

MAY 2020

CULTURE DIVISION

Newsletter
Special Edition - Covid19 2020



WELCOME

Eileen Burgess

Welcome to the first Donegal County Council Culture Division interactive newsletter.

Amidst the devastation of COVID-19, a worldwide demonstration of culture, creativity and imagination has emerged as part of our collective response to minding ourselves and each other. Will we ever forget the images of classical musicians on their balconies playing for their neighbours, or of family recreations of well-known paintings? More than ever we're understanding how important everyday activities like reading, writing, drawing, singing, making music, appreciating our local heritage and history, being outdoors, and simply talking to each other in whatever form that takes, really are. Libraries, arts, heritage, culture and creativity in all its forms, hugely contribute to our quality of life.

Therefore, we thought it an opportune time to put together some information on how to contact us and signpost to services – some of which are very new and very creative, and all of which are very enjoyable – not to mention free. What's not to like about that?

Please stay safe, follow public health guidelines, and join us as we venture forth into a new normal.

Cruinniú na nÓg

Cruinniú na nÓg, a national day of youthful creativity will take place on Saturday 13th June. Events are evolving in line with public health advice and great efforts are being made to make sure it's as hands on as possible. Information as it is confirmed will be added to the [Cruinniú na nÓg website](#).

Cruinniú na nÓg is part of the [Creative Ireland Programme](#).



TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

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We are here for you online

We are missing meeting and greeting everyone during this difficult time and look forward to seeing you all again when things return to normal. In the meantime, it's important we all stay safe and stay home.



www.donegallibrary.ie

We have been working hard behind the scenes to bring you great content online including:

- eMagazines
- eBooks and eAudiobooks
- eNewspapers
- eLearning
- eResearch

Library members can access online resources using their library card number and PIN. If you have a library card number and can't remember your PIN, [try resetting it](#). This will work if you have registered an email address with us.

If you're not a member yet, you can [sign up online](#).

If you have any queries or feedback, please get in touch via our social media pages, email or phone. Check out our [online tutorials](#) to see how easy it is to access online resources.

We're about books and so much more. [Your little card holds so much potential!](#)

Learning Irish

If you've ever thought about brushing up on your Irish or learning it anew [Transparent Languages](#) provides a fun and engaging experience for learners of all levels looking to build their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Spring Into Storytime on Facebook

We are also delivering Spring into Storytime - an annual nationwide storytime series for children - via our [facebook page](#). Join Donegal Author Malachy Doyle on Saturday 2nd and 9th of May at 10.30am for some storytime fun. Later in the month keep an eye out for more spring fun and dancing with Bernie from Boogie Bugs and some cultural stories from storyteller Karen Edwards. Follow us on social media for stories and highlights from libraries across the country.



Healthy Ireland

As part of the *Healthy Ireland at your Library* programme Donegal County Council are delighted to announce that leading psychologist David Coleman will be coming to Central Library Letterkenny. Healthy Ireland at your Library is a national initiative which aims to promote health awareness in three key areas: Healthy Eating, Physical activity and Mental Health. We would like the Donegal public to decide which topic David Coleman will speak about. The 6 topics to choose from are as follows:

- Effective communication with children and teenagers
- Dealing with anxiety in children and teenagers
- Bullying and Cyberbullying
- Building self-esteem in children and teenagers
- Supporting the transition from Primary to Secondary School
- Positive parenting and effective discipline

Please email your preference to kevin.mccaul@donegalcoco.ie and the results of the poll and further details of time and date of event will be published on our social media pages.





#HomelsWhereTheArts

An engagement programme for young art lovers was launched in March. Daily art challenges are posted on the 'RCC for Kids' Facebook group page with almost 6,000 families from all over the world signed up.

Lake of Eyes Online Poetry Reading

Featuring Denise Blake, Emily S Cooper and Aodán McCardle. Presented by the RCC and Poetry Ireland, this live reading will take place on Friday 1st May, 8pm and is open to everyone, but registration is essential.



Poets involved in Lake of Eyes Online Poetry Reading

Virtual Artist-in-Residence Programme

We're delighted to be working with theatre-maker and writer Little John Nee, visual artist Redmond Herrity, digital artist Joe Fahy and actor and playwright Maura Logue this Spring. Maura Logue will present 'Through the Red Door' - Original Irish Stories Live by the Fire on the [RCC's Facebook page](#) on Wednesday, 6th, 13th & 20th May. This is presented in association with Donegal Arts Office. Little John Nee began his residency on the 26th March and streams live theatre performances on the RCC's Facebook page every Thursday at 8pm.

Virtual Reality Exhibition

The RCC will be presenting two exhibitions over May in our new virtual Minecraft Gallery. This space has been designed by Donegal digital artist Joe Fahy and will see artists from all over the world exhibiting 2D works.

