

Monk and Nun Roof Tiles



Item: Curved Roof Tiles

Date: Late 12th Century

Find Location: Trim Castle

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

These tiles were used to roof the castle at Trim in the late twelfth century. The roof survived for three hundred years being re-roofed in the 15th century. The tiles were laid down in two layers. The lower layer was laid face up secured to the roof timbers by projecting nibs. The upper tiles were laid face down spanning two lower tiles. All tiles are narrowed at one end to fit inside to the next tile.

Over two tonnes of tile debris was discovered in the 1990s excavations. Some were also uncovered during the earlier excavation. From its first phase, the keep at Trim appears to have been roofed with tiles. The form of these tiles is unparalleled elsewhere in Ireland or Britain. Some were probably imported, while others could be local copies. They are most closely paralleled by the ‘monk’ and ‘nun’ tiles used to roof castles and churches in Denmark and north Germany from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries.

Further Information:

Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations 1995-8 by Alan Hayden

Michael Potterton: 2005: *Medieval Trim: history and archaeology*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. 464pp.

Key



Item: Iron Key

Date: 11-13th century

Find Location: Knowth

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

In the 7th or 8th century the great Knowth mound was fortified with a ditch, and perhaps became the residence of the kings of North Brega. Around the 10th and 11th centuries, Knowth was particularly important as one of its kings, Congalach, who died in 956, became High King of Ireland. In 1142 the first Irish Cistercian Abbey was founded at nearby Mellifont, the lands of Knowth became part of its possessions and a grange was built on the top of the Neolithic mound. Mellifont and its granges flourished up to the time of the Reformation in the mid-16th century.

Further Information:

Bog Butter found in Duleek Bog



Item: Bog Butter

Date: Iron Age or Medieval Period

Find Location: Duleek

Current Location: Drogheda Museum Millmount

Description:

Bog butter has also been discovered at various other sites throughout Meath including most recently at Ervey on the border with Cavan. The creamy white dairy product, which smells like a strong cheese and is believed to be about 2,000 years old, was unearthed by Jack Conway, from Maghera, Co Cavan, while he worked on Emlagh bog in June 2016. The find, while not unusual, has been given to the National Museum, where it will be preserved. Bog butter was often buried to preserve it to be dug up at a later date. Other research has shed light on it being buried as an offering to the gods or spirits in the hope of renewed prosperity. The Emlagh discovery, 12ft below the surface, may never have been intended to be unearthed as there was no cover. Bog butter dated to Iron age or medieval period. Bog butter may be a votive offerings or boundary marker. A firkin of bog butter was found in Mountainstown bog in 1943.

Further Information:

<https://nmni.com/acm/Collections/Human-History/Pre-History/Bog-butter>

Shrine of An Cathach



Item: Shrine of An Cathach (Eleventh century side panel in photograph)

Date: Late 11th century

Find Location: Associated with Kells

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street

Description:

An Cathach (meaning "the Battler") was a very important relic used by the Clan Ó Domhnaill of Tír Chonaill, as a rallying cry and protector in battle. It is the oldest surviving manuscript in Ireland, and the second oldest Latin psalter in the world. The manuscript is now in the Royal Irish Academy. It was enclosed in a shrine.

The late 11th-century shrine (*cumdach*) of the Cathach, made by Sitric of Kells, Co. Meath to the order of Cathbarr O'Donnell, may be seen in the National Museum of Ireland. The initial work on the case was done between 1072 and 1098 at Kells, but a new main face was added in the 14th century with a large seated Christ in Majesty flanked by scenes of the Crucifixion and saints in gilt repoussé. This was done by Cathbarr Ó Domhnaill, chief of the O'Donnells and Domhnall Mag Robhartaigh, the Abbot of Kells. The shrine cover consists of a brass box measuring 9 inches long, 8 inches wide and 2 inches thick. The top is heavily decorated with silver, crystals, pearls and other precious stones. It shows an image of the Crucifixion and an image of St Colm Cille.

The side panels which date from the eleventh century are decorated with broad scrolls or stems, in typical Ringersike fashion. It bears an inscription enabling it to be dated to between 1062 and 1094. The inscription also bears the name of its Irish maker Sitric mac Meic Aeda – a name form which suggests that he may have been of mixed Irish-Norse origin.

