



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Cavan County Museum
Guidebook

Opening Times

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,
Friday & Saturday 10am - 5pm

Admission

Adults	€6
Seniors	€4
Children	€4
Family Ticket	€14

Groups

To make a group booking contact the museum by phone or by email.

Refreshments can be arranged for groups at an additional cost. Group leaders go free.

Contact us

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Introduction

Cavan County Museum is housed in a Georgian period building which was designed in the early 1880's by the well-known architect, William Hague, from Cavan. Hague is known for designing churches and civic buildings in Ireland. Two notable projects of his are St Patrick's College in Cavan Town and the tower and spire at Maynooth College, Co. Kildare.



The Poor Clare Nuns were invited by Bishop Conaty of Kilmore to provide education to the local children, and they arrived in Ballyjamesduff in 1872. Their first convent was on Dublin Street. However, the building you now stand in soon became too small for their needs and in 1883, this building was built as a convent and a school.

For many years, the nuns ran a primary school here and a Commercial School for girls. A secondary school opened here in the 1960's. It moved to a new location in 1983, as the demand was so great for education. In 2008, a new primary school was built beside the secondary school. Both schools still carry the name of St Clare's, as a link to their beginnings in this building.

With the intention of preserving, protecting, displaying and promoting the heritage of County Cavan, this beautiful building was bought by Cavan County Council for the purpose of turning it into a County Museum. Cavan County Museum opened its doors to the public in 1996.

GROUND FLOOR

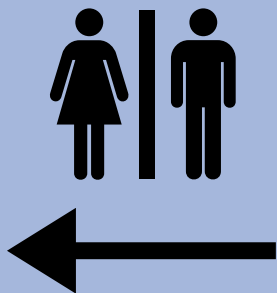


Main Hall

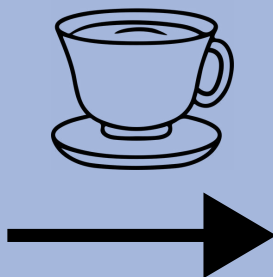
As you stand in the main entrance hall at the start of your visit, the original wooden staircase leads visitors upstairs. Underfoot are the original cream, orange and black floor tiles. Many feet have come up the steps, entered this building and crossed these tiles. The scene for your visit is set.

On the wall to the left of the stairs, you will see a collection of photographs of Cavan from the early 20th Century hanging on the wall. The door straight ahead gives access to the museum garden.

Access to the Boat Room and the bathrooms is down the corridor to your left.



Access to the Gaelic Games Galleries and the museum tearooms is down the corridor to your right.



The Boat Room

Now known as the Boat Room because of the long 1000-year-old log boat housed here, this room is the former chapel.

The Boat Room houses the largest artefacts and archaeological pieces contained in the museum.

The items displayed in the Boat Room highlight different traditions within our county, province and nation.

Banners

On the wall to the left as you enter the Boat Room are two early 20th century banners connected to County Cavan. The Orange Lodge banner (Belturbet Temperance L.O.L. 348) is believed to have come from the Ballymena Christian Crusaders Orange Lodge. It wasn't unusual for lodges to loan or give Banners to other lodges. The green A.O.H. banner (Ancient Order of Hibernians Div 682) belonged to the Knockbride Branch.

Mná na Eireann 1916 – 2016 banner

This banner displayed over the traditional wooden settle bed, was made by the Erne Quilters as part of 1916 centenary. The Erne Quilters meet regularly in the museum to work on their projects together.

This banner features three panels with hand-stitched symbols representing important aspects of the lives of three significant female figures from the early 20th century:

- 1) Agnes O Farrelly, 1874 – 1951 from Mullagh, Co. Cavan.
- 2) Elizabeth O'Farrel, 1883 – 1957, from Dublin City.
- 3) Countess Markievich, 1868 – 1927 from Co. Mayo.

Lough Errill Log Boat

This boat was found in sediment on the shore of Lough Errill on the Cavan/Leitrim border. It is over a thousand years old. 25 feet in length, the boat is made from oak. It was possibly used for transporting animals and people across the lakes and waterways in the area.

Bog Trackway Sleeper

This trackway sleeper was found during land clearance near Virginia. Trackways would have been used to cross bogs and marshy areas.

Made by laying down smaller branches as a base for the trackway, with sleepers like this one on display, on top. They were laid down, side by side and dowelled with wooden pegs to stabilize them.

Ballinvally Cist Burial

In 1935, this Bronze Age cist burial was dug up as part of a rescue excavation at Ballinvally, Co. Meath by Dr. Joseph Raftery of the National Museum. Ballinvally is located at the foot of Sliabh na gCailligh, near Loughcrew, Oldcastle. This location is only a few miles from the Museum.

