

Ard-Mhúsaem
na hÉireann
National Museum
of Ireland

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Follow Sammy
the swallow on their
migration from Ireland to
St. Gallen in Switzerland.
Help Sammy along the way
by answering the questions
in this activity booklet,
and discover what life was
like for people in the early
medieval period.

Words on the Wing

Activity Booklet for the *Words on the Wave:*
Ireland and St. Gallen in Early Medieval Europe Exhibition

Welcome

1

As we begin our journey, let's figure out the best way to travel. Sammy is lucky that they are able to fly over the sea to Europe. But if you wanted to travel to Europe from Ireland over 1,400 years ago, how did you travel?



Make your way down the steps

Take a look at the map on your righthand side and see where St. Gallen is. This is where the Irish monk, St. Gall, travelled to around 1,400 years ago. After his death, his followers built a monastery and library.

2

During the medieval period, a lot of people travelled back and forth from Ireland to Europe.

Can you find the case with artefacts that came from late Roman and early medieval Europe and name three things that people brought to Ireland?

1

2

3

As you travel through the exhibition with Sammy, don't forget to take a look at each of the manuscripts

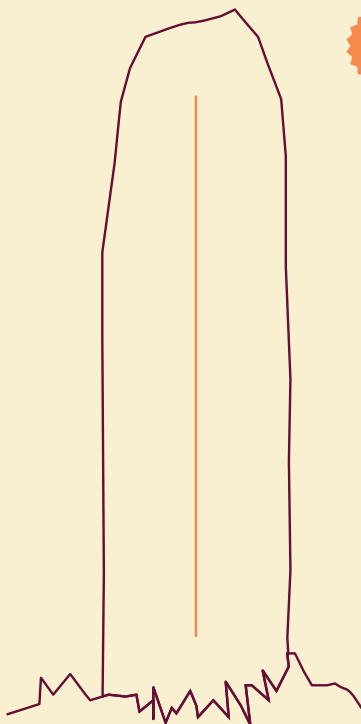
These manuscripts are on loan to the Museum from the Abbey Library of St. Gall. Some of these manuscripts were brought by Irish monks to St. Gallen around 1,400 years ago and it is the first time they have come back to Ireland.

	R		N
	Z		S
	NG		V
	G		L
	M		B
	Q		I
	C		E
	T		U
	D		O
	H		A

3

Travel with Sammy further along the exhibition until you see some large standing stones. One of these is an **ogham stone**. Ogham is the earliest type of writing found in Ireland and its letters are made using lines.

Use the ogham alphabet to write your name, or a message, on this stone



4

Ogham was not just used to write on stone but was also used to write on other objects. If you travel down a little further, what other object can you see that has ogham written on it?

Fill in the blank letters to get the answer

B _ _ L _ S _ E _ L A N

B _ _ O _ H

5

Look out for some replica objects to learn all about manuscript writing and production. See what raw materials were used to create the colours to decorate manuscripts.

Can you draw a line and match up the raw material to its colour?

GREEN •
BLACK •
YELLOW •
RED •
BLUE •

• LEAD
• COPPER
• WOAD
• IRON GALL AND GUM ARABIC
• ORPIMENT

6

After learning about ogham, Sammy wants to find out more about reading and writing. Help Sammy to find an image of **St. Matthew** in a manuscript, who is sitting down and writing.

Tick the objects that you can see **St. Matthew** using to write his manuscript

- ☐ Reed pen
- ☐ Pencil
- ☐ Inkwell and Ink
- ☐ Eraser
- ☐ Sharpener
- ☐ Knife
- ☐ Pages

7

Can you show Sammy some other objects with similar designs and patterns, like the ones found in the manuscripts? Find two cases with lots of objects, mostly made of metal, that have decoration just like the manuscripts.

A lot of these objects are decorated with different types of animals. Look closely at the objects and circle the animals and animal parts that you can see in the decoration.

DOG'S TAIL

SNAKE

RABBIT'S EARS

BIRD'S BEAK

FISH

BIRD'S FOOT



Rowing Out

Before you turn the corner, take a look at the large interactive map and find out more about the people who travelled around Europe in the early medieval period and the journeys that they made.

8

Sammy knows how difficult it was for the monks to write manuscripts. Near the corner, there is a book called **Institutiones Grammaticae**. In this book, as the monks were writing it, they wrote notes in the margins and between the lines.

Can you name two things that the monks were not happy about as they were writing?

