



CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION 2017

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

2017.

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Contents

Foreword	5
Creative Ireland	6
Library Service	9
Arts Service	19
Regional Cultural Centre	37
Museum Service	45
Archives Service	51
Heritage Office	58
Ireland 1916:2016 Centenary Programme	64
Acronyms	66

Libraries
Leabharlanna



Regional Cultural Centre
Lárionad Cultúrtha Réigiúnach



Museum
Músaem



Heritage
Oldhreach



Arts
Ealaíon



Public Art
Ealaín Phoiblí



Archives
Cartlann



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Foreword

The mission of the Cultural Services Division, as set out in *Cultúr : a Strategic Vision for Cultural Services 2016 - 2020*, is to enrich life, enhance sense of identity, increase cultural and social opportunities and conserve cultural inheritance for present and future generations by developing Library, Arts, Museum, Archive and Heritage services.

Donegal County Council recognise that culture creates tangible societal value, promotes wellbeing and provides a positive direct and indirect economic value.

Cultural Services is a key area of work for Donegal County Council and we are proud to have a longstanding dedicated Division to lead and deliver in this area.

We are delighted to present the 2017 Cultural Services Review which is a snapshot of the wide and rich range of activities delivered during the year, not least of which were the formal close of the 1916 commemorative programme and the launch of the *Culture & Creativity Plan 2017* within the Creative Ireland initiative.

Joe Peoples, Director

Eileen Burgess, Divisional Manager

Creative Ireland Programme

Creative Ireland is a culture-based programme designed to promote individual, community and national wellbeing. It is underpinned by the key values identified in Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach.

Local Authorities are involved in the delivery of all 5 pillars in the programme and will take the lead on Pillar 2:

1. Enabling the creative potential of every child
2. Enabling creativity in every community
3. Investing in our creative and cultural infrastructure
4. Ireland as a centre of excellence in media production
5. Unifying our global reputation

A well attended public workshop was held at the Regional Cultural Centre in April to outline the programme and to inform the Donegal Creative Ireland 2017 action plan, which along with all other local plans, was launched at Dublin Castle in May. The Taoiseach selected a single event out of all 31 plans, and it was an acknowledgement of how Donegal's plan perfectly reflected the aims and ethos of Creative Ireland when Donegal's Arts and Book Festival for Children, Wainfest, was the one event selected

for special mention. The 2017 Wainfest programme was greatly expanded through support from Creative Ireland and several other projects were also delivered as a result of the initiative.

The local Creative Ireland Culture Team co-ordinated the delivery of the 2017 programme and also the development of the Culture and Creativity Strategy. This team includes the County Librarian/ Divisional Manager Cultural Services, Senior Executive Librarians, the Arts Officer, the Regional Cultural Centre Director, the Museum Curator, the Archivist, and the Heritage Officer, all of whom are part of the Council's Cultural Services Division. The Head of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), which supports creative entrepreneurs and manages the Diaspora Project, is on the Team. The Council's Film Office is also represented with the Dífgeach Forbartha Gaeilge and the Conservation Officer completing the Culture Team, which is led by Director of Service Joe Peoples.



The national Creative Youth plan was launched in December. It covers Pillar 1 and sets out a transformative and creative approach to education and learning. The plan will be delivered collaboratively across several Government Departments and in association with local authorities.

Further, more extensive public consultation took place in Donegal in September/October to inform the Donegal five year plan. Meetings were held in each of the five Municipal Districts. Online and hard copy surveys were created and much constructive feedback was provided with many innovative proposals submitted. Submissions were considered by the Culture Team and five strategic priorities were identified with actions for delivery under each priority. The draft document was approved at the November SPC meeting and will be submitted to the Creative Ireland office following adoption by Donegal County Council.

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017-2022



*Sarah Keaveney and Michael O'Reilly from the Creative Ireland Team with Cathaoirleach Cllr Terence Slowe at the Creative Ireland Programme workshop held in the Regional Cultural Centre in Letterkenny on 3 April 2017.
Photograph: Paul McGuckin*

“Ireland’s public libraries promote community cohesion and well-being, economic growth and cultural identity. They will enhance self worth and confidence.”

Opportunities for All: A strategy for public libraries 2013 – 2017



*Little John Nee and his Caledonia Highly Strung Orchestra performing at the Regional Cultural Centre during Wainfest
Photograph: Paul McGuckin*



Library Service

Donegal County Library Service is now part of a network of 333 libraries countrywide, through the *Libraries Ireland* network. The network in Donegal includes 8 community Libraries in the Twin Towns (Ballybofey/Stranorlar), Buncrana, Bundoran, Carndonagh, Gaoth Dobhair, Lifford, Milford and Na Rosa, and 4 branch libraries in Ballyshannon, Donegal Town, Moville and Raphoe, with the Central Library in Letterkenny at its core. Taobh Tíre community outreach points and a Cross Border Mobile Library supplement the network. Joining your local library in Donegal provides you with access to over 15 million items of stock as well as a national collection of e-books and e-audio books, online newspapers, magazines, language learning and courses, as well as online reference material. Details of all library services are available online at www.donegallibrary.ie.

Library Promotional Video

The Library Service identified the need for the development of a professionally designed comprehensive video that would promote libraries in Donegal as vibrant, busy, educational and cultural community hubs. A three minute video was commissioned and launched in August with simultaneous launches in Central Library by Councillor Jimmy Kavanagh and in Leabharlann Phobail Ghaoth Dobhair by Councillor Mícheál Cholm Mac Giolla Easbuig. The video entitled *Transform, Enrich and Inspire* is available to view on the library website www.donegallibrary.ie.

Night Night North West

In November the Library Service partnered with Donegal based television, film & radio company Real Films and Highland Radio to work on the radio series, Night Night North West. School children were invited to nine libraries across the County where they listened to a guest storyteller read beautiful Irish stories of myth and legend. The storytelling sessions were recorded and will be aired as a weekly series on Highland Radio in early 2018. The series was designed to educate and inform in a soft and informal way, for those present and those listening to experience and learn about Irish literature. The Library Service was delighted to host Laureate na nÓg, PJ Lynch as one of the guest readers.



Eileen Burgess (Cultural Services Divisional Manager), Cllr Mícheál Naughton and Cllr Jimmy Kavanagh at the launch of the library promotional video
Photograph: Paul McGuckin



Laureate na nÓg PJ Lynch at the recording of the Night Night North West sessions
Photograph: Paul McGuckin

Twin Towns Storytelling Chair Unveiled

An open day to mark the new Twin Towns Community Library was held on 17 November. As part of the day's proceedings the new storytelling chair was also unveiled by Councillor Martin Harley. The chair, which is inspired by the book *Granny's Wonderful Chair* by Stranorlar born author Frances Browne, was designed and created by Kerry-based furniture maker, Alan Hanafin. The chair is a unique and welcome addition to the library. The library itself is a bright, colourful and welcoming space and since it opened in The Base in June 2016 there have been over 12,000 visits. The library has a membership of 4,845 patrons and this number is growing every week with its up to date collection of approximately 10,000 items.



Unveiling of the Storytelling Chair in Twin Towns Community Library
Photograph: Paul McGuckin

ICT Services

During March 2017 the Library Service extended its network of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) self-service kiosks to include the Twin Towns and Bundoran Community libraries. RFID kiosks were previously installed in Central Library and Buncrana Community Library. These RFID kiosks are intuitive, attractive and easy to use, making it simpler and faster for library members to borrow and return their own items within the library. RFID also allows simpler options for library stock management.

During the summer of 2017 all stock in Donegal libraries, approximately 143,000 items, were RFID tagged, with the help of a grant from the Department of Rural and Community Development. This tagging enables the uninhibited movement of stock throughout the countrywide network.

Towards the end of 2017 the Department of Rural and Community Development announced funding for libraries to support initiatives commenced under the current strategy, *Opportunities for All*, while at the same time providing for the development and promotion of those initiatives under the new strategy, *Libraries Ireland 2018 – 2022*. The funding enabled the continued roll-out of self-service in public libraries as well as the implementation of the Right to Read

and Work Matters programmes. Donegal County Library Service applied and was granted funding for 11 RFID self-service kiosks and 11 sets of RFID security gates for their libraries as part of this funding programme; as well as a number of story sacks to support the implementation of the Right to Read programme and carrels and promotional material to support the Work Matters programme in five libraries.

