



LOCAL
AUTHORITY
MUSEUMS'
NETWORK

Preserving the Past
Shaping the Future
Strategy 2016 – 2019





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Foreword

The Local Authority Museums Network (LAMN) was established as the Local Authority Curators Group in the early 1990s to promote cooperation between Local Authority Museums. Our museums not only play an important role in the preservation of the material culture of our counties, but these diverse collections are used to promote social inclusion and tourism locally and provide a valuable educational resource for our communities. This plan seeks to build on these achievements.

Local Authority Museums have emerged sporadically over the years and exist mainly in two clusters – one along the border and the other in Munster – with two outliers in Carlow and Galway. Most museums are quite young; more than half of these institutions did not exist 25 years ago. These museums were established for a variety of reasons and historically a lack of uniform structures and resources has hindered development of the Local Authority Museum Network as a whole. In recent years this situation has begun to change and there have been two key developments in particular which have transformed thinking within the network.

Firstly, the Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) has encouraged a rapid increase in the levels of professionalism within the Irish Museum sector over the last decade.

Almost all LAMN museums have achieved either Interim or Full Accreditation and have a framework of standards and policies that have provided our museums with a firm foundation based on best practice. This has fed into the network itself by raising confidence, broadening horizons and increasing expectations.

Secondly, the increased pressure on public finances has focused the minds of all Local Authority curators and this has also influenced the network - we have had to rethink what our goals should be and how we can achieve and fund them. This change in mindset has provided the stimulus to discuss and create this Strategic Plan – a plan that acknowledges that there is strength in numbers and that the challenges that face us are also opportunities. Finally, this plan would not have been possible without a great deal of hard work and travel on public transport by network curators and I would like to thank my colleagues for making this plan possible. As a document, it represents a beginning rather than an end and I hope that during the lifetime of this plan the Local Authority Museums Network will become a high profile brand that will stand for resilience, relevance and excellence.

John Rattigan,
Chairman,
Local Authority Museums Network



Introduction

The Local Authority Museums Network (LAMN) represents the 12 Local Authority Museums across Ireland who all play a vital role in the social, cultural and economic life of regions across Ireland. The LAMN comprises Carlow County Museum; Cavan County Museum; Clare County Museum, Cork Public Museum, County Museum, Dundalk; Donegal County Museum; Galway City Museum; Kerry County Museum; Limerick Museum; Monaghan County Museum; Tipperary County Museum and Waterford Museum of Treasures.

Local authorities throughout Ireland play a vital and proactive role in promoting and preserving culture and heritage, ensuring the best possible quality of life for their communities. Through their museum services they strengthen local communities by underpinning local identity and sense of place and as a result can contribute to the development of sustainable economic activity in their areas. Local authority museums work in partnership with services across the wider local authorities, as well as with other organisations in their respective regions, with government departments and, of course, with communities themselves.

Collectively the local authority museums serve a population of over 1.8 million people, attracting over half a million direct visitors each year with a far reaching impact in schools, communities and voluntary organisations across the country. They also play a significant role as engines of local and regional tourism and support the cultural identity and image of Ireland to overseas

visitors. Despite the economic challenges that have persevered over the past number of years however, the local authority museums have demonstrated resilience, creativity and imagination which has firmly rooted them and their work at the heart of local communities throughout Ireland. Through this work, the local authority museums have instilled local pride of place through an inclusive, innovative and collaborative approach to engaging with the community, devising imaginative education and outreach activities and showcasing the local archaeological and historic richness of their collections to people all over Ireland as well as overseas visitors.

The local authority museums' rich collections include some of the most inspiring and unique examples of Ireland's archaeological and historic heritage all of which can be experienced in a diversity of ways. The wide and imaginative range of exhibitions and events provided by local authority museums nationwide demonstrates the catalytic impact of how local museums create social cohesion in their communities. As a group of professional organisations, one of the unique strengths of the LAMN is the ability to continually pioneer new and imaginative programmes for engaging with communities of all ages and all backgrounds.

The LAMN plays a vital role in preserving archaeological heritage. The members of the LAMN are designated museums under Section 68 (2) of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997. Under this legislation each Museum is



legally entitled to retain archaeological objects on behalf of the State. The National Museum of Ireland will only lend objects for display to designated museums.

