

Official Opening of Saldanha Suite

THE official opening of the Saldanha Suite at Fort Dunree took place on Friday 11th November. International Fund for Ireland chairman Dr Denis Rooney, who attended the event, said the suite was an "important resource" and "a major addition to the Buncrana area".

"The vision of the museum has been realised in the suite, which has greatly expanded the range of exhibitions and activities available at the museum. It will stand as a lasting legacy to the commitment of the staff and supporters of the museum and will play an important role in community and economic development in this region," said Mr Rooney.



Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, Dr Denis Rooney, cuts the tape to officially open the Saldanha Suite at Dunree Fort. Also included are museum chairman, John McCarter; IFI senior development officer, Paddy Harte; IFI project administrator, Mary Devlin; museum manager, David Magee, Fort Dunree Board Members and guests from the local community.

Fort Dunree chairman, John McCarter, added: "Fort Dunree has been closely supported by the International Fund for Ireland since 1997. Over the intervening period of nearly 15 years, the Fund has invested approx €1.1 million in the Fort Dunree project. We are extremely grateful for this level of funding which has delivered much progress and development at Fort Dunree." The suite is named after HMS Saldanha, which sank in Lough Swilly in 1811 with the loss of 253 souls on board. At present it is home to the "Rockhill Collection", Art Exhibitions, Yoga Classes and even weddings!

HOW WE REMEMBER

HOW WE REMEMBER' exhibition in the Saldanha Suite, Fort Dunree is a very exciting exhibition on the history of the Permanent Defence Forces and the Reserve Defence Forces. It looks at the role of the 28th Infantry Battalion during periods of both peace and conflict at home and their contribution to Peacekeeping missions.

"Is mor an onair domsa a bheith pairteach I dteaspantas comhglormhor le seo mar Oifigeach I gCeannais An Fiche hocht Cathlan Coisithe.

This exhibition offers a valuable insight into the role of the 28th Infantry Battalion during the Troubles and also in peace-keeping on overseas missions with the United Nations. It also illustrates the highly effective role that the Reserve Units of the Defence Forces, previously called FCA played during this time where they supported their PDF colleagues with great dedication and conviction.

"Much has changed in the interim in terms of the political landscape and there remains a significant role for the Defence Forces in the Region. In terms of equipment and facilities the Defence Forces has advanced considerably since then matching those of any modern army. "

Lieutenant Colonel Mick Meehan, Retired Officer Commanding of 28th Infantry Battalion

This project is supported by the PEACE III Programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Donegal County Council.

Shackleton Aviation and Space Museum

Shackleton Aviation and Space Museum, situated at Magilligan Point are proud to share with you the history of Aviation in Ireland including photos, letters and stories. There are over 30 members in the Shackleton Museum Association costing £10 per year to include three magazines and free admission to the museum if you have a love for aviation and wish to join you can post a cheque made out to the Shackleton Aviation and Space Museum and also send your full postal address. For further information on visiting times please ring Ballykelly 02877769807 or mob. 07598706651. During the winter months the museum will be open every Sunday from 1400 hrs to 1600 hrs. Groups wishing to visit the Museum out of visiting hours can do so by ringing Ballykelly 02877769807.

Armistice Day at Fort Dunree

On Saturday November 12th Inishowen Friends of Messines held a Remembrance Service at the Fort Dunree Memorial Wall and Peace Garden to mark Armistice Day. There were over 80 people in attendance and were fortunate to bask in the November sun shine. Fort Dunree have been hosting Remembrance events since 2005 which have attracted people from all over Ireland. As part of the Peace III funded Fort Dunree Remembrance Project a lasting legacy was created with the construction of the Fort Dunree Memorial Wall. Formally opened in June 2011, the wall consists of 226 people from all the parishes in Inishowen who gave their lives during World War I. This was the first opportunity that Inishowen Friends of Messines had to conduct a formal Armistice Ceremony in line with all the other ceremonies across the world at this time. There will be further remembrance events to take place throughout 2012.

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This project is being delivered as part of the One Donegal Cultural Diversity Month – Embracing and Celebrating Diversity. For further details on events being run throughout November 2011 as part of this initiative please contact Sarah Thompson, Good Relations Officer, Donegal County Council on (074) 9172586 or sthompson@donegalcoco.ie



Standard Bearers and speakers at the Armistice Event at Fort Dunree

G.O.C on mission to Fort Dunree



Colonel Ger Aherne, Acting Officer Commanding 4th Western Brigade and Lieutenant Colonel Dave Dignan, Officer Commanding 28th Infantry Battalion on a recent trip to Fort Dunree with David Magee, Dermot McLaughlin and Terry Tedstone.

Gannets

The Gannet *moras bassanas* is the largest seabird that is seen on Lough Swilly, having a wingspan just under 2mts. It is a beautiful white bird with yellow head and black tips to it's long wings. Young birds are black becoming increasingly white over the course of five years when they reach breeding age. When searching for fish it circles an area of sea and then spectacularly dives from a height of up to 40mts, folding it's wings at the last moment before entering the water. They have air sacs in their head to cushion their brain against the impact of hitting the water. They are often seen in numbers off Dunree diving after a shoal of fish.

Gannets nest in large colonies, usually on rocky uninhabited islands. The main Gannet colonies in Ireland are at The Skelligs islands off Kerry, Great Saltee island off Wexford and Bull island, Cork. However there are no colonies in the Northern half of the country and the Gannets that visit Lough Swilly in Summer are foraging from the nearest colony at Ailsa Craig island on the west coast of Scotland (also known as Paddy's Milestone) which is about 85miles from Malin Head. About 40,000 pairs of Gannets nest at Ailsa Craig. Lines of Gannets can be seen passing Malin Head in the Summer.