Further Information:

<https://www.ria.ie/cathach-psalter-st-columba>

M. Esposito, 'The Cathach of St Columba', *Louth Archaeological Journal* 4 (1916-20), 80-3.

M. Herity and A. Breen, *The Cathach of Colum Cille: an introduction* (Dublin, 2002).

R.S. Ó Cochláin, 'The Cathach Battle Book and the O'Donnells', *The Irish Sword* 8 (1968), 157-77.

Dáithí Ó Cróinín, 'The Cathach and Domnach Airgid' in Bernadette Cunningham and Siobhán Fitzpatrick (eds), *Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library* (Dublin, 2009), 1-8.

Chess Piece



Item: Queen from Chess Set

Date: Late Twelfth Century

Find Location: Clonard

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Ivory chess piece showing a queen seated on Clonard, discovered in a bog in Clonard in 1817. It is the only known survivor of a number of chess pieces found in Clonard bog. It may be of Scottish or Scandinavian origin. It may have been brought to Clonard by someone in the retinue of Simon de Rochfort who became bishop of Meath in the late twelfth century.

It represents a carved figure of a Queen from a chess set. It is made of ivory or polished bone with a core of lead. It has a small iron spike at the base, presumably for attachment to the playing surface.

The figure has a crown, wears a shoulder length veil over a mantle. The edges of the mantle are folded back revealing a decorative border of dots and crosses. The left hand is raised to the cheek and is supported by the right hand at the elbow.

The chair the figure sits on has projecting arms. The back of the chair is decorated with a pair of two-legged dragons with backward looking heads. Their tails are fishlike and intertwined. The mouths of the animals are joined by a beaded scroll. The letters S, P and K are written on the back in Lombardic script. The perforation through the neck seems to have been added at a later date.

The figure it seems belongs to the same workshop tradition which produced the group of 78 walrus ivory chessmen found in 1831 on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland. Only two other figures are known from the same workshop- one in Bargello, Florence, the other found in Óland in Sweden. The decoration of these pieces is Romanesque in style and were manufactured in some Viking Kingdom in the second half of the twelfth century. The Clonard piece was found before the Lewis chess pieces, this piece represents the sole survivor of a similar set now lost.

Further Information:

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~clonardns/thechesspiece.htm>

Seal Matrix



Item: Seal Matrix of the Augustinian monasteries of Durrow and Trim

Date: 13th century

Find Location: Lynn, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

The organisation of the monastery was in the hands of the abbot or prior who had his own seal. These frequently carried images of the abbot and his crozier, the symbol of his power. Discovered about 1833 Dean Butler made a copy of it. On one side is an abbot, face on, with a book in his left hand and a crozier in his right. The other side has an image of the abbot side on.

Further Information:

Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim: history and archaeology* (Dublin, 2005)

Norman and Medieval Period - Meath Virtual Museum – Noel French

Bone Stylus



Item: Bone Stylus

Date: 13th/14th century

Find Location: Trim Castle

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

A stylus is a slender, tapered utensil used for writing on wax-coated wooden tablets. Styli crafted in medieval Ireland were generally hand-carved from animal bone. While the tip used to carve into the wax was sometimes created simply by sharpening the bone into a point, most often a sharp metal tip was inset into the end of the bone shaft. Styli from multiple archaeological sites indicate that the bone tips were sometimes re-carved after breakage or the loss of the metal tip.

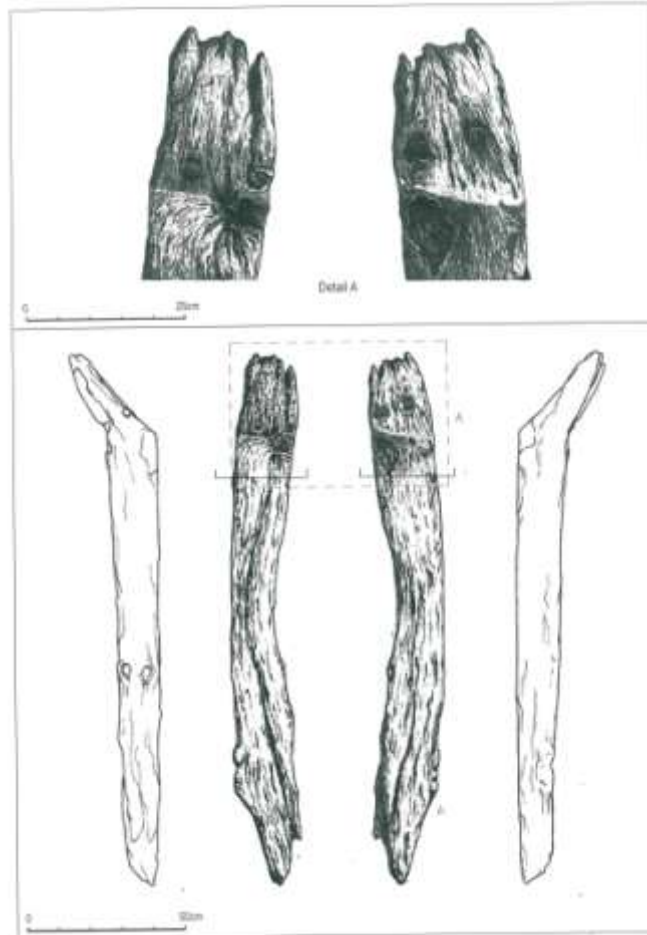
This particular stylus is made of bone and is missing its metal inset tip. The bone is a creamy white color. The top of the stylus is spherical. This rounded top was used, much like the eraser at the end of a modern pencil, to “erase” writing in the wax by rubbing back and forth on the wax to smooth over the indented surface.

