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# News Letter

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The Friends of  
Fermanagh County Museum

No. 1

September, 1985

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## The Watergate History and Heritage Centre

In this our first Newsletter, it is good to be able to announce plans for an exciting new development within the Castle Barracks in Enniskillen. It will be known as the Watergate History and Heritage Centre and will provide a better range of services not only for our local and regional communities but for the large numbers of foreign visitors, many of them drawn to Fermanagh in a search for their roots.

A feasibility study for this project has been carried out by architect, Richard H. Pierce, and his proposals have been greeted with enthusiasm by Fermanagh District Council. It is hoped that the Centre will attract funding from the European Economic Community. More details in our next Newsletter!

## Events and Exhibitions 1984/1985

### Jan-Feb 1984 — Passing the Time

The year began with an exhibition of drawings and photographs by the American Folklorist Henry Glassie, many of them used to illustrate his books about Fermanagh "Passing the Time" and "All Silver and No Brass." The exhibition had been launched in December with a splendid Christmas entertainment featuring Henry Glassie talking about Ballymenone, traditional songs by Gabriel McArdle, storytelling by Pat McTaggart and a performance of a Mummers play by the pupils of St. Aidan's High School in Derrylin. The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the spirited performance by the straw-clad players and musicians from Derrylin, directed by their headmaster Mr. Bryan Gallagher. The museum was packed to capacity for the entertainment and the night ended with the serving of refreshments including the traditional boxty, a delicacy especially prepared for the occasion.

Dr. Henry Glassie, Professor of Folklore at the University of Pennsylvania, had travelled to Enniskillen from America especially for the occasion. During his visit his book "Passing the Time" a study of folklore and local history in Ballymenone, was launched at the museum. On the same afternoon Dr. Alan Gailey delivered an illustrated lecture on "Fermanagh Mummers: their origins and connections."

### April-May 1984 — An Exhibition and Audio-Visual Presentation

#### *"The Maguires of Fermanagh and the Town of Enniskillen"*

The audio visual programme about life in Fermanagh under the Maguire chieftains and after the Plantation was the culmination of several years work by the museum's staff. The research and script were by the Curator, Helen Lanigan Wood and the photography was by Vera Watters, Museum Assistant. The programme was produced



*Mr. Michael Murphy, Chief Education Officer of the Western Education and Library Board talks to Vera Watters and Helen Lanigan Wood after he launched the Audio Visual programme "The Maguires of Fermanagh and the Town of Enniskillen" and the accompanying exhibition in April 1984.*

by David Hammond and the commentary was spoken by Denis Hawthorne. Micheál Ó Suilleabháin was responsible for composing and playing the music to accompany the bardic verse chanted by the Benedictine monk, Brother Ciarán Forbes. Other musical contributions were from Arty McGlynn on the guitar, Sean Potts on tin whistle and Éamon de Buítléar on melodeon.

The exhibition showed the documentary sources from which the visual material for the audio visual programme was drawn — books like Derricke's "Image of Ireland" first printed in 1591 AD, many 16th and 17th century maps and numerous topographical prints and paintings of Fermanagh. The illustrations included hand-painted enlarged details taken from the engravings in Derricke's "Image of Ireland" and original artwork depicting medieval life especially commissioned from the artist Deirinell Warner.

### May-June 1984 — Irish Silver



This was an exhibition of 23 of the most outstanding pieces of silver acquired by the National Museum of Ireland in recent years. It was opened by Mr. John

Teahan, Keeper of Art and Industrial Division in the National Museum, who spoke about the silver on display, commenting on the high standards of design and finish attained by Irish silver craftsmen of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

### **June-August 1984 — Birds of Ireland**

This exhibition of paintings by the 19th century Irish naturalist Richard Dunscombe Parker was opened by Mr. Ted Hickey, Keeper of Art in the Ulster Museum. It was the first time these watercolours had been seen outside the Ulster Museum. Also on display was a copy of a book of reproductions of the Dunscombe Parker paintings produced in a limited edition by the Blackstaff Press. Also exhibited were butterflies and butterfly paintings from the Ulster Museum assembled by Mr. Robert Nash of the Museum's Botany and Zoology department.

Prior to the opening reception a large number of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum attended an illustrated lecture on Richard Dunscombe Parker, given by Mr. Martyn Anglesea, editor of the book. Mr. Anglesea showed how Parker's work related to that of the English artist-naturalists, Bewick and Selby and how it was influenced by the work of the American artist Audubon.

