

# cultúr

# culture

**SA MHODÚL TABHARFAR TUISCINT AR THIONCHAR NA DTALAMH PORTAIGH AR SHAOL CULTÚRTHA NA HÉIREANN. BAINÉADH ÚSÁID AS ADHMAD PORTAIGH I GCOMHAIR TÓGÁLA AGUS IS ÁBHAR INSPIORÁIDE ANOIS É D'OBJETS D'ART. SOLÁTHRAÍONN GO LEOR FRÍOTHA SEANDÁLAÍOCHTA LÉARGAS AR LEITH DÚINN AR AN AM ATÁ CAITE. LÉIRÍONN NA TAISPEÁNTAIS ROINNT DE NA HEARRAÍ A SPREAG Ó THAILTE PORTAIGH AGUS EARRAÍ A FUARTHAS IONTU.**

IN THIS MODULE YOU CAN SEE THE IMPACT OF PEATLANDS ON IRISH CULTURAL LIFE. BOG WOOD WAS USED FOR BUILDING PURPOSES AND NOW INSPIRES OBJECTS OF ART. NUMEROUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS PROVIDE US WITH A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO OUR PAST. THE DISPLAYS SHOW SOME OF THE ITEMS INSPIRED BY PEATLANDS AND ALSO ITEMS DISCOVERED IN THEM.



Le Brocquy's Bord na Móna Tapestry.

Bogs have been a part of Irish consciousness for centuries. They have inspired poetry, provided a window to the past and a home for wildlife.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, peatlands have inspired artworks such as le Brocquy's Bord na Móna tapestry, commissioned by former Managing Director, Lewis Rhatigan, and a series of paintings by Maurice MacGonigal.

Bogs seem to particularly inspire sculpture: in the 1970s Michael Casey began to sculpt using wood that had been buried in bogs for centuries. Bord na Móna collaborated with him to create Celtic Roots, a co-operative studio representing artists who used bog wood and also trained apprentice carvers. A more recent collaborative effort, Sculpture in the Parklands, has placed several permanent outdoor sculptures in the Lough Boora Parklands. A variety of artists continue to complete residencies in the Parklands, creating evolving works of art.







1.

Peatlands also regularly provide unique and valuable insights into the past. As well as items like butter, shoes and pottery, the bogs preserved the Corlea Trackway and the Faddan More Psalter. Bord na Móna has built a relationship with archaeologists and the National Museum to dig for and preserve items found in bogs. In the 1980s, so frequent were finds in the peat that employees were given standardised forms to return to the National Museum.



2.

- 1. Derrynaflan Chalice.
- 2. Section of togher or bog road.
- 3. Discovery of a wooden vessel.



3.

## **BOGLAND**

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We have no prairies  
To slice a big sun at evening –  
Everywhere the eye concedes to  
Encroaching horizon,

Is wooed into the cyclops' eye  
Of a tarn. Our unfenced country  
Is bog that keeps crusting  
Between the sights of the sun.

They've taken the skeleton  
Of the Great Irish Elk  
Out of the peat, set it up  
An astounding crate full of air.

Butter sunk under  
More than a hundred years  
Was recovered salty and white.  
The ground itself is kind, black butter

Melting and opening underfoot,  
Missing its last definition  
By millions of years.  
They'll never dig coal here,

Only the waterlogged trunks  
Of great firs, soft as pulp.  
Our pioneers keep striking  
Inwards and downwards,

Every layer they strip  
Seems camped on before.  
The bogholes might be Atlantic seepage.  
The wet centre is bottomless

*Seamus Heaney*





Bog cotton

## **PRESERVATIVE PEAT**

Irish people have used bog wood for centuries. A. T. Lucas' 1954 report, *Bog Wood*, records how it was used for roofs, furniture, vessels and all types of ropes. In the 20th century Michael Casey began to create sculptures from bog oak, yew, and pine. His pieces can be seen in hospitals, churches and colleges all over Ireland. Inspired by his example Bord na Móna collaborated with him to set up a studio to train wood carvers.

Bog wood is not the only trace of the past to have been discovered preserved in peat. Bord na Móna workers have discovered many items buried in the peat as they

work. In 1977, James Wynne and Kieran Corcoran discovered an ancient crozier at Leamonaghan. Director of the National Museum, Dr. Raftery said it was "A first class object of early Christian Ireland, on a par with the Cross of Cong and St. Patrick's Bell". In 1978, David Conroy discovered a decorated wooden bucket at Garryhinch, Co. Offaly. The National Museum estimated that it dated from the 8th or 9th century A.D.

Since then many other items have been found in the bogs and Bord Na Móna employees are trained to report finds immediately.









Turfcutter sculpture.