Remote Inspiration

A Donegal Photographic COVID-19 Diary

We're asking Donegal residents to help us document their experiences during COVID-19. A selection of submissions during the challenge will be printed and exhibited at the RCC in the near future. 1,500 photographs taken by over 600 members have been submitted over the first 4 weeks.

RCC Curated Content - Instagram Exhibition

We have invited artists, curators and poets to take over our new RCC Curated Content account to present their work, thoughts and ideas. Each artist will present curated content for seven days. Our first guests have been Charlie Joe Doherty, Philip Moss & Selena Mowat.

Ceol agus Quarantine

A place to share a love of music, storytelling and poetry. Launched the day after all venues closed to the public, this online community group now boasts over 1,300 members and features daily live streams from throughout Donegal featuring some of our best talent. [More information on our website.](#)

RCC Sounds – Community Mixtape

We tasked a mix of musicians and music fanatics to each curate a playlist under a theme of their own choice. This community mixtape, lovingly selected by musicians to help keep us company during this period of unknown, will be released at least twice a week.



Upcoming Opportunities for Visual Artists

The Arts Service and the Heritage Office have been assisting the Donegal National Roads Office to finalise Artists Briefs for two forthcoming Per Cent for Art funded public art commissions, associated with the on-going N56 Coolboy to Kilmacrennan (pictured) and An Clochán Liath to Glenties Road Schemes. The Coolboy to Kilmacrennan Scheme commission will have a St. Colmcille theme - in response to the Colmcille 1500 commemorations which will take place throughout the county in 2021 - while the An Clochán Liath to Glenties commission will invite artists to respond to the spectacular cycle way which forms a key element that project. Both commissions will be advertised in the coming weeks. Requests from visual artists wishing to be notified directly of same may be sent to the Arts Service at traolach@donegalcoco.ie



Image courtesy of Donegal National Roads Office



Zandra Queen of Jazz

New Plays for Autumn

Preparations are continuing for the 20th. Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival which will take place in various towns, villages and rural communities in South Donegal in early October. We are particularly excited about two new plays celebrating the lives of women with strong Donegal connections, which will be highlighted during the event.

Actor and theatre-maker Margaret Hannon's 'Sister Black' celebrates the career of Ramelton World War I frontline health worker, Catherine 'Blackie' Black, OBE, while Roseanne Lynch's 'Zandra Queen of Jazz', tells the extraordinary lifestory of musician Alexandra Mitchell, who lived most of her later life at Coolmore House, Rosstown. Alexandra was one of the foremost jazz saxophonists of her day, touring widely with an all-female ensemble throughout the UK and mainland Europe, including Germany, in the years up to the start of the second World War.

Both shows may be seen at the Abbey Arts & Cultural Centre, Ballyshannon, in the first week of October.



Heritage Sector Survey

The Heritage Council is conducting an on-line Heritage Sector Survey as regards the impact of Covid-19. They are interested in the views of organisations, community groups and heritage professionals. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey by the deadline of midnight, Wednesday, May 6.

'Stories from the Waterside'

A story-telling competition being run by Local Authority Waters Programme and supported by the Heritage Officer Network, The Heritage Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland and Waterways Ireland is open for entries until Sunday May 31. Further information is available here.

Ireland's Town Centres Colouring Series for Kids

produced by The Heritage Council includes Ballyshannon (by Cllr. Barry Sweeny) and Letterkenny (by John Ruddy). Check them out and get colouring.

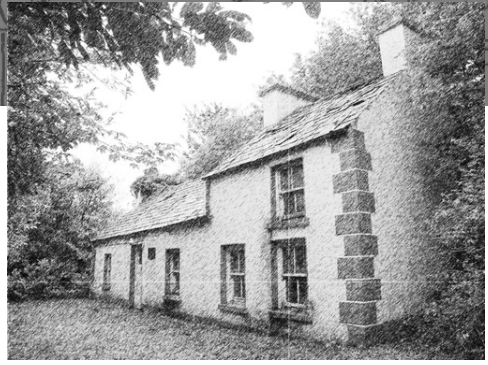
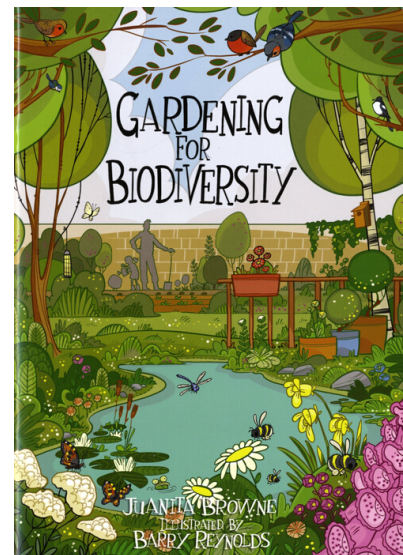


Photo Credit: Joseph Gallagher

The Laurels - People, Place and Prose

Applications are being invited for 'The Laurels - People, Place & Prose' - a research project on Brian Friel's Ballybeg and 'The Laurels', Glenties - until Friday, May 8 at 4 p.m.

