

# MONAGHAN COUNTY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 23 • SPRING/SUMMER 2023

MONAGHAN  
*Músaem Chontae Mhuineachain*  
COUNTY  
MUSEUM



## WE ARE MOVING!

Monaghan County Museum closed its doors on Hill Street on International Museums Day, May 18th. Our home on Hill Street has served the Museum well for nearly forty years, but the ambitions of the service and the wealth and breadth of our collection now requires a bigger and more accessible space to reach an even wider audience. That new space is the Peace Campus building, currently under construction on Plantation Road in Monaghan Town.

*A project supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).*



*Our new home: The Peace Campus from above*

The doors to Monaghan County Museum on Hill Street may be closed but the museum itself remains active and busy. Actually, very active as our move to our new home at the Peace Campus edges ever closer. This requires a temporary restriction on visitor access as we carefully organise the safe transit of our collection to its new home, but behind closed doors it's business as usual and a whole lot more!

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Peace   
Northern Ireland - Ireland



# PEACE CAMPUS UPDATE

Building has continued apace at the site of the Peace Campus as has our anticipation for the move to the museum's new home there. Recent images of the site show great progress in construction, allowing us a view of the emerging shape and layout of our new exhibition space. Monaghan County Museum at the Peace Campus will be an exciting, inclusive, accessible space of enjoyment and education for the communities of County Monaghan and visitors alike.



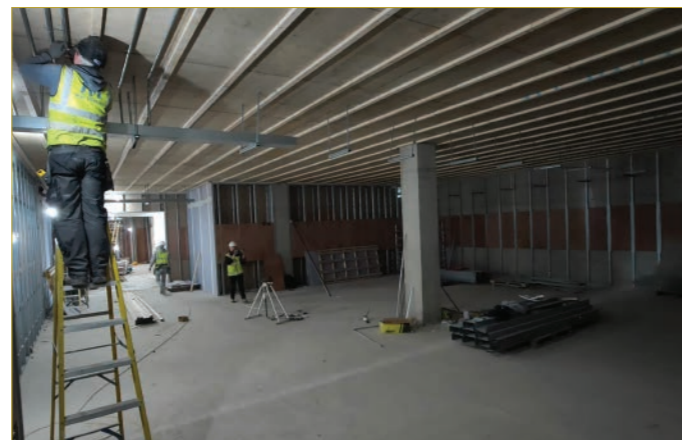
The exterior of the museum-end of the building



The impressive staircase in the Peace Campus



The view across Monaghan town from the Peace Campus roof



The second-floor museum gallery space taking shape in the Peace Campus

# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

## PREPARATIONS FOR THE MOVE

Behind the closed doors, the museum remains a hive of activity. All staff members are occupied with preparations for the move to the Peace Campus later this year. Whether it be exhibition planning, object packing, script research or programme development, it's all hands on deck as the team works to prepare for the big move to our new home.

In order to facilitate the meticulous process of moving the collection, the temporary gallery space closed to the public in January. This gallery space has now become the organisational hub of the physical move. Before this could happen

our nationally acclaimed Monaghan's War of Independence exhibition had to be carefully dismantled.

With the gallery cleared, the space is now being used to facilitate auditing, photography, numbering, packing, and storing the collection before the move. The relocation to a new building has provided collections care staff a unique opportunity to audit the entire collection within an 18-month timescale. The best part of it has been the rediscovery of objects in the store, some which may never have been exhibited before and might now be displayed in the Peace Campus.



The Collections Care Team inspect the condition of one of the banners in the museum collection



Objects being sorted and packed



Removing the wall panels from the Monaghan's War of Independence exhibition

# BANNERS

The museum's collection is fortunate to contain some beautiful banners that belonged to different organisations in County Monaghan. Banners were displayed by society members as a way of publicly expressing their

attitudes, views, and allegiances. Banners, which were usually carried at marches and parades, were often decorated with paintings and symbols or motifs connected with the beliefs and history of the organisation they

represented. During the recent audit of our collection, we had the banners out and were so struck by their vibrant beauty that we just have to share some images of them!

## LOYAL ORANGE LODGE



Loyal Orange Lodge No. 211 Banner from Ballybay, Co. Monaghan.

