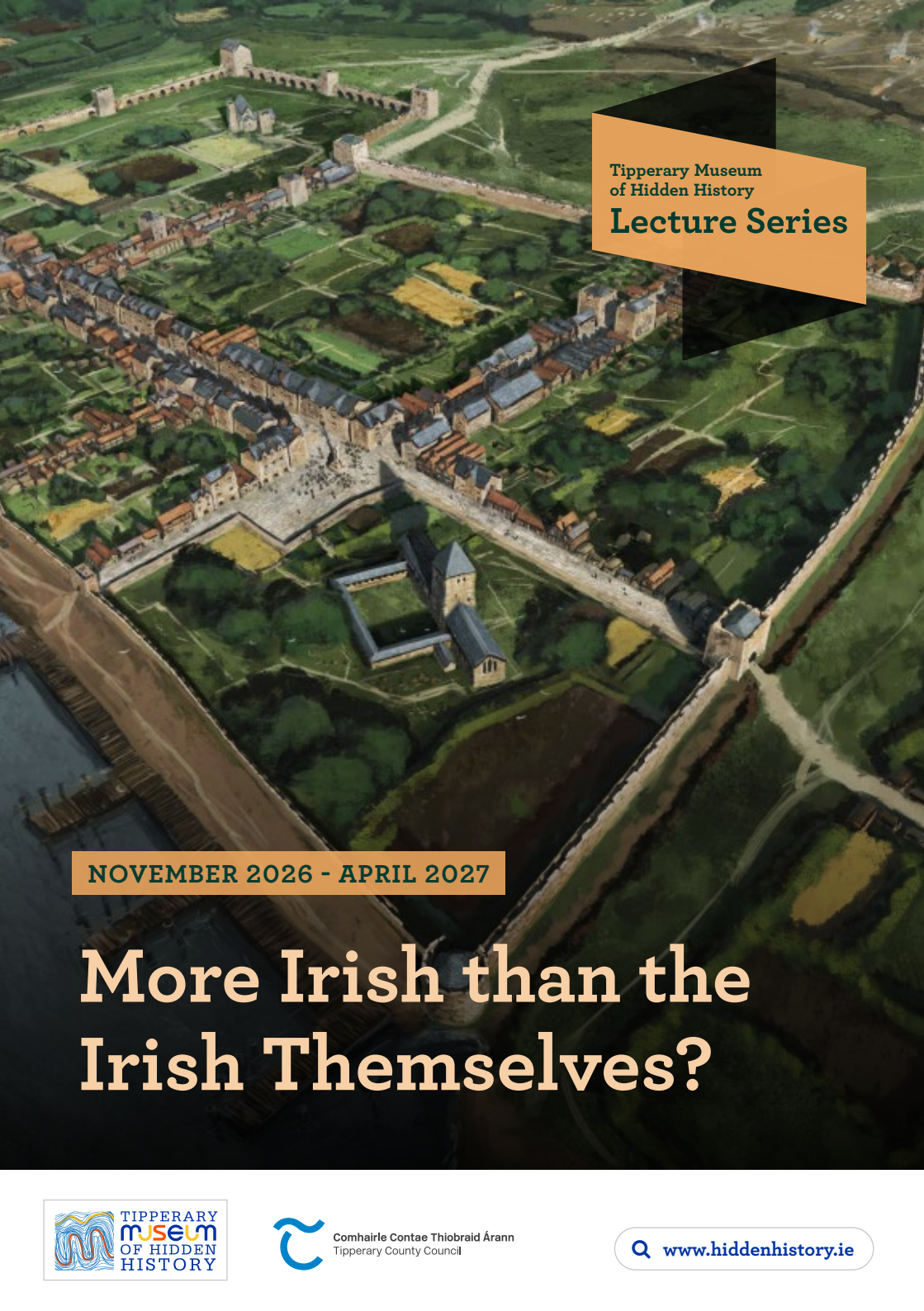




Tipperary Museum  
of Hidden History

## Lecture Series

NOVEMBER 2026 - APRIL 2027

# More Irish than the Irish Themselves?

# Lecture Calendar

LECTURE

01

*Deeds and misdeeds: a new exhibition on Ireland and the Norman world*

*Speaker: Diarmuid O' Rian*

SAT  
07  
NOVEMBER  
• 2026 •

LECTURE

02

*Mere Kinglets? Irish Kingship and the invasion of 1169*

*Speaker: Dr Ronan Mulhiare*

SAT  
05  
DECEMBER  
• 2026 •

LECTURE

03

*A Day in the Life of a Medieval Irish Town*

*Speaker: Michael Potterton*

SAT  
09  
JANUARY  
• 2027 •

LECTURE

04

*The tale of Diarmait MacMurchada and Robert FitzStephens*

*Speaker: Dr Stephen Mandal*

SAT  
06  
FEBRUARY  
• 2027 •

LECTURE

05

*What have the Normans ever done for us?*

*Speaker: Eamon Darcy*

SAT  
06  
MARCH  
• 2027 •

SEMINAR

ONE  
DAY

*The origins of Tipperary's Normans*

*Speaker: Seán Duffy*

*12th and 13th Century Castles of Tipperary*

*Speaker: Con Manning*

*The Anglo-Norman church in Tipperary*

*Speaker: Tadhg O'Keeffe*

*Inventing Anglo Norman Surnames*

*Speaker: Fiona Fitzsimons*

SAT  
03  
APRIL  
• 2027 •

## The arrival of the Normans in Ireland in 1169 marked a significant turning point in Irish history.

Historians have long debated whether their presence began as an invitation, an invasion, or a process of cultural integration. Whatever the circumstances of their arrival, the legacy they left transformed the Irish landscape, architecture, legal traditions, and urban development, and introduced many surnames that remain familiar today. Influential figures such as Strongbow and the Butlers of Ormond continue to feature prominently in studies of the period.

Over time, the Normans became integrated into Irish society and culture, intermarrying with local communities and adopting Irish language, customs, and dress. Their assimilation was so extensive that they are often described as having become "more Irish than the Irish themselves".

This enduring legacy is reflected in the Year of the Normans, 2026 -2027, which commemorates the millennium of William the Conqueror, born in Falaise, Normandy, in 1027 and crowned King of England in 1066. The initiative highlights the Normans' far-reaching influence across Europe, including Ireland, showcasing their political, social, and architectural achievements. Led by the Regional Council of Normandy, the programme brings together countries connected by Norman history, including Ireland, the United Kingdom, Norway, Denmark, and parts of Italy, to celebrate and explore this shared heritage. This lecture series forms part of that programme.

