

# AUDIT OF HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS FOR COUNTY DONEGAL



by

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COMHAIRLE CHONTAE  
**Dhún na nGall**  
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



An Action of the County Donegal Heritage Plan

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Finally I would like to thank Stephen McNamee, Project Co-Ordinator of the History Links Project, for loaning me essential equipment as well as advice right from the beginning.

## **Summary**

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This report follows the completion of a full photographic audit of known public collections relating to County Donegal throughout the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (County Donegal Heritage Plan Action 2.4). This audit has resulted in the creation of a detailed database listing location and details of approximately 2,250 historic photographs taken in locations throughout Donegal.

This report includes details on the layout of the current database as well as instructions for use by the general public. Details on the relevant photograph repositories are also provided, as well as recommendations for future collecting.

It is envisaged that this County Donegal Heritage Plan Action will provide a more complete picture of photographic resources available to the general public, and in doing so assist them significantly in gaining access to these resources.

The audit was carried out from November 2010 until the end of January 2011.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Collecting Process and Database Layout**

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### **1.1. Collecting Process**

The collection process for the audit required initial research into existing repositories and the collections held therein. Once initial contact was established and the existence of collections with photographs relating to County Donegal were identified, it was then necessary to travel to each repository and both assess the collections as well as the level of access to them before beginning the process of entering the records into the database.

### **1.2. Database Layout**

When creating the database it was necessary to direct its design towards a user-friendly format for the general public. The database currently exists in two separate formats for use in either Microsoft Access™ or Microsoft Excel™, although search methods in both applications are similar. Microsoft Access™ provides a stable database for the audit, while Microsoft Excel™ provides editing capabilities which will prove invaluable as more information regarding each photograph is identified by future users of the database. Any changes made in Excel™ can be imported directly into Access™. Having these separate formats may also make it easier to upload the database to the Donegal County Council website in the future.

When creating the database it was necessary to include a wide range of column headings in order to include as much detail on each photograph as possible while also widening the search parameters for the individual user.

The columns included in the database, followed by descriptions for each, are as follows:

- a) Entry Number
- b) Catalogue Number
- c) Title
- d) Place
- e) Photo Date
- f) Collection
- g) Collection Catalogue Number
- h) Theme
- i) Link (direct URL if applicable)
- j) Image (if applicable)
- k) Additional Information
- l) Colour

### **1.2.1. Entry Number**

This column indicates the chronological entry number of each photograph into the collection. Although the majority of the entry numbers indicate a single photograph, a small number of entries are grouped together if they consist of copies or non-catalogued small collections.

### **1.2.2. Catalogue Number**

Each entry has been assigned a new catalogue number under the abbreviation DCAPH or Donegal County Archive Photograph (*e.g.* DCAPH1, DCAPH2 *etc.*). This will allow return visitors to find individual entries quicker.

### **1.2.3. Title**

The title of each photograph as assigned by its respective collection has been included in the database in order to provide as much information about the photograph as possible and to assist visitors. Due to the nature of this column the entries are not in uniform format, but any necessary changes to spelling mistakes have been made to assist the visitor while searching.

#### **1.2.4. Place**

This is one of the more invaluable columns for searching purposes. The general area where each photograph has been taken is included here, as well as in the title where possible. Any photograph with an as-of-yet unidentifiable location has been entered as 'Co. Donegal', although provisions are in place that will allow the database to be edited should a researcher further identify photographs in the future.

#### **1.2.5. Photo Date**

The year each entry was taken, or the general time period as close as it could be ascertained, has been included in this column.

#### **1.2.6. Collection**

This column indicates the collection and the archive that individual entries are currently located in. Further details on the archives, their collections as well as access details are included later in this report (see pages 10-17).

#### **1.2.7. Collection Catalogue Number**

This indicates the original catalogue number of the entry in its current archive location. This column will be extremely useful for users who wish to either travel to or order copies from respective archives of photographs listed in the audit.

