

June 2nd 2011

The Treasury

Celtic and Early Christian Ireland

Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht will officially open a new exhibition *The Treasury – Celtic and Early Christian Ireland* on **Tuesday, evening 7th June** at the **National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, Kildare St, D2**.

The Treasury – Celtic and Early Christian Ireland is a new exhibition which introduces the recently-conserved Faddan More Psalter in the context of the National Museum's re-display of its world famous – collection of masterpieces from Celtic and Early Christian Ireland. The Fadden More Psalter was a chance find made in a Tipperary bog in 2006 which has been skilfully conserved and preserved in the National Museum's conservation laboratory at Collins Barracks by John Gillis (*senior conservator*) and Rolly Read (*Head of Conservation*). Its papyrus-lined cover is direct evidence for contact between Ireland and the Mediterranean region over one thousand years ago. This was the first ever discovery of its kind in Ireland and indeed anywhere in the world. It is of international importance and is now on display to the public (**8th June**) for the first time since being found and will be a highlight of this new exhibition.

Commenting on the exhibition, Minister Deenihan said "The development of Irish art from the pagan Iron Age to the twelfth century which is explored in this exhibition highlights the transition from paganism to Christianity and it is the exquisite decorative detail of early Irish metalwork that sets it apart from comparable European material. I am delighted to see that the visitor's experience of this exhibition will be further enhanced by a number of additional multilingual audio-visual and print resources and that there will also be an educational interactive element for younger visitors and an activity trail for families. In an age when technology is ever advancing, it is tremendous to have the Faddan More Psalter on display to act as a reminder of just how rich our Irish heritage is".

The Director of the National Museum of Ireland, Dr Patrick Wallace commented "I am honoured that an object as unique as the Faddan More Psalter is going on display during my time as Director. I am also proud that it was possible for the conservation to take place in the conservation laboratories in the National Museum of Ireland".

The exhibition begins with artefacts of the Celtic Iron Age and includes well-known pieces such as the Brougher gold boat and the Corleck Head. The skill of the Iron Age metalworker is seen in magnificently-produced bronze objects such as the Loughnashade horn which are being displayed in a new and exciting way.

The introduction of Christianity to Ireland in the 5th century AD and its subsequent development is traced in a range of artefacts made in the service of the church. Elaborate treasures of gold and silver speak of the great wealth of the Irish church and its patrons. These include objects such as the Ardagh Chalice and the Derrynaflan Hoard. Spectacular secular artefacts include the famous Tara Brooch, a virtual showcase of the skills of the 8th-century metalworker. The glittering surface of the Tara Brooch is as eye-catching today as it must have seemed when it was first produced.

The exhibition also contains major pieces of ecclesiastical metalwork associated with the church in the 11th and 12th centuries including St Patrick's Bell and its shrine and the Cross of Cong. On display for the first time ever is a unique ivory crozier from Aghadoe, Co. Kerry on loan from the Statens Historiska Museum in Stockholm.

This new exhibition opens to the public on Wednesday 8th June 2011.

FOR MORE PRESS INFORMATION CONTACT

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Images are available through the following link:

<http://www.museum.ie/en/list/treasury-press.aspx> The zip file password is **ardagh**

For any technical issues please contact: webmaster@museum.ie

A photo call will take place on Tuesday 7th June at 5.30pm within the exhibition space at the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, Kildare Street. Details to follow.

Notes to the Editor:

This new exhibition opens to the public on Wednesday 8th June 2011.

Extra Resources: Extra resources have been developed to help visitors explore the exhibition. These are outlined below:

Audio Guide - *The Treasury - Celtic and Early Christian Ireland* audio-guide is the first dedicated audio guide at the National Museum and is available in an MP3-Album format, *free to download* from the NMI Website at www.museum.ie/audio. There are approximately 30 tracks which were scripted by specialist curators from the National Museum and are available in 6 languages (*English, Irish, French, German, Spanish, and Italian*). They provide insightful descriptions of artefacts as well as interesting associated facts. Once downloaded, the tracks can be played on the visitor's iPhone, iPod, Android Phone or MP3 player as an album. For visitors who have smart-phones or tablets but have not downloaded the album prior to their visit, they will be able to connect to a local Wifi network streaming each of the tracks. Finally, for visitors who do not have a smartphone or who require a physical keypad for accessibility purposes, a physical audio-guide will also be available in limited quantity and for a small fee through our Museum shop and redeemable in the shop.

Sincere thanks to the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Technology Fund 2010 for the development of the audio-guides.

The Treasury Trail - The Treasury Trail was developed by our Education & Outreach Department and is an activity trail through the exhibition for families to use and which is available on site free of charge.

Shop: To complement this exciting new exhibition we have developed a new product range which we feel has something to suit all ages and interests available to purchase in our Museum shop. The National Museum has produced two new booklets-; ***10 Major Pieces from the Treasury*** and also ***Reading The Faddan More Psalter: An Introduction***. In addition an 80-page book entitled *The Faddan More Psalter – Discovery, Conservation and Investigation* has also been developed which focuses solely on the Faddan More Psalter.

Admission to the National Museum of Ireland and its Exhibitions is Free

Groups intending to visit the museum and this exhibition need to book via our Bookings Office by email bookings@museum.ie or telephone 01 648 6453.

Open Tuesday – Saturday 10.00am – 5.00pm, Sunday 2.00pm – 5.00pm