A pottery bowl, known as a Food Vessel, was found in the burial beside partially cremated bones. These bones are roughly 4000 years old.

It is thought that the capstone removed from the cist burial - seen on the ledge to the right of the display - was a reused stone that would have had a different function prior to functioning as a capstone for the burial.

Note the four sets of concentric circles (spirals) visible on the capstone. These spirals would have been on the underside of the capstone, just over the burial – possibly for the benefit of the individual buried in the cist grave rather than those outside it.

The Killycluggin Stone

The Killycluggin Stone is one of the most famous pagan Celtic Iron Age symbols in Ireland. It is dated to the Iron Age by the La Tene style art engraved on it. Therefore, it is 2000 years old.

This stone is one of only four examples found in Ireland. The other stones are found at Turoe, Co. Galway, Castlestrange, Co. Roscommon and Derrykeighan, Co. Antrim.

The stone was identified in the early 20th century in Killycluggin Townland, near Templeport in County Cavan.



In 1974, a rescue excavation was completed by Professor Barry Raftery, of University College Dublin, to remove the stones to the National Museum in Dublin.

Two flint scrapers and a flint waste flake dated to the Bronze Age were found during the excavation, and they are displayed in our archaeology gallery upstairs.

Unfortunately, the stone was damaged in antiquity and can be seen displayed here on two different plinths. The stone may have been subjected to damage when clearing the stone for agricultural purposes. The myth associated with it, is that St. Patrick broke the stone, as it was a Pagan Idol. The smaller pieces on the plinth to the right are dowelled together and they belong on top of the larger piece, on the plinth to the left.

The Killycluggin Stone is displayed in our gallery next to the Ballinvalley Cist Burial. Notable is the fact that Prof. Barry Raftery, who excavated the Killycluggin Stone in 1974, was the son of Dr. Joseph Raftery, who carried out the excavation of the cist burial 39 years earlier in 1935.

The Lipton Cup

Also known as the Peace Cup, the Lipton Cup is believed to be the oldest soccer cup in the Republic of Ireland. It was originally commissioned by Sir Thomas Lipton, of Lipton's Tea fame.

It was competed for just once in the 1913/1914 season - just before World War 1. At that time, it was won by the Enniskillen Corinthians. During the war, it was hidden for safe keeping.

Gaelic Games Galleries

Camogie Gallery

On exhibit in this gallery is a collection of images and artefacts from around the County relating to the sport of Camogie. An Cumann Camogaiochta (The Camogie Association) was originally formed in 1905 and the First All-Ireland Camogie Championship was played in 1932.

Our Camogie gallery houses, amongst other things – photos, cups, medals, camans and sliotars, pinafores and match programmes. Two unusual matching ceramic trophies from Alacken Camogie Club, who were County Champions in 1923 and the Cavan County Camogie Board Minute Book from 1932 – 1945, are among the interesting artefacts on display.

It is a regular occurrence for a visitor to find a family member or friend in one of the many team photos featuring different parishes that played camogie in Cavan over the decades – the photos span the period from 1930's to 2010's.

Have a look at the photos - you might see someone you know!

Gaelic Football & Hurling Gallery (Room 1)

This gallery displays a collection of images and artefacts relating to the origins of football and hurling in County Cavan.

Cavan's Men Senior Football teams have won All-Irelands in the years, 1933, 1935, 1947, 1948 & 1952.

In 1947 they made history as the only team ever to lift the Sam Maguire Cup outside of Ireland.

The year 1947 saw the only occasion where an All-Ireland Football Final took place outside of Ireland. It was played in New York to commemorate the centenary of the Irish Famine in 1847. A model of the Polo Grounds in New York where it was played is on display here.

Also on display are many photographs, a referee's whistle, football boots, sliotars, match programmes and a range of medals from notable Cavan footballers:

Victor Sherlock; Val Gannon; Patrick McNamee; Patsy Lynch and Frank McAuley

Football Gallery (Room 2)

P.J. Duke from Stradone played in the 1947 Football Final. On display are some of P.J.'s boots, trophies, and jerseys. We also have his passport, luggage ticket, Cunard White Star baggage ticket and banquet menus from the 1947, 1948 and 1949 celebrations.

Tragically Duke died just a few years later, 1 May 1950 after a short illness at St Vincent's Hospital in Dublin.

He was just 25 years old

There is an audio-visual showing footage of the 1947 final and various photographs.



FIRST FLOOR



First Floor

As you climb up the stairs to the first floor, you will see some small displays on the wall linked to people from County Cavan.

The Titanic and Cavan

Among the Irish that sailed on the doomed maiden voyage of the Titanic were several people from Cavan. Some such as Kate Connolly from Ballynarry and Thomas Henry Conlon originally from Arva perished in the sinking. Mary McGovern of Corlough and Julia Smyth, Kilcogy both survived and returned to Ireland.

The framed Titanic Tile and Painting of the R.M.S. Titanic was presented to the Museum by Mr. John Cross, White Star Line International Ltd, Portsmouth, England in 2004.

Newspaper Clipping and Map

At the top of the stairs, on the wall, is a newspaper clipping and a map dating to 1818, which was found hidden in a wall in a house in Belturbet during renovations.

To the **left** on the First Floor you will find the following galleries:

- **World War I Gallery**
- **Archaeology Gallery**
- **Medieval Gallery**



To the **right** on the First Floor you will find the following galleries:

- **Phyllis Faris – The Pighouse Collection Gallery**
- **Folk Life Gallery**
- **Cavan Railways Exhibition**
- **The Great Famine Gallery**
- **Farnham Gallery**



Phyllis Faris – The Pighouse Collection

Born in Killiney, Co. Dublin in 1910, Phyllis Faris had a great interest in history. At the age of eighteen, she came to Killeshandra, Co. Cavan to complete an apprenticeship in poultry. She met and married her husband, Jack Faris in 1935. She became a great advocate for the history and heritage of Cavan.

She started her collection in the 1960's – she inherited items from family members and collected items that interested her. As her collection grew, and as there was no County Museum at that time for her to donate her collection to, she housed and displayed the collection in an unused pig house beside her home at Corr House, Cornafean. Hence the name – The Pighouse Collection. But Phyllis always hoped to be able to donate her collection to a County Museum.

She became a member of Cumann Seanchas Bhreifne (Breffni Historical Society). She served in turn, as Chairperson and President of this Society. Phyllis Faris advocated for a County Museum to be set up and when the opportunity arose, she was true to her word that she would donate her collection to a County Museum. When the museum opened its doors in 1996, it already had The Pighouse Collection as part of the county collection.

Here on display are some of the items that Phyllis Farris donated, including dresses, shoes, uniforms, hats and a gramophone.



Folk Life Gallery

This gallery displays a thatched cottage, a farmyard scene and a workshop with a typically corrugated roof. This sets the scene for displaying a range of artefacts which would have been widely used in Ireland from the 1850's to the 1950's - and well beyond in some cases.

The thatched cottage featuring a kitchen and a bedroom represents a well-off house from the late 19th Century and displays many items from everyday life. The hearth was the focal point of the house. The turf fire was always lit, and the kettle was always boiling. In our cottage, there is a wooden stool to sit at the fire and a basket of turf at hand to keep the fire going.

The cottage features a paved floor and whitewashed walls which were typical of the time. Irish cottages would have had a religious picture or two on the wall.

Over the fire is a swinging crane to hang pots, skillets, griddles, forks and spoons. The essential heavy black kettle has pride of place. Two heavy metal irons are also at our hearth.

Above the mantle is a clock and below the clock is a gun, easily accessible in case it was needed in a hurry. Essential candle holders and a paraffin lamp sit on the mantelpiece – this was in the days before electricity was available - a smokers pipe and ceramic ginger jars are also visible.

The kitchen dresser is used to display the willow pattern delph and crockery of the period – platters, bowls and dishes. Various bottles, stoneware jugs, jars and containers are visible around the room.

The essential churn for making butter is in front of the dresser and hanging over the little window to the right with the lace curtain is the very popular and very traditional St. Bridget's cross.

Tools from various trades and crafts are displayed in this gallery. An audio-visual at the galvanised workshop shows a local Cavan cooper, Ned Gavin, at work. The cooper was an essential tradesman who made wooden containers and vessels – the video shows how Ned made a dash churn.

Other tradesmen's tools are displayed here, including the blacksmith's tools, a clog maker's tools and the tools used to make and fix things around the house and farm.

Along the opposite wall is a wide range of farming tools and machines. There is a steam potato boiler for feeding pigs, threshing and winnowing machines, quernstones for grinding the wheat, harvesting tools, ploughs, spades, axes, saws and more.

There is information on turf cutting and how special equipment was put on donkeys to carry home the turf.

In the corner outside the cottage, is an audio-visual unit entitled 'The Oral History in Cavan'. In 2007, Audio recordings of four visitors to Darley Day Care Centre in Cootehill were collected by Cavan County Museum, in order to preserve information and share it with our visitors.

Take a moment to sit down and listen to some of the stories.



The Cavan Railways

At one end of the corridor on the first floor is our Railway Exhibition. This exhibition documents the arrival of the train to County Cavan in the 1850's, up until the closure of the railways in the 1960's. Transportation by train had a huge effect on people's lives – both in domestic life and in the world of trade and commerce.

