

# EU and State funding for Hunt Museum is lauded

By PADDY MORONEY

THE announcement by the Taoiseach of substantial EU funding for the Hunt Museum has been warmly welcomed by the chairman of Shannon Development, Michael P Houlihan.

He said that Shannon Development and the Hunt family had been engaged in close co-operation for many years, and now there was the welcome news that the development company was able to secure ERDF funds for the museum.

Said Mr Houlihan: "The ERDF grant announced by the Taoiseach is the culmination of a lengthy process of project development and design, towards which Shannon Development was delighted to contribute.

"I know speaking for those in the company directly involved with the project that it was a labour of love.

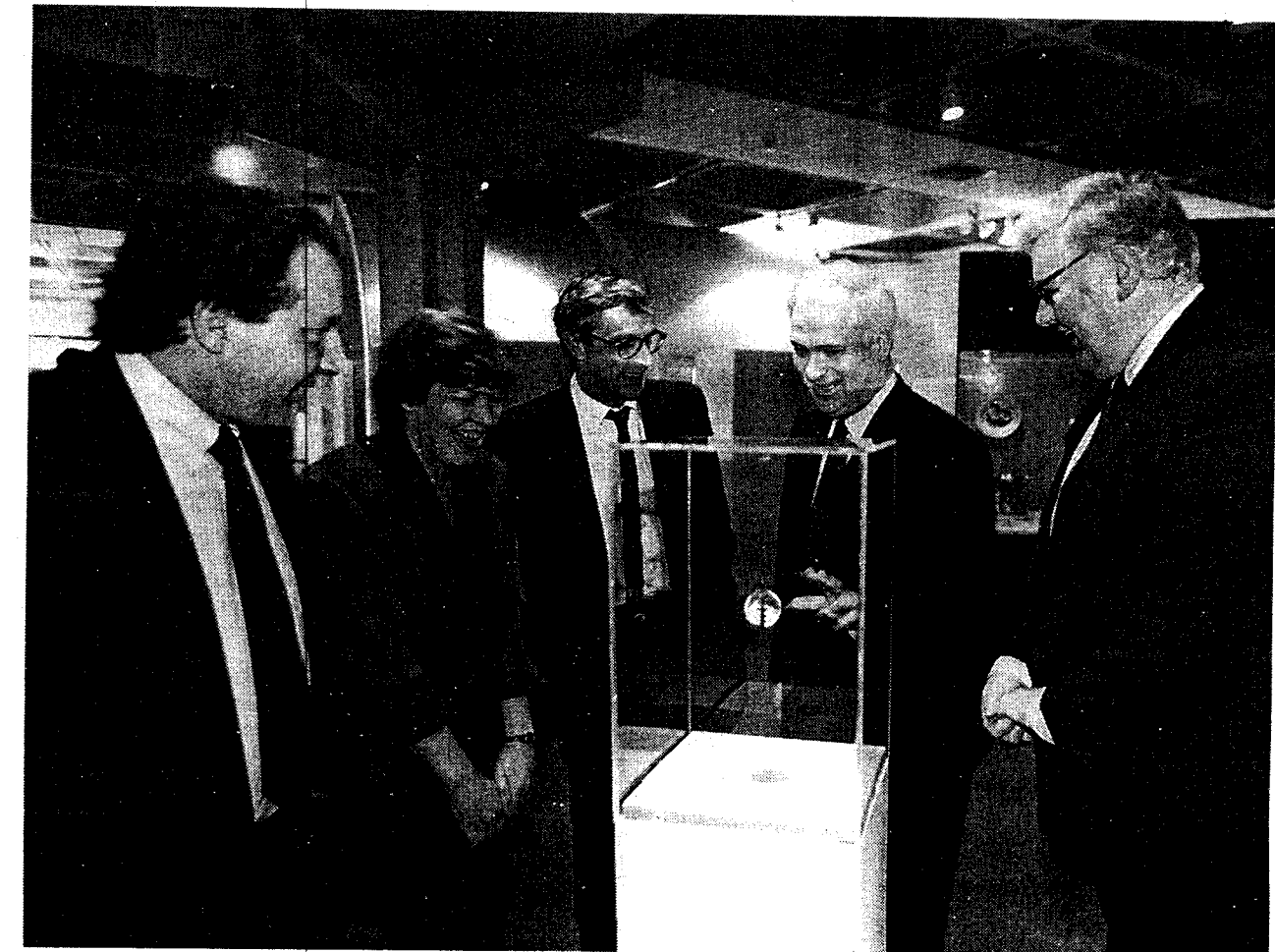
"Shannon Development and the Hunt family have been engaged in a close and very fruitful partnership for many years.