The members of the LAMN strive to achieve best standards across all areas of museum work. The Museum Standards Programme of Ireland operates under the auspices of the Heritage Council and sets out to raise standards of care across Irish museums and galleries. The programme aims to benchmark and promote professional standards in collections care and to recognise the achievement of those standards within the Irish museum sector. The Programme is fully supported by the LAMN and its members have variously achieved Maintenance of Accreditation, Full Accreditation and Interim Accreditation.

The Local Authority Museums Network is now setting out its strategy for the next few years. The Strategy will build on its achievements to date and focus on ways in which it can continue to strengthen and develop its role, in a sustainable way, for the enjoyment and engagement of communities into the future. Highlights of this strategy include; examining ways to exploit the opportunities presented by technology to promote collections and reach out to new audiences; working collectively to play a distinct role in the Decade of Centenaries and 1916; exploring opportunities for collaboration through the new EU funding programme and continuing to strengthen and develop partnerships with its key stakeholder in order to deliver on its mission.



Making butter during Heritage Week in Donegal County Museum



Strategic Aims and Objectives

Our Mission

We are a national professional network of collections based designated cultural institutions that advocates and promotes the diverse archaeological and historical richness of our museums for the enjoyment and engagement of the communities we serve.

Our Strategic Aims

- To strengthen and raise the profile of the LAMN
- To develop the archaeological and historic resource of our collections for the enjoyment and education of our communities
- To advocate on relevant issues and build partnerships with others

Strategic Aim 1:

To strengthen and raise the profile of the LAMN

Actions

- 1.1 Maximise the potential of social media as a platform to promote our work
- 1.2 Build awareness of the network through increased use of the LAMN logo among the members and opportunities for shared marketing (e.g.: a designated leaflet holder for the LAMN in each museum)
- 1.3 Strengthen the structure of the network through developing a constitution and plan of action, researching job-bridge internships and reviewing membership fees
- 1.4 Research and explore new EU funding opportunities to support joint programmes for North –South cooperation and with Europe



Strategic Aim 2:

To develop the archaeological and historic resource of our collections for the enjoyment and education of our communities.

Actions

- 2.1 Take a co-ordinated and collective approach to involvement with the Decade of Commemorations through a high profile programme of activities e.g.: *Launch of The Young Historian of the Year.*
- 2.2 To organise and develop a joint LAMN *Open Day* to showcase our collections to new and existing communities
- 2.3 To build on the success of past Joint Exhibitions e.g.: The Childhood Exhibition by exploring the potential for new collective exhibitions
- 2.4 Showcase and develop the tourism potential of the network and its activities by building relationships with relevant groups and organisations including Fáilte Ireland
- 2.5 To develop a plan for implementation of joint loans between the members of the network

Strategic Aim 3:

To advocate on relevant issues and build partnerships with others

Actions

- 3.1 Build and develop our relationship with the relevant government departments
- 3.2 Strengthen our relationship with the National Museum of Ireland including the development of a *Code of Practise* relating to loans, exhibitions etc.
- 3.3 Ensure that LAMN is adequately represented in relevant organisations and networks including the *Irish Museums Association; ICOM; Department of Education review group on the curriculum for history in the Junior Cycle*
- 3.4 Build and collect data to highlight the social and economic impact of LAMN including employment numbers; visitor numbers; outreach activities with schools, community groups etc.
- 3.5 Develop existing linkages and create new networks with relevant organisations and groups on a cross border basis.
- 3.6 Actively contribute to relevant national policy developments through participation and submissions e.g.: *Culture 2025*



Our Museum Network



Carlow County Museum



Ground floor exhibition, Carlow County Museum



Cavan County Museum

Carlow County Museum

Carlow County Museum is Ireland's newest local authority museum. The Museum is operated by Carlow County Council but was originally founded in 1973 on a voluntary basis by the Carlow Historical & Archaeological Society. A Museum board made up of both organisations devises the Museum's policies. The Museum opened its new premises in 2012 and is open all year round with free admission. The County Museum is housed in the former Presentation Convent on College Street, Carlow Town. The displays over four galleries (one temporary) give a snapshot of the history and heritage of the county. The building is in a prime town centre location and is part of a complex that also houses the Tourist Office and the Central Library. The Museum has been 'Designated' by the National Museum of Ireland.

