

CULTURE DIVISION

Interactive
Newsletter



Colmille 1500 Commemorations

St. Colmille, also known as St. Columba, is one of Ireland's patron saints, a distinction that he shares with St. Patrick and St. Bridget. St. Colmille was born in Gartan, County Donegal on December 7, 521 A.D. or 520 A.D. There are many sites associated with his life and many more that are dedicated to him. In 545 A.D., St. Colmille founded his first monastery in Derry / Doire Cholm Cille. St. Colmille and twelve monks sailed from Derry to the island of Iona in Scotland in 563 A.D. He died on Iona on June 9, 597 A.D. and his feast day is commemorated on that date every year.



St. Colmille's Chapel in Gartan is an archaeological monument protected under the National Monuments Acts and will undergo conservation works in 2021.

Donegal County Council and Derry City & Strabane District Council have projects and events planned to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of the birth of St. Colmille between December 7, 2020 and December 7, 2021.

The programme has been developed based on extensive consultation undertaken for the [Audit of Columban Cultural Heritage](#) by Abarta Heritage and commissioned by Donegal County Council, Derry City & Strabane District Council, Foras na Gaeilge and The Heritage Council as part of the implementation of the County Donegal Heritage Plan.

The programme includes:

- Appointment of Colmille 1500 Project Manager to coordinate the Colmille 1500 commemorations with support from the North West Development Fund.
- Conservation works to selected Columban archaeological and built heritage sites including St. Colmille's Chapel, Gartan and Kilmacrennan Abbey.
- Launch of a free downloadable Colmille audio heritage guide of Columban heritage sites in County Donegal and the publication of a Colmille colouring book commissioned under the County Donegal Heritage Plan.
- Public Art commission on the N56 between Letterkenny and Kilmacrennan.
- Academic conference at the Magee College campus of Ulster University.

TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

Archives	p3
Arts	p3
Heritage	p4
Libraries	p4
Museum	p5
RCC	p5



Left: St. Colmcille's Holy Well, Bíofán, Gleann Cholm Cille -one of the stops along Turas Cholm Cille observed between June 9 (St. Colmcille's Feast Day) and August 15 each year.
Photo: Abarta Heritage

- Major cross-border exhibition and accompanying events programme exploring a variety of themes associated with the saint, his life and legacy in the Tower Museum, Derry (April - September 2021) and Donegal County Museum (September 2021 - February 2022).
- Colmcille Digital Schools' Folklore Project coordinated by the Donegal Library Service and Libraries NI in association with The Nerve Centre. Children from five primary schools in Donegal and five primary schools in Derry will gather folklore about Colmcille on a cross-generational basis. A selection of the stories will be recorded and transformed into an animated story on the life and lore of Colmcille that will culminate in a showcase event in April 2021.
- Production of an educational resource pack for primary schools on the life and legacy of Colmcille commissioned by the Donegal County Archives. The pack (consisting of an illustrated information booklet and worksheets) will be available in both English and Irish and will be distributed to schools in early 2021.
- Cross-border production by An Grianan Theatre of Brian Friel's play 'The Enemy Within'. Set on the island of Iona in the autumn of 587 A.D., the play examines a period in the life of St. Colmcille as a man having worked in his ministry for many years and settled in his monastery in Iona, is still subject to the demands of his turbulent family clan in Donegal. The production directed by Caitríona McLaughlin will run for one week in Letterkenny before undertaking a three-week tour of Dublin, Belfast, Sligo, Longford and Derry City in May - June 2021.



Abbey Theatre Associate Director,
Caitríona McLaughlin.

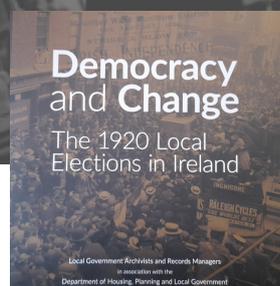


Composer Vincent Kennedy conducting the Donegal Youth Orchestra. Photo: John Soffe

- Composition and arrangement of a Colmcille-related suite of musical works for orchestra and voices by Donegal Youth Orchestra conductor and composer Vincent Kennedy in partnership with Donegal Music Education Partnership. The premier performance of the newly-commissioned work will take place in the latter half of 2021.

- Production of a select bibliography of titles relating to Colmcille available in the Library Service's Donegal Studies Collection.
- Display of facsimile copy of the Book of Kells in the Central Library, Letterkenny.
- Selected on-line and live cultural events that comply with on-going COVID-19 restrictions.

Further information on the Colmcille 1500 commemoration programme will be made available through www.donegalcoco.ie



Right: Front cover, *Democracy & Change: The 1920 Local Elections*. Photo: Donegal County Archives

As the Archives Service has been unable to travel to history groups or schools for most of this year to promote the County Archives' services and collections, the Service has produced a number of free online presentations on archival collections and historical themes. They are available to view on the County Council YouTube channel at these links:

- [Family History in Donegal County Archives](#)
- [From the Cradle to the Grave: Fanad Health Club](#)
- [Relief of the Destitute Poor: Glenties Workhouse](#)

For young people:

- [Donegal and the First Dáil](#)
- [Life in Donegal 100 Years Ago](#)

Democracy & Change: The 1920 Local Elections

Local Archives Services, including Donegal County Archives, have collaborated with the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage to produce a commemorative booklet on the historic 1920 local elections held across Ireland. The booklet is entitled *Democracy & Change: The 1920 Local Elections/ Daonlathas & Athrú: Toghcháin Áitiúla 1920 in Éirinn*. It explores themes such as the advent of proportional representation; historic election results; the War of Independence; the important role of women; some of the famous people who were elected. Many of the images are from Donegal County Archives and it is available to view [here](#).



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ARTS

An Grianán Theatre's New Work Bursaries – Let's Make Some Noise!