Right to Read

The Right to Read programme brings together local authorities and local bodies involved in supporting literacy and reading development in the local area for a coordinated, sustainable and standard approach to providing these services in the community, and across the country. During 2017, the implementation of Right to Read focused on support for children and families. A Right to Read Action Plan for Donegal was drawn up by the Library Service, and implemented during 2017. Highlights included Spring into Storytime sessions during April, the Summer Stars reading programme during the summer months and Wainfest in October. Projects with network partners included Bookworm Babies and Creating Lifelong Readers, as well as programmes with local schools such as Battle of the Books and Bite Size Books.



Spring into Storytime

Libraries in Donegal took part in the first national storytime initiative during the month of April. Spring into Storytime is part of the Right to Read Campaign and its aim is to celebrate the importance of families reading together and sharing stories. 13 sessions took place in 12 Donegal libraries with 330 children and 56 adults enjoying stories, rhymes and art activities. Feedback on this programme from the public and library staff was very positive.

Young girl enjoying stories during the Spring into Storytime sessions
Photograph: Paul McGuckin

Summer Stars Reading Adventure

Summer Stars is an exciting national reading based programme available free to children across the country during the summer months. All participants were given a reading card to record and track their reading progress. Rewards and incentives were given along the way and a grand finale event was held in each library. Before the programme began, library staff visited local primary schools to promote the programme. 2,300 children signed up for the reading adventure in Donegal. Throughout the summer, libraries held various events to complement the programme. These included quizzes, Lego workshops, Harry Potter potion classes, treasure hunts, local superhero visits, storytelling, arts and craft activities.



Children enjoying the Summer Stars Reading Adventure
Photograph: Donegal Library Service



Harry Potter potions class during the summer activities
Photograph: Donegal Library Service





Wainfest Arts and Books Festival for Children

Libraries, the Regional Cultural Centre, the County Museum and other cultural venues across the county enjoyed a hugely successful Wainfest festival this year. The theme of this year's festival was *Unleash the Magic* and the magic was surely unleashed as the numbers attending events doubled from the previous year to just over 7,100. The festival was launched by Cathaoirleach Cllr Gerry Mc Monagle on 22 September in Donegal Castle with special guest, children's author Shane Hegarty. The festival ran for eight days from 7 – 15 October with 119 events in 34 venues across the county. The programme was expanded this year to include 31 family events with the help of our partners. The festival also benefited from being part of the Creative Ireland Programme for 2017. A major highlight for Wainfest in 2017 was the shortlisting of the festival for a Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award in the Best Library Service Category.

Author Jim Smith speaking to children during Wainfest
Photograph: Paul McGuckin



Read DL

Read DL is a reading initiative which grew out of Read LK [Letterkenny], and was inspired by the *One Book, One Community* projects that have been successful all over the world. The objective of the project is to get as many people reading a book by a particular author at the same time, therefore building a sense of community while also promoting literacy. The book chosen for 2017 was *The Breadwinner* by Canadian author and activist Deborah Ellis. *The Breadwinner* tells the story of one family's survival under Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Participating groups and schools were encouraged to undertake some or all of the following activities: reading the book in school and at home, having mystery guest readers in school classes, writing competitions based on the book, posting their activities on the Read DL Facebook page and having guest speakers to discuss the topic from the book. During 2017 1,700 books were distributed to 50 schools. Agencies who took part were: Donegal ETB, HSE, Parentstop, SCP/HSC, LYIT, and the Library Service.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

Seachtain Na Gaeilge was launched by the Cathaoirleach Cllr Terence Slowey. The Library Service in Donegal in partnership with Oifigeach Gaeilge, Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall provided a wide range of events during this year's festival which ran from 1 – 17 March, with 51 events taking place in libraries.

Bealtaine

Bealtaine is an annual festival which celebrates and promotes creativity in older age during the month of May, and is one of the highlights of the Cultural Services calendar. The theme of Bealtaine for 2017 was *Altogether Now! Collectivism, civic engagement and protest!* Bealtaine celebrated its 20th year in Donegal during 2017 and was launched in the Regional Cultural Centre with entertainment provided by Derry alto saxophone player and clarinettist Gay McIntyre, accompanied by his longtime friend John Trotter on trombone, violin, accordion and vocals. Events included exhibitions, storytelling, weaving, basket making, safety in the home, creative writing, computer classes, crochet, chair yoga, music and song. Local talent included Fergus Cleary, Mary McGranaghan, Sally McMenamin, Patsy Cavanagh and many more.



Science Week

The Library Service once again took part in Science Week from 12 - 19 November. Thirty events were held across the county with 650 children and 110 adults attending those events. These events included workshops by Dr Trish Murphy, Abbott Ireland and The Science Foundation of Ireland. Lego competitions were held in five libraries, maths trails in four libraries and a Coder Dojo information evening was held in Carndonagh Community Library as part of the Creative Ireland Programme.



Young member enjoying the Lego workshops
Photograph: Donegal Library Service

Winner of the under 18 Europe Direct Information Centre soapbox debating competition - Laura Diver
Photograph: Paul McGuckin

Europe Direct Information Centre

The Europe Direct Information Centre is based in the Central Library, Letterkenny with a satellite centre in Leabharlann Phobail Ghaoth Dobhair providing services to the Gaeltacht. During the course of 2017, the Europe Direct Information Centre Donegal and Gaeltacht had over 8,200 personal contacts with EU citizens from Donegal on topics from Brexit to fisheries to working rights and conditions. The centre also answered 700 EU-related queries via email and on the phone. 2017 saw the centre organise 32 EU-themed events on topics such as Coder Dojo, the history of the EU, Human Trafficking awareness, and Erasmus+ opportunities for students to study in Europe.



*Gaith Dobhair dancer and choreographer Breandán de Gallaí and his Ériú dance company presented the world premier of their new show 'Aon' at Amharclann Ghaith Dobhair in July, as part of Earagail Arts Festival
Photograph: Declan English*



Arts Service

The Arts Service prioritises the continuous improvement of access to and participation in creative activities among all members of the public, the promotion and development of the educational value of the arts and the support of quality and innovation in the arts sector.

Strategic Partnership Revenue Funding programme

Donegal County Council provided revenue funding of €71,000 to the county's network of independent arts organizations – including Balor Arts Centre and Balor Developmental Community Arts Ballybofey, Abbey Arts Centre Ballyshannon, Amharclann Ghaoth Dobhair, Artlink at Fort Dunree, An Gailearaí at Aislann Ghaoth Dobhair, An Cosán Glas artists group, Gort a'Choirce/An Falcarrach and Summer Palace Press at Cill Chartha.

17th Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival

The 17th Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival took place from 28 September – 28 October. The Festival supports artists and engages communities throughout South and South West Donegal including Ballyshannon, Bundoran, Ballybofey, Donegal, Inver, Killybegs, Cill Chartha, Gleann Cholm Cille, Ardara and Glenties, with a programme of theatre, music of all kinds, spectacle, literary and visual events and events for children.

Thanks to funding from Creative Ireland, the Festival was able to re-introduce its very successful theatre in schools programme. As a result, over 350 primary school children in the Glenties, Ardara, Cill Chartha and Ballyshannon catchment areas enjoyed premier Irish language theatre company Fíbín's visually arresting interpretation of *Clann Lir*, the legend of the Children of Lir.

The Donegal Voices Choir's presentation of *A Handel Celebration* at Ballyshannon and Letterkenny on 6 and 14 October was another Festival highlight. Tremendous commitment is required on the part of the choir members who travel from all over to participate in rehearsals led by Choir Director Andrew Batchelor, which commenced many months in advance of the actual performances.

The programme also included theatre performances by Donegal Drama Circle (David Mamet's *American Buffalo*) and the Balor Rep Theatre Company (the Ray Cooney comedy *Why Not Stay For Breakfast?*) at Inver, Ballybofey, Ballyshannon, Gleann Cholm Cille and An Clochán Liath.