Have a go at dispensing a train ticket at our ticket office, look at the prices of train tickets from the 1880's or try on a hat or jacket from the period at the coat stand.

Early 19th Century Milestone

This milestone was found in Relagh Beg, Bailieborough in 2003, adjacent to the old carriage road between Bailieborough, Co. Cavan and Kells, Co. Meath. It indicates the distance in Irish miles from Bailieborough to Dublin as '39 by Kells'.

Signpost - Lough Ramor Ferry

The exact date of the establishment of the ferry is not known. However, in the 1821 Census Michael Finn's occupation is listed as 'ferryman of Loughramor'.

The ferry was an important facility for the people of Munterconnaught to be able to cross on the ferry to shop and socialize and for the people of Virginia to use the ferry to go and enjoy the woods on the southern shore of the lake.

The ferry service came to an end in the late 1950's with the advancement in transport. The road to Lough Ramor on the Munterconnaught side is still known locally as the 'Boat Road.'

The Great Famine

The Famine Gallery provides information about one of the most devastating periods in Cavan's history. Also known as An Gorta Mor in Irish – which translates as The Great Hunger. It refers to the potato famine in Ireland between 1845 and 1852. During that time approximately one million people died with a further one million fleeing the country.

As you enter the famine gallery, you immediately come face-to-face with our depiction of a single-roomed mud walled cabin from the period. The representation of the young child in the doorway weak with hunger and an empty bowl beside him is a powerful one.

In stark black and white above the cabin are the numbers:

1841: 243,158

1851: 170,210

These are the numbers taken from the Population Census in County Cavan.



Before the famine, the poor relied on a diet which mainly consisted of milk and potatoes. They worked as tenant farmers in exchange for a small potato plot from their landlord. They depended on a successful potato crop, as they had little money to buy any other types of food.

In 1845, a new disease swept through Ireland. It affected the potato crop and was called 'potato blight'. Plants and stored tubers rapidly decayed, leaving tenant farmers without a food source or a supply of seed potatoes to plant the following season. The potato blight wreaked havoc for three years in a row and caused widespread starvation among the poor.

Eviction

Tenant Farmers and their families lived in small cabins. These were often erected in a single day by friends and neighbours for newly married couples. Cabins generally consisted of one room with a fireplace and possibly a chimney. They were usually thatched but lacked windows and sanitation. Many had natural earth floors. Often the inhabitants shared their cabins with their animals.

During the famine, evictions were common, often leading to the demolition of cabins as part of a land clearance programme. Between 1845 and 1853, landlords in Ireland evicted 87,123 families because they could not afford to pay their rents. The ballad 'By Lough Sheelin Side' records the eviction of 700 poor by a single landlord in Mountnugent, County Cavan in 1848.

Some landlords reduced their rents or delayed collections to help their poorest tenant farmers. Others, such as Theophilus Lucas-Clements, a landlord in the barony of Tullygarvey, County Cavan formed public works schemes and local relief committees with the region's nobles and clergy to support the poor. Funds raised were often not enough to prevent large-scale deaths.

In some cases, landlords whose tenants were unable to pay their rents went bankrupt and had to sell their lands, which led to evictions and land clearance in order to enhance the property for potential buyers.

Although not all landlords evicted their tenants, poor families who were homeless were left with little option but to enter the workhouse.

The Workhouse

The room to the right of the mud walled cabin, displays information about Workhouses in Ireland. Many were forced to enter into workhouses during the mid nineteenth century, especially during the Famine times.

To enter this room, you walk through our representation of a workhouse gate. This re-enacts the moment a person gave up their freedom in return for the promise of food and lodgings in their time of need. This was the fate of many during the nineteenth century and especially during the Famine.

The placing of the large Famine Pot in the corner of the room to the right is a simple but stark visual reminder of life in the Workhouse. This is the cooking utensil, from Bailieborough Workhouse which was used to make the gruel that was served in the workhouse. It is hard to contemplate the number of starving people this pot has catered for.

The Famine Pot on display was purchased in 1921 by Mr. Joe Sheridan, a blacksmith from Bailieborough, at the closing-down sale of the town's workhouse.



Emigration during Famine times

Entering the room to the left of the mud walled cabin, the visitor is presented with detailed information on Irish emigration during the Famine which at that time was mainly to America.

Over one million people escaped the famine in Ireland through emigration. Some went south to Australia or emigrated to Canada, but the destination for the vast majority was America.

The population of the province of Ulster dropped to 16% during the famine. County Cavan was the worst affected in the province, losing 43% of its population to emigration and death.