An Grianán Theatre recently announced the five recipients of its new bursaries initiative, Let's Make Some Noise! Each artist will receive a bursary of up to €4,000 to develop their proposals, as well as additional production and resource support from An Grianán Theatre. The five recipients are Brenda Kelly, Éiru Dance Company, Lorcan Strain, Mirinda Rosenberg and Orson Sterritt.

Brenda Kelly will develop her musical play, ODD, into a full-length show, with new music by Fionn Robinson. Éiru Dance Company's 'The Village' will be a play with music and dance created by Artistic Director, Breandán de Gallaí. Lorcan Strain will develop a theatre piece on the theme of growing up gay in a rural community. Singer-songwriter Mirinda Rosenberg will further develop her one-woman-show, a short version of which debuted online at this year's Donegal Bay and Bluestacks Festival.



Left: Musicians, Conor and Michael Murray - co-curators of the popular online Falcarragh Winter Jazz Series.

Falcarragh Online Winter Jazz Series

Musicians Conor and Michael Murray are the co-curators of the Falcarragh Winter Jazz Series, the re-profiled, online version of the Falcarragh Winter Jazz Festival. Assisted by Donegal County Council Arts Service, the series takes the form of a series of filmed, live concert performances, featuring the Murray Brothers and guests including drummer David Lyttle, singer Christine Tobin and guitarists Jack Kelly and Phil Robson. The concerts are broadcast from 8.00pm each Wednesday night throughout November and December on the [Shamrock Lodge Facebook page](#).

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HERITAGE

4

Ramelton Historic Towns Initiative

Conservation works to 14 historic properties along Castle Street, Back Lane, Bridge Street and at the Market Cross in Ramelton are progressing well. Under the July Jobs Stimulus Package, Donegal County Council secured an additional €90,000 from The Heritage Council to supplement the €200,000 already secured to support the conservation works. The project is co-managed by the Heritage Officer and Conservation Officer in partnership with the Ramelton Georgian Society, Dedalus Architecture and local property owners.

National Heritage Awards

Congratulations to Rathmullan & District Local History Society, Johnny Shiels, Disert Heritage Group and Donegal GAP Heritage & History Group for their successes at the National Heritage Awards organised by The Heritage Council in October. More information is available [here](#).



Left: Scollop-thatched, direct-entry cottage in Ballindrait

Award Nomination for Thatch Repair Grant Scheme

Donegal County Council's Thatch Repair Grant Scheme has been shortlisted for a Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award in the 'Heritage & Built Environment' category. The award recognises the best local authority initiatives to promote public interest in, and knowledge, appreciation and protection of local heritage. Further information is available [here](#).

The Heritage Council turns 25

The Heritage Council is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. To mark the occasion, a special supplement appeared in 'The Irish Times' newspaper. Find out what you missed [here](#).

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LIBRARIES

New Doorstep Delivery Service

Are you self isolating and have read everything on your bookshelf? If so, Donegal Library Service is here to help. Simply contact the Covid 19 Community Response line on 1800 928 982 or email covidsupport@donegalcoco.ie. You will be referred to the library, where a staff member will have a chat about what you would like to read, listen to or watch. Please have your Eircode available for the call. Library staff will endeavour to find suitable items and possibly a wild card too! The selection of books and other items is then delivered to your door. If you need a top up selection you simply ring the Community Response line again and the Library Service will organise additional material for delivery. All items are on long loan, there are no overdue charges and access to the service is **free**.

Not a member of the library? No problem. This service is for anyone who is in self isolation, whether you are a library member or not. You can join over the phone and your new library card will be included with your first delivery!



Our Elf on the 'Library' Shelf.
Photo: Donegal County Library Service

Family Time at your Library

Keep an eye out on our [website](#) and social media channels for our online *Family Time at your Library* programme this December. Lots of Christmas stories and shenanigans are promised.



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Cinecommunities.org

As part of the CINE project, cinecommunities.org has been developed. This website provides a series of 'getting started', guides for a range of digital tools which will enable communities to create and present engaging heritage content for indoor, outdoor and remote experiences. As part of the CINE project, the Museum and its partners worked with local communities to create virtual exhibitions as case studies in digital heritage. These include inchheritage.org and virtualstcatherines.net which showcase what is possible using the digital tools and platforms presented on cinecommunities.org.



Left: Booklet
"From Conflict to
Division:
Donegal 1919-
1925"

Booklet:

"From Conflict to Division: Donegal 1919-1925"

Donegal County Museum has written and produced a booklet on the theme of the Decade of Centenaries entitled "From Conflict to Division: Donegal 1919-1925". The booklet explores the impact of the War of Independence, Partition, and the Civil War, on people and communities in County Donegal. The booklet aims to promote a wider understanding of the events of this period.



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www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/countymuseum

REGIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE

PLAY@Home - December 2020

A do-it-yourself Christmas show guided by Lyngo Theatre's fun instructional videos!

We've developed a show that you can actually do at home, not just watch! By following our fun instructional videos in the weeks leading up to Christmas, you'll make props and table-top sets from recycled materials and household objects, invent your own sensory sessions and take a creative-play journey together as a family through a garden of delights.

We'll provide music, songs and narration so you can tell the story of how Winter got its colours, creating your own Christmas tree (with some very special decorations). At the end of this you'll have made, played and stayed together which, after all, is the true meaning of Christmas!

Click [here](#) for more information.



RCC Winter Concerts

November 2020 – January 2021

The RCC will present a winter series of online concert with an eclectic range of top Donegal and Derry acts such as Clann Mhic Ruairí, Blackbird and Crow, PORTS, People Who Listen to the Sky, In Their Thousands, DJ Dano, and many more surprises.

Follow www.regionalculturalcentre.com for more information.



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