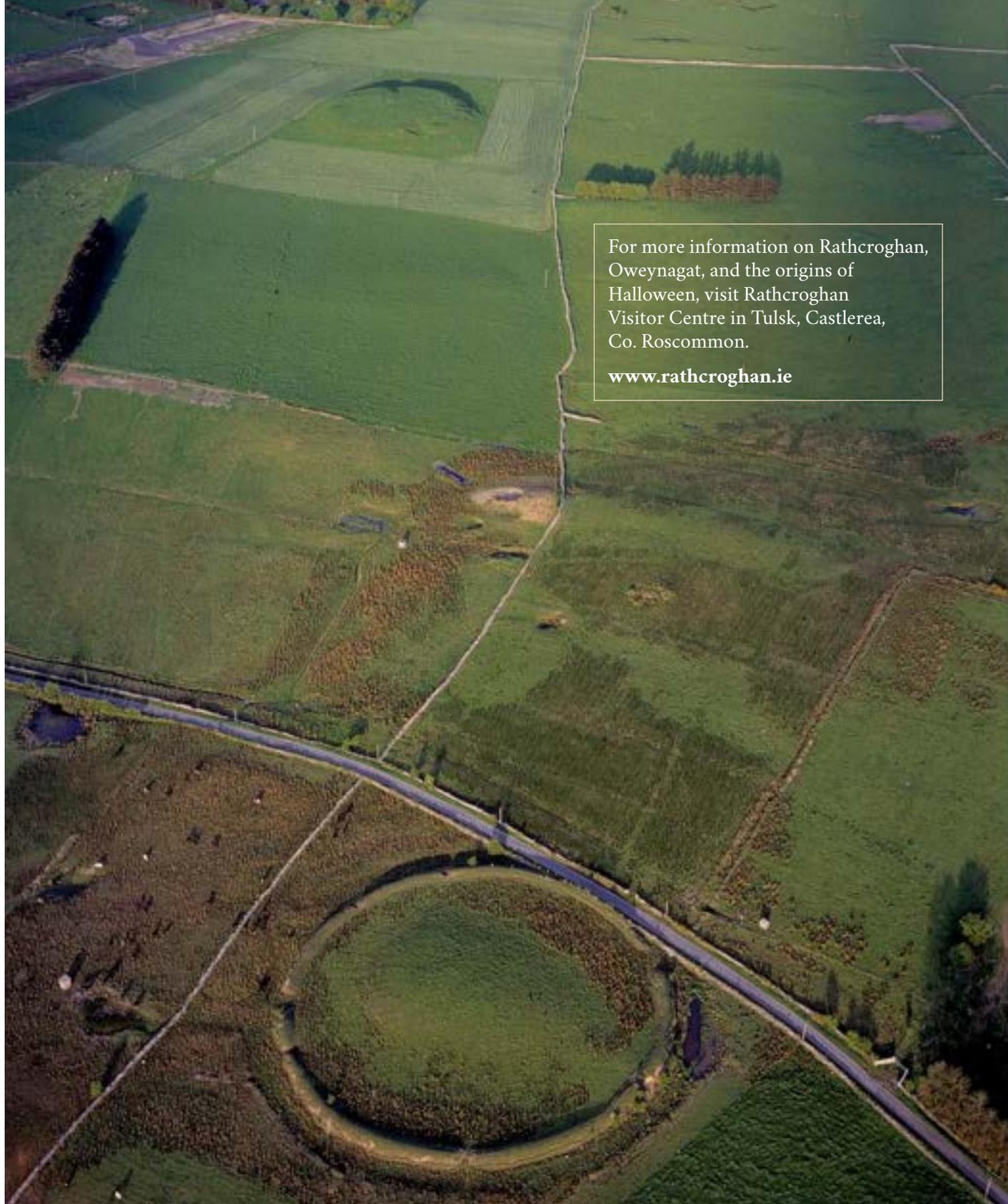
Christian scribes writing in the twelfth century felt the need to refer to Oweynagat as *dorus iffiirn na Hérend* (Ireland's Gate to Hell). In reality, however, our ancestors believed that this cave was actually an entrance or portal to another realm, more correctly referred to as the Irish Otherworld. In the Irish mind-set, the Otherworld is neither a Hell nor a Paradise in the sense that we consider it. Rather it is a land of eternal youth and bounty, and a place accessible, with difficulty, to the living.

Access to the Otherworld via Oweynagat was a journey that could only take place at one point in the calendar year, at the liminal space between the seasons of autumn and winter. Known today as the festival of Halloween, originally this Irish seasonal gathering was known as *Samhain*. The festival of *Samhain* marked the end of the harvest season, when people brought their livestock back from summer pastures, and slaughtered any animals they couldn't keep through the winter. Therefore *Samhain* was a celebration of the end of the harvest season, and the welcoming in of the winter season. This involved rituals surrounding the cleansing of animals, rites in protection of the home, as well as feasting, entertainment, trade and other activities.

Central to these assemblies was the imparting of *seanchas* (traditional stories, lore and knowledge). The tales associated with *Samhain* at Oweynagat tell us of flocks of demonic birds emerging from the cave, birds which possessed a breath so foul that it withered the leaves off the trees. More stories relate the destruction wrought by a herd of magical swine who escaped the cave and caused chaos on the land, stopping vegetation from growing for up to seven years. Legendary warriors are also tested at Oweynagat against three-headed monsters, female werewolves, terrifying wild cats, as well as troops of Otherworldly warriors who come to destroy Rathcroghan.