Coffin Ships

The 3,000 mile voyage across the Atlantic Ocean took up to three months depending on weather conditions. Many passengers travelled in ships crammed to double their capacity. Of the people who sailed to North America in 1847, an estimated one in five died from malnutrition or disease during the journey. As a result, these vessels came to be known as 'coffin ships'.

Model Famine Ship

The Model Famine Ship on display in this room was commissioned by Cavan County Museum and built by craftsman Werner Geyer. Geyer has built a variety of model ships for display in museums and public spaces across Ireland, including the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, the Carrickfergus Museum and Civic Centre and the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum.

It took five months, approximately 446 hours and over 3,000 individual pieces to recreate this model of a famine ship.

See the step-by-step photographic display on the wall beside the ship showing the progress of the making of the model.

The Farnham Gallery

The first members of the Maxwell family settled in Ireland at the end of the 16th century. Farnham house was built in the 1700's. They were one of the wealthiest families in Cavan, owning thousands of acres of land throughout the county.

On display in The Farnham Gallery are many items which they have donated to the Museum including a selection of Farnham papers, photographs and artefacts.

Artefacts include Masonic medals and Masonic apron, Inventory and Valuation Survey Books of Farnham Estate, a white marble bust of Henry Maxwell, 7th Baron Farnham, Military medals of Arthur Kenlis, 11th Baron Farnham and Barry Owen Somerset Maxell who was killed at El Alemain in 1942.

On display is the ceremonial robe made for Arthur Kenlis Maxwell, 11th Barron Farnham, to wear at the coronation of King George V in 1911. Photographs of Arthur and his wife Aileen in their robes are on the wall beside the display case.

The Maxwell Family: the Barons Farnham

The family was politically active and served as Members of Parliament for County Cavan and other counties, while others were clergymen.



Eldest son John Maxwell succeeded his father Bishop Maxwell, as owner of the Farnham estate in 1672. In 1689 he was charged with high treason and his name was included within the secret list of King James II. John Maxwell died without issue in 1713 and his nephew Rev Robert Maxwell DD, of Fellows Hall, County Armagh succeeded to the Cavan estate. Rev Robert Maxwell DD died without issue and his cousin, John Maxwell of College Hall, County Armagh, son of his uncle Henry, inherited the estate.

In 1777, noted agricultural scientist and topographer Arthur Young said of Farnham Estate:

“...upon the whole Farnham is one of the finest places that I have ever seen in Ireland; the water wood and hill are all in great stile and abound in a variety of capabilities. The woodland plantations of Derrygid coupled with the lakes of Farnham and Derrygid were noted by Young who described them as being ‘uncommonly beautiful; extensive and have a shore extremely varied.’ In the 1770’s, approximately 100 labourers were employed in maintaining the landscape at Farnham.”



Barry Owen Somerset Maxwell, 12th Baron Farnham, was born in July 1931 and at the age of 26 succeeded his grandfather as Baron Farnham. He was a high-ranking freemason and held office in the United Grand Lodge of England as Senior Grand Warden 1977–78, Assistant Grand Master 1982–89, Deputy Grand Master 1989–91, and Pro Grand Master 1991–2001.

His wife, Diana, was a Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Elizabeth II from 1987 until her passing in 2021. Their photograph is on display at the entrance to the gallery.

Lady Farnham rode alongside the Queen on the way to the Diamond Jubilee service on 5 June 2012 in the absence through illness of the Duke of Edinburgh. She also accompanied the Queen on her historic visit to Ireland in 2012.



World War 1 Gallery

County Cavan and the First World War

It is estimated that 210,000 Irish men served with the British army and navy over the course of the First World War. Of these, 49,000 were killed. To date 752 of the war dead who were recruited or came from the county are listed on the Cavan Roll of Honour produced by Cavan County Museum in 2018.

These men came from all social backgrounds and from both unionist and nationalist traditions. Looking back through the lens of later events, it can sometimes seem confusing that this would be the case. However, in 1914 for a supporter of the Union, or for a supporter of Home Rule, each could clearly see why they would fight in the name of Britain at the time.

There are 6 display cases in the World War I gallery along with storyboards on the walls giving information on the contribution of some Cavan people to the war effort.

James Somers. V.C.

James was from Belturbet, Co. Cavan. He joined the army in 1914, enlisting in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. He quickly rose to the rank of sergeant and fought in the Dardanelles. It was here as a grenade bomb thrower that he displayed the bravery that won him a Victoria Cross.

Oliver Steward Wood Nugent

Oliver was born in 1860 in Aldershot, the son of Major-General St. George Mervyn Nugent of Farren Connell, Mountnugent, County Cavan. Having already seen action in the British Army in the late 1800s, he was recalled to the army and in September 1915 he was promoted to command the 36th (Ulster) Division.



*The Battle of the Somme, The Attack of The Ulster Division,
JP Beadle, original in City Hall, Belfast.*

Over the fireplace is a print of *The Battle of the Somme, The Attack of The Ulster Division*, painted by Artist J. P. Beadle, depicting the 11th Royal Irish Rifles (South Antrim Volunteers) on 1st July 1916. The original painting is in City Hall, Belfast.

The 36th (Ulster) Division were one of the first divisions to go “over the top” on the first day of the Battle of the Somme on July 1st 1916. They fought extremely well that day, advancing miles before being forced back to the German front line.

However they paid a heavy price, with 5000 casualties on that day, which had a terrible effect on communities in Ulster. The Battle of the Somme became one of the most important and devastating experiences for the Ulster Unionist community in the twentieth century.

Cases 2, 3 and 4 all have sections of barbed wire in them. These are from the Battle of the Somme.

The German wire has more barbs on it and is distinguishable from the British pieces which have less barbs. The white coating that is visible on the barbed wire is the result of coming in contact with poisonous gases released during warfare.

Before you leave the World War 1 gallery, look up:

- **Hanging over the two doorways you will see our Sopwith Camel Propellor which is from one of the first types of planes to be developed to take part in warfare and it was used in World War I.**
- **Hanging over Case 5 & 6 there is a World War I stretcher - a previous owner added red paint to it to imitate blood.**



Archaeology Gallery

The oldest artefacts in the Museum are displayed in this gallery. We have artefacts from The Mesolithic Period, The Bronze Age and The Iron Age on display. The haunting music adds to the ambience of the archaeology gallery.

There are flint flakes from the Mesolithic. Many examples of polished stone axes and also potsherds from the Neolithic. Bronze Age items including flat axes, rapiers, Food Vessels. Stone Heads, a bronze figure of a pig and horse trappings from the Iron Age.

The main highlights in this gallery are the Ralaghan Man figure and Corleck Head idol, both are from Cavan (these are exact replica items – the originals are in the National Museum of Ireland).

Fittingly as we are Cavan County Museum, we have some archaeological artefacts from Cavan. There is a Bronze Age Flat Axe which was found in Ballyjamesduff, a hoard of three bronze trumpets from Corracanvy, two flint scrapers and a waste flake which were found during the excavation of the Killycluggin Stone in the 1970's, as well as lots of other prehistoric artefacts on display.



The Mesolithic Period (8000 BCE – 4500 BCE)

The hunter-gatherers of the Mesolithic era lived on a varied diet of seafood, birds, wild boar and hazelnuts. People hunted with spears, arrows and harpoons tipped with small flint blades called microliths, examples of which are on display in this room while supplementing their diet with gathered nuts, fruit and berries. They lived in seasonal shelters, which they constructed by stretching animal skins over simple wooden frames.

The Neolithic Period (4500 BCE – 2500 BCE)

The Neolithic Period in Ireland witnessed the introduction of farming and pottery and the use of more advanced stone implements. This was a long and slow process resulting from trade and overseas contacts with agricultural communities in Continental Europe and Britain.

Agriculture began around 4500 BCE. Sheep, goats, cattle and cereals were imported from southwest continental Europe, and as a result of improved and more plentiful food supplies, the population rose significantly. Wheat and barley were the principal crops cultivated. Pottery made its appearance around the same time as agriculture.

Typical of this ware are wide-mouthed, round-bottomed bowls. Towards the end of the Neolithic period, metallurgy was established in the country, which ushered in the Bronze Age.



The Bronze Age (2500 BCE – 500 BCE)

The Bronze Age properly began once copper was alloyed with tin to produce true bronze artefacts, and this took place in Ireland around 2000 BCE.

Bronze was used for the manufacture of both weapons and tools. Swords, axes, daggers, hatchets, halberds, drinking utensils and horn shaped trumpets, examples of which we have on display here are just some of the items that have been unearthed at Bronze Age sites throughout the country and in Cavan. Irish craftsmen became particularly noted for the horn-shaped trumpet, three of which are on display here, and which are found in many areas throughout Europe.

Ralaghan Man

Found in Ralaghan Bog, at the foot of Taghart Mountain near Shercock, Co. Cavan in 1908. The figure has been dated to between 1096 – 906 BCE, placing its use towards the end of the Bronze Age. It was made from yew, which was considered sacred and believed to have been endowed with regenerative properties.

Taghart Mountain was a hilltop festival site of Lughnasa, a Celtic harvest festival. This site was used as a place of worship by the late Bronze Age people, by the Iron Age Celts and during the medieval period.

