

# Your Invitation

Sadly, there are no funds available for any of these essential next steps. This means The National Famine Museum must now reach out to our community across the world and ask for philanthropic support. To this end, we invite you to become a Philanthropic Leader and join us in securing, protecting, preserving and sharing this heritage in perpetuity, for all.

To achieve these essential steps the National Famine Museum needs to secure at least €6 million in philanthropic support.

At the Irish Heritage Trust no donation gets lost in the shuffle. Every single donation helps us in our mission to safeguard and to preserve Irish Heritage – not just for today, but for generations to come.

*‘This kind of philanthropic support is a salute to the past, an investment in the work that needs to be done today and an eye to the future, where our shared heritage also belongs.’*

Anne O’Donoghue – CEO of the Irish Heritage Trust

Since 2015 the Irish Heritage Trust, a not-for-profit organisation, cares for and manages the National Famine Museum | Strokestown Park and has overseen this significant redevelopment project. The re-imagined National Famine Museum tells the complete story of the Great Irish Famine in a compelling manner and explores the parallel lives of Strokestown Park’s aristocratic landlords and their tenants during this period. Visitors engage in a truly immersive experience as the Museum takes local and national stories from this tragic period in Ireland’s past and brings them dramatically to life.

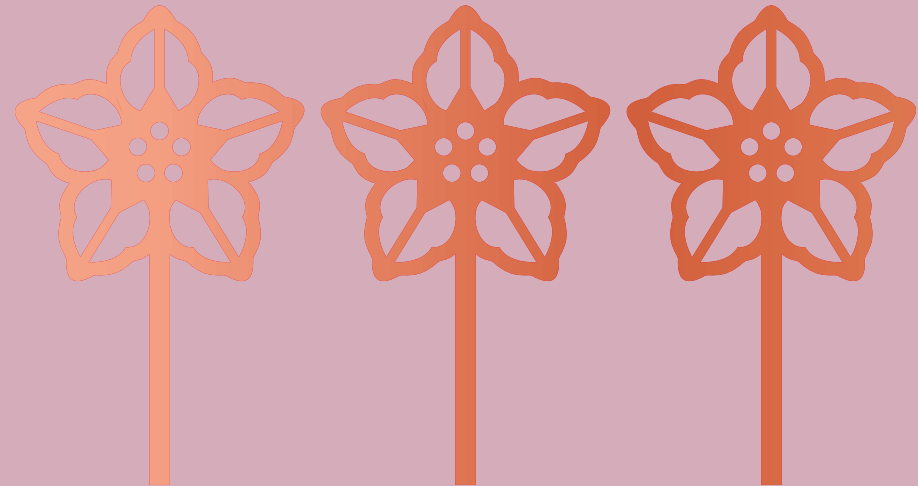
If you are interested in becoming a philanthropic supporter of The National Famine Museum | Strokestown Park, please contact our Head of Philanthropy and Supporter Engagement, Paul McCarthy, for a confidential discussion: [p.mccarthy@irishheritagetrust.ie](mailto:p.mccarthy@irishheritagetrust.ie).

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*Bringing Places to Life*

THE NATIONAL  
FAMINE MUSEUM  
STROKESTOWN PARK

# Campaign for The National Famine Museum | Strokestown Park

THE NATIONAL  
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# About The National Famine Museum

The Great Irish Famine of the 1840s is considered to be the single greatest social disaster that occurred in 19th-century Europe. Famine had troubled countries across Europe in the 1830s and early 1840s, but – from 1845 – it devastated the island of Ireland. Over 2 million people – almost a quarter of the entire population – either died or emigrated in what became known as ‘An Gorta Mór’: the Great Hunger. At the National Famine Museum this tragic chapter of Irish history is explored through the prism of dramatically different parallel lives. The Museum, juxtaposed in the shadow of the ‘Big House’, telling the story of those forgotten voices during the Great Irish Famine. The Strokestown Park Famine Archive is one of the largest and most important collections of documents about the Great Irish Famine in the world and is an extraordinary repository of information about the people, across all walks of life, whose lives – lived in parallel – were irrevocably changed by the famine. It contains thousands of documents, found within Strokestown Park House, that relate to the era of the Great Irish Famine. This extraordinary collection includes unique rental and lease documents, letters and other correspondence, as well as labour and financial records and detailed accounts casting light on the forced emigration scheme from Strokestown. Together, they shed light on the power structures, and the social and political relationships, that shaped 19th-century Irish society and its response to the famine crisis.