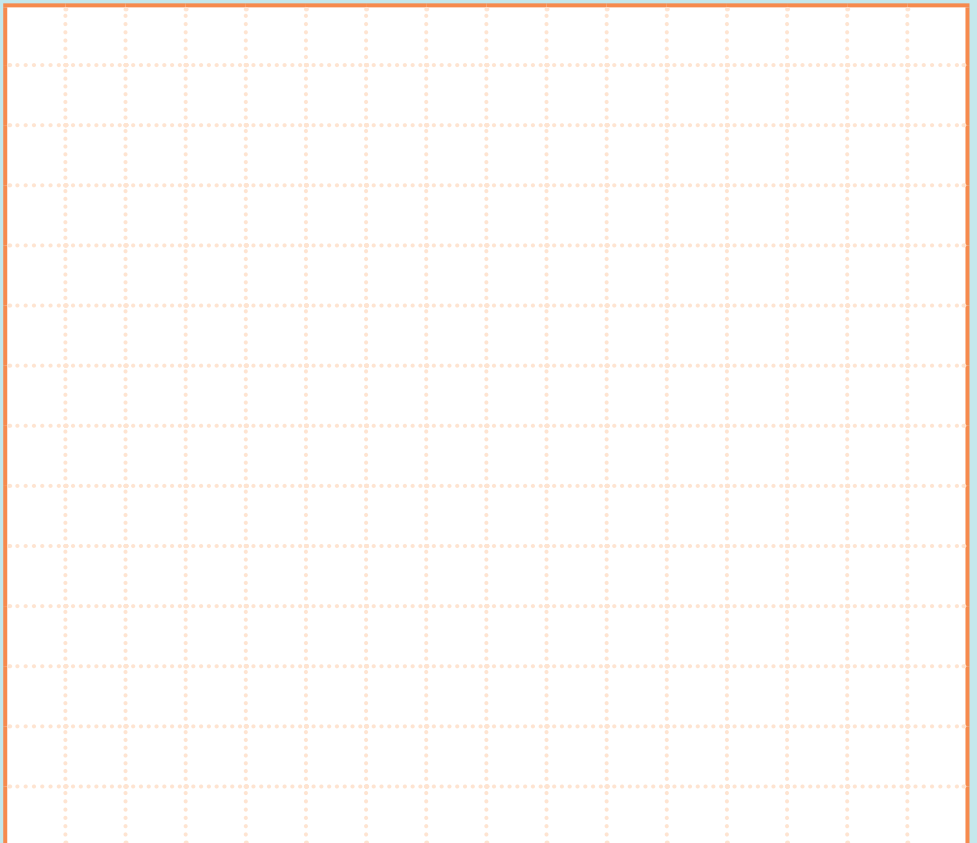
1

2

9

Turn around and find the **Fadden More Psalter**. This is a book that was found in a bog in Ireland. The book was found within a decorated leather cover.

Can you draw some of the decoration found on the leather cover of the Fadden More Psalter?



10

Can you find and show Sammy the **Lough Kinale Book Shrine**? This was found in a lake and was made to keep a manuscript safe. It is made from oak and is covered in decorated pieces of metals.

What shapes can you see on the book shrine?

To take a closer look at the Lough Kinale Book Shrine, make sure you explore the 3D interactive where you can see close up features and decoration of the shrine.

11

The Lough Kinale Book Shrine is made out of precious metals, and some groups of people may have attacked monasteries to find objects just like it.

Who do you think the monks were afraid of attacking their monastery?

Hint: Find the poem called 'Bitter is the Wind Tonight'

12

Find a large stone close by that has a lot of decoration on it. On this stone, can you show Sammy the deer that has its leg caught in a trap?

Can you unscramble the letters to find out the name of the stone?

NANEAHBS RTOG

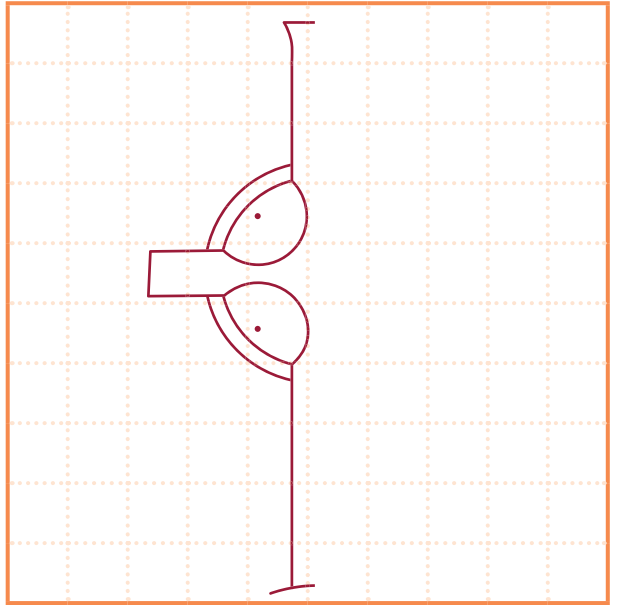
B							
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S				
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13

Turn around and find a case with a large leather bag and a bell. This bell is from Lough Lene in Co. Westmeath.

Look closely at the decoration and complete the drawing



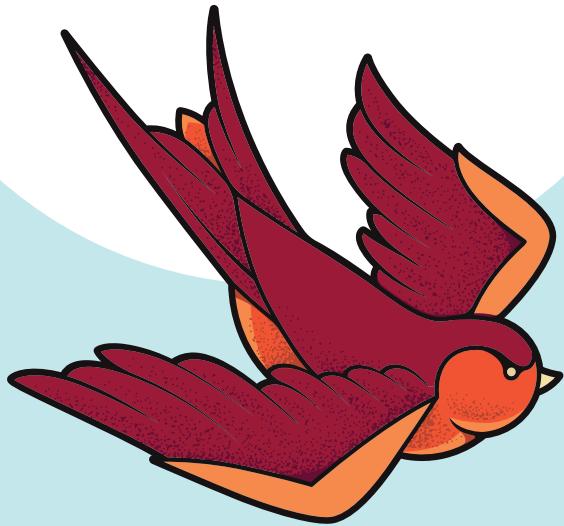
For this exhibition, students from Ireland and St. Gallen were taught how to write and to create decoration just like the monks in medieval times.

Take a look at the St. Gallen Schools project to see the manuscript pages made by the students using vellum, quills, and natural inks.

14

You have now travelled over the seas and mountains to St. Gallen in Switzerland with Sammy, and along the way, have discovered all about early medieval manuscripts and writing.

Before you leave, check out the interactive display at the end and see if you can learn how to create some interlace, a type of decoration that was used on manuscripts and objects during this time.



Opening hours

Sunday & Monday: 13:00 – 17:00

Tuesday – Saturday: 10:00 – 17:00

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Exhibition details &
accessibility info