

what's
in the
box?



Ballinskelligs Castle Box

Teachers' Guide



L O A N B O X P R O G R A M M E

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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



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what's in the box?



Introducing the Loan Box Programme



Kerry County Museum's interactive Loan Box Programme is an important part of our education, community and outreach strategy. The boxes bring a little piece of the museum to the outside world as each contains artefacts and replica objects from the Museum's collections. We are providing pupils with a unique hands-on experience to actively discover and explore the past.

The boxes are aimed primarily, but not exclusively, for the use of primary schools in County Kerry. The 20th Century Box for example may also be used by other groups for reminiscence workshops.

This service, which has been funded by the Heritage Council, Kerry County Council and Tralee Town Council, is a new venture for the museum. We hope that the loan boxes will not only support and enhance the experience of the primary school curriculum for children but also prove to be a valuable educational tool for teachers and other educators. We believe that it will increase appreciation for our heritage, local history and the Museum.

As already mentioned, many of the items in the boxes are genuine artefacts. Some, for example the Stone Age arrowhead, are thousands of years old and it is imperative that the artefacts are treated with the utmost care. Please read the *Guidelines for Handling* (page 6) prior to using the box and complete the artefact inventory checklist when returning the box to the Museum.

We would also be grateful if teachers using the box in the classroom could complete an evaluation form. This will assist us in developing more loan boxes and classroom materials.

We hope you enjoy using the box and the resource materials with your group!

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Aims and benefits of the scheme

AIMS OF THE LOAN BOX SCHEME

By introducing this service to schools in Kerry it the aspiration of Kerry County Museum that a number of aims will be achieved:

- To allow schools and groups in the county of Kerry to borrow museum collections and to help children recognise the importance of primary sources.
- To provide support to the primary school curriculum through the use of museum artefacts in the classroom.
- To extend access to the museum collections and increase awareness of the role of the regional museum.
- Encourage children and parents to use the museum.



BENEFITS OF HANDLING PROGRAMMES

The loan box service at Kerry County Museum is a new undertaking for the museum. Handling programmes, which involve making objects in a museum accessible to the public, has been ongoing in many British museums for many years and has proven to be of immense benefit, to both young and old. Handling original objects gives users an enhanced experience of museum collections, with the senses of sight, hearing, smell and touch, all being used; removing physical and sensory barriers for everyone. Val Munday, referring to the experience of museums in Britain (2002, Guidelines for establishing, managing and using handling collections and hands on exhibits in museums, galleries and children's centres) has listed a number of the benefits associated with handling collections and loan services:

- It is an inclusive activity, breaking down barriers and encouraging group interaction.
- It has a proven track record in reminiscence work.
- Outreach of original objects through loan services allows people who may not be able to get to the museum, to appreciate objects and use them to support their learning.
- Access to real objects can play a powerful role in both stimulating and supporting learning. The curriculum emphasises the importance of using a variety of different sources and of introducing children to primary and secondary source material. The evidence suggests that attainment is raised and the learning of under-achievers is stimulated.

Overview of box contents

Each box contains: artefacts and replicas, activity sheets and information about the objects

PREHISTORIC BOX –

This box contains artefacts dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age in Ireland. The artefacts include a stone axehead, flint arrowhead, three flint scrapers, a mining hammer and a bronze axehead. There is also a box with a number of pieces of unworked flint. A number of replica items are also included; a flint arrow, bronze axe, flat bronze axehead with handle and leather binding and a stone mould for casting bronze axeheads. These replica items can be handled freely and give opportunity

to experience the weight and uses of the objects.

It is hoped that the information included will provide the children with a context for the artefacts, by showing them how people lived in the Stone and Bronze Ages, the type of food that they ate and what type of houses they lived in etc. The realisation from the children's point of view should be that people in prehistoric Ireland depended on these types of tools for their very lives.

BALLINSKELLIGS CASTLE BOX –

Ballinskelligs Castle is the ruin of a tower house located on the Iveragh Peninsula, Co. Kerry. A rescue archaeological excavation at the site some years back yielded hundreds of artefacts and these provide the main focus for the loan box. The artefacts in the box include glass, pottery, bone, shell, and iron nails. Replicas of items that generally do not survive in an excavation context are also included, such as a pair of gentleman's leather gloves, clothes, a leather belt, leather boots, an arrow and two ceramic pots.

While the main focal point of the box is centred on Ballinskelligs Castle, the support information

accompanying the box provides information not only on the castle itself, but also on the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century and the beginnings of castle building in Ireland.

Information sheets in the booklet provide additional information on the finds e.g. the bone and shell come under 'Medieval food'. Other topics covered include 'Medieval pottery and glass', 'trading in medieval times', and 'clothes in medieval times'.

Similar to the Prehistoric box, there are question sheets for each of the artefacts.

20TH CENTURY BOX –

The format of this box is slightly different to the previous two. Firstly, all the objects are 'real' and are from our more recent history, generally dating to different periods throughout the 20th century. They fall under the categories of 'household', 'travel and communication' and 'school'. Secondly, the support

information included is artefact specific, with an information card, included for each object. The blank pages of the notebook provide an opportunity for any group using the objects, to record their own thoughts or memories about the items.

Guidelines for handling the objects

The objects contained in the loan boxes are original artefacts, which form part of the collections usually held in storage at Kerry County Museum. In loaning objects to schools and groups we wish to stress that their care is a priority, as these objects are irreplaceable. In order to ensure the safety and care of the objects, we would ask schools to strictly adhere to the following guidelines:

- *Designate one person (teacher or group leader) who is responsible for the box and its contents.*
- *Please use both hands to carry boxes containing objects. Carry and store the box in an upright position. Seek assistance to carry a heavy box. Keep the box locked away when not in use.*
- *Wash hands before and after handling objects and please use gloves provided for handling sensitive objects such as the bronze axehead. Items should only be handled under the supervision of the teacher.*
- *Handle the objects using both hands, over a firm surface such as a table.*
- *Only handle one object at a time and do not walk around with objects.*
- *Please do not try to open any of the sealed boxes as the artefacts inside are extremely fragile.*
- *Do not expose the items to strong sunlight, excessive heat or damp.*
- *Please use pencils when working with the artefacts. Do not use ink pens.*
- *Please be careful when handling the replica axes and arrowheads as they are sharp, and misuse can lead to accidents.*
- *Please re-pack the box carefully and ensure the objects are replaced in the box in their original packing. Heavier objects should be placed in the bottom of the box, with lighter ones on top.*
- *Please complete a check that all the objects have been returned undamaged to the box.*
- *Report damage, loss or theft of an object to the museum immediately. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to repair a damaged or broken object, but ensure all the broken pieces are retained.*



Activity sheet 1 | Clay pot

Replica

Archaeologists discovered many artefacts (man-made objects from the past) at Ballinskelligs Castle. Some artefacts are medieval but there are also objects from later centuries, such as pieces of pottery from England. A pot was reconstructed from the pieces. It is very fragile and is stored safely in the museum. We have included an exact copy (replica) of the pot for you instead.



Reconstructed pot



Replica pot

- 1 It takes five different steps to make pottery from clay. (1) *Forming the pottery* (2) *Digging the clay* (3) *Drying the pottery* (4) *Firing the pottery* (5) *Preparing the clay*. Oops, the five steps are all mixed up – can you bring them in the correct order?
- 2 Pottery was sometimes imported from other countries, such as France and England. Do you think most pottery was made locally or far away?
- 3 Look at the shape and the colour of the pot. Do you think the pot was an everyday or special object?
- 4 What kinds of food and drink would people have used the pot for?
- 5 Can you think of a story of how the pot was broken?
- 6 Do you think the people who made and used the original pot ever thought it would end up in a museum?

Bileog oibre 1 | Pota cré

Macasamhail

D'aimsigh seandálaithe an-chuid iarsmaí (rudaí lámhdhéanta ag daoine fadó) ag Caisleán Bhaile an Sceilg. Is iarsmaí meánaoiseacha cuid acu, ach téann cuid eile acu i bhfad níos sia siar, mar shampla, píosaí potaireachta ó Shasana. Deineadh athchruthú ar phota astu siúd. Tá sé ana-leochaileach agus é slán sábháilte sa músaem. Tá a mhacasamhail curtha san áireamh againn duit anseo.



Pota athchruthaithe



A mhacasamhail

- 1 Tá cúig chéim le potaireacht a dhéanamh as cré. (1) An photaireacht a mhúnladh (2) An chré a thochailt (3) An photaireacht a thriomú (4) Tine a thabhairt don bpotaireacht (5) An chré a réiteach. Oops, tá na cúig chéim go léir meascáithe – an féidir leat iad a chur san ord ceart?
- 2 Tugadh potaireacht isteach ó thíortha eile go minic, An Fhrainc nó Sasana, mar shampla. An cheapann tú gur go háitiúil nó i bhfad ó bhaile a dheineadh an photaireacht seo?
- 3 Féach ar mhúnla agus dath an phota. An i gcomhar úsáid lae a bhí an pota nó d'ócáidí speisialta é, meas tú?
- 4 Cén sórt bia nó dí a bhí sa phota?
- 5 An féidir leat scéal a chumadh faoi conas ar bhriseadh an pota?
- 6 An cheapann tú go raibh tuairim riamh ag na daoine a dhein agus a úsáid an pota go gcríochnódh sé i músaem?

Activity sheet 2

Pottery sherds

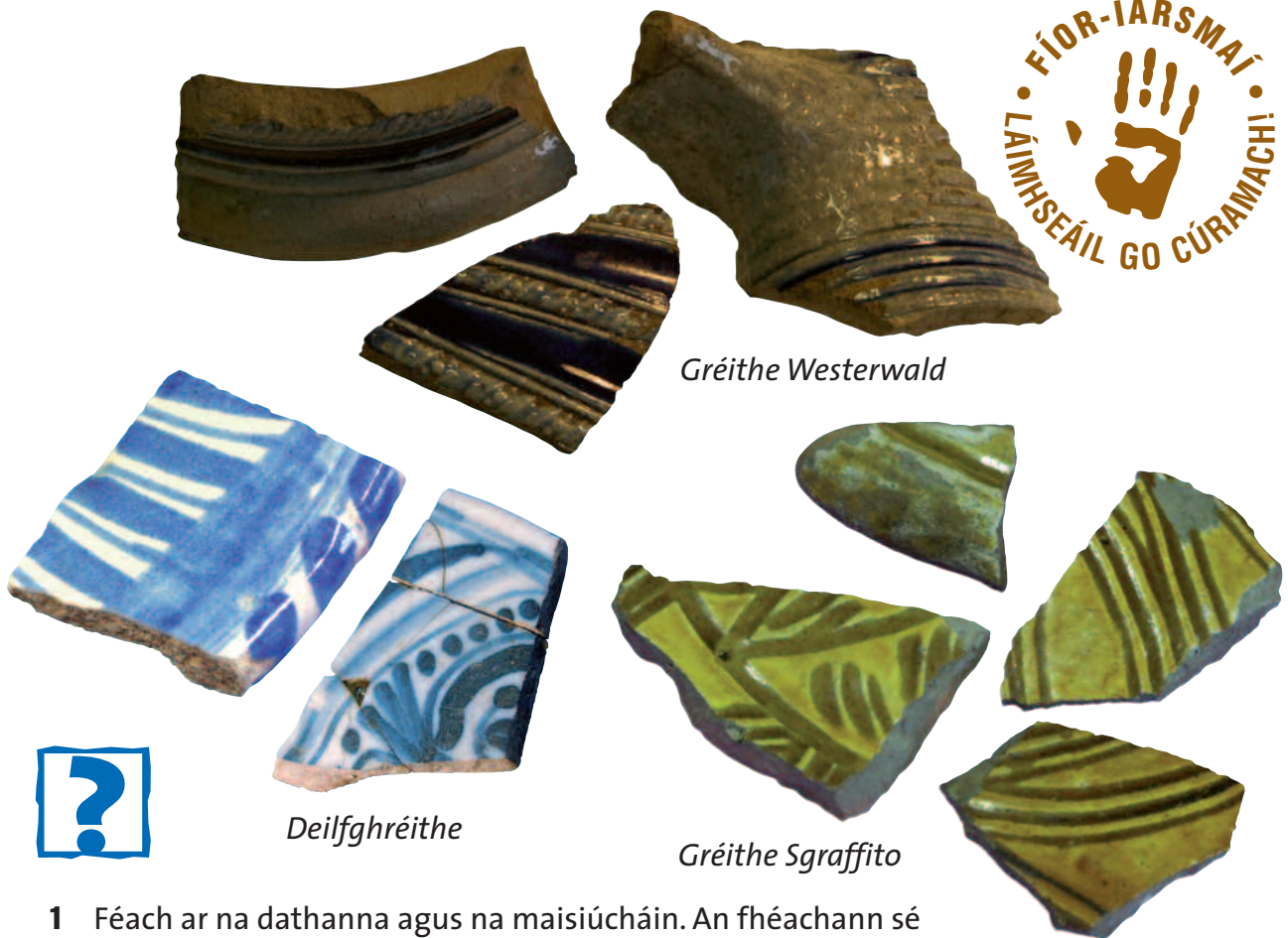
Found by archaeologists at Ballinskelligs Castle

