



# IRISH GAZETTE



August 2007

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Exhibits at the Saint Patrick Centre in Co. Down

## Are you a friend of St. Patrick?

Dr. Tim Campbell, director of the Saint Patrick Centre in Downpatrick, Co. Down, hopes you are a friend of the patron saint. And he'll be asking people that question at this year's Irish Fair of Minnesota Aug. 10- 12 in St. Paul.

The Saint Patrick Centre, located near St. Patrick's grave at the Down Cathedral, is the only permanent exhibit about St. Patrick in the world. Its location in Northern Ireland makes perfect sense — for more than 1,500 years, people have made pilgrimages to this site to honor the patron saint of Ireland. Locally, the area is known as "St. Patrick's country," to commemorate its many connections with Patrick.

Completed seven years ago, the \$10 million Saint Patrick Centre offers modern exhibits to explain an ancient time. It takes you on a journey back to the 5th century with Patrick, where you learn about his childhood in Britain, his abduction and years as a slave in Ireland, his escape and eventual return as a missionary. An IMAX theater presentation brings you back to the present, offering a dramatic overview of how St. Patrick is celebrated around the world. His legacy, for Ireland and the world, is explored and debated.

While tourists visit the Centre to learn about the life and times of St. Patrick, another important activity is also happening there. Educational programming focused on cross-community reconciliation is really at the heart of the Saint Patrick Centre. Staff at the Centre work with hundreds of school groups every year, inspiring students through Patrick's words and deeds to live together peacefully.

The Friends of Saint Patrick, an organization started by the Saint Patrick Centre, helps support its education initiatives. By becoming a member of the Friends of Saint Patrick, those living outside of the Emerald Isle can stay connected and actively support Patrick's message of reconciliation for all faiths. Or, put another way, "If you have a love of Ireland and want the legacy of Patrick to last more than one day a year" then you should join the Friends of Saint Patrick.

Many people around the world have already joined. Now Dr. Campbell hopes to establish a Friends of Saint Patrick chapter right here in Minnesota. According to Dr. Campbell, “the emphasis is on bringing people with a love of Ireland together to have fun, do good works in the name of St. Patrick, learn more about Ireland and have direct involvement with the home of the patron saint.”

If you're at the Irish Fair this year, make sure to stop by and talk with Dr. Campbell. If you can't make it to the Fair, check out the Saint Patrick Centre web site at [www.saintpatrickcentre.com](http://www.saintpatrickcentre.com). You want to be a Friend of St. Patrick, don't you?

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