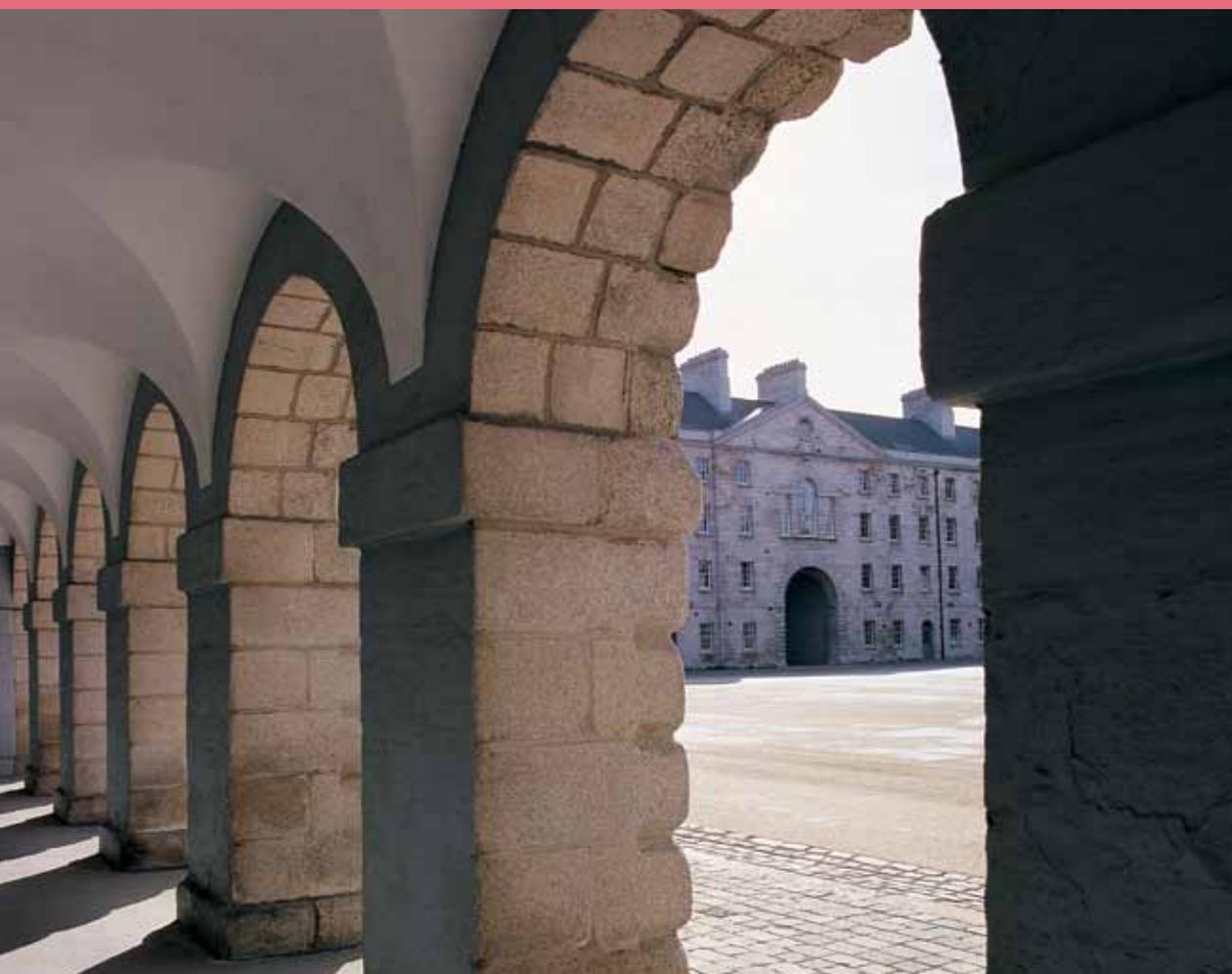


# Guide to the National Museum of Ireland *Decorative Arts & History*

**museum**

National Museum of Ireland  
*Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann*

Decorative Arts & History



Guide to the National Museum of Ireland  
*Decorative Arts & History*



Guide to the National Museum of Ireland – Collins Barracks  
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View of the west block of Clarke Square, showing the current entrance to the exhibitions. According to tradition, the passage and window in the archway were built so that Queen Victoria could remain indoors while viewing her troops

## Introduction

In December 1988, the decision was taken at government level to close Collins Barracks as a military installation, and following consultation with a number of committees formed for the purpose, plans were made in September 1993 to develop the site as an extra venue for the National Museum of Ireland. This important decision ensured that the earliest purpose-built residential barracks on these islands was restored for museum use. It also allowed for the display of museum collections that had been in storage since 1922, when government took over the museum exhibition galleries and curatorial offices in Leinster House.

The first location to be restored architecturally by the Office of Public Works was Clarke Square. The billets on the south and west blocks were fitted with air handling equipment, many windows and fireplaces blocked and barrack rooms transformed into exhibition galleries. The artefacts prepared for display were selected principally from the collections of the Art and Industrial Division. On 18th September 1997, the Inaugural Exhibitions were opened by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Síle de Valera T.D.

At present the museum is working to a planned building programme for the use of the rest of the 18 acres of the site. The old barracks, which had billets, stables, a riding school, drilling grounds and firing ranges, is currently being transformed sympathetically into museum galleries for exhibitions, reserve collections, conservation laboratories, libraries and offices. The central square, the buildings of which were demolished in 1890, will become the main entrance to the museum with visitor facilities, a restaurant and exhibition galleries. The barracks and central square are named after Michael Collins, the first Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Free State, who was killed at Béal na Bláth four months before the barracks was surrendered to the Free State Army. General Richard Mulcahy, who formally accepted the handover, immediately named the site after Collins.

## History of the Site

The Dublin Barracks, 1704-'10, was the earliest permanent barracks on these islands to be purpose-built for billeting soldiers. Parliament did not allow any such establishment in England until the fear of attack by Napoleon made them necessary in the 1790s.

Although the Treaty of Limerick of 1691 was critical in establishing his power in Ireland, William III nevertheless remained so insecure that he ordered a network of barracks to be built throughout the country. Pivotal to this network was a large barracks at Dublin, which was intended to protect the capital of the new ruling class.