There are three different types of pottery sherds (pieces) in the box: Delft ware, Westerwald ware and Sgraffito. These pottery sherds are from the post-medieval period.



- 1 Look at the colours and decorations. Does it look very different to mugs, plates or saucers you have at home?
- 2 Look at the colours and the design of the three different types. In your opinion, were they all made by the same person?
- 3 Which of the three different types looks oldest and newest to you? Why?
- 4 Imagine all the pieces had survived. What objects do you think the sherds were part of? Can you draw a picture of what the white and blue pottery (Delft ware) would look like if all pieces had survived?
- 5 Do you think the pottery sherds were part of everyday or special objects?
- 6 Do you think poor people or rich people once owned the objects?

Tá trí shórt píosaí potaireachta sa bhosca: Deilfghréithe, Gréithe Westerwald agus Sgraffito. Is ós na meánaoiseanna na píosaí potaireachta seo.



- 1 Féach ar na dathanna agus na maisiúcháin. An fhéachann sé difriúil ós na mugaí, plátaí nó fochupáin atá agat sa bhaile?
- 2 Féach ar na dathanna agus na dearaí ar na dtrí shórt éagsúla. An raibh siad go léir déanta ag an nduine céanna, meas tú?
- 3 Cén ceann de na sórtanna difriúla is sine nó is óige, dár leat? Cén fáth?
- 4 Samhlaigh gur tháinig na píosaí ar fad slán. Cad a bhain siad leis, meas tú? An féidir leat pictiúr a tharrac ar an gcuma a bheadh ar an bpotaireacht bhán agus ghorm (Deilfghréithe) dá maireodh na píosaí ar fad?
- 5 An i gcomhar úsáid lae a bhí na píosaí potaireachta nó d'ócáidí speisialta, meas tú?
- 6 An ag daoine bochta nó saibhre a bhí na rudaí seo, meas tú?

Activity sheet 3

Glass pieces

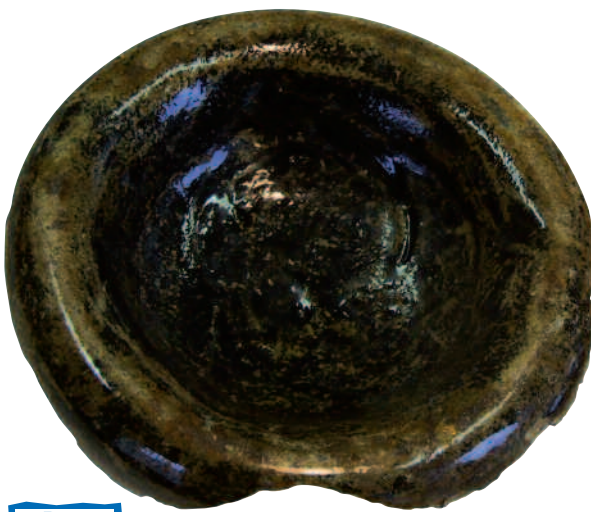
Found by archaeologists at Ballinskelligs Castle

Glass was a very expensive material and not commonly used for everyday objects in Ireland until after the Middle Ages. These two pieces of glass are a base and a neck of a bottle, which probably dates from the 18th century.



- 1 When people think of castles, they often believe that people lived in them during the Middle Ages. What can you tell from the fact that the glass pieces found at the castle are from the 18th century (which is more than 200 years after the end of the medieval period)?
- 2 Imagine the two pieces are from the same bottle. Can you draw a picture of it?
- 3 Compare this glass bottle to a modern bottle. Are the colour, shape and feel of the material very different or very similar?
- 4 The bottle was probably used for storing wine. Do you have an idea how the top of the bottle could have been sealed to keep the wine fresh?
- 5 Today we bring an empty bottle to the bottle bank. Do you think the people who owned this bottle would have thrown it out or used more than once? Why do you think so?
- 6 Using materials such as glass more than once was necessary for people in the past because they had to be very resourceful. Do you think we should do the same? Why?

Ábhar an-chostasach ab ea gloine agus ní úsáideadh é de ghnáth in Éirinn go dtí tar éis na Meánaoiseanna. Is cosúil gur ón 18ú céad a thagann an dá phíosa gloine seo, bun agus scrogall buidéil.

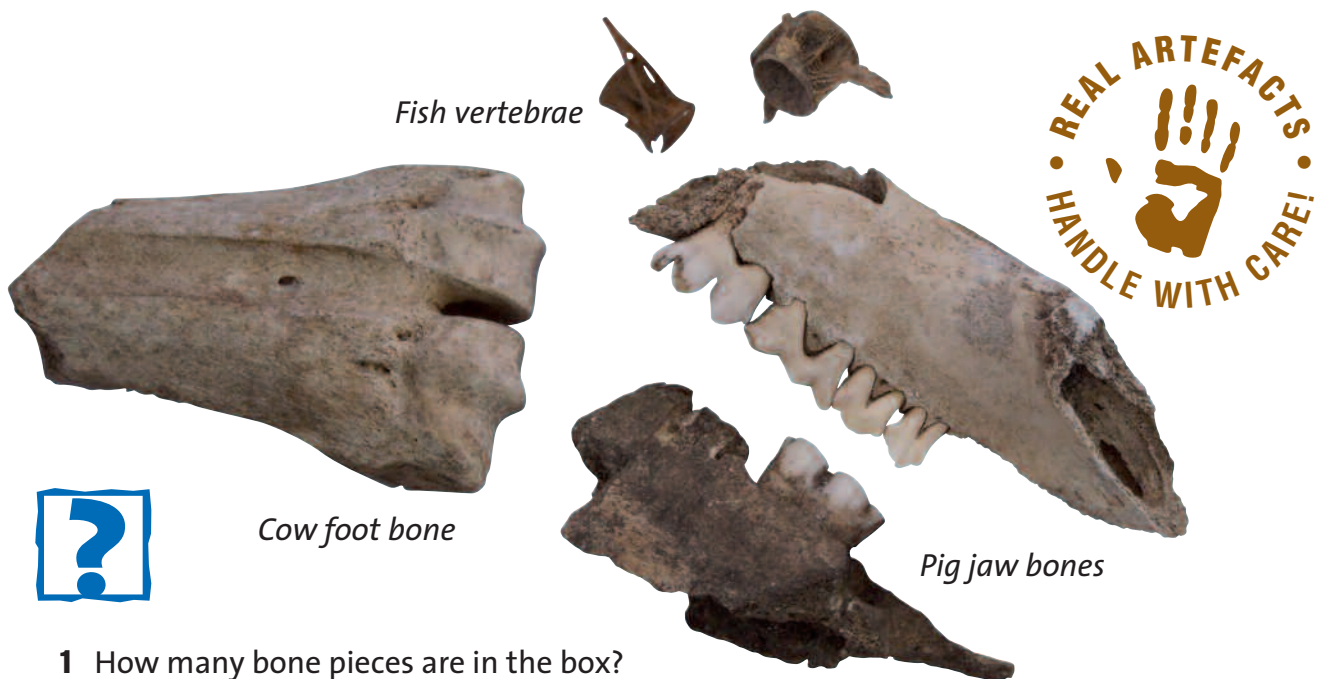


- 1 Nuair a smaoiníonn daoine ar chaisleáin, ceapann siad go minic gur mhair daoine iontu sna Meánaoiseanna. Cad is féidir leat a léamh ós na píosaí gloine seo ón 18ú céad (atá breis is 200 bliain níos déanaí ná deireadh na Meánaoiseanna) a aimsíodh ag an gCaisleán?
- 2 Samhlaigh gur ón mbuidéal céanna a tháinig an dá phíosa. An féidir leat pictiúr dó a tharrac?
- 3 Dein comporáid idir an buidéal seo agus buidéal an lae inniu. An bhfuil dath, múnla agus mothú an ábhair difriúil nó mar an gcéanna?
- 4 Seans gur fíon a bhí sa bhuidéal. An bhfuil aon tuairim agat conas a ndéintí séalú ar oscailt an bhuidéil chun an fíon a choimeád úr?
- 5 Inniu tugaimid buidéil folamha go dtí banc na mbuidéal. An cheapann tú gur chaith na daoine gur leo an buidéal seo amach é nó gur úsáideadh siad arís é? Cén fáth, dar leat?
- 6 Bhí sé riachtanach ag daoine fadó gloine a athúsáid go minic mar acmhainn. An chóir dúinn an rud céanna a dhéanamh? Cén fáth?

Activity sheet 4 | Animal bones

Found by archaeologists at Ballinskelligs Castle

By examining animal bones found during the excavation we can tell what people had for dinner in the 16th century! Animals were not only kept as a source of meat. Cattle, for example, pulled carts and provided dairy products and hides. Sheep produced wool. As today, dogs made great companions but were also kept for security and hunting. Cats were handy to keep rats and mice away but they may also have been used for their soft fur!



- 1 How many bone pieces are in the box?
Look at the size and shape – do you think they are from the same animal?
- 2 Can you make a list of animals that would have lived in and around Ballinskelligs Castle? (Don't forget about the wild animals!)
- 3 There were no fridges in medieval times. Can you think of ways how to keep meat and fish fresh?
- 4 Could medieval people go to a supermarket and buy food? If not, where did they get their food from?
- 5 Meat was very expensive. Do you think poor people could eat meat every day?
- 6 The bone fragments are basically medieval people's rubbish. Do you think it is a good idea to keep them in a museum? Why?

sa 16ú aois! Ní raibh ainmhithe ann do bhia amháin. Mar shampla, bhí beithígh in úsáid chun cartanna a tharrac agus a sholáthraigh earraí déiríochta agus leathar. Bhí olann ann ós na caoirigh. Mar atá inniu, an-comráidí ab ea madraí ach bhíodar ann chomh maith do shábháltacht agus do shealgaireacht. Bhí na cait áiseach chun an ruaig a chur ar fhrancaigh agus ar locha ach seans go mbaintí úsáid as a gclúmh bog chomh maith.



