THE OUR IRISH WOMEN EXHIBITION:
CULTURAL DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE

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Our Irish Women was co-funded by the National Museum of Ireland & County Galway Heritage Office

An exhibition celebrating the women of Ireland
Exhibition Development Process

5 Key Stages

Shared Decision-Making

1. Developing proposal into plan of action

3. Designing banner template & logo

Group Decision-Making

2. Community input, researching & selection of woman/women

4. Preparing banner/website content

Collaborative Working

5. Proofing the graphic design
Visitor & Community Engagement
Visitor & Community Engagement

“Great to know that there actually were women in Irish history, nothing is ever mentioned about them, fantastic work.”
Welcome
Welcome to the website of Abbey Heritage Group. Here you can browse through our collection of interesting historical material including photos and memories recalled by local people. We hope you will help us to add to this collection by sending us any old photographs or information from the past that you may have. We look forward to receiving your comments. Further information here.
The Abbey Heritage Experience

Our Irish Woman: Aggie Whyte Ryan

Aggie Whyte with her reproduction Stradivarius, now 130 years-old

Aggie, bottom right, with the Ballinakill Céilí Band
Aggie’s fiddle playing style was very East Galway. Beautifully paced & very eloquent & definitive with a lovely sense of ornamentation. Her music was sweet & powerful all at once & is a great reference for fiddle players. Mairtín O’Connor, Irish traditional musician

Aggie travelled all over Ireland & England with the Ballinakill Céilí Band
Made recordings at His Master’s Voice studios & had high profile on post-war radio
Featured in reciprocal Irish, Dutch & Italian folk music radio programmes
Won All-Ireland Senior Fiddle Competition in 1954
Awarded the Oireachtas Gold Medal in 1958
Represented Galway Style Fiddle playing at seminar in UCC in 1978
Recording with her sister Bridie archived by Irish Folklore Commission
Huge tributes from all over Ireland following her death in 1979

“THE QUEEN OF FIDDLERS”
THE ABBEY HERITAGE EXPERIENCE
LAUNCHING OUR EXHIBITION
The Abbey Heritage Experience

On tour: bringing the women to Abbey
We valued the planning and support received from the museum.

A realisation of the value of working collectively and the benefit of this to small individual heritage groups.

There was a great sense of ownership of the project.

We could not have done it on our own.
Challenges

- Co-production not challenging as mutual trust & positive working environment already established

- Challenges were practical in nature: coordination, clear communication, meeting deadlines

Opportunities

- To further build & consolidate working relationships vital for long-term success of iCAN initiative

- Reflecting the local in the national historical narrative creates a strong sense of community ownership

Learning

- Clear parameters & guidance framing shared decision-making worked well

- When working with community volunteers build in a time buffer of at least 15%
THANKS FOR LISTENING!

For more on Our Irish Women
ouririshheritage.org

For more on Aggie Whyte Ryan
abbey.galwaycommunityheritage.org