

'What's in the Museum?'
Resource Pack for Post Primary Teachers

Education & Outreach Department © 2011

museum

National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

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INTRODUCTION

The 'What's in the Museum?' introductory pack is for Post Primary teachers who wish to bring their students on a self-directed visit to the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts and History. It provides information on the Museum and some of its displays.

The Education & Outreach staff developed this pack. Their extensive experience in delivering tours and workshops to schools, and in observing how students learn in the Museum, is the basis for the information in the pack.

The pack aims to:

1. Provide teachers with essential resources and information to enable them to introduce the Museum and its collections of material heritage to their students.
2. Enable teachers to introduce key concepts, for example:
 - Why do people and museums collect?
 - What can we learn from objects as visual sources of evidence?
 - What else do museums do? For example, museums collect, store and conserve collections; they also put these collections on display; and they interpret and communicate the collections through exhibitions and learning programmes.
3. Provide teachers with practical advice on bringing their group around the Museum:
 - How to make the most of your Museum visit
 - Pre- and post-visit tips and advice
 - What to do when you are at the Museum
 - How to encourage students to observe, describe and analyse objects
 - How to use the visit as a resource for further learning
4. Provide information on 10 artefacts in two galleries
 - Visual information
 - Social, cultural and historical contexts
 - Glossary of relevant terms and further reading and resources section

CURRICULUM LINKS

The key curriculum links the teacher can make on a museum visit using the **'What's in the Museum?'** resource pack are within the History and Art curriculum. However, there are important opportunities to make connections across a range of curricula - and so to use the visit as a way of integrating a range of subjects:

History

- Working as an Historian
- Using Evidence
- Social and Political Change

Art

- Observation and Analysis
- Drawing/ Construction/ Fabric and Fibre

Other subject links:

English

- Cognitive skills: speaking and listening skills
- Communication



BEFORE YOUR VISIT

1. If you can, try to visit the Museum before bringing your group. Advance preparation can be very helpful – feedback from teachers has shown that it can make a huge difference to how your group experiences the Museum. An advance visit will also familiarise you with the gallery layout and other facilities.

If it is not possible to visit in advance, however, then a visit to the Museum website is strongly recommended. Visit, for example, the pages on the galleries featured in this pack:

Curator's Choice and Out of Storage

<http://www.museum.ie/en/exhibition/curators-choice.aspx>

<http://www.museum.ie/en/exhibition/list/out-of-storage.aspx>

Other recommended pages include the pages for post primary teachers and the conservation pages, which will provide a broader view of the work of the Museum:

Explore and Learn

<http://www.museum.ie/en/list/schools-and-colleges-arts-history.aspx>

Conservation

<http://www.museum.ie/en/list/studios.aspx>

2. Book your visit through the Education & Outreach Department; and please book well ahead of time – we cannot guarantee that you will have access to galleries if you do not book in advance.
3. Have a classroom discussion about the visit. Here are suggested questions and topics for discussion:

Why do people collect? Why do museums collect?

A discussion about collecting and collections can be very constructive – asking the students about their own collections is a good starting point in talking about museum collections. Is it important to have regional or national museums? Encourage students to think about family collections, for example, photographs or videos, mementos or holiday souvenirs and also about other collections they might have encountered before. How do we decide what is accessioned to collections? How do we put value on objects?



Post Primary School students in Clarke Square, Collins Barracks



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MUSEUM VISIT

Practical issues

- Teachers must book self-directed visits through the Education & Outreach Department. Booked groups will have precedence over groups who arrive unannounced.
- We recommend that the optimum time for the self-directed gallery session is 45 minutes – 1 hour maximum. You can spend time afterwards in some of the other galleries in the Museum or in Clarke Square.
- The Museum asks that a minimum ratio of 1 adult per 15 students is adhered to.
- If you are visiting with more than 15 students, we ask that you split your class into two smaller groups accompanied by one adult minimum per group: one group can start in 'Curator's Choice', while the other group starts in 'Out of Storage', swapping rooms at an agreed time during the session.
- When you arrive at the Museum, please report your arrival to the main reception, present your Booking Confirmation Form and give your name as group leader and the name of your group. In the event that you do not report to reception, other booked groups who have reported to reception may get precedence over your group when entering the galleries. Please note that not reporting to reception is also in contravention of the Museum's Child Protections Policy. For more on this policy go to:
<http://www.museum.ie/en/list/policies.aspx>
- There is limited storage for coats and bags at the Museum reception area, so large groups are advised to bring as little as possible with them into the Museum. Groups arriving by bus should store bags and coats on the bus. There is a lunch room that can be booked through the bookings office, where bags and coats can also be stored while in the Museum.
- Clipboards and pencils for notes and drawing can be provided only if they are requested in advance when booking the visit.

Making the most of your Museum visit

Getting Started

- A brief history of Collins Barracks is included in the pack. We recommend you begin your visit in Clarke Square and talk about the building and its history. If the weather is not good, you might prefer to start in the first gallery, 'Curator's Choice', which is on the first floor. Plans of the two galleries on which the pack is based are included in the resource pack.
- When you are in the galleries, please use them as your temporary 'classroom': for example, ask questions, have discussions, and encourage plenty of interaction. Be aware, however, that each gallery is a public space and you may be sharing it with members of the public.



Making the most of your Museum visit

What to do in the Galleries

- As stated in Curriculum Links, the visit provides great opportunities to integrate a range of subjects.
- Each of the 10 factsheets gives a range of suggested questions you can ask students, drawing on their observational and imaginative skills.
- Students can be encouraged to build on prior knowledge through observation, discussion, listening, analysing and drawing conclusions as a group.
- Encourage your students to understand the concept of multiple views or truths; students can learn that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to some questions and that the same sources can be interpreted in different ways.
- Encourage your students to understand that objects can reveal stories – through looking at an object we can find out:
 - How old it might be**
 - What materials were used in its construction**
 - What it was used for**
 - Who or what kind of person might have owned it**



A Brief History of Collins Barracks

- Originally named the 'Barracks, Dublin', it was the first purpose built barracks in Ireland and Britain. Unlike most barracks, it was designed to house both cavalry (soldiers who fight on horseback) and infantry (foot soldiers) regiments.
- It was first occupied in 1707.
- By 1710 there was accommodation for 1,500 soldiers and stables for 150 horses.
- The Barracks was a huge complex of 17 acres (just under 8 hectares) with four squares.