Founded in Loughgall, Co. Armagh in 1795 the Loyal Orange Institution (often referred to as the Orange Order) is a Protestant, fraternal society. Loyal Orange Order banners were often displayed at the Order's Twelfth of July celebrations and many, such as this one from Ballybay, portray scenes related to William III (William of Orange) and his victorious Irish campaign at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 where the Catholic King James II of England was defeated. William of Orange is often shown, as on this banner, riding a white horse. However, this is considered historically inaccurate as a white horse would have made William an easy target for his enemies!

## ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS



Ancient Order of Hibernians Banner of Division Number 255, Monaghan.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) was a Catholic nationalist society that first evolved in Ireland, but its first stronghold was in the USA where it was established in New York in 1836. The AOH remained small in Ireland until the early twentieth century when it became very popular in rural south-west Ulster. Their banners, including this fine example from Monaghan, often featured paintings of symbolically Irish buildings, chieftains, and nationalist figures, surrounded by emblems of nationalist Ireland including the figure of Erin and the harp. Banners would have been carried in parades particularly at their annual celebration on 15th August.

## ROYAL BLACK PRECEPTORY

The Royal Black Preceptory Institution belongs to the family of 'Orange' institutions who aim to uphold Protestantism in Ulster. They are a distinct organisation but members of the RBP must also have belonged to the Loyal Orange Order. Their banners tend to feature scenes from bible stories that hold a particular relevance to the society connected to the hierarchical degrees of initiation. Banners would have been carried at RBP marches particularly on the 13th July and towards the end of August in their 'Last Saturday' parades.



Royal Black Preceptory Banner from Ballybay, Co. Monaghan, Preceptory No. 218

## IRISH NATIONAL FORESTERS



Irish National Foresters Banner, Ballybay Branch No. 602, Co. Monaghan

The Irish National Foresters (INF) were founded in 1877 in Ireland as a new entity, after some Dublin members of the Ancient Order of Foresters (AOF) seceded from that British based organisation. The INF were a fraternal friendly society who operated by providing members a grant during times of sickness from work in return for a weekly subscription. Their banners displayed at processions favoured recognisably Irish nationalist emblems, Celtic strapwork designs and benevolent scenes including INF members dressed in the 'Emmet' costume based on one worn by Irish patriot Robert Emmet. Famed for his unsuccessful uprising against the British in 1803, it was chosen as the uniform of the INF in line with their nationalist aims.

# WHAT'S THE STORY?

## SITTING PRETTY FOR A LABOUR OF LOVE



Birthing Chair from Newbliss Dispensary, County Monaghan

Every object in the museum has a unique story to tell, very often connected to its past ownership, where it comes from and what it was used for. If this object could talk it may tell many stories of great joy and perhaps some of suffering and tragedy.

This object is a birthing chair, originally used in the Dispensary at Newbliss, Co. Monaghan, and would have been seen in its day as a technological advance for delivering babies! The dispensary system that this birthing chair served in, was formed in Ireland in 1862 and provided provision of a doctor and midwife for each district. However, this birthing chair was not pushing scientific boundaries when it was produced but instead represented the latest evolution of an ancient artefact.



A woodcut illustration of a birthing chair in use in 1513 AD.

### BIRTHING CHAIRS: BRINGING BIRTH TO NEW HEIGHTS!

Archaeology tells us that birthing chairs have been with us for a very long time. Their use is recorded in Babylonia as early as 2,000 BC., whilst British birthing stools dating from 1,000 years ago were the 'flat packs' of their era. They could be disassembled allowing them to travel with midwives. The upright position offered by the birthing chair is not without merit as they invite gravity to assist in a safe, swift delivery. Hopefully, this was the experience of the Monaghan mothers who used our chair in the past!

*Birthing chair, Europe, 1601-1700 Image credit: (Credit: Parturition chair, Europe, 1601-1700. Science Museum, London. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0))*



# THE LAST CHRISTMAS ON HILL STREET

On December 7th last, the museum invited the public to come and join us in celebrating the last Christmas spent in our present home on Hill Street. This was the last large event in the museum and many people came to join in the festive celebrations. The festivities swung into action with renowned Monaghan Uilleann pipers Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn and Eamonn Curran, entertaining the audience with traditional music. Seasonal mince pies and mulled wine were served up, as were many fond memories of the people, events and exhibitions associated with the museum's thirty-six years in the building.

