

Newry and Mourne Museum Newsletter
Spring/Summer 2003

CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION PROGRAMME GETS UNDERWAY

Last month Declan Carroll was appointed to run 20 major events over the next two years for the Cross-Border Cultural Exchange Project between Newry and Mourne Museum and the County Museum Dundalk, funded by Co-operation Ireland. He has already helped us run a very successful six-week genealogy course and a cultural diversity workshop with schools by Upturn Theatre called *Gael and Gaul*. He is currently planning a series of events for *Seachtain Gaeilge* at Dundalk Museum from 10th-17th March, as well as a Carlingford Lough Maritime Festival in September and a cross-community oral history project.

Robert Emmet Commemorations

In conjunction with Newry and Mourne District Council, Declan will be organising a number of events for the bi-centenary of Robert Emmet's execution in 1803. Born to a wealthy Protestant doctor in Dublin, Robert Emmet joined the United Irishmen in 1796, influenced by the republican ideals of America and France. After the failure of the 1798 rebellion he began to plan another with Thomas Russell and other leading republicans. The rising was badly planned and soon squashed and Emmet's legacy was only secured by his now famous speech from the dock challenging others to ensure Ireland took its place among the nations of the world.

27th March **Emmet the Man: by his biographers**
Patrick Geoghegan and Ruan O'Donnell explore Emmet's life and legacy

8pm at the Arts Centre and Museum, Bank Parade, Newry
Funded by NMDC Community Relations Department

8th April **Robert Emmet in Song and Story**
A musical event for all age groups remembering Emmet through popular commemorative songs, music, poetry and stories

8pm at the Arts Centre and Museum, Bank Parade, Newry
Funded by Co-Operation Ireland

12th May **Can Robert Emmet's Epitaph be Written?**
A panel discussion led by leading local historians, politicians and cultural critics on Robert Emmet's challenge to Ireland as a nation

8pm at the Arts Centre and Museum, Bank Parade, Newry
Funded by Co-Operation Ireland

20th May **Women in Irish Politics: the Legacy of Anne Devlin**
Anne Devlin is remembered as Emmet's faithful servant who refused to betray the nationalist cause to which her master was devoted. This lively discussion will explore the complicated and often misrepresented role of women in the history of Irish politics.

8pm at the Arts Centre and Museum, Bank Parade, Newry
Funded by Co-operation Ireland

3rd August/ **Emmet's Trial: A Re-enactment by Palace Stables, Armagh**
15th October A dramatic re-enactment for local schools of Emmet's trial and famous speech

Run in August at the Camlough Festival, funded by Co-operation Ireland and in October at the Arts Centre and Museum, Newry, funded by Newry and Mourne Museum

ACQUISITION OF THE MAJOR G.W. RESIDE COLLECTION

The Museum has recently received a donation of outstanding archival material of huge importance to the study of local history and genealogy in the Newry and Mourne area. Totalling c.10,000 documents, the Collection is the product of the professional lives of Major G.W. Reside, a local architect and engineer, and his wife, Margaret (née Fisher), who was a solicitor in Newry. Much of this material also reflects Major Reside's enthusiasm for local history and the Collection has been donated to the Museum by Major Reside's nephew, Mr Fergus Hanna Bell, as a unique and essential resource for understanding the heritage of Newry and the wider south Armagh/south Down area.

Dating from 1715 to 1986, the documents in the Collection include records from the estates of the Earls of Kilmorey, the Marquises of Downshire and the Hall family of Narrow Water, various types of maps, Land Purchase Commission papers, legal papers, newspapers, architectural plans and numerous miscellaneous items. Highlights of the Collection include a complete series of rental books from the estates of the Earls of Kilmorey for the years of the Great Famine (1845-1850), a large number of lease maps showing the historic topography of the principal streets in Newry and Warrenpoint and several scrapbooks containing newspapers cuttings charting the impact of The Troubles on the Newry area during the 1970s and 1980s.

Many of these documents are unique and complement material of local interest already held by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. The Collection will be the nucleus of the archive at the new museum at Bagenal's Castle and will provide an invaluable research and education resource, affording local people a greater appreciation and understanding of their heritage. The documents will be available for consultation by members the public once conservation and cataloguing has been completed.

Bagenal's Castle Update

The Bagenal's Castle Project Travelling Exhibition and booklet was launched on the 3rd December. Our guest speaker, Dr. John McCavitt, local teacher and author of *Flight of the Earl*, gave an interesting and amusing talk on the Bagenals in Newry. Historical re-enactors dressed as Mr. and Mrs Bagenal mingled with the audience and Mourne Grange Orchestra played medieval tunes on their handcrafted Celtic lyres. Many enthusiastic local supporters attended the night's festivities and also present were representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Environment and Heritage Service.

After a month on display in the museum, the exhibition has now started its travels. Newry and Kilkeel Institute of Further and Higher Education has been the first venue to host the exhibition. Raymond Mullen Director and Chief Executive of the Institute welcomed this major project to Newry, coinciding with the elevation of Newry to a city. He added that project would record the history of the area and help people treasure and protect the past. John Russell, Lecturer for Built Environment spoke of the invaluable assistance provided by the museum staff to students of the Institute and looked forward to the continuing involvement of Built Environment students in the new museum's work.

Altnaveigh House is hosting the exhibition until 4th March, when it will move to Mullaghbane Community Centre to coincide with the handover of the 1821 Census from the Jackson Trust to Mullaghbane Community Association.

New Exhibition – 3rd March

On the 3rd of March a permanent exhibition on the Bagenal's Castle Project will be launched in the museum. The exhibition is a colourful and informative display on the project. The museum would like to thank Philip Anley for the loan of the Nicholas Bagenal portrait and other items relating to the Kilmoreys, and also Joe Coyle from the Newhaven Trust for lending us two bronze casts of the fifteenth century carved head and animal preserved within the castle and thought to have originally belonged to the monastery.

Excavations

Further excavations at the castle are scheduled to take place at the end of February. Newry and Mourne District Council have appointed *Archaeological Development Services Ltd* to undertake the investigations, which we hope will answer a number of questions posed by the first excavations in December 2000. More needs to be known about the undercroft found during these excavations, particularly its extent and period of construction. The remaining plaster on the interior walls will also be removed to confirm first and second floor levels and reveal openings and original limewash. One of the original windows will also be opened up from the inside to locate mullions and other window features that may survive, which will help inform the restoration process.

If you are interested in hosting the Travelling Exhibition, or would like a copy of the booklet contact Noreen or Gemma on 302 66232.

Six Week Genealogy Course a Great Success

As part of their Joint Education Programme Newry and Mourne Museum and the County Museum, Dundalk devised a Genealogy Course targeted at both County Louth and Newry and Mourne. The course ran for six weeks at the Arts Centre and Museum, Newry and aimed to provide participants with the skills and knowledge to make the most of local genealogical records to produce family histories for themselves and others.

The classes were jointly run by Ian Maxwell, who has published widely on family research in Northern Ireland, and William Roulston, from the Ulster Historical Foundation. It attracted a large number of participants keen to develop their research

expertise. So great was the demand for places that there are now plans to recreate the same course early next year.

The course was free to participants and was funded through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation administered by Co-operation Ireland and promoted by Dundalk Town Council and Newry and Mourne District Council

New to Our Collections

The museum was recently donated a fur coat dating to the 1920s from Mrs Margaret Wilson. It belonged to her grandmother Mrs Margaret Heather who was married to Newry Volunteer Fire Brigade's most famous Captain, James Heather who received the Police Medal in 1930 for 39 years of Exemplary Service distinguished by Special Merit and Ability. Made by the Siberian Fur Company Ltd. Wellington Place, Belfast, the coat is in excellent condition with a beautifully decorated lining embroidered with *art nouveau* style flowers and tendrils.

Patricia McArdle has donated a beautiful Limerick lace costume made by her mother in the 1930s. Ellen McArdle was taught lace-making by Sister Camillus at the Convent of Mercy, Newry, where she worked before she got married. The dress, veil and purse were made for Patricia's First Communion and the bodice replaced for her Confirmation. To have received all these items as well as photographs of Patricia in both dresses makes this a very valuable donation and Gemma will be carrying out further research on local lace making enterprises for an exhibition later this year.

The Museum is also extremely grateful to have received a long-line spinning frame, owned by Chambers McBride of Kilkeel and donated by his son. The McBride family are well known in the local fishing community and this is one of the few such sets of spinning frames, known as a 'bitch and whelps', left in the local area. Mr and Mrs. McBride have also kindly donated a bag of sail-making tools used on the family fishing boat for many years and Bill Quinn has added his own sail-making palm, sail-making needles and brass eyes to the donation so the museum now has a complete representative collection of sail-making tools. The donation has been made in memory of Chambers MacBride, and his grandson Alistair.