Terms of reference are available [here](#).



'Gardening for Biodiversity' Booklet

A booklet produced by Juanita Browne in partnership with the Heritage Officer Network that highlights things that you can do to support wildlife in your garden is available as well as the accompanying 'Gardening for Biodiversity' Colouring Book for children. Remember that Friday, May 22 is International Biodiversity Day.

[Biodiversity Booklet](#)

[Biodiversity Colouring Pages](#)



#LoveTownCentres



History in the Making

Collecting Donegal's COVID-19 experiences

The Culture Division wants to capture the firsthand everyday Covid-19 experiences of Social Distancing, Self-isolation and Cocooning from a wide variety of people with different jobs, community roles and family situations. We are asking people to submit letters, diaries, drawings, photographs, or video diaries. We are also interested in collecting objects that relate to COVID-19 including PPE (once it is not needed), posters, leaflets etc. All the material submitted will be used to help us build a collection telling the story of Donegal's experience of the pandemic.

#Heritageishome

The Museum has been posting regularly on social media under [#Heritageishome](#) encouraging people to share stories and images of everyday heritage.



Credit: Donegal County Museum



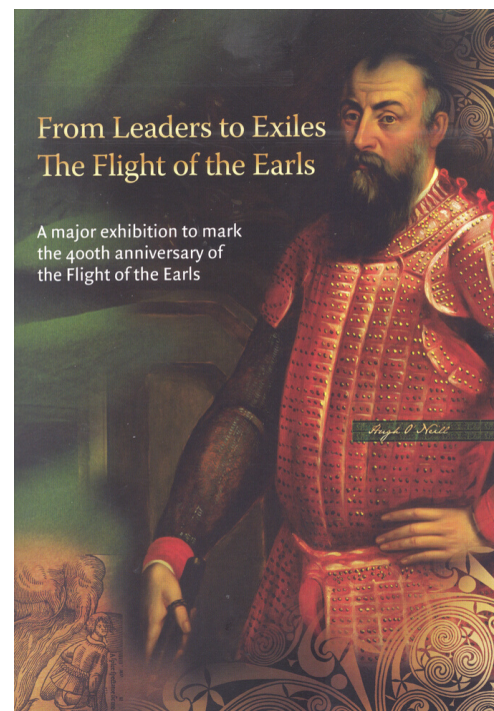
Photo Credit: Cinematic Sky

CINE project

As part of the CINE NPA/Interreg project the Museum has been working with the community of Inch Island, to create a virtual museum exhibition that explores the island's extraordinary heritage. Working in partnership with Ulster University's School of Computing, Engineering and Intelligent Systems, a new website, www.inchheritage.org is being launched in May.

Virtual Exhibitions

A variety of previous exhibitions and publications have been uploaded to the [Museums webpage](#) and are highlighted through our social media.



Echoes of the Decade

The Peace IV Echoes of the Decade Archives/Museum project has temporarily turned into an online oral history project for all who are interested in local history to get involved in, adults and children. Sources, resources, guides, questionnaires and workshops on this historical period have been added to the [Archives website](#).

Challenges are being put up on [Facebook](#) three days a week, e.g., Can you tell me about life as a child? What Stories were you told? What toys did you like?

History groups and teachers can still get involved in this project, contact: abarrettmcginley@donegalcoco.ie



'Four Courts on fire during the Civil War' lego designed by Alarnagh Barrett-McGinley

Donations

The Archives is encouraging people to consider donation of archival material relating to Donegal's history and culture to the County Archives, whilst presently preserving them in their own homes until we reopen.



Credit: Alarnagh Barrett McGinley

Educational Resources

To assist teachers and students: the Flight of the Earls and Ulster Plantation educational packs are now accessible online. The Donegal & the Decade of Change and Co. Donegal in 1916 packs are already online. Recent presentations given to teachers on Sources for Leaving Cert History and sources for Primary and Secondary school students are [now online](#).

Family History

Our Family History Researchers' resources document and recent Archives Sources for Genealogy presentation have been updated and [uploaded to the website](#).

Presentation notes now available

As part of the ongoing Decade of Centenaries the Archives has uploaded the archivist's presentation The 1918 General Election & the First Dáil and presentations given on Donegal & the 1916 Rising and County Donegal in 1916. [Available now](#)

Covid-19 Diaries

In mid March the Archives asked people, via its [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) account, to consider submitting any diaries or journals on life in 2020 for preservation in the Archives.