

Robert Emmet's Watch



NO PHOTO

Item: Robert Emmet's Watch

Date: 1803

Find Location: Unclear

Current Location: Unknown. Was on display in Rathbeggan House when it was the home of the Wilkinson family.

Description:

Robert Emmet (1778 – 1803) was an Irish nationalist and Republican, orator and rebel leader. After leading an abortive rebellion against British rule in 1803 he was captured then tried and executed for high treason. Emmet became a heroic figure in Irish history. His speech from the dock is widely quoted and remembered. Rathbeggan was connected to the Standish and Wilkinson families who owned Rathbeggan House for 350 years until it was sold to the Brindley family in 1990. Originally owned by the Standish family, the house and lands came to the Wilkinsons through descent. In 1876 Henry Standish held an estate of 868 acres and died in 1885 aged 71 years, his successor was John Wilkinson who died in 1904, both are buried in the graveyard near the house. The Wilkinson family were closely associated with John Philpot Curran, the lawyer who defended many of the rebels of 1798. Curran's daughter, Sarah, was the girlfriend of Robert Emmet who was executed for his part in the 1803 rebellion. Sarah gave Emmet's watch to the Wilkinson family. I saw the watch when the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society visited the house a number of years ago. Also in the house were portraits of Curran, Emmet and Lord Kilwarden, who was killed in the 1803 rebellion.

Further Information:

Penal Cross



Item: Penal Cross

Date: 1806

Find Location: Moymet, Trim, c. 1950.

Current Location: Locally held

Description:

This penal cross was discovered when Smith's old house at Moymet, Trim, fell about 1950. A new hay barn is on the site. This family of Smith's founded J & E Smith in Trim. The cross has on the back the date 1806. A considerable number of these small wooden crucifixes have survived from the early 18th to the mid 19th centuries. They are all alike even in the technique of carving which suggests that they were produced by a family of hereditary carvers in County Donegal for sale to the pilgrims visiting St. Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg. These wooden crucifixes measure 10 cms long, the face is without features, the torso is very long, the loincloth is indicated by strokes, the legs are fused, the feet only are indicated by strokes, a very large nimbus and INRI over the head.

There are similar penal crosses from Meath in the Diocesan Museum in Mullingar, the Museum at Maynooth College and the National Museum of Ireland, Castlebar. It was once said that the crosses had short arms so they could be more easily hidden in sleeves but probably the more realistic answer is that longer arms would have easily been snapped off by accident.

Further Information:

Copper Collecting Box



Item: Copper Collecting Box

Date: 1820

Find Location: Navan

Current Location: Navan

Description:

A church collecting box with turned wood handle and engraved inscription "Navan Church" and dated 1820. This unusual type of collecting box were thought to have been used mostly by the Church of Ireland. Presumably the long handle allowed them to be handed round and up to the balcony with ease. Copper collecting boxes, with long handles, were sometimes irreverently referred to as "warming pans." They have quite gone out of use, and are preserved merely as curiosities. It is to be feared that many were be lost, an example from Moynalty was sold at auction in England.

Further Information:

David Hall *Irish Brass Bronze and Copper 1600 - 1900*

John Healy *History of the Diocese of Meath*, (Meath, 1908)

County Meath Deputy Lieutenant Epaulettes



Item: County Meath Deputy Lieutenant Epaulettes.

Date: 1830

Find Location: Associated with Moynalty

Current Location: Sold at Auction

Description:

A very fine pair of box pattern County Meath Deputy Lieutenant epaulettes, attributed to Captain John Arthur Joseph Farrell of the Royal Meath Militia, Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff of County Meath. Silver bullion strap edged with corded inniskillen. Within the silver crescent are gold corded bullion shamrock leaves. The crescent, supports fine twisted tassels. The underside is lined with plush crimson silk and edged with red velvet and leather. Contained in their original crimson lined, velvet padded storage box. John Arthur Joseph Farrell was born in Dublin in the year of 1825. He was a Captain in the Royal Meath Militia, and also Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff of County Meath. He and his family resided at Moynalty House, County Meath and were landowner's of over 4,000 acres. His son was also commissioned into the Royal Meath Militia. Captain Farrell died on the 27th of November 1904.