The Dublin barracks was built by a Limerick man, Thomas Burgh, who trained with one of the greatest military engineers of his age, the Dutch Baron van Coehorn. Consequently the plan of his barracks followed that which had been developed in Flanders and Spain. In that philosophy a barracks did not just provide accommodation for a large body of soldiers but also ensured that, by living in close association, units would be disciplined and develop a sense of loyalty. From 1701, in an attempt to ensure that loyalty, it was decreed by Parliament that all members of the army (even of the rank-and-file) had to be of the Protestant religion.

The first regiment took up residence in the Dublin barracks in April 1707, at a time when the second square, Little Square, was under construction. Completed about 1710, the barracks was initially intended to accommodate 1500 infantry and cavalry. However, the actual number of soldiers accommodated had increased to 2,500 by 1732, largely due to fear of attack from Stuart supporters during the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. Increasing political agitation in the mid-18th century led to this number growing to 4,000 men by 1753. In this way, the number of soldiers at the Dublin barracks grew steadily in the first half of the 18th century, although troop strength fluctuated in the short term, depending on the level of political instability. The long-term increases ensured that overcrowding and building programmes became regular irritants of barracks life.



Architectural model of the next phase of development planned for the complex, incorporating a reception and exhibition area on the site of the original Royal or Grand Square

*Model made by the Office of Public Works*

Throughout the 18th century the duties of soldiers at this barracks ranged from official guard work at Dublin Castle to civil duty in the city streets, in the years before the establishment of a police force. The Dublin barracks was also the principal centre for mustering men before embarkation for service in foreign wars. As warfare was then reliant on trained and disciplined troops, the chores of each day were directed towards that discipline. Daily life was strict, the men being awakened with a Reveille 'as soon as it is fair daylight'. From about 5 a.m. they began the regular work of the day, the drumbeat signifying when the hour was up and the next range of duties should begin. By 9 a.m. those scheduled for that day's guard duties had undergone a long routine drill so as to ensure that they would 'march handsomely' when in the public eye.

Billet life was harsh, as it would seem that six men were allocated to each barrack room. That room had a table and two wooden forms and lighting was provided by a single iron candlestick. There was one fireplace, where the men cooked their own food. Soldiers slept two to a bed. They had adequate bed covering and the straw of the mattress was scheduled for change four times a year.

Horse Square. The next major expansion was in 1767, when the architect Christopher Myers built a wide East Block in Palatine Square. To provide extra accommodation he also widened and raised the other three blocks by a floor. The square's appearance was also improved with such architectural details as stone parapets and high central pediments. Because of the quality of Myers's work, the barracks headquarters was transferred to Palatine Square from the central Grand Square.

The 1780s and 1790s were difficult times politically, with divisive debates in the Irish Parliament, the Regency crisis, the fall of the Bastille and the eruption in Ireland, Europe and the Americas of agrarian unrest, revolution and war. Consequently the number of men at the Dublin barracks was again increased dramatically, and in about 1793 a new square was built to accommodate nine extra troops of horse.

The soldiers' reaction during and after the 1798 Rebellion indicates their perception of duty. During the summer of 1798 the old provost or military prison, which was built to detain the occasional deserter, had to constantly accommodate between 100 and 150 rebels. Some

Soldiers were paid every thirty days, but deductions were made arbitrarily from wages. These ranged from deductions for the services of the riding master and support for the surgeon to payment for washing bed linen and the provision of feed for one's horse. A soldier also paid for his own shoe polish and the repair of his arms. Some complained that after all of these deductions the soldier had so little left that he could afford to buy only the cheapest food – bran bread, cheese, buttermilk and 'bad' meat.

Ordinary foot soldiers who complained about such deductions were punished by being whipped by strong drummer boys. Furthermore, advertisements in newspapers show that soldiers who attempted to desert – wearing their only set of clothes, their uniform – were harshly treated when caught, not just for attempting to desert but also for attempting to steal the crown's property.

In contrast, the life of an officer was made easier by the fact that each had spacious living quarters with fine views. Their rooms, which were furnished in the manner of their peers in civil life, had no cooking smells as officers dined in local taverns.

By 1753 the demand for accommodation on the site had grown so acute that the hay yard was transferred to Arbour Hill, to a site that was convenient to the watered meadows of Grangegorman. Trooper accommodation was then built on the old hay yard space behind

View of the barracks, taken from 'A Map of the city and suburbs of Dublin', by Charles Brooking, 1728



Indenture dated 6 March 1704, transferring ownership of the Palace Gardens to the trustees for the erection of barracks in Ireland

new magazines to store ammunition, as well as extra stables and the armourers' shop. This trend is also reflected in the fact that the entrances to the barracks were rebuilt in a fortified style. The guard houses on Barrack (now Benburb) Street were built, one with cells for miscreant soldiers, the other (in the spirit of improvement of the 1830s-'40s) with a library. Another major change was that Robert Peel, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, proposed that the meandering Liffey be re-aligned and walled in such a manner that an esplanade would be created in front of the barracks. This extension, which was achieved in the early 1840s, quickly became a drilling ground. It was also there, in 1847, that Alexis Soyer built the first soup kitchen of the Great Famine.

By 1850, new cook houses and canteens were introduced, where rations of boiled beef or beef broth and coffee were prepared twice daily for the soldiers. Because of this, the hygiene in the billets was improved as it reduced the amount of food that was prepared there. The new spirit of well-being also encouraged recreation and so ball courts and skittle alleys were provided.

After the Crimean War (1853-'6), reformers campaigned to improve the sanitation in all of the barracks of these islands. A Parliamentary Report of 1861 criticised the recently-renamed Royal Barracks in particular. It cited that the troopers slept immediately above their horses' stables and that the recently-built guard rooms had no water latrines, even though men did duty there for twenty-four hours at a time. It also criticised the fact that the barracks was overcrowded, with 1917 men, 87 women and 109 children living in 183 barrack rooms with little privacy, as the division between families was generally no more than a screen hung on a cord. Because of this criticism, there were immediate attempts to improve the ventilation and light in the barrack rooms through the provision of extra windows.

