

Press release

May 2007

Local Community Groups Make History

Community groups across the borough will work together in 'Making History' - a revolutionary project designed to encourage cross community celebration of local history in Ballymena.

Co-ordinated by Ballymena Museum, the project - involving participants aged from 13 to 75 - will culminate in a multimedia and photographic exhibition at The Braid, Ballymena's new civic, museum and arts centre.

Speaking in advance of the official launch at Ballymena Museum on 23 May 2007, Museum Access Officer, Dominique Bouchard, explained:

"We have joined up with local community groups spanning all ages, abilities, ethnicities and religions - from Ballee, Cullybackey, Dunclug, Glenravel, Harryville and the Ballymena Interethnic Forum. It was important to us to involve participants from a range of backgrounds and experiences to produce an interesting, thought-provoking community history for Ballymena."

"We have worked in partnership with each group to help them design and coordinate projects tailored to their unique needs and interests."

The projects are as varied as the groups: the Glenravel and Cullybackey groups will look at their shared history in Ballymena's linen industry. Dunclug will work on a contemporary history project that draws on their technical skills and knowledge, supplemented through field trips and workshops with professional multimedia educators and artists.

Dominique added: "These encounters help broaden the participants' view of history in relation to their own experiences, as well as helping them interrogate their place and role in memory, public history and their community."

"The Community History Programme aims to cut across the legacy of division by encouraging core historical practices, such as incorporating joint experiences and viewpoints, verification of facts and respectful communication."

It aims to promote community development in Mid-Antrim in five key ways:

- introducing alternative or non-traditional voices into historical dialogue
- promoting skills that help people criticise and evaluate history
- increasing access to heritage services for the traditionally excluded
- developing practical and analytical skills
- encouraging community groups to work together across all boundaries.

Over the course of the project, digital images, video and sound files recorded during each group's programme will be added to a Community Multimedia Archive using a fully searchable database, one of which will be available for public use at The Braid from June 2008.

The group will select a series of key images and stories from each project to be developed into a dramatic community exhibition for display in The Braid museum.

Ends

For further information, please contact Nicola McCullough at event-ful on 028 9043 4320.