### **September 1984 — Architects in Practice**

An exhibition commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Royal Institute of Architects consisted of good illustrations of recent work by leading architects in Northern Ireland.

### **October-December 1984 — *A Quiet Valley:* Early Photographs of Carleton's Country by Rose Shaw**

#### **And Memorabilia of the writer Anne Crone 1915-1972**

Rose Shaw's photographs of small farming communities in the Clogher valley were taken between about 1905 and the early 1920's. Miss Shaw, a native of Bath, had come to the area as governess to the Gledstones of Fardross house, near Clogher. Only about 30 of her photographs have survived, many of them showing women at work. Several of them can be seen in the museum display in Lisnaskea, used to illustrate facets of rural life.

The exhibition generated a lot of local interest particularly from people living in the Clogher valley. As a result the exhibition travelled to Fivemiletown Library, where it attracted a good attendance during May and June of this year. Local people were able to identify many of the subjects in the photographs and further researches among families in the Clogher valley has resulted in nearly all of the subjects being identified, much to the satisfaction of the photographic department of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, where the negatives of the Rose Shaw collection are held.

The opening of the photographic exhibition was also an occasion to launch a Fermanagh novel "Bridie Steen" by Anne Crone, reprinted by Blackstaff Press and Arlen House. Memorabilia of Anne Crone were on display, including copies of her three novels, German and Swedish translations, manuscripts of childrens' stories broadcast by B.B.C. Northern Ireland and some interesting photographs and letters. Miss Elgy Gillespie, Irish Times journalist read extracts from "Bridie Steen" and spoke



*Rose Shaw's photograph of Mrs. Cassie McCaughey.*

enthusiastically about the work of Anne Crone. The writer's nonagenarian aunt, Miss Dora Plunkett of Derryadd, Lisnaskea, was guest of honour as were many other relatives of Anne Crone who had travelled to Enniskillen for the occasion.

### **Dec. 1984 - Jan. 1985 — The Flute and Ireland: Our Musical Heritage**

This exhibition from the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum traced the evolution of the flute in Ireland over the past four centuries and featured many rare instruments of each age. It was launched on December 18th with a concert of traditional Irish flute music played to a full house by Cathal McConnell, well known Fermanagh member of the Boys of the Lough. Cathal spoke about the Fermanagh flute-playing tradition and provided musical illustrations of the different styles of playing. It was again an evening for serving the traditional delicacy boxty, this time accompanied by a popular liquid concoction, especially made for the occasion by Vera Watters.

### **Feb.-April 1985 — Harry Ferguson Exhibition**

This photographic exhibition, mounted by the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, illustrated Harry Ferguson's life and achievements in the farm and motor industry. It was opened by the chairman of Fermanagh District Council, Mr. Caldwell McClaughry and attracted many first-time visitors to the museum from the farming community of Fermanagh. The exhibition included a 1937 Ferguson Brown tractor lent by Mr. William Elliott, of

Tempo alongside a brand-new Massey tractor lent by the firm of T. P. Topping, Enniskillen.

On February 27th, Mr. John S. Moore, Keeper of Transport at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, travelled to Enniskillen to give a public lecture about Harry Ferguson at the museum. Again this attracted a good attendance from the farming community who took part in an interesting discussion after the lecture.

### **April-June 1985 — Finds from the Armada Ships, La Trinidad Valencera and the Girona**

This long-awaited exhibition of finds from the Armada ships was opened by Mr. Laurence Flanagan, Keeper of Antiquities at the Ulster Museum. It included many interesting items of organic material — wooden bowls and platters, textiles, leather shoes as well as the famous gold Salamander pendant and gold and silver coins from the 16th century.

### **June-August 1985 — Heydays, Fair-days and Not So Good Days**

#### **Tempo House, Town and People at the Turn of the Century**

**An exhibition from the Ulster Museum of the Langham collection of Photographs, Birds, Moths and Butterflies.**

Earlier this year the Ulster Museum acquired a large collection of birds, moths, butterflies and photographs from the Langham family of Tempo Manor. The photographs, taken by Charles and Ethel Langham, give an intimate glimpse of life in Tempo around the turn of the century. Sir Charles Langham was also one of the great amateur naturalists of his day and he was responsible for the outstanding collection of butterflies, moths, and stuffed birds which were exhibited along with the photographs in Fermanagh County Museum. In a generous gesture towards Fermanagh the exhibition was given its first viewing in Enniskillen and it will not be seen in Belfast until a later date. The exhibition was opened by Dr. William A. Maguire, Keeper of Local History at the Ulster Museum, who was responsible for assembling the display. To co-incide with the exhibition, Fermanagh County Museum has produced its first publication — a well illustrated booklet about Tempo Village and Manor at the turn of the century written by Dr. W. A. Maguire.

