

Docent Handbook

THE HUNT MUSEUM

Docent Handbook

The Hunt Museum

We would like to welcome you into the Docent Program at The Hunt Museum. This DOCENT HANDBOOK will assist you in helping visitors appreciate and enjoy The Hunt Museum. You are the ambassadors and the face of our museum. We hope your time and experience as a docent is both enriching and rewarding and we thank you for being a valuable part of our Team.

“In 1915, Benjamin Ives Gilman of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, first used the term ‘docent’ to identify the specially trained volunteers of their newly created education division. He stated that as a museum preserves {gardant} and exhibits {monstrant}, it must fulfil its duty of ‘sharpening the spiritual sight.’ It was this duty to which he gave the name docent.

“Docents for the ... museum have volunteered to share their interest in history with our museum visitors, following the tradition of discovery learning by helping children make connections between the artefacts of the past and the reality they perceive today. We ‘sharpen their spiritual sight’ by allowing them to experience the past through physical contact with those objects that represent the past.”

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Hunt Museum: Strategic Ambitions

Social impact goals

1. Lives are better and fuller for our disadvantaged, dementia, mental health communities who benefit from our life-long learning opportunities.
2. Society is more cohesive with active participation in cultural heritage, overcoming stereotyping by ourselves and others

Innovation goals

1. Joint services for cultural heritage and galleries have increased capacity.
2. A vibrant, edgy and creative museum for Limerick and the world.

Economic impact goals

1. Limerick Region is culturally more attractive for employment and tourism.
2. Pride in cultural heritage has delivered a cleaner and brighter living space.

Strategic Plan is available [here](#)

About the Hunt Museum

The Hunt Museum houses a diverse collection of antiquities and fine and decorative art. It reflects the tastes and interests of the two people who formed it, John and Gertrude Hunt.

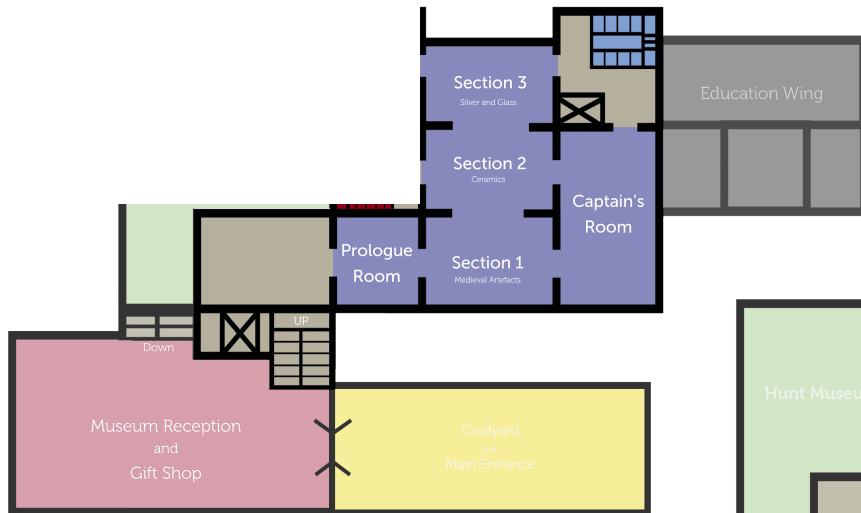
There are artefacts from Greece, Rome, Egypt and the Olmec civilisation. There is also an important collection of Irish Pre-historic archaeological material ranging from Mesolithic through to the Iron Age which includes a significant selection of Bronze Age items, most notably a Bronze Age shield and cauldron. Early Christian objects include a collection of monastic bells as well as the unique 9th century Antrim Cross. One of the strengths of the collection is the Irish and European medieval material, which includes statues in stone and wood, painted panels, jewellery, enamels, ivories, ceramics, crystal and crucifixes. 18th and 19th century decorative arts are also represented with fine examples of silver, glass and ceramics. Artists' works in the collection include Pablo Picasso, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Roderic O'Connor, Jack B. Yeats, Robert Fagan and Henry Moore.