This is a replica of the original, now on display in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.



Iron Age (500BCE–400CE)

Iron is a far superior metal to bronze, being stronger and more durable. On the other hand, it required much hotter fires to extract it from its ore, so it took a higher level of skill to use it. It was during this period that Cavan artefacts such as the Corleck Head, (a replica of which can be seen in this room) and the Killycluggin Stone, which is on display in the Boat Room on the ground floor, were created.

The Corleck Head

The three faced Corleck Head is an Iron Age Celtic Pagan artefact dating from about 1st Century BCE. It is one of the most famous and identifiable examples of Celtic pagan art in Ireland.



It was found in the townland of Corleck in the parish of Knockbride in 1855. The three faces are not identical, each has a distinctly different expression. The function of the hole between the lips of one face is not clear.

A hole on the underside of the head would indicate that the head was originally part of another stone or object, possibly a timber post.

The number three was of great significance to the Celts. They believed that magic, mystery and the soul of a person resided in the head, and there are reports that Celtic warriors kept the heads of their vanquished opponents.

This is a replica of the original, now on display in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.

Medieval Gallery

The artefacts in this gallery date from 400CE to c. 1700CE and are associated with every day life in medieval Cavan. There are items linked to clothing and cloth production, such as ring pins, brooches and spindle whorls. We also have beauty items such as beads and a bone comb. Food and drink items such as pot sherds, a goblet, a wooden mether, wooden dishes and bog butter.

The highlights from this gallery are:

Medieval bog butter and wooden vessel. These are in Case 2.

Mether – wooden and four-handled. This is a medieval drinking vessel. If you think it is a very recognizable form that is because it was used in the design of the G.A.A.'s (Gaelic Athletic Association) Liam MacCarthy Cup. The cup is made from silver and is the trophy awarded to the winners of the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship. In Case 2.

Sheela na Gig - mysterious carvings of female genitalia, are found all over Europe but many examples are found in Ireland. On display are two examples from Cavan. In case 1.

Some think they were used to ward off evil. They date to the period between the 12th and early 17th centuries.

Penannular brooch
(pictured right) dated to the 7th Century CE from Shantermon, Cavan. In Case 3.



Life in Medieval Cavan

Cavan in the early medieval period was an area of competing regional powers, as the rulers of Connacht, Ulster and Meath sought to achieve control. There was no single ruler of Cavan but instead a vast number of small lordships or tuatha.

In the late eighth and early ninth centuries a new wave of settlers arrived from Leitrim and north Connacht - the Gailenga and Luighne tribes. The region was Christianised in the early sixth century and numerous small monasteries and churches were constructed. These served as the focal points for the creation of parishes in the later medieval period.

The two most common forms of habitation at this time were crannógs, which continued in popularity because of their defensive nature, and ringforts, which were simple earth-banked fortifications providing protection and shelter for small farmers and their livestock.

The Vikings came to Cavan in the ninth and tenth centuries. They probably entered the area by the river Erne but they never established towns or permanent trading-posts. However, it is possible that small communities may have settled down and intermarried.

Once the threat of Viking raids had passed, the feelings of security were echoed in renewed church building in Cavan and continental influences were often blended with vernacular styles. This was accompanied by the arrival of monastic orders from England and France.



Crannógs

Crannógs are habitations that were constructed on artificial islands in lakes and occasionally in rivers or even the sea. The name is derived from the Irish word 'crann', meaning tree, wood being the main construction material in crannógs.

Crannógs in Ireland are mainly concentrated in the north midlands and south Ulster. They may have developed partly from a habit of living on small natural islands, either as a means of exploiting the fish stocks surrounding them, or as a defensive function.

Evidence of metal working as well as domestic refuse, animal bones and various tools, weapons and personal ornaments have been found on these sites.

Many crannógs in Cavan, Leitrim and Fermanagh seem to have been refortified in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which may be related to contemporary conflicts between the O'Rourkes of west Breifne and the Maguires of Fermanagh.

The English disapproved of crannógs, and it was suggested in 1604 'that none of the Irish do build any house on loughs, but be enjoined to build castles or houses upon the firm land, and those houses that now are built upon loughs to be defaced'.

Although primitive crannógs were in use from the prehistoric period, most seem to have been constructed during the early medieval period (sixth and seventh centuries CE) and used up until the early seventeenth century in some cases.

Indeed, there are even indications that a crannóg at Lough Inchin, between Butlersbridge and Cavan, may have been occupied during the eighteenth century.

Crannógs seem mainly to have been inhabited by prosperous families whose economies were based upon agriculture, manufacturing and trade. As would be expected in a county with so many lakes, there have been at least 143 crannógs recorded in Cavan.