Further Information:

Kells Lace



Item: Kells Lace

Date: Nineteenth Century

Find Location: Kells.

Current Location: Some in National Museum of Ireland. This example is in private hands.

Description:

Emma Colston née Hubbard established a similar lace venture in Kells, County Meath, in 1825, patterning Nottingham twist on tambour frames in a manufactory which employed 80 children aged between 8 and 15 by the end of its first year. Her family owned a lace manufacturing business in Nottingham.

As well as Kells lace, Carrickmacross lace pre-dated Limerick by almost a decade and there was a long hand-made lace tradition. Of Kells lace, it was reported to the 1836 Poor Law Commissioners that “the lace is sent to Nottingham for sale and it is only the cheapness of labour that enables it to withstand English competition”. However, Reynolds, *Kells Lace*, p. 51, states that Kells lace was made by girls in the country “and pedlars go round to the cabins to buy lace off them”.

Further Information:

Mairead Reynolds, *Kells Lace*, *Irish Arts Review*, 2, (1985) pp. 50-54.

Pamela Sharpe & Stanley D. Chapman, Women's employment and industrial organisation: commercial lace embroidery in early nineteenth-century Ireland and England, *Women's History Review*, 5:3, (1996) pp 325-351

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Bust of James McDonnell



Item: Bust of James McDonnell (1763 - 1845): Physician - 'Father of Belfast Medicine'

Date: 1841

Find Location: Kilsharvan

Current Location: The Royal Victoria Hospital – a bronze copy is in the Ulster Museum

Description:

The McDonnell family inherited Kilsharvan in the mid nineteenth century. The McDonnells originated in County Antrim and were a noted medical family. In 1920 Penelope McDonnell Stevenson offered to donate to the Ulster Medical Society a bust of her great-uncle, Dr James McDonnell. When the society disposed of its building in 1965 the bust was offered to the Royal Victoria Hospital but it vanished a short time later. In 1937, Dr Robert Marshall gave to the Royal Victoria Hospital a bronze copy of a bust of McDonnell. The marble original dating to 1844 is now on permanent loan to the Ulster Museum. Another copy of the bust was on display at Kilsharvan House while the family were in residence. It is possible that the Kilsharvan bust was the original bust, and that after its exhibition at the RA in 1842, copies were made for other branches of the family.

James McDonnell became a leading figure in medicine and medical education and also in literary, scientific and cultural activities. McDonnell pioneered the use of anaesthetic in Ireland and also blood transfusion. In late 1846 MacDonnell, a surgeon at the Richmond Hospital in Dublin, decided to try out the use of ether as an anaesthetic but was determined to see its effects first before using it on a patient. He had a vaporizer made and tried it on himself “rendering myself insensible for several seconds some five or six times” The patient was an 18 year old girl Mary Kane from near Drogheda who had developed suppurative arthritis of the elbow after getting a thorn in it whilst collecting firewood. She had deteriorated rapidly and was admitted to the hospital two weeks after the injury. After four weeks of treatment she had lost weight and had developed a sacral bed sore. MacDonnell decided on 31st December that she needed an amputation and that he would do it the next day. On Friday morning the 1st January 1847 he gave her the anesthetic and proceeded with the amputation. Twice during the procedure “she gave evidence of suffering” but when she woke up as the last sutures were being put in place she declared that she had felt no pain.

Further Information:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1891779/>

<http://www.impalapublications.com/blog/index.php/?archives/3109-James-McDonnells-bust,-by-James-OFee.html>

Maharajpoor Star 1843



Item: Medal

Date: 1843

Find Location: Oldbridge, Drogheda

Current Location: Unknown – Sold at Bonhams Auctions

Description:

Medal fitted with replacement rear fitting, and quality gilt-metal suspension and buckle, engraved (Captain Fitzherbert Coddington H.M. 40th Regt).