Museum Highlights

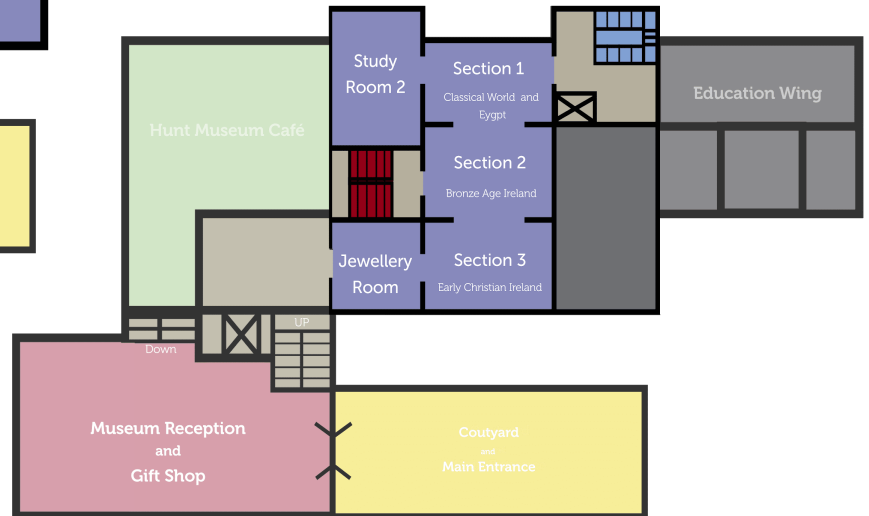
- ❖ **The Hunt Family Story** | antique dealers and advisors their amazing collection
- ❖ **The Hunt Family & Limerick** | the family's special connection with Limerick City
- ❖ **Passionate Local Community Guides** | brimming with knowledge and stories about the artefacts
- ❖ **Eminent Art Collection** | including works by Picasso, Renoir and Jack B. Yeats
- ❖ **Sacred Pieces** | one of the best collections of medieval religious works of art in Europe
- ❖ **Stunning Jewellery Collection** | The Mary Queen of Scots Cross and the personal Seal of Charles
- ❖ **Views** | overlooking the River Shannon, Limerick's historic quarter

Museum Floor Plan

First Floor



Top Floor



Ground Floor



The Museum Staff

e-mail is the primary form of communication between the Museum staff and Docent volunteers. All new docent volunteers are asked to provide an e-mail address and phone number. Museum staff e-mail addresses follow the formula Firstname@huntmuseum.com. All staff members can be contacted at their Museum e-mail addresses, which they access during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Please don't be afraid to come into the office for a chat or if you have any questions.

Director and CEO

Jill Cousins jill(at)huntmuseum.com

Curator of Education and Outreach

Maria Cagney maria(at)huntmuseum.com

Head of Operations

Giedre Chesson giedre(at)huntmuseum.com

Head of Collections

Karen Wilson karen(at)huntmuseum.com

Retail Manager and Volunteer Coordinator

Sinead Hutchison sinead(at)huntmuseum.com

Education and Outreach Assistant

Emma King emma(at)huntmuseum.com

Museums and Galleries Public Engagement Coordinator

Úna Hussey una(at)huntmuseum.com

Marketing Coordinator

Emma Twomey emma.twomey(at)huntmuseum.com

Collections Coordinator

Sian McInerney Sian(at)huntmuseum.com

Collections Assistant

Lucy Ward lucy(at)huntmuseum.com

Communities of Culture Coordinator

Simon Thompson simon(at)huntmuseum.com

Retail and Collections Assistants

Jackie Kenny jackie(at)huntmuseum.com

Declan Hassett declan(at)huntmuseum.com

Front of house Administrator

Valerie Fahy valerie(at)huntmuseum.com

Friends Coordinator

Catriona Osborne friends(at)huntmuseum.com

Docent Position Description

There are many different roles that Docents can fulfil within the Hunt Museum.

- Welcome visitors to the Hunt Museum
- Give guided tours of the Hunt Collection and Temporary Exhibitions
- Work with children and adults on school programmes and outreach programmes
- Assist with administrative and curatorial duties
- Research the Hunt Collection

Time commitment

In general, the Hunt Museum docents meet on the first Tuesday of the month between 11.00am to 11.30am. *(Due to Covid 19 these meetings are currently held online.)* All docents are encouraged to participate in as many docent meetings, workshops, talks, and lectures as possible. Independent study is also strongly encouraged. In addition to the Tuesday meetings, Docents are assigned to a specific Morning 10:00 – 14:00 or Afternoon 14:00 – 17:00 a week.