- 1 Cé mhéad píosaí cnámha atá sa bhosca?
Féach ar toirt agus ar mhúnla na cnámha – an ón ainmhí céanna iad, dar leat?
- 2 An féidir leat liosta ainmhí a bhí timpeall ar Chaisleán Bhaile an Sceilg a dhéanamh?
(Ná dein dearmad ar ainmhithe fiáine!)
- 3 Ní raibh cuisneoirí ann sna meánaoiseanna. An féidir leat smaoineamh ar shlite chun feol agus éisc a choimeád úr?
- 4 Muna raibh olmhargaidh ann sna meánaoiseanna chun bia a cheannach, cá fuair siad bia?
- 5 Bí feol an-chostasach. An raibh feol le n-ithe ag na bochtáin gach lá?
- 6 Go bunúsach, is bruscar na ndaoine meánaoiseacha na hiarsmaí cnámha seo. An tuairim mhaith é iad a choimeád i músaem, dar leat? Cén fáth?

Activity sheet 5

Shells

Found by archaeologists at Ballinskelligs Castle

Seafood and fish formed an important part in medieval people's diet because they were a lot cheaper than meat, more readily available and easy to catch or collect. As a matter of fact, oysters are considered a luxury food today but they were eaten in large quantities in the medieval period.



- 1 How many shells are in the box?
- 2 Can you name some of them?
- 3 Fish and seafood were both eaten a lot in medieval times. Can you think of a reason why a lot more shells turn up in excavations than fish bones?
- 4 The collection of seafood is quite simple and there is no special equipment needed. Do you think the cook who worked in Ballinskelligs Castle would have collected the seafood or who would have been sent to do that job?
- 5 Imagine you are the scullery boy sent for seafood. For this job it is helpful to have a good knowledge of the rhythms of the sea, the pattern of the tides and even the lunar cycle. Can you make up a story of how the shells ended up being dumped as rubbish?
- 6 Can you name one modern dish that we use shellfish for today?

Cuid thábhachtach de chothú phobal na meánaoise ab ea bia mara agus éisc toisc iad a bheith níos saoire ná feoil, ar fáil go réidh agus fuirist le marú nó le bailiú. Cé gur sóanna iad oisrí sa lá atá inniu ann, d'ití cuid mhór acu sna meánaoiseanna.



- 1 Cé mhéad sliogán atá sa bhosca?
- 2 An féidir leat aon cheann a ainmniú?
- 3 Bhí éisc agus bia mara á n-ithe go láidir sna meánaoiseanna. An bhfuil aon tuairim agat cén fáth go raibh i bhfad níos mó sliogán ná cnámha éisc ann ag tochailt?
- 4 Tá bailiú bia mara simplí go leor agus níl aon ghá le fearas ar leith. Cé bhailigh an bia mara, dar leat – an cócaire i gCaisleán Bhaile an Sceilg nó cé a dheineadh an obair sin?
- 5 Samhlaigh gur tusa buachaill na cistine. Chun an obair seo a dhéanamh i gceart ba chóir eolas maith a bheith agat ar chúrsaí farraige, gréasáin na dtaoidí agus fiú ciogal na gealaí. An féidir leat scéal a chumadh faoi conas gur mar bhruscar a chríochnaigh na sliogáin?
- 6 An féidir leat béile amháin an lae inniu go bhfuil sliogáin ann a ainmniú?

Activity sheet 6

Iron nails

Found by archaeologists at Ballinskelligs Castle

Weapons, tools and other objects have been made from iron in Ireland for more than 2000 years. The nails in the box are just three of many that were found scattered around in the ruins of the castle and they are presumed to date from the late medieval period.



- 1** The nails are made from iron. Look at them closely to note the colour and texture. Why do they not look shiny any more?
- 2** If we do not keep them safe in a box what do you think would happen to the nails in a few years time?
- 3** Describe the nails. Do you think they were ever used? Why?
- 4** Centuries ago, people could not buy nails in a hardware shop but they were locally produced by blacksmiths. Do you think the people who lived in the castle might have had their own blacksmith? Why?
- 5** Blacksmiths worked with large, open fires. Do you think the blacksmith's workshop would have been located right next to the castle or perhaps a little distance away? Why?
- 6** We think the nails date from the 16th century but we cannot be completely sure. Let's pretend they were found in a wooden beam – would that help us to tell their age for sure? Why?

Bileog oibre 6 | Tairní iarainn

Aimsithe ag seandálaithe ag Chaisleán Bhaile an Sceilg

Tá uirlisí troda agus oibre i measc go leor eile á ndéanamh as iarainn in Éirinn le breis is 2000 bliain. Níl sa bhosca ach trí thairne as cuid mhaith a bhí scaipthe timpeall fothrach an Chaisleáin agus tuigtear gur ó thréimshe na meánaoiseanna déanacha iad.



- 1 Tá na tairní déanta as iarainn. Féach orthu go géar agus tabhair faoi ndeara an dath agus an comhdhéanamh. Cén fáth nach bhfuil siad geal a thuilleadh?
- 2 Muna bhfuil siad stórála slán i mbosca, conas a bheadh siad faoi cheann cúpla bliain?
- 3 Tabhair cur síos ar na tairní. Ar úsáideadh riamh iad? Cén fáth?
- 4 I bhfad ó shin ní raibh tairní ar fáil i siopa chrua-earraí ach dheineadh gabha iad. An raibh gabha ar leith ag obair sa Chaisleán, meas tú? Cén fáth?
- 5 D'oibrigh gabha le tine mór oscailte. An raibh ceárta an ghabha cóngarch don Chaisleán nó tamall uaidh, meas tú? Cén fáth?
- 6 Measaimid go mbaineann na tairní leis an 16ú céad, ach ní féidir linn a bheith cinnte. Má ghlacaimid gur aimsíodh i mbioma adhmaid iad – an gcabhródh sé sin linn aois dhearfach a thabhairt dóibh? Cén fáth?

Activity sheet 7 | Clothes

Replicas

These are copies of the different clothes worn by the residents of Ballinskelligs Castle in the medieval period.



- 1 Look at the medieval clothes. Who would have worn them? Men or woman? Rich or poor people?
- 2 Rich people wanted to show off their wealth by wearing clothes made from expensive fabrics, which were dyed in flamboyant colours, such as red, deep blue and purple. Do you think poor people could afford clothes like this?
- 3 Let's pretend that the children whose parents own Ballinskelligs Castle and the children of the blacksmith meet each other. Can you imagine what they might think (and say!) about each others clothes?
- 4 Medieval clothes were mainly produced by spinning and weaving. The spinning was often done by unmarried woman – this is where the word 'spinster' comes from! Do you think the clothes were comfortable to wear?
- 5 Would you like to wear clothes like this every day? Why?
- 6 Compare the medieval clothes to clothes we wear today. Look at how they were made, shape and design, materials, colours, decorations, fastenings *etc.* What are the main differences and similarities?

Bileog oibre 7 | Éadaí Macasamhla

Is macasamhla ar éadaí difriúla a chaitheadh na daoine i gCaisleán Bhaile an Sceilg sna meánaoiseanna iad seo.

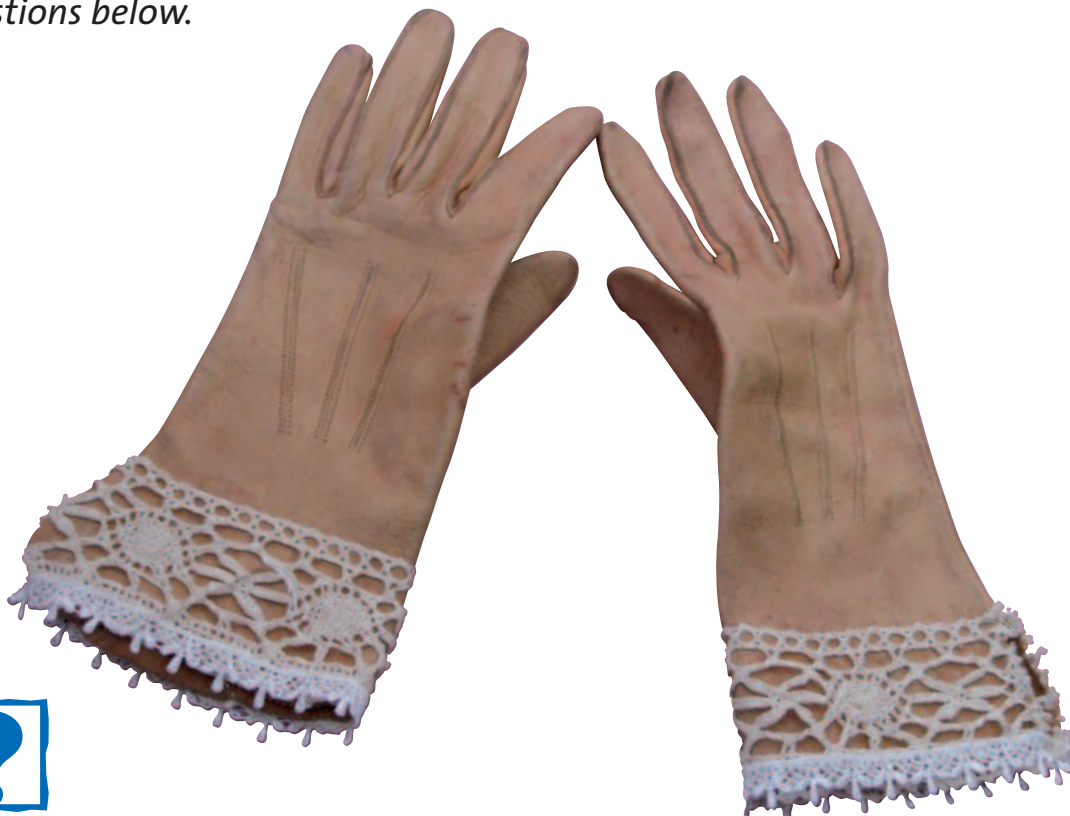


- 1 Féach ar na héadaí meánaoiseacha. Cé chaitheadh iad? Fir nó mná? Daoine saibhre nó bochta?
- 2 Bhí na daoine saibhre ag iarraidh a rachmas a léiriú le héadaí déanta as ábhair costasacha a chaitheamh, a bhí dathaithe le dathanna galánta, mar dhearg, gorm láidir nó corcra. An raibh sé d'acmhainn ag na bochtáin éadaí mar seo a cheannach, dar leat?
- 3 Cuir i gcás gur bhuail leanaí úinéirí Chaisleán Bhaile an Sceilg agus leanaí an ghabha le chéile. An féidir leat a shamhlú cad a cheapfadh (nó deirfeadh) siad faoin a gcuid éadaí difriúla?
- 4 Is le sníomhadóireacht agus le fíodóireacht a dheintí éadaí sna meánaoiseanna. Go minic bhíodh sníomhadóireacht déanta ag bean shingil – is as an bhfocal Béarla ‘spin’ a thagann an focal ‘spinster’! An raibh na héadaí seo compordach le caitheamh, dar leat?
- 5 Ar mhaith leat éadaí mar seo a chaitheamh gach lá? Cén fáth?
- 6 Dein comporáid idir éadaí na meánaoiseanna agus na héadaí a chaithimid inniu. Féach ar conas a bhí siad déanta, an múnla agus an dearadh, na hábhair, na dathanna, na measúcháin, na fáiscíní, srl. Cad iad na príomh difríochtaí agus cosúlachtaí?