Writing with a stylus and wax was much cheaper than writing on paper in the Middle Ages, especially since the wax tablets were reusable. Styli were used for a number of purposes in medieval London, most notably for writing school exercises, legal records, and correspondence, although they could be used for any type of composition. It has been argued that these instruments were also used as markers for transferring embroidery patterns or as parchment “prickers,” used to prepare parchment for writing by marking horizontal lines.

Archaeological and documentary evidence supports the contention that the stylus was a popular and essential tool for centuries throughout Europe.

Further Information:

Wooden Yoke - Killeen



Item: Wooden Yoke

Date: Medieval period – 13-15th century

Find Location: Merrywell, Killeen.

Current Location:

Description:

This yoke was discovered from the fill of a well at Merrywell, Killeen in 2005 by ACS Ltd. Oxen were used to provide a source of power through their ability to haul ploughs and heavy loads and to transport people and goods. Oxen also provided meat and hide. By the start of the thirteenth century eight-ox plough teams were in use in Meath. Oxen were used throughout the Dublin region in medieval times. Heavy horse were sometimes used together with oxen for ploughing. The great plow-horse, which was originally developed on the Continent for military use, was introduced to Ireland, and by the end of the fifteenth century it seems that oxen were largely superseded for this purpose.

Further Information:

<https://books.google.ie/books?id=2rwRDAAAQBAJ&pg=PA557&lpg=PA557&dq=ploughing+with+oxen+medieval+ireland&source=bl&ots=qqjOyNCXSw&sig=TfJUXhd8VgCSjGpJsvgbzxDrxzA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiUnNmplvnQAhXFB8AKHWDuDWYQ6AEIWjAN>

Petronilla de Meath Place Setting



Item: Place Setting

Date: Associated with 1324

Find Location: Associated with Meath

Current Location: Brooklyn Museum, New York.

Description:

Created by artist, Judy Chicago, in 1974-79 this place setting runner has a cotton/linen base fabric. Petronilla de Meath was the first Irish woman to be burned at the stake for the crime of heresy. She served as a maid to Dame Alice Kytler, one of the earliest women to be accused of witchcraft. In Kilkenny in 1324, Lady Alice Kyteler, along with her son and ten others, became one of the earliest targets of witchcraft accusations, centuries before the more famous rash of witch trials in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She was charged by the Bishop of Ossory with a wide slate of crimes, from sorcery and demonism to the murders of several husbands. Lady Alice was believed to have illegally acquired her wealth through magical and devilish means. With the help of relatives, Lady Alice used her connections to flee to England, taking with her Petronilla's daughter, Basilia. Lady Alice's followers, including Petronilla, remained behind. Some were convicted and whipped, but others, Petronilla included, were burned alive at the stake. Petronilla's place setting employs many of the most familiar symbols of witchcraft from both Petronilla's time and today, including the broomstick incorporated into the illuminated letter "P" on the front of her runner.

Further Information:

Curran, Bob. *A Bewitched Land: Ireland's Witches*. Dublin: O'Brien, 2005.

Davidson, Sharon, and John O. Ward, trans. *The Sorcery Trial of Alice Kyteler: A Contemporary Account (1324)*. Asheville, N.C.: Pegasus Press, 2004.

Silver Pennies - Kells



Item: Silver Pennies of Edward I and Edward II

Date: 1325-50 AD

Find Location: In the vicinity of Kells

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Meath has very few coins from this period. This find was made in the 1950s but the circumstances were not recorded. The coins are stamped EDW REX ANGL DNS HYB meaning Edward King of England Lord of Ireland.