The Barracks in the 19th century

- During the 19th century the 'Royal Barracks', as it was then called, underwent substantial changes. Large arch gateways and stone guardhouses were built at the corners.
- The river Liffey was aligned in 1830 and the spacious area in front of the barracks became a drilling (training) ground.
- A parliamentary report in 1880 found that there was a higher death rate for people living in the Barracks than for those living outside it. The report found that 1% of the people living at the Royal Barracks died in a single year.
- Between January 1879 and October 1887 there were several outbreaks of typhoid in the barracks. Typhoid is a deadly disease spread by unclean water.
- In 1887 a parliamentary enquiry recommended demolishing some of the buildings.
- In the late 19th century sanitation was improved. A canteen and cook houses were built on site and each soldier now slept in a single iron bed.
- Many soldiers who were stationed at the Royal Barracks took part in wars that were led by the British Empire, such as the Crimean War (1853-56), Queen Victoria's colonial wars in India, South Africa and Egypt and World War One (1914-1918).

The Barracks in the 20th century

- Irish independence in 1922 meant that the British Army left the Barracks. In December 1922 the Barracks was handed over to the Irish Free State Army under the command of General Richard Mulcahy.
- It was no longer known as 'Royal Barracks' but renamed after the former commander-in-chief of the Irish Army, Michael Collins, who was killed in August of 1922.
- Throughout the following decades Collins Barracks was used by the Free State Army and, until 1997, by the Irish Defence Forces.

A Brief History of Collins Barracks

Events in Focus 1798 Rebellion

- During the 1798 rebellion executions were carried out at the Barracks (and at Arbour Hill, which is situated behind the Barracks).
- Rebels were held in the old provost prison (which it is said was situated in the north east corner of Clarke Square, today the extension building featuring the 'Soldiers & Chiefs' galleries).
- One of the prisoners was Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763–1798) who was detained here in November 1798 and sentenced to death by hanging after being charged with treason. Before the sentence was carried out Wolfe Tone died in his cell on the 19th of November from a neck wound.

Easter Rising 1916

- During the Easter Rising in 1916, the 10th Royal Irish Fusiliers, stationed at the Royal Barracks, were sent out to fight the insurgents who were positioned in the General Post Office and other key locations in Dublin city centre. One of the first battles of Easter 1916 took place in front of the Barracks.
- Following the surrender, the 2nd Sherwood Foresters from this Barracks supplied the guards to escort the leaders of the Rising to and from the military courts.
- After the Rising, fourteen of the leaders were executed at Kilmainham Gaol and anonymously buried in Arbour Hill. Today, there is a memorial on this site, which is open to the public.

You will find more information on the history of the Barracks and the life of the soldiers in the 'Barracks Life Room'. This room also provides computer interactives, reconstructions and replica uniforms to try on.



Top image: Detail from the plan of the city of Dublin by John Roque, 1756.
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

Bottom image: A view of the Barracks of Dublin, 1796 by James Malton.
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

GALLERY OVERVIEW

'CURATOR'S CHOICE'

- The gallery displays 25 objects which have been chosen by different curators as their own personal favourites for both personal and historical reasons.
- These artefacts relate to the political, social and economic history of Ireland, or are associated with particular figures in Irish history.
- One of the themes of the Gallery is that every object can tell a story, or several stories and that through these stories, objects document our history.
- Curators are the people in the Museum who acquire objects and select objects for exhibition. The reasons for their choices are explained in direct quotes, which you can read on the graphic panels and on the factsheets.
- Curators also devise and plan exhibitions, research the artefacts in their collections, work with conservators to care for their collections and work with museum educators to communicate the collections to the public.
- Museum conservators are responsible for the long term care of the collections. Conservators ensure that the collections on display and in stores are kept in a safe condition; they treat objects to prevent further damage and they investigate objects to find out how they were made, for example through microscopic examination or x-ray.

Themes that you can explore in this gallery with students are:

- How we can 'read' or deconstruct an object to find out its history
- How objects end up in museums
- What do museums do?
- What is a curator?
- The gallery can also stimulate discussion on personal collections or favourite or important objects. Students could be asked to talk about an object they own that they feel tells a story about them. For example, they might own objects that mark important events or milestones such as an important birthday, the passing of an exam or participation in a competition..

Gallery Overview 'Curator's Choice'

At the Museum you can also:

Book the workshop, 'If Things Could Talk...'

This workshop aims to explore the purpose of museums, the role of the curator and the meanings that we invest in objects.

For more information go to the website-

<http://www.museum.ie/en/list/schools-and-colleges-arts-history.aspx>



Fleetwood Cabinet

Worth Gown

Gauntlets

Lismullen Decanter

Crucifixion Stone

GALLERY OVERVIEW 'OUT OF STORAGE'

- This exhibition is intended to evoke a museum storage facility – notice the gallery design and the way in which the objects are displayed.
- The exhibition's title also refers to the fact that much of what is known as the 'Art and Industrial' collection was kept in storage for many years before this exhibition opened in 1997, when the Museum at Collins Barracks was inaugurated.
- The gallery also aims to show the variety and breadth of the 'Art and Industrial' collections, and convey the evolution of the collection over the past two hundred and fifty years.
- The Science and Art Museum, Dublin was established by an Act of Parliament in 1877 and the first objects registered in 1878. The nucleus of the Museum's collection was that of the following three museums:
The Royal Dublin Society
The Royal Irish Academy
The Museum of Irish Industry
- These earlier collections were run mainly by wealthy gentlemen of leisure, who travelled the world to bring back artefacts as souvenirs and trophies of their journeys.
- People also donated artefacts to these collections motivated by philanthropy and also by a desire to be remembered.
- The Museum as we know it today then went through further changes, influenced by political and social events – the table shows the evolution of the collections from 1877 to the present day and objects on display which reflect the changing collecting policies:

When	Collection/ Museum	Key Collecting Policy	Examples of Artefacts on Display
1877	Science and Art Museum, Dublin	To acquire objects to encourage an understanding of art and the role of design in manufacture	Art nouveau glass, the Japanese palanquin and the samurai suit of armour
1899	National Museum of Science and Art	To collect objects to encourage rural and home industries There was a greater emphasis on collecting Irish objects, as control of the Museum moved from London to Dublin	Examples of lace To record Irish history the Museum accepted the donation of the life buoy and oar from the Lusitania
1922	National Museum of Ireland	To acquire Irish material and objects relating to Irish history	Parnell Freedom Box The Great Seal of Ireland Pugh glass Examples of Belleek

Gallery Overview 'Out of Storage'

Themes that you can explore in this gallery with students are:

- Collections and collecting – how we value objects
- What criteria do we use when deciding whether to keep something in a collection or not keep it?
- Discuss reasons behind the Museum's collecting policies and how political and social changes influenced these policies.

