



Spiral (ribbon) armlet

Boston aglow

Irish Bronze Age gold gets rare showing in Boston

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Ancient gold artifacts from Ireland's Bronze Age, rarely seen by the general public, will go on display in Boston next month at a special event hosted by the Eire Society, one of the city's foremost Irish cultural

groups.

"Unveiling Celtic Treasures of Eire" features Irish objects at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts that are not currently on public display. They will be shown at the museum at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 13.

The Eire Society has organized the event to kick off the

group's fall calendar of cultural events, according to society president Peter Estes.

Board Member Michael Neagle will provide commentary at the event and speak about the society's longstanding relationship with the museum for the past seventy years.

In fact, three of the items - a

spiral ribbon torque and two penannular armlets - were donated to the museum by the Eire Society in the 1950s.

Two armlets are from the Irish late Bronze Age, 800-750 BC, according to museum officials. The items were found at Ballycotlin, near Cloyne, County Cork, in May 1864, according to museum records.

The torque is from the Irish middle bronze age, 1200-1000 BC, and was found at Innishown.

"These objects once adorned the necks of Celtic aristocracy in Ireland, dating as far back as 1200 BC," Estes said. "It is a rare

opportunity to view these treasures."

The Museum of Fine Arts, which opened on July 4, 1876, is one of the city's "most revered cultural institutions," notes Boston author Susan Wilson.

Among its one-million-plus objects are rare paintings from Van Gogh, Renoir, Gauguin, as well as extensive collections from Asia and Africa.

While the museum's Irish collection is relatively small, many of the artifacts - gold and silver pieces, Belfast linen, glassware, artwork and books - are valuable and unique in their own right.

Among the museum's rare and important musical instruments are an Irish harp made by Dublin's John Kelly in 1734 and a set of uilleann pipes made by Michael Egan about 1850.

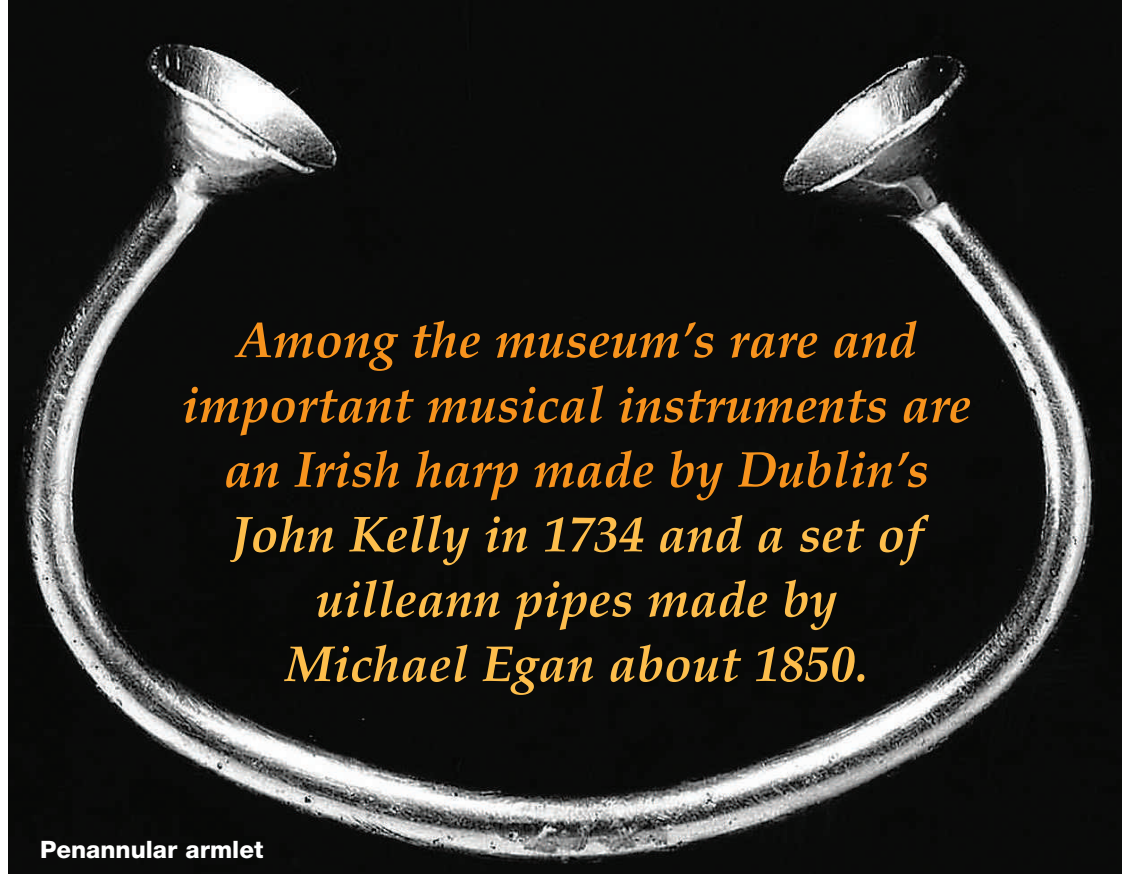
The museum has five paintings by Jack Yeats, brother of poet William Butler Yeats, that were donated by the late Henry Shattuck, a wealthy philanthropist and member of the Charitable Irish Society.

The museum has over 100 paintings by John Singleton Copley, America's first great portrait painter. Copley was born in Boston in 1737 to parents from County Clare and County Limerick.

The Eire Society of Boston is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year as one of the city's most active Irish organizations.

In May, the Society gave its annual gold medal award to Jean Kennedy Smith, an honor that was bestowed on her brother, President Kennedy, back in 1957.

"Unveiling Celtic Treasures of Eire" is open to Eire Society members and also to the general public. For more information, visit www.eiresociety.org. For more information on the Museum of Fine Arts, visit www.mfa.org.



Penannular armlet

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Armlet