

Heritage Ireland

Issue 16 | Spring 2022
heritageireland.ie



OPW



Contents

< Trim Castle illuminated
in blue & yellow for
St. Patrick's Day in
solidarity with Ukraine.
(Photo Anthony Murphy)



John McMahon Retires – A Tribute

7



Maynooth Castle

9



Ireland's Historic Gardens

12



Head Gardener Seamus O'Brien Wins Award

15



Kilkenny Castle

16



Castletown House Guide Wins Scholarship

17



Ireland's Iconic Heritage Sites on Screen

18



Cahir Castle – Europe's Favourite Film Location

21



Cahir Castle – History

23



How to Play Like a Viking! Learn Hnefatafl

30



Free Things to Do in 2022

34



What's New – 90 amazing places to visit

36



The Rock of Cashel

39



Annes Grove – Plant Collection & Gardens

45



OPW Heritage sites light up for Ukraine

52



Events & Exhibitions

A Life in Paint – Patrick Reel Exhibition (p.6), Daniel O'Neill: Romanticism and Friendships (p.11), The Dublin Bowie Festival (p.33), Castletown House Events (p.42), Intervals of Peace – Civil War Prison Art (p.43), Tech Week: Bricks4Kids Workshop (p.44), Bealtaine Festival – Architectural Tour of Kilkenny Castle (p.44), Rhododendron Week at the National Botanic Gardens (54).

< OPW Heritage sites
light up for Ukraine



Welcome

Rosemary Collier
Head of Heritage Services
& Capital Works Delivery



Maurice Buckley
Chairman OPW



"A generation which ignores history has no past and no future"

Robert A. Heilein's quote seems particularly apt as we welcome you to the Spring 2022 issue of Heritage Ireland. We are proud that many of our sites have been illuminated in the colours of the Ukrainian flag in support of our friends in the Ukraine and hope for a speedy resolution to the conflict. Other sections of the OPW are supporting the provision of State property and offering technical assistance to the provision of accommodation of displaced Ukrainians in Ireland.

Our heritage sites span the entirety of Ireland's historical record and each is presented in a way that maintains its own unique and authentic character ensuring visitors experience the passage of time and history as it was lived. Our knowledgeable and experienced staff expertly share the stories of these unique places, helping visitors discover the people, places and stories that defined our past so that we can all use them to shape our future.

Spring is in the air and preparations are underway across all of our national heritage sites as we ready ourselves to play our part in supporting the recovery post-Covid. For tourism to recover we must have stand-out attractions to entice visitors, domestic and international, to explore Ireland. We are particularly delighted, therefore, to share details of sensational new offerings at a number of sites that you will be able to enjoy this year. Knowth, although less well known

than Newgrange, is probably even more impressive, with Western Europe's largest collection of Neolithic art. The new state-of-the-art exhibition at Knowth includes improved interpretation to tell the story of the 50-year archaeological excavation of the site by Professor George Eogan, the significance of the site's megalithic art and its importance in national and international terms.

More new wonderful developments coming soon are the revamped visitor experiences at the Blasket Centre and the Céide Fields, using state of the art technology to give an insight into the lives of our Céide Fields ancestors and the ever-changing landscape of the Céide Coast, while the new viewing platform at the Blasket Centre has been followed by upgrades to the visitor centre, with new AV displays and graphics telling the story of life on the Blasket Islands.

We are also delighted to be able to facilitate public access to the spectacular gardens at Annes Grove. The Annesley family donated the north-Cork property to the state in 2016 and, since then, an impressive renovation programme has restored these beautiful gardens to their original splendour.

We hope you enjoy learning about our past through our wonderful historic sites all over the country and the many events hosted at those sites. We are waiting to welcome you! Please visit our website at www.heritageireland.ie for more information and don't forget that you can stay in touch with your favourite properties on our social channels.

Contributors



Jim Mulligan is a seasonal guide at the Rock of Cashel since 2012. Holds a B.A. Public Management (1996) and M.A. Human Resource Management (2011) from the Institute of Public Administration.



Robert O'Brien joined the Office of Public Works as a tour guide in the summer of 2014, first working at Ormond Castle in Carrick-on-Suir before it closed for renovations, before moving on to Cahir Castle the following year. Robert studied Creative Writing at Maynooth College in Kilkenny and has given Creative Writing workshops to adults and children over the years. He also studied horticulture at Kildalton College. Robert is a keen historian with particular interest in the Crusades and naval operations during the Second World War. He lives in County Waterford.



Neil Porteous is an historic garden consultant working in Ireland. Neil is also a plantsman gardener just retired as Head Gardener at Mount Stewart for the National Trust. He has a BSc Hons in Horticulture and an MA in Garden History.



Catherine Bergin Victory is a guide at Castletown House, Co. Kildare. Catherine is an historian and archaeologist, qualifying with a PhD in history from Maynooth University.



Stephanie Kennedy holds a Masters in Cultural Event Management and works for the Office of Public Works at St Audoen's Church creating playful learning content for Heritage Ireland Website. She is a member of the Muse Tech working group with research supported by the IMA. She is also currently working on an EU project in the field of Alzheimer's with a view to finding way to remove barriers to engagement.



Hugh Carrigan is a Parks Superintendent with the OPW. He has over twenty five years' experience in a diverse range of creative and management roles in the area of Parks & Landscape Management. He is currently working on many landscape projects within the Heritage Services section of the OPW and has previously worked at senior management level as Parks Superintendent in Waterford City Council 2008-13 and South Dublin County Council 2002-2008, and has collaborated and project lead many urban development projects including the development and management of many public parks and gardens. Hugh was instrumental managing the Annes Grove Estate restoration project from when it came into public ownership in 2015 until May 2021.



Paul O'Brien M.A., 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, he 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, son and two cats. Stay up to date with the author at www.paulobrienauthor.ie



‘A Life in Paint’

Patrick Reel
Retrospective
Exhibition
at Dublin
Castle

‘A Life in Paint’ encompasses the creative journey of Patrick Reel (b.1935). While covering all of this journey, many of the paintings included in this exhibition are very recent works, reflecting Reel’s ongoing energy and enthusiasm for a painting practice which spans over sixty years. Several of these paintings are arguably some of the finest he has ever produced.

The subject matter of his works ranges from portraits to landscape studies, semi-abstract/abstract compositions, and black and white sketches, all in evidence in this exhibition. As long ago as 1968, Reel exhibited as part of the Irish Exhibition of Living Art, alongside Louis le Brocqy, Mainie Jellett and others. A solo exhibition of his abstract work followed in 1973 in the prestigious Project Arts Centre.

Exhibition runs from:

11th March – 1st August 2022

**The State Apartments Galleries,
Dublin Castle**

9.45am–5.15pm, Monday–Sunday

Admission €3

Working with the curatorial team in Dublin Castle and the artist himself, curator John O’Hagan has carefully documented Reel’s back catalogue of work and pieced together the history of his career using photographs, letters, archives and memory.

The resulting retrospective shines a light over decades of production across several genres and shows how his observational skill, draughtsmanship, his love of his native town Navan and of nature, the mystical majesty of the primeval Boyne landscape and inherited archaeology all leave a distinctive trace in his entire oeuvre, always moving the work forward, searching for new ways to express and release the creativity within.



John
< McMahon

John McMahon

Retired OPW
Commissioner

A tribute

by Rosemary Collier

John Mc Mahon, OPW's long-serving Heritage Commissioner, has recently retired from the OPW and is hopefully, as I write, enjoying the fruits of an early springtime free from the cares of formal work and responsibility, the first in many, many years. This event shouldn't, I think, pass unremarked and it offers me an opportunity to reflect on a professional and personal relationship that I have both benefited from and enjoyed in recent years since I joined the OPW's Heritage Service in 2016.

John has, obviously, a long history in the OPW, much longer than me, and many of his former colleagues over the nearly 46 years of his service in "the Board" will have had a chance over the last few months since he announced his intention to depart, to express their gratitude and admiration to him for all that he has contributed. John served in a huge variety of roles over the years, from Property Maintenance Services to the old (dare I say notorious?) Central Building Maintenance Workshop on Lad Lane, and on to more senior roles in Property Management Services, Project Management Services and, latterly, as the Commissioner with responsibility for a significant part of the OPW's delivery functions, including Heritage Services. Slightly after the formal 2021 celebration of John's career therefore, I'd like to take the opportunity to mark this latter contribution particularly in our Heritage Ireland ezine so that I can share a few personal impressions and memories of the "Commr from Clontarf".

My own longevity within the OPW is obviously very short compared to many others and my lack of experience within the organisation was one of the things I found most personally daunting when I joined as Head of the National Historic Properties Service in 2016. Immediately I landed however, it was clear

that John, far from fulfilling the image of a "traditional" conservative senior Civil Service mandarin, was rather a hugely warm, funny, supportive and reassuring boss, forever on hand to give advice and reassurance, share wisdom (or a joke) and, crucially, willing at a moment's notice to take time to fill in the vital backstory on many of the issues and challenges I had to face. For a "newbie" in the organisation, this was vital and helped in no small way to ensure that I was able to manage both the professional and personal challenge involved in fitting into a complex and varied organisation like the OPW much better than I would have otherwise.

Obviously, much of my early experience of working with John was something that I will always value, however, I was only later to learn that I had a place in John's vision and that he had personally championed my recruitment to OPW, seeing my previous experience with the Arts Council, Opera Ireland and the Kilkenny Arts Festival as valuable background to help fill out the OPW's senior management heritage team and bring a new dimension to our approach to the running of Ireland's heritage and cultural estate. Though it wasn't apparent to me at the time, John was clearly focused on what he wanted to do and the legacy he intended to leave and he was, as I would learn, singularly adept at sharing this with everyone around him. Others within Heritage Services will, I know, remember how he would spend time with them listening to problems, suggesting help and solutions and everywhere injecting his particular brand of enthusiasm and love of heritage.

The role of Heritage Commissioner is a curious one in some ways – fundamentally, the OPW mission is to conserve, preserve and protect Ireland's built heritage in our care and this means making sure that it isn't altered or changed in any way and helps to maintain a truthful aesthetic and material link with the past. While John was always very focussed on this, he was however always conscious too of the need to move forward, to adapt and change as necessary and to seek out new and exciting ways to add richness and colour to the Heritage Estate in the OPW's care. I particularly recall his personal contribution to the OPW's Heritage Services' in-house workshop in Dublin Castle in April, 2019 to prepare our contribution to Heritage Ireland 2030, the new Strategy for Heritage being created by the Department of Heritage. In his opening presentation to us that day, he reminded us of the breadth and extent of the wonderful heritage we care for and directly



< Pictured at the opening of the Lady Kildare Room at Castletown House (2020), L-R: John McMahon, Maurice Buckley and Rosemarie Collier, OPW.

challenged us to think of new ways to do our jobs, specifically calling for bravery and ambition in our approach and not just being tempted to use the opportunity to focus on everything that was amiss around us. It was this positivity and willingness to consider what was the better way forward, the radical approach even,

that marked his tenure out and I think will leave a lasting impression within OPW.

Practically, John's vision and sense of the possible within the heritage estate manifested itself in many ways. He led the senior Heritage team in our engagement with the Department of Heritage and Fáilte Ireland that unlocked a valuable source of funding for our visitor estate. This has, since 2015, resulted in a huge investment in projects at a long list of sites and, as many readers will know, has led to some wonderful developments at places like the Kilmainham Courthouse, Dublin Castle, Brú na Bóinne and Céide Fields. There had not been a similar planned investment programme across such a broad range of the estate since the mid 1990's and, with his previous experience in Project Management Services and Property Management Services, John was uniquely placed to bring a unique perspective to the value of spending on our existing portfolio and creating modern buildings and facilities to enrich the visitor experience. He was also, learning from that previous experience, adamant that we had to invest in proper maintenance and this too has resulted in significant improvement; though much of this is invisible to the casual eye, it is vital for our ability to continue to deliver for Government, citizens and the visiting public. He has also left a legacy in the work that he helped to fund to create various strategies and masterplans for some of our most important heritage assets. He was, I know, especially proud of the Phoenix Park Masterplan that

sets out a vision for its future and how it can continue to play an important role for the citizens of Dublin in particular. As a part of this, and belying any notion that he was solely a bricks and mortar Commissioner only focussed on new buildings, John was a tireless champion for the creation of a new bridge on the historic Lutyens design across the Liffey at Islandbridge to join the Park with the War Memorial Gardens showing that he valued our past as well as our present. The Lutyens vision, and John's adoption of it, remains, hopefully, to be realised.

Apart from his work on the Visitor Programme, John was also instrumental in making changes like free admission initiatives for children and people with disabilities, marketing of the visitor estate, online booking and web-oriented visitor engagement. In time these changes, though challenging to implement seamlessly at the time, will I think be seen as significant steps on the way to OPW modernising its approach to visitors and opening our doors to the fullest extent possible.

Apart from his overriding sense of vision for the heritage estate, John was – and this was I think hugely important in my own case – a great friend to those who worked for him. Many others of his old colleagues around the OPW will attest to this. Also, it has to be said, he was simply great fun to be with and his appreciation for a nice pint of Guinness was well known and was sometimes exercised with colleagues when work was done. I have many fond memories of the fun John could create within a group and the great sense of camaraderie he created. John, on behalf of us all, can I say we'll miss you and many thanks for all the wonderful memories we have of you.



Maynooth Castle

by Paul O'Brien

Maynooth in County Kildare, is located 24 kilometres (15 miles) west of central Dublin, and is just inside the western edge of the Pale. A castle was constructed in the area during the early 13th century that became the seat of power for the Fitzgerald family, who dominated Irish affairs and governed Ireland for the King of England from 1487 to 1513.

During the rebellion of Silken Thomas in 1534, the son of the ninth earl of Kildare, the castle was besieged by crown forces commanded by William Skeffington. The techniques of European warfare had been transformed during the 15th and 16th centuries with the advent of gunpowder and by the substantial progress in the effectiveness and destructive power of artillery.

In March 1535, Skeffington's army, using artillery, bombarded the castle, destroying much of the medieval structure, forcing the garrison to capitulate after a ten day siege. The prisoners were led out from the ruins and

summary executed at the castle gates. The rebellion was brought to an end and Silken Thomas was captured and imprisoned along with five of his uncles in the Tower of London. They were executed at Tyburn for treason on 3 February 1537.

With the marriage of Richard Boyle's (1st Earl of Cork) daughter to George Fitzgerald, 16th Earl of Kildare, a restoration of the castle was undertaken between 1630 and 1635. This period of relative peace in Ireland was short lived as in 1641 the conflict known as the Irish Confederate Wars, also called the Eleven Years War commenced. The conflict was considered the Irish theatre of war for the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, civil wars that were being fought in Ireland, England and Scotland. Those loyal to the King of England and those loyal to Parliament, clashed in numerous battles and skirmishes and it is considered to be one of the most violent and bloody periods in Irish history. This conflict had political, religious and ethnic aspects and was fought over governance, land ownership, religious freedom and religious discrimination.



Images of early 13th century Maynooth Castle and detail of the FitzGerald family Coat of Arms, which features two monkeys.



