

world within walls

Discovering the journey from
Cavan-Monaghan Asylum
to Community Services

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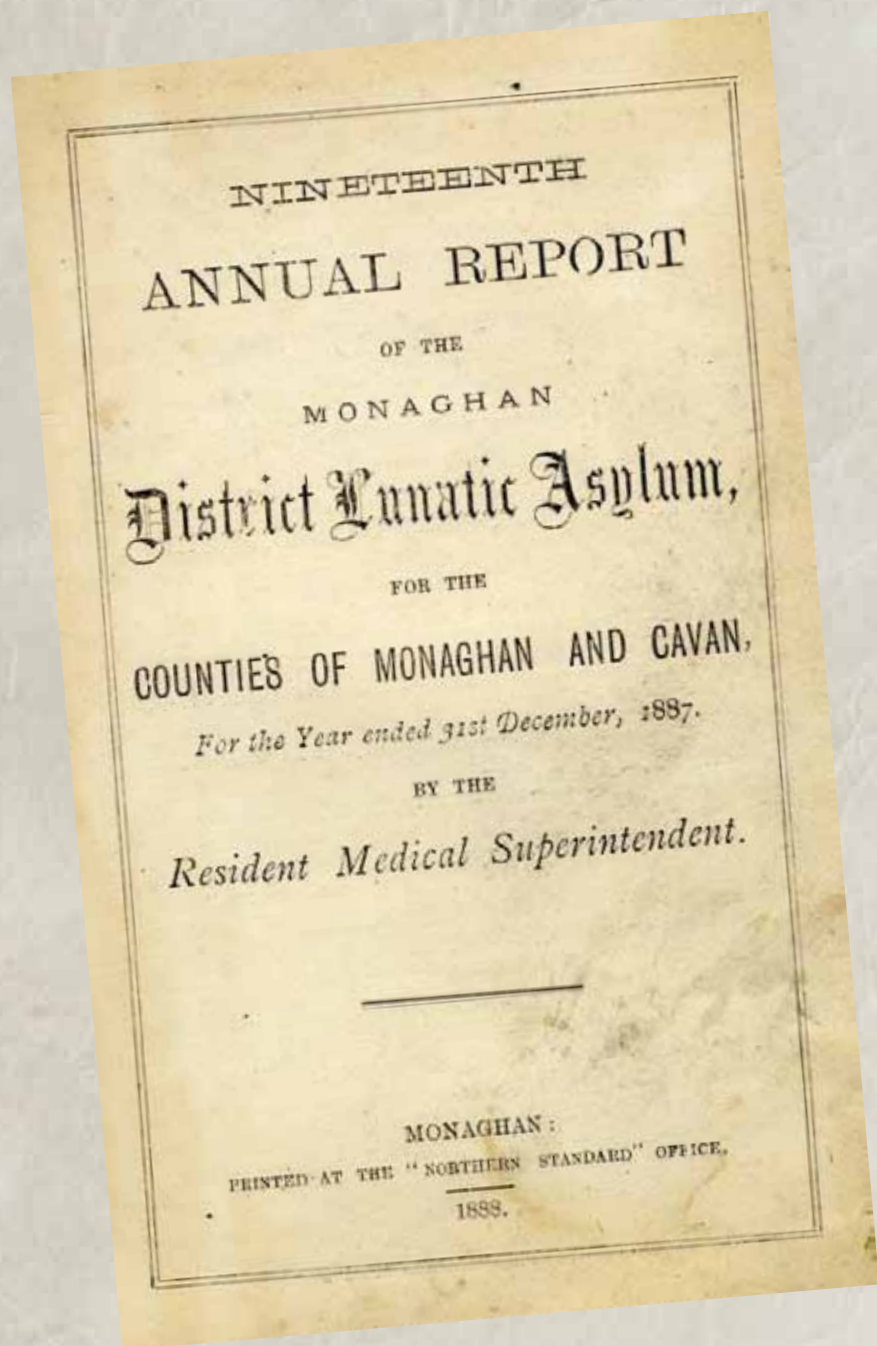
Niamh NicGhabhann and Fiona Byrne

with contributions by Liam Bradley and Leo Kinsella

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Foreword

HSE file pending

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Image Caption HSE forward page:

First Minute Books of the Asylum -Photographer Fiona Byrne ©HSE 2014



A typical small dormitory 1985.
Courtesy of Donal McEnroe and Monaghan County Museum.

Foreword

Liam Bradley, Monaghan County Museum

Monaghan County Council led the way in 1974 when it became the first local authority in the Republic of Ireland to set up a full time professionally run museum. Monaghan County Museum celebrated forty years serving the community of Monaghan in 2014. During the years in which the museum has been in existence there have been significant changes in the County. When it opened in 1974 the conflict in Northern Ireland was raging on, the Monaghan bombing had occurred that same year killing seven people. The people of County Monaghan were suffering personally as well as economically from the Troubles. It was against this external backdrop that the museum opened its doors to the public.

Over the decades the staff of the museum has instigated numerous programmes aimed at raising awareness of the cultural diversity and historical richness of County Monaghan. One of the museum's key strengths is its ability to bring different communities together through their shared interest in history and heritage. As well as an annual programme of exhibitions and events which promote the heritage of the region, the museum also runs a widespread outreach programme where the museum collection is brought out around the county to groups of all ages, cultural, economic and religious backgrounds.

County Monaghan has changed and its community has diversified over the last forty years. The conflict in Northern Ireland has ended and the its proximity to the border is now an advantage as the museum service grows and reaches out around its own community and across the border to build new professional relations and strengthen old ones. The collection has grown to one of the finest in Ireland and the staff use the incredible

stories connected with these objects to help paint the story of the county through workshops, talks, tours, seminars, schools loans programmes, outreach events, living history family fun days and online.

Monaghan County Museum is very happy to be working in cooperation with HSE Cavan Monaghan on this exhibition which tells the story of St. Davnet's from District Lunatic Asylum to Community Services. This exhibition is part of a wider local history project commissioned and funded by the HSE Cavan Monaghan and delivered by Stair: An Irish Public History Company under the guidance of the HSE *World Within Walls* project reference group.

