

National Heritage Week Awards 2022

The National Heritage Awards honour those organisers who created the most engaging and inspiring events and projects for National Heritage Week 2022 as well as Ireland's Heritage Hero. This year, National Heritage Week celebrated the return of in-person events while continuing to showcase digital projects, which proved popular over the last two years. More than 1,800 events and projects took place around the country in August during National Heritage Week, as communities and individuals answered the Heritage Council's invitation to explore this year's themes of sustainable heritage and biodiversity.

Entrants were also encouraged to use environmentally friendly practices to ensure the sustainability of their events and to share heritage with everyone in the community, including those who are new to heritage, those who do not have local roots or those who have additional accessibility needs.

Heritage Hero Award

Teddy Fennelly from Portlaoise, Co Laois: Teddy Fennelly has been an advocate and enthusiast for local history and heritage in Laois for more than 50 years. He has been honoured with the 2022 Heritage Hero award for his outstanding contribution to the protection and promotion of heritage over that time. He has been pivotal in ensuring that the story of Colonel James Fitzmaurice and first East-West Transatlantic flight in April 1928 is remembered and his book *Fitz and the Famous Flight* is the definitive work on the subject.

Sustainable Heritage Award

Ballyshannon Regeneration Group, Co Donegal: With the help of the Heritage Council, Donegal County Council and property owners, Ballyshannon Regeneration Group's '**Ballyshannon Historic Town, Conversation and Conservation**' event aimed to breath new life into the town, through the reuse of some of the historic buildings. The event featured a walk and talk, with stories and discussion about buildings set for conservation.

Biodiversity Award

BirdWatch Ireland in association with Kildare Bat Group and Laois Heritage Office, Co Laois: Irish Wildlife Trust Laois Offaly Branch, BirdWatch Ireland and Kildare Bat Group organised '**Bats about Rooks**', a walk for all ages through the People's Park in Portlaoise to hear all about its bird and bat life. Speakers included ornithologist Ricky Whelan, who discussed the rookery at the nearby Downs, the largest roost in Co Laois. The walk continued along the Triogue River with information about bats from Anna Collins of Kildare Bat Group.

Sustainable and Inclusive Event Award

Irish Wheelchair Charity Shop Letterkenny with Donegal County Museum, Co Donegal: The '**Selling the Past Exhibition**' was an interactive exhibition of items donated to Letterkenny's Irish Wheelchair Charity Shop, all with links to Donegal's history. People were invited to browse through the store to find items with tags featuring historical information about Donegal, such as an embroidered cloth that connected the finder with the county's famous cottage sewing and lacemaking, and a fireside chair inspired by the tradition of visiting and hearing poems and songs.

Wild Child Award (sponsored by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)

Myshall Nature, Co Carlow: Myshall Nature hosted '**Myshall Community Family Biodiversity Day**' to celebrate the rich biodiversity found in local garden spaces. The event focused on family participation

using a 'dig a little, plant a little and play a little' approach. Activities included biodiversity flower bed planting, bird feeder crafting, and tree trail and heritage trail scavenger hunts, and a picnic.

Water Heritage Award (sponsored by the Local Authority Waters Programme)

StreamScapes, Co Cork: StreamScapes organised the '[Launch of Blue Dot Coomhola River Booklet](#)'. The 'Blue Dot' Catchments Programme is about identifying the means to conserve Ireland's high-status water bodies. In support of this, StreamScapes, a designer and producer of community engagement projects for catchments around Ireland, developed a template for communicating Blue Dot objectives to local communities. They launched the Blue Dot Booklet on the Coomhola River, at a 'StreamSchool' in Coomhola, Bantry, and followed with a river field trip.

Speaking at the event, Minister Malcolm Noonan TD, said: "I am delighted to be able to attend the annual National Heritage Awards and acknowledge the fantastic work of so many heritage enthusiasts around Ireland. National Heritage Week demonstrates that there are a great many people who really do appreciate our precious heritage – be it built, natural or cultural – and are willing to work together to protect and conserve it. I share that commitment and welcome the fact that my Government colleagues and I have been in a position to double funding for natural, built and archaeological heritage since I took office in July 2020."