17th annual Carnival Ballyshannon Project

Away With the Fairies! was the theme of the 2017 Carnival Project as Ballyshannon's most famous literary son William Allingham (1824-1889) was celebrated in a carnival interpretation of his best loved poem *The Fairies*. Over 200 young people and adults participated in its six week, pre-event programme of Community Carnival Arts workshops. The project featured artistic input from professional artists, theatre and carnival companies including LUXe landscape theatre (Inishowen), Dark Daughter Productions (Bundoran), Workhouse Studios (Sligo), Réalta (Galway) and visual artists Tom Meskell (Westmeath) and Diarmaid Flaherty (Sligo).

LUXe Landscape Theatre Company greeting the returning sunlight at Andøy, Northern Norway, in February, as part of their EDGES International Cultural Partnership facilitated Vesteralen residency
Photograph: LUXe/Tord Vike



*The performance by Little John Nee and the Caledonia Highly Strung Orchestra at An Grianán Theatre was a highlight of Culture Night in September
Photograph: Paul McGuckin*

Culture Night

Letterkenny's participation for the ninth time in National Culture Night on Friday, 22 September generated close to 4,000 visits to 24 cultural facilities and events.

New additions included the immensely popular Art Tent at Letterkenny Town Park, the first Culture Night performance by an African church choir (the Choir of the Church of Pentecost, Letterkenny), a new Cross Border dimension which saw a combined Old Courthouse Lifford/Alley Theatre Strabane promenade presentation, and a greatly expanded programme in the vicinity of Church Lane/The Cathedral Quarter which included an unveiling of a set of portraits by artist Bernie Wilson of former No. 1 Church Lane residents, the Crerand Brothers, John and Gerard.

The Regional Cultural Centre, Donegal County Museum, the Archives Service, the Central Library and the Heritage Office all contributed immensely to the success of the programme.

Particular highlights included Donegal County Museum's *A Vanished World - The Landed Gentry of Donegal* exhibition and An Grianán Theatre's drama and music double-bill of Mikel Murfi's *I Hear You and Rejoice*, and Little John Nee &

the Caledonia Highly Strung Orchestra's improvised piece *Letterkenny: Past, Present and Future*. The programme at the Central Library included performances by local Polish folk group The Hazels and Club Amhránaíochra Ros Goill, while the Heritage Office-organised *Life on The Ledge* walking tour with Aengus Kennedy of Nature North West highlighted the wildlife that survives and thrives among the built environment.

Culture Night in Letterkenny was co-ordinated and presented by Donegal County Council Cultural Services with the support of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. A simultaneous programme of Culture Night events, co-ordinated by Ealaín na Gaeltachta, took place throughout the Gaeltacht areas of the county.

Irish Aerial Dance Festival

Donegal Arts Service partnered with Fidget Feet Aerial Dance and An Grianán Theatre to co-present the 8th Irish Aerial Dance Festival in Letterkenny from 28 May – 10 June. The Festival featured a wide ranging residential programme of specialized aerial dance classes, facilitated by 10 internationally recognised practitioners. Over 130 dancers from 20 countries participated in the Festival, which is directed by Ballybofey choreographer Chantal McCormick. An added dimension in 2017 included public performances by Carolina Cabanas Dance Company from Costa Rica and the Dutch duo Saar Rombout and Maartje Fijen.



Rachel Strickland and Aisling Ni Chealligh from Fidget Feet Aerial Dance during the 8th Irish Aerial Dance Festival in Letterkenny
Photograph: Jym Daly

Investing in the Creation of New Artistic Work in Donegal

One of the most important roles of the Arts Service is that of encouraging the creation and presentation of new artistic work in the county. In 2017, the following works were among those supported by the Service.

The Service was delighted to partner with An Grianán Theatre to devise and present a new play *Shoot The Gear*, created from stories, memories and reminiscences gathered among the fishing community of Killybegs by An Grianán's theatre artist in residence Guy Le Jeune. *Shoot The Gear* ran for three nights at the Fish Auction Hall, Killybegs Harbour during the Donegal Bay and Bluestacks Festival, and was very warmly received. The Service also partnered with the Bundoran Express Railway Heritage Festival to present a new play by Maura Logue and Dark Daughter Productions *End of The Line – O'Carroll's Dance*

Hall 1957, marking the 50th anniversary of the closure of the Great Northern Railway line to Bundoran.

The Arts Service was also delighted to support Inishowen Carnival in the creation and presentation of their new performance work *The Ancients*, which was enjoyed by over 500,000 people at the annual St Patrick's Day Parade in Dublin, and later was a huge hit at Letterkenny Town Park as a highlight of Culture Night. Performing alongside Inishowen Carnival on both occasions were the Aislingí and Dynamic Waves dance companies from Ballybofey and Letterkenny.



Actors Fionn Robinson, Ronan Carr, Louise Conaghan and Orlaith Gilcreest, who played multiple roles in Guy Le Jeune's new play 'Shoot The Gear', which ran for three nights at the Fish Auction Hall, Killybegs, in September
Photograph: Guy Barriscale

Dámhlann an Ghleanna

Another very successful evening of poetry and music was enjoyed by a capacity audience at Dámhlann an Ghleanna, Gort a'Choirce in July, where the special guests included noted Dublin fiddle player Paddy Glackin and renowned Donegal poet Moya Cannon. The host for the evening was resident writer Cathal Ó Searcaigh.

EDGES Donegal E. Iceland Vesteralen

Arising from a visit of Cultural Directors from Vesteralen to Donegal in 2016, LUXe landscape theatre company of Burnfoot travelled to Northern Norway in February and September, where they completed a number of short residency projects in Andøy, Sortland and Melbu. The LUXe in Vesteralen residency series, which continues into 2018, is funded by Culture Ireland, Vesteralen Cultural Council and Donegal County Council.

Following a successful submission by Artlink to the Arts Council's Visual Arts Projects Scheme - in which the Arts Service was a partner - a programme of four artists' residencies took place at Fort Dunree over the course of 2017. One of the residencies was reserved for an artist from the EDGES partner regions and as such, Lytten Nystrom of Seydisfjordor, East Iceland was the international artist in residence in May.



LUXe Landscape Theatre Company greeting the returning sunlight at Andøy, Northern Norway, in February, as part of their EDGES International Cultural Partnership facilitated Vesteralen residency
Photograph: LUXe/Tord Vike

29th Earagail Arts Festival

The 29th Earagail Arts Festival took place from 4 – 23 July. The programme continued to animate the Wild Atlantic Way, further developing the hub model adopted in recent years, ie. focusing programme highlights in each of the three regions of West Donegal, Letterkenny/Ballybofey and Inishowen on alternate weekends, alongside on-going programming in Letterkeny throughout the period of the Festival.

Home with The Henry Girls

In *Home with The Henry Girls*, the Festival developed a unique five day, interactive residency with The Henry Girls in their home village of Malin. The residency attracted participants from Ireland, the UK and Scandinavia who enjoyed a programme of song-writing workshops, cultural and culinary tours, traditional pub sessions and two special concerts, including the hugely successful Henry Girls' musical tribute to another singing sister act – the Boswell Sisters of 1920s and 30s New York and New Orleans.



The Henry Girls performing their special musical tribute to fêted 1930s New Orleans vocal harmony group The Boswell Sisters in the Tumble Circus tent on Malin Village Green in July, as part of Earagail Arts Festival
Photograph: Paul Brown/EAF

Donegal International Folk and Roots Weekend

The Donegal International Folk and Roots Weekend featured a series of top class performances in the Regional Cultural Centre, An Grianán Theatre and the Balor Arts Centre, with Kila, Na Mooneys, Rosie Carney, Donal Lunny's Atlantic Arc Orchestra, For Foresters and Leila Jane & The Healers.

Wild Atlantic Weekend on Malin Green

The Festival's second two day celebration of Irish and international street art and circus on Malin Village Green - with Circus Raj from Rajasthan, Tumble Circus, and Cahoots NI - was a big hit with large and appreciative family audiences, while the Mountain Stage programme of music, song and literary events - as Gaeilge and Scots Gaidhlaig - on Oileán Árann Mhór, in partnership with the Swell Festival, was a particular highlight of that event.