During this conflict, sieges aimed at isolating and reducing fortified positions became a tactical nous for both sides. The Kildare Geraldines who occupied the castle during this period sought to avoid conflict and avoid the war. Because of Maynooth Castle's strategic importance, its close proximity to the Pale and the possibility that it could be used as a forward operating base for Parliamentarian forces to launch attacks or harass troops heading into County Dublin, Royalist Forces under the command of Owen Roe O'Neill launched an attack. Once again artillery was deployed and the garrison defeated. Much of the castle was destroyed and ruined in order that it could not be reoccupied and pose a threat to forces in Dublin. Only the gatehouse and the solar tower remained.

The Fitzgeralds subsequently left Maynooth Castle, first moving to Kilkea Castle and then taking up residence at Carton House which became their family seat.

Today, part of Maynooth Castle has been restored by the Office of Public Works and one can visit this magnificent stone edifice and relive what times were like during Ireland's turbulent past.

Special thanks to Alan Cleary and Mary Henry for information on Maynooth Castle.

<https://heritageireland.ie/places-to-visit/maynooth-castle/>



Daniel O'Neill

Romanticism and Friendships

The Office of Public Works (OPW) presents a retrospective of Daniel O'Neill's work at the Farmleigh Gallery. The exhibition is being curated by art historian Karen Reihill with the majority of the works being borrowed from private collections, many unseen in public in over 50 years, as well as paintings from the collections of IMMA, University of Limerick and the Ulster Museum.

This exhibition will be Daniel O'Neill's first retrospective since 1952 which was held at the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery (Ulster Museum)

which then recorded a record attendance for the time. It is hoped that this exhibition will be an opportunity for the public to re-examine the life and work of this artist, who was highly regarded by the critics in the post war years and whose works were in popular demand until his death in 1974.

Born in Belfast, O'Neill had little orthodox training except for a few classes at the College of Art, Belfast. He started painting with watercolours at the age of fifteen and when possible spent all his spare time in the Belfast Reference Library studying the Italian renaissance painters. Working as an electrical engineer in the Belfast Corporation Transport Department, he worked on the night shift so he could paint during the day. This continued for over five years until he was taken up by the Dublin dealer, Victor Waddington, in 1945 where several one man shows followed. In 1948 he spent six months in France, mostly staying in Paris, where he was given the opportunity to study the painters he admired, such as Watteau, Rouault, Vlaminck, Utrillo and the Impressionists. During the late 1940's/1950's Daniel O'Neill was selected to participate in over twenty overseas exhibitions of Irish Art that toured Britain, Europe and the USA. Many of these exhibitions were sponsored by the Irish Department of

External Affairs and they were intended to showcase the very best of Irish art abroad.

O'Neill moved to London in 1958 to start a new life. His paintings were then mainly sent to The Waddington Galleries in Montreal where he gained a new International market. His work was also shown at The Dawson Gallery in Dublin up until 1963 where it continued to be in demand but after that date his work was not seen in Dublin for another eight years which caused his work, and name, to fade in to the background. Throughout this period O'Neill struggled with personal problems, however, an opportunity arose on a visit home when he was persuaded to return to Belfast and hold an exhibition there which opened in 1970. After an eighteen year absence from exhibiting in his native city critics expressed surprise at the new bright strong colours which was a move away from the sombre romantic style they had last seen in the 1950's. Following this successful exhibition in Belfast, he held his last solo exhibition in Dublin in 1971 at the Dawson gallery and his future looked promising. Unfortunately due to a combination of events in Belfast his health deteriorated and he died tragically in March 1974 at the early age of 54.

This exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive catalogue detailing the life of Daniel O'Neill and that of his other innovative friends that make up the Belfast Boys, Gerard Dillon and George Campbell among others. It is hoped this publication along with the exhibition will lead to a reassessment of Daniel O'Neill's place in the history of Irish art by a new audience and generation of critics, students and enthusiasts.

Exhibition runs from:

13th March 2022 – 6th June 2022

Farmleigh Gallery | Opening Hours:

Tues – Sun (& Bank Holiday Mondays)

10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm

Admission is free.





Kilkenny Castle *The rose garden and extensive parklands are just some of the delights*



The John F. Kennedy Arboretum
A garden of presidential proportions.

Ireland's Historical Gardens

This Spring discover some of Ireland's most iconic gardens and celebrated plant collections, from the internationally renowned National Botanic Gardens to Ilnacullin, an island oasis of rare beauty. Visit Fota Arboretum with its celebrated champion conifers or uncover Dublin's best-kept secret, the Iveagh Gardens.

Ireland's historical gardens are of great architectural interest and beauty. Many of them were designed by the foremost visionaries of their day, like Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll. Each has an atmosphere all of its own.

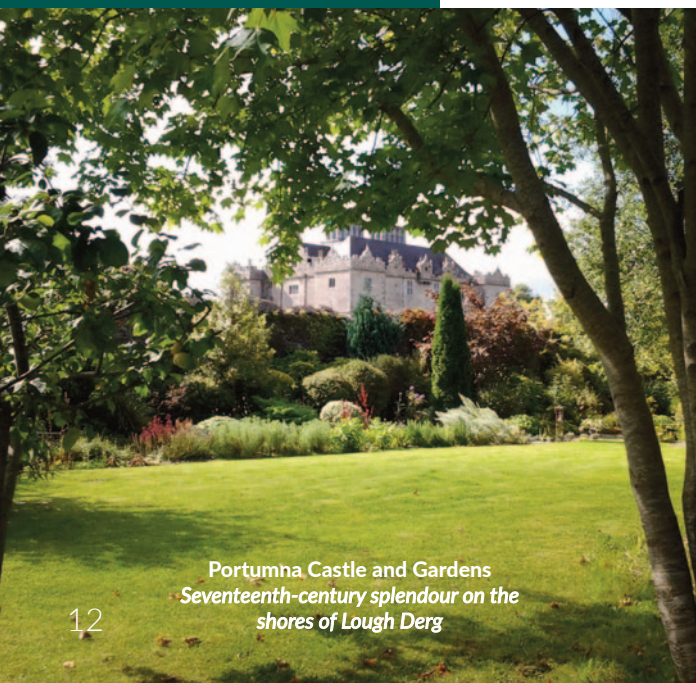
Whether you are drawn by the rare horticultural delights on offer, the cutting-edge conservation work or simply the chance to rest and reflect in scenic surroundings, our exquisite gardens will not disappoint.



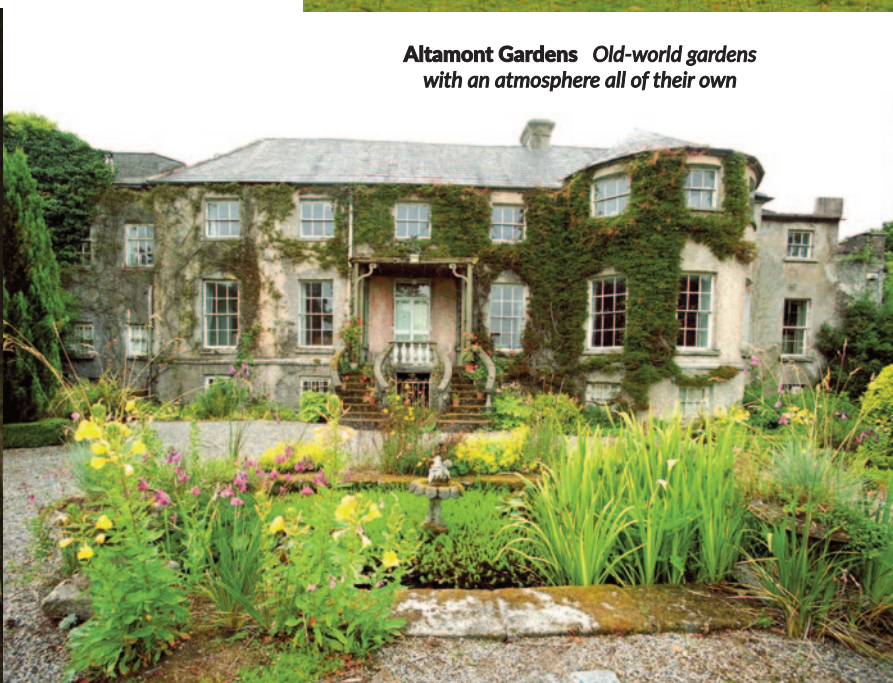
Iveagh Gardens *Experience a sense of wonder in Dublin's 'secret garden'*



Doneraile Estate
Discover its parterre walled garden and so much more



Portumna Castle and Gardens
Seventeenth-century splendour on the shores of Lough Derg



Altamont Gardens *Old-world gardens with an atmosphere all of their own*



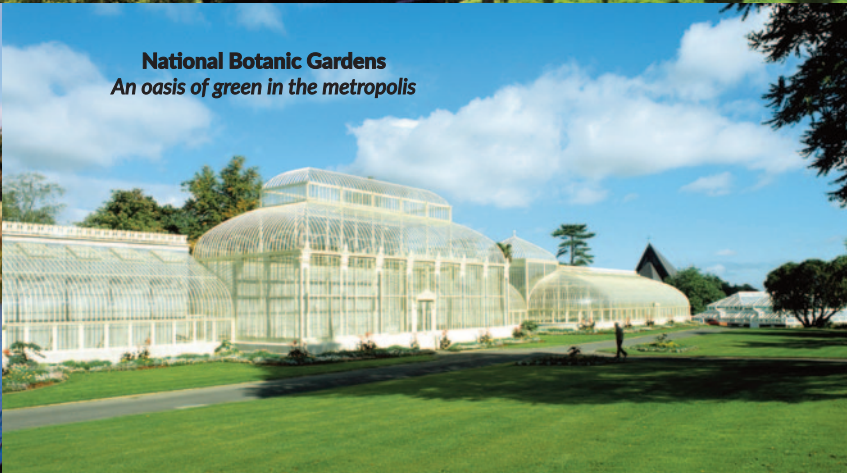
Annes Grove *A horticultural paradise
amid the glens of north Cork*



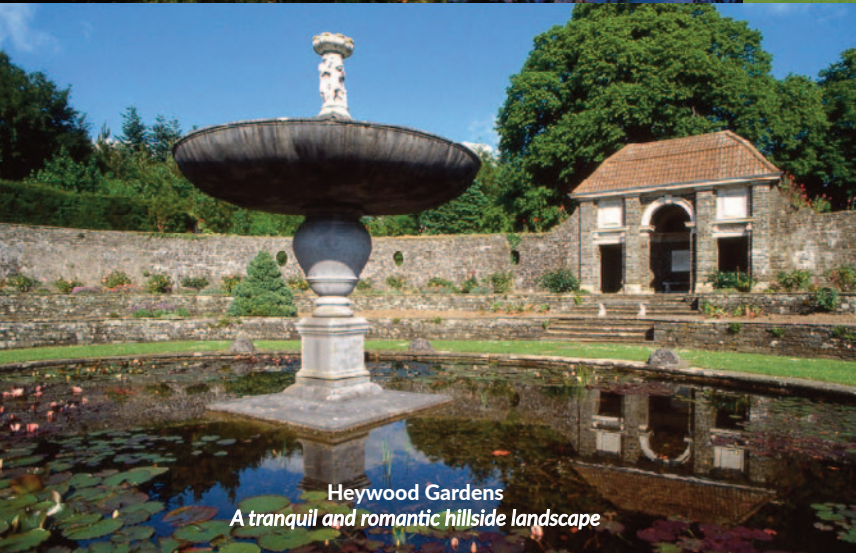
Emo Court *A stunning estate rich in
history and natural
beauty*



Castletown House and Parklands *Soak up the tranquillity of the Pleasure
Gardens*



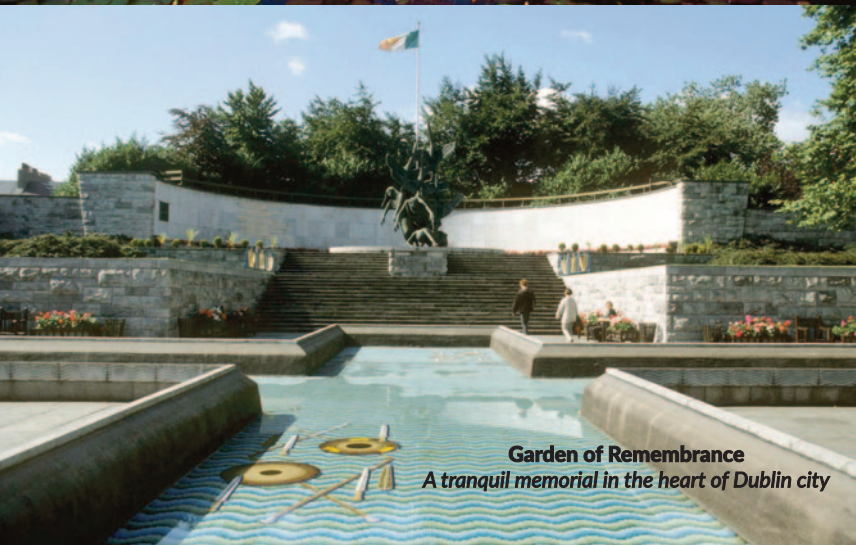
National Botanic Gardens *An oasis of green in the metropolis*



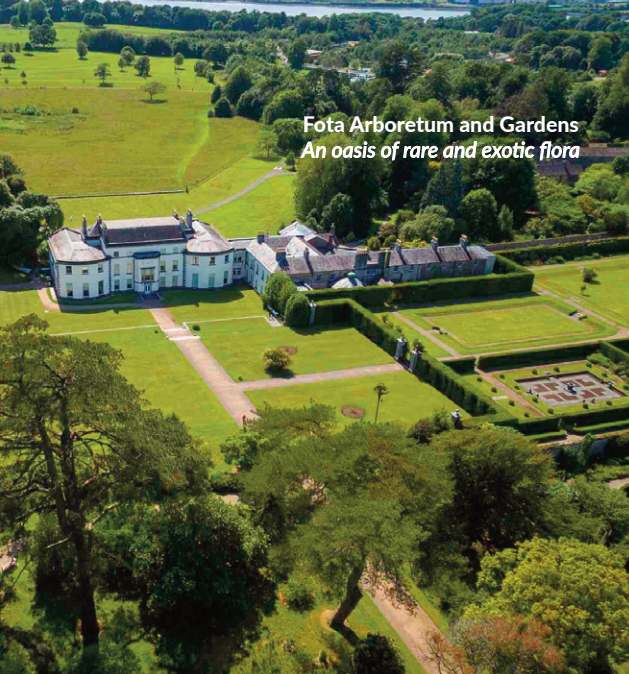
Heywood Gardens *A tranquil and romantic hillside landscape*