For example, Asian art became fashionable towards the end of the 19th century and this is reflected in what the Museum collected at that time. After Irish independence, there was a desire to highlight the best of what was Irish and 'hide' from view what was seen to be British.

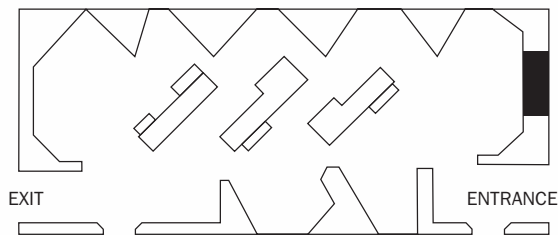
- You could discuss the different ways objects end up in museums – through donations, purchase, or through being 'found' and then donated, as in the example of the life buoy from the Lusitania.
- What is on display in 'Out of Storage' is from abroad as well as Ireland. For example, there are objects from Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Greece as well as objects from China, Japan, Iran and India. Students might be asked what they think about objects that have come from other countries. Should they be returned to the country of their origin? Or is it a positive thing that we have examples of objects to represent a range of cultures?



Fleetwood Cabinet



Floorplan - Curator's Choice 1



Location:

The cabinet is immediately on your right as you enter the 'Curator's Choice' gallery.

The Story Behind the Object

This portable cabinet is a fine example of 17th century Flemish furniture. It incorporates the skill of the cabinet-maker, the silversmith (there are ornate silver panels with fruit and foliage) and the artist. There are ten painted panels based on scenes from one of Ovid's collection of poems 'Metamorphosis'. Behind the painted panels are concealed compartments, which would have been used to store coins, jewellery and botanical specimens. Cabinets or chests with images of romantic scenes were often part of women's trousseaux on their wedding day. To have a piece of furniture from this period in an Irish museum collection is quite rare, as very little Irish-owned furniture from the 17th century has survived. One of the reasons that so much was lost is due to Ireland's turbulent history during this period, from the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland (1649-1653) to the Williamite Wars (1689-1691).

'This cabinet is a very fine example of the cabinetmaker's craft incorporating the work of the silversmith and the artist, but the reason I have chosen it is because of its associations with a significant figure in Irish history'

Paul Doyle, Curator



Things to Think and Talk About

Acquisition

It is believed that Oliver Cromwell gave this cabinet to his daughter Bridget on her marriage to her second husband General Charles Fleetwood in 1652. After Bridget's death in 1662, it ended up in the possession of Sarah Burkitt, her niece. The cabinet remained in the Burkitt family until 1862 when Alexander Horace Burkitt sold it to his sister. She subsequently left it to Miss Frances Margaret Andrews of Terenure Road, Dublin, who was a relative of her husband. In 1931, Miss Andrews in turn bequeathed the cabinet to the National Gallery as a gift (see the plaque on the front). In 1932 the cabinet was given on loan and transferred from the National Gallery of Ireland to the National Museum of Ireland.

Ways of Collecting

- Do you, your family members or friends collect anything?
- How do you acquire objects?

Objects and their Meanings

- You can discuss the different types of value we attach to objects – be it in personal or national collections. Objects gain value through the meanings we give them.
- What importance does a piece like this cabinet have to a National Museum? Why do you think the National Museum has chosen to display this particular cabinet?
(You can include in the discussion issues such as provenance/ its connection to a central figure in history/ the rarity of this type of furniture in Ireland.)
- Do you think that objects reveal things about their owners? For example, what did you learn about Oliver Cromwell, and did it change your perception of him?

Observation and Analysis: Design

- Can you see how the cabinet has been put together?
(The cabinet features wooden inlays and joints.)
- The makers were craftsmen who usually worked on commission. Do you think there might be any comparisons to this type of work today?
(You can find pieces of contemporary furniture that were made by designers such as the *Suaimhneas* chair by Joseph Walsh in the Furniture Gallery on the second floor.)

Social Change

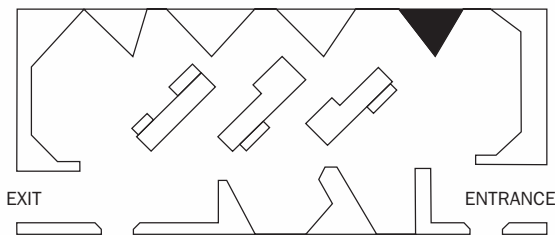
- A piece like this would probably have been placed in the bedroom, due to the romantic and possibly moral imagery. During the 17th century, the bedroom was not a private place. It was often used as a state room and would therefore have contained the grandest furniture of the house such as the bed, and wardrobe, as well as carved and painted cabinets.
- Did strict rules of furnishing interiors survive? Where would a grand piece of furniture, like a cabinet, be placed today?

FACTSHEET 2

Worth Gown



Floorplan - Curator's Choice 2



Location:

You will see the dress on your right as you enter the 'Curator's Choice' gallery.

The Story Behind the Object

This dress was worn by a Mrs Meagher, wife of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Thomas Meagher, on the day of his inauguration in 1885. It would have been worn as a formal outfit at a time when rooms were dimly lit by gas and candle light. (Electric light only became available in the 1890s.) This dress cost about £60.00 when it was made; today, the equivalent amount would be approximately €4,000. The National Museum bought the dress on 27 July 1966 from the grand-niece of Mrs Meagher, a Miss B. Egan of Sandycove in Dublin. The Museum paid £25 for the dress; today, the equivalent amount would be about €380.

'The sheen of this gowns' satin and the brilliance of its brocade captivated me'

Colleen M. Dube, Curator



Fashion and Shape

Things to Think and Talk About

This dress was made by English-born Charles Frederick Worth (1825-1895). Worth was one of the first high fashion designers and he is credited with being the first fashion designer to put labels onto the clothing he manufactured. The dress has a bustle at the back, a typical feature of Victorian dresses. Mrs. Meagher would also have worn a corset underneath her waist coat. Corsets were made from whale bone and later from spring steel; and aimed to give women a slim waistline.