Circus Raj, from the desert state of Rajasthan, India, entertained the crowds on Malin Village Green as part of Earagail Arts Festival in July
Photograph: Donegal County Council Arts Service

Theatre and Dance

The Festival was delighted to host the world premier at Amharclann Ghaath Dobhair of local dancer and choreographer Breandán de Gallaí's new work for his Ériú dance company *Aon*. Running for three nights, the show was a highlight and extremely well received. Other Festival drama highlights included An Grianán Youth Theatre's adaptation and presentation of *Blackadder Goes Forth*, Pat Kinevan's award-winning *Silent*, Aisteoirí Ghaath Dobhair's *Sadhbh/Sive*, Dan Gordon/Happenstance Theatre's *Frank Carson: A Rebel Without a Pause* and Compagnia TPO of Italy's *Kindur: The Adventurous Life of Icelandic Sheep*, which was a particular favourite among younger audiences.

Gaath Dobhair dancer and choreographer Breandán de Gallaí and his Ériú dance company presented the world premier of their new show 'Aon' at Amharclann Ghaath Dobhair in July, as part of Earagail Arts Festival
Photograph: Declan English



Cultural Tourism

The Festival was delighted to work closely with Fáilte Ireland, animating Donegal's Wild Atlantic Way with an exciting, bilingual programme of theatre, music, visual arts, outdoor spectacle, literary events and events for children, that engaged and entertained both local people and visitors alike. In all, the Festival promoted 165 performances in 30 venues spread across 16 towns, villages and islands over 20 days and nights.

Partnerships

Earagail Arts Festival continues to raise the profile of Donegal and nationally based Irish artists as an ongoing process, and it continues to work towards this objective with a range of partners locally including the Regional Cultural Centre, An Grianán Theatre, Ealaín na Gaeltachta, Donegal County Museum, Donegal County Council Arts Service, Donegal Local Enterprise Office, Balor Arts Centre Ballybofey, Amharclann Ghaoth Dobhair, An Gailearaí Doire Beag, An tSean Bheairic An Falcarrach, Comharchumann Oileán Árainn Mhór, Comharchumann Oileán Thoraigh, Malin Community Development, the OPW at Glebe House and Gallery Churchill and Glenveagh National Park.



Celebrated Nigerian musician Femi Kuti and his Positive Force band in concert at McGrory's of Culdaff in July, as part of Earagail Arts Festival. Photograph: Paul Brown/EAF

An Grianán Theatre

Music

2017 kicked off to an amazing start at the theatre with two outstanding gigs as part of Letterkenny Trad Week, including the all-star line up of Martin and Eliza Carthy, Lankum, The Rheingans Sisters and Coirm. The closing gig was a sell-out performance with Billy Bragg and Joe Henry.

The theatre enjoyed visits from other internationally renowned musicians as well throughout the year including gigs by Eddi Reader, Mary Black, John Prine and Sturgill Simpson, The High Kings as well as upcoming Donegal stars Little Hours.

Youth Performance Focus

The theatre had a big focus on Youth activities in 2017 including its first fully staged production from An Grianán Youth Theatre which was presented in July as part of the Earagail Arts Festival. The students adapted the classic comedy series *Blackadder Goes Forth* for the stage, and performed and produced the project themselves under the mentorship of the professional in-house team.

An Grianán worked with Donegal Youth Musical Theatre for the first time to produce a unique four week summer school project based on *The Phantom of the Opera*, which culminated in three sold-out performances in the theatre in August.

The theatre also collaborated with ZoNa Dance for the first time to produce a beautiful adaptation of *The Nutcracker* for the Christmas show. With a new script from An Grianán's Theatre artist in residence, Guy Le Jeune, the theatre maximised the opportunities for participation for both young actors and dancers locally. The project enjoyed 6 sold-out shows which appealed to schools and family audiences alike.

An Grianán Theatre hosted a unique residency with the artist Pat Kinevane, who performed his three plays – ‘*Silent*’, ‘*Forgotten*’ and ‘*Underneath*’ [pictured] – in October
Photograph: Patrick Redmond

Pat Kinevane /Fishamble Residency

As well as An Grianán’s usual programme of artform development opportunities for young people, 2017 also saw a focus on professional arts development opportunities. The theatre offered a unique residency with the artist Pat Kinevane/Fishamble Theatre Company, who performed his three plays – *Silent*, *Forgotten* and *Underneath*. The residency also offered workshops in stage direction with Fishamble’s Veronica Coburn and playwriting with Gavin Kostick.

New Theatre Works in Development

An Grianán is in its third year of work with its Theatre artist in residence, the focus of which will be a project with the people of Oileán Árann Mhór in 2018. Additionally, the theatre has two writers working on new commissions: Tara McKeivitt has developed a new script for the theatre which will be produced in 2018 and John D. Ruddy has written a stage adaptation of his comic history book *Manny Man Does the History of Ireland*. This will also be produced in 2018.



*An Grianán Youth Theatre adapted the classic BBC comedy series 'Blackadder Goes Forth' for the stage and produced and performed the project themselves at An Grianán Theatre in July, under the mentorship of the professional in-house team
Photograph: Rik Walton*



*Constantinople and Ablaye Cissoko who performed at the Regional Cultural Centre as part of the Earagail Arts Festival
Photograph: Earagail Arts Festival*



Regional Cultural Centre

Letterkenny's award-winning Regional Cultural Centre building, designed by MacGabhann Architects, is one of the finest arts facilities in Ireland. The Centre has had a full programme of high quality arts activities since it opened in 2007. The programme is made possible by annual funding from the Arts Council, Donegal County Council and project funding from a variety of sources.

Visual Arts

The Regional Cultural Centre (RCC) continued to commission and show major Irish and international art exhibitions in 2017. The exhibition programme was dominated by a number of large-scale, one-person shows by Donegal artists. These included Maria McKinney's *Sire* comprising sculpture, photography and film, investigating genetics in cattle. The main summer exhibition, to coincide with the Earagail Arts Festival, was *Exploring Architecture*, a mid-career retrospective of the work of Danish based Donegal artist Eamon O'Kane, comprising of paintings, drawings and animation, as part of a series of art & architecture exhibitions. The RCC's 10th birthday in July was celebrated in two exhibitions, *John Soffe: RCC Live 2007 - 2017*, photographs of live music concerts at the RCC since it opened, and *MacGabhann Architects: Regional Cultural Centre*, consisting of plans, models, photographs and reviews of the award-winning building.

The 2nd edition of the Remote Photo festival, dedicated to photographers creating work in remote or rural contexts included, *The Queen, The Chairman and I* by award winning Hong Kong born photographer Kurt Tong, in association with Impressions Gallery Bradford, and a group exhibition from the Ulster University School

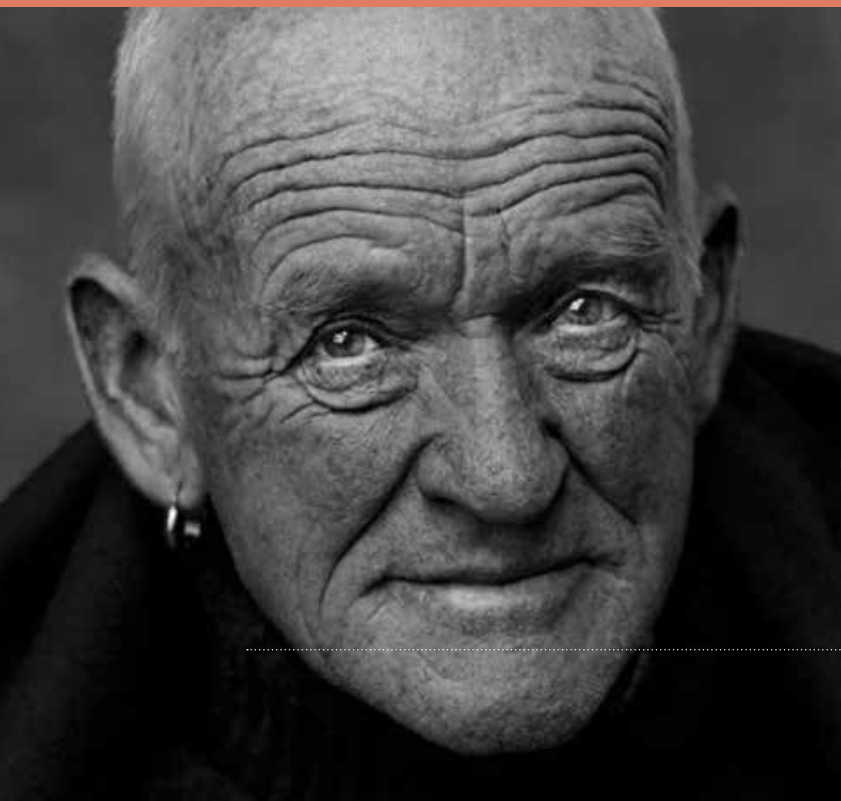
of Photography MFA. The final RCC 2017 main gallery exhibition was *Portrait*, a group show curated by Adrian Kelly, a broad exploration of the artistic portrait.