Irish National War Memorial Gardens



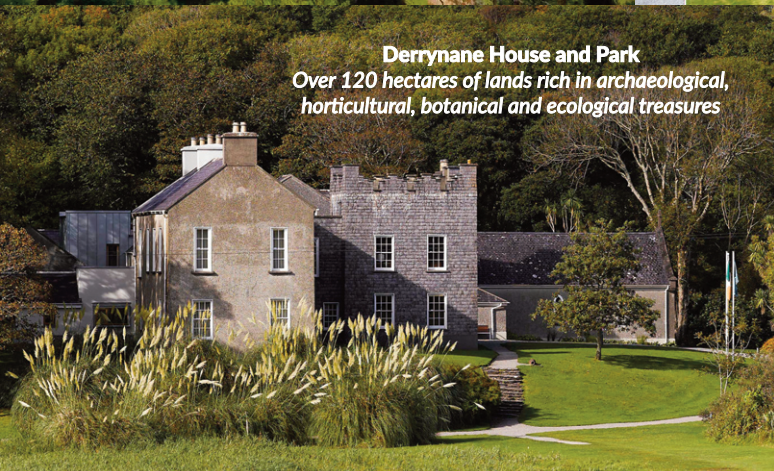
Garden of Remembrance *A tranquil memorial in the heart of Dublin city*



Fota Arboretum and Gardens
An oasis of rare and exotic flora



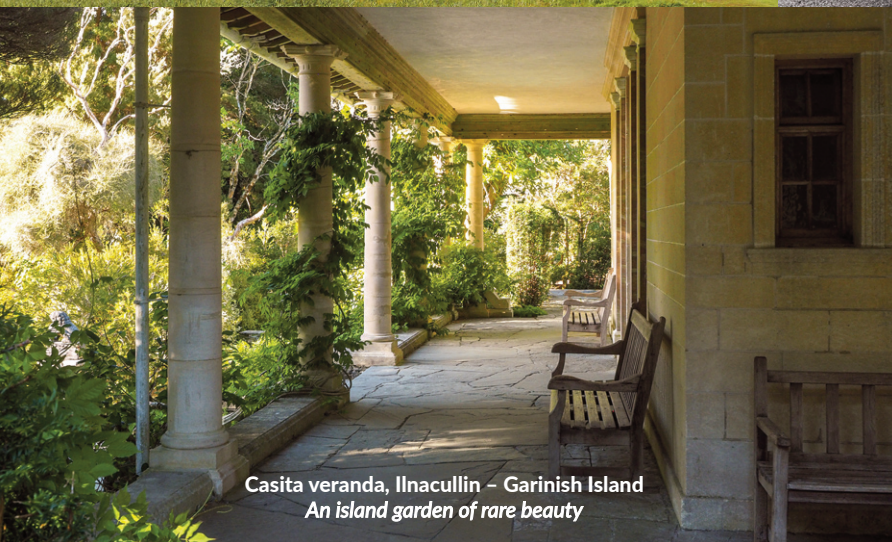
Battle of the Boyne
Discover the unique sunken
Octagon garden



Derrynane House and Park
Over 120 hectares of lands rich in archaeological,
horticultural, botanical and ecological treasures



Phoenix Park
Where Dublin goes to breathe



Casita veranda, Ilnacullin - Garinish Island
An island garden of rare beauty



St Stephen's Green
A Victorian civic gem in Dublin's greatest
garden square



National Botanic Gardens Kilmacurragh
An oasis of rare horticultural delights

Seamus O'Brien receives prestigious award from the Royal Horticultural Society

The Royal Horticultural Society formally presented Seamus O'Brien, Head Gardener at the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland Kilmacurragh with the Loder Rhododendron Cup on the 12th of March 2022. This is only the second time in its 101-year-old history that it has been awarded to an Irish recipient (the first was to Sir Frederick Moore, former director of the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland in 1942).

In the *The Irish Times* on Saturday 12th March, Fionnuala Fallon writes "O'Brien's devotion to Kilmacurragh and his unparalleled knowledge of its historic plantings as well as his determination "to conserve and build on that existing historic collection" has won him huge respect and admiration both here in Ireland and abroad. So has his parallel career as a garden writer whose botanical expeditions, following in the footsteps of the famous plant hunters Augustine Henry and Joseph Dalton Hooker, have provided the rich material for his award-winning series of books".

Congratulations Seamus from all the team in the OPW.



▲ Seamus O'Brien, Head Gardener at the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland Kilmacurragh is presented with the Loder Rhododendron Cup

ANNES GROVE

CASTLETOWNROCHE
CO. CORK

OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC
April 3rd -
September 22nd

During 2022 the Gardens will be accessible by guided tour only.

Gardens Open 10am – 4pm
Thursday to Monday
(last tour 3pm).



OPW Oifig na
«Oibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

For more information see www.heritageireland.ie



Kilkenny Castle Gardening Talks

▲ Kilkenny Castle view from Rose Garden



Kilkenny Castle is delighted to present the Free Gardening Talks at the Parade Tower as part of our Spring Programme 2022 once again. There will be a wide range of speakers, covering a variety of topics.

The series starts on Tuesday 29 March and runs until Tuesday 10 May. All talks are free and entry is on a first come first served basis. Doors open at 7:30pm each Tuesday.

For the first of the series, Fionnuala Fallon will talk on 'Growing and Working with Cut Flowers'. Fionnuala is the well known gardening columnist with the Irish Times. She also grows and arranges cut flowers in a sustainable way.

5 April

In our second talk in our series, Alan Ryan will present a talk called 'The Restoration of Colclough Gardens, Tintern Abbey'.

Alan started the restoration of Colclough Walled Garden in Wexford in 2009 with a small grant and permission to restore the walled garden adjacent to the OPW monument of Tintern Abbey. Although he had no horticultural qualifications or experience of restoring walled gardens, his passion and work ethic inspired hundreds of people to volunteer, sponsor, donate to make the restoration possible.

12 April

Kilkenny Castle's series of Garden Talks continues with the third in the series presented by Éanna Ní Lamhna, who will give a fascinating talk called 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' about wild life in the garden.

Éanna is a botanist. She has been a lecturer in sustainable development in DIT for over twenty years. She is publicly on the side of the environment and author of several books on the subject. She has been broadcasting on RTE about wildlife since 1988.

26 Apr

This week's Garden Talk will be presented by David Kenny and will be 'All About Roses'.

David is a retired teacher who has been growing roses for over forty years, breeding healthy, novel and scented roses in all types and colours. Several seedlings of his are in trials around the world and are being tested for their commercial potential.

3 May

We continue our series of Garden Talks with Chris O'Neill's talk on 'Garinish Island Restored'.

Chris is a landscape architect and a Parks Superintendent with the OPW, with responsibility for Garinish Island, Derrynane and Fota Arboretum & Gardens.

10 May

Our Garden Talk series comes to an end with a very fitting 'Walk through Kilkenny Castle Park' with the Foreman of the Park, Colm Mangan.

Colm's informative walks are legendary. Each year he brings a different aspect of this great Park and this year promises to be as educational and enjoyable as ever.

Please note that this talk and walk starts at the earlier time of 7:15pm. All talks are free and entry is on a first come first served basis.



^ Long Gallery Castletown House Image courtesy of OPW
v Deirdre Cullen

Castletown House

Guide wins Desmond Guinness Scholarship Award

by Catherine Bergin-Victory

We are delighted to announce that our former colleague at Castletown House, Deirdre Cullen is one of two PhD students this year to be awarded the prestigious Desmond Guinness Scholarship by the Irish Georgian Society.

During Deirdre's time as a guide at Castletown, she shared her extensive knowledge and enthusiasm for this magnificent Palladian country house, especially for the beautiful Long Gallery, with both staff and visitors alike. Now Deirdre has brought this passion into her research focusing on the Long Gallery at Castletown as a rare example of the neoclassical taste for painted rooms 'all'antica' ("in the manner of the ancients") and an expression of the intellectual and cultural worlds of Ireland's eighteenth-century elite.

Deirdre will use the Desmond Guinness Scholarship to help fund archival research in three UK archives (the British Library, the West Sussex Record Office and Suffolk Archives), as well as to conduct site visits to key neoclassical interiors across England, from Heaton Hall in Manchester to Fawley Court in Buckinghamshire. This research



will allow her to compare and analyse the Long Gallery within the genre of the painted room 'all'antica' and the wider genre of neoclassical painted decoration in Britain and Ireland.

Deirdre's research is sponsored by the Irish Research Council and the Office of Public Works.

From everyone here at Castletown and the OPW we would like to wish Deirdre well in this research project!



Ireland's Iconic Heritage Sites on Screen

OPW Publishes a Guide to Filming at its Historic Locations to Promote Local Opportunities

^ OPW guide Catherine Victory in costume to launch **A Guide to Filming at Ireland's Historic Locations** in the Throne Room at Dublin Castle to promote local filming opportunities at OPW's iconic heritage sites.
Pic: Naoise Culhane

"Working with the Office of Public Works in Ireland was an invaluable experience. Their unique historical sites supply dramatic scenery as well as being incredibly production-friendly. It was a smooth and rewarding process and I hope to work again with them in the future."

– Ridley Scott, Director *'The Last Duel'* (2021)

In March 2022, Patrick O'Donovan T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works (OPW), together with Grainne Humphreys, Director of the Dublin International Film Festival, launched **Heritage Ireland on Screen: A Guide to Filming at Ireland's Historic Locations** at Dublin Castle, the scene of many national and international film productions over the years. This practical guide for filmmakers wishing to film in Ireland showcases the beauty of our cultural heritage



Set of **Braveheart** (1995) at Trim Castle, Co Meath
Pic © Frank Courtney Photography



and the pride we take in sharing these rare and cherished places with the wider world. It will travel as an attractive, cultural passport with Ministers to locations all around the world as they meet influential audiences in more than 30 locations overseas and promote Ireland and Irish interests this St. Patrick's Day.

Minister O'Donovan said:

"The OPW cares for some 1,000 monuments and historic properties in 768 locations across Ireland, ranging from Neolithic passage tombs, medieval churches and castles, to Elizabethan manor houses, Palladian mansions, parks and gardens and monumental forts. The iconic monuments and properties in our care are significant to the identities of our towns and communities across Ireland and are a key driver of tourism and regional economic development.

At the same time, they also occupy an important place in a shared imagination that transcends geographic boundaries through art, literature, music and film. As custodians of many of Ireland's most precious built treasures, our role is to build a bridge between our past, present and future by connecting more people to the richness, diversity and inspiration that exist in our heritage."

Ireland's relationship with cinema runs deep. Moving pictures were first shown here in 1896, and just a few months later, cameramen working for the Lumière brothers filmed the first footage of the country. Ever since then, filmmakers have flocked to Ireland, drawn by the diversity of its landscapes, the mild climate that enables filming all year round, the creative talent that resides here and, above all, by a 5000-year history that is visible across the land, from Brú na Bóinne to Bantry Bay.

Director Neil Jordan fondly recalled his experience of working with the OPW on his historical biopic starring Liam Neeson:

"The filming of **Michael Collins** was a wonderful experience. The Office of Public Works gave me access to streetscapes and buildings of immense historical significance, from the Four Courts to College Green. The most resonant of these was Dublin Castle, which played such a significant part in the period."

As part of our mission, the OPW is proud to offer access to our sites to filmmakers from all over the world, working closely with film crews to maintain the highest standards of safety, integrity and authenticity. Famous films from **The Italian Job** and **Barry Lyndon** to **Star Wars: The Force Awakens** and **The Green Knight** have been shot at OPW sites, and with this guide, superb infrastructure and great post-production studios, it has never been easier to film here.



Reeve Carney & Eva Greene during the filming of **Penny Dreadful** (2014) at National Botanic Gardens Dublin
Credit FILM COMPANY DESERT WOLF PRODUCTIONS



Daniel Day-Lewis during filming of **In the Name of the Father** at Kilmainham Gaol. Credit Universal Pictures / Alamy

The full brochure can be viewed here: https://issuu.com/heritageireland.ie/docs/issuu_heritage_ireland_-_a_guide_to_filming_at_ire



A Guide to Filming at Ireland's Historic Locations

Pics 1 & 2: OPW guide Catherine Victory (centre) in costume to launch **A Guide to Filming at Ireland's Historic Locations** in the Throne Room at Dublin Castle to promote local filming opportunities at OPW's iconic heritage sites . Pic: *Naoise Culhane*

Pic 3: Amy Adams and Matthew Goode during the filming of **Leap Year** in St. Stephen's Green, Dublin (2010). Credit *AF Archive / Alamy*.

Pic 4: Filming of **Neverland** at Dublin Castle (2010). Credit: *WENN Rights Ltd / Alamy*.

Pic 5: OPW guide Catherine Bergin in costume at Dublin Castle.

Pic 5: Dev Patel 'The Green Knight' (2021) Cahir Castle. Credit *Killian Dowling Screen Ireland*.



Cahir Castle

Wins title of Europe's favourite filming location

Cahir Castle, which has stood proudly for more than 700 years on its rocky island over the River Suir has won the European Film Commissions Network (EUFEN) Location Award 2021. Nominated by Screen Ireland as the location for *The Green Knight*, Cahir Castle won by public vote against four other shortlisted European film locations in Norway (*Dune*), Spain (*The Crown*), Croatia (*Murina*) and Germany (*The Queen's Gambit*). The award was announced at the Berlinale's European Film Market on 15th February 2022.

One of Ireland's largest and best-preserved historic castles, Cahir Castle has captured the imagination of multiple filmmakers over the past decades. In David Lowery's 2021 film – a fantasy retelling of the famous medieval story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight – the 13th-century fortress features as the Camelot of Arthurian legend, a role it has starred in before in the 1981 film *Excalibur*.

Receiving the award trophy in Cahir Castle on Tuesday 15th February, Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works (OPW), Patrick O'Donovan, T.D., said:

"I am delighted and I wish to thank all the people here in Ireland and abroad who answered our call and voted for Cahir Castle to win the EUFCN Location Award 2021. Winning this award is deserved recognition for one of Ireland's stunning locations as well as for the dedicated OPW team of heritage and conservation experts committed to restoring, preserving and promoting Ireland's cultural heritage for present and future generations to enjoy. The OPW cares for 780 of Ireland's most iconic heritage sites. As part of its mission, it is proud to offer access to its sites to filmmakers from all over the world, working closely with film crews to maintain the highest standards of safety, integrity and authenticity."

Welcoming the news of Cahir Castle's award, Rosemary Collier, Assistant Secretary and Head of OPW's Heritage Services and Capital Works Delivery, said:

"The Office of Public Works and indeed the local community are thrilled that Cahir Castle has won the prestigious European Film Location Awards this year. Anybody who has visited it will easily see how its impressive battlements rising above the River Suir make it a dream location for internationally acclaimed fantasy films such as *The Green Knight* last year or *Excalibur*. We are privileged to care for and conserve Cahir Castle and we hope to welcome many of the viewers near and far who have seen it on the screen to this iconic Irish heritage site."

Eleanor Morrissey, the OPW site manager at Cahir Castle added:

"All of us working in Cahir Castle are immensely honoured and feel proud of this fantastic achievement that acknowledges how special Cahir Castle is not only in Ireland but in Europe. Working on site during the filming of *The Green Knight* was a wonderful experience which allowed us to see the courtyards dressed for filming, re-creating the appearance and atmosphere of how they may have been in centuries past. The craftsmanship of the medieval masons provided a wonderfully authentic backdrop for this tale of honour, bravery and courage, but Cahir Castle's own history is no less fascinating and really comes to life in our guided tours and multilingual audio-visual show."

> Minister Patrick O'Donovan and Lorraine Egan, Cahir Castle, with the EUFCN Location Award 2021 plaque.
Pic John Kelly Photography



v Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works Patrick O'Donovan with the award and the team at Cahir Castle.



