

Ark Of Tides

The Ark of Tides is a Public Art Project by Buncrana artist Marie Barrett, inspired by the life of the celebrated Carndonagh born hagiographer, Fr. John Colgan, O.F.M. (1592-1658). Cogan's work on the ecclesiastical history of Ireland is unequalled. He recorded information about the lives of saints, monasteries, shrines, ruins, relics and sacred images, which otherwise would have been lost. He also brought together much useful information on Irish nomenclature, especially place names from throughout the country.

This temporary artwork commissioned by Donegal County Council under the Per Cent for Art Scheme is associated with the Carndonagh Sewerage Treatment Scheme. Carndonagh was an important ecclesiastical site from the 5th century. Prior to this there is strong archaeological evidence to suggest it was a place of worship for the Celts. The work investigates elements of religious practice and ritual in relation to local experience and has three elements

The Ark, temporarily sited on Pollan Beach, Ballyliffin is a sculptural interpretation of the altar-like structures that were carried or rolled on to the beaches in coastal areas such as Donegal and placed within the tide marks – land not technically owned by landlords - during Penal Times where celebrants of the mass might thus avoid prosecution. The Church of the Little Ark in Kilbaha, Co. Clare holds the only surviving ark from Penal times.

An exhibition/process room will also be temporarily sited in the Pollan Beach car park area to show Turas, a beautiful collection of photographic images of local ancient ecclesiastical sites and other visual manifestations of belief – prayer tallies, mass rocks, holy wells, pilgrimage and the turas (the sacrificial practice of walking barefoot and praying) that are the result of an education project undertaken by the artist and Transition Year Students from Carndonagh Community School.

Finally Mission Bells are two bells providing a gateway to the other artworks. They invite the audience to contemplate how for centuries bells have played an important role in calling people to work & prayer and marking the time of day.

The Ark of Tides and the Turas exhibition were open to the public on Pollan Beach, Ballyliffin, Co. Donegal from 4.30pm on Thursday 8th September until 8.00pm on Sunday 11th September 2005. The Mission Bells will remain and can be heard by parking at the roadside lay-by on the Mountain Road. Travelling north from Drumfries to Carndonagh along the 'Mountain Road' (R244), bell 1 is located on the island in the smaller right hand lake of Lough Naminn while bell 2 is located in the opposite lake of Lough Fad.