St. Davnet's has played an important role in the history of County Monaghan for almost 150 years and it is timely that an exhibition detailing the history of this institution would now be made available to the people of Monaghan. As the title of the exhibition suggests, this was for many years a world within walls. The exhibition will give the public an insight into the life of both the staff and the service users. The story is told through original objects dating back to the opening of what was then known as the District Lunatic Asylum, archival material, oral histories, images, a virtual tour of the St. Davnet's Campus, online resources and a range of talks and events that will be staged in conjunction with the exhibition.

Monaghan County Museum would like to acknowledge Cavan Monaghan HSE and Stair: An Irish Public History Company for their partnership and professional expertise throughout the development of this ground breaking exhibition.



Introduction

World Within Walls: Discovering the journey from Cavan-Monaghan Asylum to Community Services is an exhibition that explores the histories, stories and memories of St. Davnet's Hospital in Monaghan town. The campus has a long history, and many people have passed through its gates since the

Niamh NicGhabhann

hospital was first opened as the Cavan and Monaghan District Asylum in 1869. It has been, for different people, a place of employment, of work, of recovery, of illness, of fear, of respite, of recreation, of incarceration and of care.

Today, many of the buildings are used by the Health Service Executive for the provision of services to the community, and many use the site as a site for leisure and exercise. Gates that were once closed have been opened, reflecting deeper changes in the provision of mental health care, and in the way that we think about mental health in society.

In creating this exhibition, we have been aware of these very different experiences, and accept that one exhibition could not fully explore each and every individual story connected with the site. We decided to present a clear historical framework, allowing visitors to put the story of St. Davnet's in a national historical context from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. In doing so, we have drawn on the work of many medical historians who have increased our knowledge about psychiatric history in this country. Within this historical context, we have told the story of the site through images and objects connected with the hospital from its days as asylum, as mental hospital, and finally, as St. Davnet's campus. Individual voices have been included through the oral history project, an invaluable record created by Fiona Byrne as part of the overall *World Within Walls* project.

Rather than tell the story of staff and patients separately, and risk perpetuating stereotypes about illness and identity, we instead focused on areas of life within St. Davnet's shared by all those who lived and engaged with life there.

Rather than tell the story of staff and patients separately, and risk perpetuating stereotypes about illness and identity, we instead focused on areas of life within St. Davnet's shared by all those who lived and engaged with life there. These areas include the world of work, ideas of illness and recovery, and daily life and life cycles at St. Davnet's. These themes cross between identities of staff and patient, and highlight instead the shared lives and experiences on the campus. We hope that visitors will explore the

stories presented within their historical context - many of the practices and words within the exhibition would not be acceptable today. As curators, we have tried to give visitors as much information as possible in order to make their own judgments about past and present ideas of mental illness, health, care and wellbeing.

The design and construction of this exhibition involved many people, and has been a truly collaborative process. Every stage of the *World Within Walls* project, including the development of a book, an oral history archive, an archives management plan and a community outreach strand, has been guided by local involvement. This support and involvement has been invaluable to the development of the project. We have also been guided by a project reference group, which has included members of the HSE, former staff members, and local history experts. We are hugely indebted to the curator and staff at Monaghan County Museum, who have been extremely generous with their expertise, and have engaged with the development of the exhibition at every level.

World Within Walls: discovering the journey from Cavan-Monaghan Asylum to Community Services is, in many ways, an exhibition about a difficult aspect of Ireland's history, and about a difficult, and sometimes tragic, part of life. It forms part of a wider desire within Irish society to look at, and better understand, aspects of our history that involve sadness, suffering and illness. Issues of overcrowding, of limited resources and stigma feature throughout the story, as well as stories of extraordinary care, attention and achievement in difficult circumstances. We are very grateful to all those who have given us their time and shared their stories with us as we put this exhibition together, and we hope that it will form part of a greater culture of understanding into the future.

Image: The Staff, including Dr. Neary and his red setter Billy c.1930s
Courtesy of Harry Hughes



View from the Hillgrove Hotel; here you can see on the left the new nurses' home designed by Arthur H.Laudner, on the hill to the right the old nurses' home known as St. Judes today, it was built in the 1940s which was taken over as part of the T.B. hospital, and in the foreground the GAA grounds which once formed part of the asylum farm land.

Photograph Niamh NicGhabhann ©HSE 2014

Discovering the history of St. Davnet's

The buildings and site that we now know as St. Davnet's Campus were first opened in 1869 as the Cavan and Monaghan District Lunatic Asylum.

The asylum was just one of many built across Britain and Ireland at the time. When it first opened, the Monaghan asylum was the largest in the country. The first 113 patients came from Armagh District Asylum, which was suffering badly from overcrowding. These included men between the ages of 17 and 40, and women aged between 23 and 61.

Originally built to accommodate 300 patients, the building quickly became overcrowded. Overcrowding was a continuous problem until the 1960s and additional spaces and buildings were added throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The name of the asylum was changed to Monaghan Mental Hospital in 1924, and was changed again to St. Davnet's Hospital in 1954, today the site is known as St. Davnet's campus. These name changes reflect shifting attitudes towards mental health and its treatment in Ireland.