These horrific manifestations are regulated in their passage to and from the Otherworld by a goddess of battle, who is described as using Oweynagat as her 'fit abode' or lair. This goddess, known as the *Mórrígan – an Mór Ríoghain* (the Great or Phantom Queen), is a shape-shifting spirit, who uses a variety of forms in order control her world, including the washerwoman, the grey wolf, a hornless red-eared heifer, and most notably, the raven or hooded crow. Oweynagat is her demesne, and she opens and closes the portal between our world and the Otherworld on that last night between autumn and winter, allowing the processes of winter to take hold.

This informs us then of the reason why we dress up at *Samhain*, with the intention of being disguised as the monsters, beasts and demons that stalk the land on that liminal night, so as not to be brought back down into the Otherworld at night's end. Oweynagat, *Uaimh na gCat*, *Úaim Crúachan* or *Síd Crúachan* – all of these names relay the nature of this physical entrance into a unique part of the mind-set of our early Irish ancestors, a place apart, and a supernatural force that brings winter into the world! *Oíche Shamhna Shona Daoibh.*



For more information on Rathcroghan, Oweynagat, and the origins of Halloween, visit Rathcroghan Visitor Centre in Tulsk, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon.

[www.rathcroghan.ie](http://www.rathcroghan.ie)

- ◀ Facing page: Oweynagat Cave (image courtesy of Hamish Fenton)
- ▲ Above: Rathcroghan portrait image over landscape (image by Markus Casey)
- ▶ Right: Cave entrance



# Halloween at Pearse Museum

This is our third year in a row to run a **SCAREGROW exhibition** as part of our Halloween festivities in the Pearse Museum and St Enda's Park. It has proven to be one of our more popular events, with entries in 2017 and 2018 coming from local Primary/Secondary/Montessori schools, Girl Guides groups and many entries from families who visit the Park regularly. The entries have been so diverse, ranging from an Egyptian Mummy to a Headless Horseman to a Minion and even to Kim Kardashian.

We are very much looking forward to seeing this year's entries with excited anticipation! The talent and ingenuity that has been shown in previous years' entries have brought so much enjoyment to staff and visitors alike.

**Entries have to be in by Monday 22nd October and can be seen displayed in the Walled Garden from Wednesday 24th October until Monday 4th November 2019.**



TEXT BY MARTINA HALPIN, INFORMATION GUIDE  
AND RESIDENT OF THE NATURE ROOM IN PEARSE MUSEUM  
AND ST ENDA'S PARK, DUBLIN

*Headless Henry  
on An Capall Dorcha*



Mermaid



Mummy



Minion



Henry



Spaceman



Kim Cowdashian



St. Mary's 2nd Class, Sully



Pablo P The Painter



Scarey Crow



# Pearse Museum & St Enda's Park



## SCARECROW COMPETITION

Entries in by  
Monday 21st October



Scarecrow exhibits can be viewed  
in the Walled Garden from  
Wednesday 23rd October  
to Monday 4th November 2019



St Endas Park, Grange Rd, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16, D16 Y7Y5  
Phone: (01) 493 4208 Email: [pearsemuseum@opw.ie](mailto:pearsemuseum@opw.ie)



# *Halloween at Portumna Castle*

From pumpkins basking in the Autumn sun, nearly ready for Halloween, to spooky spider workshops. Call into Portumna Castle and it's 17th century walled kitchen garden this Halloween and enjoy the Autumn warmth, bounty and colour.





# GREEN FLAG PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS 2019

Every year the Green Flag Award for parks Scheme runs a 'Peoples Choice Awards' where they ask members of the public to vote for their favourite Green Flag Award park or green space via the Green Flag Award website.

This year an army of experts awarded a record breaking 2,100 Green Flag Awards to some of the world's very best parks and green spaces and then asked the public to vote for their favourites.

The list of OPW sites with Green Flags are St. Stephen's Green Park, Derrynane Historic Park, Fota Arboretum & Gardens, Garinish Island, Grangegorman Military Cemetery, the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, the Iveagh Gardens, the Phoenix Park and Castletown Demesne

You can find your nearest award-winning park at <http://greenflagaward.org/award-winners/#republicofireland>

Voting took place during September, with the top winning sites announced on the 15th of October.

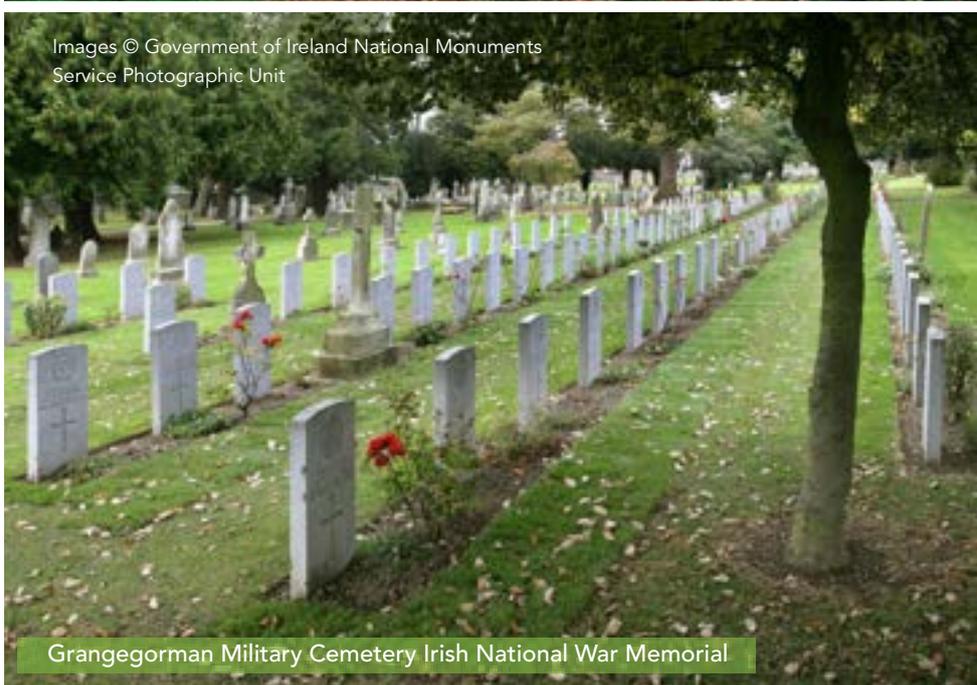
Paul Todd, International Green Flag Award Manager said, "This year we have had more Green Flag Award winning sites than ever before, The People's Choice Award is an opportunity to show how much your favourite park means to you."

