# Early 20th Century Irish Donegal Ats & Crafts Carpet Designed by Gavin Morton

**Description**



Donegal Carpet
Ireland
10’4” x 13”6” - 315 x 411
Early 20th century; c. 1910
Wool pile of symmetric knots on a wool foundation
Designed by Gavin Morton
The Donegal factory in Killybegs was established by Gavin and Alexander Morton of the Scottish carpet firm of Morton’s about 1893. Gavin Morton designed many of the early pieces and employed Celtic and Anatolian designs initially. Oushak carpets were popular at the time for British and foreign middle-class houses and it was therefore easy to capitalize on the trend while “improving” the resulting pieces. Liberty of London was already selling these Turkicised carpets by the 1890’s.
This carpet employs the dark blue field as a dramatic foil for the bold, one-way, ascending palmette pattern. Full ragged palmettes are aligned on a slender vertical central staff, while the half width offset similar run up the sides.
The palmettes are supported by lower-level triples of ecru six petal rosettes and straight stems. There is a third layer of stems and small florets. The main border is done in a straw-old ivory tone, with branching palmettes along the sides, elaborate doubled palmettes fanned out in the corners, smaller elliptical ragged palmettes between, and hyacinth sprays filling in. These sprays are directly adapted from Oushak weavings.
It looks like an Oushak, but resembles no known Turkish carpet. The weave on Donegals is always coarse with large motives and areas of plain color. The carpets were executed on vertical looms by local Irish women. After the William Morris/Voysey carpets, these are the best known of Arts and Crafts carpets.
The carpets followed cartoons allowing for varied colorways and sizes. A carpet of this size took about three months of knotting time. The Donegal

factory continued in operation until the 1950's. Ireland has always been known for its vast flocks of sheep and this piece is in excellent condition with a thick and long pile of local wool. There are no fine weave Donegals, with weaving usually running about 30-40 knots per square inch, with some coarser.
Following Donegal, other carpet works were established in Ireland, but none have achieved the consistent fame of Donegals. Their coarse weave and symmetric knots makes them easy to repair. This carpet is in good condition and shows no repairs.

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| Stock ID: | #24126 |
| General Rug Type: | European |
| Specific Rug Type: | Donegal - Arts & Crafts |
| Circa: | 1900 |
| Color: | Navy |
| Origin: | Ireland |
| Material: | Wool |
| Weave: | Pile - Knotted |
| Shape: | Rectangle |
| Width: | 10' 4" ( 314.96 cm ) |
| Length: | 13' 6" ( 411.48 cm ) |