The Kingdom of Gwalior, whose capital lies south of Agra in the north of modern India, was ruled along with Ujjain by the Maratha Scindia dynasty from 1731, although after the defeat of the Maratha states in the in 1818 it was forced to recognise British suzerainty. In 1843 however Maharaja Jankojirao II Scindia died, with his appointed heir Jayajirao still an infant of 10 years, and the Maharaja's widow, not Jayajirao's mother, was party to the instalment of a regency under the Prime Minister, that opposed the succession of the British-supported Jayajirao. The British campaign then ousted Dada Khasgee Wala and emplaced the young Maharajah on his throne; it culminated in a decisive battle at Maharajpur. For participation in that battle, this star was issued by the Honourable East India Company.

Major Fitzherbert Nicholas Coddington, was born in Meath, he was the third son of Nicholas Coddington of Oldbridge Co.Meath.Dangerously wounded at the muzzles of the Maharatta's guns, leading his men he was the Officer responsible for capturing four of the Maharatta's regimental standards. He was mentioned in despatches from Major General Valian to General Sir H.Gough. Entitled to Candahar, Ghuznee Cabul medal. He died at Brighton on the 6th April 1853 aged 45, from the wounds suffered at Maharajpoor.

Further Information:

<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/21707/lot/8/>

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Drogheda Harp



Item: Harp played at O'Connell's Monster Meeting Tara, 1843 (Photo: History Ireland)

Date: 1843

Find Location: Drogheda

Current Location: Private Hands

Description:

One of the Drogheda harps, played by the student William Griffith at the Tara monster meeting in 1843, that has remained in the ownership of a Drogheda family for several generations. Daniel O'Connell held a 'monster meeting' on 15 August 1843, was held at the Hill of Tara. Five students from The Drogheda Harp Society played a welcome to O'Connell at the meeting. One of the harps, played by the student William Griffith, still survives. This extraordinary instrument has remained in the family for several generations. The Drogheda Harp Society was started on 15 January 1842 by Fr Thomas Burke, OP, who appointed Hugh Frazer as teacher for the school. The Drogheda Harp Society was the last remaining institution to teach the Irish harp. Timber for the Drogheda harps was supplied by Mr Ball of Ballsgrove House, and a local craftsman, Francis Flood, oversaw their construction and decoration, with the boys working on their own harps. Strands of plump shamrocks in a figure-of-eight pattern fill the upper area, and wreaths of shamrocks encircle patriotic inscriptions in Gaelic. On the left (facing) is the popular slogan 'Eiren go-bragh' ('Ireland forever'), still found on today's souvenir t-shirts from Ireland. On the right side is 'Eire óg' ('Young Ireland'), for the group of young activists led by Thomas Davis, who founded The Nation newspaper to assist the Repeal campaign. The inscription underneath, 'Inis na Naein', is less clear.

Further Information:

<http://www.historyireland.com/18th-19th-century-history/a-drogheda-harp-instrument-and-icon/>

Patrick Cooney 'Drogheda Harp Society', *The Journal of the Old Drogheda Society* (1976) Vol 1.

Repeal Salver



Item: Silver Salver

Date: 1843

Find Location: Hilltown, Bellewstown.

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks.

Description:

A tray of Irish silver was presented to Nicholas Boylan in 1843 by members of the Movement to record their dismay at his dismissal by the government from his position as commissioner of peace. This ornamented silver salver, raised on three feet, was made by Dublin silversmith Samuel Walker in 1759

A framed hand-written address to Boylan from Daniel O'Connell, describing him as "a patriot and a truehearted Irish gentleman" dated Richmond Prison, 6th September 1844, was also acquired. O'Connell and his associates had been imprisoned for sedition and this address is dated the day of their release.

Other prominent members of the Repeal Movement including Thomas Ray, secretary of the Repeal Association and Charles Gavan Duffy, editor of the Nation newspaper also signed this address.