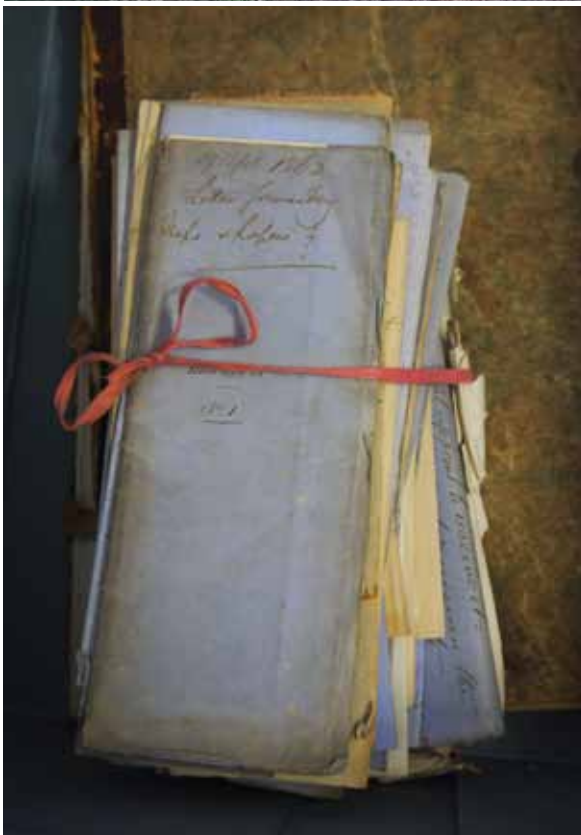
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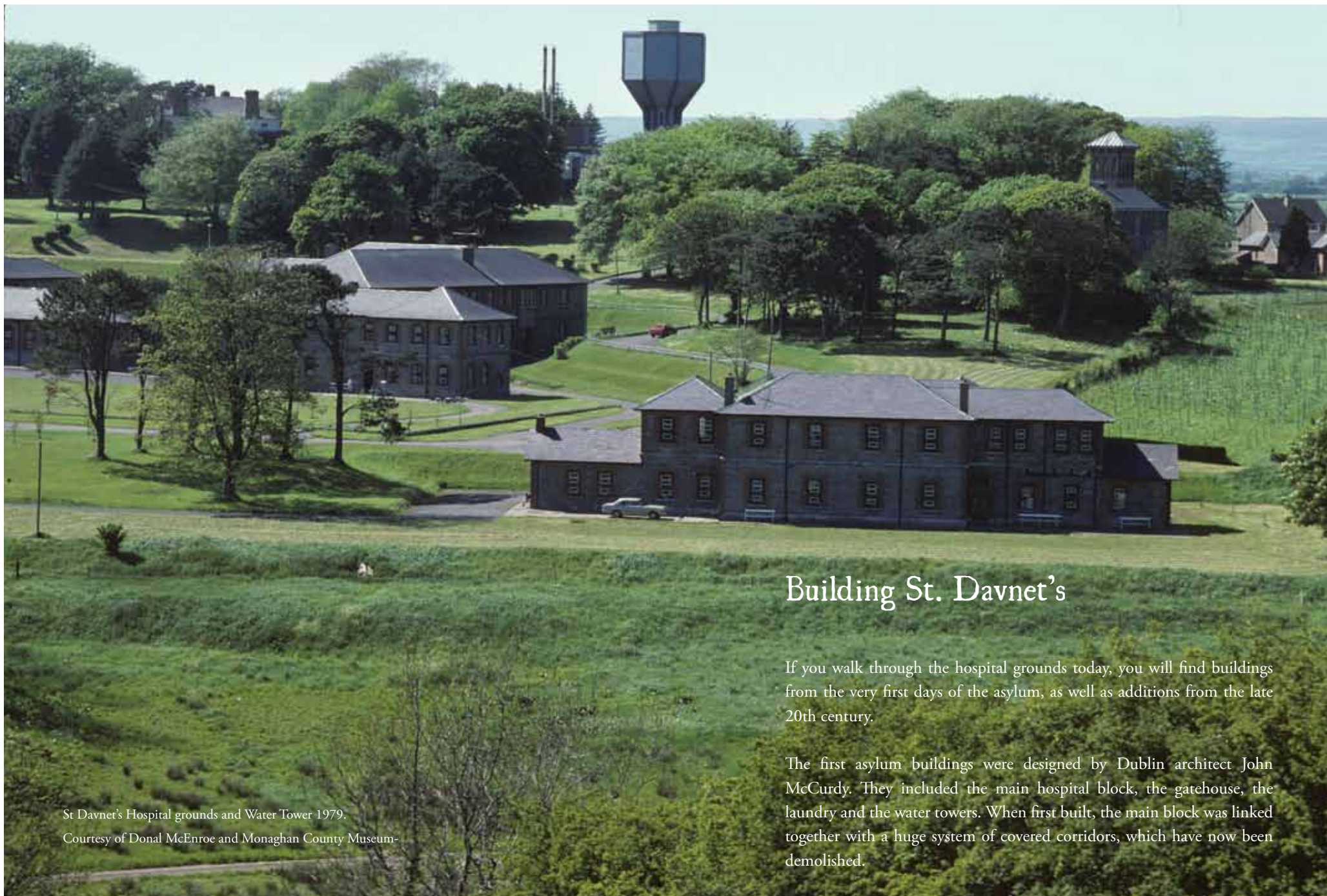
J.Nolan and P. Connolly at the front gates of the hospital in 1947
image courtesy of Martin Connolly;

Minutes of the first meeting of the Monaghan District Lunatic Asylum in 1869
image from archives ©HSE 2014;

First admissions book for the district asylum -Photographer-Fiona Byrne 2014 ©HSE 2014;

Bundle of documents from the archives which relate to the establishment of the asylum
Photographer Fiona Byrne ©HSE 2014





St Davnet's Hospital grounds and Water Tower 1979.
Courtesy of Donal McEnroe and Monaghan County Museum-

Building St. Davnet's

If you walk through the hospital grounds today, you will find buildings from the very first days of the asylum, as well as additions from the late 20th century.

The first asylum buildings were designed by Dublin architect John McCurdy. They included the main hospital block, the gatehouse, the laundry and the water towers. When first built, the main block was linked together with a huge system of covered corridors, which have now been demolished.



I remember looking down and seeing the old chronic building all spread out below me, it was indubitably a mental hospital it couldn't be anything else. It had all the elements of institutionalism, grey and sombre and lots of wandering figures around it...

Interviewee AD

Aerial View St Davnet's Hospital 1985.

Courtesy of Donal McEnroe and Monaghan County Museum-



Clockwise from top left;
The Medical Superintendent's residence.

Glass and plasterwork from the interior of the RMS residence.

The Catholic and Church of Ireland churches side by side in the grounds of St. Davnets.

Photographs
Fiona Byrne © HSE 2014



The house of the Resident Medical Superintendent was built later, in 1880, and is more ornate than the other buildings on the site. The twinned chapels on the site were built at the turn of the twentieth century.

Continuing problems with overcrowding led to the construction of a new Acute Admissions Unit and a Nurses' Home in the 1940s. However, due to the T.B. crisis in Ireland these were immediately taken over as a T.B. hospital and not returned to the hospital until the 1950s.



Arthur H. Lardner architectural drawing of the Nurses' Home 1953

In the 1960's with the developments in pharmacology and a drive to engage patients in socialisation things began to change on the campus. In the 70's and 80's a rapid shift in how mental health services should be delivered saw the beginning of the end for institutional care. Buildings began to change in use, such as St Jude's originally built as a new nurses home and which was taken over as a hostel for patients, as a half way point to living in the community again.

