

Issue 15 January 2001

# The *Sentinel*

FERMANAGH COUNTY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER



*Another Gulbenkian/Heritage Council Award for Fermanagh County Museum*



# Gulbenkian/Heritage Council Award

for

Fermanagh  
County Museum

Last year Fermanagh County Museum won a commendation award and cheque for £400 for Best Education Project. The prize was given in acknowledgement of the excellent use of its 'slim resources' in providing an excellent and innovative education service.



Award winning staff at Fermanagh County Museum. From left, Bronagh Cleary, development officer, Joe Sheerin, Kellie Beacom, education officer, Bridget Dolan, administrative assistant, Helen Lanigan Wood, museum curator, Trevor Vance, development officer and Karen Bowes-Ryan, information assistant. Photograph by John Deering.

**In 2000 Fermanagh County Museum won the top award for Best Education Project and received a cheque for £2,500. (See cover photograph)**

The Museum faced tough competition for this award including entries from three national institutions in Dublin. In making the award to Fermanagh County Museum the judges commented 'This is a museum which reaches out to all members of the community to welcome them and help them

appreciate their community heritage. The Education Officer at this museum is working part-time and producing a remarkable output. Four projects were delivered during the year. The four projects included 'Earth Bound', a science programme for primary schools which used role play effectively to introduce environmental studies to seven hundred pupils. The education room at the museum was transformed into a space ship for six months. A 'Science for Toddlers' version of this was produced for one hundred toddlers.'

## STAFF NEWS

It has been a year of change. Museum assistant Adrian Beattie took up a museum post with Strabane District Council in February; administrative assistant Fiona Cathcart also left for pastures new and development officer Jayne Olphert joined the Antrim Museum Service in Ballymena. Information assistant Neil Armstrong moved to Boyle in Roscommon where he is manager of the King House. We wish all our former colleagues good luck in their new posts and thank them for all the good work they did for Fermanagh County Museum.

New faces include Trevor Vance, honours graduate in fine art, who moved rapidly from the post of museum assistant to that of development officer, when that post was vacated by Jayne Olphert. Bridget Dolan with a HND in business studies is our new administrative assistant and Karen Bowes-Ryan who holds an honours degree in retail and distribution management is the new information assistant.



# Millennium Sculpture



*Celebrating the completion of Philip Flanagan's Millennium Sculpture 'Reflections on Water' are (from left) Helen Lanigan Wood, museum curator, Peter Duffy, chairman of the Association of Friends of the Museum which co-funded the sculpture, Richard Pierce, who launched the sculpture, Maria McAllister and Philip Flanagan. Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter.*

The sculpture, made of glass and bronze, is now part of the Museum's permanent collections. It came about as the result of the sculptor's residency at the Museum in 1999 and was funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland National Lottery Fund and the Northern Ireland Museums Council as well as by the Friends of the Museum.

## LOCAL HEROES:

### SPORTING FERMANAGH

The exhibition concentrated on amateur team sports in Fermanagh including hurling, netball, Gaelic football, soccer, rugby, camogie and basketball. It celebrated all those local people who gave time and commitment to bring pride to their local community; it also featured those local heroes who participated in Olympic and Commonwealth Games. Many local organisations and individuals lent artefacts and sports photographs from Shay Nethercott's recent donation to the museum were much in evidence.



*An exhibition celebrating amateur sport in Fermanagh was opened at the Museum in October 1999 by Mr. Danny O'Connor, (left) former director of the Lottery Sports Fund and the Northern Ireland Sports Council. Also in the photograph, examining the coat worn by Keith Burns at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games is the chairman of Fermanagh District Council, Mr. Derrick Nixon, museum development officer Bronagh Cleary and Mrs Dolores O'Connor. Photograph courtesy of The Fermanagh Herald.*



# CONTEMPORARY ART IN FERMANAGH

## Photoworks, Paintings and Sculpture

This was an exhibition of great variety, the work of five invited artists from Fermanagh. The downstairs gallery was devoted to the work of Cathal Morris and Mervyn Johnston. Johnston's paintings characterised by a confident use of strong, bold images and a rich palette were drawn from both his early and more recent work.

They formed a pleasing contrast with the photographic triptychs and multiple images in Morris' work, sepia-toned and delicately hand-coloured



*Richard Pierce (centre) who officially opened the exhibition with the exhibitors (from left) Cathal Morris, Jo Tinney, Mavis Thomson, Frances Morris, and Mervyn Johnston. Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter.*

work of great refinement. Landscape dominated the exhibition in the upstairs gallery with Jo Tinney's scenes of bog, mountain and sea capturing the essence and timelessness of nature and the meticulous work of Frances Morris expressing the beauty and tranquillity of Fermanagh's lakes and

woodlands. Mavis Thomson's delightful sculptural works, at times serious, at other times humorous in intent, provided another attractive contrast in this exhibition. These constructions and assemblages made from discarded material (objets trouves) found washed up on the seashore, draw their inspiration from the sea.

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## THE LIGHTNING STRIKE: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE OSMAN COLLECTION



*John Osman, founder of Dublin's Gallery of Photography, discussing his exhibition with Robert Gibson, director of Environmental Services with Fermanagh District Council and Bronagh Cleary, museum development officer. Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter.*

A very popular exhibition, this selection of 100 photographs contained examples extending back to photography's beginnings, by Henry Fox Talbot, Julia Margaret Cameron, Francis Frith, Roger Fenton and Bill Brandt. It included works by modern Irish artists, historic images of the 1916 Rising and the Irish Civil War as well as photographs of Phil Lynott and James Dean. The title of the exhibition comes from a photograph of a bare bottom which in 1909 suffered a direct strike by lightning!

On May 18th there was free admission to this exhibition to celebrate International Museum's Day.



# Local Identities



*Father Brian D'Arcy (right) who opened the exhibition with Mr. Warren Loane. Photograph courtesy of John McVitty, Impartial Reporter.*

The Local Identities exhibition explored our personal identity, our culture, our sense of place, the faith and politics we profess, the way our work and leisure activities define us, and the effect of external forces on our regional culture.

The exhibition focused in particular on Fermanagh and what gives it a special identity. It dealt mainly with contemporary Fermanagh although, with the past inevitably impinging on the present, many of the exhibits were drawn from the Museum's collections.

## *Exhibition from the Fermanagh Orange Cultural Society*

Coinciding with the Twelfth of July celebrations this year was an exhibition of memorabilia 'In Bygone Days of Yore' mounted by the Fermanagh Orange Cultural Society in the museum's Education Room. This was of particular interest to the large numbers who attended an evening of lectures, music and debate in the museum on the 11th of July, hosted by the Fermanagh Grand Orange Lodge. Included in the audience were many guests from Limerick who listened with interest to talks on the battles of Newtownbutler and Cornagrade and a lecture by Dr. Gordon Lucy on the early history of the Orange Order. Many members of the audience responded to an invitation from the chairman, 'Tell us what orangism means to you' and following this the Limerick visitors expressed their appreciation of an interesting and enlightening evening.

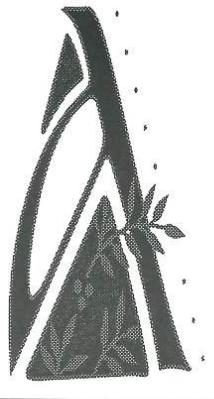


*Dr. Patricia Roberts and Mrs Anita Mukherji who contributed artefacts and photographs to the Local Identities exhibition. Photograph courtesy of John McVitty, Impartial Reporter.*



*Margaret Flanagan from Belleek listens to a contribution she recorded for the exhibition. Recordings from the Museum's oral history archives formed an important part of the Local Identities exhibition; visitors could put on headphones and listen to local people of an earlier generation talk about their experiences over the last sixty years. Photograph courtesy of John McVitty, Impartial Reporter.*





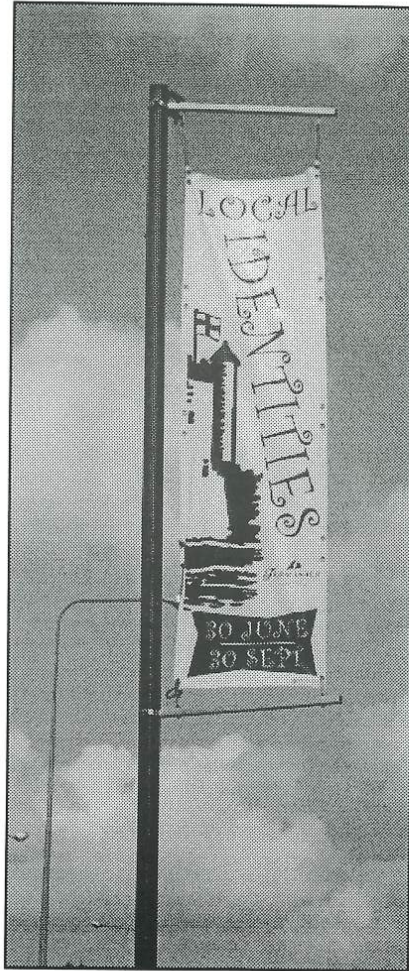
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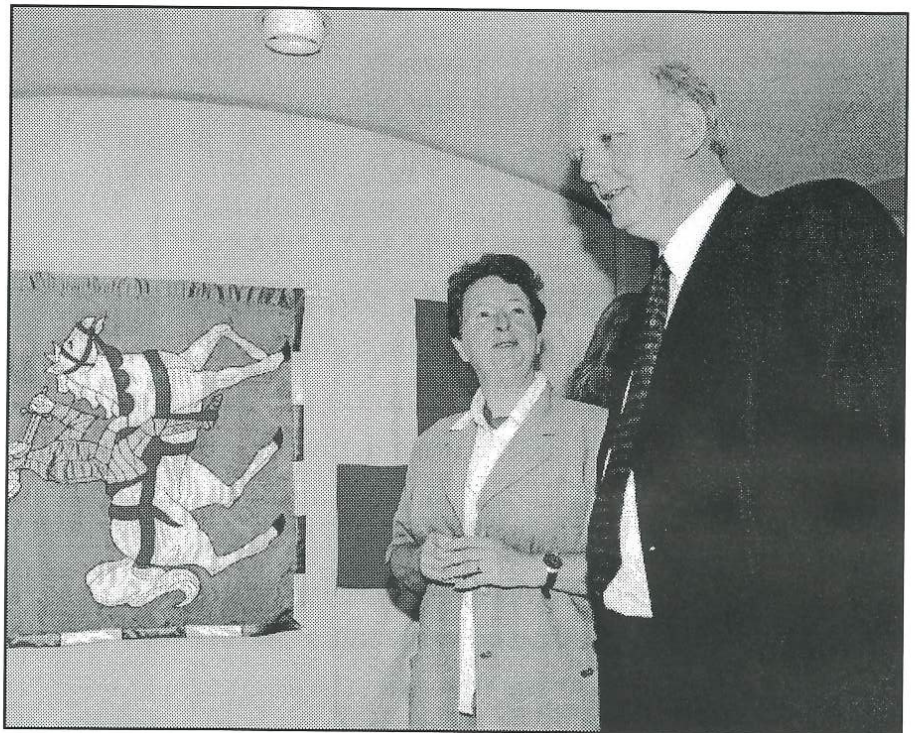
*Museum*



## NEW BOOK ON BOATS

A recent publication from the Environment and Heritage Service, Department of the Environment is Coiti: Logboats from Northern Ireland by Malcolm Fry. This excellent inventory of boats made from hollowed tree trunks and used from the late Mesolithic until the 17th century AD includes many found in Fermanagh and many successfully dated by a combination of radiocarbon and tree-ring analysis. There are chapters on the history of water communication and worthwhile discussions on the use and construction of these boats.

ISBN 0 85640 676 7 paperback  
£19.99



*A distinguished visitor to the Local Identities exhibition. Mr. Michael McGimpsey, minister for Arts, Culture and Leisure is shown around the exhibition by museum curator Helen Lanigan Wood.*

*Commenting on the museum and exhibition Mr. McGimpsey observed 'Such facilities can help our two main communities learn more about each other's traditions and, by doing so, nurture tolerance and mutual respect so we can all work together to improve the quality of life for everyone in Northern Ireland.' Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter*



# Stitches and Ditches

## Irish Museum of Modern Art

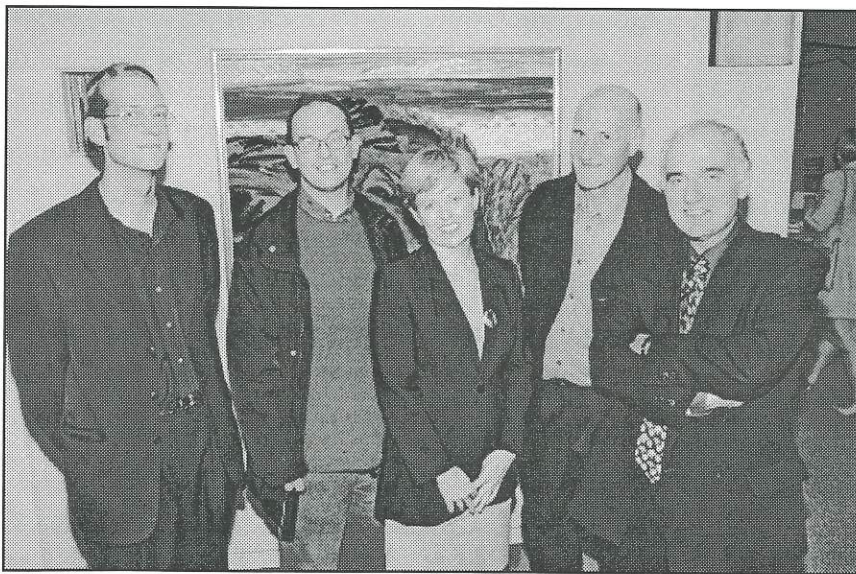
*An exhibition from the collection selected by the Fermanagh and Leitrim women curators*

**Stitches and Ditches came about as a result of a special millennium cross-border project involving eight women from Leitrim Irish Country Women's Association and six women from Fermanagh Women's Institute.**

The project co-ordinators were Carissa Farrell from the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Terre Duffy, arts officer from Leitrim County Council and Geraldine O'Reilly from Fermanagh.

A highlight of the project was the catalogue produced by the group which explains some of the

reasons behind the selections. For most of the group it was their first real experience of modern art; it involved studying artworks in the Irish Museum of Modern Art and in other galleries and by all accounts the project was a rewarding one for everyone involved.



*Aideen McGinley (centre) permanent secretary, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, who officially opened the exhibition with (from left) Trevor Vance, museum development officer, Sean Fingleton, artist, David Crone, artist and Brian Ferran, director of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.*

*Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter.*

The exhibition included work by many important 20th century artists including Joan Miro, Ilya Kabakov, Sean Scully and Tim Rollins. A particularly memorable exhibit was the video installation by the Belgian artist Mary Jo Lafontaine entitled "Waves", a dramatic and atmospheric portrayal of the sea and its power filmed off the west coast of Ireland.

*Geraldine O'Reilly, arts officer of Fermanagh District Council, addressing the gathering at the opening of the Stitches and Ditches exhibition. Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter.*





# HOMAGE TO PAPER

*Exhibition of Latin American prints from the Irish Museum of Modern Art*



*Adeline Lee, president of the Erne Area WI and Marcella Tiernan, federation president ICA in Leitrim, two of the women curators who selected the exhibition. Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter.*

This collection of prints was donated to IMMA by Smurfit: Carton Y Papel de Mexico and represents the work of artists from many countries including Venezuela, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador Mexico and Guatemala. Many of the artists engage with political and social issues; the quest for national identity is evident in several works as is a re-evaluation of indigenous culture.

**THE ULSTER POETS** - exhibition produced by People Poetry Place, a partnership between The Armagh Rhymers, Bellaghy Bawn, The Navan Centre and The Patrick Kavanagh Rural and Literary Resource Centre.



*At the launch of the exhibition are P7 pupils from St Theresa's Primary School (front row, from left) Leanne McElroy, Edwina Allen, Cherie Maguire, Amy Louise Hopkins and Connie Masterson and (back row, from left) Kellie Beacom museum education officer, Macdara Mac Uibh Aille, director of People, Poetry Place, Catherine McManus, community relations officer, Fermanagh District Council, Nigel McLaughlin, poet from Fermanagh, and Maureen Dolan, teacher from St. Theresa's.*

An original approach to presenting Ulster's rich literary heritage, this exhibition was part of Fermanagh District Council's Community Relations Programme. Poems and songs reflecting each of the nine counties of Ulster were attractively displayed on batik fabric made into lanterns; other poems, including some by Fermanagh school children were accessible on an interactive CD-ROM programme. The programme also included workshops and performances by The Armagh Rhymers.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK AT THE MUSEUM

A special project for the next year, one supported by the Northern Ireland Museums Council, is the digitisation of all our photographic records and cataloguing work on the collection of photographs presented to the Museum by Shay Nethercott. The person appointed to undertake this work is John Deering, who describes his long established interest in photography:-

*'I grew up in a family of photographers, both professional and amateur. My first direct experience of photography turned out to be more painful than pleasant; as I investigated the innards of my uncle's light meter, with a screwdriver!*

*Since then I have had a more harmonious interest in photography. I used it widely in my teaching career as a biologist. In 1978 George Balfour and I collected old Fermanagh photographs and this resulted in an exhibition held at the Museum in March of that year. The fascination of old photographs is still with me and I am delighted to be involved in a project which has the aim of bringing the past to all through the use of the photographic image.'*



*John Deering at work on the photographic collections in the Museum. The Museum is keen to add to its photographic collection and would like the public to bring in any interesting photographs from their family albums. We welcome original prints but we are also interested in copying old photographs and even photographs as recent as the 1960s and 70s.*



# RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The first year of the new millennium brought some interesting additions to the collections. Among them were:

## Millennium Sculpture

The sculpture entitled Reflections on Water by Philip Flanagan commissioned to commemorate the new millennium. (FCM\_2000\_001) See page 2.

## Farming Club Medal



Early 19th century medallion from an Enniskillen farming club (FCM 2000\_023)

Thanks to a grant from the Northern Ireland Museums Council and a contribution of £242.50 from the Friends of the Museum, we were able to purchase a rare medallion from a 19th century Enniskillen farming club. Made from silver with a gold band around the circumference it is inscribed "Farmer's Club Enniskillen No. 1" and on the reverse "Peace and

Plenty CINCINNATUS". Dating as it does from the pre famine period, possibly c.1810, it may have been awarded as a prize for a ploughing competition or a farm improvement project. The reference to Cincinnatus relates to a powerful dictator in ancient Rome who wielded vast political power c.460BC but gave all up to live a simple life as a farmer, exchanging his sword for a ploughshare.

## Items from the Taylor Woods Factory in Enniskillen

The history of this clothing factory featured in our Local Identities exhibition during the summer and reminded one Belfast visitor that she still possessed a number of garments made in this well known Enniskillen factory. Mrs Susan Wright generously donated a negligee and slip to the Museum, both of which she had purchased in Belfast (FCM 2000\_030 and 031)

We also received some of the staff magazines produced by Taylor Woods, a copy of 'The Bird's Eye' (FCM\_2000\_020) from February 1954, donated by Mrs Florence Hoey, Enniskillen and 'The Link' (FCM\_2000\_022) from May 1963, donated by Mrs Marion Maxwell of Bellanaleck. First appearing in 1950 'The Bird's Eye' featured staff photographs, greetings to new staff, sport results & film reviews and regular witty cartoons by Ronnie Fallis. 'The Link' replaced 'The Bird's Eye' in 1962 and was named after the new factory situated in Raceview Link, Enniskillen.

## Railway Memorabilia

Dr. D.B.McNeill of Newtownards, well known authority on transport history, donated two splendid photographic albums (FCM\_2000\_039 & 040) containing historic images from the Clogher Valley Railway and the Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway, all methodically annotated and dated. These include, not only railway stations and locomotives but also more unusual photographs of railway employees at work and of people using trains.

The Museum also received two timetables (FCM\_2000\_037 & FCM\_2000\_038), one relating to the Great Northern Railways and one relating to the Ulster Transport Authority (rail and road services), donated by Mr Christopher Wilson of Limavady.

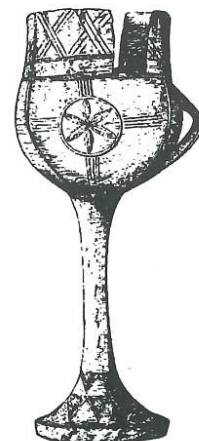
## Catalogue of Old Masters from Fermanagh

Miss Anne Boyd of Belfast donated an interesting illustrated catalogue of an exhibition held in Enniskillen in 1944 drawn from art collections belonging to Fermanagh families. (FCM\_2000\_029)

## Conservation Work

An important part of the Museum's work is maintaining the collections in good condition. Often the services of professional conservators are employed and this year specialist Mary McGrath from Kildare undertook the task of conserving one of our most important wooden artefacts - a yew drinking cup of 16th or 17th century date which was given many years ago to the late Sir Charles Langham of Tempo Manor by a workman who may have found it while cutting turf.

The conservation work, which was grant-aided by the Northern Ireland Museums Council, consisted of replacing missing pieces with well seasoned yew carved to match the profile of the original and held in place with animal glue. We look forward to the day when we have space to mount a permanent local history exhibition in the Museum and display historic artefacts like this Fermanagh drinking cup. In the meantime it and many other interesting items must remain in storage.



This drawing of the yew drinking cup from Fermanagh shows it before conservation work was carried out to repair the rim and base.



# Outing to Crom Estate and Belturbet,

June 2000

We had hit on a good idea in 1999 when the Friends' outing took us to see people and places in our own county, Belleek and beyond. The same good idea was tried, and worked well again in 2000, when we went to the opposite end of Fermanagh, to Crom Estate and on by water to Belturbet, on Saturday 3 June. There were many other events that weekend so the Committee feared a poor attendance. Fears were swept aside by delight when 50 turned out, as many as in 1999, and now hopes are high for another good crowd at our next Friends' outing to Dublin in June 2001.

We gathered for coffee at 10.30 and then off walking round Crom with Vicky Herbert telling us about life on the Estate which had been family home and workplace for many generations of local folk. Michael Goodwin - today an executive in a big Dublin finance house - recalled crucial boyhood financial decisions: if he ate fruit he picked at Crom it could not be weighed for payment. In a long chatting line we strolled lakeside meadows past a grove of big trees marking the burial place of men killed here in 1689 during James' and William's war. After pausing a while at old Crom castle, we went on under a massive spreading yew tree that has been a gathering place for three centuries past. One of us, William Hurst was 82 that day, so we sang him happy birthday, he cheerfully smiling, a lady at each side.



*Members of the Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum on their annual outing in June 2000. In the background is Belturbet Railway complex. Photograph courtesy of Sean McMahon, The Anglo Celt.*

## Friends of the County Museum

Back for lunch, a tasty repast by National Trust staff, then all aboard the Share Centre barge for a circuitous aquatic exploration, turning eventually towards Belturbet at Caroline Connolly's donkey and bird sanctuary by Quivvy Water. All the way we heard tales from Sean McElgunn about people and places through every lough shore townland. We looked along School River, once the children's waterway to school in family rowing boats. Long ago Dean Henry wrote of a few pretty yachts that lay in Belturbet channel. Some three hundred years later, as we arrived, that channel was a mini-Rotterdam, crowded with craft, all sizes and shapes, boatyards and fuelling docks.

A few weaker voyagers slipped aside for warming liquids in Belturbet's tempting hostelries.

The strong walked on uphill to the Railway Station to be greeted by tea and cake and a third great story teller, George Morrissey, who showed us around the restoration work at this once busy railway yard and junction. And more, he came with us on the voyage back by the shortcut known as the Folies Cut, sheltered from rain by the barge roof, diesel hammering underfoot, telling yarns about smuggling on these borderland waterways, about importing new cars disguised as second hand, fitted with old doors and wheels, while the new doors and wheels followed by water at night, and about the embarrassed man smuggling a new suit on the Newtownbutler train. He went to wear it through Customs, took off his old trousers and threw them out the toilet window, and then discovered that a cheating draper had kept the new ones out of the parcel!

Ashore again at Crom we dispersed, having seen, understood and enjoyed neighbours, people and places, past and present. A happy day in good company.

*Michael Clarke*





*Willie Hurst celebrates his birthday with Vicky Herbert (left) and museum development officer Jayne Olphert.*

*Photograph courtesy of Michael Clarke.*



*Miss Carol Armstrong and Mrs Hazel Hart at Crom Castle*

*Photograph courtesy of Michael Clarke*

*Mrs Ita Kerrin and Mrs Jean Agnew beside  
the ancient Yew tree at Crom.  
Photograph courtesy of Michael Clarke*





# Education at the Museum

## **Museum Launches Promotional Booklet 'Accessing Discovery'**

With the nature of the Museum's education provision now well developed for the primary school market it was an appropriate time to produce professionally printed promotional literature. The booklet 'Accessing Discovery' - a group visit guide to Enniskillen Castle was circulated to all schools, colleges, and group organisations in May of 2000. The publication detailed the various programmes on offer for primary and secondary schools and demonstrated the Service's flexibility to provide for the specific educational needs of many organisations or groups. The 'Accessing Discovery' booklet was funded by the Museum's and Galleries Month (MGM 2000) initiative and officially launched at the 'Food for Thought' Education Forums on 18th and 25th May 2000.



*At the launch for Primary school teachers of the 'Accessing Discovery' booklet were (seated, from left) Helen Lanigan Wood, Mr. David Nixon, Kellie Beacom, and (standing, from left) Mrs. Kate Outram, Ms Freda Beacom and Ms Ciara McCarney. Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter.*

## **Food for Thought - Education Forum**

A project designed to raise profile beyond current users was Food for Thought - Education Forum, supported by MGM 2000, which took place on the 18th and 25th May 2000. Museum staff considered visitor profiles and social dynamics of the area, and felt an effective means of increasing access from new audiences would be through endorsement via word of mouth. To build on this initiative representatives from schools, pre-schools, community groups and adult education providers were invited to one of two forums.

The forums had two main objectives - to present and promote the Museum's education service, and to seek the views of education representatives on future programme development. All participants completed a questionnaire and the afternoon was concluded with a light meal and refreshments. Museum staff were very pleased with feedback from these events, particularly in relation to developing programmes suited to secondary schools, notoriously a difficult market to attract.

### **'Finding a Voice' - Community Outreach**

'Finding a Voice', a community outreach programme aimed at encouraging greater access to the Museum, was a pilot project supported by the Community Relations Council, through the Northern Ireland Museum Council. The aim of this project was to encourage community groups to use items from the Museum's collections as a catalyst for an exploration of identity. Participants were also encouraged to consider personal items which reflected aspects of their character.

Six community groups were initially involved including Tamblight Women's

Institute, Ethnic Women's Group, Woman Making Waves, and Fermanagh's Women's Aid. Jayne Olphert, former museum development officer, attending many of the group's evening gatherings to implement 'Finding a Voice'. Many of the participants were photographed with their objects of personal relevance and these were used to complement three professionally designed and printed A1 panels which were displayed with the Local Identities exhibition. Some participants also loaned the Museum objects - an added bonus which expanded the boundaries of the Local Identities exhibition.

As community outreach is relatively new to the Museum there were a lot of vital lessons to be learned within the process. Staff realised that involvement with community groups required significant time resources. It was initially important to build confidence within the group in order to establish a relationship, and appreciate and respond to the groups own projects and needs. It is now the intention of the Museum to maintain this relationship, these groups now feature on our exhibition opening mailing list and future collaborations are being planned. The Local Identities exhibition was an ideal vehicle for this project as it embraced contemporary issues close to the heart of its participants. This demonstrates the importance of selecting appropriate exhibitions to support future development of this work.

The Museum would like to thank all those who took part in the 'Finding a Voice' process. We are also grateful to those who loaned material for display within the Local Identities exhibition

### **Summer Art Workshops Exploring Identity**

Linked to the theme of the Local Identities exhibition and with a view to extending local access to the Museum, artists Clare McCarroll and Tracey Walsh were enlisted to undertake a series of weekend workshops

exploring identity through art. Clare McCarroll co-ordinated two workshops suitable for adults. Working with wool she demonstrated the process of felt making and assisted visitors to develop their own work. The first workshop attracted five participants with the second attracting six.

The second artist Tracey Walsh worked with a younger audience. Her first workshop encouraged children to consider environmental issues and represent these using collage materials. The finished artwork was retained so that it could be recreated in a 7ft x 2ft permanent banner; this was displayed at the entrance to the Museum for the duration of the Local Identities Exhibition. Tracey's second workshop involved a similar technique using tissue on clear acetate. The 'stained glass' pictures accompanied by each child's photo were also displayed in the museum exhibition. Twenty-one children ranging in age from six to 12 years attended these two-hour workshops.



*Participants in the art workshops conducted by artist Clare McCarroll*



# EARTHBOUND



*At the launch of the interactive exhibition Earth Bound are pupils from St Theresa's Primary School' Enniskillen. From left Martina Lynch, Kylie Tummon, Ria Matthews and Natassija de Silva, with education officer Kellie Beacom and Brian McCaffrey, vice-chairman Fermanagh District Council. Photograph courtesy of The Impartial Reporter.*

*In the past Fermanagh County Museum has played host to many exciting and imaginative projects aimed at school children. However converting one of the Museum's buildings into a space ship would have to have to be a little out of the ordinary!*

With thanks to special funding from COPUS, the Museum's Education Room was transformed from February - June 2000 into a 'space ship' to support 'Earthbound'. Enhanced with a computer animated production produced by the Armagh Planetarium, the set was designed to motivate and enthuse an upper Key Stage 2 audience as they launched into outer space on a 'mission' to save their people from an ecological disaster.

Children compared the life support capacity of each planet they encountered and selected the most suitable for habitation. Once landed they entered the 'space ship laboratory' to investigate key resources represented by tactile interactive models. Topics introduced during this section included photosynthesis, water cycle, recycling, oil products, and rock resources.

With an understanding of the global picture it was now time to investigate local flora and fauna. This utilised the Museum's Natural History Gallery and incorporated an interactive food web model, 'build an adaptable animal' workshop, and problem solving exercises. Lastly it was back to the space ship to re-launch, recap, and answer the question - 'is it feasible to relocate a population, or should they protect and conserve their own planet'? This programme was very successful attracting over 700 primary school children from all over Northern Ireland. The space ship and accompanying models have now been dismantled and placed into storage thankfully reinstating the Education Room back to its former use. However with the popularity of this programme staff are currently considering re-running it in the spring of 2002.

The Museum is very grateful for the support from COPUS, the Armagh Planetarium, LE Graphics, and the Portora Royal School. Many thanks to all those who assisted in the development of this project.

## **Science for Toddlers**

Discover Planet Earth was prepared in support of the National Week of Science, Engineering, and Technology. Targeted at

pre-school groups, a new audience to the Museum, it captured the essence of the Earthbound environmental programme in very simplified terms, and also utilised the space ship set located in the Education Room. A puppet 'Captain Rascals', ensured a very entertaining delivery of key issues at an appropriate level. Toddlers undertook a simple yet effective activity linking animals to their habitats and finally they explored the Museum's Natural History gallery. This innovative programme attracted over 100 toddlers and resulted in very positive feedback from their group leaders.

## **Education Service introduces CD ROM**

With thanks to NIMC funding, the Museum has developed the first stage of an interactive CD-ROM for use in a primary level history programme 'Meet the Middle Ages' and in a secondary level geography programme 'Our Castle - Our Town'. A flexible programme based on 16th and 17th century maps and on a study of the castle itself, it can be projected on screen for showing to groups or used on computer by an individual. Using historical sources, it is imaginatively presented and includes the chanting of Medieval Gaelic poetry, the voices of the chieftain, Hugh Maguire and of the founder of Enniskillen town, William Cole.

## **Interpreting Medieval Times for Primary School Children**

Museum Education Officer, Kellie Beacom, is currently developing a new education programme designed to interpret the historical relevance of Enniskillen Castle. 'Meet the Middle Ages' will explore life within a medieval castle and link this to the past inhabitants of the Castle - the Maguires.

Suitable for Key Stage 2 children, a visit to this programme will combine role-play, costume, workshops, and an interactive CD ROM presentation. A highlight of their visit may well be taking part in recreating the Maguire's medieval banquet. Support from the Northern Ireland Museum's Council has enabled the purchase of a selection of child size medieval costumes, costumes for education staff, as well as replica medieval table ware. It is hoped that this programme will be launched in March of 2001.



# HALLOWE'EN HAVOC



Storytellers Janet O'Neill (centre) and Marion McLoughlin surrounded by their young audience at Hallowe'en. Photograph courtesy of Pat D'Arcy.



The ghostly goings on at the Museum were back by popular demand. Enniskillen Castle's Hallowe'en Family Fun Day began with the 'Monster Madness' costume workshop. Almost 20 children busily created their desired costumes during the 2-hour session. Witches' hats and capes were particularly popular, as were vampires and space suits!

The afternoon's Hallowe'en schedule was fully subscribed with nearly 120 toddlers, children, and their parents enjoying the various activities on offer. Children (and their parents) had the opportunity to be "spooked" by ghostly stories,

try apple-ducking, have their faces painted, and become dragons in a mask making workshop.

One of the highlights of their visit was the 'Pumpkin Time Machine'. Mystical sounds and visual projections, accompanied by children's screams and shouts, enabled them to travel 'back through time'. Then assisted by torch lights they journeyed through the darkened museum galleries in search of the pumpkin treasures hidden within the cases.

Fermanagh County Museum would like to take this opportunity to thank Marion McLoughlin and Janet O'Neill for generously supporting this event.



A spooky story told by Marion McLoughlin.

Photograph courtesy of Pat D'Arcy.



# Family Heritage Day

The highlight of Fermanagh County Museum's summer programme was with no doubt the Enniskillen Castle's Family Heritage Day, Sunday 10 September 2000. This special free event was designed to celebrate Fermanagh's unique identity and coincide with the Museum's Local Identities Exhibition and the European Heritage Open Days.

Support by the Community Relations Council through the Northern Ireland Museums Council enabled the Museum to deliver an event of a scale and nature never attempted before. A great deal of effort went into the organisation and marketing of this event, all made worthwhile with over 1100 visitors attracted to the afternoon's schedule of entertainment.

With performances hosted in a huge 110 foot marquee erected in the centre of the court yard, as well as in the Education room (formally the Barrack's Store) and on a mobile stage in front of the Castle Keep, there was something on offer for all ages. Performances on the day took the form of the 'Starlight Dance Band' playing music of the 40s and 50s, traditional Irish music with Francie Rasdale, Catherine Dunne and Jim Hoy, the Ballyreagh Silver band, and set dancing. Children were entertained by circus acts, storytellers, music with Tom Sweeney, puppet shows, vintage cars display, yard skittles, flame-throwers and facepainting just to name a few.

