

## **Newry and Mourne Museum Newsletter**

### **Autumn/Winter 2003**

#### **A Border Town's Experience of the Twentieth Century**

Newry and Mourne Museum has secured £50,000 under the Peace II Programme through Newry and Mourne Local Strategy Partnership to produce an exhibition exploring the impact of twentieth century political events on the local area.

The exhibition aims to challenge popular preconceptions of our troubled past through exploring different perspectives and interpretations in an accessible, informal format. The exhibition will therefore be a medium for cross-community dialogue and interaction through workshops, seminars, re-enactments, reminiscence and recreational events.

**We need your support and assistance. If you are willing to donate relevant objects, pass on useful information or share with us your experiences please contact Noreen on (028) 3026 6232.**

#### **Oral History Project**

We often overlook one of the most obvious and relevant forms sources of information about the past i.e., those around us. To capture the wealth experiences of people in the Newry & Mourne and Co. Louth areas the Cross Border Education Project has devised an Oral History project, which will paint a unique insight into the region.

Local schools will be invited to question local people from a variety of different backgrounds on several themes, including school days, social life, folklore and traditions, fashion and marriage, and record the information generated. The results of the project will be published as part of both museums' education and research resources. The project will be launched in September at a public music and storytelling event in both Newry & Dundalk.

#### **Carlingford Maritime Festival**

The Cross-Border Education Programme includes a Maritime Festival to celebrate local traditions and stimulate debate regarding future development in the area.

A weekend conference from 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> March 2004 at Newry and Dundalk Museums will explore the strategic history of the area; fishing, trade and emigration; folklore and traditions and the environment through talks by leading academics from various fields of expertise. The conference will culminate in Carlingford in an afternoon of lively events for all ages and interests, including historical re-enactments, traditional boats and demonstrations on net and rope making, boat building and basket making. Prior to the conference Newry and Dundalk Museums will also host a week of events for local schools. **For more information please contact Declan Carroll on (028) 3026 6232/ (0035342) 932 7056.**

### **Rare Documents in The Reside Collection**

During his lifetime, Major G.W. Reside acquired a number of rare and important documents relating to Newry's architectural heritage. One of these is the original Articles of Agreement, dated 26<sup>th</sup> July 1750, between Robert Nedham and the Chief Commissioners and Governors of His Majesty's Revenue in Ireland for the building of a new Custom House in Newry. The customhouse closed in 1806, but the collection also includes the original lease by which Francis, Viscount Kilmorey, demised the old building and its stores to the Grand Jury of the County of Down for use as a Bridewell (or Gaol) in 1820. The lease includes an elevation of the building as it looked at that time, before undergoing considerable rebuilding in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and eventually being demolished in the early 1960s.

### **Lace and Embroidery Research Project**

The museum has been helping the Convent of Mercy in Newry to document and record the small collection of pieces surviving from the sewing school run by the Sisters. The school opened in 1855, shortly after the Sisters of Mercy first arrived in Newry from Kinsale, and provided a source of income for hundreds of poor girls in the town until the 1940s. There is an exquisite early sample book of fine embroidery miniatures, as well as several examples of limerick lace, Irish crochet and drawn thread work. Also of note are the ecclesiastical pieces worked by Sister Camillus, for many years the head and designer of the school, who died in the 1960s. Sr. Camillus developed her own unique style, which she named 'Clanrye Lace', that combined a variety of lace and embroidery techniques, which will be studied further by Una McCullough of the Lace Guild.

The museum has also commissioned Miss Mary Mahon from Crossmaglen to make three pieces of Carrickmacross lace for the collection. Miss McMahan is one of the last lace makers in an area known from the late nineteenth century for its network of skilled outworkers. Miss McMahan's pieces from traditional designs owned originally by her mother will be an invaluable addition to the collection along with digital recordings of her at work.

**CAN YOU HELP? If you have any objects or information relating to the Convent of Mercy Lace School or lace making in Crossmaglen, please contact Noreen on (028) 3026 6232.**

### **Bagenal's Castle - Excavations**

Excavations by Archaeological Development Services Ltd in April have uncovered more exciting information about the castle.