The Benefits of becoming a Docent

- Access to Docent Library
- There is a locked cabinet in the docent library for personal belongings.
- Notice Board to provide Docents with important information, along with printed copies of schedules, and tour scripts.
- Special exhibition and Collection catalogues are available for consultation.
- Docents are entitled to a 10% discount in the Gift Shop.
- Docents receive a reduced price on tea or coffee in the Hunt Café when on duty: €1 for tea and €2.50 for Coffee
- Meeting people who have similar interests.
- Gain experience of working in a museum.
- Develop knowledge of history, archaeology and art history.
- Participate in outings to museums and galleries around the country.
- Attend exhibitions, openings, launches and parties.
- Further your own research , with the prospect of future publication.
- Gives you the opportunity to develop new skills which can be confidence building.

How to apply to be a Docent

1. Attend an information morning.
2. Interview by Volunteer Coordinator.
3. Be Garda Vetted if you are to work with children or vulnerable adults over an extended piece of time without teacher or parental supervision.

What happens when you join the team?

When you join the Docent program you are partnered up with a mentor. Your Mentor will be your guide to becoming a valued member of the Hunt Museum Community. The mentor will go through your starter pack with you and is available when you have any questions.

Museum Data protection

The Hunt Museum is committed to providing a confidential service to its users. We are committed to adhering to our data protection policy and keeping personal information confidential, safe and secure, whether on computer or on paper. All personal data will be dealt with sensitively and in the strictest confidence internally and externally.

As a volunteer, the Hunt Museum will store information about you, on paper and on computer. No information given to the Museum will be shared with any other organisations or individuals without your expressed permission.

The Museum holds personal data about its volunteers for the purposes for which it was gathered and will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the organisation without prior permission.

How to build up to a Great tour

Every tour is different and it is up to the individual docent to amend their tour structure for their specific group needs.

- Welcome tour group visitors and introduce yourself.
- Outline some general museum etiquette:
 - Do not touch the artwork,
 - Stay with the group,
 - If showing children around ask them not to run
 - Be mindful of other people in the museum
- Get to know your audience.
 - Has the group visited The Hunt Museum before?
 - Are they primarily in one age or family group?
 - Do they all know each other?
 - Is there anything they particularly want to see?
 - Have they a time schedule?
- Give a quick overview of the tour route; using the stairs and using the lift. Some people on your tour might prefer to use the lift
- Let them know about some of the Hunt collections highlights they can look forward to, give them an estimate of the length of the tour, and invite them to ask questions at any time.

How to build up to a Great tour cont.

- Should someone ask you a question you don't know the answer to,
 1. Ask a Fellow Docent,
 2. Offer to research the answer and get back to the visitor,
 3. Visitors can be directed to The Hunt Museum website,
 4. The visitor may leave their contact information, including email address, with the Front of House Staff and the docent may follow up.
- Pace Yourself It's okay to take a few moments to look at a work in silence. This allows visitors to process the information you've just given them and to study the object or painting you have discussed.
- Be prepared. You should be familiar with your tour stops and your route.
- Speak at an even pace and loud enough to be heard by everyone in the group.
- Use questions to keep the group engaged. People love to show what they know!
- Give visitors a chance to ask questions. Repeat questions after they are asked to make sure that everyone hears them. You do not need to give a comprehensive answer to every question.
- If members of your group are lagging behind, wait for them to catch up.

How to build up to a Great tour cont.

- Totally avoid sensitive topics like politics, race, ethnicity, gender issues etc.
- Note the Number of Visitors You Speak with and record it in the Docent Sign-in Book at the end of your tour.
- Rehearse what you plan to say, and don't be afraid to keep it short. Focusing on a single message is preferable to overwhelming people with too much information. Some docents prepare for a tour by outlining bullet points, while others write out their tour. Use whatever method best helps you retain the information, but do practice.
- Docents should select a limited number of items in the museum to include on a tour. (Between 4-8 per floor is a general guideline for the 1 hour tour.)
- Remaining flexible: this will allow you to adapt a tour to meet your group's interests and needs. With this in mind, consider structuring your tour in sections, such that you can easily add, subtract, or reshuffle parts as needed. Don't feel as if you have to do everything or fit in every last detail that you planned.
- Thank visitors for coming and invite them to return. Remind them of the café, shop and toilets.