Typhoid or enteric fever was a problem at Royal Barracks from at least the 1860s. It was a problem too for the city itself, where not just the tenements but even Dublin Castle and the Vice-Regal Lodge were affected. Examining the barracks, the authorities recommended in 1886-'7 that water closets be introduced throughout and that dormitories be ventilated further. This was addressed, but as more officers died in 1888, a more drastic remedy was sought. It was then recommended that most of the old buildings, including the Riding School, should be demolished. The plan then was that the infantry would remain at the Royal Barracks



Print of 'A Prospect of the Barracks of Dublin from St. James's Church Yard', Dublin, 1765-1775. The original engraving for this print was by James Tudor, c.1750. Views of the barracks were popular presentation gifts for departing officers

slept in the few damp prison cells, but the majority slept in tents in the prison yard, which had a high wall and enclosed a space of 80 by 40 feet. It was said that men were flogged and tortured there, and that after court-martial in Little Square, were hanged either on Arbour Hill, outside the barrack walls or on the city bridges. Tradition also claims that they and many others who were killed in Counties Dublin and Meath were thrown into a mass grave in the land between the barracks and the Liffey, on a site now known as the 'Croppies Acre'. Although recent archaeological testing did not discover any evidence of mass burials there, the area is still regarded as a memorial site.

In the 1790s, the authorities began to pay more attention to the soldiers' living conditions. It was decreed that each man was then entitled to 'a well baked loaf of wheat flour' every four days, for which he paid five pence. A washerwoman was employed for each company or every twenty men. For their work wash houses were built to the north of the site, with dedicated areas nearby for drying clothes. In 1802, land was bought beside the hay-yard on Arbour Hill to build a new provost prison and a military hospital. Both buildings are now within the walls of St. Bricin's hospital.

In the early decades of the 19th century the concentration was on the development of the site militarily, with the addition of four



The 1st Battalion, 62nd (Wiltshire) Regiment at their Ferozeshah Day Parade in the Royal Barracks, Dublin, in 1921. (This annual parade commemorated the Battle of Ferozeshah, which took place on the 21st and 22nd December 1845, during the First Sikh War in Northern India. The Commander-in-Chief of the regiment during this war was Sir Hugh Gough, an Irishman)

and that the cavalry would transfer to a barracks that was then being built at Grangegorman (now McKee Barracks).

Tradition states that for a short period, the barracks also served as a residence for the Viceroy, following the assassination of the chief secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and the under-secretary, Thomas Burke, in Phoenix Park on 6 May 1882.

Although major demolitions began on the site in 1889, the War Office does not seem to have been fully aware of this until the following year. The Central Square, corners of Palatine Square and much of the area to the north of the site were removed at this time. A re-building programme was intended to make the site habitable again. However, it ran into a budget problem as the resident engineer, Major Hart, preferred to complement the old building by using cut stone. The War Office preferred a less expensive building material – red brick. Consequently Hart was transferred to other duties as extensive new structures, including drill and firing sheds, were built in that red brick.

Less than twenty years after these major architectural changes the barracks again played a major role in military affairs, when large numbers of soldiers were mustered there for service in the Great War. Many were killed or wounded in action. During the Easter Rising of 1916, when members of the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army occupied the General Post Office



Removal of the washrooms and night urinals, built c.1891, and restoration of the North Block wall to its original design. Following the hand-over of the barracks to the National Museum, the Office of Public Works, with Gilroy McMahon architects, commenced the task of restoring Clarke Square to its 18th-century glory



and other key buildings in Dublin, the first military response on Easter Monday came from soldiers billeted at the Royal Barracks. As the week progressed, troops were also brought from other parts of Ireland, and then in large numbers from England, so that the insurgents were soon hugely outnumbered. When the rebels were forced to surrender due to a combination of factors, including the use of artillery to shell the city's buildings, and the resulting raging fires, the leaders of the rebellion were escorted to and from the military court at Kilmainham Gaol by soldiers of the 2nd Sherwood Foresters, then based at the Royal Barracks. Following the execution of fourteen of the rebel leaders in the stonebreakers' yard of Kilmainham, an action which fuelled growing public outcry, the same Sherwood Foresters oversaw the transfer of the bodies to the garrison graveyard at Arbour Hill.

On 17th December 1922, General Sir Neville Macready surrendered the barracks and took the salute of his troops, the 2nd Battalion Wiltshire Regiment, as they marched down the quays. Then the Free State army marched into Royal Barracks and the first review was taken by the Commander-in-Chief, General Richard Mulcahy, accompanied by the Chief of Staff, General MacMahon. The barracks was then named after the first Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Free State, General Michael Collins, who had been killed at Béal na Bláth, Co. Cork on the previous 22nd August.

## The Exhibitions

The exhibitions at Collins Barracks begin at the Reception area. As this was previously the Privates' Mess, it is here that the museum salutes the site's military history with plans and illustrations of the area since the 1660s. Keenly aware of the role played by this barracks in Ireland's history, and of that played by Irish soldiers who served in the international arena, the museum is preparing a major military history exhibition that will honour that past. It will open in the North Block of Clarke Square in 2006.

The exhibition galleries in the South and West Blocks are divided in general into two different philosophical approaches. For the three large galleries of the south block the curators selected material thematically. On the first floor is a major exhibition of Irish silver, while the second floor is devoted to Irish period furniture and scientific instruments. Irish traditional furniture and woodcraft is displayed on the third floor. In the main galleries on the West Block the aim is that, through the selection of material from different disciplines and periods, the visitor will learn about the national collections, our cultural history and the story of the museum. More recently, the East Block of Clarke Square has been used to house the 'What's in Store?' section, a modern 'visible storage' facility that allows visitors to see important collections of artefacts that would otherwise be inaccessible to the public.



Carved oak figure of St. Molaise from Inishmurray Island, Co. Sligo. The figure, which dates to the late 13th or early 14th century, stood in St. Molaise's Church on the island until 1949

The Fleetwood Cabinet, given as a wedding present by Oliver Cromwell to his daughter Bridget, when she married her second husband, General Charles Fleetwood, in 1652. In the same year, Fleetwood became Commander-in-Chief in Ireland

## The West Block

### 'Curators' Choice'

In the belief that each object tells a story, even several stories, and that through this they document our history, the curators were asked to select an object in which they were interested. The twenty-five items selected show that while some museum objects document important milestones of political and military history, others are testimony to the way of life and beliefs of our ancestors.