Of national and international importance, the Strokestown Park Archive is a complete record of economic, social and estate history and gives a real insight into life on one of Ireland’s great estates. Artefacts and documents from Strokestown’s extensive archive are showcased throughout the National Famine Museum.

## Strokestown’s 1,490

The Strokestown Archive reveals the stories of the 1,490 men, women and children whowere forced to emigrate from Strokestownin 1847. Their journey is commemorated in the National Famine Way and the Great Famine Voices project.

The Potato Flower icon used as the National Famine Museum landmark is a powerful symbol which unites the harrowing history of Strokestown Park with hope for the future.



# Sharing & Preserving Our Heritage

## The National Famine Museum | Strokestown Park

The National Famine Museum has recently been transformed with a €5 million investment via Fáilte Ireland and Westward Holdings Ltd in partnership with the Irish Heritage Trust.

This investment enables visitors to experience a new state-of-the-art National Famine Museum, telling the complete story of the Great Irish Famine for the first time. Visitors can learn about the political, social, economic, and environmental factors that played a part in the Great Irish Famine and contributed to its devastating human cost. This new heritage experience not only includes the National Famine Museum, but also the historic walled gardens and woodland walk at Strokestown Park and the Palladian House with its original furnishings and features. A self-guided audio tour is now on offer, available in six languages, with a mixture of imaginative scene setting and innovative audio-visuals and touch screens. Visitors are able to explore the tenants’ experience of hunger, eviction and exile through voluntary and forced migration while engaging with the landlord’s perspective: his power, his dilemma and controversial assassination and so gain insight into a cataclysmic disaster that changed Ireland forever.

# Why We Need Your Support

Building on this recent foundational investment **a comprehensive survey, by an expert building conservation firm, has identified essential structural work which is now needed** on the ‘Big House’ so all areas of the house can be opened to the public. Opening up new areas of the house will ensure the stories of all the lives of those who worked in the house can be shared equally with that of the aristocratic landlords. Structural works which will not just protect the House going forward but will also allow us to show and tell the story of the Servants at Strokestown Park and how they lived during the Famine. In addition, rooms on the floor and half above the current public rooms, which were the living quarters for servants, need to be restored to increase access for the public. Also, funds are needed to **fully restore the Woodland Walk & Walled Gardens, groundworks, landscaping, car parking and bus parking routes** making The National Famine Museum | Strokestown Park House more accessible, safer and more sustainable.



Quote above reads:

“Our families are really and truly suffering in our presence and we cannot much longer withstand their cries for food. We have no food for them, our potatoes are rotten and we have no grain”.

Cloonahée Petition, Strokestown Estate, 22 August 1846

The National Famine Museum really needs a **full-time Education Officer** to share and engage our global community with their heritage. This person will develop a suite of educational activities, locally, nationally and internationally – both in person and virtually. This post will be endowed in perpetuity to ensure this heritage always retains its voice and presence on the world stage. In particular, the postholder will ensure the newly catalogued famine archive will be open and shared as widely as possible.

To unlock as much of our shared heritage as possible a **New Estate Walk is long overdue** – via the 17th-century Church, which would add another valued cultural feature at Strokestown for visitors to experience. The new walk will take in the 17th-century Mausoleum, the Icehouse, the Urney 12th-century Church, the c. 2000-year-old trivallate Ringfort and a number of other features. We also wish to undertake a long-held aspiration to investigate the possibilities of **an archaeological exploration** of the site to access hitherto unknown heritage, all of which will be shared with the public.

To honour the 1490, forced to emigrate from Strokestown in 1847, we wish to commission **A Musical Composition for the 1490** – we also wish to create the **Great Irish Famine Garden of Remembrance** for all victims of the Irish Famine. This will be an area of quiet contemplation and reflection for visitors to pause and connect with their heritage. **A New 1490 Memorial** is also needed to replace the temporary existing glass wall. This will be a thoughtful, creative, appropriate and artistic interpretation of the wall. It will be of exceptional craftsmanship and quality to last in perpetuity.