#### **1.2.8. Theme**

Due to the wide variety of themes assigned by various archives on their collections, it was necessary to narrow these themes down into searchable titles. The themes included are as follows: Social, Landscape, Architecture, Archaeology, Transport and Industry. Although the majority of entries are in a social context, some can also include a mixture of the themes mentioned above.

#### **1.2.9. Link**

Entries in this column provide a stable URL link directly to an on-line copy of the photograph, but only if this resource is available from the

original archive. Many repositories, such as the National Museum of Northern Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland, will continue to upload their collections on-line when necessary, thus the provision to add new URLs in the future has been included in this column.

#### **1.2.10. Image**

This column has been included in the event that Donegal County Council gains direct access to digital copies photographs from the various collections in the future. Direct pathways to digital copies on a local network can be included in this column. This is particularly relevant to archives that have no provision to make their collections available on-line.

#### **1.2.11. Additional Information**

Any additional or relevant information that can assist visitors but is not suitable for inclusion in the other columns has been entered here. Additional information may include information on the origins of photographs, on various collections or further information on the content of the photographs themselves.

#### **1.2.12. Colour**

The colour format of the photograph, where identifiable, has been included here. Colour formats general consist of black and white, colour, negative or sepia.

## Chapter 2

### Collections Guide

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#### 2.1. National Photographic Archive Collections

##### 2.1.1. The Eason Collection

The Eason collection consists of 2,772 images of Ireland, originally created for the Irish postcard trade by Eason & Son between 1900 and 1940.

Approximately 90 of these photographs were taken in various locations throughout Donegal.



Figure 1: Doon Well, Termon (EAS\_1042) © National Library of Ireland

### **2.1.2. The Lawrence Royal and Cabinet Collections**

This collection, housed in the National library of Ireland, is a series of 19,272 images from a collection of commercially-produced photographs taken between 1870 and 1914, showing topographical scenes throughout Ireland.

William Lawrence was born in Dublin in 1841 and in 1865 set up a photograph studio on Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street), Dublin. For over 50 years the studio, and its principal photographer Robert French, took over 30,000 photographs from the length and breadth of the Irish landscape.



**Figure 2: Lough Derg, Co. Donegal (L\_CAB\_04684) © National Library of Ireland**

There are 1,331 surviving photographs from the collection relating to Donegal ranging from 1880 until 1914. The Lawrence collection, due to its size and ease of access on-line, has not been included directly in the audit.

### **Contact and Order Details**

All the photographs are housed in the National Photographic Archive of Ireland and can be viewed there by appointment or also on-line at the National Library website: <http://www.nli.ie/digital-photographs.aspx>

Reproductions of photos from the National Photographic Archive can also be ordered for approximately €19 per photograph either in hard or digital copy by phoning the archive (+353 1 6030214) or directly by e-mail at [copy-orders@nli.ie](mailto:copy-orders@nli.ie)

## 2.2. Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Collections

### 2.2.1. The R.J. Welch Collection

The R.J. Welch photographic collection consists of glass negatives, original prints, lantern slides, original photographic albums and published series of views. Dating from c.1880 – c.1935, it contains material of topographical, scientific, anthropological, archaeological, transport and industrial interest, covering the whole of Ireland with particular emphasis on the north and west. There are currently 313 images in the existing Welch collection relating to Donegal.



**Figure 3: 'Reeling yarn for Irish Homespuns' R.J. Welch 1366**  
© National Museums Northern Ireland

## 2.2.2. The Hogg Collection

The A.R. Hogg photographic collection consists of glass negatives, original prints, lantern slides and photographic albums. Dating from c.1880 -1939, it holds material of topographical and industrial interest and includes a large number of named portraits. While all parts of Ireland are covered, the collection's focus is particularly strong in relation to Belfast and north-east Ulster. There are currently 109 photographs in the Hogg collection relating to Donegal.



