



## Royal Irish Academy Grants Report

Title:	Dr
First Name:	Colleen
Surname:	Thomas
Discipline:	Humanities and Social Sciences
Year of Award:	2018
Project Title	The Social Network of Irish/Scottish Crosses

### 1. Research background:

The goal of the research proposed for support by a Charlemont Grant was to identify the producers of Celtic Cross monuments in Scotland during the Victorian period. It has been a component of my larger project, Social Networks of Irish/Scottish Crosses (SONIC), which investigates the visual culture of Celtic crosses as a populist and nationalist symbol in the nineteenth century. The premise of the project is that this motif was not a standard but was instead a complex and fluid emblem, the meaning of which developed as the form proliferated in visual culture through Victorian social networks. The project focuses on two regions where Celtic crosses were produced, Ireland and Scotland, and which represent distinctly different contexts for nationalism. The comparison provides the necessary scope to test the populist/nationalist significance of Celtic crosses.

As a result of previous field work and archival research, the SONIC project has already identified nineteenth century Irish producers of Celtic crosses, particularly Earley & Powells. In order to compare the contexts of Celtic cross production in Victorian Britain, comparable evidence must be identified for Scottish producers. The institutions visited house archival records relevant to the nineteenth century cemeteries and building and design industries.

### 2. Please outline the findings of your research and/or milestones achieved (did you achieve the primary objectives - if not, what did you learn from the process)?

A significant goal for this research trip had been to identify a Scottish monument maker whose archival records could serve as a parallel for those of the Irish producers, Earley & Powells. The positive news is that I did find a viable firm – J & G Mossman of Edinburgh. A small portion of the Mossman business records is held in the Glasgow City Archives. While these provided an important history of the firm and early photograph of their stoneyard, the records did not extend past the 1830s and as this project focuses on the 1860s, this set of records is insufficient. Happily, the National Archives Scotland had identified through a survey a more extensive collection of Mossman records held privately.

Unfortunately, the location of the collection is in some doubt, but I am continuing to pursue access. I did discover that nineteenth century cemetery regulations mandated proposed monuments be approved by the cemetery board and required plans to be submitted. This suggests the possibility of collections of drawings for these monuments which could provide insight into design and production. I was also able to add visits to cemeteries where I identified more monument makers by the signatures on the monuments they produced.

The Centre for Environment, Heritage and Policy, University of Stirling invited me to give a talk during my visit in September. Through this and other meetings with researchers from the Universities of Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and the Edinburgh College of Art I expanded my network in Scotland.



## Colleen Thomas - Charlemont Award Final Report Social Media Summary

My communications plan for my research trip was to tweet about visits to archives and cemeteries using the twitter handle for each institution and the Charlemont hashtag. Colleagues tweeted about my work or retweeted my posts. Through my social media activity, I gained multiple followers and a larger audience for my research.

### Twitter:

