



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, 19th July 2018

Ireland's unique stories and traditions celebrated in National Heritage Week programme

More than 2,000 events ranging from storytelling and gathering, iron forging and nature trails, to a medieval re-enactment and a special concert unlocking the sounds of Ireland's ancient instruments, will take place across the country as part of [National Heritage Week 2018](#), launched by Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD today (19.07.18).

Coordinated by the Heritage Council since 2005, National Heritage Week has become Ireland's largest cultural event. This year's programme, which will run from Saturday, 18th August to Sunday, 26th August, is a highlight of Ireland's celebration of the [European Year of Cultural Heritage \(EYCH\)](#), which encourages communities throughout Ireland to make a connection with Irish and European heritage.

The call to action for this year's Heritage Week activities is 'Share a Story, Make a Connection'. Complementing Ireland's famous tradition of storytelling, people are invited to share their stories with others, be they about a family heirloom, about traditional crafts, skills or music, or about little-known facts or forgotten places in their local area.

Launching Heritage Week, Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD said: "I'm delighted to see such an exciting and diverse range of events and activities planned for this year's Heritage Week programme. The participation of hundreds of communities across the country demonstrates Ireland's great appreciation of our heritage and people's enthusiasm for getting involved in protecting and promoting their local landscapes, stories and traditions.

"Ireland's unique heritage is something we should all cherish and celebrate and my department has a strong commitment to investing in our cultural and heritage infrastructure to ensure the protection our shared heritage for generations to come. In this European Year of Cultural Heritage, I am particularly delighted to see that our strong European connections are also reflected in this year's activities."

The Heritage Week programme features events for all ages, most of which are free to attend. Highlights include:

- **Daily guided tours of Scattery Island**, Co Clare. Enjoy a guided tour of Saint Senan's sixth-century monastic settlement. Hear about the island's maritime history and see the island's working lighthouse and 200-year-old Napoleonic gun battery. Saturday, 18th to Sunday, 26th August, 10am to 5pm. Please note there is a charge imposed by the ferry operator who departs from Kilrush Marina. Sailing times may vary. Booking required via info@scatteryislandtours.com.

- **Discover rock art by night and become a constellation detective** at St Crohan's church gate, Caherdaniel, Co Kerry. Join archaeologist Aoibheann Lambe of Rock Art Kerry for a short torch-lit stroll to see a 5,000-year-old example of rock art. Then, become a constellation detective as Caherdaniel Dark Sky Group introduce you to constellations visible in the Northern Hemisphere. Discover some of the mythology stories associated with them as you gaze at the stars. Sunday, 19th August, 9pm to 11.45pm. Free. No booking required.
- **Emigrant story collecting** at EPIC, the Irish emigration museum, Dublin 1. Members of the public are invited to bring an object that symbolises their migration story. Saturday, 18th and Sunday, 19th August, 10am to 5pm. Free. No booking required.
- **Medieval re-enactment** at Gallows Hill, Durgarvan, Co Waterford. As part of Gallows Hill Archeology Festival, Gallows Hill will return to its medieval origins as a busy thriving castle and village for one day only. Listen to the tales of conquests and deceit from the town's most infamous knights and warriors. Guided tours, craft workshops, excavations, clothing and armoury displays will be hosted throughout the festival. Sunday, 19th August, 11am to 4.30pm. Free. No booking required.
- **Explore the connections between Waterford and Tenerife** at Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford. Join Dr John Bergin of UCD for a lunchtime talk on seventeenth and eighteenth-century Waterford settlements in Tenerife, and the trading houses which flourished for over a century. Tuesday, 21st August, 1.15pm to 2pm. Free. No booking required.
- **Experience 'Old Stories, New Sounds'** at the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA), Dublin 2. This event will encompass a concert, interviews and an audio-visual presentation celebrating the restoration of four unique traditional music instruments from the ITMA collection. Wednesday, 22nd August, 2pm to 3pm. Free. Booking required via info@itma.ie.
- **Treasures of the National Museum** at the National Museum of Ireland, Archaeology, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Learn how archaeology can help uncover the stories behind the manufacture, use and discovery of the iconic treasures in the National Museum, including the 'Tara' Brooch and the Ardagh Chalice. Suitable for ages 7+. Free. No booking required.
- **Furnace Festival** at Sliabh Aughty Furnace Project, Woodford, Co Galway. Local iron ore, charcoal and clay will be used to make iron in the area for the first time in nearly 250 years. Thirteen groups from all over Europe will build their own furnaces from iron smelted the previous week. Afterwards, this iron will be forged by blacksmiths. Saturday, 25th and Sunday, 26th August, 9am to 6pm. Free. No booking required.