The last admission to St. Davnet's was in 2011. An acute psychiatric unit has been developed at Cavan General Hospital. St. Davnet's campus is now a community resource with numerous outpatients services, the births, death and marriages offices and walkways through the campus for the general public.

The World of Work

From the earliest days of the asylum, work played a large part in the daily lives of patients. Work was seen as a form of therapy, and continued to play a role in the treatment of patients throughout the twentieth century.

One record from 1897 gives us an insight into the kinds of work that patients carried out in the asylum. Like all of life on the wards, this work would have been segregated by gender, with men and women doing different jobs.

Duties included:

- Assisting attendants in the wards
- Garden or field labourer
- Clerk
- Storekeeper
- Messenger
- Stoker
- Tailor
- Shoemaker
- Upholsterer
- Painter
- Joiner
- Mason
- Laundry work
- Officers' quarters
- Needlework
- Knitting



Monaghan Lunatic Asylum Fire Station c.1920.

Image courtesy of Irish Historical Picture Company

Patients continued to work at the asylum, and later the hospital, until the 1970s. Following the Mental Health Treatment Act 1961, patients were paid for their work from January 1963.

The asylum, and later the hospital, was also an important source of employment in the local area. Jobs ranged from the Resident Medical Superintendent, to nurses, attendants, groundskeepers, dairy maids and even the bandmaster for the Asylum Band and organist for the church.

Conditions varied for those working in the asylum. In the early years, for example, the Resident Medical Superintendent got an annual salary of £400, with a fine house to live in. The matron got a salary of £100 a year, with apartments in the asylum and allowances of fuel, light, washing, bread, milk and vegetables.

While other staff, such as attendants, were offered job security, regular wages, food and accommodation, their hours were very long and their accommodation was not as spacious. The work was tough both mentally and physically.



The laundry building, sinks and rollers



Staff photo c.1930s.

Image courtesy of Harry Huges

Peadar O'Donnell in Monaghan

On 18 January 1919, the *Northern Standard* commented on discontent in the asylum.

On 23 January, a special meeting of the Joint Management Committee took place. Peadar O'Donnell put forward terms on behalf of the staff.

Peadar O'Donnell's Demands on behalf of Asylum Staff, January 1919

1. A 56-hour week for all members of the union, time and a half for overtime.
2. Married men to be at liberty to leave the grounds after working day is finished.
3. An all round increase of £1 per week over pre-war rates retrospective since August last.
4. Skilled workmen to be paid rates current for their particular crafts.

The *Northern Standard* reported that at a special meeting in the Boardroom, O'Donnell said he *'was asking for peace, but I was prepared for war.'*

The Committee gave way on the tradesmen issue but refused the £1 war bonus. O'Donnell refused to accept this and the members of the Committee gave instructions to call in the police and have the strikers removed.

The strike that ensued was a form of 'lock in' rather than a 'lock out' with attendants and nurses continuing to look after the inmates. It was reported that the red flag was raised over the asylum which was proclaimed a soviet.



The strike ended on the night of 3 February 1919 through the intervention of Fr. James McNamee who acted as a mediator between the strikers and the Joint Management Committee. O'Donnell recalls that Fr. McNamee, who later became a Bishop proved to be a *'topper, an absolute dinger'*.

Summary of the terms of Settlement

1. All strikers to return to duty forthwith without victimization.
2. The Joint Committee to undertake to do its utmost to procure the formation of a General Committee of Asylum Committees for all Ireland on the lines of the General Council of County Councils.
3. The General Committee to confer with the Union of Asylum Attendants and arrange a uniform scale for all Ireland of salaries, hours and other terms of employment.
4. The Cavan Monaghan Joint Asylum Committee will accept the scale and terms so arranged.
5. Failing the fixing of a scale in the manner aforesaid within 12 months from this date all questions of salaries, bonuses, hours of duty and all other terms of employment to be left to the decision of a Court of Arbitration.
6. The war bonuses to continue in force and payable until the fixing of the scale in accordance with paragraph 3 or the making of an award as in paragraph 5.
7. Messrs Thomas Toal, William Martin, Owen Hughes and Peter Mullan undertake to have these terms ratified at the next meeting of the Joint Committee of Management provided they are now accepted by the attendants.



Professionalising the nursing profession:

In the early years of the hospital nurses carried out a large variety of duties including cleaning and cooking. In the 1940s the new Department for Health expressed their wish that nurses would not carry out non-nursing duties.

In 1950 the Nurses' Act gave nurses a substantial role in the regulation of their own profession and in 1961 a 'sister tutor' for nurses in St Davnet's was appointed. Also in the 1960s, St Davnet's took the innovative step of hiring community nurses. In 1968, at a ceremony held at St Davnet's, the Minister for Health Sean Flanagan officially launched an Inter Hospitals' Course for General and Psychiatric Nurses.

Staff photograph, image courtesy of Harry Hughes



Ground floor room in Ward 7,
photographer Fiona Byrne, ©HSE 2014

Illness and Recovery

Our ideas about mental health, illness, care and recovery have changed considerably since the first days of the asylum in 1869.

When it was built, the asylum was part of a large system of public institutions put in place to manage those who were ill (hospitals), destitute (workhouses) or involved in criminal activities (the gaol). Those with enough money, and without criminal convictions, would be cared for in private institutions, or at home.

While some patients spent a short time within the hospital walls, others remained within the system of institutional care throughout their lives.

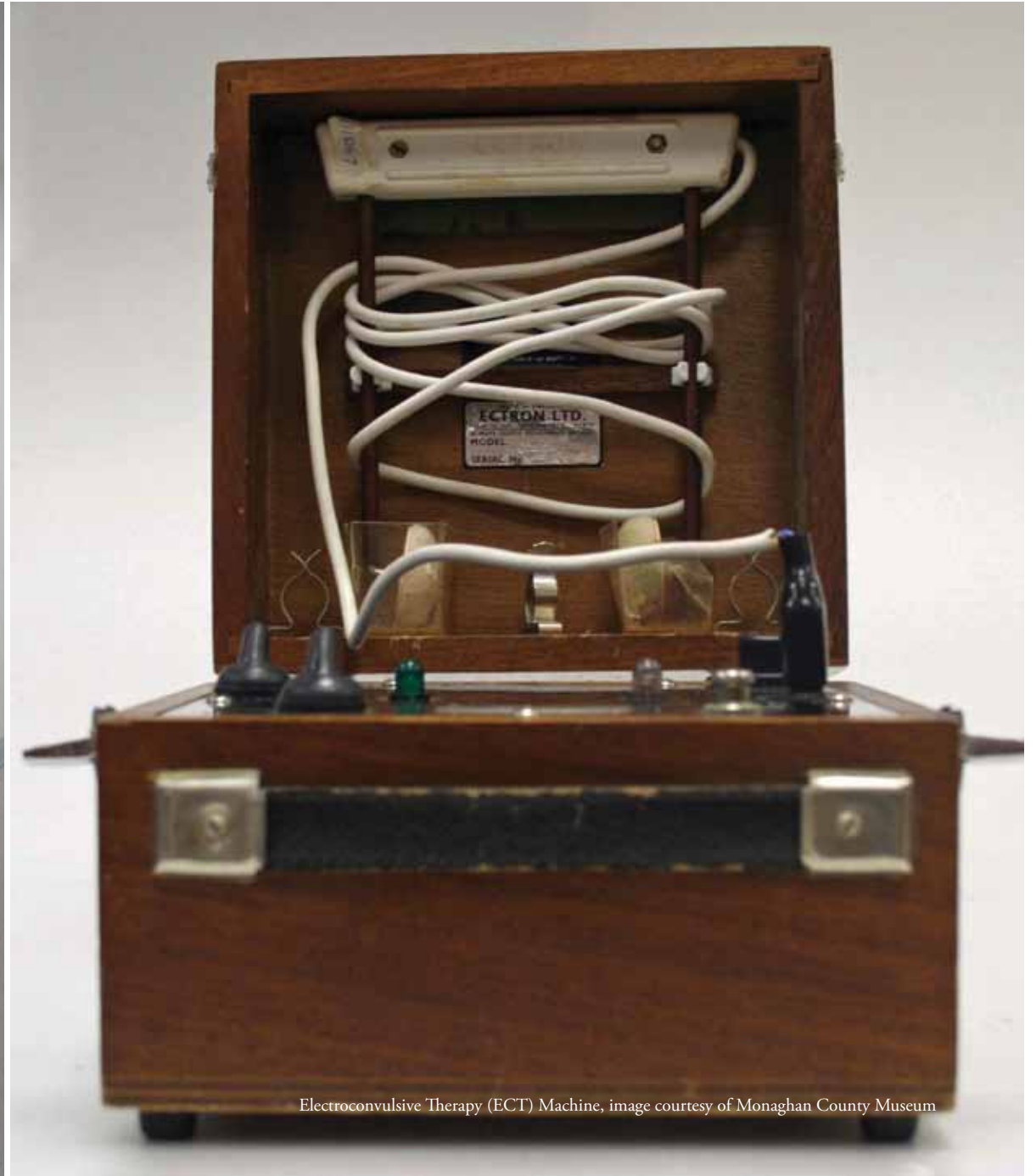
The changes at St. Davnet's throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries reflect changes in how we view and treat mental health and illness in society.

In 1945 categories of patient were defined as: voluntary patients, temporary patients and persons of unsound mind. It was the first time that patients could be voluntary and was a significant change in thinking about those with mental health needs.

From moral management, work as therapy, drug treatments to care in community settings, the hospital at Monaghan reflected changes in national health policy and international ideas on how best to care for and treat those suffering from mental ill health.



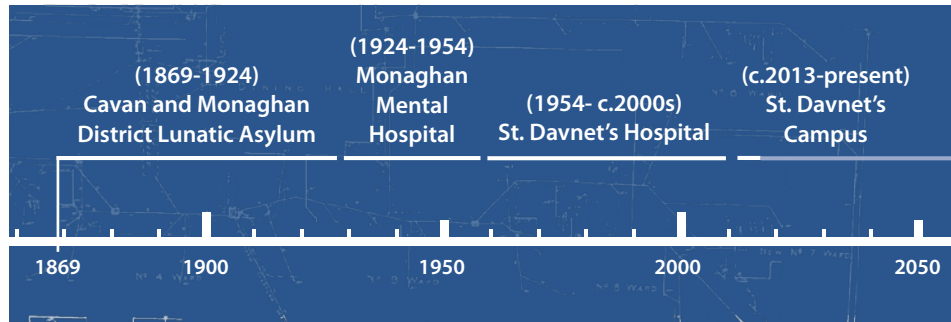
Corridor in the main building also known as the 'body of the house',
photographer Fiona Byrne, ©HSE 2014



Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) Machine, image courtesy of Monaghan County Museum

The words we use to talk about mental health reveal a great deal about our attitudes and beliefs.

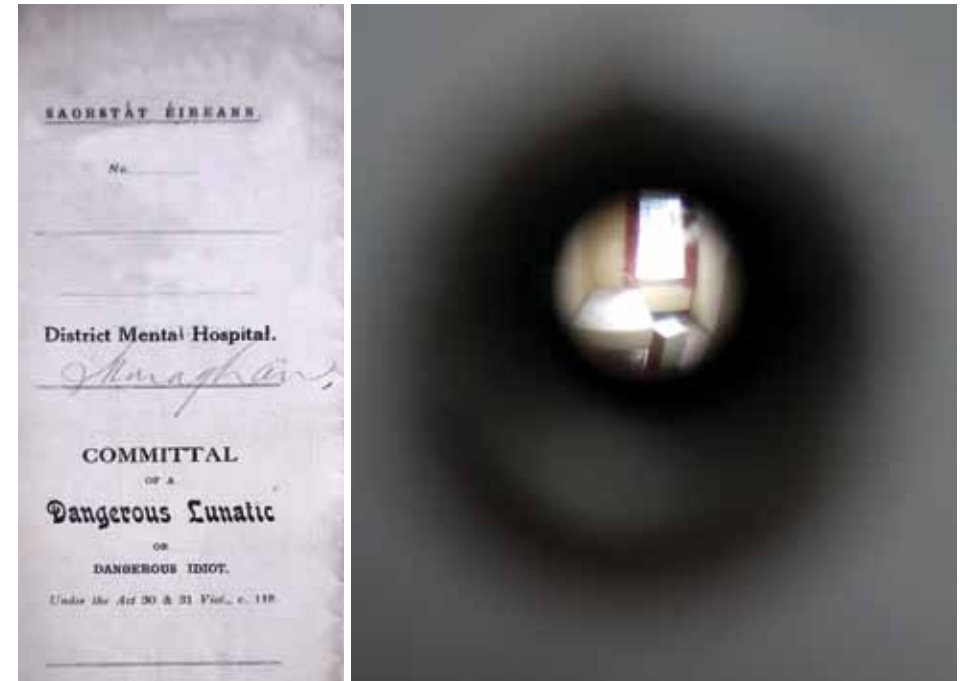
The changing name of the institution itself reflects these changes



Some of the terms used to describe patients, such as *lunatics* seem insulting and cruel today, but must be understood in the context of their own time. This language was used even in official government documents of the period for example the Dangerous Lunatics Act, or the Inspector of Lunatics. These words began to change in the late 1940s with The Mental Treatment Act 1945. Today *service user* is used to describe someone who accesses mental health services.

The first patients who moved to the asylum from Armagh, were described as suffering from mania, melancholia, dementia and imbecility. According to medical historians, mania and melancholia probably refer to what we now think of as mania and depression. Dementia may refer to more severe illness, and was related to schizophrenia. Idiocy and imbecility were terms associated with intellectual disability.

The 'causes of insanity' listed for the first patients at the asylum also give us an insight into their lives. Two women were suffering from mania due to poverty and overwork. Other causes listed included poverty and reversal of fortunes, seduction, religious excitement, jealousy, excessive tea drinking and intemperance.



Clockwise from top left – Committal form for a dangerous lunatic, 1945, image from archives ©HSE 2014; View into a patients bedroom, photographer Fiona Byrne ©HSE 2014; Selection of keys; there were male and female keys which only allowed access to either the male or female parts of the hospital, image courtesy of Monaghan County Museum; Patient bed with restraints visible, photographer Fiona Byrne ©HSE 2014



I mean they are very very simple reasons, that now a days, certainly they wouldn't be admitted. They could have been unmarried mothers, they could have been children from incestuous relationships, they could have been children whose mother died and whose father was maybe working in England and had nowhere to go. They could have

been children who were mentally handicapped, we had a lot of Down syndrome people in here, who just didn't fit into society... and they were just put in here. But you know, having said that the word asylum means a place of refuge and this was like a complete little world in here, and the staff looked after them and mothered them, and went to their funerals and celebrated their birthdays...

Interviewee AJ

Left: View of the entrance to the Acute Admission unit which was taken over for use in the treatment of T.B. in the 1940s and 1950s.

Right: Plate IV from the first chapter 'Tubercle' showing manifestations of tuberculous matter in the lungs; by Robert Carswell, image courtesy of the Wellcome Images.



Infectious Diseases

One of the challenges facing the asylum from 1869 to 1899 was that it was prone to epidemics. This was a concern in all institutions in Ireland at the time. There was no effective treatment for most infectious diseases until the mid-twentieth century so contagious diseases could wreak havoc in crowded places with close continuous contact between people. Both patients and staff of asylums were at risk of diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis, influenza and typhoid.

Outbreaks of infectious diseases continued to plague Monaghan Asylum/ Mental Hospital in the years from 1900 to 1930. Both patients and staff were vulnerable to infection. In August 1904, there was an outbreak of smallpox in Monaghan town. The RMS acted promptly and applied to the Local Government Board for a supply of lymph to vaccinate the patients. The vulnerability of Monaghan asylum to epidemics that commenced outside the walls was demonstrated in late 1918 and early 1919. The First World War was followed by a pandemic of Spanish influenza. It was terrifying in its virulent symptoms with projectile nose bleeding, the coughing up of blood and the skin turning a blue-black colour. The patients gave off a strange and puzzling stench. As well as producing symptoms that were reminiscent of the plague, the Spanish flu displayed a preference for young adults.

Tuberculosis, which was endemic in Ireland, was responsible for a substantial proportion of deaths in most years in the institution [as it was outside the walls] during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Isolation continued to be a problem in the overcrowded Monaghan Mental hospital and in 1956 the Inspectors report found that here were no proper facilities for isolation of tubercular or infectious patients.

What does Cavan-Monaghan Mental Health Service look like today?

The Cavan-Monaghan Mental Health Service today is provided through a comprehensive community based service using a bio-psychosocial approach, delivered by specialist mental health multi-disciplinary teams covering the whole life spectrum from childhood to old age. These specialist teams comprise a number of mental health professionals including medical, nursing, social work, psychology and occupational therapy staff supported by clerical administration and care staff.

This community focus is underpinned by a recovery approach which affords each individual an opportunity to overcome their mental health issue and to achieve their personal goals in life. This modern mental health service works closely with primary care services and is in many instances located with the primary care service.

The service governance and oversight is provided by the Area Mental Health Management Team which comprises of all heads of disciplines working within the teams along with a service user representative and a carer or family representative. The service also engages with a range of other statutory and voluntary organisations aimed at enhancing the overall service user experience, these include Irish Advocacy Network, SHINE, GROW and AWARE.

In addition to this the service also supports a consumer panel process across the Cavan Monaghan area, which affords service users a voice in the planning of services and any service development initiatives or an opportunity to raise concerns regarding services provided.

The following specialist teams are currently operating within the service:

- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Adult Community Mental Health Service
- Community Rehabilitation Service
- Psychiatry of later life Service
- Mental Health Team for People with an Intellectual Disability (MHID)

Cavan Monaghan Mental Health service has two approved centres

- Acute Psychiatric Unit, Cavan General Hospital, Cavan (Acute General Adult).
- Blackwater House, St. Davnet's Complex, Rooskey, Monaghan (Continuing Care Unit). Blackwater House is the last residential, 24 hour staffed unit of the traditional psychiatric hospital, under the control on CMMHS.





St Davnets Hospital Ward 4 Infirmary Section 1985,
Courtesy of Donal McEnroe and Monaghan County Museum

Daily Life at St Davnet's

Routine was a very important part of life at the asylum and both staff and patients were governed by strict rules. From 1898 district asylums could make their own rules under the Local Government (Ireland) Act (61 & 61 Vic. C. 37). For patients and staff, daily routines varied little and it seems even a man landing on the moon wasn't enough to cause a shift in the schedule:

The moon landing, it was a very famous one! That actually happened up there on ward 12, I was up there at that time. There was a system up there, the charge was a very regimental kind of a guy which I suppose all the older staff were, they were all regimental in their systems. But he would strike you as an army general you know that kind of thing... there were four or five patients that needed [to be] undressed and nightshirts put on them and they'd have to go up to bed early before the main patients would be going at half seven to bed... but these few 'first timers' they were called, they had to go at twenty to seven and it was this evening that this particular thing was on the television... even when the whole world was watching that particular thing it didn't matter the same regime took place and we had to go upstairs and not see it.

Interviewee AO

When patients arrived to the Monaghan asylum, they would have been given a warm bath, and had their own clothes removed and replaced by standard asylum-issue garments.

The Inspector's Report for 1890 provides us with a glimpse of the clothes worn by the asylum patients in the late 1800s

Female clothing in Monaghan Asylum, 1890

- A tweed or cotton dress,
- A grey flannel petticoat,
- A striped drugget [heavy carpet-like hardwearing material],
- A linen chemise
- A woolen handkerchief, and
- A brown shawl for out of doors, while some wear straw hats;
- Leather boots and stockings
- A change is provided for the different seasons but not for Sundays and holidays.

41st Report of the Inspectors of Lunatics (Ireland), 1892

Male Clothing in Monaghan Asylum

- A frieze jacket and waistcoat (soon afterwards, tweed was substituted for frieze)
- A shirt
- A vest
- Drawers
- Boots and Stockings
- No change is made for summer or winter nor are any different clothes allowed for Sundays and holidays.

40th Report of the Inspectors of Lunatics (Ireland), 1890-91.

Page from the cancellation book at the hospital; stock checks were taken very seriously and when an item was being replaced it had to be cancelled and destroyed before a replacement would be issued, image courtesy of Monaghan County Museum.



Staff also wore uniforms – the men's uniforms changed from a very formal uniform that was reminiscent of a prison guard's uniform, to a less formal suit and in the later years, iconic white coats. Female uniforms also went through a number of dramatic changes, from Florence Nightingale severe and rigid style uniforms to more informal styles. The changes in uniform reflected the changes in care, changing from attendants to nurses.



Attendants uniform c.1950,
image courtesy of Harry Hughes



St. Davnet's Hospital Day room for long stay ward 1985,
Courtesy of Donal McEnroe and Monaghan County Museum

Patients began to select their own clothes from the 1960s onwards, and began to have access to small luxuries, such as hairdressing facilities.

My father did the best he could, he was very modern in his views[...] It was very antiquated in those days... They used to wear dreadful clothes [...] you see the government didn't want to spend money on people like that [...] but he managed to get around them and they got dressed in proper outfits... They used to have big heavy serge dresses and big heavy socks and shoes and winter and summer were the same, they wore the same clothes all the time, he changed all that and got them much more modern wear.

From interview with daughter of the RMS, Dr. Coyne



St. Davnet's football team, 1956, image courtesy of Harry Hughes

Recreation, celebration and occupying time

In the early days of the asylum, patients played cards and draughts in their spare time. From 1878, a band was employed twice a week for staff and patients to enjoy.

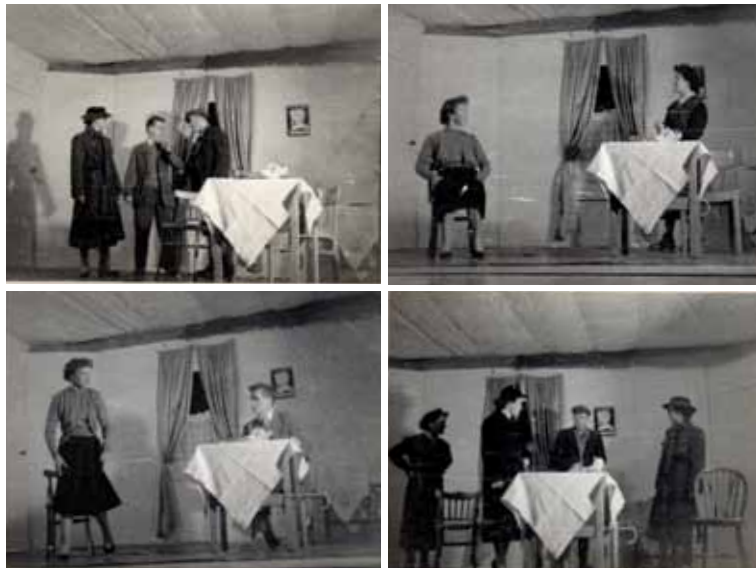
Throughout the twentieth century, a culture of recreation and sport began to grow at the hospital. Staff and patients, together, participated in sports such as handball, soccer, snooker, camogie and football.

Patients and staff took part in sports days each year, as well as dances and music on special occasions, with music often provided by visiting bands, including Big Tom and the Mainliners.

'New Year's Day we used to have a fancy dress competition, that was so much fun, we used to think of so many different outfits they could wear [...] there was a lovely big hall up there and we would go in on a Sunday afternoon and have a big dance [...] and there was a prize then for the fancy dress'

From the 1950s, patients produced art and craft works, and took part in cookery and household management classes.

Other recreational activities available at St. Davnet's included the dramatic society, 'St. Davnet's Players' – their first performance in 1962, of John B. Keane's *Sive*, won trophies at the first County Monaghan Drama Festival.



Wooden Case, Chalice Silver and Paten 1985, image courtesy of Monaghan County Museum.

Religion was significant for employment of staff. Staff were selected on the basis of religion as well as geography – numbers of Catholics and Protestants on the staff were supposed to be balanced in respect of patient demography.

A swimming pool was built on the hospital campus in the late 1960s. Despite these developments an ex-patient who was on the wards in the 1960s described the hospital as a very dull place to pass time, saying *'the day be as long as broad in the wards'*.

'the day be as long as broad in the wards'.

Occupational Therapy was introduced to the hospital in the 1970s. During the 1970s and 1980s, the grounds of the hospital were increasingly opened to the town, and patients began to visit the town to shop, to visit the post office and bank or to attend church services.

Some patients were also afforded the opportunity of short breaks in places like Donegal and Waterford. This reflects the move towards care in the community, and the decline of the institution.



Left and top: Various views of the interior of the hospital found in the hospital archives, undated ©HSE 2015

Above: Day room in main building, photograph Fiona Byrne, ©HSE 2014



Interior of the laundry building showing artwork, now faded away, and the original red and black floor tiles

Right: Corridor in acute admissions unit, photographer Fiona Byrne, ©HSE 2014





Engaging the community

Fiona Byrne

For the Health Service Executive, a vital part of the ethos of the World Within Walls project was that the community should be involved and informed throughout the lifetime of the project. With this in mind Stair built a number of initiatives into the project which were designed to reach out to the community, enable them to become active, aware and give feedback.