Material

The gown is made from velvet and satin, which can now be manufactured artificially. Traditionally, however, satin is made from silk – and silk was originally produced in China. The emperors of China strove to keep the method of silk production secret to maintain the Chinese monopoly; and the secret of silk-making only reached Europe around AD 550. Italy and France became important centres of silk production in medieval Europe.

Observation and Analysis

- In spite of its age, this dress is still in good condition. What is it about the shape and design of the dress that reveals its age?.
- Discuss the materials of the dress. Are they natural or artificial?
- Why is there so much material?

You could talk about:

Clothes that conform - for example, school uniforms, sports kit, business suits, army uniforms or street styles

Clothes that 'show off' – clothes such as the Worth Gown, party clothes, 'debs' dresses and suits, fashion labels

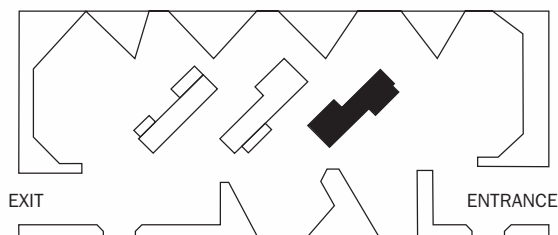
Clothes worn for practical reasons – raincoats or wellington boots

Visit the gallery 'The Way We Wore: 250 Years of Irish Clothing and Jewellery' on the third floor of the Museum where themes raised here are developed.

Gauntlets



Floorplan - Curator's Choice 3



Location:

The gauntlets are displayed in the first case at the centre of the Curator's Choice gallery.

The Story Behind the Object

These gloves or gauntlets were given by William of Orange (King William III) to Sir John Dillon of Lismullen, Co. Meath, following the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. After the battle, William of Orange spent a night on his way to Dublin as a guest of the Dillon family. According to a story that has been handed down through generations of the Dillon family, the King left five items with the house (two pairs of gauntlets plus decanter, posset bowl and a velvet table cover) before he set out the next morning. This gesture was in keeping with William's well-known and established custom of giving personal belongings as tokens of recognition to those who offered him their service.

'The Battle of the Boyne in July 1690 is, like the 1916 Rising, a decisive moment in Irish history; and I have always been amazed that these gloves have survived for 321 years in such wonderful condition!'

Lar Joye, Curator



Things to Think and Talk About

Historical context

The famous Battle of the Boyne was fought near Drogheda, between Catholic King James II and Protestant King William III over their rival claim to the English, Scottish and Irish thrones. William won the battle and his ultimate victory marked an era of Protestant rule in Ireland. From about 1695, harsh 'penal laws' came into effect with devastating consequences for Irish Catholics.

(See FACTSHEET 5 on the Crucifixion Stone in this pack.)

Materials and Meaning

- These gauntlets were probably made in the Netherlands around 1689-1690. Gauntlets are the name for a pair of gloves, which usually have an extended cuff. The gauntlets are made of buckskin (young male goat or deer). The embroidery shows stylized foliage and flowers with a fringed edge. In the 17th century, gauntlets formed part of a man's armour when he went into battle.

Did you know?

- Gloves in the 17th century were symbols of authority, ceremony and chivalry.
- Gloves were often offered and accepted as valuable gifts between people in this period of history.

Observation and Analysis

- Discuss the materials of the gauntlets. Why do you think King William's gloves are so ornate? Do you think he wore these gauntlets in the battle?

Imagination and Empathy

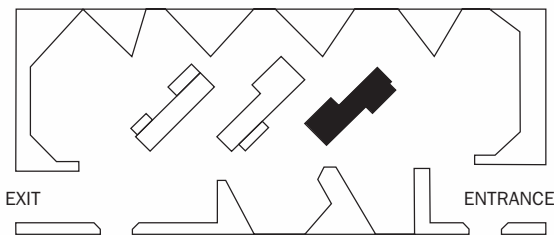
- Can you imagine what it might have been like to have witnessed the Battle of the Boyne in 1690? Describe an eyewitness account of what you might have seen then.
- The victory of King William III at the Battle of the Boyne is still controversially celebrated in Ireland by the Protestant 'Orange Order' on the Twelfth of July every year. Why do you think the Orange Order still marks this occasion?
- What is the purpose of commemorating historical events like the Battle of the Boyne? Do you think commemorating prominent Irish military battles is relevant in Ireland today? Discuss.

You can see more objects relating to warfare in the 17th century in the 'Soldiers and Chiefs' gallery.

Lismullen Decanter



Floorplan - Curator's Choice 4



Location:

The Lismullen Decanter is positioned next to the gauntlets in the first central display case of the Curator's Choice gallery.

The Story Behind the Object

This is a wine decanter made of glass, dating from the late 17th century. It originally belonged to King William III (William of Orange), and he gave it as a gift to Sir John Dillon of Lismullen, Co. Meath, following the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. William had spent the second night after the Battle of the Boyne as a guest of the Dillon family. The story goes that before he set out the next morning, William left five items with the house, as a mark of his appreciation. Among the items given was this glass wine decanter (as well as the gauntlets). This generous gesture was in keeping with William's well-known, established custom of giving personal belongings as tokens of recognition to those who gave him their service.

'What I find most interesting about this glass is its important connection to historical events – in particular military history.'

Catherine McIvor, Curator



Things to Think and Talk About

Materials & Meaning

This wine decanter is made of a heavy white flint-glass metal. Look for the large and small bubbles which it contains. It is ornately decorated with a wheel engraving of William III's coat of arms, a gun, powder kegs, pistol, sword and other war trophies. This is one of the earliest examples of flint glass and it is likely that it was designed and made in England.

Historical context of Flint Glass

The production of flint glass was only developed in the 1670s but by the end of the 17th century, it was widely produced in England. This flint glass decanter is first-hand evidence of this robust and clear glass-ware, which was used at the English royal table during military campaigns such as the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

Working as an Historian

- It is often the connection to a famous individual and/or an historical event that is said to imbue an object with importance and a sense of history, making it worthy of display. Discuss whether that association elevates everyday items to important records of history.
- What sort of a status did this object confer on its original owner? What value did it have when it was first produced
- Was this object a necessity or a luxury?

Imagination and Empathy

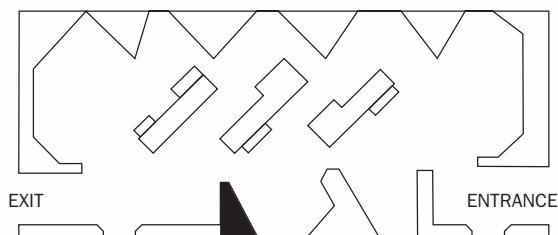
- Do you notice the large crack and staples on the surface of the glass? What might have happened to cause the crack in the glass decanter?
- During the Civil War, in 1923, Lismullen House was destroyed by fire and there was little time to save the possessions. The gifts of William III were brought to safety, but the glass was damaged.

You can see more objects that relate to the Irish Civil War in the 'Soldiers and Chiefs' exhibition (gallery 6) on the first floor.

Crucifixion Stone



Floorplan - Curator's Choice 4



Location:

Enter the Curator's Choice gallery, pass the wooden statue in front of you, walk past the bell to your left and you will see the Crucifixion Stone straight ahead.

The Story Behind the Object

This Crucifixion Stone was found in the early 1950s in a small room (1x1.5m) of a house in Summerhill, Co. Meath. It dates from 1740 (see carved date at the top) and is associated with the restrictions on the practice of religion during 'penal times'. The Stone depicts a crucifixion scene using various symbols associated with the death of Jesus Christ: for example the ladder, the dice and the rooster. Some of these symbols date from early Christian times. The arrangement of symbols as seen on this stone was also used on Irish family tombstones from the 15th century onwards and on 18th and 19th century 'penal' crosses.

'The stone was chosen as an example of a religious artefact which has been finely and skilfully carved. The survival of the symbols in religious folk-art through the centuries of political and religious upheaval is clear testimony to the strength of tradition.'

Dr Anne O'Dowd, Curator



Things to Think and Talk About

Historical Context: Penal Laws

From 1695 to 1709, the Dublin Parliament passed a series of laws known as the Penal Laws. These laws guaranteed the rule of the Protestant ascendancy. They excluded Catholics and religious minority groups from public worship and public offices (jobs), the right to vote, owning property and carrying arms. Although the enforcement of the Penal Laws was relaxed greatly in the course of the 18th century, full Catholic emancipation was not granted until 1830.

Observation and Analysis: Symbols

- What is a crucifixion? (An ancient method of painful execution in which the condemned person is tied or nailed to a large wooden cross and left to hang until dead)

- Describe the images on the stone. Do you know what they symbolise?

Rooster: The rooster is the bringer of dawn: like Christ, it is a symbol of hope. According to the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), it also relates to Peter betraying Jesus before the rooster crows three times.

Three Nails: Three nails symbolise the crucifixion – two for Christ's hands and a third for his feet.

The Hammer: A symbol of "The Passion"; and used to nail Jesus to the Cross. (Passion is the Christian term used for the events and suffering of Jesus in the hours before and during his execution by crucifixion.)

The Spear: A symbol of "The Passion"; and used to pierce Christ's side.

The Ladder: It symbolises Jacob's dream as found in Genesis 28:12. Usually, it has a sheet wrapped around it and is sometimes portrayed along with a reed and sponge. A ladder was used to get Jesus' body down from the cross after he died.

The Die (Dice): A symbol of "The Passion", referring specifically to the account found in John 29:23-24 where the soldiers cast lots for Jesus' coat.

- At what time of the year do Christians celebrate mass as a reminder of the crucifixion of Jesus?

Working as an Historian

- One of the things Catholics did while the Penal Laws were enforced, was to have secret masses in hidden rooms in houses or outside in the hedges and woods. This stone was found in a small walled-up room in a house in Co. Meath in the early 1950s. Discuss whether this confirms that secret masses actually happened?

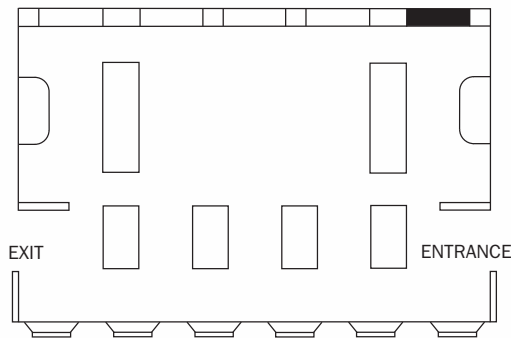
Political and Religious Change

- The Irish Constitution of 1937 guarantees freedom of worship and rules that the State may not discriminate on religious grounds (Article 44.2). Which religions are practiced in Ireland today? What places of worship exist in your local area?

Presentation Box



Floorplan - Out of Storage 1



Location:

Turn right upon entering the Out of Storage Gallery and you will see the silver presentation box in the display cabinet at the wall in front of you.

The Story Behind the Object

This box, called a "Freedom Box", was presented by the Nationalists of Drogheda to the Irish nationalist leader Charles Stewart Parnell in 1884. The box has a roof-like lid with figures of a wolf hound and of Hibernia. There are interlaced designs and Irish motifs such as shamrock, round towers and wolf hounds at each corner of the casket. At the front of the casket, there is an image of the former Parliament building near Trinity College Dublin (today a Bank of Ireland building); before the Act of Union (1800), the Irish Parliament was housed here. In the late 19th century the building was used by constitutional Nationalists as a symbol for Irish Home Rule. Kilmainham Gaol (Dublin) is pictured on the left at the front of the casket. Charles Stewart Parnell was imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol between 1881 and 1882.



Things to Think and Talk About

How did it work

Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891) was leader of the Home Rule League and President of the Irish National Land League, which sought to stop the exploitation of tenant farmers. In 1881, the British government under William Ewart Gladstone introduced the *Second Land Act*, establishing a Land Commission that reduced rents and enabled some tenants to buy their farms. This halted random evictions, at least where tenant farmers had paid their rent. Parnell attacked this Land Act in speeches and through his newspaper *The United Ireland*, and was imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol. While he was in gaol (1881-1882), negotiations with the British government led to the so-called *Kilmainham Treaty*. After the *Treaty* was agreed, other members of the Land League who were imprisoned with Parnell were then released from prison. This transformed Parnell from a respected leader to a national hero.

Design and Meaning

- List the images and symbols featured on the presentation box and discuss their origins. Why were these used as symbols of Irish national identity?
- Can you still find them in the public sphere in Ireland today?
- Are there other symbols used today to express Irish identities?
- What do Kilmainham Gaol and the former Parliament building at College Green house today? Does this tell you anything about the values of contemporary Irish society? (A discussion around the role of museums and places of collective memory like Kilmainham Gaol could follow. Do we need them? If so, why?)