Activity sheet 8 | Leather gloves

Replicas

Fine leather gloves like these were worn by people living in Ballinskelligs Castle during the 16th century. Examine them closely and answer the questions below.



- 1 What colour are the gloves? What does the material feel like?
- 2 Who would have worn such gloves and why?
- 3 Were these everyday or special objects? Why?
- 4 Leather workers made many different items from leather: shoemakers made shoes, cobblers repaired them and other craftsmen specialized in making gloves and belts. Do you think poor people could afford to buy such gloves?
- 5 Compare the medieval gloves with a pair you have at home: what are the differences and similarities? Which ones are nicer/ more practical in your opinion?
- 6 Organic materials (such as the material clothes and gloves are made from) are seldom found during archaeological excavations. Can you think of reasons why this is the case?

Bhí lámhainní mhín leathair ar nós iad seo á gcaitheamh ag na daoine a mhair i gCaisleán Bhaile an Sceilg le linn an 16ú chéid. Dein dian scrúdú orthu agus freagair na ceisteanna thíos.



- 1 Cén dath iad na lámhainní? Conas a mhothaíonn an t-ábhar?
- 2 Cé chaitheadh lámhainní mar seo? Cén fáth?
- 3 Ar chaitheadh gach lá iad nó ag ócáidí speisialta amháin, meas tú? Cén fáth?
- 4 Dheineadh ceardaithe leathair an-chuid rudaí as leathar: dheineadh gréasaithe bróga agus iad á ndheisiú ag caibléirí, agus bhíodh ceardaithe eile ann i mbun lámhainní agus criosanna a dhéanamh. An raibh sé d'acmhainn ag na bochtáin lámhainní mar seo a cheannach?
- 5 Dein comporáid idir na lámhainní mheánaoiseacha le péire lámhainní atá agat sa bhaile: cén difríocht atá eadarthu agus cad iad na cosúlachtaí atá acu le chéile? Cé acu ab fhearr leat nó atá níos praiticiúla, meas tú?
- 6 Is annamh a aimsítear ábhar orgánach (ábhar na lámhainní seo, mar shampla) ag tochailt sheandálaíochta. Cén chúis atá le seo, meas tú?

Activity sheet 9 | Leather belt

Replica

Belts like this were worn by people living in Ballinskelligs Castle during the 16th century. Examine it closely and answer the questions below.



- 1** What materials is it made of? Is it well made?
- 2** Who might have worn it – a man, a woman, a child? Why do you think so?
- 3** Look at the decorated buckle. Was the belt worn everyday or for special occasions? Also, do you think it was worn by a rich or poor person?
- 4** Has the design of the belt been improved since medieval times or did it not need improvement in your opinion?
- 5** Do you think it was a fashionable or practical item, or both? Why?
- 6** If a belt is found during an excavation, which part of it (leather or buckle) would survive best? Can you think of reasons why this is the case?

Bileog oibre 9 | Crios leathair

Macasamhail

Bhíodh criosanna mar seo á gcaitheamh ag na daoine a mhair i gCaisleán Bhaile an Sceilg le linn an 16ú chéid. Dein dian scrúdú orthu agus freagair na ceisteanna thíos.



- 1 Cad as a bhfuil sé déanta? An bhfuil sé déanta go maith?
- 2 Cé chaitheadh é, meas tú – fear, bean nó leanbh? Cén fáth, meas tú?
- 3 Féach ar an mbúcla measaithe. Ar chaitheadh an crios gach lá nó ag ócáidí speisialta, meas tú? Agus ar chaitheadh é ag duine saibhir nó ag duine bocht?
- 4 Ar tháinig feabhas ar dhearadh creasa ó aimsir na meánaoiseanna nó an raibh gá le feabhas, dar leat?
- 5 An ábhar faisiúnta nó praiticiúil é, nó an dá rud? Cén fáth?
- 6 Má aimsíodh crios ag tochailt, cén pháirt (an leathar nó an búcla) a mhairfeadh níos fearr? Cad is cúis leis seo, dar leat?

Activity sheet 10 | Leather shoes

Replicas

This pair of shoes is a replica of the type worn by the people who lived in Ballinskelligs Castle during the medieval period. Please try them on – do they fit?



- 1 Medieval shoes were entirely made from leather. Do you think the same leather was used for the top and the bottom? Why do you think so?
- 2 Shoes like this are also called 'turn-shoes'. Why do you think that is? (Hint: It has to do with the way they were made. Are the stitches on the outside or the inside of the shoes?)
- 3 Leather was a very expensive material in medieval times. Do you think children would have worn shoes?
- 4 Please try on the shoes. Are they very comfortable? Do you think they would be practical to wear if you are going for a long walk? Why?
- 5 Compare your pair of shoes with the medieval ones. Which ones are nicer/more practical in your opinion?
- 6 Leather is made from hides (animal skins). One of the ways to remove hair and fat from the hides was to place them in a bath of urine! True or false?

Bileog oibre 10 | Bróga leathair

Macasamhla

Is macasamhla do phéire bróga iad seo a chaitheadh daoine a mhair i gCaisleán Bhaile an Sceilg le linn an 16ú chéid. Cuir ort féin iad agus bain triall astu – an bhfuil an tomhas ceart ann duit?



- 1 Dheintí bróga sna meánaoiseanna go hiomlán as leathar. Ar úsáideadh an leathar céanna do bharr agus do bhun an bhróig, meas tú? Cén fáth go gceapann tú é sin?
- 2 Tugtar “casbhróga” ar bhróga mar seo. Cén chúis atá leis seo, dar leat? (Leid: baineann sé leis an tslí inar dheintí iad. An bhfuil na greamanna laistigh nó lasmuigh?)
- 3 Bhí leathar an-chostasach le linn na meánaoiseanna. An mbíodh leanaí ag caitheamh bróga, meas tú?
- 4 Cuir ort iad agus bain triall astu. An bhfuil siad compordach? An mbeadh siad praiticiúil agus tú ag tabhairt faoi shiúlóid fhada? Cén fáth?
- 5 Dein comporáid idir do bhróga féin agus bróga na meánaoiseanna. Cé acu ab fhearr leat nó atá níos praiticiúla, meas tú?
- 6 Deintear leathar as craiceann ainmhí. Slí amháin chun gruaig agus saill a bhaint ón gcraiceann ná é a thumadh i dabhach fuaile? An fíor nó bréagach é sin?

Activity sheet 11 | Arrow

Replica

Longbows were common weapons during medieval times, when there was a lot of warfare and fighting in Ireland. This arrow is a replica of the type which would have been used to defend Ballinskelligs Castle from attackers.



- 1 Measure it against your arm. What length is the arrow?
- 2 Do you think arrows like this were used for short or long distances?
- 3 Can you name the different types of materials which were needed to make it?
- 4 If you were in charge of defending the castle where would you put the archers?
- 5 Can you think of other types of weapons which were used once the attackers got inside the castle?
- 6 What part of the arrow is most likely to survive in the ground for centuries and to be found during an excavation? Why?



Bileog oibre 11 | Saighead

Macasamhla

B'uirlisí troda coitianta iad crosbhoghanna fada le linn na meánaoiseanna nuair a bhí an-chuid cogaíochta in Éirinn. Is macasamhail an saighead seo den chineál a d'úsáidtí le Caisleán Bhaile an Sceilg a chosaint ó ionsaithe.



- 1 Tomhasaigh é le hais do lámh? Cén fhad é an saghead?
- 2 An raibh saigheada mar seo in úsáid d'achar fada nó gearr?
- 3 An féidir leat na hábhair difriúla a bhí riachtanach le saighead a dhéanamh a ainmniú?
- 4 Má bhí tú i gceannas ar chosaint an Chaisleáin, cá gcuirfeá na saighdeoirí?
- 5 An féidir leat cuimhneamh ar uirlisí troda eile a d'úsáidtí nuair a bheadh ionsaitheoirí istigh sa Chaisleán?
- 6 Cén píosa den tsaighead, meas tú, go mbeadh seans níos fearr aige teacht slán ón dtalamh agus é aimsithe ag tochailt? Cén fáth?



Discover
more
about:

The Anglo-Normans

*Who were the Anglo-Normans? Why did they come to Ireland?
Why did they build castles?*

WHO WERE THE ANGLO-NORMANS?

The Normans were descendants of Vikings who had settled in Normandy in northern France around 911. In 1066 their leader William the Conqueror defeated the English king at the battle of Hastings. The Normans ruled England after their victory and they did not return to France. This is the reason why historians call them Anglo-Normans, which means that they are English-French (Anglo is the Latin word for English).



The Anglo-Normans were accomplished warriors who controlled England, southern Italy and Ireland by the 12th century. Their influence ultimately spread as far east as Greece, Turkey and Syria because of their involvement in the crusades!

WHY DID THEY COME TO IRELAND?

100 years after the battle of Hastings, in 1169, the Anglo-Normans came to Ireland at the invitation of Diarmuid Mac Muchada (Dermot Mac Murrough), the king of Leinster. Three years earlier, Diarmuid had lost his kingship to Rory O'Connor, the king of Connacht. Diarmuid fled to England and asked King Henry II for help. Henry II allowed him to recruit Anglo-Norman warriors to fight for his kingship in Ireland.

WHAT WAS THE DEAL ?

Among the Anglo-Norman warriors was Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, whose nickname was Strongbow because of his great military skills. Strongbow agreed to help Diarmuid but he wanted two things in return: firstly, to marry Diarmuid's daughter Aoife and secondly, to become the king of Leinster after Diarmuid's death. That's quite a bargain – don't you think?



This drawing shows Diarmuid MacMurrough with a great battle axe

WHEN DID THEY ARRIVE?

On 1st May 1169, 600 Anglo-Norman mercenaries (professional soldiers), including knights on horseback, foot soldiers and archers, landed at Bannow Bay, Co. Wexford and captured Wexford town. A few months later Strongbow himself arrived with a large army and captured Waterford after a bitter and bloody hand-to-hand combat. Shortly afterwards Strongbow married Aoife in Waterford Cathedral. Diarmuid, Strongbow and the Anglo-Norman army then marched on Dublin and captured the town on 21st September 1170. Diarmuid did not have much time to enjoy his victory. He died one year later and Strongbow became the king of Leinster. The Anglo-Normans were here to stay and the king of England became overlord of Ireland.



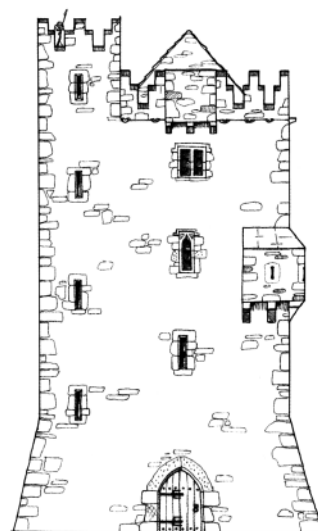
Strongbow's highly trained knights with their modern armour, weapons and war horses were very hard to beat in battle

WHEN DID THEY COME TO KERRY?

As soon as the Anglo-Normans arrived in Ireland they began to settle throughout the country, capturing new lands for themselves. By 1200, they had arrived in North Kerry, and in 1216 they founded the town of Tralee. One of the new Anglo-Norman families was the **FitzGerald**s, who captured land in north Kerry and Limerick (in 1329 they became the **Earls of Desmond**). However, in south Kerry, the Anglo-Normans came up against an Irish family called the **MacCarthy**s. The MacCarthy's battled to protect their lands (at the Battle of Callan in 1261) and stopped the Anglo-Normans from capturing more land in the southwest. The MacCarthy's ruled South Kerry for another 300 years.