These included: a community day at Monaghan County Museum, a meal and tour as part of National Heritage Week, community workshops, schools projects and vitally the gathering of oral histories.

Through these varied activities we were able to reach a wide variety of people and hopefully this exhibition will reach even more. Stair was very aware of their position as outsiders to the local community and knew how much knowledge was held within local memories.

We were very privileged throughout our engagement with the groups we worked with to have had great responses to all our activities. The *Inside St. Davnet's* event for Heritage Week was particularly well attended with over 150 people taking part. This day was made up of two elements a meal: based on the 1920s patient diet sheets and following that a tour of the grounds and some of the buildings of the hospital. This allowed people to learn about the history of the site, while experiencing the site itself.

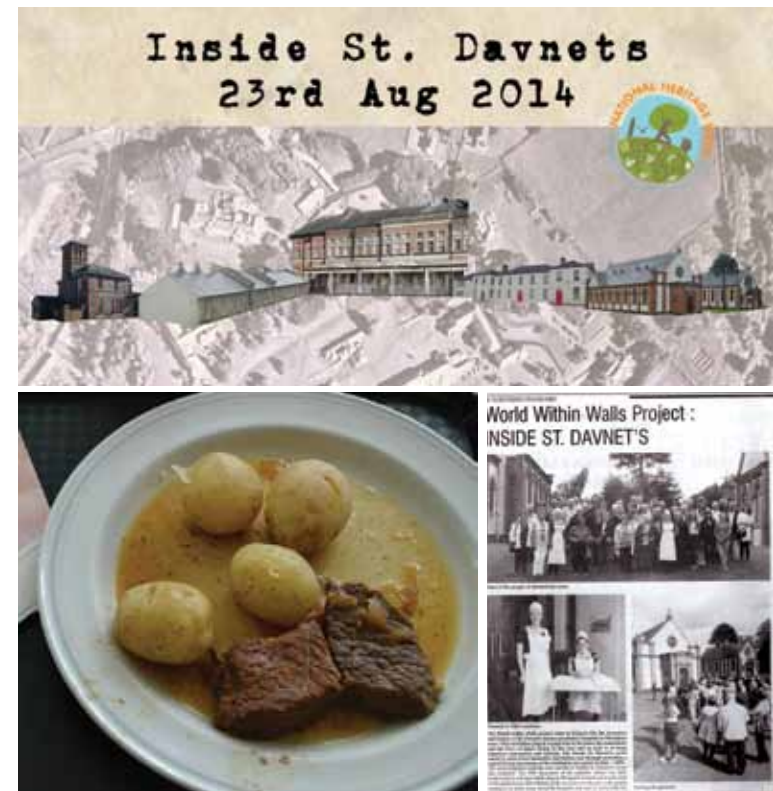
Left: Details of various artworks created during the World Within Walls community outreach programs

The oral history gathering took place from May until December 2014 and was a timely way to capture many of the stories of the hospital which might otherwise be lost with the passing of time. During this project we were honoured to be invited into the lives and often the homes of many people in the community to hear about their experiences in relation to St. Davnet's. Some of these people worked there, some had family ties, others were patients. All of the individuals we spoke with had many important stories to tell and we are grateful that they took the time and energy to share them with us. The stories collected will form a digital archive which will be preserved for the future so that these memories are not forgotten. Some clips from these conversations can be listened to in the exhibition and on the exhibition website: <http://stdavnets.wix.com/worldwithinwalls>.

Also on display as part of the exhibition is the glass wall which was created by participants in the craft workshops that ran during the project. Workshops took place in Monaghan County Museum, at Solas Drop in Centre, in the Day Activation Unit and Horticulture Unit at St. Davnet's and also with MISE in Monaghan town. We were delighted with the work produced at these events. Each tile used in the construction of this new wall displays what St. Davnet's means to people today. The mixture of images, colours and words creates a powerful piece of art which we hope will allow people to reflect on the history of the site and the changes that have come to pass at the complex in the past 145 years.

During the schools project we worked with the children to create abstract imagery which expressed emotions. These workshops were designed as a way to introduce them to the idea that art can be used as an outlet for emotional expression and does not need to be focused on realistic pictorial representation. This process worked for some and not others but for those that found a new way to create art and express themselves more freely the workshops were well worth all the hard work! A selection of these art works are on display in the exhibition.

Community projects are always daunting and exciting, being unsure of the reaction and results you will create is both the best and worst part of the



Images from the Inside St. Davnet's event which ran as part of Heritage Week in August 2014

job. We very much hope that all those who were involved in the project first hand can see their efforts reflected in the project outputs and that they feel their participation benefited them. The support and collaboration of the Cavan and Monaghan community has made this history project much more vibrant than a review of an institution might otherwise be. The community has provided a much more developed and nuanced view of what this place meant to them than the documents could ever reveal alone. We are very grateful to everyone who shared their creativity, memories and suggestions with us over the last twelve months –THANK YOU-

Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful for the help and support of a large number of individuals who supported this exhibition from its inception.

At St. Davnet's Hospital many of the staff were exceptionally helpful. Many gave up their spare time to help with the project. A special thank you to Margaret Caulfield for permitting access to the archives and artefacts that were held on the site and allowing them to be displayed for the public to see.

We are indebted to those whose patience and attention to detail has helped bring this exhibition to life. Especially to Leo Kinsella without whose vision the World Within Walls project would not exist.

The staff at Monaghan County Museum have been hugely accommodating and no task has been too big or too small; we are very grateful for the support and skills you have offered throughout the creation of this exhibition.

We would like to acknowledge the work of Dr. Anne Mac Lellan in researching the history of the campus, much of the content of this exhibition is built on her excellent research.

We are hugely grateful to the many staff and former staff of St Davnet's who shared their memories with us. To the members of the community and ex-staff who have played a key role in keeping the history of St. Davnet's Hospital alive through collecting images, objects and stories, your contribution is invaluable.

Ex-patients who contributed their thoughts and communicated their experience of the hospital: We were honoured that you shared your story with us and hope that it will serve to represent an often untold element of the story of these institutions.

Finally we would like to thank the World Within Walls Project Reference Group who guided the project and this exhibition through its many stages.