LECTURE

01



Image courtesy of Diarmuid O'Rian

LECTURE TITLE

### *Deeds and misdeeds: a new exhibition on Ireland and the Norman world*

SAT  
07  
NOVEMBER  
• 2026 •

**Synopsis:** This lecture will give a preview of an exhibition on the theme of Ireland and the Norman world that will open at the National Museum of Ireland in 2027. The exhibition results from a collaboration between the museum and the National Library of Ireland and will see medieval archaeological artefacts displayed alongside contemporary charters and manuscripts. The lecture will discuss these objects and highlight what they tell us about relations between Ireland, Normandy and Norman England before and after 1169, encompassing trade, ecclesiastical ties, conquest, colonisation and resistance.

SPEAKER



**Diarmuid O' Rian**

Diarmuid Ó Riain has been a curatorial researcher at the National Museum of Ireland since 2024, where he has worked on preparing the 'Words and the Wave' (St. Gallen) and 'Year of the Normans' exhibitions. He spent many years working on medieval research projects in Austria and Germany and has published extensively on hagiography, manuscript transmission and interactions between Ireland and the Continent in the Middle Ages.



LECTURE

02

Image courtesy of Dr Ronan Mulhaire



LECTURE

03

Image courtesy of Michael Potterton

LECTURE TITLE

## ***Mere Kinglets? Irish Kingship and the invasion of 1169***



**Synopsis:** Diarmait Mac Murchada's expulsion from Leinster in 1166 set in motion a chain of events that would drastically alter the political map of medieval Ireland. Ireland, unlike the comparatively centralized Angevin kingdom of England, was, on the eve of invasion, a land of many kings. This lecture traces the development of kingship in Ireland in the centuries preceding the invasion; explores Irish responses to the English invasion; and examines the ways in which Irish kingship was conceptualized both by the Irish kings themselves and by English and foreign chroniclers.

