

# CULTURE DIVISION

Interactive  
Newsletter



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

We are delighted to be working towards a phased re-establishment of our services based on the Government's Roadmap for reopening, while bearing in mind the safety of our staff and the public.

Our summer is likely to be spent in a very different way this year. While the core work of all our Culture Division services continues behind the scenes, we hope that the outreach activities, projects and events signposted in this newsletter will provide you with some much-needed engagement and entertainment over the coming months. Whether you want to encourage your children to continue reading over the summer with [Donegal Library Service](#), try out some recipes with the RCC's free [recipe ebook](#), enjoy [Earagail Arts Festival](#) and [National Heritage Week](#)'s online programmes, share your pandemic experiences or take part in history challenges, there is something for everyone.

Wishing you all a safe and fun filled summer.

*The Culture Team*

## Cruinniú na nÓg

Cruinniú na nÓg took place in living rooms and kitchens throughout Donegal and across Ireland on June 13th. Children and young people had the opportunity to participate in a range of online activities including online workshops, a mini youth music festival, short film release and tutorials.

While some events were live, others required some input prior to the big day and are now widely available online.

Budding young chefs contributed to a dedicated e-book, [Recipes for Disasters](#).

[The Alone Together youth mini music festival](#), organised by the Regional Cultural Centre in collaboration with The Loft, offered young musicians and music fans the opportunity to put together their very own festival.

A short film, [Gathering of the Force](#), which premiered on social media on Saturday, was also a huge hit. The film represents the resilience of young people throughout this pandemic and showcases the breathtaking scenery at Donegal's Banba's Crown, Malin Head.



*Sisters getting creative at home for Cruinniú na nÓg.*

*Photo Credit: Paul McGuckin*

## TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

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We are currently working on a plan for the phased re-establishment of our library services, and we are looking forward to meeting and greeting everyone again, bearing in mind staff and public safety. The following libraries are offering a browsing and borrowing service, where library members can also return items:

- Buncrana (Inishowen Municipal District)
- Central (Letterkenny Municipal District)
- Twin Towns (Stranorlar Municipal District)
- Bundoran (Donegal Municipal District)
- Gaoh Dobhair (Glenties Municipal District)

We also have a huge range of free online resources available 24/7. For further information see [www.donegallibrary.ie](http://www.donegallibrary.ie)



As part of the Healthy Ireland at your Library programme, the Library Service are delighted to announce that Dr Mary O'Kane will be hosting two videos on our Facebook page on Saturday 11th and Saturday 18th July at 11am. Dr O'Kane is a Lecturer in Education and Psychology and is a regular contributor on Ireland AM and on radio on both parenting and education issues. Check out the [online poll](#) on our Facebook page to decide which topics Dr O'Kane will speak about.

The [David Coleman event poll](#) is still running so please give us your feedback on that also.

### **Book of Kells added to Donegal Studies Collection**

Donegal County Library has purchased an exquisite facsimile edition of The Book of Kells. The Book of Kells is thought to have been created by the monastic community established by Saint Colmcille/Columba on the Isle of Iona. The original manuscript was brought to the monastery at Kells, County Meath, to escape the Viking raids on the Iona community in the ninth century. This new addition will form part of our Colmcille 1500 programme.

### **Online book clubs**

Keep an eye out for details of our online book clubs coming soon....

### **Summer Stars Reading Adventure**

The Summer Stars Reading Adventure will run during July and August and is the perfect way to disconnect. However, this doesn't mean abandoning your technology, as there are lots of brilliant audiobooks and e-books that can help you escape through the BorrowBox app. This is free for all members to use from anywhere, anytime.

The library service is eager to connect with our young readers again and there will be heaps of activities, such as:

- Online quizzes
- Prizes
- Story competition
- Online story-times

Keep an eye on our [Facebook page](#) over the coming weeks, as there will be lots to keep you entertained all summer!



This year's Wainfest will run from the 3rd-11th of October. Check out [www.wainfest.ie](http://www.wainfest.ie) for further information.

### **New Sensory Services in Donegal Libraries**

Donegal County Library is developing sensory services in many of our libraries. The aim is to improve the library experience and services for parents and carers of children and adults with sensory impairments and learning differences. For more information please contact Ciara Cunnane at [ccunnane@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:ccunnane@donegalcoco.ie)



*New sensory wall at Buncrana Community Library.  
Photo Credit: Donegal County Library*



## RCC Kids Programme Launch Free eBook 'Recipes For Disasters'

What can I make when I have nothing in the cupboard and there's a pandemic outside? 'Storecupboard cooking' has risen in popularity in some parts of the world and involves making recipes that include those ingredients that have a habit of living unloved at the back of the cupboard.