Cavan County Museum

Cavan County Museum is a magnificent 19th century building, beautifully situated amid extensive grounds nestling among the lakes and drumlins of East Cavan. The Museum houses the material culture of County Cavan and surrounding districts. Exhibits include the 1,000 year old Lough Errill dug-out boat, the three faced pre-Christian Corleck Head, and medieval Sheela-na-Gigs. Galleries trace the story of the Gaelic Athletic Association in Cavan together with the County's folklife and heritage along with The Great Famine and Farnham collections. Cavan World War I Trench Experience & Exhibition provides an insight into the 'The Great War'. The Trench Experience is the largest outdoor replica trench open to the public in Ireland and the UK.



Cavan County Museum



Clare County Museum

Clare Museum

Clare Museum was established in Ennis in the year 2000 in a former Sisters of Mercy convent and tells the history of County Clare over a period of 6,000 years. The Museum features a permanent exhibition called the Riches of Clare which includes a large collection of objects on loan from the National Museum of Ireland. The Museum also has a strong online presence and maintains a website to provide access to its collection, carrying photos of hundreds of objects, many of which are in storage. The Museum has received Interim Accreditation under the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.



Being an archaeologist at Clare County Museum



Cork Public Museum

Cork Public Museum

The collections of Cork Public Museum, in Fitzgerald Park, Cork City cover the economic, social and municipal history of the city and surrounding areas from the Mesolithic period onwards. The Museum is housed in a two storey Georgian House. Of special significance are the very fine collections of Cork Silver, Cork Glass and Youghal Needlepoint Lace.



Exhibitions at Cork Public Museum



Exhibitions at Cork Public Museum



Donegal County Museum

Donegal County Museum

Donegal County Museum is based in part of the old Letterkenny Workhouse, built in 1846. The Museum houses two exhibition galleries. A series of temporary exhibitions on a wide variety of topics, are held each year in the ground floor gallery. The first floor gallery explores the history of Donegal from the Stone Age to the Twentieth Century. Children and their families can find out more about the history of the county through the Donegal Museum Detectives backpack which is available to borrow free of charge during their visit to the Museum. Visitors can view the North West Film Archive and Islands Archives which contain over 100 hours of film material relating to Donegal and Derry. The Museum also organises a comprehensive programme of activities and events throughout the year both in the Museum and in venues throughout Donegal. Donegal County Museum has achieved both Full and Maintenance of Accreditation in the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland.



Donegal Museum Detectives searching for clues



County Museum, Dundalk

County Museum, Dundalk

The County Museum, Dundalk is a Designated Museum run and operated by Louth County Council. Opened in 1994, it charts the industrial, cultural and archaeological history of County Louth and is one of the largest museums in the country. As a Designated Museum it is one of a select group of Museums in the country which can accept and borrow items from the National Collection.

The Museum boasts a collection of over 60,000 items ranging from perennial favourites such as the Heinkel motorcar and tobacco Indian to everyday items such as flint arrowheads and domestic materials. The Museum recalls a wide range of themes including the archaeology, history and geology of County Louth as well the area's industrial, social and cultural life covering a period of 5,000 years.



The most popular artefact in the County Museum Dundalk, the Heinkel motorcar, made in Dundalk at the end of the 1950s



Galway City Museum

Galway City Museum

Galway City Museum was founded in 1976 and was originally located in Comerford House beside the Spanish Arch.

The new Galway City Museum was officially opened in April 2007. The building was designed by the Office of Public Works and is a Galway City Council initiative to advance the cultural and heritage life of Galway City. The Museum is a spacious, modern building, situated in the heart of Galway city on the banks of the River Corrib and overlooking the famous Spanish Arch. It houses a variety of permanent and touring exhibitions representing Galway's rich archaeology, heritage and history.



Exhibitions at Galway City Museum



Galway City Museum



Kerry County Museum

Kerry County Museum

Located in the Ashe Memorial Hall in the centre of Tralee, Kerry County Museum opened in 1991. It comprises the Medieval Experience, which takes visitors through the sights, sounds and smells of the recreated town; the permanent gallery, which displays the archaeology and history of the county; and a large temporary exhibition space, which hosts major exhibitions. Our mission is to enable people to experience the culture and heritage of Co Kerry through collecting, caring, researching, interpreting and displaying the material history of our county for the enjoyment, education and benefit of all our users and visitors.