LECTURE TITLE

## ***A Day in the Life of a Medieval Irish Town***



**Synopsis:** What was it really like to live in a medieval Irish town? This illustrated lecture explores everyday life within the walls of towns such as Clonmel, Kilkenny, Waterford and Dublin. Drawing on archaeology, documentary evidence and surviving buildings, it examines the homes, streets, markets, crafts, food, trade and defences that shaped urban life between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries. It also considers the people who lived there – from wealthy merchants and craftworkers to children, beggars and criminals – and shows how archaeological excavations over recent decades have transformed our understanding of daily life in Ireland's many medieval towns.

SPEAKER

**Dr Ronan Mulhaire**



Dr Ronan Mulhaire works in Hibernia College and holds a PhD in medieval history from Trinity College Dublin. His first monograph, *Irish kingship in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Approaches to the study of power* was published by Routledge in 2025. Ronan has also published articles on violence and regicide in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland, and on the history and development of wrestling in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland.

SPEAKER

**Michael Potterton**



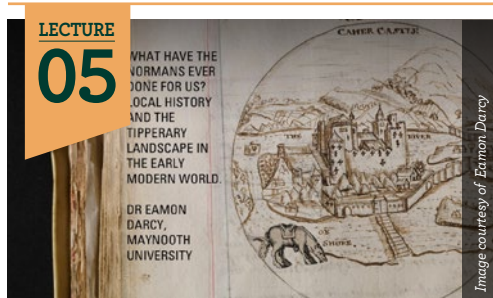
Dr Michael Potterton is Associate Professor of Medieval History at Maynooth University. His research focuses on medieval Ireland, particularly towns, settlement, landscape and archaeology. He has published widely, including *The Town in Medieval Ireland* (with Christiaan Corlett). He is Chair of the Irish Historic Towns Atlas. His lectures combine historical sources with archaeological discoveries to bring the medieval world to life for both specialist and general audiences.



LECTURE

04

Image courtesy of Dr Stephen Mandal



LECTURE

05

Image courtesy of Eamon Darcy

LECTURE TITLE

## *The tale of Diarmait MacMurchada and Robert FitzStephen – where it all began*



**Synopsis:** This lecture will look at two sites that are integral to the story of the Anglo-Norman Invasion of Ireland. In the mid-12th century, Diarmait MacMurchada, King of Leinster, established a monastery in Ferns. Some 25km due south of Ferns, a natural promontory forms a pinch point in the River Slaney as it enters Wexford harbour. This strategic site was chosen by Robert FitzStephen, one of the leaders of the advance wave of the invasion in May 1169, as the site for a Ringwork Castle, the first Anglo-Norman stronghold to be built in this island.

LECTURE TITLE

## *What have the Normans ever done for us?*



### **Local history and the Tipperary landscape in the early modern world.**

**Synopsis:** The question of whether the Normans were as Irish as the Irish themselves has been asked throughout Irish history. For Tipperary locals, however, this was hotly debated thanks to the county's strong connections to the Butler family, arguably the most important Norman family in Ireland in the seventeenth century. In this talk, we will look at how our early modern counterparts understood local history and their place in wider debates about the Irish past.

SPEAKER



**Dr Stephen Mandal**

Dr Stephen Mandal is co-founder (with Dr Denis Shine) of the Irish Heritage School, a private educational organisation. Stephen graduated from TCD (1991) with a degree in Geology and completed his PhD in Geoarchaeology in 1995. He has co-authored three academic books and contributed to numerous books and journals on subjects as wide ranging as geoarchaeology, medieval archaeology and community heritage.

SPEAKER



**Eamon Darcy**

Dr Eamon Darcy is a historian of early modern Ireland who teaches at Maynooth University. He is author of *The Irish Rebellion of 1641 and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms* published by Boydell and Brewer. He is also editor of *Archivum Hibernicum* and Co-PI on the Ancient Woodlands of Ireland project.

## ONE DAY SEMINAR:

# Horse & Jockey Hotel

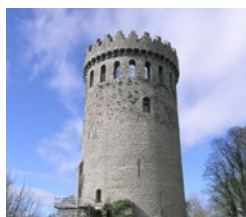
### LECTURE TITLE

#### *The origins of Tipperary's Normans*

**Synopsis:** It is well known that the Anglo-Norman conquest of what would soon become the county of Tipperary got underway in earnest in the aftermath of the expedition to Ireland in 1185 of the future King John. And it is also well known that much of the work of conquest was undertaken by William de Burgh, ancestor of the Burke family, and Theobald Walter, ancestor of the Butlers. But Tipperary was not merely conquered by these Normans, it was colonised by them – because a royal charter granting its lucky recipient a vast tract of land in Ireland's Golden Vale was nothing more than a piece of parchment unless it was followed up by boots on the ground, and the introduction of new settlers and new settlements. This lecture examines the conquest of Tipperary, where its would-be conquerors hailed from, and who the newcomers were who would make Tipperary their home.