Chair of the Heritage Council, Dr Martina Moloney praised the enthusiasm and passion of the event and project organisers. She said: "National Heritage Week is not only a celebration of heritage but also a celebration of people and particularly those whose work in heritage, very often as volunteers, has made such a difference to their communities. The Awards are our chance to say thank you for the outstanding work and collective effort of all participants."

Chief Executive of the Heritage Council, Virginia Teehan added: "National Heritage Week aims to build awareness and education about our heritage. This year it looked to the past to create a better future and chose themes that have particular resonance for us all as we grapple with climate change and the impact we have on the world around us. We chose the themes of sustainability and biodiversity and encouraged organisers to examine the intersection of the environment with preserving our tangible, intangible and natural heritage to create a more resilient world. The Awards are a recognition of every organiser, and of every event and project that took place. Today's recipients are representative of the tremendous work of all organisers across the country, work that supports and encourages heritage protection."

County Award Winners

Carlow

For their event, [Rathanna National School: Memories of our School Days](#), Rathanna Irish Countrywomen's Association invited members of the community to meet up to discuss their memories of Rathanna N.S. (now Rathanna Community Hall). The school operated from 1883-1969, and the group's aim was to gather photographic, written and oral information from past pupils of the school and members of the community. They will use this information to produce a written and / or digital document in the future.

Cavan

The Cavan County Heritage Office in association with Templeport Development Association, Jampa Ling Buddhist Centre, Drumlane History and Heritage Group and Killeshandra Tidy Towns hosted an event series called [Footprints of the Past](#) to celebrate local churches and other historic sites through mixed media art responses.

Clare

Connecting Communities with Peatlands invited people for a [Walk and Talk on Shanakyle Bog](#) in partnership with the Shanakyle Bog Restoration Project. The bog was partially

restored and rewetted in 2021 and this event was an opportunity to share the importance of this work with community members.

Cork City

Douglas Tidy towns hosted a [series of natural heritage events](#), including a biodiversity walk, a foraging walk, a river walk with water sampling, and a talk on Irish garden birds.

Cork County

Ted Cook led a [series of events](#) focusing on ecological restoration, trees and aquatic systems, and wildlife corridors.

Derry

Derry City and Strabane District Council shared a [series of virtual tours, videos and exhibitions](#) exploring local history, from archaeological finds to walled city history to military heritage.

Donegal

Síle Uí Fhearraigh's Irish language event, [Turas na dTithe Oidhreachta](#), or Heritage Houses Tour, visited three historic houses in the Tirconaill Gaeltacht, presenting interesting histories, architectural and placename conservation efforts, as well as craft and music demonstrations.

Dublin City

During [Middle Ages to Middle Aisle: The Archaeology beneath Lidl, Aungier St](#), IAC Archaeology gave a guided tour of the medieval Church of St Peter, a sunken house of Viking descendants and a once opulent theatre, all preserved beneath the Lidl in Dublin 2.

Dunlin Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown

The Marley Grange Residents' Association presented a [Citizen Science River Workshop](#), all about the aquatic life in the Little Dargle River through a family friendly sampling survey. Kids got the chance to look for aquatic invertebrates and learn about the health of the river and biodiversity.

Dublin Fingal

The EIRE 6 Restoration group led a walk on talk on the history, restoration and importance of ecology during their [Heritage Week Howth](#) event. Their aim is to promote awareness of the WWII Neutrality sign and of Howth in general.

Dublin South

During [St Finian's Medieval Church and Graveyard by Night](#), the Society for Old Lucan hosted an evening workshop of the church and graveyard, speaking about the history and biodiversity of the site. They demonstrated night-time photography methods and gave participants a chance to test out lowlighting smartphone camera work. They also had a bat detector on site to hear bats' ultrasound calls.

Galway City

Philip James led a [Walk and Talk about Galway's 1000 Year History of Canal Building and Milling](#) through the streets of Galway city. He explored prominent water-powered businesses, the technology they used, and the families they involved.

Galway County

[An Bhean Ghlúine](#) launched a short film, Life from a Midwife's Bag, introducing midwives from the early 20th century and showcasing their courageous work at a time when childbirth came with much uncertainty. Emma Laffey also presented podcasts and an e-book on this subject to share stories, photographs and other memorabilia.