WHY DID THEY BUILD CASTLES?

After the initial conquest, the Anglo-Normans needed to secure and protect their new land. They built castles to protect themselves from the Irish. It takes a long time to build a stone fortress and for that reason the first castles were made from earth and timber! The building of stone castles started about 1190. The Irish soon discovered that they did not have the weapons or the know-how to attack and capture the Anglo-Norman fortresses.



Tower houses provided security for people and their possessions

WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

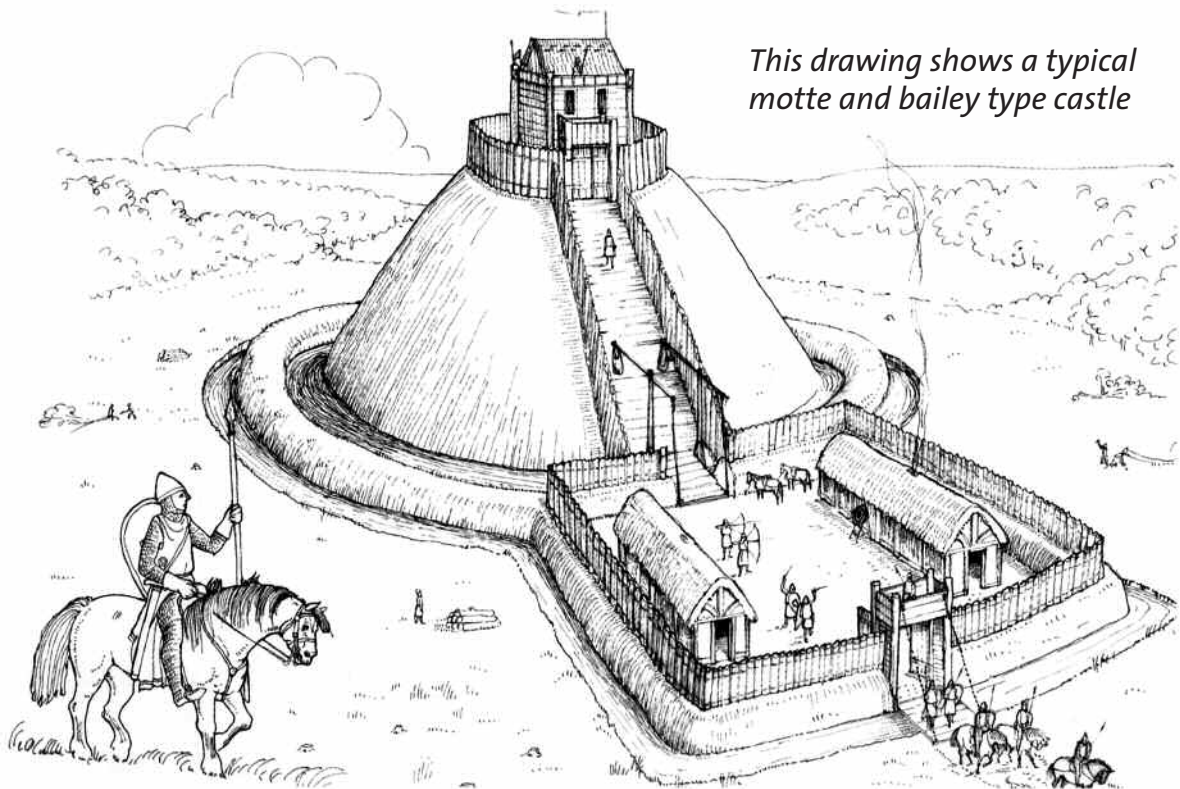
Villages and towns grew up around their castles. Over the centuries the Anglo-Normans settled well into life in Ireland, learning the Irish language and marrying into Irish families. By the 14th and 15th centuries they were said to be 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'. The Anglo-Normans left a lasting impression on Ireland and their descendents are spread around the whole country. Are you perhaps one of them? Some common Norman family names in Kerry include: Beamish, Burke, Browne, Day, Dillon, Fitzgerald, Fitzmaurice, Granville, Gorham, Herbert, Hussey, Keating, Lyons, MacElligot, Molyneux, Nagle, Quilter, Redmond, Rice, Stapleton, Tobin and Walsh!

Discover more about: | Medieval Castles in Ireland

There were no stone castles in Ireland before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. The great period of castle building started in about 1190 and lasted for about one hundred years. You can see the remains of Anglo-Norman castles all over Ireland today.



The castles we see today look very different from when they were first built. They may only be ruins now so you have to imagine what they were like when people lived in them hundreds of years ago.



This drawing shows a typical motte and bailey castle

EARTH AND TIMBER CASTLES

The first castles the Anglo-Normans built were made of earth and timber and they are called motte and bailey castles. The advantage was that they were easy to build and it

took very little time. First of all they piled up a large mound of earth in the shape of a pudding bowl – this is the motte. Then they built a wooden tower with palisades on top. At the base of the motte was the bailey, an enclosure which was also surrounded by a palisade. Finally, the motte and bailey was surrounded by a deep ditch and earthen bank. Lords and knights lived in the motte, while soldiers and animals stayed in the bailey.



Q *Look at the picture of the motte and bailey castle and see if you can find the motte, the timber castle, the bailey and the palisade?*

STONE CASTLES

Motte and bailey castles were great short-term solutions to provide a military base for the Anglo-Normans but one of the disadvantages was that they were easy to burn down. As soon as the newly conquered lands were under control the building of stone castles started. They took a lot longer to build but they were much safer to live in and nearly impossible to destroy.



HOW WOULD YOU BUILD A MEDIEVAL CASTLE?

Building a castle costs a lot of money and involves many skilled people. The most important decision you have to make is: location, location, location!

CHOOSING A GOOD SITE

Imagine you are surrounded by hostile Irish neighbours. You need to be able to see the surrounding countryside. This means you can spot an approaching enemy early and get ready to defend your castle. Don't forget: it also needs to be close to a river or stream so you can get water for cooking and cleaning.

MATERIALS YOU'LL NEED

Think of the huge amount of stone and timber that you will need to build your castle. Ideally, you want to have a large supply of timber and stone nearby so that you do not have to carry the heavy materials far to the building site.

Discover more about: Medieval Castles in Ireland

HELP YOU'LL NEED

Think of the large workforce you will need to build your castle such as:

- A master stonemason to draw rough plans or make a model of the castle
- Stonecutters to quarry and shape the blocks of stone
- Stonemasons to set the stone in place with mortar (some of the work was done by boys as young as twelve who were apprentices)
- Carpenters to build wooden scaffolding along the rising walls and roof supports
- Thatchers to make a water-tight roof



Q *If you were going to build a castle near where you live, can you think of any good places or sites? Are there any castles near you – do you think they are well placed?*

TYPES OF STONE CASTLES

There are different types of medieval castles in Ireland and their size and layout can be quite different. A castle from the 12th century can look very different to a 16th century castle because their function changed over time. Let's take a closer look at two of the main types of castles you come across when travelling in Ireland.



King John's Castle, Limerick

FORTRESSES:

The mighty Anglo-Norman stone-built castles from the 12th to the early 14th century can rightly be described as fortresses because that is what they were built for. They were huge

Discover more about: Medieval Castles in Ireland

and impressive fortifications with massive towers at the corners and high curtain walls. The idea behind such castles was to send out the following message: 'I am the boss now – do not start a fight because you will not win!' Good examples of such fortresses are Dublin Castle and King John's Castle in Limerick.

Ballymalis Castle near Killorglin is a fine example of a tower house

TOWER HOUSES:

During the first part of the 14th century, a number of events began to weaken Ireland. The worst of them was the Black Death which arrived in Ireland in 1348. It is believed that the plague killed at least one third of Ireland's population within just a few years. This also meant the end of the



building of the great Anglo-Norman castles. It took Ireland nearly one hundred years to recover from the plague. Once the country had recovered, castle building started again on a large scale. These castles are called tower houses because they were more a strong private residence than a military fortress. Ballinskelligs Castle is a good example of this type. Other tower houses in County Kerry are Ballymalis Castle, near Killorglin, Minard Castle, near Annascaul and Rathinane Castle, near Ventry.



Q Look at the map of Kerry (there is one supplied in the box). Can you find these tower houses on the map? Which one is nearest to you?

Discover
more
about:

Tower Houses

Tower houses are the most common type of castle found in Ireland. All the artefacts in the box come from the ruins of Ballinskelligs Castle, which was a tower house.

A TYPICAL IRISH TOWER HOUSE



Look at the drawings of the tower house. See if you can find the features mentioned here on the picture of the tower house.

The tower house is a tall building, usually three to five storeys high and sometimes surrounded by a **bawn wall**, which encloses a **court yard**. There may be other buildings in the courtyard, for either the people who worked in the castle or for animals.

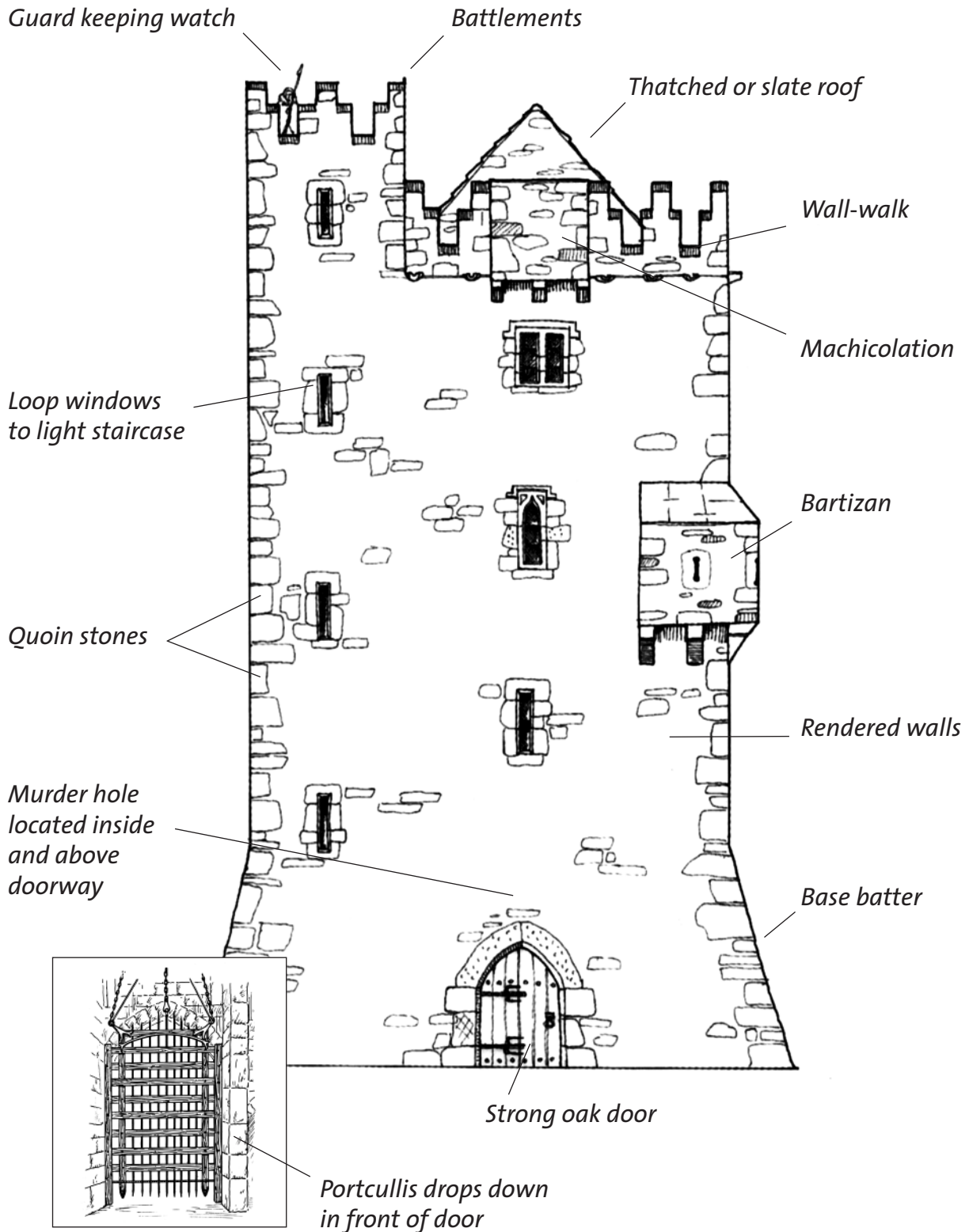
BUILDING THE CASTLE

People built tower houses using whatever stone was available nearby. Well-shaped stones called **quoin stones**, were used at the corners of the building. The builders also cut and shaped stone for the doorways and windows. When the castle was finished, builders covered it (**rendered**) on the outside with plaster, and probably white washed it as well. The rooms inside would also have been rendered and possibly painted. The roof of the tower house had a timber frame, which was covered with wood, slate, lead or thatch.

