

# Hen's Nest



NMI Handling Collection

## What is it?

This hen's nest is made from straw, woven to form a beehive shape. It was made in 2001 by Ted Kelly from County Sligo.

The nests were mostly made from oaten straw, but they might also have been constructed using rushes or grass. Most surviving examples were built in either a round or oval shape.

## What was it used for?

Hens' nests were usually kept in the kitchen. The nests provided a warm and safe place for both hens and chickens. The hens laid and hatched eggs in the nests.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In the middle of the 20th century, people were encouraged to have a separate outbuilding for hens, as the straw nest was considered to be unhygienic.

## Brief History

Until the end of the 19th century, hens were generally kept in the family home. Some families had a hen coop dresser for keeping the hens in at night. Warm and safe from foxes, they produced a supply of eggs for most of the year.

Without a nest or coop, hens could lay their eggs in a number of different places. This was known as 'laying out', and made it very hard to find the eggs.



Mr Laurence Mulligan, Co Longford, making a straw hen's nest for the National Museum of Ireland, 1969

*Image: NMI Collection*

# Nead Chirce



*Bailiúchán Láimhseála AMÉ*

## Céard atá ann?

Déantar an nead chirce seo as tuí, fite chun cruth coirceoige a dhéanamh. Rinne Ted Kelly as Contae Shligigh é in 2001.

Ba as tuí coirce a rinneadh na neadacha de ghnáth, ach d'fhéadfaí iad a thógáil freisin trí úsáid a bhaint as luachair nó féar. Tógadh an chuid is mó de na samplaí atá ann fós i gcruth cruinn nó ubhchruthach.

## Cén úsáid a mbaintear as?

De ghnáth, coinníodh neadacha circe sa chistin. Ar an mbealach sin, bhí na neadacha te agus sábháilte don chearc agus don sicín. Rug na cearca uibheacha agus luigh siad ar na huibheacha sna neadacha.

**AN RAIBH A  
FHÍOS AGAT?**

I lár an 20ú haois, spreagadh daoine foirgneamh scartha lasmuigh a bheith acu do na cearca, toisc gur measadh go raibh an nead tuí míshláinteach.

## Stair Ghairid

Go deireadh an 19ú haois, coinníodh cearc i dteach an teaghlaigh de ghnáth. Bhí drisiúr cúibe circe ag roinnt teaghlach ina gcoinníodh na cearca san oíche. Bhí siad te agus sábháilte ó na sionnaigh, agus thug siad soláthar uibheacha don chuid is mó den bhliain.

Gan nead nó cúb, d'fhéadfadh cearc a n-uibheacha a bhreith i roinnt áiteanna éagsúla. Tugadh 'leagan amach' air seo, agus bhí sé an-deacair na huibheacha a aimsiú.



An tUasal Laurence Mulligan, Co an Longfoirt, ag déanamh nead chirce as tuí d'Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann, 1969

*Pictiúr: Bailiúchán AMÉ*

**museum**

National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

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