Welcoming you to the gallery is the late-13th- / early-14th-century carved oak figure of St. Molaise. This 6th-century saint, who established his monastery on Inishmurray Island, Co. Sligo, should have one hand raised in blessing. Local lore explains that it was Cromwell's men who cut off both hands. This statue, which was a focal part of an annual pilgrimage, was venerated in a church there for centuries. It was transferred for safekeeping to the National Museum when the last inhabitants left the island in 1948.

Nearby is a cabinet that gives a different insight into the man. This was Oliver Cromwell's wedding present to his daughter Bridget when she married Charles Fleetwood, a soldier who is remembered for his merciless transplantation of dispossessed Irish people from 1653 to 1654. Closed, the cabinet's simple style echoes the Puritanical ethos of his age. Open, it displays an appreciation of wealth and learning; its erotic paintings are said to represent scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.



Posset bowl given by King William III to John Dillon of Lismullen, Co. Meath, in 1690. The gift was made in gratitude for Dillon's hospitality after the Battle of the Boyne. (Posset was a drink composed of hot milk curdled by the addition of alcohol)



Another famous figure represented by memorabilia here is King William III of England. In gratitude for his hospitality after the Battle of the Boyne, he gave John Dillon of Lismullen, Co. Meath some personal items including an engraved decanter. This handsome gift shows the quality achievable very shortly after lead glass was first invented. It also shows that military leaders expected the luxury of home even while on military campaigns.

The nationalist politician William Smith O'Brien, who was transported to Tasmania because of his part in the rebellion of 1848, was honoured by his compatriots when he was pardoned six years later. A presentation cup, made from recently-mined 24ct gold, was commissioned from William Hackett, a Dublin goldsmith then resident in Melbourne. The cup is decorated with Irish and Australian symbols, and the finial depicts Hibernia carrying a cap of liberty and crowning Smith O'Brien with a laurel wreath. Conscious of the sacrifice of his compatriots and the symbolism of the piece, Smith O'Brien bequeathed it to the Royal Irish Academy to ensure its preservation for posterity.

In contrast, a stone nearby is simply carved with the symbols of the



Gold cup presented to the Young Ireland leader William Smith O'Brien by his compatriots in Australia, in celebration of his official pardon and return home in 1854



Altar stone from Summerhill, Co. Meath, 18th century. The carving includes such symbols of Christ's crucifixion as the hammer, nails and spear

France and William Beckford of Fonthill Abbey. Unrecognised because the mounts were removed in the 19th century, the vase was acquired by this museum at auction in 1882 for about £28.

**'Out of Storage'**

This double-height gallery attempts to evoke behind-the-scenes experiences of museum storage, and through that to show not only the variety in the museum's collections but also the logistical problems of storage. Lighting changes slowly to give a feeling of movement in this large space and to encourage the visitor to look from object to object. The five hundred pieces displayed were chosen to reflect the collecting policies of this museum through the years.



The Fonthill vase, made between 1300 and 1340, is world-renowned as one of the best-documented pieces of early Chinese porcelain

Passion of Christ. For centuries, and in an international context, both the poor and the wealthy meditated through reading these symbols. Tradition says that this locally-carved stone was found in a small walled-up room in Summerhill, Co. Meath. Dated 1740, it has been suggested that it was an altar stone used during the penal period, when Mass was said furtively in such homes and at mass rocks. Another contrast is an item of major international importance, the Fonthill Vase. Of celadon porcelain, it was made about 1300 AD. When the vase was brought to Europe shortly afterwards, it was treated as semi-precious stone and hence given silver-gilt mounts. As Europeans were unable to make porcelain until over four centuries later, such objects were treated with great respect. The vase, which is one of the best-documented pieces of Chinese porcelain known, is recorded through the centuries in the collections of Louis the Great of Hungary, Charles III of Durazzo, the Dauphin of

### Origins of the National Museum of Ireland

The museum's history and that of its predecessors is addressed on graphic panels both in the 'Out of Storage' gallery and on the walkway over the museum reception area. The campaign to establish a public museum in Dublin can be traced to about 1835. At that time the new Mechanics Institutes of Cork, Belfast and Dublin campaigned for the provision of a museum where their students could draw patterns or objects in a manner similar to their counterparts in London and Antwerp. That demand increased when schools of design were opened in Limerick (1842), Cork and Dublin (1849). Their demand was for a public museum similar to the British Museum, where the manufacturing artists could study 'vases, casts, bronzes and works of decorative architecture'. At the same time the public made government increasingly aware that the private museums that they supported in Dublin were rarely open to the public, students or mechanics. Subsequently the Dublin Science and Art Museum Act (1877) established a new public museum that would develop its own collection and incorporate those of earlier institutions such as the Royal Dublin Society, which was compensated financially for its property and collections. Key members of its staff also became museum officials.



Sample of the minerals fluorite and pyrite, from the collection of Nathanael Leske, acquired by the Dublin Society in 1792. Gersdorf, Saxony, Germany

### The Royal Dublin Society

Established as the Dublin Society (1731) to encourage husbandry, manufactures and other useful arts, it was to that aim that modern agricultural and industrial machinery was initially collected. Their schools of Ornament and Architectural Drawing, established from 1756, collected samples of classical archaeology and plaster casts, which were then used in classes on these subjects. In the late 18th century the society purchased, with government funding, the internationally important Leskean collection of fossils and minerals. They built on this nucleus through the employment of a geologist who collected local minerals, all of which were transferred to the society's Natural History Museum when it was opened in 1857. Otherwise the society collected material of interest to its members, which ranged from 'a beautiful piece of writing performed by a person without hands' to classical archaeological objects and Indian



Krater (vase), red-figure type, made in Greece during the 5th century B.C. Bequeathed to the Royal Dublin Society by George La Touche in 1825

arms. By degrees from 1883, The Royal Dublin Society transferred its collection to the new Dublin Museum. Amongst the first items transferred was a Greek vase, which is on display in the 'Out of Storage' gallery. This item was bequeathed to the Society in 1825 by George La Touche. On display also are two specimens from the Leskean collection.

industrial education, so that Ireland's natural resources could be exploited correctly and the living standard of the people improved, the museum had a lecture programme as well as exhibitions. There was opposition to this enlightened approach; as a result the museum was abolished in about 1865, and the collections transferred to the Royal Dublin Society. On display here from that museum's collection is a Parian porcelain bust of William Dargan, the railway contractor who funded the Dublin International Exhibition of 1853. It was made at Worcester when two Dubliners, W.H. Kerr and R.W. Binns, owned that pottery, and when Irish ceramic clays were tested with the ambition that manufacturing potteries could be established in Ireland.