^ Cahir Castle. Pic Richard Cummins

Thank you for voting

Cahir Castle Wins Best European Film Location Award 2021



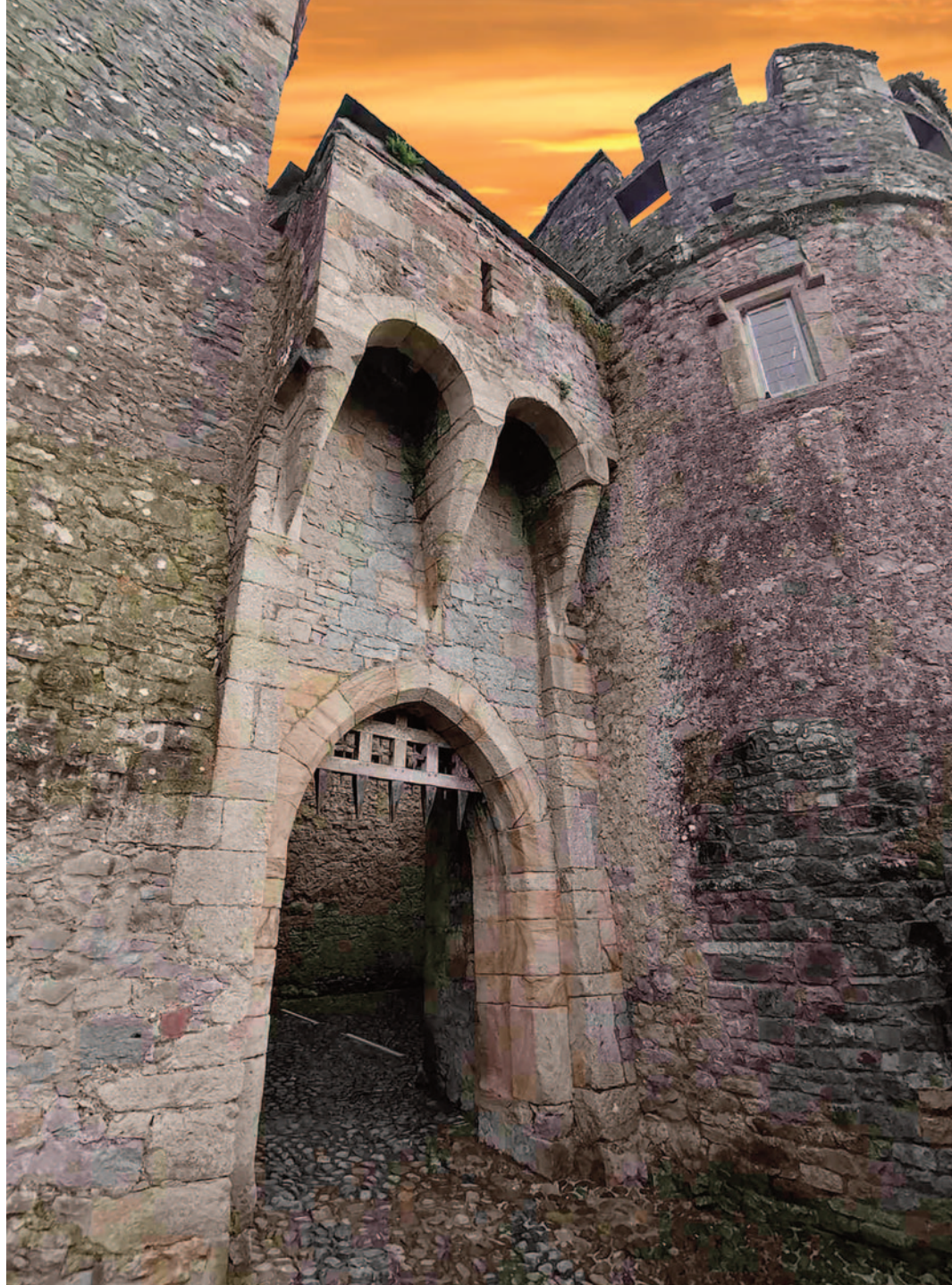


Minister Patrick O'Donovan at Cahir Castle with the EUFCN award




Cahir Castle

by Robert O'Brien



In 1971, Cahir Castle opened its doors to the visiting public for the first time after a lengthy period of conservation and restoration by the OPW. Since then hundreds of thousands of visitors, both from the island of Ireland and around the world have walked its cobblestoned paths and marvelled at its centuries old architecture, while being regaled with the rich history of the castle by our dedicated team of tour guides.

Why are so many people still being drawn to this picturesque corner of Tipperary, even during these current tumultuous times? Is it just the fact that Cahir Castle that has stood overlooking the river Suir for over 800 years and is widely considered as one of the finest

examples of a Norman built castle in Ireland? Could it be the castle's wonderful state of preservation or its role as a film set for so many Hollywood blockbusters over the last 50 years? Our visitors can retrace the footsteps of movie stars such as Richard Burton, Helen Mirren, Ryan O'Neil, Liam Neeson and Matt Damon. Or finally, could it be the visitor friendly atmosphere of the town, with its picturesque appearance and plethora of restaurants and gift shops or, perhaps in truth it is all of the above and so much more.

The story of Cahir predates the castle. The native Irish had built stone fortifications here long before the first Norman knights made landfall in Wexford in 1169. One of the first

[^] Cahir Castle – the Portcullis and the trapping area within



Cahir Castle - View across River Suir



^ Cannonball embedded in the North East Tower
> The fireplace from the movie 'The Last Duel'



The Antlers of the Giant Irish Deer in the Banqueting Hall at Cahir Castle

references to a fort in Cahir comes from a manuscript written by the Mac Firisigh family in the 14th century, which recounts ancient oral tales. The Great Book of Lecan describes the stone fort as belonging to a woman called Badamair in the 3rd century AD; she is still known as the first woman of Cahir to this day. She was the mistress of an Irish chieftain, Finn Mac Radamair. The book describes how an enemy of the chieftain attacked the fort killing Badamair, in an act of vengeance against her lover. The fort was called 'Rath Badhamhrach' and it was said to have been destroyed during the assault.

The Normans were responsible for introducing stone castles to Ireland. Cahir Castle dates from the early 13th century when the Worcester family began the task of fortifying the island in order to solidify their control of the region and the river traffic that flowed past its walls. Positioned on a rocky island the castle would have been an awe-inspiring sight.

In 1375, the castle and its lands were granted to James Butler, 3rd Earl of Ormond by Edward III, King of England. This influential family would hold sway over the castle and the surrounding area for almost 600 years.

One of the most interesting events of the castle's history occurred in 1599, during the reign of Elizabeth I. In May of that year Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex and a favourite of the Queen, brought her army and two heavy artillery guns to batter the castle's defences, the first use of such weapons against this mighty fortification. After just 3 days of heavy bombardment, the castle was captured. Visitors to Cahir can still see reminders from this momentous occasion, as there are two culverin balls embedded in the castle walls. The first of these can be seen in the North East tower overlooking the main entrance, while the second shot can be found wedged high up in the east wall of the keep, overlooking the middle courtyard. A superb large scaled model of the siege is the centrepiece of an exhibition about the event.

Unfortunately, for Robert Devereux, his victory at Cahir was one of the few successes of his campaign in Ireland and on his return to England with little to show for his costly efforts, he would fall from the Queen's favour and feel the axeman's blade just two years later.

Just 50 years later another famous character from history would also make his mark on the story of Cahir Castle. In 1650, Oliver Cromwell, along with part of his New Model Army, was cutting a bloody and brutal trail through the country when they arrived outside

of the castle's walls and prepared for war. Only this time, it was not his cannons that forced the defenders to eventually surrender, but his words. He wrote a direct letter to the Butler family that said:

"Sir, having brought my army and my cannon near this place, according to my usual manner in summoning places, I thought fit to offer you terms honourable to soldiers, that you march away with your baggage, arms and colours free from injury and violence. But if I be, notwithstanding, necessitated to bend my cannon upon you, you must expect the extremity usual in such cases. To avoid blood, this is offered to you by your servant, Oliver Cromwell"

These words may very well have spared Cahir the same fate as other fortified defences that were decimated by Cromwell's armies during this period. In 1652, the castle's Banqueting Hall was the





^ President Mary Robinson's visit to Cahir Castle in 1994.

location of a meeting where the articles of agreement were signed between the local Confederate leaders and the Cromwellian commanders.

Another infamous event had occurred in the Banqueting Hall in 1627 when the then Lord Cahir's son in law, Lord Dunboyne and a Butler relation James Prendergast were attending a function at the castle. The two men were in dispute over the inheritance of land and both became embroiled in an altercation that led to the death of Prendergast. Lord Dunboyne was subsequently arrested for murder and incarcerated in Dublin Castle, but a jury of his peers acquitted him of the crime.

Today, visitors can self-guide around the site, but to truly get to grips with the rich and vibrant history of the castle a guided tour is always recommended. The guides bring the castle's history to life.

The castle has a myriad of features, which capture the attention, one of which is the portcullis. Its winding mechanism and wooden gears are located within the Keep (main tower). The gate, a classic representation of a medieval castle is a favoured location for photographs.

The Banqueting Hall the heart of the castle is home to the oldest and the newest artefacts at Cahir Castle. High upon the north wall of this large room sit the impressive antlers of the Giant Irish Deer, which has been extinct for approximately 10,000 years, while the ornate fireplace, with a medieval shield embossed on its stonework, is in fact only a year old! The fireplace is a prop created for the movie, 'The Last Duel', directed by Ridley Scott, and is not made from stone at all but from plaster.

It's not just tourists that have availed of the guided tours at Cahir, there have been many celebrity visitors to the castle since it opened, included among them the actor Mel Gibson of Braveheart fame, the historian Dan Snow and in 1995 the then President Mary Robinson toured the castle.

There are plenty of things to see beyond the castle walls including the finely designed wooden carvings of the Inch Field as well as the famous sword in the stone, erected in honour of the local people who played extras in the Hollywood movie Excalibur, which was partly filmed at Cahir Castle in the early 1980's.

The river Suir, which surrounds the castle, is home to a multitude of wildlife, including a flourishing colony of geese, a family of elegant swans, as well as herons, and a host of ducks that flock to see if visitors have any treats for them. In the adjacent parkland grey squirrels leap from branch to branch in the mighty oaks and buzzards and sparrow hawks soar high above the castle.

The Castle on Film

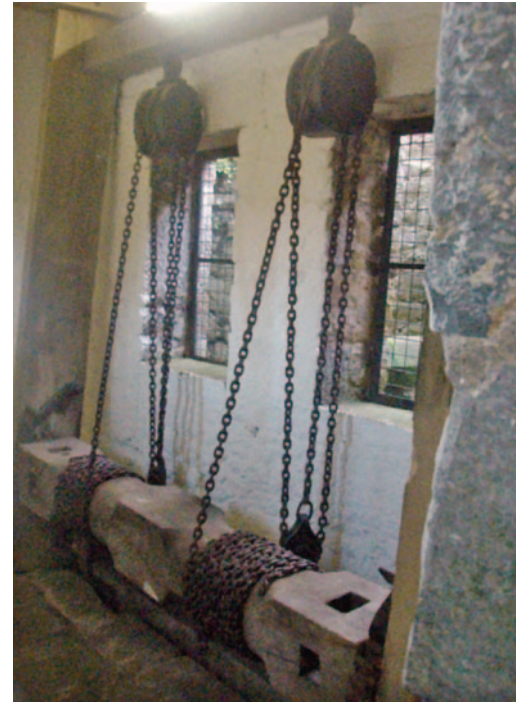
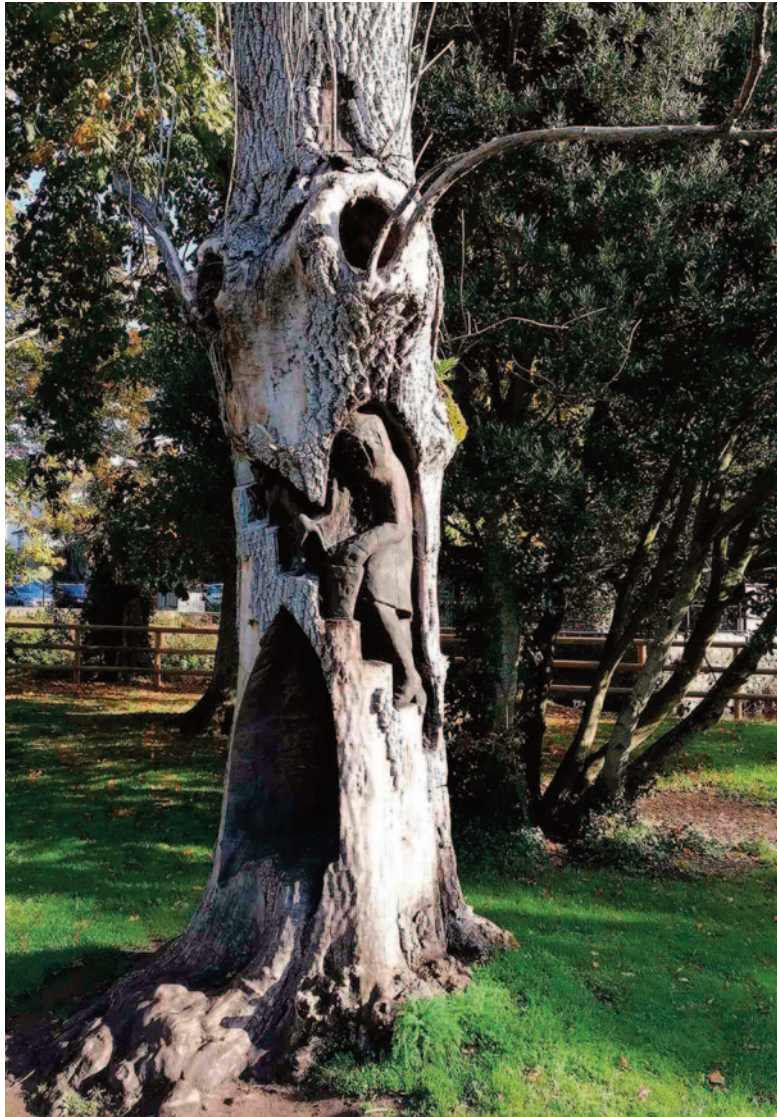
Just outside the castle are information plaques dedicated to the movies filmed at Cahir Castle. The history of the last 50 years is mirrored by the list of films starting with the 1973 production of 'Catholics' that starred the Hollywood Actors Martin Sheen and Trevor Howard.

In 1975, the director Stanley Kubrick, famous for his Sci-Fi epic 2001 A Space Odyssey, started filming another cult classic. 'Barry Lyndon' was a period drama starring Ryan O'Neil, Patrick Magee and Hardy Kruger and several key scenes were filmed in Cahir Castle's Banqueting Hall, inner courtyard and in the adjacent Inch Field.

Richard Burton, arguably one of the finest actors of his generation, came to Cahir Castle to film the movie 'Tristan and Isolde', which was released in the USA as Love Spell. Alongside Burton were many Irish actors such as Geraldine FitzGerald and Neil Tobin. Sadly, the film has slipped into the movie ether and is rarely seen today.