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Guests enjoying the last Christmas in the museum on Hill Street.



(left – right) Monaghan County Museum Curator, Liam Bradley and Cathaoirleach Sean Conlan from Monaghan County Council



(left – right) Monaghan Uilleann pipers Eamonn Curran and Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn provided the afternoon's entertainment



The museum staff attending the last Christmas at their Hill Street workplace

# MUSEUM EVENTS

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On March 8th, the museum celebrated International Women's Day 2023 with a special presentation on 'How to Care for Your Skin' in conjunction with Cavan Monaghan

ETB. Those who attended were provided with information on how to establish a suitable regime for glowing, healthy skin regardless of age, gender, or skin type.



Attendees at the Skin Care Workshop



Participants at the Needlework Workshop



Dainty embroidery produced on the day

## NATIONAL DRAWING DAY 2023

For our annual National Drawing Day celebration in May, our colleagues in the Monaghan Arts Centre allowed us to host the event in the Market House, Monaghan. Thanks to all our young artists!



Young artists at work for National Drawing Day and some of the samples of the great work produced



## EVENTS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Even though we're closed, preparing for the move to our new home at the Peace Campus, our events continue in different venues.



## BEALTAINÉ FESTIVAL 2023

We were very happy to take part in the annual Bealtaine Festival, Celebrating Creativity as we age in partnership with Cavan Monaghan ETB. This year we hosted a Sewing and Embroidery class and our participants really let their creativity flow, as you can see from the beautiful results. Thank you again to our colleagues in Monaghan Market House Arts Centre for hosting our Bealtaine Festival event.



# CELEBRITY VISIT

## ACTOR ARDAL O'HANLON VISITS THE MUSEUM

We were so happy to host Ardal O'Hanlon in the Museum when he paid us a visit recently. The famous actor, comedian and writer who grew up in Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan, dropped in to record a special interview which will feature as part of our new exhibition 'Bordering Realities', when we open at our new home in the Peace Campus, Monaghan early next year.

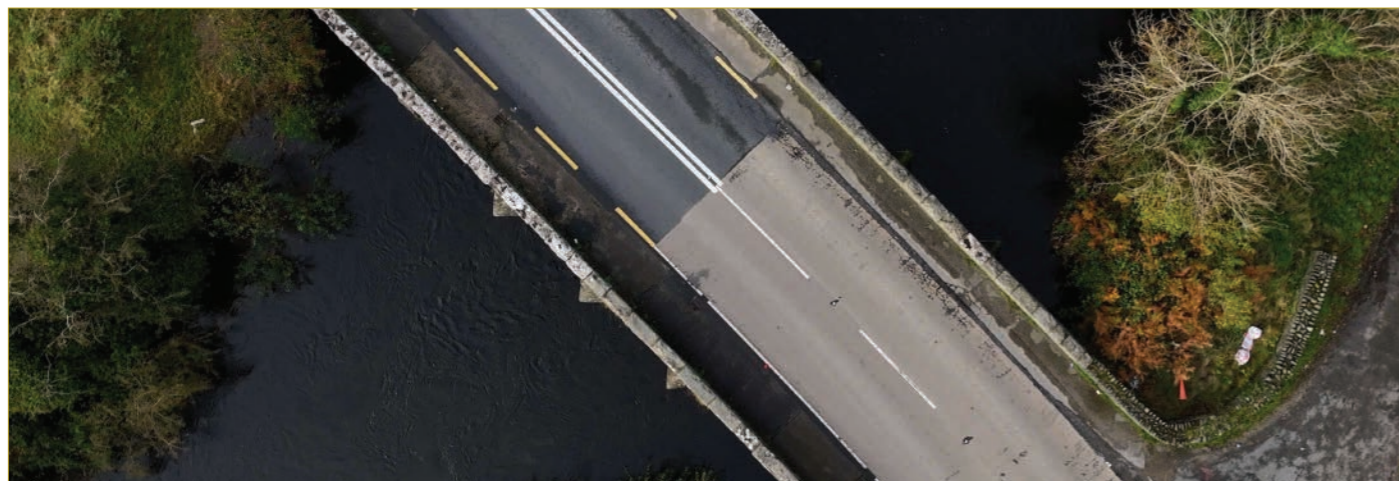
Ardal is best known for his starring role as Father Dougal in the hit TV series Father Ted, set in the West of Ireland, and Death in Paradise that saw him transposed to the exotic Caribbean Island of Guadalupe. Ardal began his career as a stand-up comedian, but his many talents have seen him diversify into other areas including theatre, writing and presenting documentaries and authoring novels. During his visit Ardal took time to meet the team and view some of our fantastic museum objects that we're getting ready for the move.