### **Map of Enniskillen in 1772** by Farrell Mulvihill

This important 18th century map is now in the Public Records Office in Belfast but because of its poor condition, attempts to produce a good photographic copy of it met with failure. However the museum has now been able to have this map faithfully reproduced by hand from a full-size photograph of the original map. This work was done by John Hynes, who joined the museum's staff under the Action for Community Employment Scheme. His meticulously drawn copy details the names of over a hundred occupiers in the town and the extent of their holdings.

## **A Talking Picture of Fermanagh**

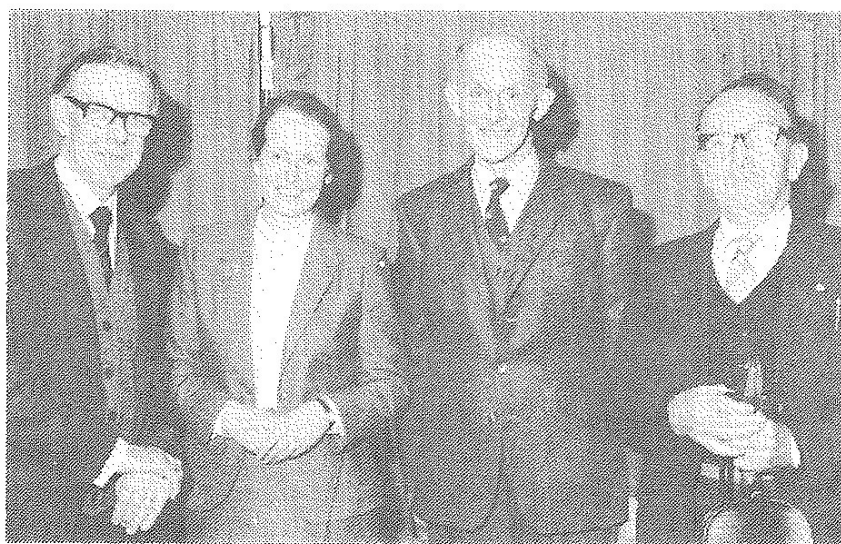
### **A Review of the Audio-Visual Presentation "The Maguires of Fermanagh and the Town of Enniskillen" by Reverend P. Ó Gallachair**

Our Fermanagh County Museum, in its historic setting, has always been a delightful place to visit. Never more so than at present with its varied assortment of special exhibitions, growing acquisitions and other improvements. But for at least one visitor the *pièce de résistance* is the stimulating audio-visual show on medieval and modern Fermanagh. Before enjoying it one might think one's knowledge of the history and scenery of the county was fairly full. But less than twenty minutes of this eloquent, illustrated account soon lays bare one's ignorance of some salient facts of the Fermanagh story.

We are briefly introduced to the Fermanagh royalty of Gaelic days — the Maguire kings, like the castle-builders Tomás Mór, his son, Tomás Óg and his popular brother, Hugh the Hospitable. We glance at their life-style, their patronage of religion, literature and the arts; then follow them down to the fall of the House of Maguire and the replacement of the Gaelic by the British Establishment here after many a bitter battle. The Ulster Plantation creates a new ascendancy holding new castles and building also busy market towns, well exemplified here in reproductions of prints and pictures of Enniskillen itself. And so the two communities, often divided, continue to co-exist, sometimes uncomfortably, in the Fermanagh of today.

This succinct story is naturally a happy hunting ground for the nitpicker from either community noting omissions of their own version of the Fermanagh story. But it must jog the genuine student of local history to further reading. With its tightly written script and stunningly beautiful pictures of Fermanagh's lakeland, this programme is undoubtedly a source of pleasure and information to all who visit the museum.

## **Museum Exhibition in Lisnaskea**



*At the opening of the Lisnaskea Museum were from left, Mr. George Thompson, Director of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Mrs. Renée Thompson, Mr. Pat Cassidy and Mr. Paddy Gunn, fiddle player. The highlight of the evening was a demonstration of a country dance by Mr. Cassidy to the accompaniment of Mr. Gunn's fiddle music.*



*Mr. Frank Mulholland (right) at the opening of the Lisnaskea Museum, discusses a display of his family's work of scythe stone making with Mr. Charlie McNally.*

This year the Museum broadened its field of operation with the setting up a new museum display in Lisnaskea library. Mr. George Thompson, Director of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum performed the official opening of the Lisnaskea Museum on April 1st. The exhibition of Fermanagh folk-life and customs is based on the collection made by Mr. Pat Cassidy and formerly housed in his Corner House Bar in Lisnaskea. In 1981 Mr. Cassidy presented this large collection — over 800 items — to Fermanagh District Council.

