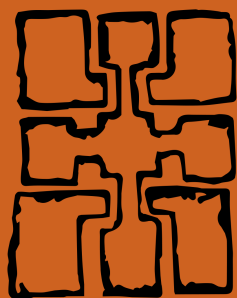


BANTRY MUSEUM



OUR PEOPLE



OUR PAST



OUR PLACE

DIGITISATION PROJECT

This project is supported by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Funding 2022



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



ABOUT BANTRY MUSEUM

Bantry Museum, located in a small building behind Bantry Fire Station in Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, was founded by volunteers from Bantry Historical & Archaeological Society (BH&AS) to store and display BH&AS's collection of historical artefacts.

As well as housing physical artefacts which are viewable by the public during the museum's opening hours (10:30AM to 4:30PM, Monday to Friday, between May and September), Bantry Museum is also the location of BH&AS's reference library and archive, comprising multiple bookshelves filled with albums of hand-written and typed historical research, maps, newspaper clippings, and photographs.

The museum first opened its doors to the public on Sunday 3rd August 1986. Since that time, it has depended on donations from local people and visitors for its continued existence, and has been staffed and managed entirely by BH&AS volunteers.

Bantry Museum serves a number of different functions in Bantry town. The first is as a destination for local people and visitors with an interest in the history and culture of the area. The second is as a research archive for scholars, authors, and officials, who have specific questions about Bantry history, or who are researching a particular aspect.

In its nearly forty years of existence, BH&AS volunteers have struggled to keep the doors open, and haven't always had time to properly manage and curate the museum's collections of artefacts and research due to volunteer shortages and turnover.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Museum Digitisation Project intends to address the documentation, condition, storage, use, and accessibility of the museum's collections. The aim of this project is to ensure the future sustainability of the museum, and with the ultimate aim of moving Bantry Museum to a ground-floor premises with more storage space.

The first stage in this project involves completing an inventory of the museum's artefacts and documents. Over the coming months, BH&AS volunteers will digitally photograph each item, and scan each document, and add these to a tagged and categorised and searchable online database. This database will include images of each item and details of its historical significance, as well as its age, provenance, copyright and ownership status, and condition, and other relevant information.

This online database will form part of a permanent "digital museum", housed on BH&AS's existing website. The digital museum will feature rotating exhibitions, which will showcase the museum collection, providing international scholars and historians with access to the detailed local research carried out over the decades by BH&AS members like Hazel Vickery, Joan O'Carroll, Paddy O'Keeffe, Donal Fitzgerald and others.

NEXT STEPS & TIMELINE

April-May 2022

- Project proposed and approved at BH&AS AGM
- Funding sought and received from the Heritage Council under County Heritage Plan Funding 2022
- New, modernised branding for Bantry Museum, to tie in with existing BH&AS logo, commissioned

June-July 2022

- New IT equipment (laptop, printer, ink, scanner) purchased for Bantry Museum
- Garden area in front of museum updated - overgrown hedges trimmed, gravel beds weeded, historic water pipe sanded, primed, and painted

August-September 2022

- Video recording of artefact and collections begins
- Photography of artefacts begins

October-December 2022

- A floorplan of the museum is drawn up, with each item's location marked on it
- Volunteers capture Room 1 artefact details on a Google spreadsheet, tied to photographs via artefact number, and location via floorplan map
- Volunteers scan the documents in bookshelf 1

January-March 2023

- Volunteers capture Room 2 artefact details
- Volunteers scan documents in bookshelves 2, 3, 4

April-July 2023

- Volunteers tag and categorise the scanned documents and cross-reference with artefact lists

August 2023

- Results of the project released to the public during Heritage Week 2023



DIGITAL MUSEUM EXAMPLE 1: THE COOMHOLA ANVIL

THE COOMHOLA ANVIL



From 1700 to 1750, the Whites of Bantry House engaged in iron ore smelting at Adrigole, Glengarriff, Bantry Abbey, and Mill Little (Mill Beg) in Coomhola. Traces of burnt stones and charcoal from the smelting can be found in the area.

Iron ore was imported from Lancashire, England directly by ship into Bantry, and mixed with an inferior quality ore that was available locally.

The oak and birch trees used in the making of charcoal, which were needed for the smelting process, were readily available in Bantry, unlike in England, where many of these trees had long since been felled. The Whites took advantage of this, and started the industry here.