We asked families and young people living in Donegal to test out their Lockdown Recipes and share the best ones with us. So get out those measuring cups and dust off those scales, and try our *Recipes for Disasters*. The eBook contains 12 recipes submitted by children from throughout Donegal. Visit [regionalculturalcentre.com](http://regionalculturalcentre.com) to download your free copy.



## The Joe McGarrigle Collection.

The RCC will showcase daily elements of this newly digitised collection from June 15 through to June 28 with the intention of curating a physical exhibition in 2021.

Born in 1916, Joe McGarrigle worked as a clerical officer with CIE in Donegal Town. He had his first short story published while still in his teenage years and from that moment became a dedicated freelance journalist, a job he would continue until his untimely passing in 1993.

Joe covered a lot of everyday happenings - Festivals, tragedies, politics, canvassing and all things in between. He was the 'local' face on RTÉ as its North-West correspondent before Tommie Gorman and Eileen Magnier, while he was also the Donegal Town note-taker for all the local newspapers.



## Sarah E. Cullen joins the RCC as one of its June 2020 Virtual Artists-in-Residence

Having already created soundscapes for BBC productions, cut many tracks as a session musician and multi-instrumentalist, and provided signature atmospheric qualities to other records, this new project represents the Carrigart artist's imagining and re-imaginings of scenes of real life and magic in the everyday, mirrored in *The Reflection Box*. Sarah has released two singles to-date under the moniker of *The Reflection Box* - Bob Dylan's *Buckets Of Rain* and the Crosby, Stills & Nash classic *For What It's Worth* - Favourites re-imagined by the artist.

*The Reflection Box* album, due for release in the next few months, was started at Amberville Studios, Co Antrim, and is currently being finished at Attica Recording Studios in Termon.

"I'm delighted to be asked to take part in the RCC Virtual Artist-in-Residence series as it will provide a welcome motivation to create a song/instrumental every week, and also the chance to reimagine some favourite covers, as well," she said.



Follow the Regional Cultural Centre's social media pages for updates on Sarah E. Cullen's residency and the Joe McGarrigle Collection.

### 32nd Earagail Arts Festival

In response to the Covid pandemic, Earagail Arts Festival is going on-line this year and is pleased to present it's fantastic FREE 18-day digital, Srutháin ('streams') programme from July 9th-26th.

Highlights will include new and commissioned works across spoken word, music, circus and dance with artists and companies such as Breandán de Gallaí's Ériu Dance Company, Belfast's Tumblecircus, Teelin-based guitarist Steve Cooney, Gaith Dobhair's musical family Na Mooneys, The Henry Girls, Falcarragh poet Anne Marie Ní Churreáin, Rann na Feirste singers Maighréad and Triona Ní Dhómhnaill, performer and musician Little John Nee, visual artists Christy Keeney and Ian Gordon, writers Dermot Bolger and Cathal Ó Searcaigh.

The full Srutháin line-up, including broadcast times and dates, will be launched on the festival website [www.eaf.ie](http://www.eaf.ie) on June 29th.



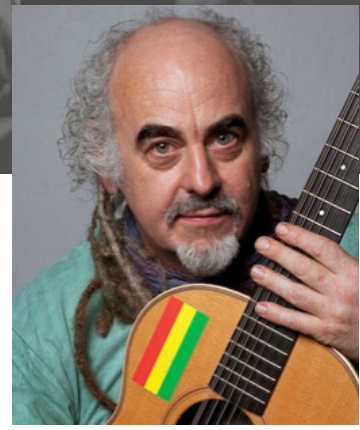
*The Henry Girls in Malin.*

*Photo Credit: Earagail Arts Festival*

### Cathal Ó Searcaigh with Maighréad and Triona Ní Dhómhnaill, at Dámhlann an Ghleanna

Traditionally an annual summer highlight, the literary gatherings, hosted by Cathal Ó Searcaigh at Dámhlann an Ghleanna, Gort a' Choire, has attracted large audiences to enjoy a selection of Ireland's finest writers, singers and musicians over the years. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic however, this summer's evening with Cathal and Maighréad and Triona Ní Dhómhnaill, will instead be pre-recorded and broadcast on the Earagail Arts Festival online platform on Monday evening, July 20th.