### The Royal Irish Academy

Founded in 1785 to promote pure science, history, antiquities and literature, the Academy concentrated on collecting Irish antiquities, many of which are now displayed in the National Museum's Kildare Street premises. However, consistent with its policy of documenting Irish history, the Academy also acquired such items as Dean Swift's wine bottles, dating from 1729, which were probably amongst the first glass bottles made in Dublin. On display here too is the 17th-century silver mace of the Corporation of Naas, Co. Kildare, which was presented to the Academy by a descendant of Thomas Burgh, the architect of the Barracks.

### The Museum of Irish Industry

Although established in 1845 as the Museum of Economic Geology, the first director of that museum, Sir Robert Kane, quickly changed its rationale to become the Museum of Irish Industry and Government School of Science. Allied to a belief in the need for



Bottle made for Jonathan Swift, probably in Dublin, 1727 (the year in which he published the second edition of *Gulliver's Travels*). At this time, he strongly advocated the use of Irish-made goods

Mace of the town of Naas, c.1650. Presented to the Royal Irish Academy in 1861 by a descendant of Thomas Burgh, architect of the barracks



Bust of William Dargan, who financed the Dublin Industrial Exhibition of 1853. It was made in parian porcelain at Worcester

### The Science and Art Museum, Dublin

In 1877, government passed an Act of Parliament to establish a new Dublin Museum, with the intention that 'the people of Ireland would obtain the fullest opportunity of improvement in the cultivation of industrial and decorative arts'. With advice from South Kensington museum in London, officials began immediately to acquire material from renowned international private collections. Quality contemporary items were selected directly from, for example, Tiffany and William de Morgan as well as locally from Vodrey, Pugh and Belleek. Works were collected also to document the 'cradles of the world's civilisations' – the classical Mediterranean, India and China. The new institution also concentrated on items illustrating industrial and economic development in Ireland, particularly from the 17th century. As a result of its vigorous acquisition policy, the collections expanded greatly. Indeed, when the new Kildare Street premises opened in 1890 some collections remained on exhibition in Leinster House because of space constraints.



Mosque lamp made in Cairo, Egypt, in the reign of Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir, 1310-1341, and enamelled with a verse from the Qur'an as well as the sultan's name



Carp vase, cased glass, made by Eugène Rousseau in 1880. This was one of a number of items purchased by the National Museum from the artist's studio



Bowl and stand made at Waterford, c.1820. This was the first piece of antique Irish glass acquired by the Museum of Science and Art

Examples of the types of material acquired at this time and on display in the 'Out of Storage' gallery include glass vases that were purchased directly from the studio of Eugène Rousseau in 1880. With advice from the British Museum the museum purchased a mosque lamp, which was a remarkable achievement of the early 14th century in terms of the quality of its glass production, gilding and enamelling. It was acquired along with Turkish and Damascus tiles from the estate of a renowned collector, Major W.J. Myers. On display also is a two-handed bowl and stand, the first piece of 19th-century Irish glass acquired by the museum. Made in Waterford about 1820, its pillared and diamond design was the inspiration for the popular 'Hibernia' pattern produced at the new Waterford Glass factory in 1947.



Mitre designed by Georgina Smith, Sister Bonaventure, and made at an art embroidery class in the Poor Clare Convent, Kenmare, Co. Kerry. Commissioned by the Dublin Science and Art Museum, and displayed at the Cork Exhibition of 1902

by degrees from 1925, under the new title of the National Museum of Ireland. Its new parent government department was Education. That department commissioned a committee of inquiry to re-assess the museum's functions, and in 1927 it was recommended that the rôle of the museum was 'to increase and diffuse the knowledge of Irish civilisation and the relations of Ireland in these respects with other countries'.

On display here to represent this period is the Great Seal of Saorstát Éireann, which dates to about 1925. The seal was designed by Archibald McGoogan, the museum's first photographer and later the curator of musical instruments and water-colours. Also on display are egg, market, butter and potato baskets - everyday objects of Irish life that were made from locally-available materials.



Enamelled triptych commissioned by the Dublin Science and Art Museum from Alexander Fisher, London, 1903. Fisher, a talented exponent of the art of enamelling, was an occasional advisor to the museum



Basket made from oak chips by Nicholas Hilliard, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow, c.1950

### The National Museum of Science and Art

Following the enactment of the Agriculture & Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act in 1899, responsibility for the museum passed to the government department of the same name in Dublin. Consequently, while curators continued to collect quality pieces of decorative art and those illustrative of industrial design, they also supported Department officials in acquiring pieces that would influence rural communities in the production of marketable products to high artistic standards. To that purpose the museum also commissioned pieces. Both types of acquisition were displayed at venues throughout the country. With the aim of encouraging industrial design, one gallery was dedicated to temporary exhibitions of works by 'living artists (and) manufacturers, Irish, English, Continental and American'. On display are two pieces commissioned by the museum at this time. One is an embroidered mitre that was designed and worked in the Poor Clare Convent in Kenmare in 1901. The other is an enameled triptych by Alexander Fisher, which represents St. Patrick converting King Laoghaire's two beautiful daughters while they were at the Palace of Cruachan under the tuition of the two Druids, Mal and Colpait.

