

Hunt director settles in to 'challenge of millennium'

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By LAURA RYAN

OVER 30,000 people have visited the Hunt Museum in its first year at its new home in the Custom House in Limerick.

And if the new museum director Ciaran McGonigal has his way, that number will increase to 100,000.

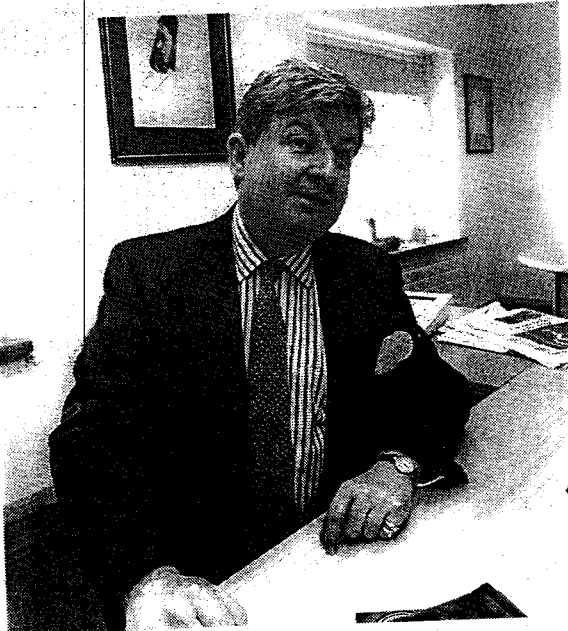
Mr McGonigal this week said he was delighted with his new appointment and was looking forward to the challenge of the millennium and the development of the Hunt Museum.

"This is a wonderful collection here in Limerick and its value should be realised by Limerick people and the nation. I want to see it become a national museum," he said.

He also said that he was anxious to preserve the relationship the museum had with the University of Limerick.

A director of the RHA Gallagher Gallery in Dublin, Mr McGonigal is a member of the Arts Council Board and a member of the National Gallery of Ireland. He takes up his new position in Limerick this month.

Since the museum moved into the city from its original home in Plassey, the



Ciaran McGonigal: looking forward to challenge. (LL)

Hunt Collection has had a four-fold increase in visiting numbers.

Among the many important works in the collection is a coin revered since the Middle Ages as being one of the 30 pieces of silver, and a bronze horse by Leonardo da Vinci. There are also paintings by Renoir, Picasso, O'Conor and Yeats. The Hunt also houses the second largest collection of prehistoric Irish material in the State.

The museum are keen to

attract young people to see the collection and a specific education wing now exists.

"We're hoping to develop a series of materials for secondary teachers across a range of subjects," explained Peter McNamara, the museum general manager.

"For example, we have items perfect for Leaving Certs to use in their portfolio's applying to art college," he said.

A children's art exhibition was opened in the education wing this week by

Raymond Keavney, Director of the National Gallery featuring works by children from all over Ireland.

"We're confident that the museum will continue to attract the numbers it's attracting and we intend to build and develop the collection in the future," Mr McGonigal stated.

A royal surprise for UL students

By LAURA RYAN

STUDENTS studying for exams at UL got a royal surprise this Wednesday when Princess Michael of Kent arrived at the University at the invitation of the International Studies Programme (ISP).

Arriving in a black stretch limo amid tight security co-ordinated by Henry Street Garda Station, the Princess first had lunch with UL President Dr Edward Walsh and his wife Stephanie in Plassey House. They were joined by Lord and Lady Ross and ISP course director Dr Nabil Adawy.

She then gave a quite humorous historical lecture entitled Royal Powers, Substance and Show to the students who had invited her to

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