**Figure 4: Rosapenna Hotel Dining Room with guests c.1919. A.R. Hogg Y654**  
© National Museums Northern Ireland

### 2.2.3. The Green Collection

The W.A. Green photographic collection consists of glass negatives, original prints, lantern slides and published series of views and dates from c.1880 – c.1940. It contains material of topographical, archaeological, industrial and transport interest but is particularly strong in regard to images of agriculture, rural life, crafts and pastime of the north of Ireland. There are currently 310 photographs relating to Donegal in the Green Collection.



**Figure 5: Stone Cist Or Primitive Grave On The "Kitchen Middens", Rosapenna.**  
**W.A. Green WAG0208. © National Museums Northern Ireland**

### Contact and Order Details

All the photographs from the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Collection are housed in the Picture Library located in the museum administrative buildings. A small portion of the photographs are also available on-line at [www.nmni.com/home/online-collections](http://www.nmni.com/home/online-collections). Photographs can be reproduced in digital or hard copy on request for the following fees:

10" x 8" black & white print @ £10.00 + VAT per image

20" x 16" black & white print @ £20.00 + VAT per image

To request reproductions, arrange a visit or inquire for further info, contact Michelle Ashmore, Picture Library Executive at:

National Museums Northern Ireland  
Cultra, Holywood, County Down, BT18 0EU, Northern Ireland

Telephone: +44 (0) 28 9039 5109

Fax: +44 (0) 28 9039 5004

E-mail: [picture.library@nmni.com](mailto:picture.library@nmni.com)

### **2.3. The Cooper Collection**

This collection consists of over 2,500 photographs, mostly taken in counties Tyrone and Donegal. Herbert Cooper was born in Hammersmith, London, in 1874 and arrived in Strabane just before the outbreak of the First World War. He took over the photographic studio in Railway Street which had been run by J. Burroughs from about 1901 until 1913. From then until his death in 1960, Cooper amassed a huge collection of photographs, of which 706 relate to Donegal.

#### **Contact and Order Details**

The Cooper Collection will be available for viewing at the new PRONI offices in the Titanic Quarter in Belfast from April 2011. Reproductions of photographs can be ordered by e-mail at [pronidcalni.gov.uk](mailto:pronidcalni.gov.uk) or by writing to PRONI at:

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland  
66 Balmoral Avenue,  
Belfast,  
BT9 6NY,  
Northern Ireland

## **2.4. The Bigger / Mc Donald Collection**

This collection consists of over 12,800 photographs relating to north-west Ulster. The photographs are not indexed and are only organised by theme. None of the photographs in the collection (apart from the Kerr portraits) carry descriptions.

The Collection is available on cd format and in large folders in thumbnail format. There are three main thumbnail indexes as well as two folders of portraits from Kerr Studios, Carlisle Street, Derry, from the 1880s.

### **Contact and Order Details**

Photographs can be ordered from the library in Derry and can be reproduced on disc or on hard copy at £5 per photo. The library can be contacted as follows:

Derry Central Library  
35 Foyle Street,  
Derry,  
County Londonderry,  
BT48 6AL,  
Northern Ireland  
Telephone: +44 (0)28 7127 2310  
Fax: +44 (0)28 7126 9084  
E-mail: [derrycentral.library@librariesni.org.uk](mailto:derrycentral.library@librariesni.org.uk)

## **2.5. Donegal County Museum Postcard Collection**

The County Museum postcard collection consists of a wide variety of postcards, the majority ranging from 1900-1950 in date. The postcards depict varying scenes of landscape, leisure and social life around the county, both in black and white, and colour format. The catalogued postcard collection was previously in the care of the County Library. There are approximately 163 photos in the collection.

## **Contact and Order Details**

The collection is available for viewing at the museum by booking an appointment. Photocopying services are also available with permission from museum staff. The museum can be contacted as follows:

Donegal County Museum  
High Road,  
Letterkenny,  
County Donegal  
Telephone: +353 (0)74 912 4613  
E-mail: [museum@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:museum@donegalcoco.ie)

## **2.6. Donegal County Archive Collections**

This collection contains a wide variety of photographs obtained from numerous public and private collections on a large variety of themes relating to County Donegal. The photographs can be found in varying formats and colours and offer a large range of topics from the 19<sup>th</sup> century right up to the present day. There are approximately 227 photos in this collection.