Left to right: Denise Henry, Museum Registrar; Patricia Barbour, Administration and Marketing; Liam Bradley, Curator; Ardal O'Hanlon; Pauline Tilton, Education and Events; Theresa Loftus, Exhibitions and Research; Anna McCann, Collections Officer.

## BORDERING REALITIES

A picture can paint a thousand words and this still from our new film 'Place' certainly does! The film will form part of our new exhibition 'Bordering Realities' in the new museum at the Peace Campus and explores the border region around Co. Monaghan. This startling shot is of the bridge over the River Fane at Culloville, where the road meets between County Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland and County Armagh, in Northern Ireland.



# OUR UNKNOWN SOLDIER IS NAMED!

Some of our readers might remember our ongoing attempts to put a name to the portrait in our collection of a World War One soldier. Despite past nationwide appeals on social media, an article in the Irish Times and in-depth research we had failed to discover the identity of the young man in the picture.

The portrait, which featured in in our 1916 exhibition "From a Whisper to a Roar", shows a young man in the uniform of the regiment of the Royal Irish Fusiliers with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. The portrait had been purchased in a local shop by Mr Niall Greenan, and kindly donated to the museum and for that reason believed to be of a local person.

We are now delighted to announce that we believe that we have identified our Unknown Soldier as Dermot Jepsen Henry, formerly of Swan Park, Monaghan.



The photograph that identified our unknown soldier



Second Lieutenant Dermot Jepsen Henry of Swan Park, Monaghan.



T. Henry's shop that later became Patton's in the Diamond, Monaghan.

Dermot Jepsen Henry was identified through a photograph that fortunately clearly named him, and when our Research Officer, Theresa Loftus, saw the image, she immediately recognised the likeness to the portrait.

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Dermot Jepsen Henry was the son of James and May Jepsen Henry, of Swan Park, Monaghan. Our research shows that tragically Dermot lost his life during World War One on 9th July 1917, aged just 24. He is buried at Crump Trench British

Cemetery, Fampoux, France. Fampoux is close to where the Battle of Arras occurred between 9th April to 16th May 1917.

The 1911 census shows that Dermot's father James Henry was a general medical practitioner in Monaghan. The eighteen year-old Dermot was at that time an apprentice engineer living in Antrim. The Henry's were descended from the family who conducted, from 1866, a general grocery store and later a pharmaceutical chemist in a building that originally stood on part of the site of the present AIB Bank in Monaghan Town. It was from a small shop in that same location that our donor purchased the portrait! We would be delighted if anyone can add any further information.

# THE END OF AN ERA



Over the last two weeks before closing on 18th May, the museum invited people to take this last opportunity to visit us in our current venue. The response was excellent, and visitors came in their droves. Nostalgic stories were exchanged, reminiscences shared and people, no longer with us but who had been at the heart of the museum at Hill Street, fondly remembered.

***On Thursday,  
18th May  
the door finally  
closed to the  
public.***

***“ The staff look forward to welcoming everyone back in Spring 2024 in the new museum at the Peace Campus. ”***



*Museum Staff on the steps of the museum on Hill Street as it closed its doors to the public in preparation of the move to their new home at the Monaghan Peace Campus*

## AND THAT'S A WRAP FROM HILL STREET ...

### HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS OF MONAGHAN TOWN

These popular tours are available with prior booking and weather permitting

**PLEASE CHECK MUSEUM WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION AND UPDATES**

**www.monaghan.ie/museum/ and Facebook page or call us on 047 82928**

**f @MonaghanCountyMuseum    t Twitter:@museum\_county    g Website: https://monaghan.ie/museum/**