Chairman of the Heritage Council, Michael Parsons said: "Heritage Week aims to raise awareness and appreciation of Ireland's incredible heritage, while shining a light on the great work that is carried out in neighbourhoods nationwide to preserve and promote our built, cultural and natural heritage. From archaeology and architecture to native wildlife, traditions and crafts, all elements of our heritage are tethered to the present with strong narrative threads. It is important that we share the stories that underpin our identity as Irish people to animate them in the present and to preserve them for future generations.

"We would like to encourage everyone, from children and grandparents to those who have chosen to make Ireland their home, to join us in celebrating Heritage Week, to listen to and share their stories and to help make this year's event the best and biggest yet."

Two special days will take place during Heritage Week. Wild Child Day on Wednesday, 22nd August is dedicated to wild children everywhere. It will have a particular focus on hands-on outdoor activities, from nature trails and storytelling sessions to craft workshops. Water Heritage Day concludes Heritage Week on

Sunday, 26th August. Together with the Local Authority Waters & Communities Office, this day is a celebration of our most precious natural resource in all its forms, from the sea, to rivers, lakes and garden ponds.

Each year, the Heritage Council highlights and recognises the work of heritage enthusiasts who take part in the week through its National Heritage Awards initiative. To mark EYCH, the Heritage Council has created the 'Le Cheile san Eoraip' award, a new category, whereby three prizes of €1,000 will be awarded to the organisers of events that best represent heritage links with Europe.

Find out more about the National Heritage Week programme of events and awards at www.heritageweek.ie.

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Contact: Louise Archbold / Stephen Moloney, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-2601145 / 087-7858522.

Note to Editors:

- Spokespersons from the Heritage Council are available on request.
- Spokespersons from National Heritage Week event organisers are available on request.
- Photographer Marc O'Sullivan will issue photos from the launch photocall to photodesks this afternoon.
- Details of a selection of National Heritage Weeks events are available to download from Dropbox with imagery: <https://bit.ly/2uIWWU6>. The full event programme is available at www.heritageweek.ie.
- A promotional video for National Heritage Week is available to watch here: ***link to be added when live***

About National Heritage Week: National Heritage Week is part of European Heritage Days – a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Union in which more than 40 countries participate each year. The main aim of European Heritage Days is to promote awareness of our built, natural and cultural heritage and to promote Europe's common cultural heritage. For further information, visit: www.heritageweek.ie.

About the Heritage Council: The Heritage Council was established under the Heritage Act 1995 with responsibility to propose policies and priorities for the national heritage. It works in co-operation with a range of agencies, communities and individuals to promote education, enjoyment and understanding of our national heritage. For further information, visit: www.heritagecouncil.ie.

About the European Year of Cultural Heritage: 2018 has been designated as the European Year of Cultural Heritage by the European Commission. The initiative is designed to be truly European, with activities taking place at all levels: European, national, regional and local. The Year aims to involve all citizens in events that help to promote a sense of belonging to a common European space.

Heritage is our cultural identity, values and traditions that we have inherited from previous generations, live with today, and pass on to future generations. It includes buildings, monuments, historical and archaeological sites, museum objects, our customs, sports, music, dance, folklore, crafts and skills, and natural heritage, such as landscapes, wildlife habitats and biodiversity.

In Ireland, the Heritage Council – the statutory body charged with promoting, educating and encouraging enjoyment in Ireland’s national heritage – is coordinating the European Year of Cultural Heritage. It will coordinate and promote a national programme of European Year of Cultural Heritage events and other activities.

The theme for the Year in Ireland is ‘Make a Connection’. This theme aims to deepen the connection between people and heritage, and to build a legacy of increased public engagement. To achieve this objective, the Heritage Council is inviting organisations and individuals to take action and respond to the theme. For further information, visit www.eych2018.ie.