A series of solo shows were held in the ground floor gallery, including RCC artist in residence [2017-2019] Cathal McGinley's *Bothóg*, which featured drawings, photographs and a sculptural installation, relating to an ongoing project about Inishbofin Island, County Donegal. Letterkenny resident Mocola Vonga, originally from Angola, exhibited a series of paintings and mosaics. American photographer Steve Anderson included works on the theme of memory, landscape, dreams and hidden worlds. *One the Natural*, an exhibition of new paintings by Selena Mowat, a Scottish born artist who lived in Donegal from 2010 to 2014, opened at the end of December.

The RCC developed three exhibitions in other venues in County Donegal and *Willie Doherty, Loose Ends* was shown at Matts Gallery, London. *Lived Lives* by artist Seamus McGuinness and psychiatrist Kevin M Malone was presented at An Gailearaí, Gaoth Dobhair, as part of the Connecting for Life Donegal Suicide Prevention Plan.

The RCC produced two architectural exhibitions as part of the Earagail Arts Festival - *Seven Donegal Churches*, a photographic exhibition on the architect Liam McCormick at An Grianán Theatre, Letterkenny and *In Search of the Donegal Vernacular Cottage* in partnership with the Donegal Heritage Office at Donegal County Museum, Letterkenny and An Gailearaí, Gaoth Dobhair.

Portrait of Patsy Dan Rogers
Photograph: Richard Noble



e1027 by Eamon O'Kane
Photograph: Eamon O'Kane



Music

The RCC, one of the finest small music venues in the country, continued its music development programme in partnership with the Donegal Music Education Partnership and Earagail Arts Festival. It presented a select yearlong programme of almost 30 national and international classical, folk, jazz, world and indie music concerts. 2017 was marked by a number of successful annual music festivals starting with the 3rd Letterkenny Trad Week in January. It featured three concerts at the RCC, two at An Grianán and a number of workshops with artists in residence, the Rheingans Sisters. The highlight was the *A Family Affair Gala Concert*, featuring Martin & Eliza Carthy, Lynched and local youth group Coirm.

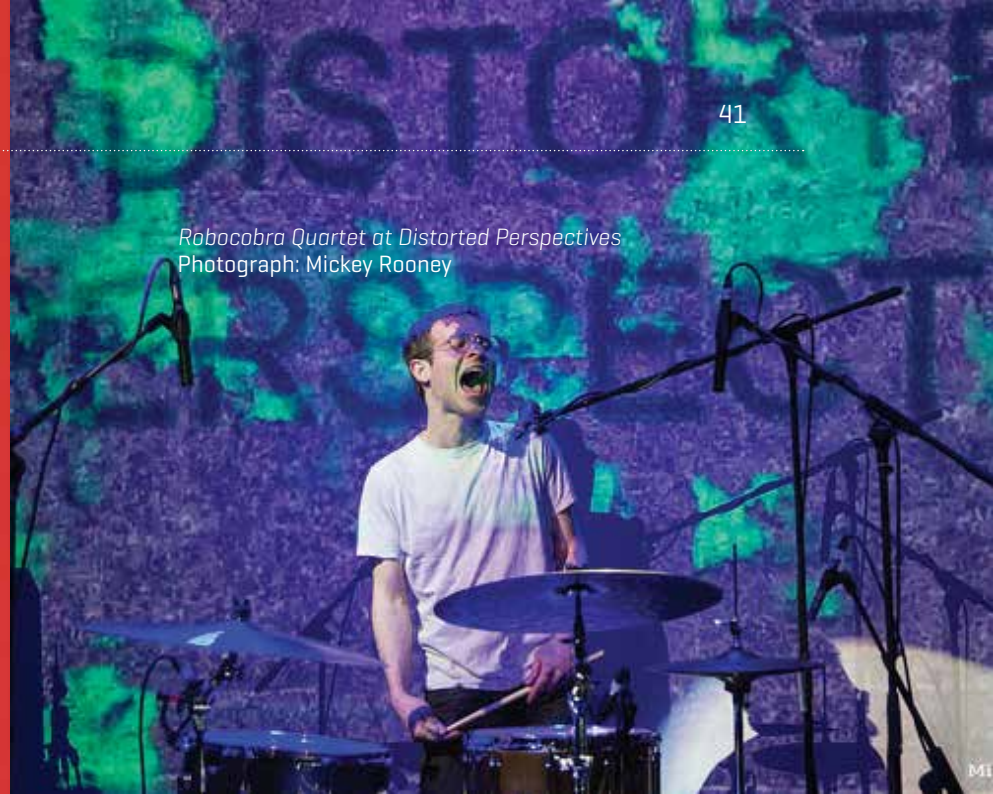
The 4th annual Distorted Perspectives experimental music festival featured two very strong line-ups at the RCC: K-X-P from Finland headlined a bill that also included Robocobra Quartet from Belfast and local outfits Tuath and The Gatefolds. Irish band exmagician headlined on the second night that also included Hannah Peel, SlowPlaceLikeHome and local bands Scenery and Aul Boy.

The RCC concert programme for the 3rd Donegal International Folk & Roots Weekend, part of the Earagail Arts Festival, featured Irish acts Gerry O'Connor & friends, Saint Sister, Kila and Na Mooneys, alongside Constantinople from Iran and Derek Gripper from South Africa.

Regional Cultural Centre Spring brochure cover
Design: Daniel McGarrigle



Robocobra Quartet at Distorted Perspectives
Photograph: Mickey Rooney



The Unthanks from RCC Live 2007-2017
Photograph: John Soffe





Artist Maria McKinney at the opening of her 'Sire' exhibition
Photograph: Clive Wasson

Donegal Music Education Partnership (DMEP)

The Donegal ETB DMEP is based in the RCC and the two organisations work closely together, including the joint promotion of RCC concerts and the facilitation of workshops to accompany the Music Network concert series. The DMEP account for a significant proportion of the RCC's activities, including regular weekly classes and rehearsals for various ensembles.



Launch of the Regional Cultural Centre anniversary exhibitions
Photograph: Declan Doherty

Education and Community Arts

The RCC coordinated the Bealtaine festival for older people, which featured over 100 events countywide, in partnership with Donegal County Council Cultural Services, Age & Opportunity and older people's organisations. RCC highlights included Letterkenny Active Retirement Association's *Life in a Lantern* book launch and the one-woman theatre show *The Lad from Laghey* starring Jean Curran. The Centre was also the venue for regular and ongoing workshops and events held by cultural, educational, community development and health organisations throughout the year. The RCC organised schools, children's and family events in the Centre and countywide with a range of partners. The RCC highlights of the 2017 Wainfest for children in October, presented in partnership with Cultural Services, included two theatre shows, the specially commissioned *Tullyglen* by Little John Nee and Eoin Lynch's *The Locksmith's Song*.



CINE kick-off meeting, Lofoten Islands, Norway, September 2017
Photograph: Skuli Gunnarsson

Museum Service

Through the County Museum Service, Donegal County Council preserves and celebrates the collective memory of the county and its communities, by preserving, displaying and interpreting artefacts related to the history of Donegal. The County Museum works with a wide variety of individuals, groups and organisations to improve access to and participation in heritage and to promote and preserve our cultural inheritance.