Combining Approaches and Drawing Conclusions

- What might have been the intention of the Nationalists of Drogheda in presenting this box to Charles Stewart Parnell?
- The decoration on this box has a political significance. Do you think this influences the artistic value people might attach to the box?

Did You Know

Freedom boxes were presented to people who were granted the 'Freedom of the City'. For some time in the 18th century, this honour carried significant benefits such as the allowance to practice free trade, vote in municipal elections and pasture sheep on common ground within the city boundaries, for example on St Stephen's Green in Dublin. By the 19th century, the 'Freedom of the City' was a purely ceremonial honour.

- Do you know any awards bestowed by Irish cities today? (The Freedom of the City of Dublin is still being granted today, although not very often. Bono (U2) received this award and brought sheep into St Stephen's Green, using the historic right to pasture as a publicity stunt.)

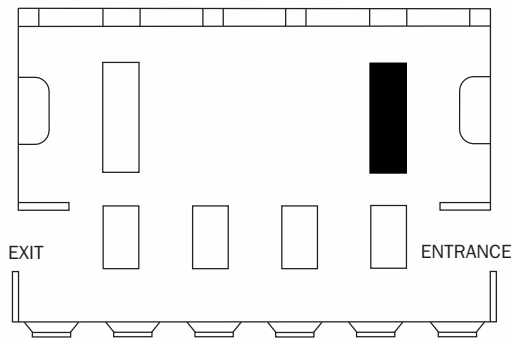
Visit the first room of the 'Irish Silver' exhibition on the same floor and explore other Irish freedom boxes.

On level two of the 'Out of Storage' gallery you can also see dishes featuring Irish symbols and nationalists, including Charles Stewart Parnell.

Palanquin



Floorplan - Out of Storage 2



Location:

Go to the centre of the gallery. Facing the wall with tall display cases, the Palanquin is to your right on top of the shelf, above the sign with a number 6.

The Story Behind the Object

This palanquin from Japan was bought by the National Museum of Ireland (then the Dublin Museum of Science and Art) in 1893. It is a kind of carriage designed for the transport of one passenger. This particular palanquin dates back to the middle of the 18th century, which is known as the Edo period (1603 – 1868); Edo (Japanese for 'river gate') is the original name of Tokyo. The palanquin is made from lacquered wood. Lacquer is made from the sap of an Asian tree (*rhus vernicifera*) and is applied to the object in many different layers. Painting something in lacquer is a highly time-consuming process because the lacquer takes a very long time to dry. Metal dust was sprinkled onto the wet lacquer – and this is how the surface appears to look burnished.



Things to Think and Talk About

How did it work

The palanquin's passenger would have got in and out through a sliding door on one side, which can be seen from the upper level of the 'Out of Storage' gallery. Six servants (or 'hammals') would have carried the palanquin: they took turns, with two at the back, two at the front, and two resting. A team of six hammals could travel about thirty miles from sunrise to sunset. If a longer journey had been planned, servants would be sent off days in advance to station themselves at ten-mile intervals along the road. By this system, a journey could be continued day and night at the rate of about one hundred miles in twenty-four hours.

Decoration and Meaning

The decorative patterns on the palanquin would have had a specific meaning in 18th-century Japan. The circular pattern with what looks like a shamrock or love hearts inside a circle is called the 'Mitsuba Aoi'. This is the coat of arms of the Tokugawa family which ruled Japan during the Edo period.

- Who, do you think, might have owned it? Draw your conclusion by examining the size, the colour, the decoration and the function of the palanquin.

Imagination and Empathy

- What do you think this object might have been used for
- Do you think it would have been hard to carry?
- How many people do you think it would hold?
- Do you think it was for an adult or for someone younger?
- Which symbols might have been used in an Irish family crest or on means of transport used in Ireland?

Did You Know

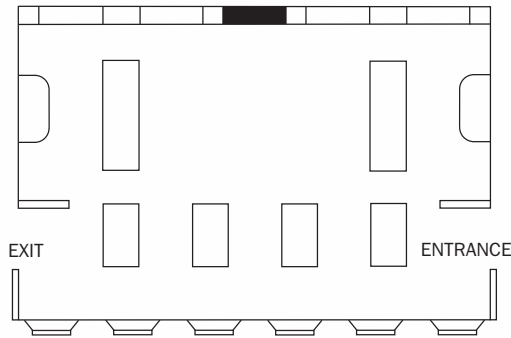
- The Irish designer and architect, Eileen Gray (1878-1976) used ancient Japanese lacquer techniques to create modern decorative objects such as tables and screens. Eileen Gray eventually came to be recognised as a very important designer and architect of the 20th century. There is an exhibition on Gray's life and work on the third floor of this Museum: here you can see a small lacquer panel by Gray dating from 1917, which depicts the Irish legend 'The Children of Lir'.

You can see close up details of the Palanquin and other objects in the 'Out of Storage' gallery on the computer stations in the centre of the room.

Greek Bell Krater



Floorplan - Out of Storage 3



Location:

Go to the centre of the 'Out of Storage' gallery. Facing the wall with tall display cases, the Greek bell krater is in front of you on the bottom shelf.

The Story Behind the Object

The Krater is from ancient Greece and dates to around the 5th century BC. The word krater is a version of the Greek word for mixing: this krater is a bowl for mixing wine and water together; and for this reason, you will find on the bowl images of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, joy and ecstasy. In ancient Greece a krater would have been used as one of five different drinking utensils at parties attended by men. This type of krater is shaped like a bell, hence the name 'bell krater'.

It is the oldest object on display in the 'Out of Storage' gallery. John David La Touche bought this vase in the late 18th century when he was sixteen years of age and on his Grand Tour in Italy. He acquired the object from James Clark, a Scottish scholar and collector living in Rome.



Things to Think and Talk About

Biographical Connection

The La Touche's were a wealthy Huguenot banking family that had a seat at Marlay Grange in Rathfarnham (Dublin) and at Lough Tay near Luggala in Co. Wicklow. David La Touche (John de la Touche's father) was the first President of the Bank of Ireland when it operated out of St Mary's Abbey in Dublin, before it acquired the College Green site after the Act of Union. The Greek bell krater stayed in the La Touche family and was passed in 1829 to the Royal Dublin Society, the collections of which went on to form part of the National Museum. .

