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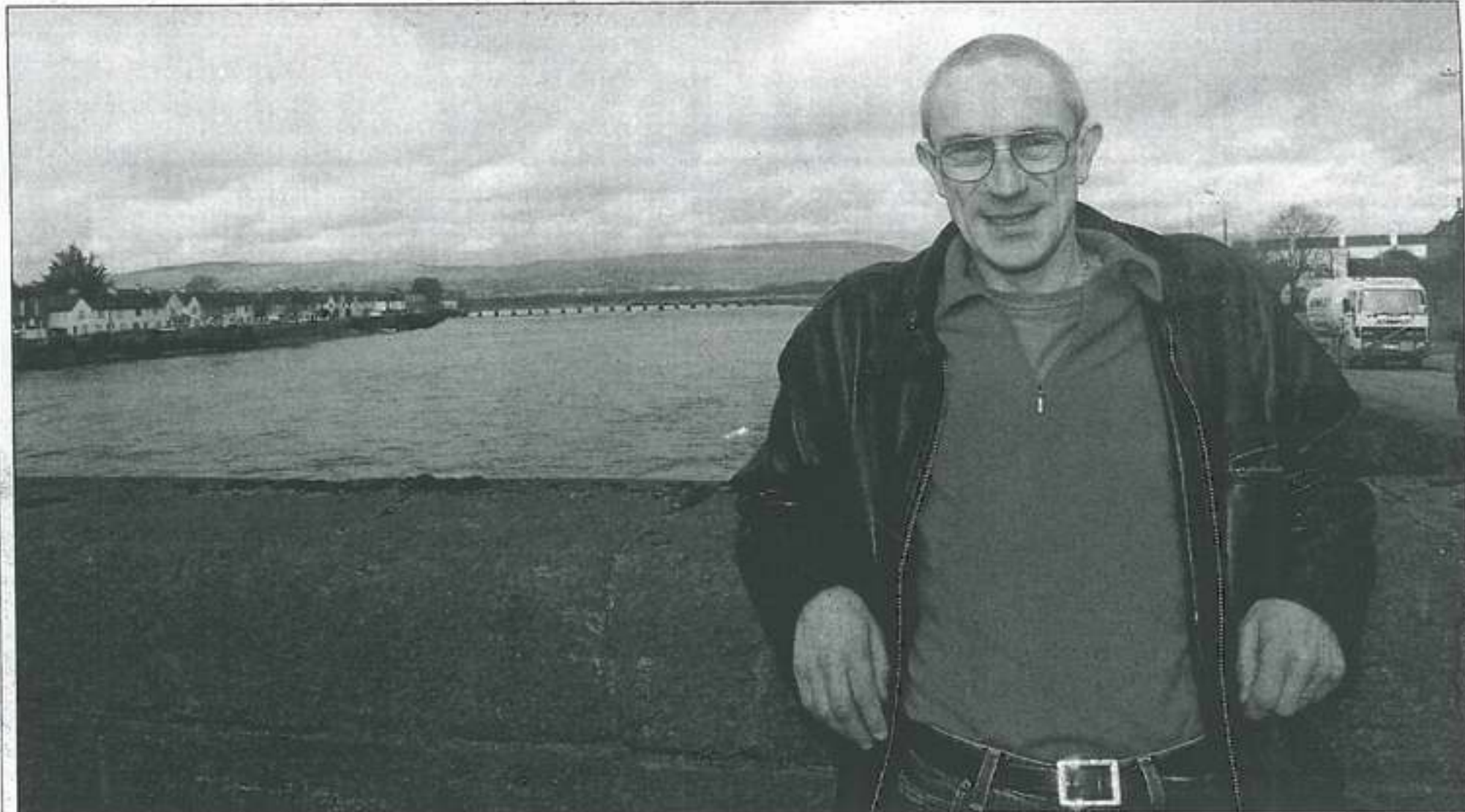
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Public House

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John Hunt: many tributes to the driving force behind the awardwinning Hunt Museum in Limerick

Limerick joins art world in mourning for John Hunt 47

By ALAN JACQUES

LIMERICK dignitaries will join hundreds of mourners at the funeral of art historian and Freeman of the City John Hunt in Dublin this Thursday.

The 47-year-old father of three who died last Sunday after a long illness, will be laid to rest in St Fintan's Cemetery, Sutton, Dublin, following his funeral Mass at 11am in the adjoining church.

In favor of Limerick, Michael Hourigan, and the city manager, Tom Mackey, will attend the funeral to extend the city's sympathy to Mr Hunt's family.

The father of three was the driving force behind the establishment of the Hunt Museum, which houses the internationally important collection of more than 2,000 works of art and antiquities formed by his parents, John and Gertrude, dating from the Neolithic

period to the 20th century.

The Hunt Museum has been acknowledged as being one of the most important private collections in the State, and includes works by Renoir, Picasso and Yeats; it opened its doors to the public in 1997.

John Hunt, who died in hospital in Dublin, is survived by his wife Patricia; daughter Miriam; sons Paddy and Jack; and sister Trudy. He had been ill for a number of years.

Among those to pay tribute to Mr Hunt was the museum's director Virginia Mahon.

"John's personal energy, liveliness and vision will be remembered with fondness by all those associated with the museum since its inception over ten years ago."

"His spontaneity and creativity in making the collection accessible has influenced the museum in all aspects of its operation. His enormous contribution will be greatly missed," she said.

Labour's city councillor John Ryan, a close friend of the art collector,

remembered Mr Hunt as "a real stalwart". "His intelligence and commitment to art could have taken him anywhere in the world. But he recognised something in Limerick and felt the Hunt Museum was truly at home here," he said.

"One of the most self-effacing achievements in his life was being Grand Marshall of the St Patrick's Parade in Limerick, as this was recognition from the ordinary people of the city."

"He was never a man to be found on the review stand, he preferred to mix with the people on the street. Limerick has lost a true gentleman," he said.

In recognition of his contribution to the Hunt Museum and other artistic and cultural initiatives, the University of Limerick had planned to confer an honorary degree on Mr Hunt in a ceremony on October 15.

UL president Prof Roger Downer said: "John was exceptionally generous with his time and resources in ensuring that a lasting legacy

would be provided for countless generations to come and his absence will be sorely felt by all who had the privilege of knowing him."

His remains were taken to St Fintan's Church, Sutton, this Wednesday, with the funeral Mass this Thursday at 11am and burial afterwards in St Fintan's cemetery.

As a mark of respect the Hunt Museum closed at 2pm this Wednesday and will reopen at 11am this Friday. A book of condolences has been opened at the museum and the public are invited to sign the book which will be available until 5pm next Monday.

Family's legacy

THE death of John Hunt is cause to remember his and his family's great legacy to Limerick and indeed, Ireland, writes Deirdre McGrath.

The late Mr Hunt's father, also John, and his mother, Gertrude, moved to Lough Gur in 1939 where Prof Sean O'Riordain, University College, Cork, had begun an excavation programme on the archaeological sites there.

The couple had an avid interest in antiques and



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