### LECTURE TITLE

#### *12th and 13th Century Castles of Tipperary*



**Synopsis:** This lecture will concentrate on the twelfth and thirteenth-century castles built by the Anglo-Normans in Co. Tipperary with special emphasis on those

that are prominent national monuments – the castles of Nenagh, Roscrea and Cahir. Nenagh has a particularly fine circular keep, one of the finest of its type in Ireland or Britain. Roscrea and Cahir are also fine examples of medieval castles. Parallels in Ireland, Britain and France will be discussed. Earthwork castles such as the motte and bailey at Knockgraffon and hall-houses such as the fine example in Mullinahone will also be discussed.

### SPEAKER

#### Seán Duffy



Seán Duffy is Professor Emeritus of Medieval Irish and Insular History at Trinity College Dublin. He is a specialist on Irish history from the Viking invasion to the Bruce invasion, and has published extensively on both Anglo-Irish relations and the connections between Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the Middle Ages. His research interests also include the history and archaeology of Dublin and he is chairman of the Friends of Medieval Dublin.

### SPEAKER

#### Con Manning



Conleth Manning MA worked as an archaeologist in the National Monuments Service until his retirement in 2017. During his career he carried out excavations at many national monuments around the country including Roscrea Castle and the Rock of Cashel and Dublin Castle. He is a past president of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland and of the County Kildare Archaeological Society.



- 10am-4pm. Admission Free
- Bookings: [museum@tipperarycoco.ie](mailto:museum@tipperarycoco.ie)



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Tipperary County Council  
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Ceangal  
A Heritage Council programme  
Clár den Chomhairle Oidhreachta

#### LECTURE TITLE

### *The Anglo-Norman church in Tipperary: organisation, architecture, heritage*



**Synopsis:** This lecture explores the contribution of the Anglo-Normans to the Church in Tipperary from the late 12th century to the second half of the 13th

century. It considers the role of the newcomers in the creation of a parish system, in the patronage of Augustinian monasteries, in the introduction of mendicancy, and in episcopal politics. The built environment is emphasised (and explained) throughout, for the Tipperary landscape possesses the most evocative reminders of the impact of the 1169 invasion on the county.

#### LECTURE TITLE

### *Inventing Anglo Norman Surnames*

**Synopsis:** The names of the Anglo-Norman invaders and settlers reveal much about their complex identities. Although we call them Normans, many had lived in Britain for generations. Most hadn't yet developed fixed hereditary surnames, their names were derived from patronyms (fathers/ grandfathers), toponyms (places), occupations or even personal characteristics. In contrast, the Gaelic-Irish elite were the first in Europe to adopt hereditary surnames and maintained rich genealogical traditions linking families to ancestors and territories. This talk explores what the names of invaders and settlers reveals about their origins, identities and how they adapted to life in medieval Ireland.

#### SPEAKER



**Tadgh O'Keeffe**

Tadgh O'Keeffe teaches in UCD, where he has a personal chair - Full Professor of Medieval Archaeology and Architectural History. He has lectured and published extensively on all aspects of medieval landscape, settlement and architecture. His most recent book is *Medieval Irish Architecture and the Concept of Romanesque: Building Traditions in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Europe* (London 2024). He has lectured regularly in Tipperary on aspects of the county's medieval heritage.

#### SPEAKER



**Fiona Fitzsimons**

Fiona Fitzsimons is a founder and director of Eneclann, a Trinity College campus company (1998), of Findmypast Ireland (2013), and of the Irish Family History Centre at EPIC (2016). Since 1998, she has led the Eneclann, later Irish Family History Centre, research team, whose work has become an international benchmark for Irish family and social history.



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### **Lectures Time:**

10.30am

### **Lectures Booking:**

Admission is €10

Email to [museum@tipperarycoco.ie](mailto:museum@tipperarycoco.ie)

Tel: 052 6165252 or on the door

### **Lectures Venue:**

The Council Chamber

County Hall

Emmet Street

Clonmel, Co Tipperary

E91 N512



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