It was director John Boorman, who really put the castle and the town on the Hollywood filming map when he chose Cahir Castle as one of the sites for his cult fantasy epic 'Excalibur'. The film took the mythical story of King Arthur and his Knights and the mercurial wizard Merlin and brought it to the big screen. Excalibur helped to launch the screen careers of many famous actors such as Nicol Williamson, Patrick Stewart, Helen Mirren, Gabriel Byrne

< The weir and River Suit viewed from Cahir Castle



^ The windlass/winding mechanism of the portcullis

< One of the carved statues that can be viewed in the inch field



^ Filming of 'The Last Duel' at Cahir Castle. Image: [twitter@screenireland](https://twitter.com/screenireland)

and Liam Neeson. It grossed over 35 million dollars in America alone and even today many visitors come to see where many of the films iconic battle scenes were filmed.

In 2013, a new historical slant on the life of King Henry VIII, The Tudors, began filming

with Cahir Castle featuring in several scenes over the productions four season run. Jonathan Rhys Meyers and future Superman actor, Henry Cavill, starred in the smash hit show.

In recent years, two new major Hollywood productions have used the castle as a location. In 2019 'The Green Knight' began filming and its lead star, Dev Patel, famous for films such as 'Slumdog Millionaire' and 'The Exotic Marigold Hotel' and Alicia Vikander (The Danish Girl and Lara Croft) featured.

During September 2020, another major movie started filming at the castle. Legendary director Ridley Scott brought his new blockbuster production to Ireland. 'The Last Duel' starred Matt Damon, Adam Driver, Jodie Comer and Ben Affleck in a tale about a desperate duel to the death set in medieval France. It almost recalls the real life story of the previously mentioned event that occurred in the Banqueting Hall at Cahir Castle in 1627.

The mighty and well preserved Cahir Castle with its fascinating and rich history is always worthy of a visit.

Main text by Robert O'Brien with additional research by Edmond Power.

<https://heritageireland.ie/places-to-visit/cahir-castle/>



The Royal Hospital Kilmainham during the Irish Civil War

by Paul O'Brien

On the morning of the 29th June 1922, an artillery shell exploded in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.¹ As the shell impacted into the ground, shrapnel and debris soared upwards and the bomb's radius was enveloped in a cloud of dust. The pensioners resident in the hospital as well as the Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in Ireland were rudely shaken from their morning routine. What had caused such an explosion and why had the Hospital been targeted?

The Irish War of Independence came to an uneasy close with the signing of a ceasefire in July 1921. Since the cessation of hostilities, British Forces had commenced a standing down of operations throughout the country and the hand-over of military and government installations to

Republican and later Free State Forces. At the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, pensioners and staff watched the transition with intense interest. The building not only housed the old soldiers but was also the quarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in Ireland, General Sir Nevil Macready. Leading British military forces during the Irish War of Independence, General Macready had conducted a counter-insurgency campaign against republican forces. As he and his army were preparing to leave the country, civil war in Ireland looked inevitable.

Republican Forces were divided in relation to the Anglo Irish Treaty that followed the ceasefire. Over six months later on 7 January 1922, Dáil Éireann passed the Irish Treaty by 64 votes to 57.

¹ Barry, M., *The Green Divide, An Illustrated History of the Irish Civil War*; (Andalus Press, Dublin, 2014)



< Royal Hospital Kilmainham

This action not only divided the Dáil but also divided the country. Throughout Ireland armed groups for and against the Treaty occupied strategic positions. On the 14 April 1922, Anti-Treaty Forces under the command of Rory O'Connor occupied the Four Courts and several other buildings in Dublin city. A tense stand off between Pro and Anti-Treaty Forces commenced.

On Wednesday 28 June 1922, the most recognisable building in Ireland, the Four Courts on Inns Quay in Dublin, was enveloped in a cloud of dust as artillery shells imploded into its edifice. The Irish Civil War had commenced.

Within the Four Courts, Rory O'Connor deployed his men in a defensive role. The complex had been well fortified with Lewis machine guns and rifles covering the main approaches to the building. A commandeered armoured car had been placed at the gates, its Vickers machine gun covering any threat that might materialise. The vehicle could be moved rapidly from point to point depending on the direction of attack. Windows and doors had been barricaded and a number of improvised explosive devices had been placed at possible entry points. Outside the walls, the newly established Free State Army had recruited many ex-British soldiers to bolster its ranks. Many of these soldiers were Irishmen who, having served in British regiments during the First World War, had gained extensive expertise in tactics and the handling of weapons, giving the State army a distinct technical advantage.

Michael Collins, now Commander-in-Chief of the National Army devised a plan of attack. A frontal assault against a fortified building would be costly

and those within the courts would have to be moved as a matter of urgency. With a number of eighteen-pounder field guns borrowed from the British Army, Collins placed General Emmet Dalton and Colonel Tony Lawlor in command of the assault. The plan was to bombard the occupants into submission. The guns were positioned at Hammond Lane, Chancery Street and two on Merchants Quay; one at Lower Bridge Street and the other at Winetavern Street. By positioning the guns at these points the building was completely covered. On the 28th June 1922 at 04.10 hours, the bombardment commenced.

High explosive shells were in short supply and the British could only supply shrapnel shells that emitted hundreds of small balls and were virtually useless against the thick granite walls of the courts. General Macready stated that they were issued just to make a noise through the night, a plan to unnerve the republican garrison. A document from military archives reveals that one gun, number 10756, fired 375 shells at the courts.

Why did a shell explode in the grounds of the Royal Hospital, a building that is a considerable distance from the Four Courts on the quays? An investigation into the incident revealed that a gunner located to the north east of the courts had elevated the gun in order to neutralise a sniper at the dome of the courts. The shell passed through the dome and continued its passage in a south westerly direction towards the Royal Hospital where it exploded in the grounds.² No injuries were reported. However, Major General Emmet Dalton had to apologise for the incident.

By Friday the 30th June, a fire was raging out of control in the headquarters block of the Courts that also housed the Records Office. A huge explosion rocked the city as the Records Office disintegrated in a cloud of dust. It is believed that a mine had been set to explode to deny ordnance to the attackers. Smoke and debris littered the courts as the beleaguered garrison clung on, many of them hoping in vain for a relief column while others planned a breakout.

Shelling and machine gun fire increased and the position became untenable. The Anti-Treaty headquarters staff that included Rory O'Connor and Liam Mellows decided to surrender. At 16.00 hours on the 30th June 1922, having held out for three days, the Four Courts garrison consisting of 140 men, unconditionally surrendered to Free State Forces. Casualties consisted of three Anti-Treaty Forces killed and eight wounded. Free State Forces had lost seven killed and seventy wounded. However, the battle for Dublin and also for Ireland was far from over.

² Barry, M., *The Green Divide, An Illustrated History of the Irish Civil War*, (Andalus Press, Dublin, 2014)

< The Ballinderry
Gaming Board
excavated in 1932
(NMI Collection)

How To Play Like a Viking!

by Stephanie
Kennedy



Step out of your time machine and stroll through Medieval Dublin, any time from the 8th to 12th century, and you might encounter groups huddled around intense games of Hnefatafl; a medieval military strategy board game for two players.

Let me show you how to play Hnefatafl as it was played in Medieval Dublin. As we play this game over and over, we build a meta knowledge – developing strategies and insights that we share with those in Medieval times.

Archaeological excavations across Medieval Dublin, including the OPW's St Audoen's Church, have found gaming pieces used by the Norse settlers and their descendants. Boards have also been found in Antrim and Waterford, with the most well-preserved board being discovered in Ballinderry, Co. Westmeath.

Through the 8th – 12th centuries, the Vikings spread the game of Hnefatafl wherever they invaded or traded. A version of it is still played in Scandinavian countries today. However, when chess arrived in Ireland in the mid-12th century

(taking c.500 years to evolve from the game of chaturanga in India), Hnefatafl was played less and less until it gradually disappeared.

This beautiful board, made from the wood of the Yew Tree, with seven holes across and seven down, giving players 49 playing spaces, was excavated in Ballinderry, Co. Westmeath in 1932. It dates sometime between the 9th and 11th centuries. With its ornate carved details, it was probably a treasured possession. The Ballinderry board is now on show in the National Museum of Ireland. When the board was found there were no playing pieces found with it. The rules of medieval Hnefatafl have not survived, so I have reconstructed the game based on how it was played across Europe.

Back to your medieval stroll, perhaps a space opens up at the game and you find yourself tempted to play. You've played chess – how hard can it be?

Unlike the mostly end to end play of chess, Hnefatafl involves multi-dimensional, surrounding plays. In Chess, two equally sized armies compete. Life isn't so equal and nor is

Hnefatafl

Making the Board: Materials for the Game

Hnefatafl which pits a king with eight defenders against an army of 12 attackers.

The objective for the defenders is to help the King escape from the centre of the board to one of the corners. The Attacker's army are trying to capture the King by surrounding him on all sides. Apart from the King, all pieces are equal and can move in a straight line vertically or horizontally.

Here's how to travel back to 8th Century Ireland in about 20 minutes and play like a Viking.

You're going to make a simple board out of card, mark it out with a ruler and coin, then play with pebbles or shells. A few starter moves at the end of this article will show you how to get going. Don't forget to roar loudly when you win!

- Sheet of white cardboard about 30cm x 30cm
- Coloured marker pens in Black, Purple and Grey
- Ruler
- Coin
- 12 stones in a dark colour
- 9 stones/shells in a pale colour
- 1 larger stone in a pale colour that you can stick on top of one of the pale stones/ shells.

Instructions

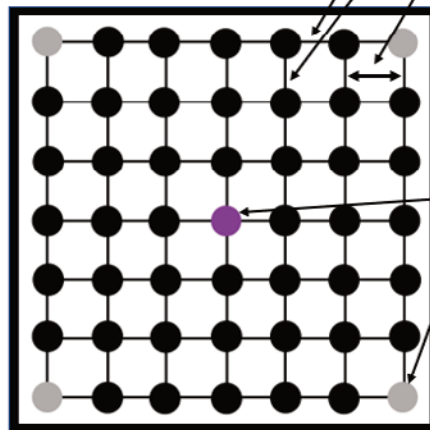
1. Draw 7 lines across, equal distance apart.

2. Draw 7 lines down, equal distance apart.

The distance between the lines is 4cm

3. Draw 49 circles where the lines meet. Use a coin to draw around so that they are all the same size.

4. Colour the centre circle purple and the four corners grey. These are called the King's circles. Colour all the remaining circles black.



Next make some gaming pieces for yourself:

You will need:

A king plus 8 defenders of one colour
12 attackers of another colour

Here are some ideas for the pieces

Stones and shells

Cardboard circles in 2 different colours

Modelling clay



These pieces are decorated with Viking Runes

The Game pieces



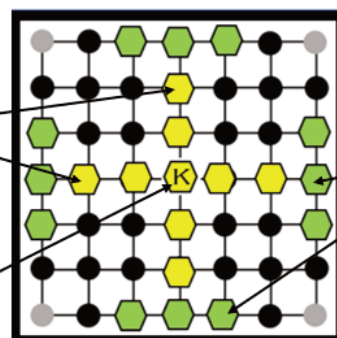
12 grey stones
9 broken shells (one of which is used for the king)

The King is made from a white stone stuck to a shell

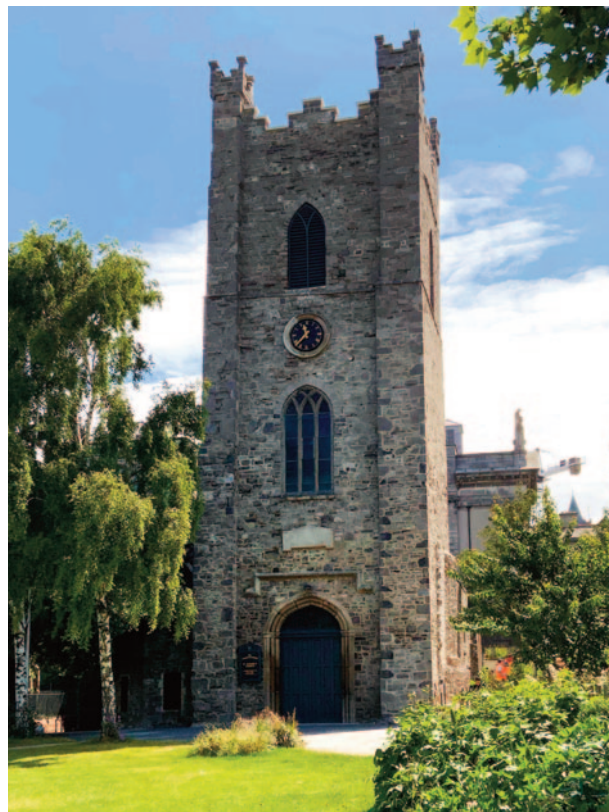
Now it's time to set up the board:

The 8 defenders (shown in yellow) form a cross shape around the King

The King stands in the middle space

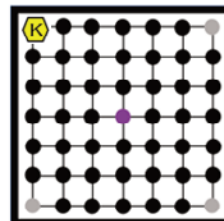


The 12 attackers (shown in green) are positioned 3 on each edge

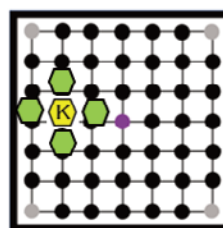


Hnefatafl

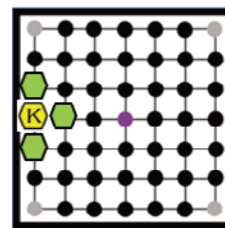
The aim of the game,
or how to win:



The defenders win by
moving their king into
one of the four corners.



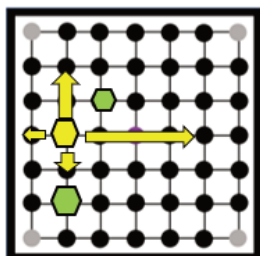
The attackers win by
surrounding the king on all 4
sides anywhere on the board



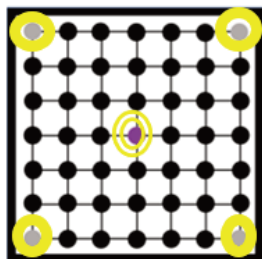
If the king is on an edge
space, it can be captured by
surrounding it on 3 sides.

^ St Audoen's Church
A medieval chapel at the
centre of city life in Dublin

How to move:

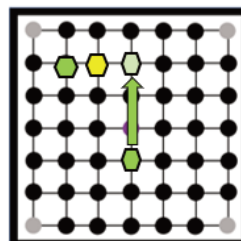


At each turn, a player moves one piece in a
straight line in any direction. You cannot
jump over another piece or move diagonally.

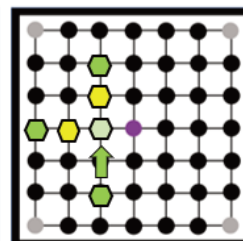


Only the king can stop on the centre
square and the four corners. Other pieces
can pass over the centre square.

How to capture your opponent:

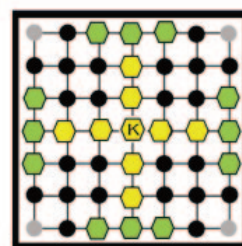


To capture another
piece you move to
sandwich it between two
of your own players.



In this play, the green
moves in to capture
two yellow pieces

Now, you are ready to start



The attackers
go first.
Good Luck

If you are looking for more educational resources, check out:
<https://heritageireland.ie/learn/educational-resources/downloads/>



The Dublin Bowie Festival Exhibition

Five Years:

*An exhibition celebrating the
brilliance of David Bowie.*

This collection was created by Designer Cartoon Bowie over a five year period (2016-2021). It draws inspiration from the songs he wrote, the albums he produced, the videos he made and the movies he starred in. Bowie's extraordinary output as an artist, his genre-hopping brilliance and perhaps the 20th century's greatest style icon produced an abundance of source material for this collection.

April 13 – May 2

Rathfarnham Castle

Admission free.



*Come with us on a journey
through Ireland's magical past...*

Free Things To Do in 2022

For a full list of sites
under the care
of the Office of Public
Works please see
www.heritageireland.ie

Admission to all sites is
free for under 12's.

^ Above: Desmond Castle,
Newcastlewest
one of the OPW sites offering
FREE entry this year.

Facing page: Additional sites >
with free entry in 2022.

This year follow in the footsteps of princesses, witches and knights and take a trip to some of our country's best kept secrets.

Follow in the footsteps of Patrick Pearse and visit the location where the teacher and poet planned rebellion. Explore the only remaining medieval Parish Church in Dublin and learn about the guilds of the city.

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

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

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

At Ferns Castle you can climb the same steps once used by lords, ladies and knights. At the top of the castle look out across the fields and mountains, knowing you are looking at the same fields where the Normans advanced ... Drive some of that route through the beautiful Blackstairs mountains to visit the Templar chapel at St Mary's where you can take a selfie

beside a knight in armour! Transport yourself back to the medieval banquets once held at Desmond Hall and discover how to survive a siege at Listowel Castle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Entry to all of the following OPW sites is FREE:



Áras an Uachtarain



Askeaton Castle



Dungarvan Castle



Ferns Castle



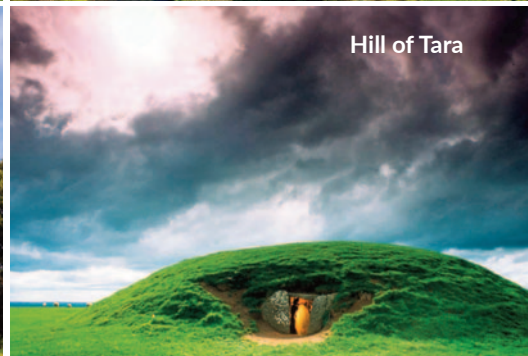
Kells Priory



Listowel Castle



National Botanic
Gardens,
Glasnevin



Hill of Tara



Loughcrew



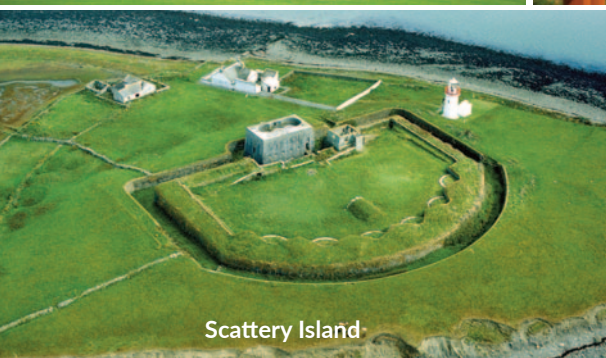
Pearse Museum



Phoenix Park Visitor Centre



Phoenix Park
People's
Flower
Garden



Scattery Island



St. Mary's Church, Gowran



The Main Guard



National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh



Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre



What's New

With over 90 amazing places to visit, you'll never be stuck for adventure!

From ancient monuments to monastic hideaways, imposing castles to revolutionary battlegrounds, Ireland's heritage has something to offer everyone. Follow in the footsteps of thousands of voyagers on a journey into Ireland's epic past.

This year discover the range of new and exciting visitor experiences we have to offer such as the new exhibition at Knowth or the re-vamped visitor centres coming soon at the Céide Fields and the Blasket Centre. Or maybe you haven't had a chance to explore other recent new offerings such as the state-of-the-art visitor experience at Brú na Bóinne or the new visitor centre at the Custom House. Perhaps you haven't had a chance to marvel at the beauty of Ormond Castle since its re-opening. Meet old friends and new at these wonderfully re-imagined places. It's all just waiting for you to explore.

> Ormond Castle



^ Above:
Custom House Dublin
Image: Naoise Culhane

> Facing page:
(Bottom) Brú na Bóinne
Interpretive Centre.

> The 4,000 year old bogwood pine tree
at the Céide Fields Visitor Centre





- ^ Knowth Visitor Centre
- > The Blasket Centre at Dún Chaoin
- > The New Visitor Centre at the Custom House, Dublin





^ (Top left) The clifftop viewing platform at the Blasket Centre, Co. Kerry.

^ (Top right) Rear of Ormond Castle, Carrick on suir, Co. Tipperary.

^ (Centre) Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre exhibition is a fully interactive visitor experience exploring the Neolithic culture, landscape and monuments of Brú na Bóinne (Newgrange & Knowth).
Photo Naoise Culhane

> (Right) Custom House Visitor Centre, a new and fascinating visitor experience exploring the building, burning and restoration of Dublin's magnificent Custom House.



The Rock of Cashel

A Symbol: National and International

by Jim Mulligan

The Rock of Cashel, also known as St. Patrick's Rock and Cashel of the Kings, is a historic site located at Cashel, Co. Tipperary which is situated on top of a limestone outcrop overlooking the Golden Vale.

No matter which approach road to Cashel that a visitor takes, whether in daylight or night-time hours, the Rock of Cashel/Carraig Phádraig, is a very impressive sight.

The Rock of Cashel is an Irish symbol both within the country and overseas. For many years locally in Cashel and Co. Tipperary generally, the image of The Rock can be found in everyday usage with various business organisations and sports clubs. On the international front, images of the Rock of Cashel can be found in airports and public spaces and transport facilities around the world. This can be attributed to the work of Fáilte Ireland in particular and their advertising campaigns across the globe in promoting Ireland as a travel destination and highlighting the Rock of Cashel through its visual impact. In the strange times caused by the lockdown resulting from Covid 19 it was

noted that RTÉ utilised a night-time view of the Rock of Cashel to represent Ireland in a Eurovision Song Contest review in May, 2020.

Pobal Ailbhe

Fr. Christy O'Dwyer, former pastor in the parish of Cashel and Rosegreen, wrote in Pobal Ailbhe that "few parishes in Ireland can surpass Cashel's wealth of ecclesiastical heritage. Its foremost site, the Rock of Cashel, attracts throngs of people from near and far to view its rich heritage." And further in the same publication in a piece titled 'The Rock of Cashel- A Reflection' he wrote, "In many parts of Ireland today the phrase 'as solid as the Rock of Cashel' is synonymous with permanence and durability. The visitor to Cashel can appreciate the appropriateness of this phrase as the eye beholds the grandeur of the ruins which have for centuries dominated the countryside from their lofty rocky site." (1)

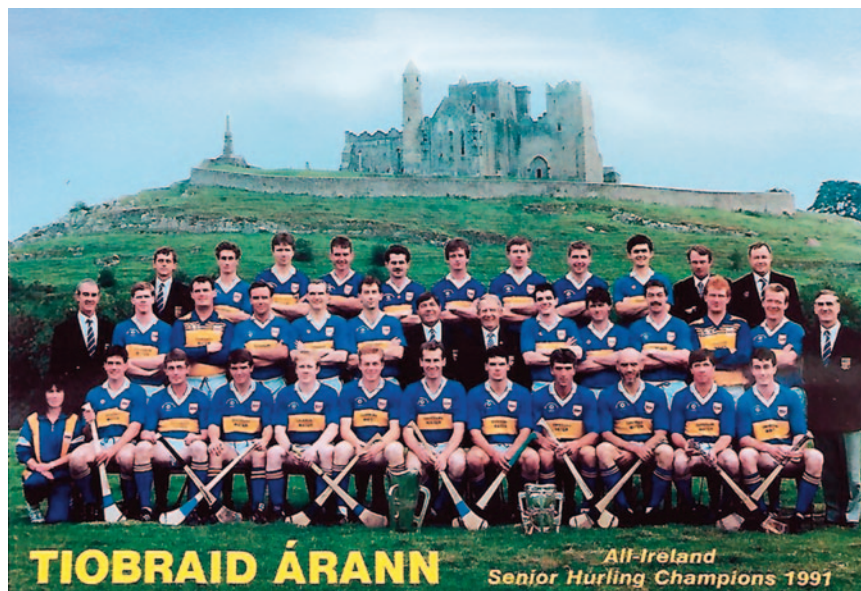
UNESCO

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and is a

[^] The Rock of Cashel Photo Ken Williams



^ (Above left) The Cross of Cashel trophy presented to the winners of the All-Ireland Under 21 Hurling title in 2015. This trophy is based on St. Patrick's Cross at the Rock of Cashel. Pictured, Wexford captain Eoin Conroy, (left), and Limerick captain Diarmuid Byrnes (right).



specialised agency of the United Nations aimed at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in Education, the Arts, the Sciences and Culture. It was founded in November, 1945 following the establishment of the United Nations in October, 1945.⁽²⁾

In November, 2018 the Gaelic games of Hurling and Camogie were placed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Gaelic Athletic Association

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) was founded at Hayes's Hotel, Thurles on 1st November, 1884. The first Patron of the GAA was Archbishop Thomas Croke who was a resident of Thurles beside his cathedral, and each succeeding Archbishop of Cashel and Emly has been given the title of Patron of the GAA. The current Patron is Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly.

The county of Tipperary has been successful in its participation in Gaelic games and, since the first All-Ireland finals commenced in 1887,

Tipperary has won 28 senior hurling championships and 4 senior football championships up to 2021. Other grades of underage hurling and football have had success in addition to the Ladies Football and Camogie teams at national level.

The Rock of Cashel in general and St. Patrick's Cross in particular have been associated with the All Ireland hurling championship at under 21 level. This was due to the intervention of Dr. Tom Morris, then Patron of the GAA in 1967 when he presented a trophy which was named as the Cashel Cross. It was retired as a trophy in 2016 but is another symbolic link with St Patrick's Rock of Cashel.

The connection between Tipperary GAA and the Rock of Cashel was further enhanced in 2000 when the crest on all Tipperary jerseys and sports equipment included the image of the Rock of Cashel and the foundation year of the GAA in Thurles of 1884 emblazoned on it, with its traditional blue and gold colours.



The local GAA club Cashel King Cormacs takes its name from the combination of Cashel being the seat of the Kings of Munster and the Cormac's Chapel on the site of the Rock overlooking the town. Its crest contains the

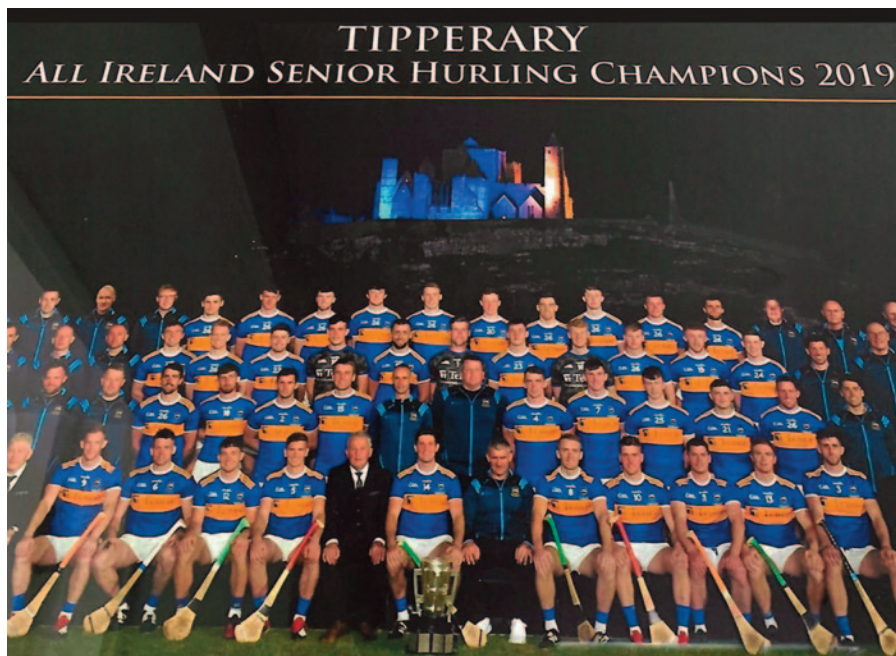
image of the Rock of Cashel on its colours of red and green. The other sporting clubs of note in Cashel that also feature the Rock of Cashel on their club crests, are Cashel Rugby Club and Cashel Town FC.

A recent publication by Liam O'Donnchu contains pictorial evidence of the link between the GAA and the Rock of Cashel.⁽³⁾

> Emblem of Tipperary GAA Club, founded in 1884, which features the Rock of Cashel logo since 2000.

Cashel King > Cormac's, Tipperary Senior Hurling Champions 1991, after winning their first title under captain Colm Bonnar, the new Tipperary Manager.





^ Tipperary All-Ireland Senior Hurling Champions 2019 at a floodlit Rock of Cashel.

A Leading Light

For many years since the Rock of Cashel became a visitor site in the 1970s it was illuminated during a portion of the hours of darkness by a single colour of white light. Since 2017 the Office of Public Works has installed an LED floodlighting system on the Rock of Cashel. This enables the site not just to be illuminated a shade of green during the St. Patrick's Day festivities but also to display a number of colour combinations in support of various causes or societal organisations. These include Darkness into Light and Pieta House, Irish Heart Foundation and World Heart Day, Disability Ireland, Epilepsy Ireland, Sudden Infant Death and various Pink/Blue Ribbon Days and Cancer Research/Support Groups.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the commencement of a lockdown scenario in March, 2020 which led to enormous pressure being brought on essential frontline workers throughout the country during that summer and autumn period of 2020. In a show of support and thanks many public buildings were illuminated with the national tricolour and the Rock of Cashel was prominent in this regard.

These floodlighting displays can be a celebration, a commemoration or simply an expression of joy and/or hope. We were particularly proud to be part of the show of solidarity with the people of the Ukraine, when the Office of Public Works illuminated 41 of Ireland's most iconic historic buildings and monuments, government buildings and national cultural institutions in the Ukrainian colours as a symbolic message of solidarity and to show that the people of Ireland stand with Ukraine.

Footnotes

¹. Fr. Christy O'Dwyer, Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, Pobal Ailbhe, 2008

². www.unesco.org

³. Liam Ó Donnchú, *Semple Stadium Field of Legends*, The O'Brien Press, 2021

⁴. Jim Mulligan, Denis Leamy : "Ireland and Munster's Rock of Cashel," *Boherlahan-Dualla Historical Journal*, 2014 pp 37-46

> The Cross of Cashel trophy



Conclusion

In January, 2008 Munster Rugby played London Wasps in the final group game in the Heineken Cup at Thomson's Park, Limerick. Denis Leamy, from Cashel Rugby Club originally, was playing for Munster in this game and scored the decisive try. Munster won the game and ultimately went on to win the final in Cardiff in May, 2008. Michael Corcoran, RTE rugby commentator was doing the radio commentary for the game and when the try was scored he described Denis Leamy's performance on the night as being as solid as 'The Rock of Cashel'. ⁽⁴⁾

Apart from the Cashel sporting clubs mentioned and the Tipperary GAA teams bearing the crest of the Rock of Cashel there are many examples on the commercial and business front where the Rock of Cashel outline graphic is incorporated into letter heads, business cards and shop premises, and even vehicles associated with these enterprises can be seen as one travels around Cashel, Co. Tipperary and further afield.

Fr. Christy O'Dwyer was describing the Rock of Cashel from an ecclesiastical perspective with reference to permanence and durability, but it is suggested that these qualities can also be applied to the world of work and leisure which includes our native games.

For the people of Cashel, Tipperary and Ireland the Rock of Cashel is an enduring symbol.

Acknowledgement

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance and support of Elaine Moriarty, Supervisor Guide, Office of Public Works, Rock of Cashel.

Castletown House events

Castletown House
is delighted to announce
forthcoming
spectacular events
in the Long Gallery.



Castletown House

- Join us on 8 April 2022 and enjoy a wonderful evening's entertainment brought to us by the **Kammerphilharmonie Europa**.

The Kammerphilharmonie Europa is an orchestra of talented young musicians recruited from eight European nations, and has performed throughout Europe since its founding in 2006. Soloists Cyrill Gussaroff (trumpet), Michael Kibardin (violin) and Tsai-Chen Juan (oboe) along with the eight member ensemble, will perform a much loved repertoire, to include Corelli's Concerto Grosso, Op. 6 No.4 in D major, Hummel's Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra E-flat major, and Bach's Concerto for Oboe and Violin BWV 1060.

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/kammer-philharmonie-europa-tickets-265873614137>



- Returning due to exceptional popular demand we welcome **Handel's Messiah** back to the stunning Long Gallery on 23 April 2022.

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/handels-messiah-tickets-264267630597>



- Chapterhouse Theatre Company are returning to Castletown House on 18 June 2022 with Shakespeare's **Romeo and Juliet**.

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/chapterhouse-theatre-presents-romeo-and-juliet-outdoors-tickets-265883132607>



'Intervals of Peace'

The Civil War Prison Art of Alfred McGloughlin

In a poignant and thoughtful speech at the opening of the exhibition, Alfred's daughter Charlotte Groarke, reflected on the creation of this unique collection of artworks by her father during a painful and violent period in Irish history, "War is something that brings out the worst and the best in people. It destroys relationships and loved ones, it destroys property and causes confusion. But today let us concentrate on the best, the gentle use of pencil and paper to ease the pain of friends, to occupy the mind with something other than anger and bitterness."

Kilmainham Gaol Museum and the Office of Public Works (OPW) are pleased to announce 'INTERVALS OF PEACE', a brand new exhibition of previously unseen Civil War portraits by prisoner and artist Alfred McGloughlin. The exhibition runs from Thursday, 31 March to Tuesday, 25 October 2022 at Kilmainham Gaol Museum, Dublin. The exhibition was launched by Alfred McGloughlin's daughter, Charlotte Groarke.

On 21 October 1922, several months into the Irish Civil War, Alfred McGloughlin was arrested in his home by Free State forces and brought to Wellington Barracks in Dublin. He spent the following year as a political prisoner, first in Wellington Barracks, then Hare Park in the Curragh, before a final stay in Mountjoy Prison from where he was released on 13 October 1923. Although he was an active supporter of the Anti-Treaty side, he was never charged with a specific offence. He experienced periods of severe ill-treatment during his incarceration but, as mentioned in his obituary in 1932, he also found 'intervals of peace in prison, sketching in watercolours, and filling a portfolio with pencil-drawings of his comrades'. 39 portraits and watercolour sketches of Mountjoy by Alfred McGloughlin will go on public display for the first time in Kilmainham Gaol in a special exhibition to mark the centenary of the Civil War.

Alfred McGloughlin was the nephew of 1916 leaders Patrick and William Pearse and grew up in the Pearse household. He later helped in the running of Patrick Pearse's school, Scoil Éanna. He went on to become a draughtsman with J & C McGloughlin Ltd., a decorative metalwork business owned by his father's family, and studied art part-time in the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art.

McGloughlin also developed an interest in theatre where he wrote and performed in numerous plays. He joined the Irish Volunteers and was involved in the Howth gun-running of 1914. He was Sinn Féin's director of elections in south Dublin for the 1918 and 1921 elections and stood as a candidate himself during the local elections of 1920. Following his release from prison he set up his own building company. When this business failed, he obtained a position as a draughtsman with the Office of Public Works. He remained active as a political journalist, and was a regular contributor to the republican newspaper 'An Phoblacht'. His health never recovered from his time in prison and he died from heart disease aged just 44 in 1932.

Visitors who wish to visit the exhibition without going on the guided tour of the Gaol do not have to book in advance and admission is free.

Tech Week: Bricks4kids Workshop



Become the ultimate Master Lego Builder this Easter at a Bricks 4 Kidz workshop at Kilkenny Castle!

Bricks 4 Kidz will be running a series of STEM based workshops on the 16th April as part of Tech Week. Enrol your child today for this free event where we will travel back in time to the Middle Ages and learn all about the Catapult! Students will then build their very own Lego Technic (robotic) Catapult model. We will also be running a separate workshop for Junior &

Senior Infants where they will build 2D and 3D themed Lego models!

For further details on the various age appropriate workshops from Junior Infants up to 6th class see

<https://ie1.bricks4kidznow.com/profile.php?id=1485092> and get your tickets now! Limited availability.

16th April 2022

Parade Tower, Kilkenny Castle

Bealtaine Festival: Architectural Outdoor Guided Tour of Kilkenny Castle

Founded soon after the Norman conquest of Ireland, Kilkenny Castle has been rebuilt, extended and adapted to suit changing circumstances and uses over a period of 800 years.

Peter Kenny, OPW, will explore the visual features of Kilkenny Castle today. The guided tour will be conducted outdoors, please wear appropriate clothes and footwear.

The event is free of charge but registration is necessary as places are limited. The event is weather dependent.

To reserve your place email:
bookingskilkennycastle@opw.ie

**Sundays 1st, 8th & 29th May
at 10.30am**

**Wednesdays 18th & 25th May
at 3.30pm**

> Kilkenny Castle
Main Gates





The History and Restoration of the Internationally Significant Plant Collection and Gardens at Annes Grove Demesne

by Hugh Carrigan

(Park Superintendent, OPW)

and

Neil Porteous

(Horticulturist & Plantsperson)

This paper was first delivered at the 19th Annual Historic Irish Houses Conference, Maynooth

Introduction

Annes Grove Demesne is located on the banks of the River Awbeg near Castletownroche, Co. Cork. The splendid designed historic landscape within the demesne had many stages of development during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. In the 20th century, Richard Grove Annesley (1879-1966) overlaid this landscape with new and exotic planting, creating a Romantic garden extending to over 30 acres in an exquisite Robinsonian style. In doing so, he created a very significant plant collection at Annes Grove.

These plant collections were enriched with newly introduced plants, as Annesley supported the plant-hunting expeditions of English botanist Frank Kingdon-Ward (1885-1958) on at least four occasions:

to North Burma and Assam (1926), Assam and Mishmi Hills (1927-28), Assam and Tibet (1933) and, most significantly, to Mount Victoria in Chin State, Myanmar (1956), which proved to be Kingdon-Ward's last expedition.

These expeditions yielded significant collections of azalea and rhododendrons, amongst other plants, some of which are believed to be still present today in Annes Grove.

The property's period-style house and its associated buildings provide a unique insight into the workings of an historic estate along with the longstanding role the Annesley family have played throughout its history.

In December 2015, the Annesley family donated Annes Grove Demesne to the State and it is now managed by the Office of Public Works (OPW). The gardens, plant collections and outbuildings are undergoing a major restoration that will take some years to complete.

> Herbaceous planting of the central border of the relaxed wall garden

✓ A bronze sculpture in the grounds of Annes Grove



History

The natural landscape of Annes Grove is an ancient one, comprising of two facing glacial sinuous limestone bluffs, eroded over the millennia by the River Awbeg, a tributary of the Blackwater – thus creating a fertile, sheltered and secluded river valley that has seen continuous habitation since the Bronze Age.

In the publication *Houses of North Cork* (Anna Maria Hajba), we get a glimpse of the family connection with the area that goes back to 1603 when Ion Grove from Hendon, Middlesex, lived at Cahirduggan Castle, near Doneraile, Co Cork. His son William purchased lands, including the townland of Ballyhemmock (later to become known as Annes Grove), in 1628 from David Roche, the Viscount of Fermoy, for the sum of £700.

Some of the existing outbuildings may well date from this early period. It is thought that around this time, the Grove family began to develop the demesne by cutting a channel now known as 'the Half River', probably to drain and improve the pasture of the valley, creating an island. A walled orchard for cider apples on the site of the walled garden may also have been an addition to the property at that time.

Mary Grove inherited the estates from her older brother Robert in 1764. Mary married Francis Charles Annesley (1st Earl of Annesley) in 1766 and they resided in the Annesley home at Castlewella, Co. Down. The Castlewella gardens are often referred to as a sister garden to Annes Grove. A *Juniperus recurva* 'castlewella' currently grows at Annes



Grove and is in good health. The 19th-century narcissus 'Countess of Annesley' once grew at Annes Grove: this plant originated at Castlewella and it is intended to reintroduce this plant into Annes Grove.

Mary and Francis Annesley were not blessed with children. Mary left the Grove family home and estates to her husband's nephew Lieutenant-General Arthur Annesley (1774-1849) after her death in 1791. Lieutenant-General Arthur Annesley assumed the name Grove into his surname.

While Mary Grove resided in Castlewella, Annes Grove was rented to Richard and Anne Aldworth of Rockmills House in the barony of Fermoy, Co. Cork. Mrs Aldworth was a talented gardener and has been credited with laying out the picturesque valley landscape with ornamental planting, walks and bridges. "Mrs Aldworth has ornamented a beautiful glen, which winds behind the house, in a manner that does honour to her taste; she has traced her paths so as to command all the beauties of rock, wood and a sweet river which glides beneath both; it's a most agreeable scenery." (Young, Arthur. *Young's Tour 1776-1779*). This is the earliest known written record of gardening at Annes Grove. These embellishments were renewed and maintained into the late 19th century.

The house itself most likely dates to c.1760 and is thought to have been built on the foundations of an older house. Other features include the pen pond, (possibly a duck decoy), the old barn, the dairy and associated farmyard and central midden, the forge/smithy, the 'Crow's Walk' and the remains of a lime avenue, now running along the



^ Image of the landscape layout at Annes Grove, 1848 (estate maps)

▼ Victorian photograph showing the layout of the gardens in the late 19th century (Annesley Collection)



northern edge of the walled garden.

Under Lieutenant-General Arthur Grove Annesley's tenure as owner of the demesne, many improvement works to the house and lands were undertaken. The walled garden (c.1835) was originally subdivided into 11 compartments with a glasshouse at the north-end wall and a main path adjacent. The northern carriage drive underwent further development works. These features are illustrated on the first edition of the 1837-42 Ordnance Survey map and the estate maps of 1848.

By 1837, the house was remodelled and this is described in the *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland 1837* (Samuel Lewis): "Annes Grove is the elegant seat of Lieut.-Gen, the Hon Arthur Grove Annesley, a handsome mansion recently Built by the proprietor, on the verge of a precipitous cliff rising from the river Awbeg, which flows through the Demesne: The grounds are laid out with great taste and surrounded by thriving Plantations."

Research work is being undertaken to determine the extent of the works to the house at this time. It is most likely that the house may have been remodelled, rather than being newly built.

Richard Grove Annesley (1815-1892) inherited the demesne in 1849 and planted many recently introduced conifers from America, *Thuja plicata* and *Cupressus macrocarpa*. The Benjamin Woodward-designed Castle Lodge was completed in c.1854, replacing an earlier lodge. The Annesley family archive photographs dating from the late Victorian period illustrate improvements and developments such as the Summer House and Victorian display garden. It is evident at Annes Grove that each generation respected the improvements and embellishments of previous generations and assimilated them into the new fashions of the period, rather than sweeping them away.

Richard Arthur Grove Annesley inherited Annes Grove at 12 years of age in 1892. He continued his family's improvements to the property by enlisting the aid of the local army garrison based at Fermoy in 1902 to build a series of weirs in the River Awbeg and the Half River. This facilitated the control of water levels in the ponds and watercourses: the Half River would receive more water in the summer and the Awbeg would receive the bulk of the water in the winter.

A series of ornamental bridges were constructed in 1905 and identified as the Rainbow Bridge, Wisteria Bridge and the Pooh Stick Bridge across the Half River and Burke's Bridge across the Awbeg. Richard



^ Ornamental bridge over the River Awbeg at Annes Grove

> Richard Grove Annesley and Lord Aberconway at Annes Grove, c.1938

married Hilda Phillips (nee MacNaghten) in 1907 and began a new and exotic style of planting, creating a Romantic garden extending to over 30 acres in Robinsonian style. In 1926, a hydraulic ram was installed to pump water from the river to the house. This feature is still intact, but is in need of restoration. Improvements to the house in this period included the installation of new limestone steps salvaged from nearby Ballywalter House, which was burned down in 1921 during the War of Independence.

As one of the sponsors of Frank Kingdon-Ward's many horticultural expeditions, Richard received much exotic plant material, particularly of azalea and rhododendron species. He propagated this material, grew these newly introduced plants in the gardens at Annes Grove and exchanged plant material with other great gardens' plant collections in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Records and letter correspondence indicate the exchanging of plants and seeds between the Annesley at Annes Grove and a network of likeminded collectors, such as the Smith-Barrys at Fota and the Bryces on Garnish Island, as these gardens were also being developed at this time. Richard was connected through marriage to Henry Duncan McLaren, Lord Aberconway of Bodnant Gardens in North Wales (now in the care of the National Trust), who visited Annes Grove in 1938. There is also a connection with the 4th Marquis of Headfort, who had a hybrid collection of over 100 varieties of rhododendrons called the 'Headfort 100'. This collection also resided at Annes Grove. The Annesley family archive has also revealed correspondence with Lionel De Rothschild, of Exbury Gardens, on the exchange information on rhododendron hybridisation. They may also have exchanged plant information and material.

We get a glimpse of the garden layout in Edward Hyam's 1967 book, *Irish Gardens 1967*, where he divided Annes Grove into five main areas:

1. The approaches, the sweeps to the house, yards and their surrounds.
2. The walled garden, intensively managed: half as ornamental, half as productive.
3. The river garden, ostensibly around the Half River, was both ambitious and labour intensive.
4. The chief division, ranging from the Crow's Walk, along the western bluff of limestone outcrop to the hydrangea rock, was the woodland garden, known as 'the rock'.
5. The rhododendron garden, extending north-west toward the Castle Lodge from the end of the woodland garden.