Clogh Oughter

This Norman castle, built on a crannóg about 1220, was in O'Reilly hands for centuries.



It was reconstructed between 1609 and 1620 as part of the Plantation of Ulster but was captured by the rebels in 1641 and used to hold important prisoners, such as Bishop Bedell, the Lord Bishop of Kilmore.

Owen Roe O'Neill, the great Irish military commander died here in 1649. It was the last stronghold in Ireland to hold out against the Cromwellians until its commander, Philip Mac Hugh O'Reilly, was forced, after artillery bombardment, to yield in April 1653.

An archaeological excavation, carried out in 1987 as part of the conservation of the castle, threw further light on the history of the castle and produced a remarkable collection of finds.

SECOND FLOOR



Farnham Family Portraits

Leaving the first floor and taking the main staircase to the 2nd Floor, visitors will see a selection of portraits from the Farnham Collection.

On this landing are two cases displaying some artefacts from the Farnham Collection including County Cavan Agricultural Society medals won by Lord Farnham in the 19th & 20th Centuries, and various presentations made to the family.

The Percy French Gallery

Percy French is probably Ballyjamesduff's most famous adopted son. Born in Cloonyquin, near Tulsk in Co. Roscommon, he studied Engineering at Trinity College, Dublin and graduated as a civil engineer in 1881.

He took up employment with the Board of Works in County Cavan, as an Inspector of Drains and he lived at No. 16 Farnham Street, Cavan Town during the 1880's. He was a keen tennis player, and it is believed that he was involved in setting up the Tennis Club in Cavan Town.

Although he worked as an engineer, Percy French was a prolific songwriter, author, poet, entertainer and painter. It was during this time in Cavan that he wrote some of his best material, including *Phil the Fluther's Ball* and *Come Back Paddy Reilly to Ballyjamesduff*.



Visitors can see some of his original paintings, poetry, photographs and detail about his family life. Listen to some of his songs which will play as you enter the gallery.

The Nuns Story

As this was a former convent of the Order of The Poor Clare nuns, it is appropriate that we tell something of their story in our museum. The Nuns Gallery is displayed in one of the former nun's bedrooms, also known as a 'cell'.

The theme of this gallery is the everyday life of the nuns, their devotion to God, and their involvement in educating the young people of Ballyjamesduff.



War of Independence

This gallery details the events happening in County Cavan during the period from 1919-1921. The jail scene highlights the experience of those who found themselves interned at that time.

The Museum of Broken Things

Jane McCormick's Museum of Broken Things is a museum within a museum. This is a collection of things which are meaningful to the artist and which she has collected throughout her life.

This Collection is a modern treasure trove of artefacts which make up “The Corracanvy Hoard” - displayed as if it might be in the future when these items have lost their meaning. It is the second Corracanvy Hoard in the museum, as the three Bronze Age trumpets in the Archaeology Gallery were found in Corracanvy – see the artefacts entitled ‘Hoard of Trumpets, Corracanvy’.



MUSEUM GARDEN



Peace Garden

A lot of features in the garden are projects which involved cross border project work – cross community participation from many different groups and schools.

Road to War – Path to Reflection

Walk along the path which tells the stories of 14 men and 1 woman (mainly from County Cavan) who lost their lives during World War I.

1916 Rising Exhibition

This installation is presented in a way that reflects in a tangible way the conditions that rebels had to deal with during and after the 1916 Rising.

The Battle of the Somme & World War 1 Trenches

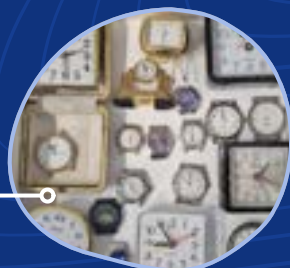
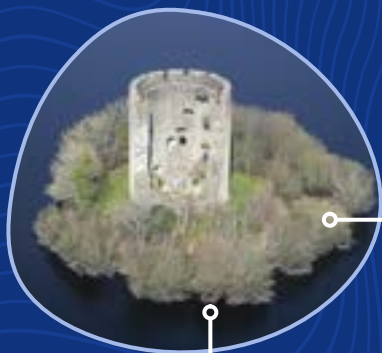
Opened in 2014 to commemorate those who fought and died during World War I between 1914 and 1918. Our trenches were built to the specifications of the Royal Irish Fusiliers manual for trench building.

Reflective Space

This is a space to reflect. The Tree is a symbol of life. The doves are a symbol of peace and water is a symbol of life. All conflict causes loss and loss is universal.

No matter what your beliefs are or what your background is, everybody feels loss and suffering during conflict.





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