### The National Museum of Ireland

The period 1914-'24 saw major political changes in Ireland. Some of the museum staff supported those who fought in the Great War, while others, such as the Director, Count G.N. Plunkett, and Keeper, Liam S. Gogan, enthusiastically supported the 1916 Rebellion and were consequently imprisoned. In June 1922, the Provisional Government closed the museum, as it was required for government accommodation; the institution was to be re-opened



Seal of Saorstát Éireann, designed by the artist Archibald McGoogan, who was also the first photographer employed by the National Museum

The exhibition is introduced with a look at the symbols used on Irish coinage and how coin hoards reflect the history of coinage. Coins used in Ireland from about 900 A.D. are shown, together with information on the mints and weights. The introduction of distinctively Irish coinage from about 1460, the issue of debased coins to prevent flows of silver from Ireland to England, and the various approaches adopted to meet a continuing need for 'small change' are all explained. The emergency coinages produced under times of political and economic stress in the 17th century and Wood's halfpence of the 18th century are also featured.

Beginning with the Battle of the Boyne, the political story is illuminated by medals commemorating particular events. The final section of the exhibition presents the 19th-century development of medals in Ireland then used to acknowledge or promote merit in various fields.

A major section deals with the 1926 competition that resulted in the production of independent Ireland's first coinage. The story continues with the process of decimalisation in 1971 and concludes with the introduction of the Euro in 2002.



Gunmoney halfcrown, copper, James II, 1689. An emergency coinage produced from melted-down cannon barrels and scrap metal, gunmoney was used by James II to pay his troops and finance the war against William III. It was demonetised by the victorious Williamites in 1691

#### 'Airgead – Money and Medals'

The history of Irish money reflects the changing political circumstances of the country and its varied economic fortunes. On the other hand, medals were produced in Ireland for a variety of reasons – political, economic, religious and educational.



Groat (fourpence), silver, Henry VIII and Jane Seymour, 1536-1537. The harp as a symbol of Ireland was first used on coins during Henry's reign. The first 'harp coinage' was issued between 1534 and 1540 and carried the initials of Henry and his current queen



Penny token, copper, James Hilles, Leixlip and Dublin, 1813. Due to the shortage of small change during the Napoleonic Wars, many traders and manufacturers issued their own tokens, usually pennies and halfpennies



Prototype of the 'non-conformist' chair, by Eileen Gray, 1926-1929. The chair was created for E1027, the house designed by Gray in Roquebrune, but was also intended for mass-production

### 'Eileen Gray, 1878 – 1976'

In May 2000 the National Museum of Ireland succeeded in purchasing a substantial collection of work by Eileen Gray, with major support from the Department of the Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. With the opening of the exhibition 'Eileen Gray, 1878-1976' in the National Museum, Collins Barracks, Dublin, in March 2002, one of Gray's greatest wishes was fulfilled, namely to have her work displayed in her own country.

The collection includes such important items as the chrome table from E1027 (the house she designed in Roquebrune, France), and prototype dining and non-conformist chairs. The overall tenor of the collection, however, is of items that Eileen Gray valued on a personal level, such as family photographs, her lacquering tools and tool chest, and a portfolio of her work. She retained these items in her Rue Bonaparte apartment in Paris until the end of her life, and the resulting exhibition seeks to convey a personal sense of this intriguing Irish designer, as well as an account of her professional development from art student in London and Paris to mature, innovating architect.



'E1027 table', by Eileen Gray, 1926-1929. This has become Gray's most famous piece of furniture, and was designed for use in E1027, the house she designed in Roquebrune, Cap-Martin, France

More recently, the National Museum has been successful in acquiring two further collections of Eileen Gray material, forming an extremely important record of the designer's work in photographic form. Also represented are carpet drawings and gouaches, a body of original correspondence, and a collection of rare publications relating to Eileen Gray's work and influences. Very importantly, it also includes a second portfolio of her architectural and furniture designs. At present, work is underway to catalogue the archive and therefore make it accessible to researchers.

Also included in the current exhibition in Collins Barracks are two recent acquisitions by the National Museum, namely a coffee table dating from 1932-'34, which Gray designed for Tempe à Pailla, her house in Castellar. Although she designed a series of similar coffee tables, no two were exactly alike, the top of the National Museum's example featuring an architectural design in relief. The second new acquisition on display is a terrace or sun chair, also designed and realised for Tempe à Pailla, which featured a large terrace as an extension of the living room. A third recent acquisition, a celluloid screen designed in 1931, has been added to the reserve collections.



Lacquer tools used by Eileen Gray from c.1910. She shared these tools with Seizo Sugawara, a lacquer master working in Paris, with whom Gray established a lacquer workshop. It was from Sugawara that Eileen Gray learned the complicated technique of lacquering. One of the tools bears both of their initials

Until recently, little was known about Eileen Gray and the seminal influence she exercised in the world of architecture and design, except among those working in the related disciplines. It is hoped that the current exhibition in the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, will go some way towards restoring the fame and honouring the memory of Eileen Gray, modern architect and designer.



'The Way We Wore' exhibition: the couple on the left wear woollens and cottons in the style of the late 19th century; such styles had changed little from the 18th century. The couple on the right are dressed in Irish woollens and poplin, following contemporary mid-19th-century fashions

### 'The Way We Wore'

This exhibition concentrates on styles of clothing worn in Ireland from the mid-18th to the 20th century. Although many Irish men and women undoubtedly dressed in the traditional manner (which changed little over the centuries), most others wore the type of clothing currently in vogue in other parts of Europe.

The development of Irish society is shown through clothing, in the sense that only the wealthy could dress fashionably in the mid-18th century. With the introduction of cotton a democratisation in dress developed. The availability of the sewing machine, particularly from the 1860s, placed extra demands on the local dressmaker as she was then expected to make clothes even more quickly. This exhibition shows that by then dressmakers in rural Ireland could compete with their urban counterparts. The display is based mainly on the clothing worn by middle-class Irish people – a schoolteacher, wife of a fish-merchant, shopkeeper, doctor, and so on. It explores the messages that such people gave through their clothes. It also shows the quality of Irish textiles woven here in the past – silk, poplin, linen, cotton, tweed and worsteds – as well as the importance and quality of the accessory industries.



