

**ARTISAN  
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*North Mayo Heritage  
Centre*

*From*  
**Dúidíns to Vapes**  
How smoking has  
evolved down  
through the years

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Cover image: Elderly couple, with the woman smoking, on the way to market, Galway 1905  
(National Geographic)





# From Dúidíns to Vapes

On 29 March 2004, Ireland became the first country in Europe to implement legislation effectively banning smoking in indoor public places. Overnight, ashtrays vanished from over 10,000 pubs, as well as clubs and restaurants, workplaces etc. Was this the beginning of the end for smoking? Not really. Smoking has been around for probably 5,000 years and has evolved down through the years from the fiddly clay pipes to the trendy vapes!

## But how did smoking come about in the first place?

Like tea, coffee and opium, tobacco was just one of many intoxicants originally used as a form of medicine with an endless list of beneficial properties. Smoking tobacco first took place via small bowls that were carved from stone. These bowls were eventually replaced by clay pipes.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century clay pipes, or “Dúidíns” as they were known in Ireland, played an important role in everyday life, especially during wakes and funerals. The pipes were laid out for the mourners and after the pipes were smoked they were broken. Often they were placed on the graves of deceased. Clay pipes were smoked by both men and women. Women smoked without shame as they had very few other avenues of pleasure.

## Where were clay pipes made?

As they became popular, clay pipes were produced in vast amounts in Knockcroghery, Co. Roscommon, which was one of the main centres of production for the Irish clay pipe industry.



Pipes were produced there for over 300 years and numerous families were involved in the industry in the village. Production ceased when the village was burned by the Black & Tans in 1921.

The Knockcroghery pipes were inscribed with the names of their producers – O’Brien, Curley, Cunnane and Murray or inscriptions such as ‘Home rule’, ‘Who dares speak of ’98?’, ‘Repeal’ and ‘Parnell (Banbury)’.

Indeed, owing to their easy and cheap production, clay pipes remained popular until the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. After this, the resilient and heat-resistant briar or bog-oak wood became the pipe material of choice.

## Cigars and cigarettes

Pipe smoking was fiddly and if the pipe fell it would easily break, so rolling cured tobacco into a wrapper that could be lit at one end and smoked at the other, gradually replaced the pipe. Effectively then, the cigar was born using a high-quality leaf as a wrapper. However, cigars burned quickly, had to be made individually and were therefore expensive. Which is obviously still true today. As time went on, the idea behind the cigar was downsized into the cigarette whereby a paper was used to wrap the tobacco. Such was the popularity of cigarettes that they were mass produced and Ireland’s first cigarette producing factory, operated by P. J. Carroll & Company Limited, (Carroll’s), was established in 1824.

Carrolls is the oldest tobacco manufacturer in the country and produced such brands of cigarettes as Carrolls, Rothmans, Sweet Afton and Major.

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The use of cigarettes spread in Ireland, particularly after the First World War, however it was not until around 1952 that the health implications were realised - the hazardous chemicals contained in its tar was so harmful to the body that it could cause issues like heart disease and cancer.

## Vapes and e-cigarettes

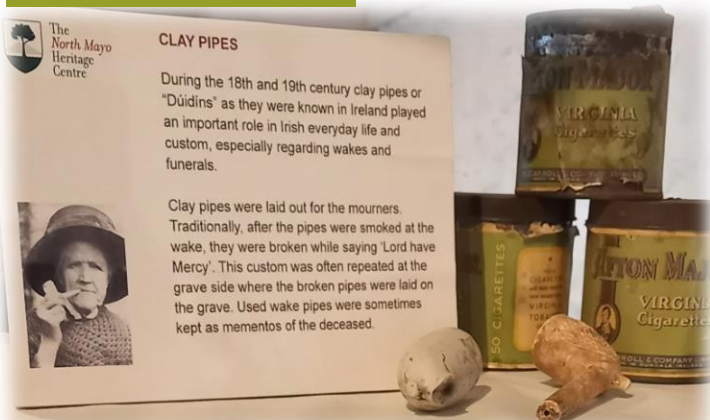
In 2003, a Chinese pharmacist, after losing his father to lung cancer, tried to create a device that would deliver the necessary hit of nicotine, but without the toxic chemicals of tobacco. The e-cigarette, and with it, vaping was born. Around that time nicotine patches were also invented whereby they allowed a decreasing amount of nicotine into your system, mainly to help those who were giving up smoking.

The e-cig has now been around for decades and initial research suggested that vaping was 95 percent less harmful to the body than smoking tobacco via cigarettes. However, recent studies have refuted this and the long term effects of vaping are unknown.

## Sources:

[PilgrimageMedievalIreland.com](http://PilgrimageMedievalIreland.com)  
[MuseumsofMayo.com](http://MuseumsofMayo.com)  
[IrishCancersociety.ie](http://IrishCancersociety.ie)

Artefacts from our exhibition  
area (below) including clay  
pipes and old tobacco tins



**DID YOU  
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In 1963, Herbert A. Gilbert, well aware of the health implications of smoking tobacco, filed a patent for an electronic smoking device. However, as cigarettes were very much a part of everyday life in the 60's and were widely accepted everywhere. Herbert's idea was before it's time and there wasn't a market for his device.