## **Contact and Order Details**

The collection is available for viewing at the archive by booking an appointment. Photocopying and reproduction services are also available and further information can be obtained from the archive staff. The archive can be contacted as follows:

Archives Service  
Donegal County Council,  
Three Rivers Centre,  
Lifford,  
County Donegal  
  
Telephone: +353 (0)74 9172490  
Fax: +353 (0)74 9142290  
  
E-mail: [archivist@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:archivist@donegalcoco.ie)

## Chapter 3

### Instructions for Use

#### 3.1. Introduction

While there are numerous methods of searching for records on both Access<sup>TM</sup> and Excel<sup>TM</sup>, the simplest and most effective format is the application of filters. Look at the image below and follow the indicated steps to search for records using filters. Please note the application in use is Microsoft Excel 2010<sup>TM</sup>.

#### 3.2. Searching using filters in Microsoft Excel 2010<sup>TM</sup>.

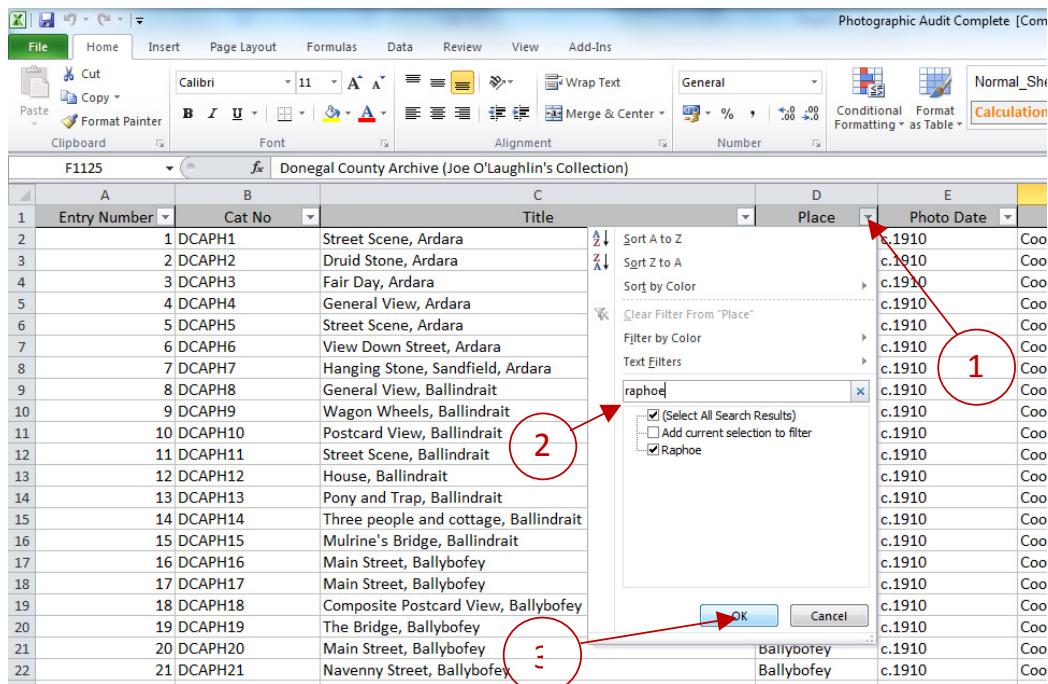


Figure 6: Using Search Filters

Step 1: Click on the filter arrow to the right of the column heading. On this occasion we are using the 'Place' column.

Step 2: Click on the search box and type in your search term.

Step 3: Click ok.