CINE Project

In September, the first partner meeting of the Connected Culture and Natural Heritage in a Northern Environment (CINE) project took place in Norway. CINE is a collaborative digital heritage project between partners from Norway, Iceland, Ireland and Scotland. The partners in Ireland are Donegal County Museum and Ulster University. The project is funded by the Northern and Arctic Periphery Programme (ERDF). CINE aims to transform people's experiences of outdoor heritage sites through technology, building on the idea of 'County Museums without walls'. The County Museum will initially work with the Killybegs History and Heritage Committee exploring models of community co-production in the creation of digital content.

Decade of Centenaries

In November, Donegal County Museum launched a two-month period of public consultation to assist with updating the County Donegal Book of Honour, The Great War 1914 - 1918. The public were invited to consult the draft version of the Book on the Council's website, to check the details provided and advise of any new names to be added.

The Ulster History Circle unveiled a Blue Plaque in honour of Pte James Duffy VC at Castle Street, Letterkenny on 10 November. A short talk and reception took place in the County Museum following the unveiling. On 17 November, Hilary Roulston's book *Laggan Lads* was launched in the County Museum. This is a collection of stories and poems inspired by the men and women of East Donegal who took part in the First World War.

On Thursday 7 December, in partnership with the Inniskilling County Museum, a Secondary Schools' World War I Study Day was organised. The event was attended by students from schools in Counties Fermanagh and Donegal. On the same day and in association with the Inniskilling County Museum, the County Museum displayed the Victoria Cross awarded to Pte James Duffy during World War I.



James Duffy's Victoria Cross on display in Donegal County Museum, November 2017
Photograph: Donegal County Museum

Exhibitions

Mná 1916: Women 1916, an exhibition telling the stories of 300 women involved in the 1916 Rising and curated by Sinead McCoolle was on display from January to March.

The County Donegal Heritage Office, Donegal County Museum, Donegal County Archives and the Regional Cultural Centre in association with the Earagail Arts Festival presented the exhibition *In Search of the Donegal Vernacular Cottage* in July and August. Through photographs, illustrations and drawings from local and national collections, the distinctive forms and features of the Donegal vernacular cottage were highlighted.

The exhibition *A Vanished World – the landed gentry of Donegal* opened in the County Museum in September. Curated by the County Museum and Archives Services, the exhibition revealed what life was like for those who lived and worked in the vanished world of Donegal's big houses. The exhibition formed part of the 2017 Creative Ireland Activation Plan for Donegal and was part funded by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

During the summer the County Museum hosted *A Trek Through Time*, the new exhibition developed by the Archives Service. From November to December, the Royal Irish Academy's travelling exhibition *Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library* was on display and in December, the County Museum hosted the exhibition *Ulster Winners of the Victoria Cross*, on loan from the Ulster Scots Agency.

Events Programme

On International Womens Day, 8 March 2017 the County Museum in association with Donegal Womens Network organised a day-long programme entitled *Visible & Invisible Women – 100 Years On*. The programme included a series of talks examining the invisible Irish women of the revolutionary period, a tour of the *Mná 1916: Women 1916* exhibition with its Curator Sinéad McCoole and a series of group discussions on a wide variety of issues affecting Donegal women today.

The County Museum events programme encompassed a wide variety of activities and events throughout the year including during the Bealtaine Festival, Heritage Week, Culture Night and Wainfest. These included a series of reminiscence sessions in day centres and community hospitals; a talk on *The Countyside Bird Survey* by Birdwatch Ireland; the launch of the Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter Literary Festival; an Urban Family Nature Walk with Aengus Kennedy; the launch of Jim Maultsaid's third book, *Dawn of Victory, Thank You China*; a traditional music session with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann; the Irish Language Awards for New Communities; the launch of the Letterkenny Historic Street Map; a living history event with the 'Countess of Leitrim'; *Family Friendly Survival Skills* with the Irish Defence Forces; a traditional roofing demonstration; a talk on Ireland's Rural Electrification Scheme by

PJ Cunningham and Dr Joe Kearney; a talk on and walk through the exhibition *In Search of the Donegal Vernacular Cottage* with Dr Joseph Gallagher.

Throughout the year the County Museum worked closely with the Donegal Education Centre to bring the County Museum's Archaeology Box to both primary and secondary schools in Donegal. County Museum staff visited over 800 pupils throughout the County.

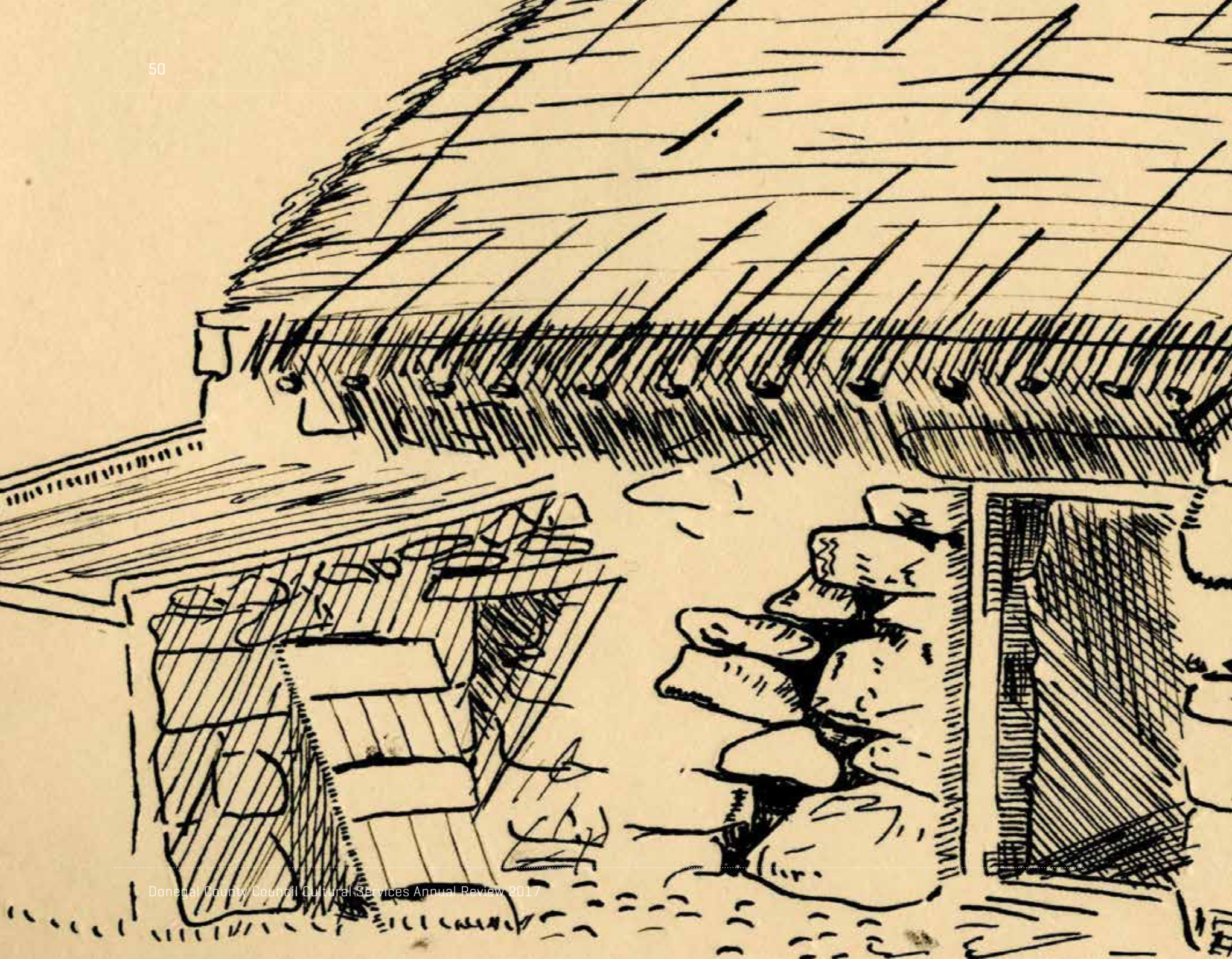
Top left: The exhibition 'A Vanished World' in Donegal County Museum
Photograph: Donegal County Museum

Top right: Traditional roofing demonstration by Sean Brogan on Culture Night in Donegal County Museum
Photograph: Donegal County Museum

Bottom left: 'Countess Leitrim and guests' during Culture Night at Donegal County Museum
Photograph: Donegal County Museum

Bottom right: Guest speakers at the 'Visible and Invisible Women' seminar, organised by the Museum, March 2017
Photograph: Paul McGuckin





Archives Service

The aim of the Archives Service is to preserve and make accessible the documented and recorded heritage of the people of County Donegal for present and future generations. It does this through the acquisition, cataloguing, conserving and secure storage of archival collections of public and private origin which relate to the history and culture of Donegal, and through the provision of public access to its archives. The Archives Service works in partnership with many groups and organisations.