Presentation Tips

- Smile!
- Maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude. It's infectious!
- Make eye contact. Speak audibly and at an even pace. Vary the tone and volume of your voice. Use it to stress a point and display emotion.
- Have Fun! If you are excited about the material and are enjoying yourself during a tour, your audience is likely going to feel the same way.
- Keep this manual's guidelines in mind, but also feel free to make the tour your own (e.g., insert humor, bring a prop, etc.)

Tour Cancellations

Cancellations are an inevitable part of scheduling tour groups. Last minute changes do occur. When possible, the Museum Staff will let you know ahead of time. We thank all docents for their flexibility and understanding in these situations. The size of your group will vary for your regularly scheduled, walk-in public tours.

Docent Etiquette

- When On Duty, Be Professional and Personable A docent has the power to make a guest's visit memorable. Appearance, demeanor, enthusiasm, and warmth make the difference!
- Present in a professional manner and show excitement about the collection.
- Wear your name Badge or Lanyard.
- Have your cell phone switched to silent or wear a watch for time keeping.
- A neat, clean casual appearance is appropriate for public and education tours.
- Wear comfortable shoes. There is a considerable amount of walking involved in conducting a tour.
- Sign-In on arrival. The Docent diary is available in the Gift Shop. If you have delivered a tour please record the time and number of visitors.
- If you are coming in for a booked group tour plan on arriving at least 15 minutes before the beginning of the tour.
- If multiple docents are working together, coordinate ahead of time so that you can have a smooth and cohesive tour.

Absences

If you are unable to make your scheduled tour, please notify The Hunt Museum of your absence in advance to allow us time to find a replacement. Docents who are unable to participate in the program for an extended period of time should inform the Volunteer Coordinator of the dates they will not be available and mark it in the Docent Diary available at the Gift Shop.

Asked to leave and Resignation

Docents may be asked to leave from the program at any time with reasonable cause. Reasons may include but are not limited to rudeness, visitor serious complaints or inappropriate behavior or comments, persistent / unreasonable absences and lateness, failure to comply with policies and procedures described in the Docent Manual. Docents may end their participation in the program for any reason with written notice and may leave with no notice in the event of emergency or other unforeseen circumstances.

Assisting People with Disabilities

The museum is committed to welcoming visitors of all abilities, and making sure that everyone has access to the same experience is a collective responsibility. The same principles of basic respect and consideration apply equally to persons with disabilities as to the general public.

Guidelines

- Address the person directly, without using a third party, whenever possible.
- Be considerate and attentive. It may take more time for the guest to say or do things.
- Observe what types of aids they are using (cane, sight dog, wheelchair, etc.).
- Keep this in mind when giving directions to the exhibits, bathrooms and other public facilities.
- Don't be shy to ask the museum guest if they need help.
- The wheelchair is a part of a person's personal space, and as such, should not be handled without the person's permission.
- Speak directly to the visitor in a normal tone of voice, even if they have impaired hearing.

Protecting the Collection

- Sketching and Writing in the Galleries.
These activities are allowed with pencil only.
- Proper Viewing of Works
Visitors are asked to stand at least 1 foot from all artwork and cabinets at all times. Docents will lead by example and be aware of where visitors are standing.
- Advise visitors not to lean against walls or cabinets.
- Photography and Videos are allowed in the museum as long as they are taken without a flash or tripod.
- Food and Beverages are not permitted in the galleries, except during special functions.
- Smoking is prohibited in all areas of the Museum.
- Take care when with a tour group not to block main traffic areas (hallways, exits, etc.) Always leave space for other visitors to pass.

Social Media

The Museum has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and Tiktok. Docents are encouraged to follow, like, and share the Museum's posts on all of these platforms. Docents should encourage Museum visitors to engage with the Museum via social media as well. It is a quick and easy way to keep up-to-date on what is happening at the Museum.

In case of Emergency

There are phones on each floor that you can contact security or the front desk for help. The extension numbers are 110 - front desk and 109 - security.

First Aid and Who is responsible

Security hold the First Aid Box and have been trained in carrying out First Aid treatment. If it is a serious accident/illness security will call for an ambulance.

There is a defibrillator on site located at the entrance to the Cafe. Security have been trained in the use of the defibrillator.

Health and Safety policy

Safeguarding vulnerable adults:

By actively promoting the empowerment and wellbeing of vulnerable adults and . making sure standards for staff and volunteer conduct and incident reporting. If you're involved in delivering a service, and volunteer directly with people with dementia and carers, you must read and be familiar with the museum's policy on safeguarding vulnerable adults. A copy of this policy is available on request.