Further Information:

Michael Kenny, 'A small coin hoard from Kells: silver pennies of Edward I and Edward II', *Ríocht na Míde VIII*, 1 (1987) pp 110-112

Ring brooch - Boyerstown



Item: Ring Brooch

Date: 13th Century

Find Location: Boyerstown, Navan.

Current Location:

Description:

This medieval ring brooch dating to about the 13th century was found during the early stages of excavation of a medieval house at Boyerstown, in advance of the M3 Clonee–North of Kells motorway scheme.. Ring brooches, which were used to fasten clothing, were worn by both men and women throughout medieval Europe. The brooch is typically tiny, just 30 mm in diameter, but close inspection reveals the nature of the markings on the front and back. The inscription on the front of the brooch is in Latin: IESVS NAZARENVS REX I. This is a shortened version of the titulus, that is the inscription placed above the head of Jesus Christ at his crucifixion: IESVS NAZARENUS REX IVDAEORVM, which translates as ‘Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews’. The strange creatures appear on the reverse of the brooch. There are four creatures, each in its own separate panel. Two of the creatures, occupying opposite panels, appear to be naturalistic depictions of birds. *Mary Deevy*

Further Information:

Seal Matrix



Item: Seal Matrix

Date: 1308-14

Find Location: Trim

Current Location: Unknown

Description:

The seal of Geoffery de Geneville. This seal comes from a monastic house of Dominicans in Ireland, founded by Geoffroy de Geneville (or de Joinville), Lord (France), brother of Jean de Joinville, the companion and historian of the king of France, St Louis. Geoffroy de Joinville was the confidential friend of Edward I, married in 1250 the co-heiress of Walter de Lacy, Maud de Lacy [AKA Matilde de Briouze], Lady of Corvesdale, of Ludlow, and of Meath.

The seal may come from the monastic house of Dominicans at Trim, (Baile Athatroin) in Ireland, founded in 1263 by Geoffroy de Geneville (or de Joinville), Lord of Meath, and his wife under the patronage of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Geneville arms are at the lower point of the seal.

Further Information:

E.A. Conwell *A Ramble Round Trim* (Dublin, 1878)

Brooch



Item: Silver Brooch ring

Date: 14th/15th Century

Find Location: Trim Castle.

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

In 1854 Dean Butler described how this ring was discovered in the Castle yard. On the front is the abbreviated form of Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews and on the reverse is the abbreviated form of Casper, Melchoir and Balthasar, the three magi. In the middle ages the veneration of the three magi was believed to have given protection against witchcraft, illness and accidents.

Further Information:

Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim: history and archaeology* (Dublin, 2005)

Mary B. Deevy, *Medieval Ring Brooches in Ireland: A Study of Jewellery, Dress, and Society* (Bray, 1998)

Bell, Processional Cross and Candlestick



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Item: Altar Furnishings

Date: c. 1450-1500 AD

Find Location: Sheephouse, Oldbridge.

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Very fine processional cross which, together with a pricket-candlestick and a small hand-bell of bronze, was discovered in 1899 by John Farrell, resting on the rock, covered by some stones, a few feet from the surface of the ground in a quarry at Sheephouse, near Oldbridge. These items may have belonged to nearby Mellifont Abbey and been buried during the Reformation. Found on lands once owned by Mellifont. The three pieces are almost certainly English imports.

Further Information:

JRSAI Vol. XLV (1915) Series VI, Vol. V Part I 31 March 1915 Armstrong, E.C.R.: Processional cross, pricket-candlestick, and bell found together at Sheephouse, near Oldbridge, Co. Meath, 27-31.

O'Reilly Money



Item: "O'Reilly money" Two examples

Date: 15th century

Find Location: Unknown but specimens were found in Oldcastle

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks

Description:

"O'Reilly money" was a base metal forgery of the Scottish or English Groat. O'Reilly's Money has been identified by Michael Dolley as "plated copies of the clipped English groat of the last half of the 14th and first half of the 15th centuries." The clipped groats usually weigh in the region of 30 grains.

O'Reilly's Money is first mentioned in January 1447 when Parliament met at Trim, and was concerned that the O'Reilly Money was circulating in such volumes that an Act of Parliament was to be passed outlawing its production and usage.

In 1840 a coin hoard containing no fewer than 71 clipped English groats was discovered at Oldcastle. The important sept of the O'Raghallaigh was centred in Breffny, and the Cavan-Meath mearing may be regarded as the epicentre of O'Raghallaigh influence.

