

All Blacks star Jerome Kaino during the opening of the Munster Museum at Thomond Park Limerick. PICTURE: ARTHUR ELLIS/PRESS22.

Rugby fans can potter around in the museum

By JOHN HOGAN

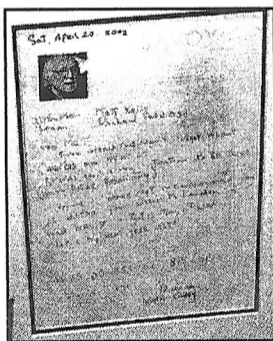
MUNSTER fans can now travel back in time for a look at the growth of their beloved team while also comparing their own rugby skills with those of their heroes at the new Thomond Park Museum.

Stadium director John Cantwell brought the Limerick Leader on a guided tour of the new museum which boasts priceless Munster Rugby artefacts such as the duffle coat seen on tv being thrown into the air after Christy Cantillon's famous try against the All Blacks in 1978.

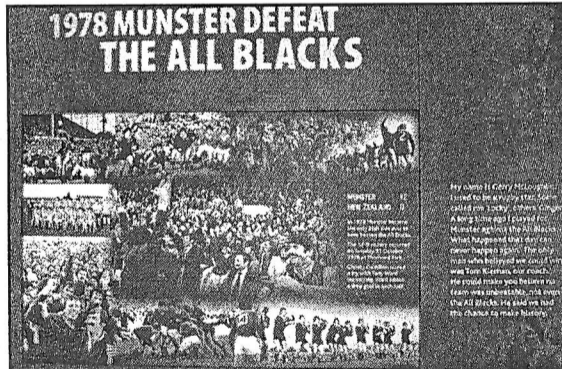
Nearby, a letter from Richard Harris to a friend postpones a visit to London as the famous actor outlines his intention to attend Munster's clash with Castres, "Harry Potter permitting".

It takes you right from the origins of Munster Rugby up to the present day using a variety of different audio, visual and interactive displays," said Mr Cantwell.

One such display that allows supporters to experience the atmosphere of the Munster dressing room is an locked door with 'Shower Room' printed on its steamed-up window.



The Harris letter, above; on right: the All Blacks were defeated in 1978 but, below right were back to pen their signatures on the museum wall last week



Coming from inside the door, visitors to the museum can hear genuine recordings of the Munster team chatting with one another after a tough training session.

Visitors to the museum will also have the chance to compare their lineout throwing skills with those of Jerry Flannery or Frankie Sheehan at the throwing nets where different points are allocated based on the accuracy of the throw.

"The All Blacks were in here last week and they went mad trying to get the balls into the hole, they nearly tore the place apart," joked the stadium

director. An eight-minute short film titled 'We are Munster' brings the museum tour to an end. Instead of dwelling on Thomond Park, the film focuses on the passion of the Red Army throughout the province. It is screened in the room where press conferences are normally held after Magners League and Heineken Cup games.

Visitors to the museum will also have the option of being shown around the stadium itself with the Munster dressing rooms, treatment facilities and of course a walk around the new stands included.

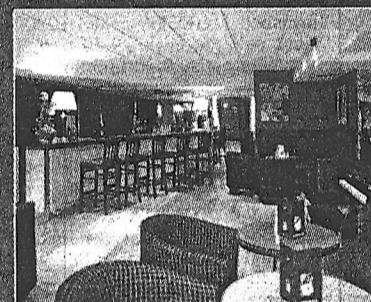
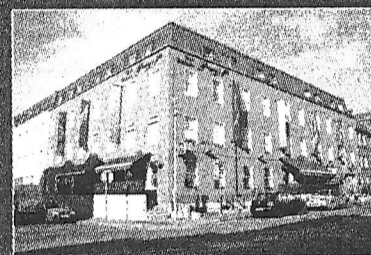
"We would welcome school tours and also offer corporate packages," continued Mr Cantwell. "We've had a great response in the week that we've been open and look forward to welcoming many more people into the museum."

The Museum is open from 9am to 5pm during the week and from 10am until 6pm on a Saturday. Tour prices start at €5 for children and €7 for adults with the full stadium tour costing €10 for a child and €12 for an adult. Family rates are also available, contact Thomond Park on 421100 for further details.

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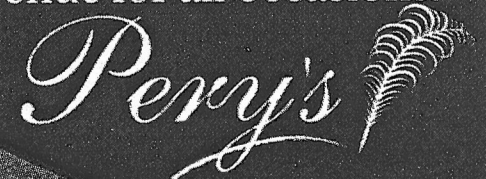
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