In his opening address Mr. Thompson paid tribute to the work of Pat Cassidy in collecting the evidence of man's past, and by passing his collection into public ownership, ensuring that it is preserved for the enlightenment of present and future generations. Mr. Thompson described the exhibition as a history of day-to-day life, of the things shared in common rather than those which divide. He went on to complement Fermanagh District

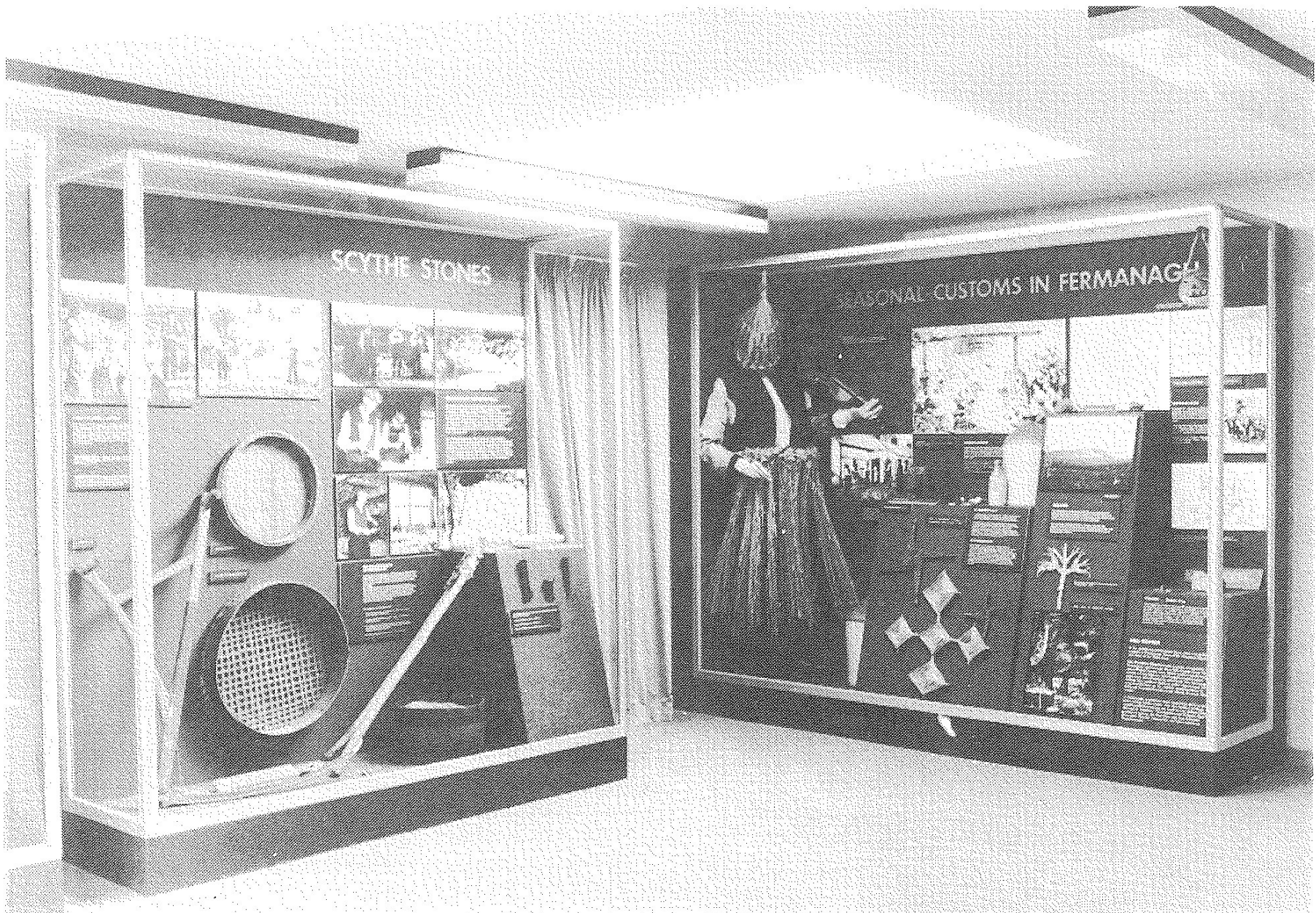
Council on the growth of its County Museum in branching out to serve the whole county.

Among the guests at the opening were two craftsmen whose work is included in the exhibition, Mr. Philip Bonner, shoe maker and Mr. Frank Mulholland maker of scythe stones. The exhibition also contains sections on seasonal folk customs, agriculture, the care of farm livestock and the crafts of straw and rush work. It was mounted by the staff of Fermanagh County Museum to a design by Ian Magill, of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. Thanks to the co-operation of the Western Education and Library Board the exhibition will be open to the public throughout the year during normal library opening hours.

## Old Farm Equipment

During the year the museum received a major donation of 44 items of farm equipment from Mrs. Anne Smyth née Crudden of Newry. They came from her family home at Lackilagreen near Newtownbutler and included many unusual objects such as a horse-drawn water carrier and a large cast-iron potato boiler as well as items like a McMahon spade, a wooden sledge or slipe, a "Tumbling Paddy" and an old rat trap!

Fermanagh County Museum began restoring and conserving large items of farm equipment in 1982. With the assistance of the Action for Community Employment Scheme and the co-operation of the Department of the Environment a team of two men, John Robinson and Ignatious Toye, commenced work in the D.O.E. workshop at Castle Archdale Country Park. Later James Eaves was employed and the scheme continues to-day with Edward McNulty and Paul Keane. As a result a large collection of Fermanagh folk-life has been preserved, including items as diverse as a Fermanagh cot presented by Mr. J. McCaffrey of Clonaroo, Newtownbutler, a threshing machine



*Part of the display in Lisnaskea Library.*

from Mr. S. Carrothers of Tamlaght, a horse-drawn tedder from Dr. R. Brandon of Monea and a drill plough from Mr. T. Fitzpatrick of Teemore.

Until recently such items were commonly seen in the countryside and many were used within living memory. However they are fast disappearing and a scheme like this is invaluable in enabling us to preserve this kind of evidence of rural life for future generations.

## Museum Acquisitions 1984-85

In April 1984 the Earl of Belmore, Patron of the Friends of Fermanagh County Museum, presented the museum with an oil painting by William Scott entitled "White and Grey (2)," Lord Belmore unveiled the painting at a special event at the museum to mark the occasion.

A second painting by William Scott was unveiled on the same occasion by the artist Mr. Terence Flanagan. This painting entitled "Louise" was purchased by Fermanagh District Council for £4,800 from the Crane Kalman Gallery in London, with the help of generous grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Friends of the National Collections of Ireland. In the Annual Report of the National Heritage Memorial Fund the grant to Fermanagh District Council is described as marking the first occasion on which a contribution has been made towards a work of art by a living artist. The writers of the report go on to describe their satisfaction in helping to bring this painting to a gallery in the artist's home town and their "real pleasure to see a living Northern Ireland artist accorded 'national heritage status.' "



"Louise" by William Scott 1939.

Oil on Canvas.

During the year the museum received two important bequests of books, one from our local historian, Mrs. Mary Rogers who has recently left Fermanagh to live near Oxford, the other from Mrs. Alice E. Crichton of Selborne, Alton, who formerly lived at Killyreagh, Tamlaght.

Mrs. Rogers' collection contains many useful reference books on Irish history, folk life and prehistory including a rare edition of a privately printed book by Henry Saunderson on the Saunderson family of Castle Saunderson. Mrs. Rogers has also given to the museum the papers, photographs and drawings used in the preparation of her two books, Prospect of Erne and Prospect of Fermanagh.



Mr. and Mrs. Frank O'Shea seated beside the historic stone which they presented to the museum. Also included in the picture are the Museum Curator, Helen Lanigan Wood and Mr. Walter Brady who supervised the removal of the stone from the O'Shea's former home at 10, Eden Street.

The stone bears the inscription "Built by L.H. 1731" and probably refers to a house built by Letournal Hudson at that time. An old map of Enniskillen by Mulvihill shows that Hudsons occupied the site of the O'Shea's house in 1772. The street at that time was called Pudding Lane.

Mrs. Crichton's collection includes some rare early books like Vallencey's A Vindication of the Ancient History of Ireland published in 1786, O'Brien's Round Towers of Ireland, The Irish Mythological Cycle by De Jubainville D'Arbois and a superb seven volume edition of the Annals of the Four Masters published in 1856.

Earlier this year an interesting collection of documents, books and old photographs was presented to the museum archive by Mrs. Hilary Wright of Ballygally, niece of the late Canon Dundas, author of a history of Enniskillen Parish and Town published in 1913. Among the documents compiled by Canon Dundas are several papers tracing the history of the Fermanagh families of Dundas and Geddes.

This rich collection from Mrs. Wright includes copies of early Fermanagh newspapers, The Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet, The Fermanagh Times, The Fermanagh Mail, the Enniskillen Advertiser and North Western Gazette and the first issue of The Impartial Reporter or Fermanagh Farmers Journal on May 19th, 1823. The oldest of these is an issue of The Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne packet printed on November 2nd in 1808, which like the other newspapers, is in remarkably good condition. The photographs include early views of Enniskillen, among them an interesting shot of the former Townhall in Enniskillen taken during festivities to mark the diamond jubilee of the accession of Queen Victoria in 1897.

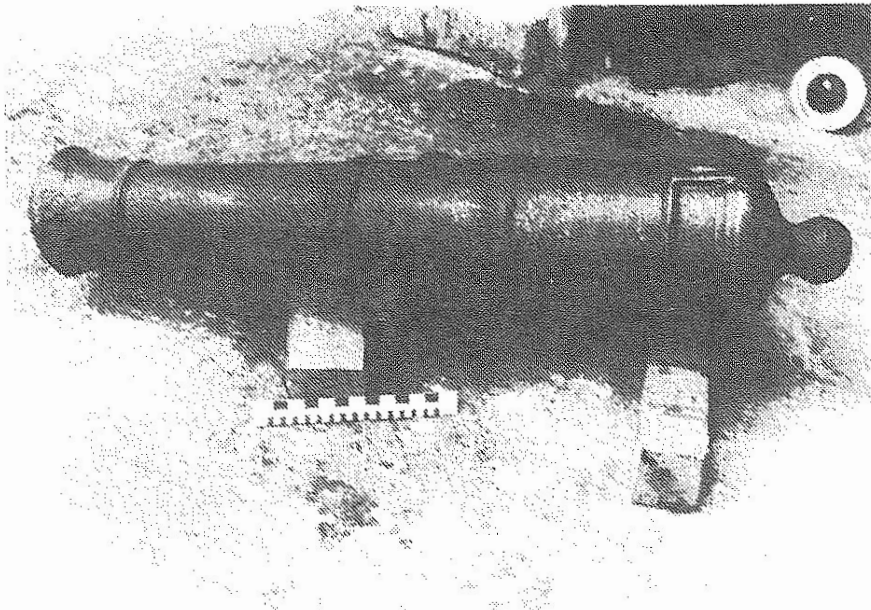
The museum is again indebted to Mr. David Blair of Enniskillen whose fine collection of photographs was shown at the museum in 1983 in the exhibition entitled "Beyond the Bridges." During the year he made a presentation to the museum of his large collection of blacksmith's, farrier's and wheelwright's tools and equipment, all in excellent condition.

During 1984 the museum recorded 220 acquisitions, most of them donations. These included geological specimens, old garments, memorabilia relating to the railways, rural household equipment, old photographs, documents, prints, maps and calendars, all of which add something to our knowledge of the past in this area. Lack of space prevents us from naming all our donors individually but we would like to express our thanks here to all who contributed so generously to the museum's collection.

## Conservation Work in Fermanagh County Museum

Conservation work is now an important part of the museum's programme. Most of the items acquired by the museum have to be treated in some way before being stored or put on display. Wooden objects are treated for woodworm, iron for rust, bronze for decay, paper for various forms of deterioration: straw materials have to be fumigated, waterlogged wooden objects stabilised, clothes repaired, leather protected; and usually every object has to be cleaned.

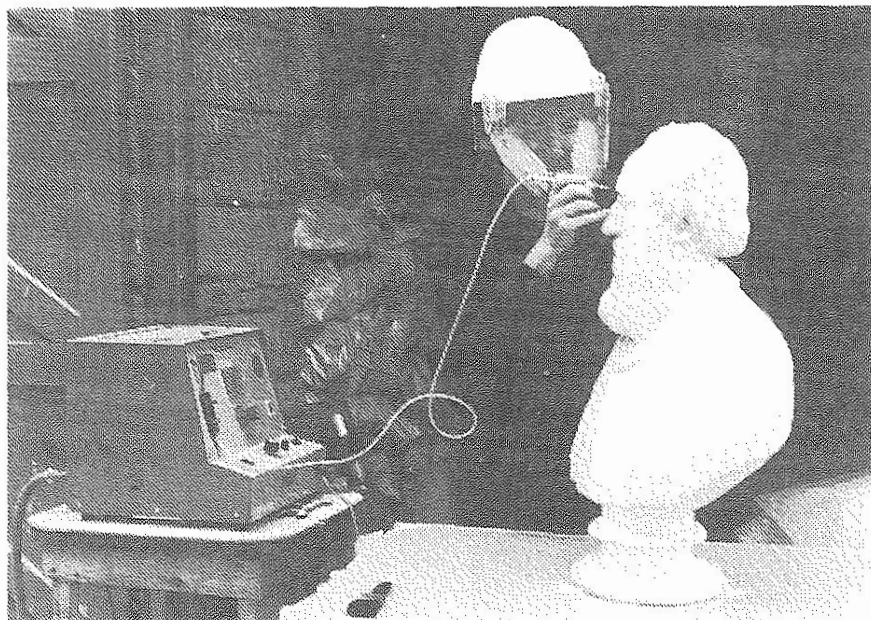
Some of these tasks — treating decayed bronze and waterlogged wood for example — have to be done by professional conservators but most are done as part of the routine work at Fermanagh museum.



*This 18th century cannon donated by the late Miss Abernethy of Ballygawley, was recently conserved at the museum, using the methods practised at the Welsh National Folk Museum for treating corroded iron. First a de-rusting agent is applied — in this case Modaply — to achieve a stable surface and this is followed by a protective coating of Waxoyl. Waxoyl is widely used to protect car bodies from rusting and it was the conservator of the Welsh museum, Mr. Robert Child who first used it to protect farm machinery in museums.*

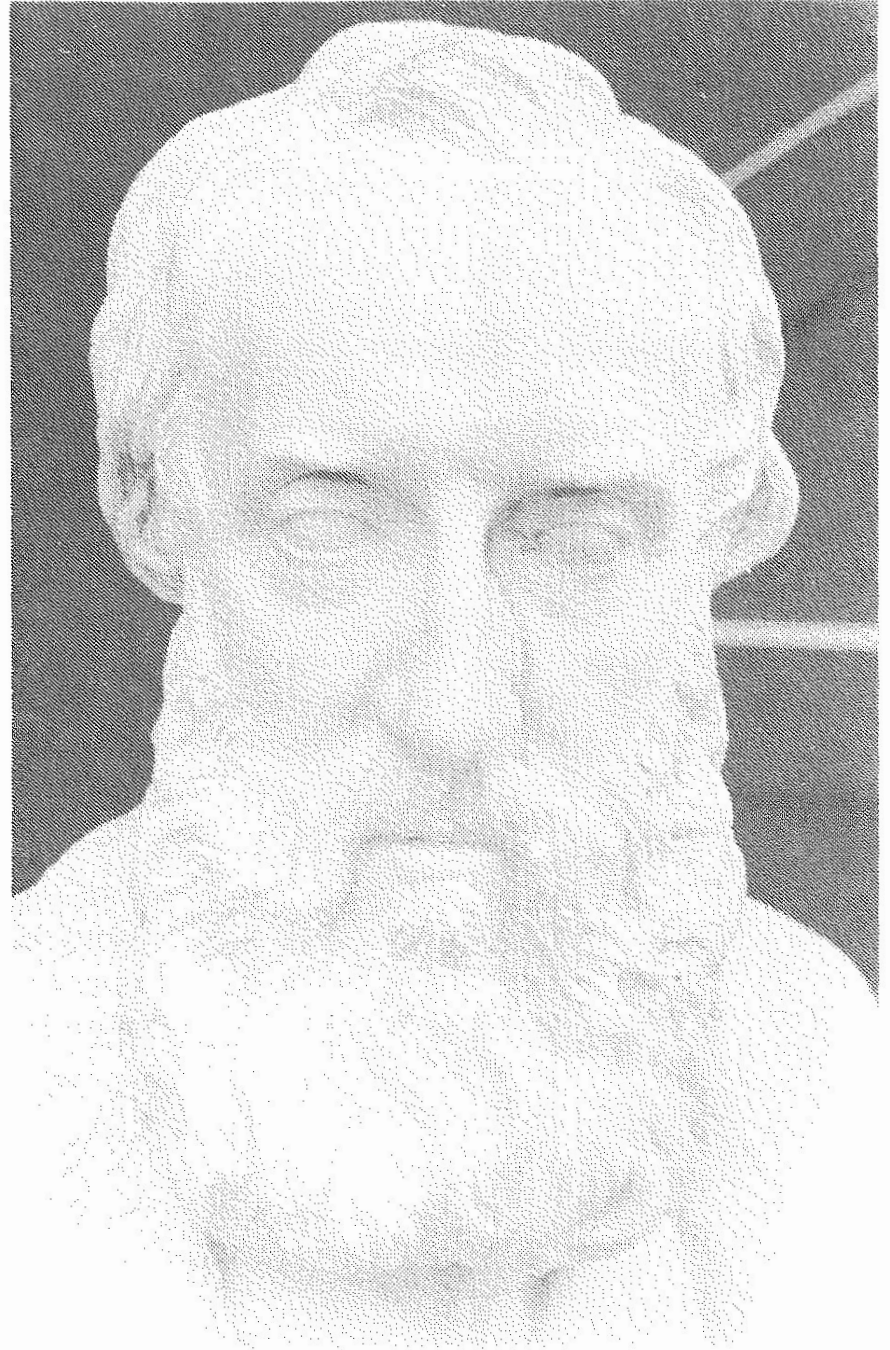
*Before the cannon can go on display, the services of a skilled joiner will be needed to reconstruct a gun carriage.*

In 1981 the museum acquired the Pat Cassidy collection of folk-life material, all of which needed urgent attention. To cope with this problem the District Council employed two additional temporary staff under the Action for Community Employment scheme and with their help a large part of this collection has now been conserved. The



*Vera Watters, Museum Assistant, uses the museum's Airbrasive machine to clean a plaster bust by the 19th century Fermanagh sculptor Joseph Watkins. The machine operates by having fine abrasive powders propelled by air pressure through a fine pen-like tool and it is capable of cleaning very fine objects like parchment manuscripts, gilded frames and fine jewellery as well as more robust materials like metal, wood and stone.*

more difficult conservation jobs are undertaken by Vera Watters who has developed considerable skills in this kind of work through experience and specialised training received from professional conservators. Here we must pay tribute to the professional conservators like Malcolm Fry of The Archeological Survey in Belfast and Maighread McParland of the National Gallery in Dublin who provide us with so much advice on conservation problems.



*Detail of the Watkin's head partly cleaned.*

## A Grant for the Museum

In 1984 the Government introduced a special scheme whereby £500,000 was made available by the Minister for the Arts for conservation purposes. Fermanagh County Museum was fortunate to obtain a grant of £450 from this fund to help purchase a second Thermohygrograph, twelve hygrometers, a light meter and an Ultra-Violet Monitor. Out of 400 applications, fifty three grants were made, twenty of them for conservation equipment. Fermanagh County Museum was the only museum in Northern Ireland to receive a grant.

## Seminar on Conservation

The museum will be represented at a week-end seminar on conservation to be held in Belfast from September 27th to 29th under the auspices of the Irish Museums Association and the International Council of Museums. The theme of the seminar is Basic Museum Conservation and several of the speakers are from the Irish Professional Conservators and Restorers Association. The next Annual General Meeting of the latter association is to take place in Fermanagh County Museum in September.

## Membership and Subscriptions

We would like to thank you all for your generous subscriptions. Your contributions are greatly valued; they enable us to purchase items which otherwise would be beyond our reach. This year, as you will have noted elsewhere in this newsletter, we have been successful in getting grants from various funding bodies. For this reason we have needed to spend only £100 from our Friends' fund. This was to purchase an attractive water-colour of Lough Erne at Crom Castle by Edward Hovell Thurlow (1839-1925). However negotiations are under way to purchase several other items for our collection and we shall have further news of these in our next newsletter.

The Association of Friends was launched in April 1984, so for the moment, the membership year will run from April 1st to March 31st. Because of popular demand we have introduced a new family subscription of £8 for 1985-1986. Those of you who pay through Bankers Orders, may like to change to this family rate, which allows the benefits of membership to be shared by all the family.

Annual subscriptions for 1985-86 are still being received; the ordinary subscription is £5 with a £2 rate for O.A.P.'s, unwaged and students. Corporate membership for schools and institutions is £15. Cheques should be made payable to The Friends of Fermanagh County

Museum and may be sent to Fermanagh County Museum, Castle Barracks, Enniskillen.

## Forthcoming Events

In October there will be an exhibition of Portraits of Irish Writers from the Ulster Museum.

★★★★

In March of next year T. P. Flanagan will be showing an exhibition of paintings inspired by his explorations of Fermanagh's past.

★★★★

In the Summer there will be a Craft exhibition from the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum "Crafted in Ireland."

★★★★

In the Autumn there will be an exhibition about the History of Wine-Making.

★★★★

A bus outing to Donegal will be held in the Spring, to visit Glenveagh Castle and the Glebe Art Gallery near Churchill.