"The Hunt Museum project is just one of our associations with the family. The history of our relationship with them goes back to the days of the flying boats and Foynes, when Brendan O'Regan and John and Gertrude Hunt first began to work together.

"With the restoration of Bunratty Castle and the construction of the first farmhouse at Bunratty Folk Park in the 1950's and '60's, the same partnership produced a project that was to grow to become one of the country's top tourist attractions which has received acclaim world-wide."

He was speaking at the Hunt Museum which is, at present, housed at the University of Limerick.

The break-down of the total £2.9 million grant reveals that the ERDF funding, through Shannon Development, comes to



The Taoiseach, John Bruton (second right), in Limerick to announce funds of £2.9 million for the immediate development of the Hunt Museum. With him are (from left): Pat Chesser, museum executive; Mairead Dunlevy, director of the museum; John Hunt, whose family donated the Hunt Collection to the State; and Michael Houlihan, chairman of Shannon Development.

£1,275 millions, with another £900,000 coming from Arts and Culture, as well as £600,000 from Limerick Corporation, and £125,000 from the Hunt Museum itself.

Continued Mr Houlihan: "The Craggaunowen project was also a product of this relationship when Shannon Development and the Hunts developed a concept that received international recognition.

"This was exemplified by Tim Severin's decision to give his leather boat, "Brendan" to Craggaunowen for permanent exhibition.

Mr Houlihan pointed out: "The Hunt Museum was their next achievement, and this brought in another important player — the University of Limerick — which facilitated the Museum by providing the

space and support services that allowed the Hunt collection to be donated and put on display initially.

He stated: "John and Trudy Hunt are continuing the great tradition established by their parents — and I know that John is particularly aware of this and regards it as an essential factor in achieving the aims

of the Hunt Museum Trust. "As an example of this, they have made a further donation of objects to the State from the collection established by their parents.

"The State has joined in the process directly by contributing the restored Custom House as the permanent home of the Hunt collection, a building which

in itself is a most important gift to the city of Limerick.

"Its restoration through the professional and expert involvement of the Office of Public Works will give Limerick a major new landmark of which it can be proud."

He said that the museum's location, close to the King's Island, was of major significance to Shannon

Development which had produced, with Limerick Corporation, an integrated plan for the development of the area.

"We see the Museum's role in this as pivotal in expanding Limerick's tourist industry based on the heritage of the Island," Mr Houlihan explained.

"Shannon Development has been working towards the full achievement of the Hunt Museum for many years.

"Initially, the museum was planned for Craggaunowen. The plan changed, however, at a meeting in Glasgow when the importance of a city location for a museum was recognised, and John (Jnr) made the important decision to consider Limerick as the possible home for his family's treasures.

"This led to the involvement of the Corporation of Limerick which has been an enthusiastic supporter of the project since it emerged.

"Funding the project was the next crucial step and it was here, again, that Shannon Development was in a position to become involved and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Museum's funding application received assistance under the ERDF Operational Programme for Tourism, administered by the Company in the Shannon Region.

"I look forward to seeing the priceless antiquities that make up the Hunt Collection being displayed for Irish people and our overseas visitors to enjoy.

"As a company, we look forward in the future to continuing our work with the Hunt Family and the Hunt Museum."

## Good Shepherd gets £150,000 for old folk housing, day-care

A GRANT of £150,000 is being made available to the Good Shepherd Sheltered Housing Complex and Day Care Centre in Pennywell, the Minister of Health, Michael Noonan has announced.

This grant will be paid in two parts — £75,000 in 1995 and £75,000 in 1996.

"The increase in the numbers of dependent elderly persons provides a particular challenge to all those who work within the health services, voluntary and statutory", said the Minister. "When I look around this new building I can say with confidence that the Good Shepherd Sisters are actively meeting that challenge."

The Department of Health made available £90,000 to the Mid-Western Health Board this year to develop community services for older people and their carers, such as home nursing, home help and respite care.

"The objective of my Department is to maintain as many older people in dignity and independence as

possible," he added.

"It seems to me that this sheltered housing complex and day care centre is a perfect example in practice of the kind of support that is needed for older citizens and those caring for them," he added.

A second objective of

health policy towards the elderly is to ensure that older people have prompt access to hospital and rehabilitation services when they need them. A consultant-led geriatric service has been provided at the Regional General Hospital and a second consultant in

medicine of old age will be appointed this year.

"The Mid-Western Health Board is the first board in which there is a department of medicine of old age in each of its general hospitals, a goal which the Health Strategy endorses for every board," said Minister Noonan.



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