The day wasn't just about celebrating familiar traditional cultures. People from other parts of the world were also there to introduce aspects of their cultures. Members of Fermanagh's Hare Krishna community surprised and enchanted the audience with their traditional procession and chanting and members of the Chinese community performed a spectacular Unicorn-Dragon dance to the wide-eyed delight of children and adult alike.

The Aughakillymaude Mummers gave an impressive performance although they were nearly upstaged at one point when a little boy in the audience tried to get them to see the error of their ways. He shouted up to Beelezebub and Captain Miller *'Bad men, bad men, made poor man fall down!'*

The Aughakillymaude Mummers led the grand finale parade followed by the helium balloon release at the front of the Watergate. Children watched in amazement as the balloons with their messages attached rose higher and higher into the distance - a fitting



Members of the Starlight Band Valerie and John McManus, with accordionist Robert Wilson. Missing from the picture is fellow musician Bryan Gallagher, who was a member of the band from 1949 until 1962 and has written about its history. The band performed widely throughout Fermanagh, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan and Donegal, playing at both Catholic and Protestant dances. Photograph courtesy of John McVitty, Impartial Reporter.

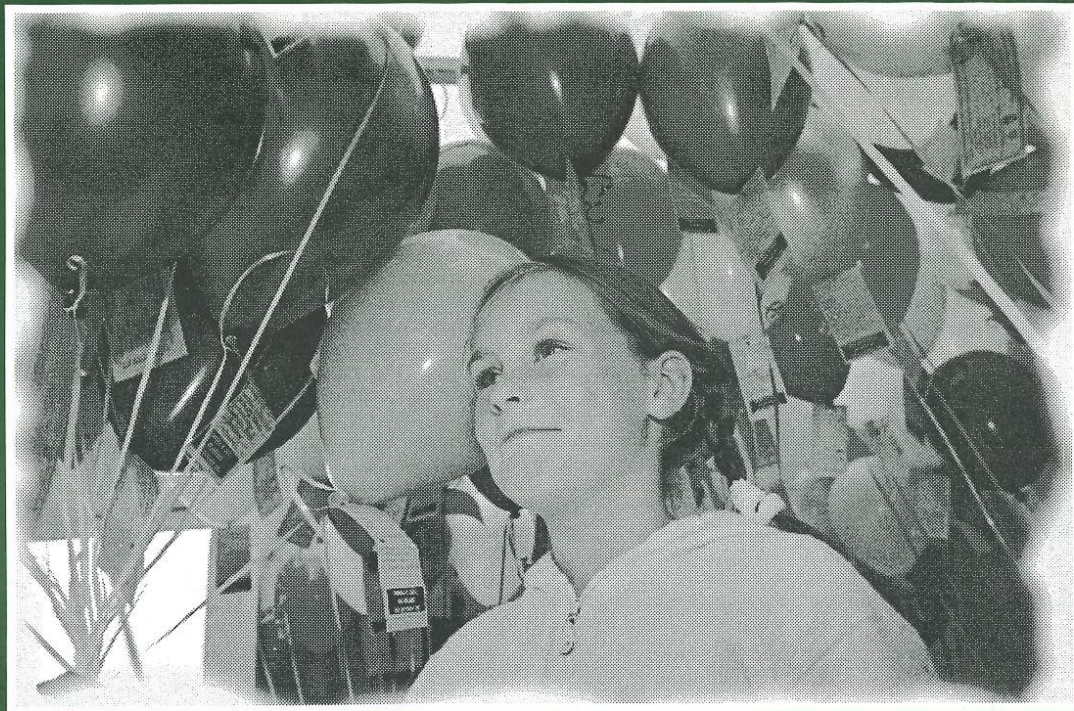
conclusion to a enjoyable and successful day. One balloon was eventually found in Denmark by a holiday maker from Berlin, resulting in a prize for Barry Love, a pupil of St. Michael's Primary School, Enniskillen. Over 500 children had written balloon tag messages for the competition, describing why they enjoyed living in Fermanagh. Barry's balloon travelled the greatest distance and his message was 'I enjoy living in Fermanagh because there is a lot of scenery and it is beautiful'.

The Museum would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members of the public who generously supported this event. We would particularly like to thank the 'Friends of the Museum' for their time and support in helping to co-ordinate the day's schedule, other Council departments for their help in marketing and set up, and the volunteers and entertainers for making such an event possible.



Leslie Reilly of Derrylin trying his hand at skittles. Photograph courtesy of John McVitty, Impartial Reporter.





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### **FRONT COVER**

*Museum Education Officer Kellie Beacom receives top Gulbenkian/Heritage Council Award for Best Education Project in 2000*

*from Sile De Valera, the Republic's minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, at a ceremony at Dublin Castle.*

*Photograph by Frank Fennell*

### **BACK COVER**

*Danielle Layden helps to organise the balloons for lift off!*

*Getting ready for the balloon release during the grand finale performance of the family heritage day.*

*Photographs courtesy of John Mc Vitty, Impartial Reporter*

*Newsletter designed by DemoPrint Ltd., Ballyshannon.*