Bone investigators, Kerry County Museum



Medieval experience, Kerry County Museum



The Franciscan Friary, new home for Limerick Museum

Limerick Museum

Limerick Museum first appeared on the city rates in 1906, but did not open its doors until 1916. Up to 1970 it was based in the Carnegie Library and, after a short closure, moved to new premises in St. John’s Square in 1979. It moved again to beside King John’s Castle in 1999 where it stayed until 2012. With redevelopment at the castle it moved to a temporary home in City Hall. The Museum plans to celebrate the centenary of the opening in new premises, the former Franciscan church and friary. The Museum collaborates with Limerick Archives for exhibition purposes. The full Museum catalogue is available to browse at museum.limerick.ie



Opening of “Stand up and fight”, military exhibition, Limerick Museum, 2015



The Lace Exhibition, Limerick Museum



Monaghan County Museum

Monaghan County Museum

Monaghan County Museum opened its doors to the public in 1974 becoming the first full time professionally staffed local authority museum in the country. For over forty years the museum staff have worked to promote the cultural diversity and historical richness of the region and to bring that diversity and richness to as wide an audience as possible.

The museum’s extensive collection covers the history of the county from the end of the last Ice Age to the modern day. Its continued commitment to provide a quality service has been rewarded on a number of occasions. In 1980 the museum won the Council of Europe Prize for excellence in community involvement, Monaghan County Museum remains the only Irish museum to have ever won this award. The professionalism of the museum staff has seen this highly respected service receive awards for Best Collections Care in 1993 and again in 2004 under the Irish Museum of the Year Awards.



Monaghan County Museum staff receiving award for full accreditation under the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland



In 2008 Monaghan County Museum led the way again by becoming the first Local Authority Museum in the country to achieve full accreditation under the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland. This list of prestigious awards confirms the Museum's standing as one of the premier cultural attractions in the country.



Some of the objects from the military collections of Monaghan County Museum



Annual Archaeology Summer Camp, Monaghan County Museum



Tipperary County Museum

Tipperary County Museum

Tipperary County Museum's collection was first founded in the 1940's. It was the first purpose-built Local Authority County Museum, located in the heart of Clonmel's civic centre during 2000. The 30,000 strong collection represents themes across many genres including fine art, sculpture, social, political, religious, sport, entertainment, military, industrial and folk life of the County. The Museum has two environmentally controlled galleries, one of which houses some of the permanent collection while the other hosts temporary exhibitions, as well as an onsite store and conservation laboratory. This award-winning Museum is dedicated to education and lifelong learning through visiting exhibitions, workshops and community projects. Our programme of events include an annual lecture series, schools heritage project, medieval camps, collection based workshops and community lead initiatives. Admission is free.



Learning Fencing at Tipperary County Museum's Medieval Camp during Festival Cluain Meala



Waterford Treasures Museums



Reginald's Tower -

Treasures of Viking Waterford

Reginald's Tower is Waterford's landmark monument and Ireland's oldest civic building. The tower houses a permanent exhibition on the treasures of Viking Waterford, including the 9th century sword and weapons from a Viking warrior's grave and the magnificent Waterford Kite Brooch, the finest example of gold and silver secular metalwork in Ireland. The tower is managed by the Office of Public Works.



Medieval Museum –

Treasures of Medieval Waterford

Treasures of Medieval Waterford is Ireland's only purpose-built medieval museum. The museum incorporates the 13th century Choristers' Hall and a 15th century wine vault and takes visitors back to the great age of faith and chivalry. The museum galleries feature some of the great treasures of medieval Ireland and Europe, including the unique 4 metre long illuminated Great Charter Roll of Waterford (1373) as well as the sumptuous cloth-of-gold vestments (1460).



Bishop's Palace –

Treasures of Georgian Waterford

The Bishop's Palace in Cathedral Square was conserved in 2010/11 and opened as a museum in June 2011, displaying the treasures of Georgian and Victorian Waterford. The ground and first floors are laid out as an historic house with displays of 18th century glass, silver, furniture and paintings. The oldest piece of Waterford Glass in the world is a highlight. The top floor continues the story of Waterford up to 1970 ending with the Hucklebuck shoes.



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