Tower houses had both small and large windows. The smaller windows, called **slit lights**, were used on the lower floors and the stairway. The bigger windows were found on the top floors, as this was where most of the day to day living went on. The windows were covered by wooden shutters to keep draughts out, as glass was very expensive.

Discover more about: Tower Houses

Exterior of a tower house



Discover more about: Tower Houses



Q *By looking at the drawing of the outside of the tower house, can you figure out where the stairway is?*

Q *Can you think of a reason why it would be safer to keep the bigger windows on the top floors?*

Q *Can you think of a reason why these castles are called ‘tower houses’?*

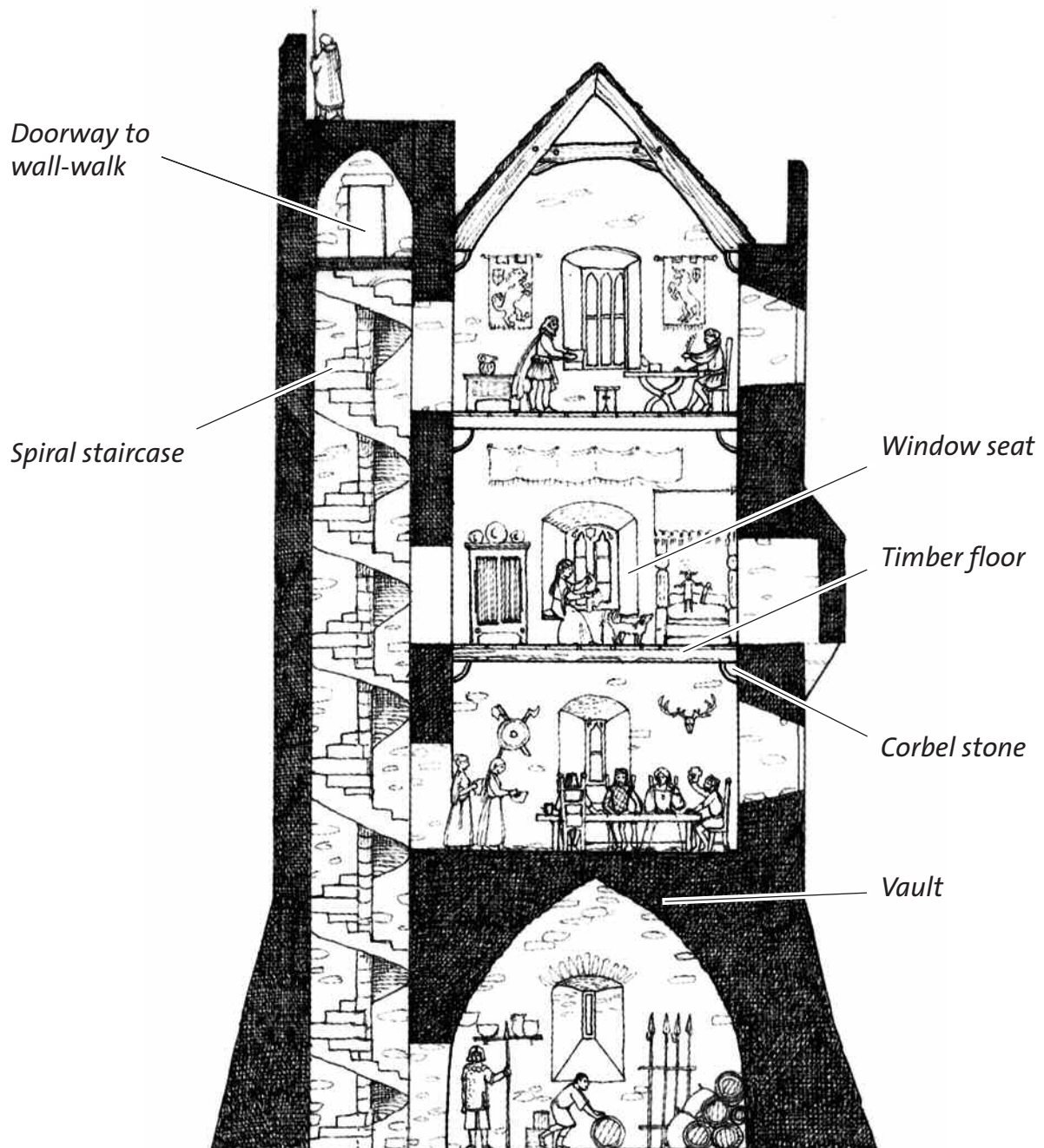
DEFENSIVE FEATURES

These castles or tower houses, were built to keep people safe in times of war. As we mentioned earlier, there was a lot of unrest and fighting in Ireland in medieval times. Tower houses were built to defend against attacks. They were built to protect the family inside. One defensive feature was the **battlements** at the top of the house (from which guards kept watch). Another was the **machicolation**, through which rocks could be thrown at the enemy below (see machicolation over the door in the picture). The machicolation at the corner of the tower house is called a **bartizan**. Defenders could reach the battlements and machicolation by a **wall-walk** at roof level.

Other defensive features of the tower house include a **base batter**. A base batter is an extra thick wall at the bottom of the castle. Attackers would find it difficult to damage the building, especially if missiles were being dropped on them from above through the machicolation or bartizan. The main entrance to the tower house would have had a strong oak door. Outside the door was a **portcullis**, an iron, grid-like gate. The **murder hole** was just inside the doorway, with someone stationed above it to pour hot water or throw missiles down on any unwanted person who got through the door. Any prisoners taken were kept in a secret chamber in the castle, called an **oubliette**.

Discover more about: Tower Houses

Interior of a tower house



LIVING IN THE TOWER HOUSE



See if you can find some of the features mentioned here on the picture of the inside of the tower house.

The tower house was a defended building but it was also a family home. Tower houses were three to five storeys high. On each floor was a main chamber or room, reached by a stairway.

The floors were separated by either a stone roof (called a **vault**), or by timber floors. The floor timbers were held up and supported by **corbel stones** which jutted out of the walls.

Different activities took place on each level of the house.

Ground floor

The ground floor room in the castle often had only very small windows, or sometimes no windows at all. Because this room was so dark and cool, it was used for storing food and wine.

First floor

The first floor of the tower house could have been a living area, a dining area, the servants' quarters or a kitchen. People of the time cooked food on an open fire using a spit. In our drawing, this chamber is a dining area.

Upper floors

The upper floors were for dining or sleeping. Some of these rooms had a fireplace for heat. Even with a fireplace the castle was probably a cold, dark place in which to live. To light the rooms at night people would use torches or candles. In our drawing you can see that one of the two upper rooms is a living area and the other one is a sleeping area.

The **garderobe** or **latrine** (loo) was also on the upper floors, often beside the sleeping area. The garderobe emptied outside the castle wall. Sometimes people built a stone basin into the garderobe, so those using the loo could wash their hands.

*Discover
more
about:*

Architecture of Ballinskelligs Castle

Ballinskelligs Castle, near Ballinskelligs Bay on the Iveragh Peninsula in County Kerry, is the ruin of a tower house that archeologists have excavated. The castle was built there to keep watch over the bay and any approaching ships.



This photo shows the back of the castle. The front faces the sea

THE OWNERS

Ballinskelligs Castle was a MacCarthy Mór castle. The MacCarthys were a native Irish family who fought the Anglo-Normans and held onto their land in south Kerry. MacCarthy Mór was an Irish king who ruled over the southern area of County Kerry.



Q *Can you find Ballinskelligs on the map of Kerry that came with the box?*

Q *What big towns would you travel through to get to Ballinskelligs castle from where you live?*

Q *Do you think Ballinskelligs was a good place for a defensive castle?*

THE STRUCTURE

The Ballinskelligs tower house is rectangular and it was three storeys high. It is only a ruin now as the roof and the upper walls have collapsed.

The people who built Ballinskelligs used limestone, probably obtained from a nearby quarry. They made the **quoin stones** from sandstone and held all of the stones in place with a stony mortar. The outside, and probably the inside, of the castle was **rendered** (plastered) and painted when it was first built. The builders made the lower walls thicker to form a **base batter**, which is up to two metres thick.



The render which once covered the walls has worn away revealing the stone underneath

THE TOILET

The **garderobe**, or loo, was hollowed out of a wall on the second floor. It was a simple hole with a wooden seat and a shaft running down through the thick wall. The contents spilled out through the **garderobe chute** into a sewer pit at the back of the castle.



Discover more about: Architecture of Ballinskelligs Castle

THE DOORWAY AND MURDER HOLE

The castle **doorway** faces out to sea. Its wooden door is missing, but the slot used to hold the block of timber that bolted the door is still there. For extra protection, there was a second door, or metal grille, called a **portcullis** outside the wooden door. Inside the doorway there is a **murder hole**, from where the people inside could attack any intruders.



Main doorway



The murder hole is in the ceiling of the passageway just inside the main door



Q *Can you work out the shape of the oak door?*

Q *Can you figure out where the portcullis was?*

Q *Why was there a second doorway leading into the ground-floor room?*

Q *Do you remember what the murder hole was used for?*

Q *What could you throw down at an enemy trying to get inside?*

THE WINDOWS AND CORBELS

Ballinskelligs castle has both large and small windows. The smaller **windows** are at ground floor level, and they lit the stairway. The larger windows are in the upper levels. Each floor was supported by **corbel stones**. The first and second floor rooms were used for eating and sleeping.



Q Why were the large windows only on the upper floors?

Q Can you find the corbel stones used to support the timber floors?



THE STAIRWAY

There was one main room on each level of the castle, and sometimes an adjoining **passageway**. You could get to the upper rooms via a **stairway** inside the doorway



Q Can you find the slot in the wall where the block of wood used to bolt the main door was fitted?

THE GROUND FLOOR

People did different things in different rooms of the castle. The ground floor at Ballinskelligs was probably used for storing food. There are three **wall cupboards** in the ground floor room – you can see two of them in the photo. These cupboards may have been lined with wood and covered over with a cloth.



Q *Can you find...*

...a doorway at first-floor level?

...wall cupboards?

...corbels?

...bedrock on the castle floor?