We're really looking forward to seeing how our OPW sites fare this year!



Castletown Demesne

Images © Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit



Grangegorman Military Cemetery Irish National War Memorial



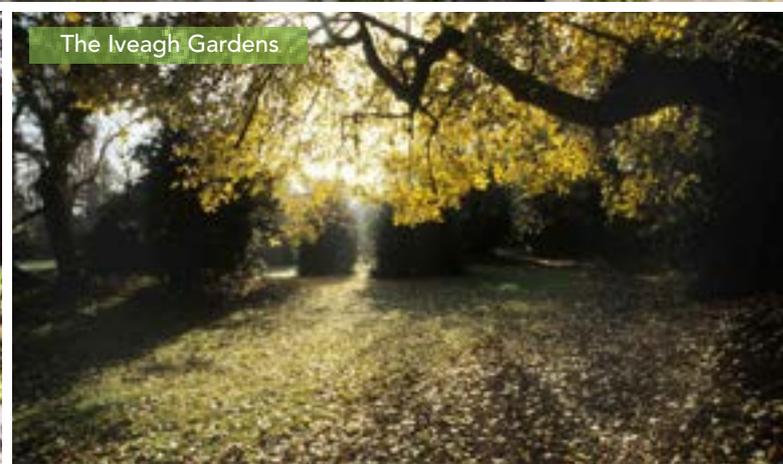
Derrynane House



Garinish Island



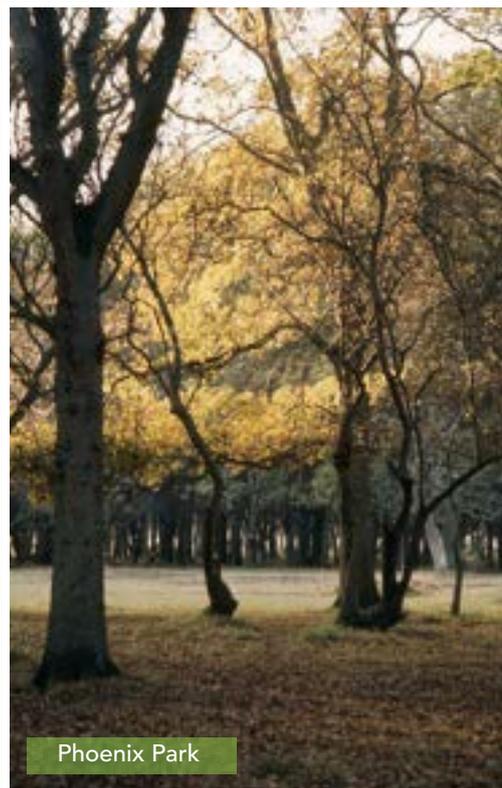
St. Stephen's Green Park



The Iveagh Gardens



Fota Arboretum & Gardens



Phoenix Park



Irish National War Memorial



# The Phoenix Park

*Did you know that...*

- 50% of all terrestrial species of mammals found in Ireland are found in the Phoenix Park?
- 72 species of birds can be found in the Phoenix Park - 35% of the total number of species found in Ireland?
- there is a population of approximately 600 fallow deer in the Phoenix Park?
- there are 351 species of plants growing in the Phoenix Park? Three species of which are rare and protected: Hairy Violet, Hairy St. John's Wort and Meadow Barley.
- 31% (220ha) of the Phoenix Park is covered in woodland or tree dominated areas?
- there are 24 different habitats found in the Phoenix Park?





## Minister Moran announces Pollinator Plan for Leinster Lawn

**K**evin 'Boxer' Moran TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works and Flood Relief announced in July 2019, that the OPW will be implementing a new Pollinator Plan for Leinster Lawn.

The OPW has been working with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, to consider actions from the All Ireland Pollinator Plan which could be implemented to make the landscape in Leinster House more pollinator friendly. This Plan was presented to the Oireachtas Committee and approval was granted in July. Works will immediately commence on the implementation of the various actions in the proposal.

The Minister acknowledged the major recent restoration project at Leinster House and stated "These proposed changes to the Leinster Lawn will enhance the recent restoration works to Leinster House while



encouraging pollinators to flourish within the city. Any changes that can be made, no matter how small, will help safeguard the future of these little wonders who are so entwined in our everyday life."

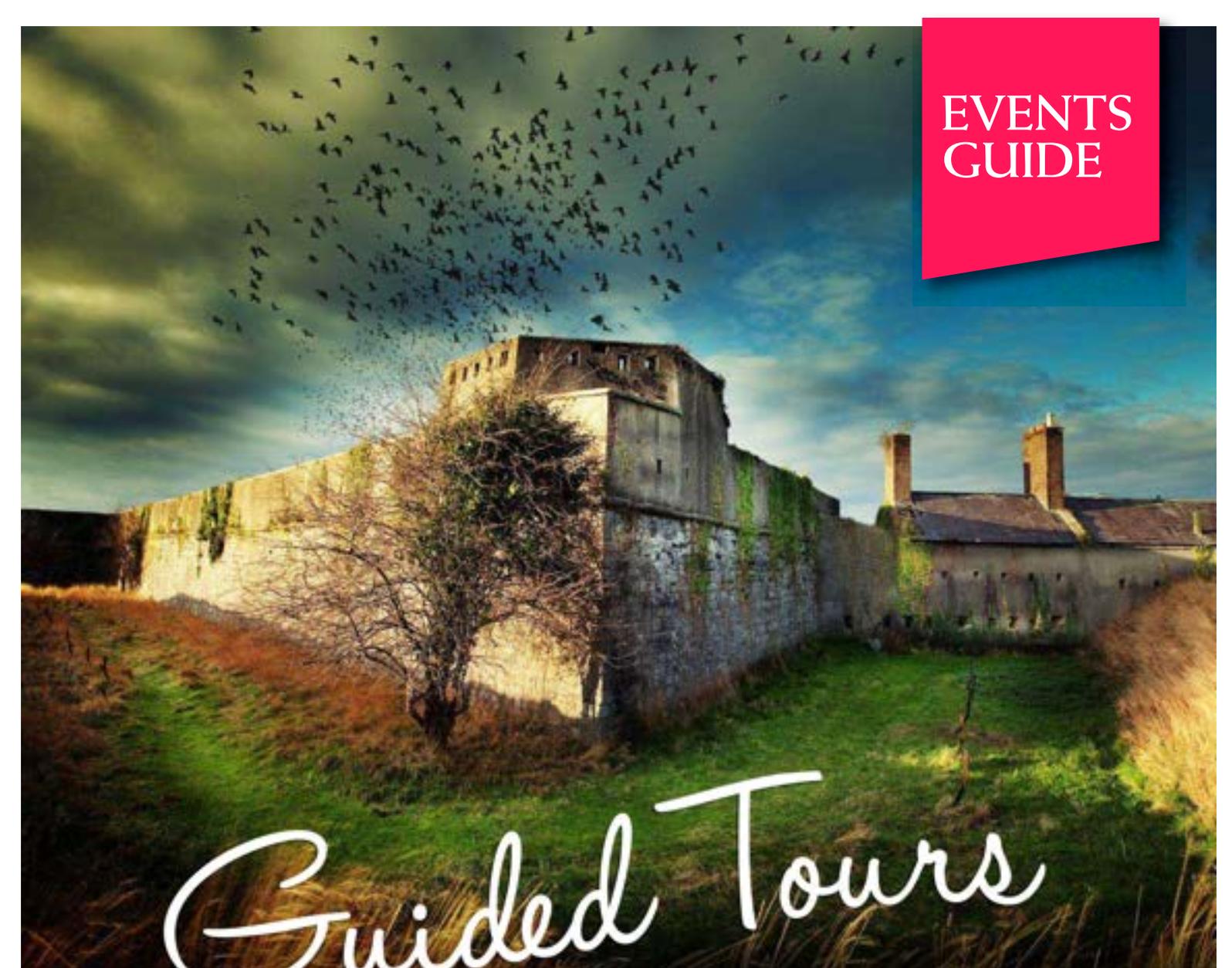
Actions being implemented by the OPW in Leinster Lawn include, planting pollinator-friendly bulbs and perennial plants, introducing native wildflowers, reducing annual bedding and incorporating pollinator-friendly plants into the formal planters. Along with this, organic weed control is used, only where necessary, and bee boxes will be installed. These initiatives will attract bees and provide excellent sources of pollen and nectar, while maintaining the important setting of Leinster House.

The original plans for 'Leinster House' were prepared in 1765 and described as having 'a large formal lawn and walk'. This new plan references the past, while addressing the needs of the present, and safeguarding the setting for future generations.

Dr. Una Fitzpatrick, Ecologist from the National Biodiversity Data Centre, said, "These actions will have significant positive impacts on our pollinators by providing them with food across their lifecycle."

By working together collectively, we can take steps to reverse pollinator losses and help restore populations to healthy levels. We all have a responsibility to contribute to reversing the pollinator decline. It is not about letting the landscape go wild, but about managing it in a way that is sustainable for pollinators, so that they can survive and continue to provide us with their vital service.

These initiatives are being implemented over the coming season by the OPW horticultural team.



EVENTS  
GUIDE

# Guided Tours

## THE MAGAZINE FORT Phoenix Park, Dublin

**From 21st April – 27th October 2019**  
**Every Sunday (weather permitting)**

Times: 10am, 12noon and 2.30pm (April to August)  
10am and 12noon (September to October)

Tickets are limited and are issued from the Phoenix Park Visitor Centre on a first come, first served basis on the day of the tour. Bus transport will be provided to and from the Fort.



Phoenix Park Visitor Centre [www.phoenixpark.ie](http://www.phoenixpark.ie) e: [phoenixparkvisitorcentre@opw.ie](mailto:phoenixparkvisitorcentre@opw.ie) t: 01 6770095

# JFK Arboretum

New Ross, Co. Wexford

*"The trees are in their  
autumn beauty"*

– W.B. Yeats.

Autumn is a wonderful time to visit the JFK Memorial Park & Arboretum with many of the trees starting to show stunning colours on their leaves.