Incident Report Forms

If you need an Incident Report Form please ask security. The witness to the incident should fill the form out and give a copy to the director, to keep on file.

Fire Drill/ Fire Alarm Procedures

To Be Followed on Activation of Fire Alarm

1. On hearing the fire alarm, proceed calmly (do not run) to the nearest emergency exit door. These are clearly marked. If you meet any visitors to the museum on your way, assist them while safely exiting the building.
2. Proceed to one of the three clearly marked assembly points
 - a. Front Courtyard
 - b. Opposite Kitchen door, towards gates
 - c. Back garden by central fence gates
3. Once you have exited the building, do not under any circumstance re-enter the building. If you have forgotten personal belongings leave them behind.
4. Cooperate fully with Hunt Museum Staff as they attempt to evacuate the building. They are completely familiar with the building and are to be heeded at all times. Once the building has been cleared by relevant security or fire personnel, you may return inside.

Fire Drill/ Fire Alarm Procedures cont.

Fire Exits (Green exit signs throughout museum)



- Side exit of café (Please proceed to assembly point by side of cafe)
- End of education wing corridor. (Please proceed to assembly point by fence gates)
- End of blue stairs beside lift in education wing. (Please proceed to assembly point by fence gates)
- Main entrance to shop of museum. (Please proceed to assembly point in courtyard)

Fire Assembly Points



These assembly points are clearly indicated by distinct green and white signage.

- 1) Front courtyard.

Fire Drill/ Fire Alarm Procedures cont.

- 2) Opposite kitchen door, towards gate.
- 3) Back Garden by centre fence gates towards river.

Role of Fire Marshal

- Start the evacuation of your site.
- Check that your site is empty, and everyone has left.
- Ensure everyone who is struggling to leave the area is assisted and taken out.
- Head to the fire assembly area.
- Take a register of your colleagues.
- Gather information from colleagues and other fire marshals.
- Is everyone accounted for?

Tips for Docents from Docents

It doesn't matter if you've been a docent for 20 years or 2 months, there is always room for improvement. Here are some tips, compiled by docents for other docents, to keep in mind while you are volunteering. You may already know some of them, but they are all good reminders! And, if you have a tip that you don't see on this list, let us know!

This is what some of our current Docents say about Volunteering with US.

“Being a docent opens up a whole new world, you will find yourself doing things you never thought you could and enjoying it. I recommend it.”

Mary O’Connor

“I like being a docent because I feel I’m involved in the running of one of the main attractions of my native city and an institution that is surely Ireland’s most important small museum.

Being a docent means being part of a very different world from my everyday one – a world of art and artists and history and the stories associated with many of the exhibits in the Hunt collection.

Being a docent also means meeting a wide range of visitors who, after a tour, will – I hope – remember Limerick and the Hunt Museum as well as they will the Cliffs of Moher and the Guinness Storehouse”

Mike Roycroft

This is what some of our current Docents say about Volunteering with us. Cont.

“...It is part of my life journey where my ship is in a sea of friendship, knowledge, & education. Where the staff provide the rudders, and colleagues the sails, in the best ambiance of all the museums I have visited to date...”

Lorraine McCarthy

“ I have a passion for art, design and craftsmanship and the influence and importance they have in our surroundings. This, for me, is reinforced in the objects in The Hunt Collection. The docent programme is an enriching and valuable learning experience that can be enjoyed and shared by all in the community. “

Margaret Walsh

General Information

Contact Details:

- Tel: +353 (0)61 312833
- Email: info(at)huntmuseum.com
- Website: www.huntmuseum.com

Opening Dates and Times:

- Open Tuesday – Saturday: 10am-5pm
- Open Sundays: 11am-5pm

Closure Dates:

- Closed Christmas 2pm December 24th – January 2nd

The Hunt Museum Café serves lunch except on Sunday, tea/coffee, sandwiches and desserts

- Opening Times: Tues- Sat- 10.00 to 1700/ Sun- 11.00 to 17.00

The Hunt Museum Gift Shop offer a selection of gifts and souvenirs

GPS coordinates: Latitude: 52° 59' 23.39" N Longitude: -8° 37' 16.19" W

Eircode: V94 EV8A