

CANADIAN AMBASSADOR OFFICIATES AT CANADIAN-IRISH EXHIBITION IN ST GEORGE'S HERITAGE & VISITORS CENTRE IN CARRICK-ON-SHANNON

Carrick-on-Shannon Heritage Group Ltd

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: KEITH NOLAN

HIS EXCELLENCY Loyola Hearn, Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, accompanied by his wife, were guests of honour at several events hosted by Leitrim Tourism, Leitrim County Council, the Carrick-on-Shannon Heritage Group, and the Chamber of Commerce on the 10th of April 2014.

The province of New Brunswick in Atlantic Canada and The Provincial Archives of New Brunswick presented an Exhibition commemorating two components of Irish history, which ran in St George's Heritage & Visitors Centre until 21st May.

A large crowd attended the reception in St George's and viewed the exhibition, which was accompanied by the magical music of Mrs. Ruth Waller on the Church's rare 1847 Telford Organ.

In a tribute to the many Irish men who served with Canadian Forces in the Great War, Ambassador Hearn laid a memorial wreath at the grave of Pvt. William 'Willie' Allen Laird (1882-1917) of Killukin, Carrick-on-Shannon, in St George's graveyard, who served with the 14th Battalion Canadian Infantry. Members of the Laird family were in attendance at the wreath laying. Several families at the reception had brought along sketches and paintings of relatives who participated in the War. The Carrick-on-Shannon & District Historical Society was pleased to include a painting, donated by the Harman family, of Charles Reginald Harman, who was killed during the War. Mrs Patricia Harman represented the Harman family at the reception.

John Bredin, Chair of the Heritage Group, said during the reception, "It is with great pleasure that we have the company of Ambassador Hearn to give formal recognition to all those who volunteered for service during that horrific period, more than

100 of whom were from Leitrim...see the banners within St George's Church listing the names of most. They will not be forgotten, and I must thank Pdraig Griffin for the huge research he has done in this regard..."

Exhibitions on Loan

One exhibit entitled, "In the Wake of the Dark Passage", dealt with the impact of the Great Irish Famine of 1847 which led 30,000 immigrants to New Brunswick, Canada. This display examined the nature of shipping in the 19th century and the rights and treatment of passengers aboard emigrant vessels. The accompanying exhibit entitled, "An Honourable Independence—Irish Immigration and Settlement in New Brunswick, 1815-1855", illustrated the migration and settlement patterns of Irish immigrants in the province and their experiences and contributions to Canadian society. Historical photographs, documents, maps and census data, all drawn from the Provincial Archives, were showcased in this display. The complementary exhibits touched on many curriculum themes such as a human dignity/rights, contributions of groups and cultures to society, interdependence of groups within society and with the environment, and impact of decisions of government. The value of the existing exhibit for educational purposes was tested during the visit of the Irish immigrant ship, the Jeannie Johnston, to Miramichi in September 2003, when visited by over 800 middle school students. Together, these displays provided a comprehensive and detailed exploration of the Irish immigrant story in early New Brunswick. Irish history and heritage has been a theme of wide interest in the province where over 38 per cent of its population is of Irish descent.



■ Members of the Laird family with Ambassador Hearn in St George's graveyard where Willie Laird from Killukin and all those Leitrim men who served in the Great War were honoured with a memorial wreath.



■ John Bredin, Chair of the Heritage Group, Ambassador & Mrs Loyola Hearn, Sean McDermott, Cathaoirleach, Leitrim County Council



■ Mrs Patricia Harman and Ambassador Hearn with a painting of Charles Reginald Harman who died in the Great War.



■ Ambassador Hearn greets Mrs Ruth Waller who played the rare 1847 Telford Organ during the reception.