### 3.3. Searching using Microsoft Excel and Access 2007™.

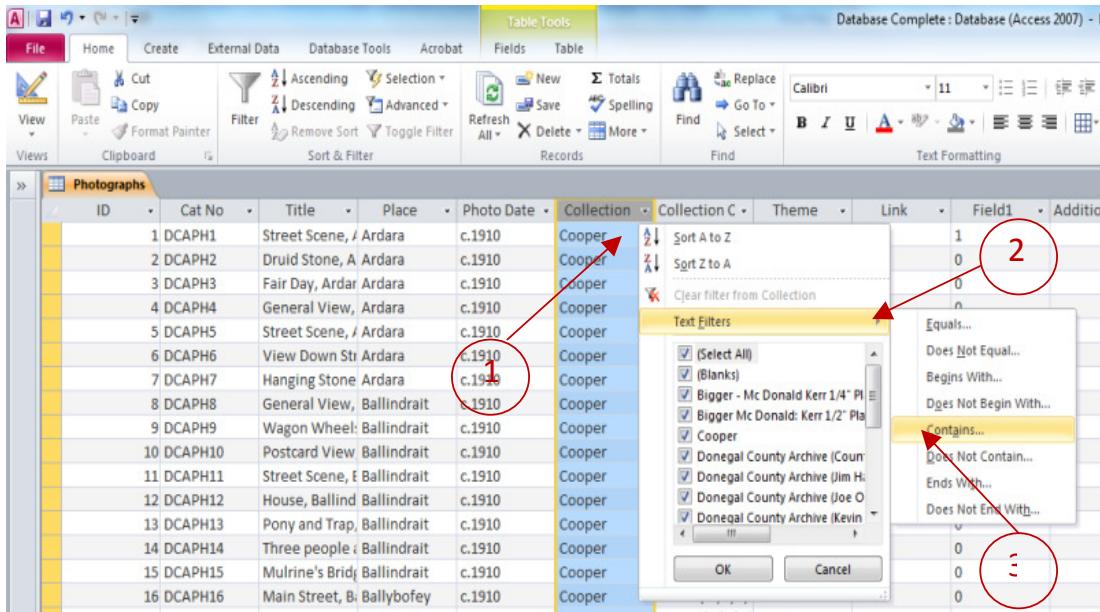


Figure 7: Using Text Filters

Step 1: Click on the filter arrow to the right of the column heading. In this occasion we are using the 'Collection' column.

Step 2: Click on 'Text Filters'.

Step 3: Click 'contains'.

Step 4: A search box will appear, where you can then enter your search term e.g. 'Cooper'

### **3.4. Important points to note**

- You can filter multiple columns in order to narrow further your search parameters.
- You can remove filter searchers by clicking the ‘undo’ button at the top left of the application or by pressing ‘ctrl + z’.
- If you cannot find the location you are searching for in the ‘place’ column, ensure you also try the ‘title’ column. If you are searching for a townland, village or landscape, you should also try searching nearby towns. Take caution when searching for places that were historically spelt different *e.g.* Castlefin/Castlefinn.
- If you are having difficulty with the filter search, try pressing ‘ctrl + f’ for a quick find method.

## Chapter 4

### Future Recommendations

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#### **4.1. Ensuring information quality**

The current database may still hold errors as a result of inadequate original cataloguing or human error on the part of the photographer in terms of place names *etc.* Although the version of the database available to the public will be protected from direct editing, provisions could easily be put in place to take on board corrections noted by researchers and users of the database. It is recommended that correction forms be provided at the archive so they can be filled in by users and the database can be updated as soon as possible.

#### **4.2. Obtaining access to digital archives**

It is recommended that the Donegal County Council obtain direct access to digital photographs in archives and collections that are not intended to be uploaded on-line in the near future. Examples include the Cooper and Bigger/Mc Donald Collections. Having direct access to these collections would greatly enhance the database service.

#### **4.3. Private collections**

During the course of the audit, the researcher has discovered many extensive private collections that are of similar and often superior quality to the existing public collections. Many of the carers of these private collections have expressed interest in loaning their collection to the archive, with particular interest in having their collections available for viewing on-line.

#### **4.4. Uploading the database on-line**

Using the database as an on-line resource would greatly benefit individual researchers. It would provide a platform for digital images as well as improve access to other on-line archives through direct links.

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