- You can visit Marlay House (Marlay Park in Dublin), which was acquired in 1764 by John de La Touche's father.

Using Prior Knowledge

The Huguenots were members of the Protestant Reformed Church of France (French Calvinists) from the 16th to the 17th centuries. By the end of the 17th century, roughly 200,000 Huguenots had emigrated from France during a series of religious persecutions. Around 10,000 of them came to Ireland

Did you know?

Evidence of Huguenot immigration can still be found in Ireland today: for example, family names such as La Roche or D'Olier and the Huguenot cemetery at Merrion Row, near St Stephen's Green, in Dublin. Relatives of the Irish writer Samuel Beckett were buried there (then using the name Becquet).

The Grand Tour

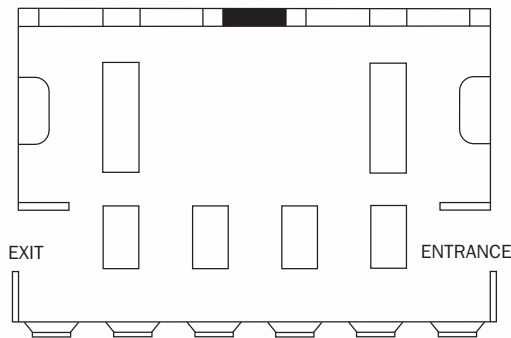
In the 18th century the Grand Tour was an established part of a nobleman's education. It provided first-hand experience of the monuments and antiquities of ancient Rome and later in the century often included a visit of the newly excavated sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

- What are common travel destinations in Europe today? Why do people travel?
- Did you ever bring something back from a trip? How does this object differ from the Greek 'bell krater'?

Life Buoy and Oar



Floorplan - Out of Storage 4



Location:

Go to the centre of the 'Out of Storage' gallery. Facing the wall with tall display cases, the life buoy and oar are in front of you at the centre of the top shelf.

The Story Behind the Object

The Lusitania was torpedoed by a German U-boat and sank off the Irish coast on 7 May, 1915. The life buoy was picked up by a Dublin fishing trawler, the Dean Swift, a fortnight after the disaster. The oar (from a lifeboat) was washed up on a beach off the west coast of Co. Clare in August 1915 and then donated to the Museum. The Lusitania, built in Scotland and owned by the Cunard line, was one of the largest, fastest and most luxurious ocean liners in the world in 1915. It had a capacity of 2,000 people and a crew of 850. On 1 May, 1915, the Lusitania set off on an Atlantic crossing from New York to Liverpool, a journey that would take seven days. The cost of a one-way ticket in first class was \$4,000 - at a time when the average wage was \$20 a week.



Things to Think and Talk About

Historical Context

Since February 1915, Germany had declared the waters around Great Britain as a war zone and had announced that ships would be sunk without warning. The Cunard company's notice advertising the scheduled departure of the Lusitania included a warning to travellers that they were sailing 'at their own risk'.

The Sinking of the Lusitania

The wreck lies approximately 7 miles (11 km) off the Old Head of Kinsale lighthouse in 300 feet (91 m) of water. Unlike the Titanic which took more than two hours to sink, the Lusitania went down in just 18 minutes. There were sufficient numbers of lifeboats, but the launching procedure was chaotic, because the crew was not very experienced. Nearly 1,200 people lost their lives in the disaster.

Did you know?

One of those who lost his life was Hugh Lane, the founder of the Hugh Lane Dublin City Gallery. Lane was on his way back from New York with two paintings by artists Titian and Rubens. They sank with the ship but because they were stored in waterproof lead containers they may still be intact at the bottom of the ocean.

Using Evidence/ Working as a Curator

- Take a good look at the objects. Is there any writing or symbols on them that tell us anything more about them?

Sometimes we have to combine information we already know with what we see. A curator researching these objects might go and look up those words and see whether he or she would find additional information. 'The Way of the Warrior' and related rules could be linked to duelling codes (see factsheet 10) or rules existing in the school environment.

- Where could you search for more information? (For example, libraries, reference books, internet, museums, universities or archives).
- Do you think that the oar and life buoy are important historical artefacts, which should be kept in the Museum? If so, why?

Imagination and Empathy

- Does it surprise you that in spite of the announcement in the newspapers people sailed on the Lusitania? Do you think you would have sailed?

In the 'Soldiers & Chiefs' exhibition (gallery 6), you will find a life jacket from the Lusitania and information about the involvement of Irish people in World War One.

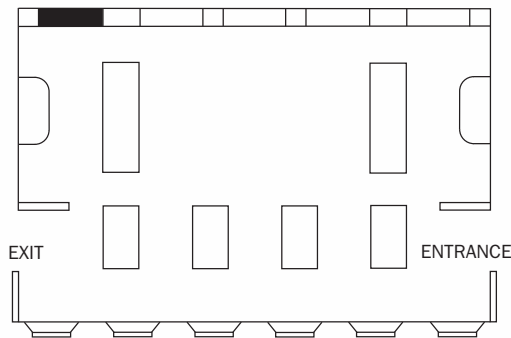
Gallery: Out of Storage

FACTSHEET 10

Duelling Pistols



Floorplan - Out of Storage 5



Location:

Go to the very back of the 'Out of Storage' gallery and see a display cabinet with weapons to your right. The duelling pistols are on the bottom shelf, the second pair of pistols from the right.

The Story Behind the Object

This pair of silver mounted flintlock pistols was made in Dublin, about 1768. The stocks are decoratively carved, as are the lock plates and cocks. On the silver serpentine back plates you will find grotesque masks. Underneath each barrel there is a wooden steel-tipped ramrod pipe attached, which was used to load the gun from the front end of the barrel. To load the gun, a set amount of powder would have been poured into the barrel from a powder horn (or powder pouch, an example of which you find inside the pull-out drawer underneath the pistols); a wad was inserted into the barrel and a ball. This was then rammed into the barrel using a stick, the ramrod.



Things to Think and Talk About

Historical Context

Duelling with pistols reached its peak between 1770 and 1830.