Discover more about:

Excavations at Ballinskelligs Castle

In the 1980s, the sea was eroding (washing away) much of the land around Ballinskelligs castle. To preserve any historical features, Archaeologist John Sheehan and his team excavated the castle site. This kind of excavation is called rescue excavation, and is done when a castle or any other site is in danger of being destroyed forever.



Q *Can you think of other times when archaeologists need to do rescue archaeology?*

Although a lonely ruin now, the castle was once a busy thriving place



WHY BOTHER EXCAVATING IT AT ALL?

The careful excavation of the ruin and the study of the artefacts found has told us a lot about Ballinskelligs Castle and the way people lived there. Some of these little 'bits and bobs' may not look all that impressive, but when studied closely they reveal a lot about what life was like hundreds of years ago. In a way archaeologists are like the forensic detectives in CSI on TV. In the programme Grissom and his team preserve the scene of the crime, collect the evidence, and after careful examination of this evidence, catch the criminal! Archaeologists approach their work in the same way. They preserve the historical site (when they can), collect the artefacts and after studying them closely, build an accurate picture of what happened a long time ago.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Three areas in and around the castle were excavated in 1988 and 1991.

AREA 1: SOUTH-EASTERN SIDE ➔

The section outside the main doorway.

What was found?

The remains of two seventeenth century buildings (one on either side of the doorway) and many sherds of pottery.

What did we learn?

That the castle and the site around it was used for many years. How rich and powerful the inhabitants were.



Q *How do you think the castle might have been used when it was no longer needed or suitable as a castle? How do we use some older buildings now?*

AREA 2: GROUND FLOOR ➔

What was found?

Large flag stones, iron nails, broken pieces of pottery and fragments of wine bottles.

What did we learn?

More about the way the castle was built and the materials used. How their pottery was made and where it came from. What they drank and where it came from. The type of trading they were involved in.



AREA 3: NORTH-WESTERN SIDE ➔

Outside back of the castle including the area underneath the garderobe chute.

What was found?

The archaeologists found a pit with an organic deposit, pottery, bone and shell.

What did we learn?

A lot about their diet and health. Where their food came from. What they hunted. How they farmed and traded.



Q What is in your lunch box today? If an archaeologist found it, what would he or she know about you? Would anything from your lunch box survive for 500 years?

WHAT HAPPENED THE ARTEFACTS?

When the excavation (**dig**) finished, the archaeologists brought the finds back to the office, where they were washed, left to dry, sorted and labeled. The artefacts were then brought to Kerry County Museum in Tralee where they are kept in a special store where they can be studied. Some have been included in this museum loan box.

WHO STUDIES THE ARTEFACTS?

Archaeologists and historians try to get as much information as possible from the finds. They send the different types of artefacts to specialists who study them. The bones, for example, are examined by a bone specialist, called an **osteo-archaeologist**, where they are identified as human, animal, fish or bird. The pottery is sent to a specialist who can identify its type, date, and place of origin (including whether it is native or imported). From the specialists reports, we can find out what people ate, where they travelled and who they traded with.

Discover more about: | Food in Medieval Times

Most of the food people ate in the medieval period was farmed. Medieval people kept sheep, cattle and pigs, and planted crops like oats, wheat and vegetables. They also went fishing and hunting.



Hundreds of years ago people ate seasonal and local food because they had to.

Can you think of any reasons why we should do this today?

The medieval diet included:

- Bread, stews, pottages (soup), and oaten cakes made from oats and wheat.
- Meats such as beef, mutton, veal and pork, wild birds like pheasant and pigeons and fowl such as hens, ducks and geese.
- Fish, including cod, ling, haddock, trout, eels and salmon; and shellfish such as crab, lobster, cockles, mussels and oysters.
- Dairy products such as milk, butter, cheese and sour curds ('white meats').
- Vegetables, including onions and cabbages, from which they could also make soup.
- Sweet dishes, such as pears in wine syrup, and roasted apples and fruits such as plums, strawberries and blackberries.
- Drinks, such as milk, ale, mead and wine. Neither tea nor coffee had yet made their way to Ireland.

HOW DID THEY KEEP THEIR FOOD FRESH?

It was very hard to preserve food in medieval times and people generally only ate food that was in season. (Only very wealthy people could afford to import out-of-season food and drink from far away). Remember, there were no fridges. They could salt, dry or smoke their food to preserve it but usually ate it fresh. Often seasonings such as salt, pepper or garlic were used to hide any bad taste!

WHEN DID THEY EAT?

Like us, medieval people ate three meals a day. Most people got up at sunrise and had bread, butter, cheese, eggs and milk for breakfast. They usually ate dinner about midday, starting with bread and pottage followed by a main course of meat or fish. The church forbade the eating of meat on certain days of the week and during Lent so people ate fish on those days. In the evening time, they had a light supper of bread, butter and milk before bedtime.



HOW DO WE KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THEIR DIET?

We get a good picture of their eating habits from the artefacts found during the excavations of Ballinskelligs Castle. Many animal bones like the ones in the loan box were collected. The samples we included in the collection come from cattle, pigs and fish. We also have a box of oyster, limpet, cockle and periwinkle shells found at the castle. These bones and shells tell us that the people who lived there were farmers, and that they also fished in the nearby bay.



Q *Why do you think people in Medieval Ireland didn't eat potatoes?*

Q *Imagine you are giving a party in Ballinskellig Castle. What would you ask your cook to prepare for your guests?*

Q *What type of creatures did Medieval people hunt?*

Discover more about: Pottery and glass

At Ballinskelligs Castle the archaeologists found many pieces of broken pottery and glass. Some of it was made in Ireland but we also know that some of it came from other countries.

THE RECONSTRUCTED POT

The archaeologists found just enough broken pieces to put this pot back together. You can see from the picture that some bits are still missing. This pot is hundreds of years old, and the type of pottery is known as **North Devon Gravel Free Ware**. It is glazed on the inside and around the top of the rim on the outside.

As the name suggests, the pot was made in England. Most of the everyday crockery (pottery) was made locally and was cheap to buy.

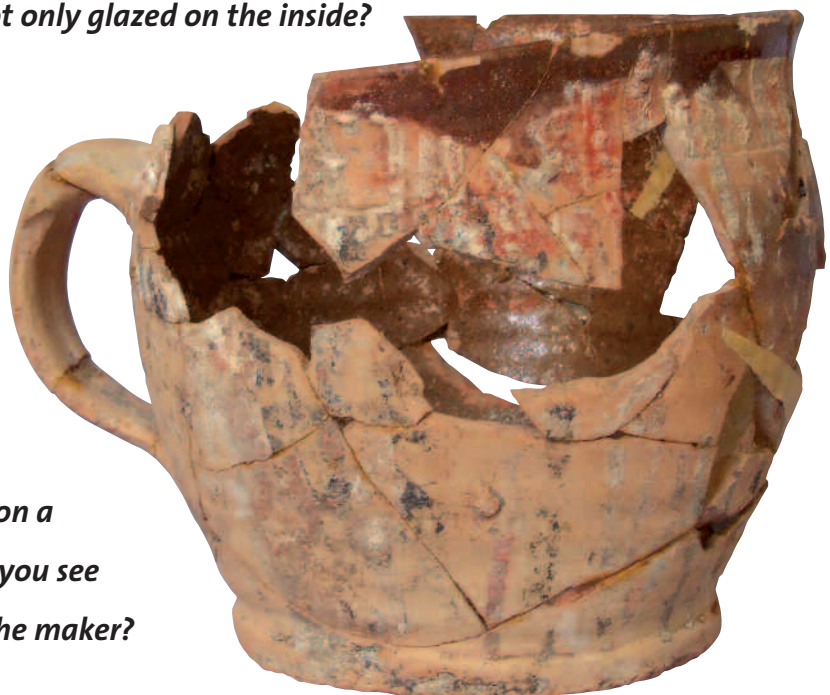


Q *Why do archaeologists rarely find complete pots?*

Q *Why was the pot only glazed on the inside?*



The pot was made on a potters wheel. Can you see the ripples left by the maker?

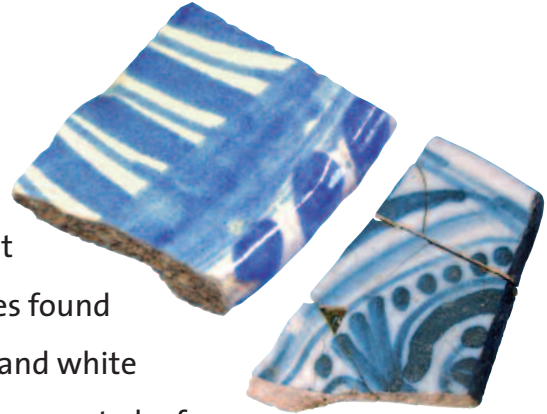


THE POTTERY PIECES

There are three boxes with sherds of Delft ware, Sgraffito ware and Westerwald ware in the loan box.

Delft ware

This type of pottery was first made in Delft, Holland in the early seventeenth century. Later, it was also made in Dublin and England. The pieces found in Ballinskelligs are glazed all over, but the blue and white designs are only on the upper side. These sherds seem to be from two different objects, as they have different patterns.



Sgraffito ware

The four sherds of Sgraffito ware seem to be from different objects, such as a plate (rim piece) and a vessel. Three of the sherds are glazed on both sides, with decoration on just one side.

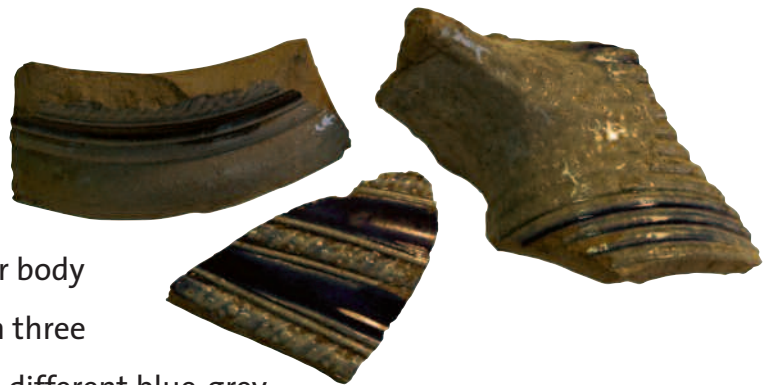
On the fourth piece, the rim doesn't seem to have much glaze on the underside. Can you figure out what these pieces were part of before the object was broken?



Westerwald ware

Westerwald is German pottery from the post-medieval period (1550-1800).

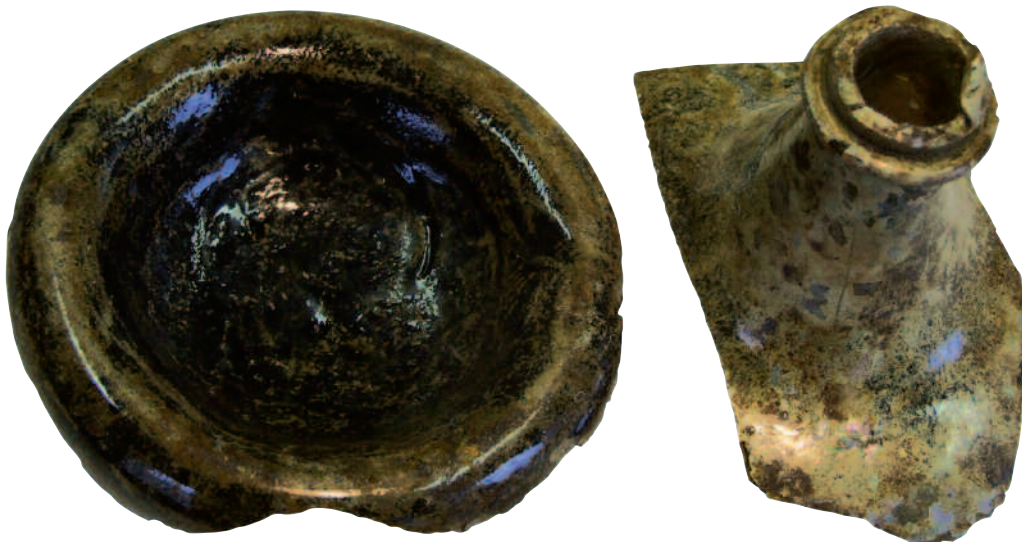
The three sherds (base piece, handle or body piece and body piece) seem to be from three different vessels because they all have different blue-grey glazes and are of different thicknesses. The sherd with the section of handle remaining may have been part of a jug or mug.