Image from the thesis by Patrick O'Neill 'A Social and Cultural Study of Crofter Life on the West Donegal Seaboard' (1940). The thesis was digitised and published online by the Archives Service in 2017

Photograph: Archives Service

A Trek through Time: Images from the Archives

In 2017, the Archives Service curated a new touring exhibition, which focuses on aspects of Donegal's history, as reflected in some of its major collections. The exhibition consists of twelve panels, each highlighting one of the Archives' Collections or a theme strongly represented in the collections. These are: *Arts & the Archives*; *The Donegal Grand Jury*; *Elections & the Electorate*; *Archives of Emigration*; *Exotic & Eccentric Donegal*; *The GAA in Co. Donegal*; *Joseph Murray*; *Ladies of Donegal*; *Maps*; *Railways*; *Schools & Schooling*; and *Workhouses*.

The purpose of the exhibition is to showcase these historic collections, to increase awareness of local archives in general and to demonstrate their inherent value. The exhibition includes themes that are significant in the study of the county's history. Two separate sets of panels were created, in Irish and English. The exhibition went on display in venues in Lifford, Letterkenny, Ardara, Gaoth Dobhair and Ballybofey.



Some of the archives on display for the exhibition A Vanished World, in the Co. Museum

Photograph: Caroline Carr

Digitisation

The 18th/19th century Donegal Grand Jury collection was digitised in 2017 with plans to upload to the website in 2018. Two other collections were digitised for Creative Ireland (see below). The minutes of meetings from the year 1916 (and surrounding years) of the local authorities of County Donegal were digitised in 2016 and launched in Lifford in May 2017. The minutes reflect the social, economic and political climate of local areas in the county, the county itself, and the country during the early years of what we now know of as the Decade of Centenaries. The minutes are particularly interesting for their political references; for example, while early reactions to the Rising were not favourable among local Council members, opinions changed as the executions of leaders in Dublin took place. The minutes are available to view on the Archives section of the Council's website.

Some of the archives of Fanad Health Club Nursing Association, digitised and published online in 2017
 Photograph: Archives Service

Creative Ireland

The Archivist is a member of the Donegal Creative Ireland [CI] Culture Team, and completed two projects for CI 2017, one of which was part funded by CI. This project was the conservation of two fragile and damaged bound volumes in the County Archives Collection - the Gaoth Dobhair Hotel Visitors' books (1842 - 1874). These registers contain original and colourful comments, poems, sketches and treatises by visitors relating to the hotel itself and life in rural Gaoth Dobhair, then the centre of controversial land improvements carried out by Lord George Hill. The other project was the digitisation and publishing online of two collections - *The Fanad Health Club*, a 1930s District Nursing association, and a 1940 Thesis by Patrick O'Neill, entitled *A Social and Cultural Study of Crofter Life on the West Donegal Seaboard*.

Gaoth Dobhair Hotel Visitors' Book, prior to conservation
Photograph: The Ox Bindery

Gaoth Dobhair Hotel Visitors' Book, following conservation by The Ox Bindery for the Archives Service, part funded by Creative Ireland
Photograph: The Ox Bindery



Festivals and Events

The Archives Service, in cooperation with the County Museum, took part in the festival of Bealtaine with reminiscences at day centres, including in Letterkenny, Fanad, Carrick and Bunrana. The *A Trek through Time* exhibition was displayed in the County Museum for Heritage Week and for Culture Night.

The Archives Service collaborated with the County Museum on the major exhibition *A Vanished World: The Landed Gentry of Co. Donegal* which was launched in September at the County Museum. The Archives Service also collaborated with the County Donegal Heritage Office and the County Museum regarding the *In Search of the Donegal Vernacular Cottage* exhibition.

Acquisition and Processing

Several significant collections of archives were acquired by the County Archives in 2017. These included part of the O'Donnell Genealogy collection from the Old Courthouse in Lifford; school records for Naomh Buadain National School, Scoil Naisiúnta Gaoth Dobhair and Dunfanaghy National School; St Johnston Graveyard register; 1837 Barony of Raphoe maps; The Fr Jackie Fitzgerald collection; correspondence re: crashed military aircraft in Co. Donegal; Robert Moore, Clerk of Inishowen Union's papers; railway records; and an 18th century ledger for Park's Distillery, Ballybegley. The sorting, preserving and cataloguing of these and other archives took place in 2017. The processing of the Steele Nicholson estate papers was completed by a post graduate student on work placement in the County Archives.

Advice and Support

Researchers assisted by letter, phone, email, social media and at the Archives Service research room included staff and members of the County Council; other public services including schools, the HSE and TUSLA; students and academics; genealogists and family and local historians; heritage groups; independent researchers; television and film producers; writers and journalists. Throughout 2017, the Archives Service facilitated and assisted personnel of the Mother & Baby Homes Commission of Inquiry in their research at the Archives.

Eileen Burgess, Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher [Chair of the Donegal 1916 Commemorative Committee], Niamh Brennan and Cathaoirleach Cllr. Terence Slowey, at the launch of the digitisation of the minutes of meetings of 1916 Donegal local authorities, 4 May 2017
Photograph: Eugene McCosker

Records Management

The Archives Service preserved and provided access to Donegal County Council's deposited non-current records and made recommendations regarding the preservation of archives and disposal of non-archival local authority records. Queries on records management matters were dealt with, and records were surveyed and deposited in the archives repository. The archivist purchased additional archival steel shelving for the Three Rivers Centre.



Of note in 2017

County Donegal in 1916: From the Edge, History & Heritage Education pack, coordinated by the Archives Service in cooperation with the County Museum, Heritage Office and Library Service in 2016, was shortlisted for a Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award in 2017.

The Archivist reviewed a book for the Archives & Records Journal [2017 edition] and gave an interview on RTE News at One on Valentine's Day in relation to a Valentine's letter found in the Archives.



Delegates from Donegal County Council at the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards in November
Photograph: Joseph Gallagher

Heritage Office

The role of the County Donegal Heritage Office is to raise awareness, provide advice, collect data and promote best practice in relation to our cultural, built and natural heritage. It oversees the implementation of the County Heritage Plan in partnership with the County Heritage Forum.



Kilbarron Castle, an archaeological monument near Rosstown, was selected as one of seven Irish heritage sites to participate in The Heritage Council's 'Adopt-a-Monument' Scheme in 2017
Photograph: Joseph Gallagher



Built Heritage

Over 120 people attended the *Conservation without Frontiers* Cross Border Built Heritage Summer School in counties Donegal, Derry & Tyrone from 7 - 10 June organised by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and the Irish Georgian Society in association with Donegal County Council, Derry City & Strabane District Council and The Heritage Council. The purpose of the Summer School was to encourage the conservation, heritage-led regeneration and promotion of the built heritage of North West Ulster, and included presentations, fieldtrips, traditional building skills demonstrations and social events. The Heritage Office in association with the County Museum, the Regional Cultural Centre, County Archives and Earagail Arts Festival curated and produced the *In Search of the Donegal Vernacular Cottage* exhibition. Through photographs, illustrations and drawings from local and national collections, the distinctive forms and features of the Donegal vernacular cottage were highlighted. The exhibition ran in the County Museum [7 June - 2 September] and in An Gailearaí, Doire Beag [from 13 November]. About 60 people attended the walk and talk through the exhibition in July led by Greg Stevenson and Joseph Gallagher, co-authors of the *Traditional Cottages of County Donegal* book.