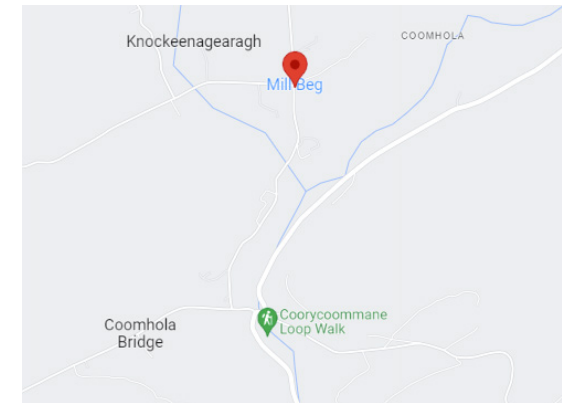
The tree cutting and smelting process, and the shipping of the finished product, created much employment in the Bantry area. The industry had other effects on Bantry's landscape. The felling of the trees opened up vast areas of land for farming, and encouraged many families to move to the area to occupy these new farms.

Once the timber in the immediate vicinity of the smelter was used up, new roads were made to access the remoter areas of the valleys for new sources of timber. Many of these roads are still in use today.

The Coomhola anvil was made at the smelter at Mill Beg, and eventually came into the possession of the McSweeney family of Marino Street, Bantry, who owned a pub and workshop locally. The McSweeneys gave it to Paddy O'Keeffe, owner of G.W. Biggs, Ltd., who used it in their lorry repair garage.

In September 2004, Maurice O'Keeffe, Paddy's son, presented it to Bantry Historical & Archaeological Society's museum.

LOCATION



DETAIL OVERVIEW

Name: Coomhola Anvil

Description: Iron anvil

Age: ~300 years old (made 1700-1750)

From: Mill Beg, Coomhola, Bantry

Status: Part of the permanent collection

Donated by: Maurice O'Keeffe

Collection: Occupational Tools

WATCH VIDEO



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Cork County Council



DIGITAL MUSEUM EXAMPLE 2: OLD IRISH MANTLE & FIREPLACE

IRISH MANTLE & FIREPLACE



This is an example of a typical open fireplace, as would have been found in an Irish country farmhouse from the late 19th to the late 20th century.

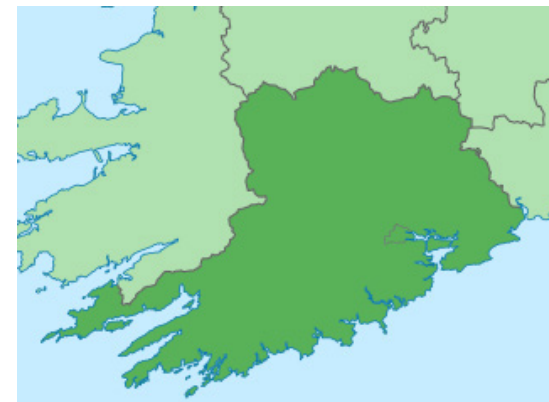
For buildings needing larger fires, for example industrial buildings or a boiler house, a pipe connected a manual bellows under the fire. By turning the handle of the bellows, air was blown upwards into the fire, creating a draught to light or enhance the fire. Hand bellows were used to increase the heat of traditional domestic fires.

The fire was fuelled by turf or wood, and the kettle, pots and other implements could be hung over the open fire at

different heights, using iron hooks and extenders with multiple holes. Tongs would be used to place fuel on the fire, and to extract food items from hot utensils.

Most of the cooking was traditionally done in covered cast iron pots called bastibles, which would be put on a hot turf fire. The interior of the bastible would be greased using butter or fat, and brown soda bread (known as “bastible bread”) would be put into it to bake. Using a tongs, hot turf would be placed on the lid of the bastible, to ensure even baking. Flat cast-iron skillets were used to make pancakes or scones.

LOCATION



DETAIL OVERVIEW

Name: Irish mantle & fireplace

Description: Wooden reconstruction of traditional Irish mantle and fireplace,

Age: In use between 1830 and 1960

From: Bantry museum

Status: Part of the permanent collection

Donated by: Joan O'Carroll

Collection: The Old Irish Home

WATCH VIDEO