> Richard Grove Annesley admiring *Cornus kousa*, the Chinese dogwood c.1935





^ The Robinsonian style gardens at Annes Grove



^ The 19th-century narcissus 'Countess of Annesley' once grew at Annes Grove and there are plans to re-introduce it.

The garden was intimate, comprising of a series of narrow paths, dressed annually with river sand. Precipitous and uneven winding limestone steps with rustic pole railings characterised the early garden. The planting was unusual to our modern eyes, with sinuous lines of conifers to act as intermittent windbreaks scattered obliquely across the river valley.

Trees on top of the eastern bluff exaggerated the depth of the valley. A clever contrast, especially in the river garden around the Half River, of bold architectural foliage provided by Gunnera, Darmera and Rodgersia planted against grass-like foliage from Cordyline, Phormium and Pampas Grass, down to Day Lilies and Iris.

As time wore on, and money and labour became less abundant, a more Robinsonian approach was adopted. Richard was able to relax the initial regimen into a more naturalistic planting, allowing natives to recolonise and exotics to naturalise. It is this later, more relaxed approach to this established garden, already bursting with rare and exotic plants, of working more sympathetically with nature and the prevailing conditions on the site, which became regarded as the epitome of Irish gardening. Richard Arthur lived to 1966, dying at the age of 87.

Annes Grove was inherited by his younger son, Patrick (1911-1975). In the course of time, Patrick's son, Patrick Annesley (b. 1943), married Jane Holder, and in 1978 they opened the gardens to the public for the first time.

A visitor to Annes Grove in the early 1980s would have been struck by the treasures on offer: rhododendrons raised from seed collected by Frank Kingdon-Ward had reached maturity, while trees and shrubs hardly ever seen before (*Maytenus boaria* from Chile or *Myrica faya* from Macaronesia) were all jumbled together amongst naturalised exotics such as *Hoheria* and Himalayan maple (*Acer cappadocicum*). The garden was open to the public in a charmingly low-key way until 2010.

Restoration

Annes Grove was gifted to the State by the Annesley family in December 2015. In the years prior to the handover, however, there was a financial crisis, two exceptionally cold winters and two significant storms that took their toll on the demesne's gardens and plant collections. By the spring of 2016, the gardens were in need of attention and the process of decay was well advanced. Many trees had blown over, paths were impassable and plants were lost. But happily, treasures had survived, such as *Magnolia campbellii* subsp. *Mollicomata* and self-sown *Photinia davidiana*, with their fluorescent pink/red berries.

The rhododendrons that had been left to their own devices needed urgent attention. They were badly affected, as the soil on top of the limestone bluffs was thin and just acidic, but not acidic enough. In the past, these plants would have been top-dressed every few years with peat from a nearby bog



^ Rhododendrons at Annes Grove



▼ Castle Avenue, Annes Grove, 2021



to sustain the pH of the topsoil – thus ensuring optimum growing conditions for these plants.

Rhododendrons in the Irish climate are not nearly as long-lived as they would be in their native Himalayas, and 80 years is about the norm without regular top-dressing. Nonetheless, surviving beauties included: rhododendron *Cornubia*, an early-flowering red *arboreum* x *Shilsonii* hybrid, which was bred at Penjerrick in Cornwall before 1911 (and is the first to flower in early March), as well as some fine ‘homemade’ hybrids, such as *R. campanulatum* x *arboretum*.

An ambitious programme of restoration commenced in early 2016. The OPW made steady progress in structural repairs to the estate walls, roads, paths and car-parking facilities. Windows and plasterwork were restored at the front of the house and extensive roof repairs were undertaken on some of the old 18th-century farmyard buildings. Essential arboricultural works were also undertaken throughout the gardens. Landscape restoration works are ongoing to remove the self-sown invaders and retain only what is worthy, opening up historic views and vistas and preparing the ground for new planting material.

Working closely with Patrick Grove Annesley, it soon became apparent that what was required was a reinvigoration.

The huge task of identifying the collection is nearly complete. Richard Grove Annesley’s *My Shrubs 1928* is a valuable record of his plantsmanship and shows the type of material being planted. Dr Mary Forrest also compiled an inventory of plants present in the 1970s,

less than 10 years after Richard passed away. This gives a comprehensive list of species planted during his lifetime. In addition, Patrick Annesley produced a plant inventory in 1991, which identifies planting locations throughout the garden – making it a very valuable source of information. Other historic plant lists are also in existence in the family archive, along with important archive material that includes literature, photographs, letters and maps.

Sourcing and propagating suitable plant material for replanting is ongoing, with thousands of plants being planted in the garden. Great care is taken to ensure plants are only sourced from trusted suppliers that are producing plant material with known provenance to ensure plants are true to type. All plants must come with appropriate phytosanitary certification to ensure, as much as possible, that they are free of pests and diseases.

The OPW has also invested significantly in horticultural staff and other resources to ensure the ongoing restoration and management of the plant collections and gardens. Plants grow quickly at Annes Grove in the humid, sheltered river valley. Many of the newer plantings have made rapid headway and are now becoming imposing. The gardening team have, in a short period of time, gained a deep understanding of this unique plant collection and landscape heritage thus ensuring its survival for future generations.

Richard first grew the tree fern *Dicksonia antarctica* at Annes Grove and there is still a great collection of tree ferns in the old forge/smithy and in a now-restored cesspit, where they can be protected in winter until established. Richard had acquired the ‘Wilson 50’, a selection of Japanese azaleas from Wisley Gardens in 1956. Only 38 varieties remain in existence, but cuttings have been sought of RHS Wisley and Exbury gardens.

Annes Grove has, naturally, what every garden maker strives for: variety. A relaxed formality in the walled garden, a large and varied rhododendron garden, the river garden with its charming bridges and waterside walks, and the precipitous woodland garden, resplendent with magnolias, camellias, bamboos and many rare and exotic treasures.

The planting is full and complex. Self-sown opportunists are allowed if they add to the composition and trees, shrubs, climbers, herbaceous and bulbous plants are near neighbours. The herbaceous planting of the central border in the relaxed walled garden



^ Walled Garden, central border



was always a late-summer *tour de force* and was constantly re-invented. Its current reincarnation is a scented succession of blue, white and silver.

Annes Grove is the most exquisite Robinsonian-style garden set in an earlier designed historic landscape. Together with the unique and rare plant collection, the 18th-century house and outbuildings and over 250-year stewardship of the Grove Annesley family, Annes Grove Demesne is unique in Ireland and one of the most outstanding gardens of its type still in existence.

We thank Patrick Annesley and his family for their invaluable knowledge, artefacts and estate records. The restoration and management of Annes Grove Demesne would not be possible without the dedication of the horticultural, professional and administrative team in the OPW, supported by specialist experts.

Open: April 3rd – September 22nd.
During 2022 the gardens will be accessible by guided tour only.
Gardens Open 10am – 4pm Thursday to Monday (last tour 3pm).

References:

Charter (1982) and Burra Charter (1999), published by the international Council on Monuments and Sites

Lewis, Samuel. *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* 1837

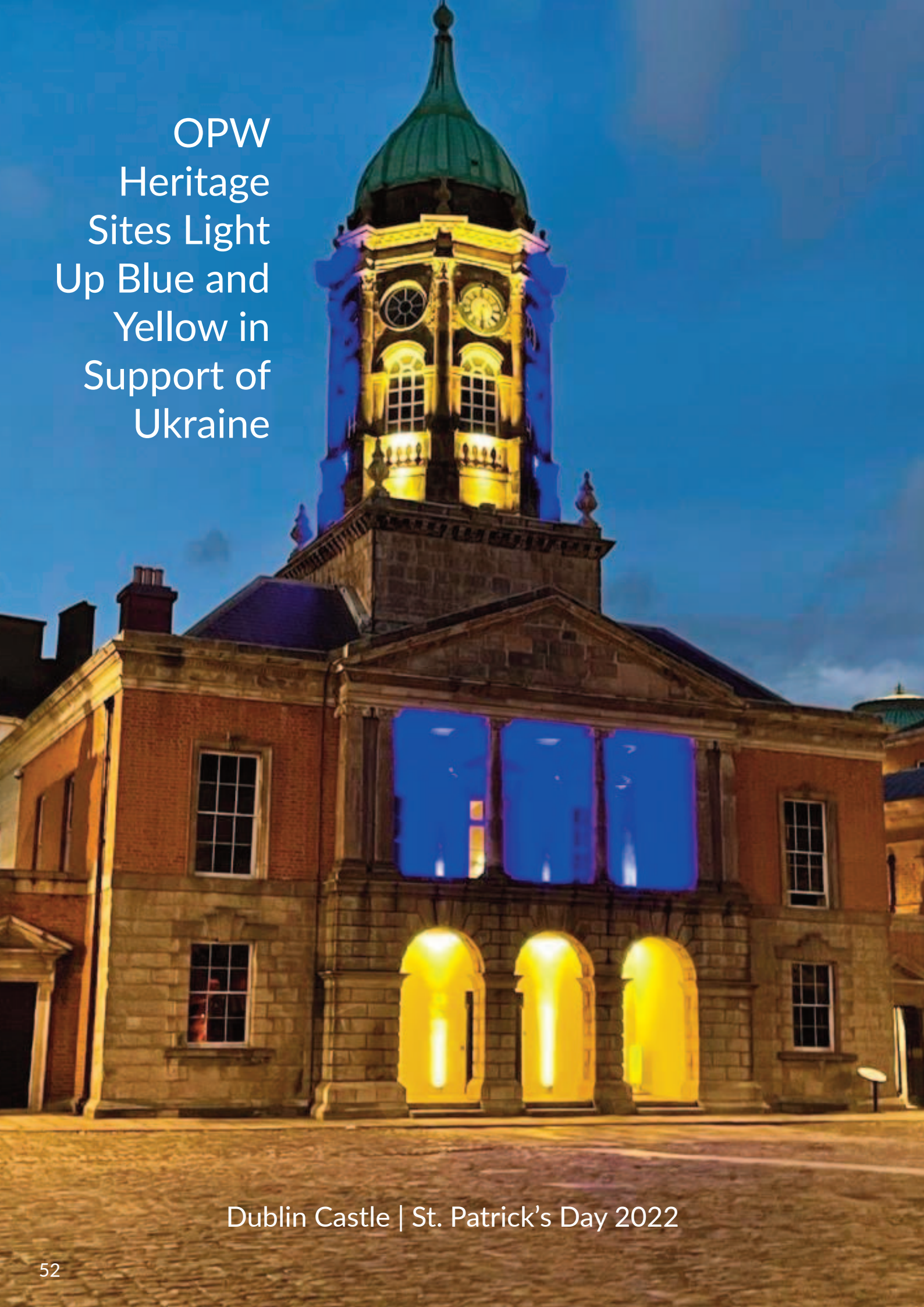
Ham's, Edward. *Irish Gardens* (photographs by William McQuillty). McDonald & Company, London 1967

Murray, Peter. Article: 'Annes Grove from past to the present.' *Irish Arts Review*, March 2018

Hajba, Anna Marie. *Houses of Cork*, Vol 1. First edition, 2002

The Annesley Family Archive

OPW
Heritage
Sites Light
Up Blue and
Yellow in
Support of
Ukraine



Dublin Castle | St. Patrick's Day 2022



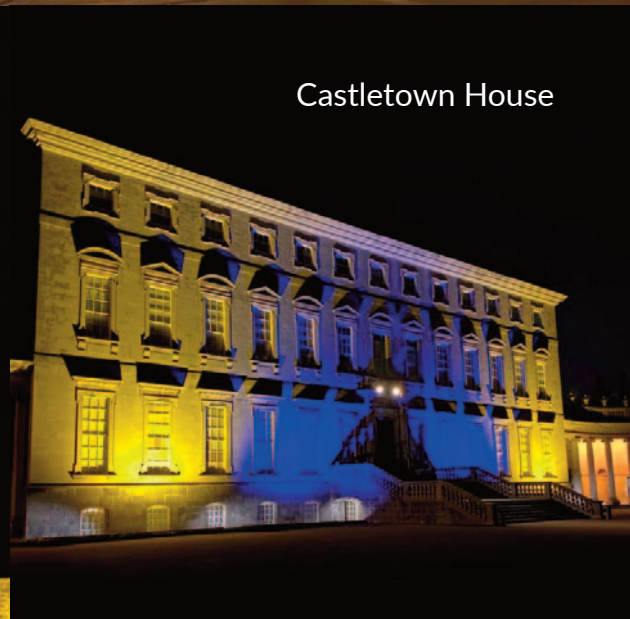
Athenry Castle



Kilmainham Gaol



Desmond Castle



Castletown House



Cahir Castle



Kilkenny Castle



Trim Castle

Rhododendron Week

2–10 April 2022

Events brought to you by the
National Botanic
Gardens of Ireland
and the Office of Public Works



Images

Pond Vista at Kilmacurragh
Rhododendron 'Janet Acton'
Broad Walk in April
Rhododendron grande

Programme of events:

Wednesday 6 April at 11.00am

Walking tour in Kilmacurragh with **Seamus O'Brien**, Head Gardener at the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland, Kilmacurragh.

Title: *Restoring Kilmacurragh's historic rhododendron collection.*

Booking required (Eventbrite). Free event. Limited availability. See botanicgardens.ie for full details.

Thursday 7 April 2022 at 6.00pm

An illustrated talk by Seamus O'Brien, Head Gardener

Title: *The Moores and Glasnevin - The Irish Rhododendron Story*

This talk takes place in the Auditorium at the **National Botanic Gardens of Ireland, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.**

Booking required (Eventbrite). Free event. Limited availability. See botanicgardens.ie for full details.

Friday 8 April 2022 at 6.00pm

An illustrated talk by Marie-Louise Agius, Director of Exbury Gardens UK

Title: *Exbury Gardens, Past and Present*

This talk takes place in the Auditorium at the **National Botanic Gardens of Ireland, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.**

Booking required (Eventbrite). Free event. Limited availability. See botanicgardens.ie for full details.

Saturday 2 April to Sunday 10 April 2022

Free guided tours every day during Rhododendron Week at the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh, Co. Wicklow at 12noon and 3pm daily.

Enquiries/bookings to kilmacurraghgardens@opw.ie or (0404)48844

Video stories on "Plant Highlights" and "Historic links between Glasnevin and Kilmacurragh" will be uploaded to social media and the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland YouTube channel.

The wearing of masks for indoor lectures is advised

This is a blended event with walking tours at Kilmacurragh and illustrated talks in Glasnevin. All details of the events are on the National Botanic Gardens website.

(www.botanicgardens.ie/calendar) and enquiries to Kilmacurragh, email: kilmacurraghgardens@opw.ie and tel. (0404) 48844. **Booking is essential:** nationalbotanicgardensofireland.eventbrite.ie



OPW Oifig na
nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

New beginnings bring new experiences

Kilkenny Castle

See what's new to
discover at **Ireland's**
most iconic **Heritage** sites

CHILDREN
GO
FREE | TO ALL
OPW
sites
heritageireland.ie

#LoveYourHeritage



OPW

Poulnabrone Portal Tomb. *Photo Ken Williams*

Heritage Ireland

Ireland's National Heritage in the care of
the Office of Public Works

www.heritageireland.ie