Archaeologists uncovered the foundations of the dividing wall shown on the 1568 ground floor plan. The wall is further evidence for the accuracy of the plans, which we now know illustrate a vaulted ceiling spanning the north room on the ground floor. The excavations uncovered more of the steps previously found, which rather than leading to a medieval vaulted basement, revealed an eighteenth century basement

under the south room. The basement appears to have been filled in during renovations at McCann's Bakery. It may have been used to store mercantile goods, since we know from research carried out by Ken, our Archive Officer, that 'the castle of Newry with the garden and Meadow behind' was leased from Robert Nedham of Newry, Esquire on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1746 by Robert Hutcheson, Merchant. Stone cobbling also discovered has been identified as the original floor of the castle. All these features will be left uncovered and glassed over for public viewing.

### **Documentary Evidence for Crelly's Castle**

Research on Bagenal's Castle has also uncovered interesting material relating to Newry's second tower house, known as 'Crelly's Castle'. It was built sometime after 1588 when Patrick Crelly was granted substantial land in Newry by Sir Nicholas Bagenal. An inquisition into the lands of Thomas Crelly (probably Patrick's son) taken after his death in 1607 records that he held a stone castle and other property in "the Millstreet". It later became known as 'Lord Hillsborough's Castle' after it the estate was sold to Michael Hill. Demolished in the 1960s, Crelly's Castle was at the east end of Mill Street, near the junction with Market Street. The photograph below, possibly from the 1950s or early 1960s, shows evidence of 17<sup>th</sup>-century brickwork and a fireplace with its original 16<sup>th</sup>-century moulding.

### **Friends of Newry and Mourne Museum at Bagenal's Castle**

We plan to set up a Friends Group, which will help develop a closer relationship between the new museum service and the local community. For a small yearly subscription, friends will have access to specially organised exhibition previews, talks, tours and events and will receive a copy of our bi-annual newsletter. **If you are interested in becoming a friend of the museum or want to find out more please contact Noreen on (028) 3026 6232 or [museum@newryandmourne.gov.uk](mailto:museum@newryandmourne.gov.uk).**

## Up and Coming Events

- 22<sup>nd</sup> September**      **Oral History Project Launch**  
1-3pm, the Auditorium. Sean Hollywood Arts Centre. For more information contact Declan on (028) 3026 6232/ (0035342) 932 7056.
- 20<sup>th</sup> + 21<sup>st</sup> September**      **European Open Heritage Day**  
Special tours by the museum of Bagenal's Castle and Newry Town Hall. Tours will start at both venues at 2pm and 3.30pm with 15 places on each. To book contact Noreen on (028) 3026 6232.
- 1<sup>st</sup> October**      **Re-enactment of Robert Emmet's Trial**  
An interactive re-enactment by the Palace Stables of Emmet's famous trial for local schools. To book contact Declan on (028) 3026 6232/ (0035342) 932 7056.
- Halloween**      **Spooky Story Competition**  
A popular competition for local schools organised with Newry Library. Entries to be submitted to the museum by 5.00 pm Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October. Prizes will be presented at 11.30 am aturday 25<sup>th</sup> October.
- 25<sup>th</sup> October**      **Halloween Storytelling and Mask-making**  
Drop in between 11am and 3pm to join the spooky fun. For children aged 5 and over.
- 10<sup>th</sup> December**      **The Navan Dragon by the Armagh Rhymers**  
An uproariously funny drama workshop for primary schools about King Conor MacNessa's magical dragon. To book contact Declan on (028) 3026 6232/ (0035342) 932 7056. (Funded by Co-operation Ireland)
- 13<sup>th</sup> December**      **Christmas Card and Toy-making workshop**  
Drop-in craft workshop from 11am-3pm for children aged 5 and over.
- Jan-Feb 2004**      **Genealogy Course**  
Following last year's success, the Cross-border Education Project will run another six-week genealogy course at Newry & Mourne Museum. There are limited places and much demand so book now through Declan on (028) 3026 6232/ (0035342) 932 7056. (Funded by Co-operation Ireland)
- 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> March 2004**      **Carlingford Maritime Festival**  
For more information please contact Declan Carroll on (028) 3026 6232/ (0035342) 932 7056.

### **Bagenal's Castle Travelling Exhibition**

The travelling exhibition continues its tour around Newry and Mourne. Recently it was on display in the Burren Heritage Centre and forthcoming venues include the Cardinal O'Fiach Centre and Kilkeel Library.

**Museum Assistant moves on to pastures new**

Gemma our much valued museum assistant is leaving us in September to take up a new post as Arts and Heritage Officer in Larne District Council. Gemma has been with us since December 2001 and her skills and talents have been a great asset to the development of the museum service. She has been very popular with staff and public alike and has shown a great enthusiasm for whatever she has been tasked to carry out. We shall miss her, but send her our very best wishes in her new post.