THE GLASS PIECES

In the box there are two pieces of glass bottles from Ballinskelligs Castle, a bottom and a neck piece though not from the same bottle.

Like the pottery, the glass found was mostly in pieces. Most of the glass comes from bottles that would have contained wine, probably imported from France or Spain.



Glass was first made thousands of years ago in the Middle East. It was not made in Ireland until after the 16th century. The main ingredient needed to make glass is sand.

Glassmakers would melt the sand in a wood-fired furnace (the furnace had to reach a temperature of about 2000°C). Different types of sand make different colours of glass. If the sand contains iron, the glass is green.

Glass bottles like these have turned up at post medieval excavations sites in Ireland



Q *Why do you think it was in countries like Egypt in the Middle East that glass was first produced ?*

TRADING IN MEDIEVAL TIMES

Ireland has been trading with other countries since the Stone Age. During the medieval period, Ireland traded with countries such as England, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Italy. The ships arrived into ports at Galway, Cork, Dublin and Waterford. Later, in the post-medieval period (1550-1800), Ireland also traded with the east coast of North America (Boston and New York), the Caribbean islands and the Canary Islands. The goods the Irish exported included salted fish, hides and wool, while their imports included salt, honey, linen and silk, in addition to pottery and wine. The goods came to Ireland on ships and were sold throughout the country by travelling merchants.



Goods exported from Ireland include wool, hides, fleeces and salted fish. Wine, salt, iron ore and fine cloths were imported in return. Luxury items such as dyes, medicine and spices came to Ireland from the Far East via Italy.



Q Do you know why goods like potatoes, coffee or tobacco were not traded in medieval times?

Take a
closer
look at

Archaeology

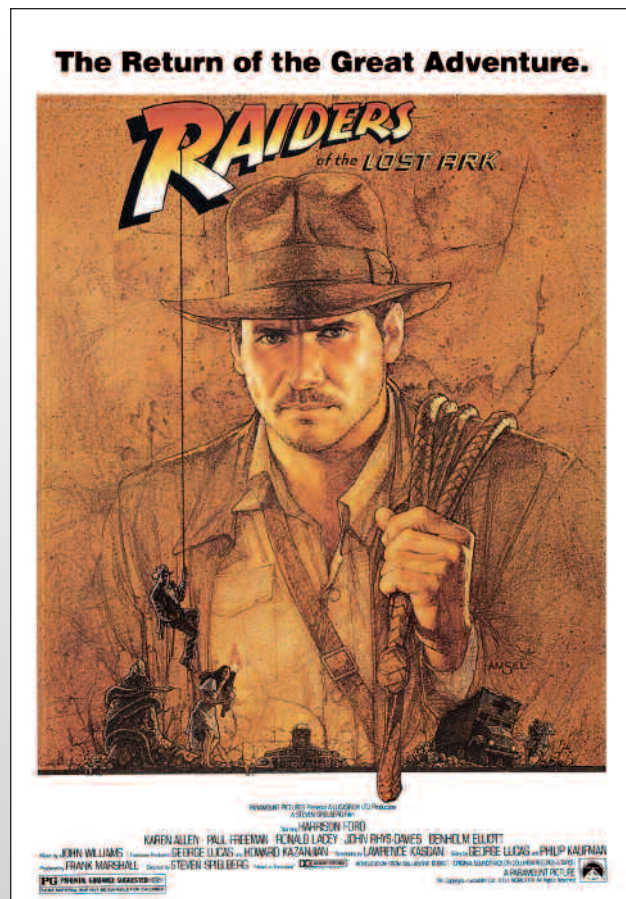


You may be wondering how archeologists go about their job. How do they find artefacts? What do they do with them? How do they work out the age of a little piece of bone or pottery? And why studying these artefacts teaches us about what life was like long ago?

WHAT IS ARCHAEOLOGY?

Archaeology is the study of how people lived in the past by examining the things they left behind, such as houses and tools. The buildings people leave behind (like castles or tombs) are called **monuments**. The portable objects they leave behind (like pottery or jewellery) are called **artefacts**. Archaeologists excavate (**dig**) monuments and try to piece together how people lived or worked by examining the artefacts found there. Unlike in the movies, archaeologists do not dig to find gold or treasure (although they might occasionally find it).

Okay, so in real life an archaeologist's job is not quite as thrilling as that portrayed by Indiana Jones. No boobie-traps, shoot-outs, head-hunters or snakes pits! However there is the real excitement of hunting for clues and the satisfaction of piecing together what life was like long ago.



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Take a closer look at: Archaeology

HOW DO ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND THINGS?

All archaeological monuments are protected under the law. So before an archaeologist can excavate a site, they must get a licence from the government.

Once they are granted a license, a team of archaeologists carry out a survey of the site. They draw detailed maps and take many photographs. That way they have an accurate record on what the area looked like before the dig begins. Next they divide the site into a grid so that the location where artefacts are found can be placed on the map. Now the excavation can begin!



The site is first photographed, mapped and marked out in a grid. The archaeologists are divided into teams and given a space in the grid to work in.



The teams dig carefully in the soil often using small hand held trowels.



Some tools of the trade; camera to photograph the site and on going work, trowel and brush to clean dirt from artifacts, ruler and tape measure to make accurate records

Take a closer look at: Archaeology

Archaeologists dig a site layer by layer. Each layer is known as a **strata** and the build up of layers is called **stratigraphy**. The older ones are at the bottom, the newer ones at the top. So the deeper you dig, the further back in time you go. It's time-travel with a shovel!

The actual digging is carried out slowly and carefully, however, a mechanical digger may be used to remove the top soil as artefacts are unlikely to be found there. Shovels are also used at the beginning but as they go deeper and there's a danger an object could get damaged, they use smaller tools like trowels. Sometimes they even use soft brushes to remove any soil from small or fragile pieces.



Loose soil and stone can be passed through a **shaker screen** (sieve) to check for little artefacts that may have been missed.



Accurate measurements, drawings, maps and photographs are made of what is being uncovered during every stage of the dig.



All the information gathered during the work is carefully written into an excavation log. This is very important as there may be many people working on a big dig and lots of artefacts, some very tiny, found. This log is used when the final report is written at the end of the excavation.

Take a closer look at: Archaeology

The team carefully records everything they uncover with photographs and drawings, because once the site is gone, it is gone forever. When the team have finished the excavation, a report is written detailing everything uncovered.

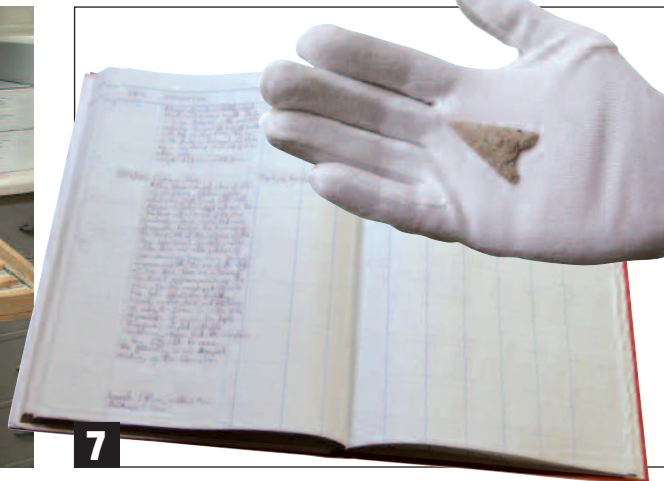
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE EXCAVATED ARTEFACTS?

Artefacts from excavated sites go into a museum once archaeologists are finished examining them. In the museum the artefacts might be put on display or they might be kept in a store room for safekeeping. In this way, they are preserved for future generations.

At the Kerry County Museum in Tralee, you can see many different kinds of artefacts found in Kerry. Some were excavated by archaeologists, and some were found by people working in bogs and fields. Others were the personal property of people who gave them to the museum. Many objects date back thousands of years, to the Stone Age but some are only 50 or 100 years old.



The artefacts are brought back to the archaeologists' office where they are cleaned and placed in drying racks. Later they are carefully studied by different specialists. When they are finished, they pass the objects on to the Museum.



Every item that comes into the possession of the Museum is given a registration number. This number is listed in a register book and on a computer data base. This register book includes a brief description of the object. It also lists other basic information such as who found it, when and where, along with the specialist's opinion of the object.

Take a closer look at: Archaeology

BUILDING A PICTURE OF THE PAST

The archaeologist is like a detective trying to tell a story, but with pieces of evidence missing. Using the artefacts and building remains found on the excavated site as clues, the archaeologist will try to determine what life was like for the people who lived or worked there long ago.

HELP FROM SPECIALISTS

One way to find out as much as possible is to have specialists examine the artefacts. For example, the pottery is sent to a pottery specialist who will figure out where the pottery was made, and how old it is. They might also try to put some of the pieces back together. If the archaeologist found bone fragments on the site, they send them to an **osteo-archaeologist**. The osteo-archaeologist can determine if the bones are animal or human, and, if animal, the type of animal they come from.



8

The artefacts are examined and if they are in bad condition they are **conserved**. Many different methods are used to stop them from falling apart altogether. They are then placed in specially designed boxes. Each object and its box is labelled.



9

The individual artefact boxes are placed in storage boxes. These larger boxes are also carefully labelled.



10

The storage boxes are put into the Museum Store by the **Collections Officer**. Their job is a bit like a librarian's, but instead of books, they look after artefacts. Specialists with an interest in the artefacts are allowed to visit the store and examine them.

Take a closer look at: Archaeology

RADIOCARBON DATING

It is important to archaeologists to find out how old artefacts are. One of the ways they figure this out is by **radiocarbon dating**. Every living organism has a set amount of **carbon isotope C14**. When the organism dies, the amount of C14 it contains decreases over time at a measurable rate. By measuring the amount of C14 remaining in organic artefacts (such as bone and wood), it is possible to calculate how old it is.

WHAT ELSE DO ARCHAEOLOGISTS DO?

Not all archaeologists work on excavations. Some study maps, books and photographs to get background information on the area in which an excavation is taking place. Others survey the excavation site, which means they measure, draw plans and take photographs of the site. Some archaeologists work in the laboratory, carefully examining artefacts under a microscope or treating them so they don't decay now that they're out of the ground. And some archaeologists even work underwater, examining things like old shipwrecks.



The Museum Store has it's own climate controlled environment. It's not too hot or too cold, too humid or too dry. This is very important in keeping the artefacts in good condition. They are regularly checked to insure all is okay.



Finally when the opportunity arises, the artefacts are taken from the store and put on display in the Museum Gallery. That way everyone can see and enjoy objects left behind by people who lived long ago.