'The Way We Wore' exhibition: the wedding gown on the right was made by Matilda Mackey of Moville, Co. Donegal, for the wedding of Anne Harold on 21st February 1905. It followed current Parisian fashions. The gowns on the left were crocheted in about 1905 by girls in the Presentation Convent in Youghal. Dresses made in the convent were exported to London, Paris and New York



Enamelled pendant in a thistle leaf design, inset with a chrysolite at the centre and with a large suspended pearl. Made by the celebrated jewellery designer, René Lalique, in Paris, 1901

Associated with this is a jewellery gallery with collections ranging from the 17th century to the present day. Acquired to illustrate and to encourage quality design, the collection includes pieces by such renowned jewellers as Carlo Giuliano, Fortunato Castellani and René Lalique. Alongside are the cameos and intaglios beloved of Irish intellectuals and the micro-mosaics and carved ivories purchased by Irish travellers. Here too are the horsehair pieces made by the poor, as well as the bog oak carvings and Celtic Revival jewellery identified with Ireland. This collection, made over the past 130 years, shows that jewellery was produced in Ireland, and that it was not always made of expensive metals and stones.

## The South Block

Displays in the South Block concentrate solely on Irish material. The Irish silver and period furniture exhibitions are drawn from the collections of the Art and Industrial Division, which range in date from around 1600 to the present time. Material from the earlier period represents a transition between the medieval and the modern ages. That this was indeed a transition can be seen by the new occupations of the residents of nearby Oxmantown; these included glass-workers, tapestry weavers, button makers, silk dyers and weavers, pewterers and clock-makers. The collections of the Art and Industrial Division are, therefore, contemporaneous with the history of the barracks itself.

The collections presently displayed on the third floor are selected from the Irish Folklife Division.



View of the 'Irish Silver' gallery, showing, on the left, examples of provincial silver. On the right are maces and freedom boxes, made for ceremonial use. A sanctuary lamp in the neo-Celtic style can be seen in the centre



General view of the 'Irish Silver' gallery, showing, on the left, a silver toilet service by John Phillips, Dublin, 1680-1683. Acquired from the late Kurt Ticher

## 'Irish Silver'

The large silver gallery traces the development of the silversmith's craft in Ireland principally from the 17th century to the present. It looks at the evolution of design in silver, and examines the mining, assaying and crafting of precious metal in Ireland. Through these centuries silversmiths enjoyed the patronage of the church, as well as that of officials who required items for ceremonial use. The wealthy also provided important patronage. Faced with the difficulty of displaying a single-colour metal, the architects / exhibition designers were innovative in the use of colour in the displays.

The general design terms 'Baroque', 'Rococo', 'Neo-Classical', 'Victorian' and 'Celtic Revival' are used to group the silver chronologically. The pieces selected to illustrate these designs show that Irish silversmiths understood and followed the European design style of the day – in their own way. Since its foundation in 1637 the Company of Goldsmiths of Dublin exercised control over silversmiths, pieces being hallmarked by them to guarantee quality. However, the fear of loss through sending precious metals to Dublin is shown in that silversmiths in centres such as Cork, Galway, Limerick, Kinsale and Waterford had their own official town marks.



Silver bread basket in the rococo style, by Robert Calderwood, Dublin, c.1745. From the collection of the Earl of Milltown



Silver candlestick in the rococo style, Dublin, c.1745. Maker unknown

This national collection of silver was acquired from many sources. Some pieces were inherited from earlier institutions, while others were acquired through the purchases and donations overseen by successive generations of curators. The national collection, however, is indebted to the scholarship and assiduity of the collector Dr. Kurt Ticher. His collection included such remarkable pieces as the pair of silver-gilt standing cups made by Edward Swan in 1679 for the Dublin Guild of Merchants, and the magnificent accoutrements supplied in Dublin for a toilet table in the 1680s. The family silver of Lady Esmonde and that of the Earl of Milltown shows the range of silverware required for tea and dinner tables, as well as items such as candlesticks and wine labels for decanters.



Model spiral staircase, mahogany, by Sheerin and Dowling, Australia, 1909

### 'Irish Period Furniture'

The period furniture gallery traces the development of furniture designed, made or used in Ireland from the late 17th century. The collection is displayed in period contexts according to the species of wood available at the time – from oak and walnut to mahogany and satinwood. This evolution is then traced to the use of such materials as chrome in the early 20th century.

A magnificent early piece is the oak altar table, probably carved by James Tarbary in 1686 for the chapel of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. It contrasts with the simplicity of an oak chest of the Corporation or Guild of Feltmakers in Dublin, dated 1673.

Ireland is well-known for its distinctive styles of mahogany furniture made in about the mid-18th century. Diverse styles displayed in proximity are the simple Irish hunt table, which contrasts with the delicacy of the carved legs and trifid feet of the silver table. Nearby is a card table with frieze carved with scallop, scrolls and flowerets and with scrolled feet, which can be compared to a nearby heavily-carved architect's table with large paw feet.



Card table, mahogany, Irish, c.1760. Carved with scrollwork against a cross-hatched background



Oak chest of the Corporation (guild) of Feltmakers, Dublin, 1673. The names of the master and wardens of the guild are carved into the front panel



View of the neo-Celtic section of the 'Irish Period Furniture' gallery, showing pieces made in Belfast, Killarney and Dublin between 1850 and 1910

1851, the furniture was commissioned by the museum in 1901 from the Cushendall Toy-Making Industry in Co. Antrim. This industry successfully produced the miniature furniture in the Sheraton, Hepplewhite, Chippendale and Adam styles. The miniature paintings in the house were commissioned from Mabel Hurse of Ranelagh, Dublin, as miniature copies of paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland.



General view of the 'Irish Country Furniture' gallery, showing a meal bin, as well as various types of dressers and chairs

By the late 18th century, when Irish furniture followed London fashions closely, cabinet-makers such as William Moore (who was apprenticed in London at the firm of Mayhew and Ince) nevertheless developed their own distinctive styles. Similarly, 19th-century pieces made by cabinet-makers in Dublin, Limerick and Kilkenny show how they followed, in their way, the styles then fashionable. The intricate inlay of Killarney work from about the 1840s, and Belfast's poker-work from the 1890s, show that some centres had developed for specific customer markets such as the tourist trade.

This gallery, which is a celebration of Irish furniture-making from the 17th century, ends with superb satinwood pieces made by James Hicks, Dublin, in the late 19th or early 20th century, and with chromed tubular furniture designed by architect Raymond McGrath in 1930 for the B.B.C. headquarters in London. With it too are contemporary pieces made at The Furniture College, Letterfrack, and by other gifted young cabinet-makers working with the Crafts Council of Ireland today.

Also on display in this area is the Domville Dolls' House, which was donated to the museum in 1901 by the Misses M. and G. Domville of Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin. While the house itself dates to about

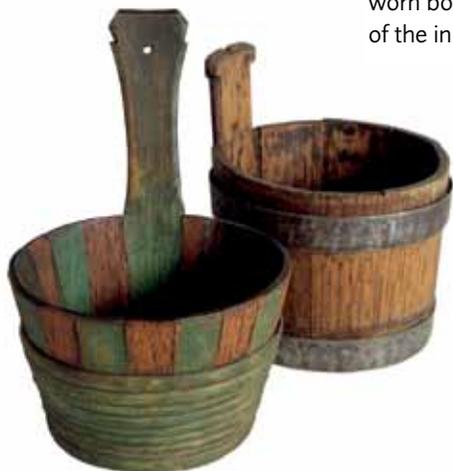
### 'Irish Country Furniture'

This gallery displays traditional or 'country' furniture that was made and used throughout Ireland. From the early 18th century the importation of deal or fir timber meant that furniture could be made less expensively. This initially followed the styles of the wealthy, but over the years carpenters developed their own individual designs. The hey-day for this work was the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, when general improvements in living standards allowed for the spread of pieces now considered typically Irish – dressers, settle beds, food presses and meal bins.

This gallery displays items according to their function rather than their domestic context. The generalised kitchen / living area furnished with associated hearth and light fittings illustrates that strict unwritten rules controlled the correct placement of items of furniture. Equally unwritten, yet controlled by the tradition of the locality, was the ground plan of each cottage and its siting in a manner appropriate to the landscape.

There is an exquisite beauty in the lightweight turned wooden piggins and noggins displayed. There is simplicity too in the iron bread-sticks crafted by the local blacksmith. These 'sticks' or toasters allowed the crust of the freshly-baked oatcake to harden.

The celebration of the seasons is reflected in the variety of St. Brigid's crosses made at the beginning of spring and in the knots woven in straw as love tokens at harvest time. Symbols of religious devotion are represented by penal crosses, the souvenirs of pilgrims who visited St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg, and by the severely-worn bone crucifixes which are testimony to the religious devotion of the inmates of the Limerick workhouse.



Wooden containers known as 'noggins', 18th or 19th century, used to hold foodstuffs such as milk, porridge and potatoes



View of the 'Irish Country Furniture' gallery, showing a variety of cooking and lighting implements

seen in the second and third sections of the store. In addition, a fraction of the Museum's ceramics collection is shown within the second section. Important Irish material, such as 18th-century delftware, Belleek, Vodrey, Queen's Institute, Carrigaline and contemporary ceramic art has been included, in association with Italian and Spanish maiolica, Japanese porcelain, Chinese blanc-de-chine, Wedgwood, German stoneware, French faïence, Islamic pottery and Dutch delftware.

The glass collection includes Roman, Persian, Indian, Venetian and Art Nouveau objects beside the internationally-acclaimed collection of 18th- and 19th-century Irish glass from Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Waterford.



Gulabpash or rosewater sprinkler, silver gilt with chased decoration of flowers, foliage and scrolls. Kashmir, second half of the 19th century



Domestic shrine of Amidanyorai Zazo, a deity who promises help in this life and heaven in the next to those who believe in him. Japanese, Middle Edo Period (18th century)



Drug jar made in Henry Delamain's factory, Dublin, mid-1750s. The name on the jar, 'George Wilson', refers to a father-and-son druggist firm based in Bride Street, Dublin, from 1714 to 1786



Tin-glazed pottery shoes decorated with flowers and foliage in the Chinese style. Belfast, 1713 and 1724

## The East Block

### 'What's in Store?'

The most recent long-term display on the Collins Barracks site is the 'What's in Store?' section, located in the East Block of Clarke Square, and opened to the public in November 2004. This storage facility makes publicly accessible some of the most important collections from the Art and Industrial Division of the National Museum. It is the first time in the history of the institution that the idea of visible storage has been addressed. The entire reserve collection of glass, Asian applied arts, silver and metalwork is shown, including material from Ireland, Britain, Europe, the Middle East, India, Pakistan, Burma, China, Japan and Tibet.

The Asian collections had not been on view since the opening of Collins Barracks in 1997. They include such materials as lacquer, jade, ivory, enamel, statuary, painting and metalwork, and can be



Linen prover, Seward, Dublin, mid-18th century. Magnifier used for measuring the density of threads in linen cloth for the purpose of quality control



Watch movement, brass, c.1780. Signed by the maker, William McCabe, who operated in Newry, Co. Down, from 1772 to 1785

Riding School as an exhibition location, which was completed in January 2005. This has enabled the museum to develop and expand its range of temporary exhibitions.



Clock, French, c.1800. Dial in the form of a chariot wheel. Body composed of two horses driven by a male figure, under the protection of Minerva (goddess of wisdom)

The facility also includes some important scientific instruments, ranging in date from the 17th to the 20th century, together with the Museum's collection of watches, the bulk of which dates to the period 1750-1850. Combined with the collections of Sheffield plate, electrotypes, pewter, brass, bronze, silver and jewellery, these can be seen in the fourth section of the store.

#### Temporary Exhibitions

The Art and Industrial Division of the National Museum also mounts temporary exhibitions in Collins Barracks on a regular basis. These exhibitions have covered a range of topics, such as the annual contemporary silver competition organised jointly by the Museum and the National College of Art and Design; Norwegian glass; the life of John Wesley; Neo-Celtic decorative and fine art; firearms by the Rigby family; contemporary Irish glass art; toys and games. This changing programme of temporary exhibitions has been greatly enhanced by the renovation of the barracks



Tea caddy by Jennifer Walsh, Dublin, 1997. Part of the National College of Art and Design student silver collection at the National Museum

## Future Exhibitions

The planned exhibition strategy of the National Museum of Ireland will ensure that there will be a regular development of new displays in the Clarke Square galleries and in the new central building in Collins Square. These will include galleries on Irish History, Design History, Postal History and Philately, Ethnography and Earth Science.

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