Kerry

Kerry Biosphere presented [Life in the Bogs: Family Funday](#) in Killarney, including activities about bog plants, pond dipping, native animals, and more.

Kildare

As part of their Tidy Towns Biodiversity Action Plan, Kilcullen Community Action left areas of grass to grow to promote wildflower growth. During [Scything Skills on Nicholastown Green](#), they scythed these areas to promote these heritage skills.

Kilkenny

St. Canice's Cathedral provided a [series of events](#) from tours of the site for children and Junior Certificate students to a Wild Child programme on Irish saints and biodiversity.

Laois

Errill Tidy Towns erected a commemorative plaque and seat on the 175th anniversary of the great famine during [Famine Pot Project Phase One](#). These were placed near what was once a soup kitchen during the famine.

Leitrim

The Leitrim Sweathouse Project hosted [Ask About Archaeology](#), during which the project coordinator was on hand to answer questions from visitors of all ages about the site and its research.

Limerick

Askeaton Ballysteen Community Council held [workshops](#) in Askeaton exploring water quality and biodiversity of the River Deel and the Shannon and Deel Estuary. Participants learned how to make a difference for local waterbodies and a community water biodiversity action plan will be created.

Longford

The Knights and Conquests Heritage Centre hosted [Norman People](#) with reenactments, living history, a market, crafts and more. They also held a [Michael Collins Commemoration](#) to celebrate the hometown of his fiancée.

Louth

Brian Larkin marked the [70th Anniversary of the Closure of the LNWR Railway in Greenore](#) with a presentation and a walk and talk in the Victorian Village.

Mayo

Louisburgh-Killeen Heritage hosted a [Foraging Walk on Cross Strand](#), discussing local seaweeds and wildlife on the beach. Participants experienced the clean waters of Clew Bay and awakened their inner Wild Child.

Meath

Paul Kerr welcomed Maurice O'Keeffe of Irish Life and Lore for an [Oral Recording at Heritage Park and 7 Arch Bridge](#). He recorded oral history including scythe cutting and the use of hand implements, the Irish Traveller community, music and other traditions.

Monaghan

The Irish Wildlife Trust Monaghan Branch and the Local Authority Waters Programme hosted [Creative Heritage Inspired by Nature and its Music](#) to explore some of the ways the sound of nature has influenced Irish creative culture. Attendees heard from recordist Dean McDonnell, who is documenting Ireland's habitats and wildlife across the north-east. Writer and medieval Irish scholar, Fearghal Duffy, shared his learnings on the ecology of early Irish

literature, whilst local musicians played tunes inspired by the Irish countryside.

Offaly

Community groups connected by the River Brosna came together to celebrate the cultural and natural heritage of the river by hosting a [Literary and Music Festival](#) at Clara House, put on by the Clara Heritage Society. The festival featured a musical performance inspired by the river. It also showcased spoken word, poetry, and children's workshops.

Roscommon

The Rathcroghan Visitor Centre hosted '[Idols and Unclean Things](#)', a conference and photography exhibition on the Gortnacranagh Figure, an eight-foot-tall Iron Age wooden figure archaeologists discovered in 2021.

Sligo

Moygara Castle Research and Conservation Project showcased [Moygara Castle Conservation Works](#), which began in 2021. Visitors could see the progress they made in preserving this historic site.

Tipperary

The Tipperary Town Revitalisation Heritage Group hosted a [series of events](#), including a documentary film about the Tipperary glove factories and a workshop that gave young people a chance to share their thoughts about revitalising the historic town centre.

Waterford

The Copper Coast Geopark hosted an [event series](#) covering the Copper Coast's geological story, mining heritage, a coastal walk and tours of new material in their visitor centre.

Westmeath

ETHOS offered a walk through the [Cloncrow Raised Bog](#) with ecologist George Smith, who highlighted native plants and conservation efforts. The group also took a historic tour of the village of Tyrrellspass.

Wexford

The Ahare River and Biodiversity Development Group hosted the [Castletown River and Nature Festival](#). Families participated in moth monitoring, a seashore nature treasure hunt and litter pick, a sand art competition, and much more.

Wicklow

The Roundwood and District Historical Society gave presentations on the research around [Castlekevin](#), an Anglo-Norman castle in the Wicklow Mountains. They are also working on a conservation plan for the site.