Seamus Ó hEochaidh thatching the roof of a cottage in Rinnakill, Teelin in the late 1930s. The intricate network of ropes [or fishing nets in some coastal locations] that was used to secure the thatch were tied to projecting stones [bacán] at the eaves and on the gables
 Photograph: Donegal County Archives



Heritage Plan Implementation

The County Donegal Heritage Forum, Donegal County Council secured €27,000 in match funding from The Heritage Council for the implementation of County Donegal Heritage Plan actions in 2017. A Study of Lime Kilns in County Donegal was commissioned that outlined their forms, documented specific case studies, highlighted conservation issues and produced the draft text for an illustrated booklet. The Heritage Office also commissioned the production of a booklet on the 1930s Schools' Manuscript Collection in County Donegal. The Heritage Office in partnership with The Heritage Council launched the audit of oral history recordings from County Donegal in May, identifying over 4,000 oral history recordings from 57 collections. It also organised a free, one-day Oral History Training Workshop, led by geographer Dr. Arlene Crampsie and oral historian Dr. Tomás Mac Conmara in Letterkenny in May, that provided participants with key skills to research, prepare for and conduct oral history interviews.

Thatcher Brian Lafferty explains the practice of rope thatching at the Scutcher's Cottage in Newmills to 'Conservation without Frontiers' summer school participants. The Office of Public Works is conserving the cottage as part of the Newmills Corn & Flax Mills, a National Monument in state care
Photograph: Joseph Gallagher

National Heritage Initiatives

National Heritage Week with its theme of *It's in Your Nature* in August was coordinated by The Heritage Council and Local Authority Heritage Officers. It was a tremendous success and County Donegal was the county with the most Heritage Week events taking place per head of population in the country, with over 124 events organised. The Heritage Office compiled the popular free, pocket-sized County Donegal Heritage Week Event Guide. Local Authority Heritage Offices and Biodiversity Offices sponsored the annual Local Authority Pollinator Award as part of the Tidy Towns competition to encourage local groups to implement pollinator-friendly actions in their towns and villages as part of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Buncrana Tidy Towns Committee won the regional award for the *North West & West Region* in the *Large Town Category* in September.

Ecologist, author and broadcaster Éanna Ní Lamhna explores a forest habitat with primary schoolchildren and teachers as part of the 'Creative Habitats' workshops during Wainfest organised by the County Donegal Heritage Office and County Library Service
Photograph: Paul McGuckin



Natural Heritage Education

The Donegal Education Centre, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Nature North West and the Heritage Office organised a *Learning Through The Landscape* CPD Course for Primary Teachers in Glenveagh National Park in July. As part of Culture Night in September, the Heritage Office hosted a walk and talk on the wildlife that survives and thrives in the built environment of Letterkenny with Aengus Kennedy, Nature North West. In association with the Library Service, the Heritage Office sponsored ecologist, author and broadcaster Éanna Ní Lamhna to undertake five *Creative Habitats* workshops for children during Wainfest in October. The Heritage Office in association with the Donegal Education Centre and The Heritage Council launched the *Heritage & Habitat in Your Community* Teachers' Guide by Billy Flynn & Éanna Ní Lamhna in October. The purpose of the guide was to raise awareness of natural habitats and to encourage habitat surveying and recording. Donegal County Council provided part-funding to Bat Conservation Ireland for its *Batlas 2020* project to support the creation of a Donegal GIS mapping dataset, a bat survey training course and survey night.

Heritage Advice and Assistance

The Heritage Office provided advice to applicants to the Community Heritage Grant Scheme, Thatch Conservation Grant Scheme, Traditional Farm Buildings Grants Scheme, *Adopt-a-Monument* Scheme and other built heritage grants. The Heritage Office provided support for the Tír Chonaill Stone Festival in Glencolmcille in June organised by the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland for the repair of a dry stone wall, *Stone Age Tools* exhibition at Greencastle Golf Club in August, the *Last Train to Bundoran* History Ireland Hedge School in Bundoran in September and *the Warp & Weft of Heritage* weekend in Ardara in October. As part of the Creative Ireland programme, Tógra Fiontar agus Cultúr Uladh and the Heritage Office oversaw the repair by Conservation Letterfrack of a traditional wooden and súgán chair from Teach Mhicí Mhic Gabhann. Donegal County Council provided part-funding to County Donegal Railway Restoration Limited for the publication of Michael Bunch's *Donegal Railway Diary*.

1916

 2016
 CLÁR COMÓRTHA
 CÉAD BLIAIN
 Centenary Programme

Ireland 1916:2016 Centenary Programme

The local programme drew to a close with the launch of the commemorative monument in March and the launch of the digitised 1916 minutes taking place in May 2017. The final meeting of the local committee also took place in May.

Artist Brian Connolly at the official unveiling of 'History Table: Elevation', a new 1916 commemorative monument, in The Diamond in Lifford
 Photograph: Paul McGuckin

History Table: Elevation

A new 1916 commemorative monument was unveiled in Lifford on 27 March. The monument was commissioned by Donegal County Council and produced by internationally renowned Antrim-based artist Brian Connolly.

The artwork takes a recognisable item of domestic furniture and re-conceptualises it as a symbolic form. The kitchen table is the centre of the home, where many ideas come from and plans are made; centre of family life and familiar in the Irish consciousness. The concept is informed by a performance artwork the artist delivered at Kilmainham Gaol as part of the 1916:2016 centenary programme and he developed it further in the permanent commemorative artwork for Lifford.

The sculpture is essentially a traditional kitchen table raised up and placed on branches of coppiced hazel. All elements are cast in bronze. The table top is pierced with an extract of text from the 1916 Proclamation. The text can be viewed from below. The artwork represents an archway, a threshold and a link between past, present and future.

The artwork is located in the Diamond in Lifford, the administrative capital of the county and the seat of Donegal County Council. Within the Diamond area of Lifford the offices of Donegal County Council are located and opposite this building is the historic Lifford Courthouse designed by Michael Priestley in 1746. It is in the Diamond setting between County Buildings and the Lifford Courthouse that the artwork is sited.

Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council Cllr. Terence Slowey said “we are delighted to be unveiling this magnificent piece of public art in the Diamond in Lifford. The Ireland 1916 Centenary Programme provided us with a once-in-a-century opportunity to shape and actively engage in a diverse range of historical, cultural and artistic activities. It allowed us to reflect, commemorate, debate and analyse and re-imagine our future. This piece of public art embodies the themes of this commemorative programme and will be enjoyed for generations to come not just by the people of Lifford but by everyone in Donegal”.

Brian Connolly is a leading practitioner in public art nationally for over 25 years. Much of his work has been *relational*, i.e. publicly

oriented and place or context related, and is intended to involve people to the point where they may no longer be solely spectators but can become participants. He has created performance art works across the world in Europe, Canada, Mexico, and China, as well as exhibitions across Europe.



*Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher Chairperson, Donegal Ireland 2016 Committee] and Cathaoirleach Cllr. Terence Slowey with Chief Executive Seamus Neely and other invited guests at the official unveiling of 'History Table: Elevation', a new 1916 commemorative monument, in The Diamond in Lifford
Photograph: Paul McGuckin*

Acronyms

CI	Creative Ireland	LYIT	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
CINE	Culture In a Northern Environment	MFA	Master of Fine Art
Cllr	[Donegal County] Councillor	NI	Northern Ireland
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	OPW	Office of Public Works
DMEP	Donegal Music Education Partnership	Pte	Private [in the army]
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund	RCC	Regional Cultural Centre
ETB	[Donegal] Education and Training Board	Read DL	Read Donegal [community reading project]
EU	European Union	RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association	RTÉ	Raidió Teilifís Éireann [national broadcaster]
GIS	Geographic Information System	SCP	School Completion Programme [Department of Education & Skills]
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison [Department of Education & Skills]	SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
HSE	Health Service Executive	TUSLA	Child and Family Agency
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	VC	Victoria Cross
LEO	Local Enterprise Office		