The meeting on the Hill of Tara on 15th August 1843 was chaired by the MP for Meath, Nicholas Boylan of Hilltown House, another supporter of the Repeal Movement. The Nation newspaper said there were three quarters of a million people present on the hill that day. The Times, no supporter of nationalism, recorded one million. The Illustrated London News had just 100,000 on Tara that day. O'Connell's procession from Dunshaughlin included a trumpeter on horseback, drummers, a harp playing 'The Harp that Once' from atop of an open carriage drawn by six grey horses, footmen six deep, horseman four deep, and banners and flags bearing the emotive word 'Repeal'. The Repeal Movement of 1842-43 demanded the repeal of the Act of Union of 1800 and the restoration of a separate Irish parliament. The tray was acquired by the National Museum in 2005. Thank you to Fiona Ahern and Bellewstown Heritage Group for this item.

Further Information:

Riocht na Midhe Vol. XXIV 2013.

Bellewstown Heritage Group *History of Hilltown and the Boylan family* (Bellewstown, 2011)

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Hypodermic Syringe



Item: Hypodermic syringe

Date: 1844

Find Location: Dublin

Current Location: Worldwide

Description:

Hypodermic syringes (hypodermic means ‘beneath the skin’) consist of a hollow needle attached to a syringe. They pierce the skin and inject substances into the bloodstream. They are also used to extract liquid such as blood from the body. The hollow metal needle was invented by Irish physician Francis Rynd and is generally credited with the first successful injection in 1844 .

Dr Rynd was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1801 to James Rynd and his third wife Hester Fleetwood, of Ryndville, County Meath. Ryndville House stood in the parish of Rathcore, near Enfield in southwest Meath. The house was demolished in the 1970s.

Dr Rynd became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1830. In 1836, he took a surgical post in the Meath Hospital. Dr Rynd, who had a lucrative private practice, also served as medical superintendent of the Mountjoy Prison.

In an article in March 1845 he outlined how he injected fluids into a patient with a hypodermic syringe, which he had done on a female patient in May 1844. This was eight years before Alexander Wood, who has mistakenly been credited with inventing the first hypodermic syringe in 1853. Rynd died in Dublin in 1861 after suffering a heart attack aged 60.

Further Information:

<http://our-ireland.com/dr-francis-rynd-irish-inventor-of-the-hypodermic-needle-and-syringe/>

<https://nagp.ie/prof-william-shannon-awarded-dr-francis-rynd-innovation-award-2016/>

Famine Pot - Loughcrew



Item: Famine Pot

Date: 1847

Find Location: Loughcrew

Current Location: Loughcrew

Description:

Famine pots are giant cast iron vessels, which were created to cook large volumes of soup to feed the starving in 1847, the bleakest year of Ireland's Great Hunger, now known as 'Black 47'.

Prior to 1847 famine relief was provided through employment schemes. Recognizing the need for farmers to be free to work the land, the British government abandoned the work schemes, and replaced them by providing the starving Irish with 'soup' through the Soup Kitchen Act of January 1847. Soup was cooked in large cast iron cauldrons which have come to be known as famine pots, soup boilers or workhouse pots. These durable pots were made in a Quaker iron foundry owned and run by the Darby family in Coalbrooke in the Severn Valley of England. Initially 600 of these durable cast iron pots were supplied by the British government. An additional 295 pots were provided by the Society of Friends or the Quakers. Soup was made in the famine pots using a variety of recipes or from whatever scraps the people could afford. The nutritional value of these soups was very questionable. By October of 1847 all of the government soup kitchens had closed. The Irish were expected to live off the new potato harvest, which was ready to be picked in autumn of 1847. Unfortunately this harvest was merely one quarter of a normal Irish potato harvest, and the three million people who depended upon the soup kitchens for survival were left to fend for themselves.

Further Information:

Cecil Woodham-Smith *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-1849* (1962, London)

Christine Kinealy *This Great Calamity: the Irish Famine, 1845-52* (Dublin, 1994)

Christine Kinealy *Private Charity to Ireland during the Great Hunger. The Kindness of Strangers* (London, 2013)