**Open all year**

**October - March:**  
Daily 10.00 - 17.00  
(Main Arboretum)

**October - March:**  
Daily 10.00 - 16.30  
(Slieve Coillte)

**April:**  
Daily 10.00 - 18.30

**May - August:**  
Daily 10.00 - 20.00

**September:**  
Daily 10.00 - 18.30

**Daily Guided Tours:**  
April - September  
12noon & 3pm  
Meet at the Visitor Centre

Guided Tours can also be  
booked in advance.  
Tel: +353 (0) 51 388 171  
Email: [jfkarboretum@opw.ie](mailto:jfkarboretum@opw.ie)

*(Pictured: Acer grosseri,  
Acer japonicum 'Aconitifolium'  
and Dipteronia sinensis)*



# Busy Bees at Fota

Fota Arboretum and Gardens,  
Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

The pollinator beds at Fota  
Arboretum and Gardens have been  
very popular this year... we wonder  
how many jars of honey have a  
little bit of Fota in them...

**OPEN ALL YEAR**

**For Vehicles:**

**April - October:**

Monday – Saturday 09:00-18:00

Sunday 09:00-18:00

**November - March:**

Monday – Friday 09:00-17:00

Sunday 09:00-17:00

**For Pedestrians:**

OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND  
AS TIMES ABOVE.

**ARBORETUM**

Daily 9am – 6pm, April – Oct. incl.

Daily 9am – 5pm, Nov. – March incl.

**WALLED GARDENS**

Mon – Fri, April – Sept incl.;

9am – 4.30pm. (Fri - 3.30pm)

Saturday, April – Sept incl,

11am – 5pm

Sunday, April – Sept incl., 2 – 5pm

Closed Christmas Holidays,

**Tours:** Available by prior  
appointment,  
Monday – Friday only.





*SINCE ancient times, the time of year that the light turns to dark has been celebrated in Ireland. It is a moment in time when the rules can be broken as a cavalcade of Púca take to the streets, transforming the night into a playground.*

**Púca Festival taking place from October 31st - November 2nd will see stunning light installations and performers, playful interactives and awe-inspiring bespoke projections at ancient sites of Ireland's Ancient East, and a new music festival across unique venues in County Meath and County Louth.**

According to Irish folklore and more recent archaeological evidence, Halloween can be traced back to the ancient Celtic tradition of Samhain. 'Summer's end' in old Irish, Samhain marked the end of the Celtic Year and the start of a new one and believed to be a time of transition, when the spirits of all those who had passed away since the previous Oíche Shamhna (31st October) moved onto the next life.

Samhain was the last great gathering before winter, a time of feasting, remembering what had passed and preparing for what was to come.

A spectacular festival of music and light complemented by rich harvest-inspired food experiences, Púca will celebrate a time when light turns to dark, the veil between realities draws thin, rules can be broken, and the spirits move between worlds.

'Púca', a character from Celtic folklore often associated with Samhain, was chosen as the name for the festival following consumer research in key markets. At Halloween, the Púca comes alive, changing the fortunes of those that cross it and immersing them in the true spirit of Halloween.

The walls of stunning and ancient Trim Castle and St. Laurence's Gate in Drogheda will come alive after dark with some of the best projection artists in the world, including Seb Lee Delisle, Algorithm, Illuminos, and Ronan Devlin.

- Three festival hubs – ATHBOY, DROGHEDA and TRIM – play host to Ireland's best established and up and coming names in music including Lisa O'Neill, David Keenan, DJ KORMAC and Jerry Fish.
- The Púca Food and Craft Market in Trim will offer tasty treats and traditional handicrafts to satisfy Halloween appetites.



- The Coming of Samhain at Athboy will kick start the festival on 31st October recreating the symbolic lighting of the Samhain fires.
- Tickets on sale now at [www.pucafestival.com](http://www.pucafestival.com)

*Some highlights attendees can expect from Púca include:*

## ATHBOY

### The Coming of Samhain

**Thursday 31 October, 5pm**

– Fair Green, Athboy.

Free but ticketed.

A stunning historical and spiritual celebration in the shadow of The Hill of Ward (Tlachtga); the ancient site from which the light of the new year first emanates.

## TRIM

### Puca Halloween Night

**Thursday 31 October**

Púca Festival opens with a spectacular series of immersive promenade events that commemorate Samhain and the beginning of the darker half of the year...

### Samhain Procession

**Thursday 31 October, 5.45pm - 7.00pm.** Free to join.

Gather on the streets of Trim as dusk falls to join the Spirits' procession as it weaves its way through the streets to the Púca playground at the Castle.

### Arrival of the Spirits

**Thursday 31 October – Saturday 2 November, Trim Castle, 7pm onwards.** Free but ticketed.

Meet the original spirits of Halloween in this dramatic Festival



Trim Castle © Tourism Ireland

opener and greet some very special Festival guests into the atmospheric surrounds of Trim Castle.

## Púca Light Spectacular

**Thursday 31 October – 2 November.**  
**Nightly from 6pm.** Admission Free.

The grounds at Trim Castle come to life each night with a host of illuminations and interactive interventions - from aerialists and Púca performers to castle projections to laser shows.

## Púca Food and Craft Market

**Thursday 31 October – 2 November**  
**in Trim from 3pm**

A wonderful showcase of local producers in the grounds of Trim Castle.

## Trim Castle Concerts

**Nightly from 8pm-11pm**

The very best in contemporary Irish music for three massive entertaining nights, including:

## Jerry Fish's Púca Sideshow

**Thursday 31 October**

Jerry resurrects his hugely popular Electric Sideshow – a wicked night of Halloween entertainment.

## Just Mustard

## Pillow Queens AE MAK

**Friday 1 November**

Breaking Tunes Púca Nite with some of Ireland's best music-makers.

## KORMAC

## Irish Chamber Orchestra

**Saturday 2 November**

Acclaimed beatmaker and performer, Kormac brings his incredible multimedia Equivalent Exchange with his Big Band and the Irish Chamber Orchestra.

## DROGHEDA

## Shadows of The Tain

## Táin Bó Cuailgne

**Thursday 31 October & Friday 1st**  
**November, Old Mollies, Drogheda.**  
**8pm.** Tickets €15

Immerse yourself in the fight

between Ferdiad and Cúchulainn, and join Queen Medb and her Connacht forces as they invade Ulster at Samhain, in a unique re-telling by Candlelit Tales of the Irish Epic, Táin Bó Cuailgne.

## Haxan

**Friday 1 November,**  
**Droichead Arts**  
**Centre, Drogheda.**  
**8pm.** Tickets €12

For this special Púca screening a new score has been created by Dublin-based musician Matthew Nolan for Benjamin Christensen's legendary silent horror Haxan (The Witches).

## David Keenan: Sive

**Friday 1 November,**  
**Crescent Concert Hall,**  
**8pm.** Tickets €20

County Louth's very own David Keenan is a singer-songwriter whose body of work is steeped in the poetic tradition of old but delivered in such a way that is entirely his own. The eerie and inspiring Sive joins Keenan on the bill with her unique, experimental arrangements.

## Lisa O'Neill

**Saturday 2 November, Crescent**  
**Concert Hall, 8pm.** €15

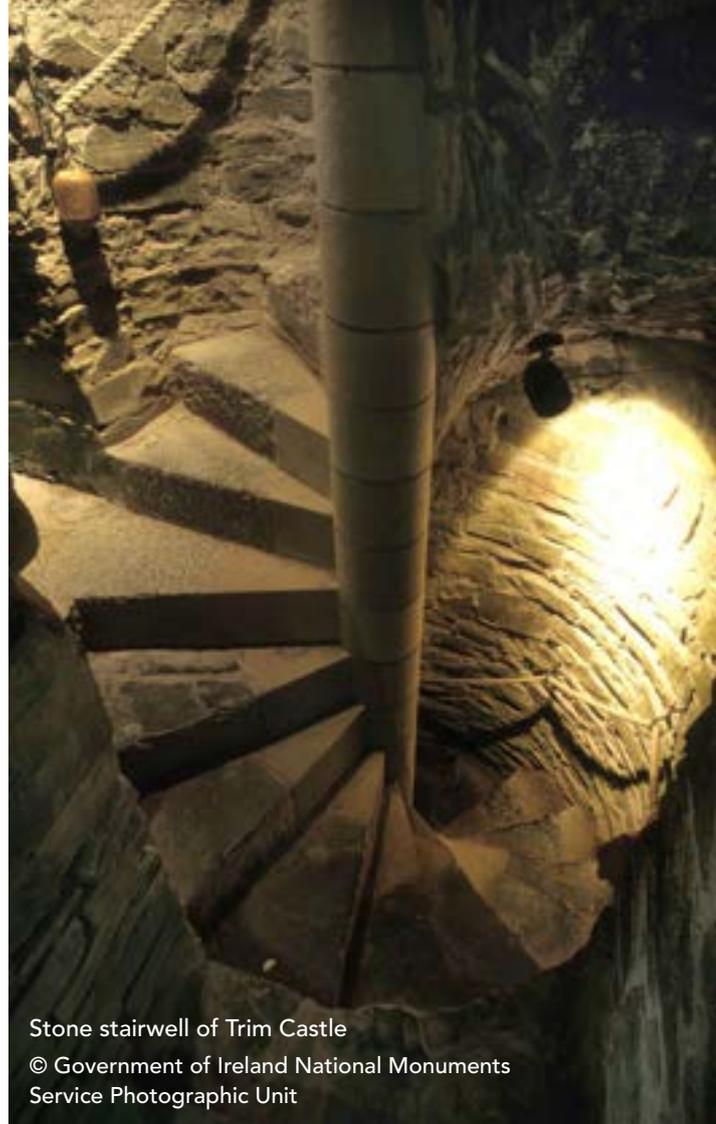
Lisa O'Neill's distinctive voice draws you into a surreal world influenced by all that is beautiful and strange in traditional Irish music and beyond.

## DROGHEDA de LUX

**31 October – 2 November,** Various locations throughout Drogheda town.

Over three nights Drogheda will play host to de:LUX - music and light installations which draw inspiration from tales of Irish folklore and the spirits of Halloween.

**The festival programme can be found at [www.pucafestival.com](http://www.pucafestival.com)**



Stone stairwell of Trim Castle

© Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit

## PUCAFESTIVAL.COM

A portal to another realm! Visit online for all event information, to buy tickets.

### • Follow PÚCA on social media

Follow on social media and start a conversation with fellow festival-goers and keep up to date with all Púca news. Use the hashtag #PucaFestival and join the Púca conversation.

Facebook: @PucaFestival

Instagram: @PucaFestivalireland

Twitter: @pucafestival

### • Keep up to date with PÚCA E-NEWS

Visit [pucafestival.com/enews](http://pucafestival.com/enews) to sign up for e-news and be the first to hear about all Púca Festival goings on.

Website: [www.pucafestival.com](http://www.pucafestival.com)

Locations: Athboy, Trim and Drogheda



# Decorated Pumpkin Competition

**WHEN: October 19, 2019 @ 10 am – 4 pm**

**WHERE: National Botanic Gardens, Dublin**

Take part in our **Decorated Pumpkin Competition** and your pumpkin can be part of a fantastic exhibition to be displayed in the Teak House, National Botanic Gardens.

no carve!



The application form for Pumpkins 2019 is available on our website [www.botanicgardens.ie](http://www.botanicgardens.ie)

This unique event is a big hit with our visitors every year. Please carefully read and fill in the application form on our website to take part in this spooktacular event

- Please remember we cannot accept any carved, cut or pierced pumpkins.
- Entries will only be accepted on Saturday 19th of October, from 10am – 4pm.
- Judging will take place at 6pm on Saturday 19th so no entries cannot be accepted after 4pm Saturday

**Prize giving for the Decorated Pumpkin Competition will be on Sunday 20th at 12.00pm**



# HARVEST FESTIVAL

## IN THE NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Harvest Time is celebrated in spectacular fashion every year in the National Botanic Gardens. The anticipation and excitement building towards Halloween begins with the construction of our unique harvest display which takes place in the second week in October.

TEXT BY FELICITY GAFFNEY

**Preparation begins in the spring with the planting and culminates in the gardeners gathering the pumpkins, gourds, giant cabbages, monstrous organic parsnips, carrots and lots of other interesting unusual plants, berries, fruits and seeds that are in season. Then the talented guide team commence on the construction of this bounteous harvest display. This is a really popular tradition in the gardens and visitors often make their annual visit to the gardens to coincide with the exhibit. This exhibition usually runs until 5th November, weather permitting.**

But, this is not all that happens during the festival - a number of events are organised around the Halloween theme. Sunday the 20th October is our official Dress up Day for all and a number of events suitable for all the family happen on this day including, the decorated pumpkin competition, family dress up day, magical plants workshops, art installations and themed tours for adults. Also on Sunday 20th to coincide with the Halloween festival and to mark the last day of Maths Week Ireland, the Botanic Gardens plays host to the Maths Week

Team for their annual celebration highlighting the fun and accessibility of maths while celebrating Halloween too! This Celebration of Mind event is part of a worldwide effort to celebrate the work of Martin Gardner, a prolific writer of puzzle books. Mathematicians, magicians and puzzlers will engage all ages with a wide variety of maths demonstrations, mazes, puzzles, maths tricks and lots more.

### DECORATED PUMPKIN COMPETITION

A firm favourite of the Halloween festival is the **Decorated Pumpkin Competition** for children which is hosted every year and culminates in a two-week exhibition where the children's creative pumpkin artwork is on display in our exhibition glasshouse. There are a number of categories in the competition with the entries growing year on year. In 2018 over 150 entered, all with their own unique and creative designs. Winners of the competition are announced at our special prize giving which is held during the family dress up day, which will be held on Sunday October 20th in 2019.

### MAGICAL PLANTS IN THE WITCHES GARDEN

During the Halloween season, the **Children's Garden** is transformed into a haven for weird and wonderful plants from around the world. Children, who bring their own adults, can meet the witches and learn all about magical plants from the famous wolfsbane of *Harry Potter* to the opium poppies of the ancient east.

This drop-by activity is run daily during the midterm break and also on Sunday 20th Oct. Schools can also book a Magical Plant Experience for free during term time.

### FOR GROWN UPS

Adults aren't forgotten at this time of the year either, on Saturdays at 2.30pm from 5th October until 26th they can come along and join the **Magic, Murder and Monkshood tour** where the darker side of the Botanic is explored, from poisons and hallucinogens to dark ritual and magic.

Take this adults only tour to discover some of the spine chilling stories encapsulated by the collections.



# Halloween

AT THE NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS  
 GLASNEVIN, DUBLIN, D09 VY63  
 email: [botanicgardens@opw.ie](mailto:botanicgardens@opw.ie) tel: +353 1 804 0300



## Dress-up Day!

**Sunday, October 20, 2019, @12noon to 4pm**  
 at the National Botanic Gardens

It's Dress-up Day when all you witches and ghouls can dress to distress. View the Halloween Harvest Display and Decorated Pumpkin Exhibition and discover all about Magical Plants when you visit the witches in their garden. Join the coven to find out more about using garlic to ward off vampires, plants for potions and spells, poisonous plants, and even some rarely seen invisible plants. Come and see just how spooky plants can really get! You can also try your hand at some of the maths puzzles and games also that will be dotted about.



## Halloween Harvest Display

**October 12, 2019 @ 10:00 am**  
 Education & Visitor Centre at the National Botanic Gardens



Enjoy this popular annual celebration at Glasnevin.

The gardeners have been busy growing a huge variety of colourful pumpkins, gourds, squashes, and lots of other plants for our Halloween Harvest Display.

Come along and try your luck at guessing the weight of the giant pumpkin – the prize winner will be announced on Monday 4th of November.

## MAGIC, MURDER, AND MONKSHOOD

**October 12, 19 and 26, 2019**

**@ 2:30pm – 3:30pm**

Explore the darker side of the Botanic on this adults-only tour. Throughout human history, plants have been used not just for sustenance and shelter, but also for more unsavoury practices. From poisons and hallucinogens to dark ritual and magic, discover some of the spine-chilling stories encapsulated by our collections.



€5 per person. Tickets available on the day – first come, first served.

National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, D90 VY63  
botanicgardens@opw.ie | +353 1 804 0300

## MAGICAL PLANTS

*Children's Event*

**October 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31, 2019**

**@ 11.00am and 11.30am, 3.00pm and 3.30pm. Erasmus Education Garden**

It's all about Magical Plants this Halloween in our witches' garden. Join the coven each day this midterm to find out more about using garlic to ward off vampires, plants for potions and spells, poisonous plants to murder your evil enemies and even some rarely seen invisible plants. Come and see just how spooky plants can really get. Join the coven for a seasonal look at some weird, wonderful and magical plants from around the world. From the famous wolfsbane of Harry Potter to the opium poppies of the ancient Egyptians, it's all about Magical Plants this Halloween in our witch's garden.



## RAPTORS AND OWLS OF THE SOUTH BALKANS

**October 16, 2019 at National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin @ 7:45pm – 9pm**

Philip Clancy of BirdWatch Ireland, Tolka Branch, looks at the Vultures, Eagles, Buzzards, Harriers, Hawks, Falcons and Owls seen on recent visits to northern Greece, Bulgaria and North Macedonia.

Free lecture, no booking necessary.



## VAN DIEMEN'S LAND'S WILDFLOWERS

**October 12, 19 & 26 @ 2:30pm – 3:30pm**

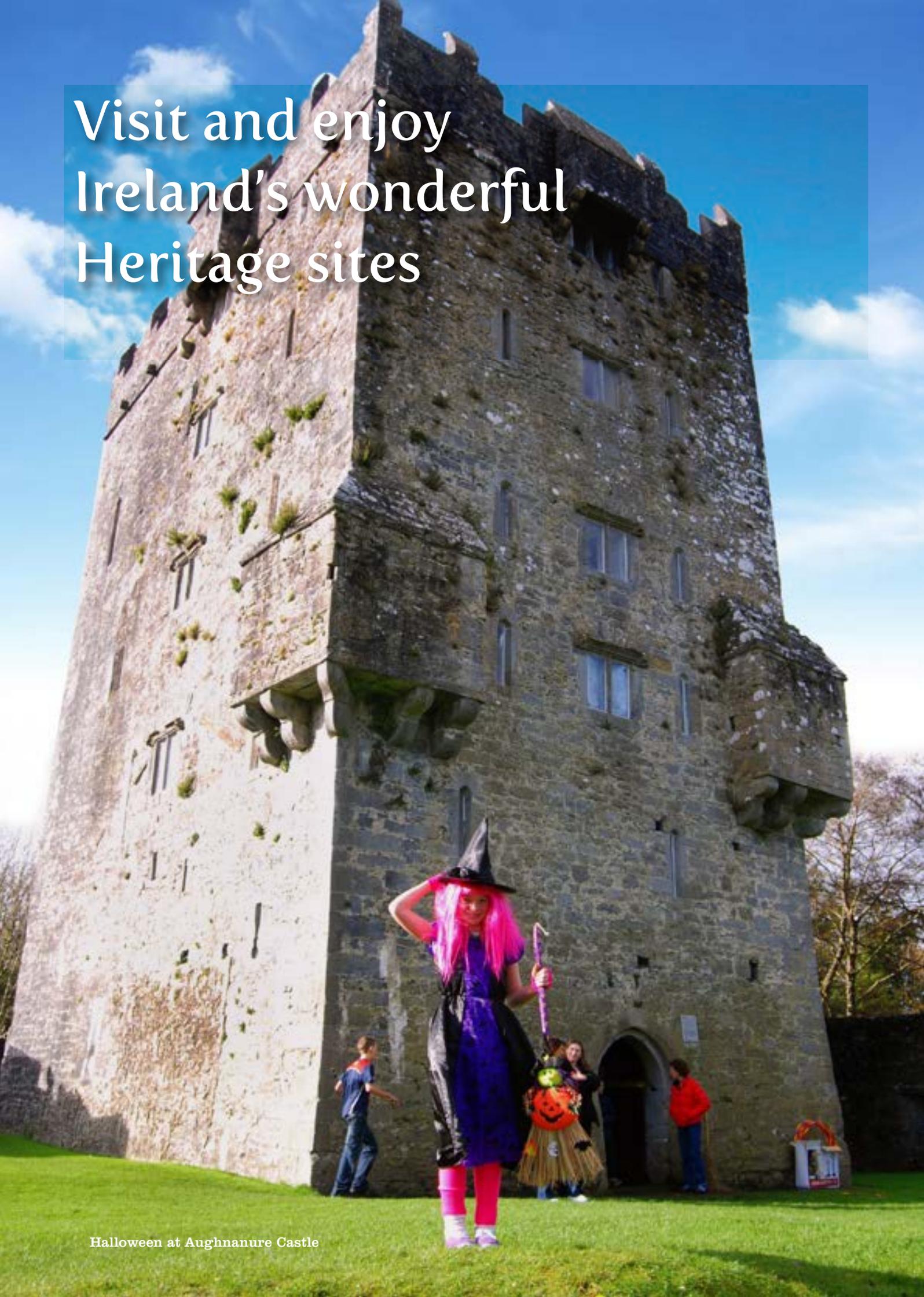
Irish Tree Society Annual Lecture: Van Diemen's Land's wildflowers – The British-Irish Botanical Expedition to Tasmania

In January 2018 Seamus O'Brien, Head Gardener at the National Botanic Gardens in Kilmacurragh, participated in a British-Irish Expedition to Tasmania, where he joined staff from the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in Hobart.

Over the course of three weeks the team collected seeds and herbarium specimens for various major gardens across Britain and Ireland, including the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh in Co. Wicklow. In this talk Seamus recounts the teams travels across the Tasmanian landscape where they met a myriad of exciting plants. Auditorium, Education & Visitor Centre. Free lecture. Organised with the Irish Tree Society. Venue: National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.



# Visit and enjoy Ireland's wonderful Heritage sites



Halloween at Aughnanure Castle