*Steve Cooney  
Photo Credit:  
Con Kelleher*



### Culture Night 2020

This year's Culture Night will take place on Friday, September 18. It is envisaged that the evening, which will include a mix of pre-recorded, online and socially distanced live events, will be a tentative but significant, collective national step in the return of audiences to live cultural events, post COVID-19 lockdown.

While the programme is being devised in the context of an evolving COVID-19 regulatory environment, it is not envisaged that Culture Night 2020 will involve the high concentration of events typical of previous years. Rather it will see a smaller number of curated events, in different locations around the county, over a longer period of time, many of which may be enjoyed online for a period, post Culture Night.

Donegal County Council's Culture Division will again be to the fore in the co-ordination of the programme which will feature input from Donegal County Library, Donegal County Museum, the Regional Cultural Centre and An Grianán Theatre as well as the Council's Heritage, Archives and Arts Services. For information, please keep in touch via the Culture Night facebook page.

*Anne Marie Ní Churreáin  
reading at Letterkenny  
Courthouse for Culture  
Night 2019.*

*Photo Credit: Paul  
McGuckin*



*Rann na Feirste  
singers Maighréad  
and Triona Ní  
Dhómhnaill*



Photo Credit: Collette Beattie

## Church Lane Historic Towns Initiative

With the resumption of work in the construction sector since mid-May, conservation works under the Historic Towns Initiative on Church Lane, Letterkenny are nearing completion. The initiative saw cooperation between, and investment by Donegal County Council (Heritage Office and Conservation Office), the Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter Committee, Dedalus Architecture, The Heritage Council and local property owners and residents. The initiative supported conservation works to seven historic properties including roof and chimney repairs, installation of cast-iron rainwater goods, reinstatement of timber sash windows and doors, application of lime render or lime pointing, and the repair of a historic shopfront. The painting of the facades of the historic properties was the last work to take place so the next time you're in Letterkenny, take some time to view the work undertaken under this award-winning project and keep up-to-date with progress through the [Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter facebook page](#).

## Thatch Repair Grant Scheme

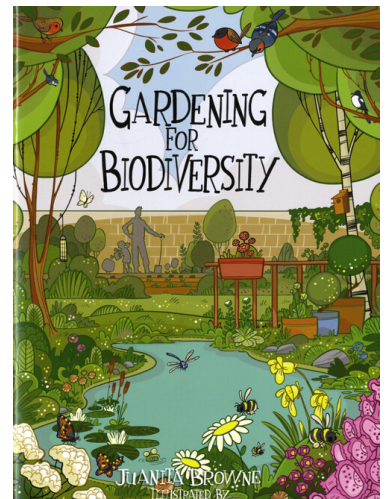
There has been a tremendous response to the Thatch Repair Grant Scheme with 44 applications from across the county. The aims of the grant scheme are to provide specialist advice to owners on the conservation of their thatched structures and to allocate funding for small-scale thatch repairs. Offers of funding for residential properties, rented dwellings, outbuildings and businesses have now been made under the scheme. The scheme provides much-needed support to thatch homeowners and valuable employment for local thatchers in these challenging times.

## 'Gardening for Biodiversity' Booklet

There has been an extraordinary response to the 'Gardening for Biodiversity' 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.

Over 600 requests have been received into the County Donegal Heritage Office in the past month alone. Order your free copy at (074) 917 2576 or by e-mail at [heritage@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:heritage@donegalcoco.ie) before they're gone!

[Biodiversity Booklet](#)



**NATIONAL  
HERITAGE  
WEEK 2020  
15-23 AUG**



## National Heritage Week

National Heritage Week will take place from Saturday, August 15, to Sunday, August 23, but not as we know it! Instead of organising events, The Heritage Council is inviting people to undertake projects that will culminate during Heritage Week and projects that are associated with this year's theme of 'Heritage & Education: Learning from our Heritage'. Further details are available on the Heritage Week website at [www.heritageweek.ie](http://www.heritageweek.ie)



Photo Credit: Donegal County Museum

## History in the Making - Collecting Donegal's COVID-19 experiences

The Culture Division has launched the *History in the Making* project. Normally history is associated with events which have happened in the past but we are making and living history right now. Help us document life in Donegal during the pandemic and add our County's story to this global historic event.

Are you working from home? Are you homeschooling, caring for elderly parents or neighbours, working as an essential worker or not working at all due to layoffs and closures? Have you taken up baking or have you a toilet roll stash? Have you or any members of your family contracted COVID-19?

We are asking people to submit letters, diaries, drawings, photographs, video diaries or any format of material. We are also interested in collecting objects that relate to COVID-19 including PPE (once it is not needed).

All the material submitted will be used to help us build a collection telling the story of Donegal's experience of the pandemic.

To find out more check out our [Facebook page](#)

Right: Killgordon Railway Station.  
Photo Credit: Donegal County Museum

## Looking forward

The Museum is looking forward to re-opening to the public in the coming weeks

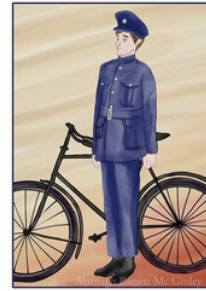
We will have a new exhibition highlighting the story of the railways in Donegal and we will be beginning work on our exhibition to explore the impact of the War of Independence, Civil War and Partition on the communities of Donegal.

If you have any family stories or photographs associated with this period which you would like to share, please contact the Museum at [museum@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:museum@donegalcoco.ie)

We look forward to welcoming everyone back.

Right: *Cumann na mBan* members May Burke, Eithne Ní Chumhaill (Eithne Coyle, Co. Donegal) and Linda Kearns in Duckett's Grove, Carlow, 1921  
Photo Credit: Donegal County Museum





What can you find out about the first members of An Garda Síochána?



History challenge relating to the first members of An Garda Síochána, posted on [Facebook - Echoes of the Decade Page](#)

## Echoes of the Decade on Facebook

A joint Archives and County Museum Peace IV project, under “Building Positive Relations” strand, has been underway since January 2020. It includes engagement with young people on the broad theme of the history and legacy of Ireland’s revolutionary years, 1912 – 1923. The entire project has had to go online following the closure of schools on 12th March and the lockdown that has followed.

Alarnagh Barrett McGinley, the project coordinator, has been designing and rolling out digital resources for teachers and students. She has also set up the public Facebook Group page entitled: Echoes of the Decade, part of [Donegal County Archives Facebook page](#).

Members of the public, adults and children from the county and the wider Diaspora are invited to get involved in the regular history challenges put up on this Facebook page. One challenge is for a young person to phone a grandparent or older relative and interview them on the history of their locality or the legacy of the Decade of Centenaries, including the civil war and partition. Another challenge asks people to search their attic or bring out the oldest photo albums and find photographs of people, events or places from as far back in the 20th century as possible. Participants can also use online sources to try to discover if their ancestors joined the newly established Garda Síochána or were involved in the War of Independence. The wide range of challenges are very popular. Stories, essays and photos have been uploaded relating to the political and social history of townlands, villages and people in Donegal. Everyone is welcome to join.

## Culture Division Genealogy

As custodians of the collective memory of the county, family history resources are a very important service provided by Culture Division. Library, Museum, and Archives have published a new guide to the sources for genealogy in their individual services. Entitled *Your Donegal Family/Do Theaghlach Conallach*, the illustrated booklet in Irish and English details the archives, objects, books, journals and newspapers normally available to view onsite at the libraries – particularly Donegal Studies section, Central Library; in the County Museum in Letterkenny; and at the County Archives in Lifford. The booklet also provides a guide to external resources, online sources and other organisations that may assist in tracing ancestors. It lists freely available online resources which are particularly useful for people who wish to research their family tree while physical facilities remain closed. Tips are given to beginners on how to commence research. The booklet will be launched and made accessible online in June 2020.

Electoral Register extract from 1914

Photo Credit: Donegal County Archives

COUNTY OF DONEGAL.										
POLLING DISTRICT OF NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM.										
COPY OF REGISTER, so far as relates to the Polling District of NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM, consisting of the following Townlands of Towns entitled to Vote as such, and Resident in a Member of Parliament for the COUNTY OF DONEGAL, from the First day of January, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy Seven.										
Electors.	Parish of Antrim.	Parish of Donegal.	Parish of Londonderry.	Parish of Tyrone.	Parish of Fermanagh.	Parish of Down.	Parish of Wick.	Parish of Monaghan.	Parish of Louth.	Parish of Cavan.
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