

MEDIA RELEASE



Tuesday 18 November 2008: *A Bird's Eye View of Ireland* is the title of the National Photographic Archive's latest exhibition of aerial photographs which provide a unique perspective on the landscape and development of twentieth century Ireland as well as a record of several significant environmental, archaeological, social and industrial events in the nation's history.

The exhibition will be opened today (Tuesday 18 November) at 6pm by Olivia Mitchell TD, Fine Gael Spokesperson on Arts, Sport and Tourism, at the National Photographic Archive, Temple Bar in Dublin.

Among the images featured are photographs of the Hill of Tara in County Meath; the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare; Croagh Patrick in County Mayo; the Guinness Brewery in Dublin; Powerscourt House in Enniskerry, County Wicklow after it had been gutted by fire; the Fiat Ireland plant in Dublin; Áras an Uachtaráin, the President of Ireland's residence in the Phoenix Park, and Mondello Park, the Irish motor racing venue in County Kildare. Also included are German aerial reconnaissance photographs of Dublin and its environs taken in December 1940. Among the areas identified are strategically important military barracks, power plants and airports.

The work featured in the current exhibition is drawn from three NPA collections – the Morgan collection, the Rex Roberts collection and the Independent Newspapers (Ireland) Limited collection. The first of these collections comprises almost 3,000 photographs taken by former Royal Artillery reconnaissance pilot Alexander 'Monkey' Morgan who became a commercial photographer after the Second World War. His work encompassed a wide range of subject matter covering almost all counties in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Some of the photographs in the collection were first published in an *Irish Independent* weekly series entitled 'Views from the air'. The year after they were published, Morgan (then aged just 38) died tragically when his twin-engine Piper Apache aircraft crashed near Shannon Airport.

The second collection featured in the exhibition comprises photographs taken by Rex Roberts, who ran a commercial studio in Dublin between 1961 and 2005. In addition to his everyday work which involved covering weddings, doing portrait photography and carrying out promotional assignments, he was also commissioned to carry out aerial photography assignments for companies and organisations such as Aer Lingus, Roadstone, Bord na Móna and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA). Included in the NPA's collection of 50,000 images by Roberts are 9,000 aerial shots with a particular focus on areas of Dublin and the surrounding counties.

The third strand of the exhibition features images drawn from the Independent Newspapers (Ireland) Limited collection which was donated to the Library in November 2004. The 300,000 images in this collection are of immense historical value and provide an excellent record of almost every aspect of twentieth century Irish life. Since the material first became available on the Library's website in February 2005, it has consistently attracted a great deal of interest from researchers and members of the public.

The exhibition continues at the National Photographic Archive until February 2009. Admission is free.

For further information, contact Jenny Doyle on (01) 6030 370