Duels were fought for a number of reasons:

To avenge an insult

Defend a lady's honour

Charges of cowardice

Cheating at cards and dice

Duelling was practised by the gentry but also by the legal profession and army officers. Daniel O'Connell and Henry Grattan were famous Irish duellists. In 1815 Daniel O'Connell mortally wounded John D'Esterre of the Dublin Corporation in a public duel spurred on by political and social differences. As a result of his guilt, O'Connell gave D'Esterre's family monetary support for the rest of his life. To kill someone in a duel was illegal - although few convictions were ever made. Phoenix Park was one of Dublin's most popular duelling spots, along with Sandymount Strand and Clontarf.

- What did Daniel O'Connell fight for in his political career?

Rules of Duelling

At the Clonmel Summer Assizes in 1777 a code was adopted *'for the government of duellists, by the gentlemen of Tipperary, Galway, Mayo, Sligo and Roscommon'*.

The code had 26 rules. It was not necessary to either kill or wound one's opponent in a duel; instead, the act of taking part preserved one's honour intact. However, at times duels could be lethal -whether accidentally or intentionally. A surgeon was often brought to the duel.

Why did Duelling Stop?

There was a public backlash against it after too many infamous duels. The introduction of a police force in 1822 was another reason. In 1844, Queen Victoria passed a law making it illegal for British Army officers to fight in a duel. The Rigby family claimed that the pistols, which they manufactured in Dublin, were so accurate that people were seriously injured more frequently.

Observation and Imagination

- Take a look at the duelling pistols. How are they decorated and how do they compare to the other guns in this display case? (They are not as rough as the blunderbusses above them and more ornate. They also have a shorter barrel.)
- What type of person might have owned such a gun?

Activity

- Re-enact a duel: visit the 'Blaze Away' exhibition on the ground floor where you find more information on rules and procedures relating to duels.

You can use the computer stations in at the centre of the 'Out of Storage' exhibition to look at the decoration of the pistols in more detail.

Glossary

This Glossary introduces key terms, which you might come across in one of the galleries on which this pack is based. These definitions contain a short explanation of concepts relevant to the museum.

Art Nouveau

A style of decorative art, architecture, and design prominent in Western Europe and the USA from about 1890 until the First World War and characterised by intricate linear designs and flowing curves based on natural forms.

Acquisition

A possession, prize, property or purchase which has been bought or gained. In the museum, it means an item which has been obtained by being bought or donated.

Bequeathed

Pass (something) on or leave (something) to a person or other beneficiary by a will. The museum can be the beneficiary of a bequest.

Botanical specimen

An individual real plant used as an example of its species or type for scientific study or display.

Bustle

A device for thrusting out the skirt at the back of the waist. From the 1860s to the 1880s this was usually a framework worn under a woman's skirt at the back to support and display the full cut and drape of a dress, so as to achieve the fashionable shape of the period.

Conservator

The conservator is responsible for the long term care of collections. Conservators ensure that the collections on display and in the stores are kept in a safe condition; they treat objects to prevent or limit further damage and they investigate objects to find out how they were made, for example through microscopic examination or x-ray.

Curator

The Curator is the person in charge of a museum collection. The word 'curator' has its origins in the Latin word *cura* meaning 'care'. The curator makes decisions regarding what objects to collect and put on display as well as researching objects and sharing that research with the public.

Duelling

A prearranged fight between two persons according to an accepted code, fought with swords or pistols.

Inauguration

A ceremony to mark the admission of someone to office or the introduction of a system, policy or period.

Lacquer

A protective coating consisting of a resin obtained from a Japanese tree, used to produce a highly polished surface on wood.

Glossary

Motif

A decorative image or design, often repeated to form a pattern.

Neo-Celtic Art

The neo-Celtic style was inspired largely by the art of Early Christian Ireland, encompassing metalwork, manuscript illumination and architecture up to 1400 A.D. While the style was mainly a nineteenth century phenomenon, its roots lay in the eighteenth century, when the appreciation of Ireland's ancient cultural and artistic past was first expressed as a coherent movement.

Neo-Classical Art

From 1750, new archaeological discoveries in Greece and Italy inspired a revival of interest in classical art, influenced by ancient Greek or Roman forms or principles. The style employs architectural elements, such as columns, capitals and pediments taken from classical Greek and Roman buildings and the distinctive shapes of various classical objects.

Plaited interlacing

The combining of two or more sets of elements crossed intricately together to form a continuous surface.

Provenance

Provenance refers to the place or source of origin of an object. It derives from the French word *provenir*, meaning 'to come from'. The word 'Provenance' is used in museums to refer to the history of ownership or location of an object. When the provenance of an object is particularly interesting, it is included in the Factsheets.

Replica

A copy or reproduction of a work of art or historical object.



After your Visit

Here are some ideas for following up your Museum visit back in the classroom.

Discussions

Have a classroom discussion based on the same questions suggested for a pre-visit discussion (see page 5 of this pack). Have the students changed their views about museums and collecting?

Ask students to write up a short article or review about their visit.

Questions you could pose include:

- What methods were used to display the objects (lighting, display cases, labels, interactive elements such as computer stations)?
- Would they recommend the Museum to their family or friends?

Ask the students to research any issues or questions that came up during their visit.

- Discuss which contemporary items might go on display in the future and why.
- Bring in a 'mysterious' artefact (for example, a candle snuffer, a thimble or a shoehorn) and practise inquiry based learning techniques to help students uncover the mystery.

Activities

Story telling or creative writing or drawing

Use the objects you saw at the Museum as the inspiration for a storytelling or imaginative writing session. Encourage the class with an imaginative exercise such as:

- Tell a group story. Ask each student to provide a sentence in the story. Write the story down as it builds – it allows students to let go and use their imagination!

Working as a curator and historian

Students bring in an object, which they believe might be on display in museums in the future. Students swap objects and try to find out in small groups as much as they can about the items. Encourage students to describe the shape of the object, the materials it is made from and any inscription that might be on it. Each group selects one item that should go on display and presents back what they established through observation and discussion.

Debate - Awarding the freedom of a city

Each student suggests a member of the school or a locally or nationally well known person who should be awarded the freedom of the city or town in which the students live. Give each student the chance to defend their choice in a short statement. Students then discuss and select in small groups who should get the Award and why. They present their conclusions in a forum in front of the class. Finally, you can hold an election and let students vote anonymously who should get the award.



School group in the 'Eileen Gray' exhibition

Let us know what you think!

We would love to hear about your students' responses to their Museum visit.

Send us your drawings or letters, by email or post:

bookings@museum.ie

Education & Outreach Department

National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History

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