Berry argued that the coins should be equated with the "cross caoile" money which he supposed to have been struck "by O'Reilly at Crossakeel" near Kells in the west of Co. Meath.

Further Information:

https://www.google.ie/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwjb1qDI-v3QAhVJBsAKHTUyBmUQFgghMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.britnumsoc.org%2Fpublications%2FDigital%2520BNJ%2Fpdfs%2F1967_BNJ_36_19.pdf&usg=AFQjCNEZAHEgvFrqtb--rr-7TTMAkpkKDg&bvm=bv.142059868,d.ZGg&cad=rja
<https://oldcurrencyexchange.com/2016/03/29/obrien-rare-coin-guide-oreillys-money-1447-1459/>

Patrick Coin - Trim



Item: Coin Henry VI half farthing called 'Patrick'

Date: 1460

Find Location: Trim 1835

Current Location: Whereabouts unknown

Description:

In 1460 Richard, Duke of York, decreed that there should be a separate coinage for Ireland minted at Dublin and Trim. In 1461 Christopher Fox was appointed comptroller of the mints at Trim and Dublin.

In 1463 Germyn Lynch, masterworker of moneys at Dublin and Trim was ordered to make coins for Ireland. A coin called a Patrick was issued which had a bishops head in full face with a tiara and the word 'Patricius' round it and on the other side a cross between two stars and two spurs with the word 'Saluator.' In 1833 a Patrick coin was uncovered in Trim.

In 1835 Dean Butler published a list of his coins discovered locally in his book on Trim castle. The coins included a Trim half groat, Drogheda groat, Dublin half groat, three crowns all from the reign of Edward IV, a Drogheda penny from Richard III and three crown pennies from Henry VII.

Further Information:

J.B.S. MacIlwaine, 'Notes on some Irish coins found at Trim' in *British Numismatic Journal* 10, (1913), pp.309-12

Richard Butler, *Some notices of the castle and of the ecclesiastical buildings of Trim* Trim, 1835.

Trim Groat



Item: Trim Minted Groat

Date: 1465

Find Location: Trim

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks

Description:

Cross and pellet style groat issued about 1465 from Trim Mint. In 1460 Richard, Duke of York, decreed that there should be a separate coinage for Ireland minted at Dublin and Trim. In 1461 Christopher Fox was appointed comptroller of the mints at Trim and Dublin. In 1463 Germyn Lynch, masterworker of moneys at Dublin and Trim was ordered to make coins for Ireland.

Further Information:

Altar Cross



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Item: Altar Cross

Date: c. 1470

Find Location: Site of Greek Church, Trim.

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Found in 1901 on the site of the Greek Church (Lackenash). Gilt bronze cross, the upper portion appears to have been broken and repaired. The front and back are decorated with scored ornament. The figure of Christ was attached by three rivets.

Further Information:

Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim: history and archaeology* (Dublin, 2005)

Seal Matrix - Gaulstown



Item: Seal Matrix

Date: Medieval

Find Location: Gaulstown, Dunshaughlin

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Discovered in 1976 by Mary Everard in the mud walls of her home. A seal authenticates a document. This bronze matrix is pointed oval in shape, 6.6 cm in length. The device represents the Holy Trinity. On the reverse is SIGILLM: CONVENTUS: FRATRM: PREDICATORM DE MOLIGAR showing that the seal was the common seal of the Convent of Preaching Priors of Mullingar, a Dominican priory founded about 1237. The seal is relatively unworn so it was probably new when lost. The Mullingar priory held a small amount of lands near Dunboyne not too far distant from Dunshaughlin. A gold seal ring discovered at Girley, Athboy has some designs that might link it to the Mullingar priory.

Further Information:

Ragnall Ó Floinn, 'Medieval seal matrix from Gaulstown, Co. Meath', *Ríocht na Mídhe* VI, 4, (1978-9) pp 84-88.

Seal - Kells



Item: Seal

Date: 16th Century

Find Location: Kells

Current Location: British Museum

Description:

Acquired 1862. Brass seal-matrix for a counter-seal of a local or official seal; bronze; circular; high semi-circular ridge for handle at back; open hand surmounted by flaming star; sprays and patterns with dots in field; inscription; with wax impression. Diameter: 5 centimetres. Inscription Content: POSVI::DEVM::ADIVTOREM::MEVM. The appearance of the hand which might suggest an association with Ulster.

Further Information: