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‘Flavit et dissipati sunt’ – Public history representations of the Spanish Armada in Ireland

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Museum Studies / History

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Abstract

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schools and museums, particularly in England and Spain, people are taught about how the English fleet were able to outsmart the undeniably more powerful Armada, yet many are unaware of Ireland's role in this event. Over twenty ships and six thousand men wrecked along the Irish coast, making it one of the worst maritime tragedies in Irish history. However, there are limited historical sites and memorials dedicated to this tragedy; why is this? This dissertation will analyse public history representations of the Spanish Armada in Ireland, using the Ulster Museum, Belfast, the Tower Museum, Derry, and the Spanish Armada Interpretive Centre, Sligo, to exemplify the different forms of Armada memory, to highlight the lack of others, and the possibilities available using public history.

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Introduction

‘Flavit et Dissipati Sunt’ – ‘He blew with His winds, and they were scattered.” This phrase was inscribed onto commemorative medals, currently displayed in the Tower Museum, which Queen Elizabeth I is said to have awarded following the sinking of the Spanish Armada along the Irish coast. The term ‘Protestant Wind’ was also used to refer to the underlying reason for the undeclared war between Spain and England, and to imply divine intervention in the war between Protestant and Catholic supremacy in Western Europe and the New World. The phrases underline, albeit indirectly, the importance of Ireland and its weather in this international conflict which is seen as the culmination of much tension throughout the Tudor era.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia, an admiral, said while escaping the Channel, ‘Take great heed lest you fall upon the Island of Ireland for fear of the harm that may happen unto you upon that coast.’[1] English and Spanish forces clearly recognised the dangers of the Irish coastline, which could wreak havoc on those unfamiliar with the terrain. And it did. Roughly 6,000 Spaniards lost their lives in Irish waters after around twenty-five ships wrecked off the coastline. The Spanish Armada and its downfall have been remembered triumphantly in England and tragically Spain; yet in Ireland, where the majority lost their lives, there has been limited commemoration.

History of the Armada

The attack of the Spanish Armada from July into August 1588 was not a standalone event; years of religious and economic tension led to this attack. When Elizabeth I

[1] Ken Douglas, *The Downfall of the Spanish Armada in Ireland* (Dublin, 2009) p.6

took the throne in 1558, she did so amid internal religious turmoil. By the mid-sixteenth century, Spain was a global empire with territories across the world. England, however, was a comparatively small nation and could exercise limited power on the global stage. An alliance with Spain could have changed this. Mary I (Elizabeth's half-sister) wed Philip of Spain, yet the marriage did not produce children and as a devout Catholic, Mary revived the Heresy Acts.[2] Following Mary's death and Elizabeth's crowning, Philip declared Elizabeth a heretic, for her rejection of Catholicism, and illegitimate, since her father's first marriage was never annulled by the Catholic Church.[3] Philip decided to invade England, gaining Papal support, who saw this invasion as a holy crusade.

The Armada left Lisbon for the English Channel on 21 July 1588, with 141 ships and around 30,000 soldiers and sailors. The English fleet waited at Plymouth; although vastly outnumbered, they had faster ships, greater stability and more room for guns.[4] The fiercest fighting of the conflict occurred during the Battle of Gravelines. As the Spanish lacked trained gunmen and could not return fire sufficiently, it is estimated that a thousand Spaniards were killed and eight hundred were wounded. The commanders conferred about what they should do next as it was clear they could not defeat the English. They could not go back on themselves, given the volume of enemy ships blocking the Channel, so they decided to aim to find the safest route through the Shetland Islands and follow the west coast of Ireland, allowing them to find their way back to Spain.

[2] Robert Hutchinson, *The Spanish Armada* (London, 2013) xix
[3] Hutchison, *The Spanish Armada* p.2
[4] Hutchinson, *The Spanish Armada* p.168

If the Spanish thought that their escape would be easy, they were sorely mistaken. The route had not been planned, their equipment was comparatively primitive, hundreds of men were killed, and survivors lacked sufficient experience.[5] About eighty-four ships returned to Spain mostly unharmed, however, the remainder of the Armada (which many historians estimate to be twenty-eight ships) did make landfall in Ireland. And this is the point at which Ireland becomes central to the history and ultimate downfall of the Armada. [6]

Research Questions

The Armada is not a standalone maritime disaster in Ireland either. According to the Geological Survey Ireland, there are an estimated 18,000 shipwrecks in Irish waters, yet the INFOMAR shipwreck inventory has only recorded 480 surveyed shipwrecks.[7] Why, as an island, is Ireland not at the forefront of recording shipwrecks? And with such a deeply rooted maritime history, with thousands of known wrecks dotted along its coast, why is there a lack of shipwreck representation in Ireland's public history?

The most obvious reason is that the coast is too dangerous for divers, thus creating a huge lack of artefacts available for public display. If the coast could wreck military ships and galleasses, what chance do individuals have? There is significant legislation imposed in the Republic of Ireland to protect these finite sites, with interference to any wreck prohibited by Section 26 of the 1930 National Monuments

[5] Douglas, *The Downfall*, p.19
[6] Douglas, *The Downfall* p.p.70-71
[7] Geological Survery Ireland, INFOMAR https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/marine-and-coastal-unit/activities/Pages/shipwrecks.aspx#:~:text=Surveying%20shipwrecks%20is%20an%20important,the%20Shipwreck%20Inventory%20of%20Ireland. (accessed 03 June 2024)

Act and Section 2 of the 1987 National Monuments (Amendment) Act.[8] [9] This legislation is akin to that of listed buildings; these are sites of historic significance and must be preserved as such. Though laws in Northern Ireland are less severe, divers must report any finds immediately and enquire if a licence is required to search further.[10]

Yet this still does not explain why there is so little coverage of the Spanish Armada in Ireland. Contemporary testimonies are available, from Spanish survivors, Irish locals, and English settlers in Ireland. There is sometimes no need to dive down either, with many items washing ashore over the centuries and oral testimonies from fishermen or locals living around the coast to tell tales and myths that would intrigue many tourists visiting the area.

Catherine Nash in her 2005 work, *Local histories in Northern Ireland,* discusses how local identity is vital to improve cultural reconciliation in post-conflict Northern Ireland, and how local heritage has previously been defined by community culture, by parameters set by community groups to divide Unionist culture and Nationalist culture.[11] The need to find shared history and identity that will not venerate one community over another and the need to find a unified heritage is central to post-conflict societies. Further, the memorialisation of the lives lost and the reminder of

[8] 1930 National Monuments Act Ireland https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1930/act/2/enacted/en/print#:~:text=42%20of%201923-,Number%202%20of%201930.,%5B26th%20February%2C%201930.%5D (accessed 04 June 2024)
[9] 1987 National Monuments Act https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1987/act/17/enacted/en/html (accessed 04 June 2024)
[10] Department of the Communities NI, *Protecting Northern Ireland's archaeology* https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/protecting-northern-irelands-archaeology#:~:text=Metal%20detecting-,Legislation,on%20searching%20for%20archaeological%20material. (accessed 04 June 2024)
[11] Catherine Nash, *Local histories in Northern Ireland* (Oxford, 2005) p.46

Ireland's position in an internationally significant event is surely a point of unity, regardless of political or religious differences.

The history of the Spanish Armada is a shared history, not built on politicised identities and divided communities. So why hasn't the Spanish Armada been focused on yet? It is likely due to the message presented in the phrase from the beginning: many at the time viewed this conflict as the triumph of Protestantism over Catholicism. It may be that contemporary English propaganda has convinced many that this was purely a victory of English strength. Perhaps there is still the Elizabethan belief that the cause of the Armada was a religious conflict, a war between Catholicism and newly emerging Protestantism. Yet this 'holy war' did not wreck the ships either and was neither a Protestant nor English victory. Certainly, the English were able to outsmart the Armada in the English Channel, however Irish coast is dangerous, particularly in September, meaning that the odds of wrecking along the coastline increased exponentially.

It is important public history is not just related to the divisive Irish past, like the 1922-23 Irish Civil War and the more recent Troubles, in order to generate new commonalities between communities. And as the field of public history continues to grow, and as more ways of presenting history to different communities are found, surely now is the perfect time to display this important event in Irish, British, and Spanish history.

Historiography

Public history is a relatively new field, developing since the 1970s. In 1978, Robert Kelley defined it as, 'the employment of historians and the historical method outside of academia: in government, private corporations, the media, historical societies and

museums, even in private practice.'[12] This is the most standard, overarching definition, though others, such as Alfred Andrea, emphasised that is also about providing academic and practical history to society.[13] As such, public, academic, and practical history are quickly becoming synonymous, with each field converging into one at a rapid pace, with boundaries between each becoming increasingly indistinguishable.

In his groundbreaking work, *Public History, a textbook of practice*, Thomas Cauvin analogises the mechanisms of public history. He used a tree to show the connections and the interweaving systems at play when practicing history.[14] The trunk, the most visible part of the tree, represents historical interpretation which takes place outside the ivory tower of academics. The leaves represent the various uses of history, the branches for communicating history, and the roots for analysing sources.[15] In short, public history provides the framework to communicate to larger audiences and to work with historical and heritage-based organisations to display their chosen histories.

Andrew Achenbaum praised public historians' work as vital for the ever-changing modern audience to engage with their heritage, yet he criticised the academic field, stating that public historians faced practical barriers that he believed were a hindrance: namely the need to secure hard-to-come-by funding.[16] He argued that the academic field was too narrow, with much veneration going towards academic research papers, rather than those engaging in community-led projects, feeling that

[12] Charles T. Cole Jr, 'Public history: What difference has it made?', *The Public Historian*, vol. 16, no. 4 (California, 1994), p.11
[13] Ibid
[14] Thomas Cauvin, *Public History: a textbook of practice* (London, 2022) p.14
[15] Cauvin, *Public History* p.15
[16] Andrew W. Achenbaum, 'Public History's Past, Present, and Prospects', in *American Historical Review* 52, no. 5 (Oxford, 1987), p. 1167

historians working outside of the academy are not given the merit they deserve.[17] It is undeniable that non-academic historians feel they have to prove themselves as historians equal to academics. Yet public history is fast becoming a field where the boundaries between what is public and what is academic are blurring. Achenbaum wrote this in 1987 when public history was still in its infancy as a field of History. Now, the tides are changing towards a greater appreciation of public history.

A decade later, Linda Shopes wrote an article agreeing with his sentiment. She described how academic scholarship is a self-referential community, often writing for and with a small group of academics, claiming that the academic field offers little in the way of public-facing opportunities.[18] She argued that differences between the narrow field of academics and the then-underdeveloped field of public history came down to different work cultures and that contemporary public history offered little in the way of further study since the public historians involved lacked free time and funding to continue these projects.[19]

When Cauvin wrote his textbook in 2022, appreciation for public history had seemingly grown. He explained how historic institutions, museums, and small-scale organisations are united around three criteria: public audiences, engagement, and participation.[20] Public history has become so entangled in academic history that it is unclear where one ends and the other begins and at the same time, public history is now so entrenched in communities that the lines between public historians and scholars have been blurred beyond recognition. This can be seen across Ireland as community groups are becoming increasingly important in the presentation and

[17] Achenbaum, Public History's Past, Present, and Prospects' p.1168
[18] Linda Shopes, 'Building bridges between academic and public history', in *TPH*, vol. 19, no. 2 (California, 1997), p.54
[19] Ibid
[20] Cauvin, *Public History* p.22

preservation of local histories and heritage; a relevant example of this is the Spanish Armada Interpretive Centre in Sligo. In just four decades, public history has undergone a dramatic transformation and as greater research is dedicated to the field, it could create a new way of experiencing and studying history.

The tourist economy is increasingly reliant on public history and heritage. Jerome de Groot, writing in 2009, highlighted the growing importance of museums to the UK economy, with so-called 'heritage tourism' bringing in £12.4 billion annually.[21] De Groot discussed a growing movement called 'New Museology', which emphasises the importance of ideology as a function of museums, which should be open to criticism and to understand the feelings generated by their exhibits. He argues that museums do not present history passively, since they have often been seen as extensions of governments and providing information to elites, rather than the general populous.[22] This is certainly true in the traditional sense. Government-funded museums do, to a certain extent, have an agenda to follow. Their exhibitions must appease their donors, and they must be willing to adapt or remove certain elements to guarantee continued funding. This, however, is where public historians come in. Smaller museums or community-led centres offer unique opportunities to present local history without government influence. While certainly lacking the financial support their national counterparts receive, smaller museums offer public historians more freedom in what they present and how they present it.

In 2000, Catherine Cameron and John Gatewood surveyed what people wanted from historical sites. Their hypothesis was that visitors were most likely seeking a

[21] Jerome De Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture* (Abingdon, 2009) p.290
[22] De Groot, *Consuming History*, p.292

deeper understanding of a specific place or era and that they may even be seeking nostalgia for a simpler time.[23] They found that the public generally prefers interactive, tactile displays rather than rather long, wordy displays of information.[24] Further, they discovered that people were put off by large museums, feeling overwhelmed by the information displayed or the layout of the site. Their conclusion agreed with de Groot: that museums need to focus more on listening to the public since, 'A presentation does not guarantee full comprehension.'[25] Often, curators, typically with an academic background, work on the assumption that the public can follow what is being discussed if there are enough images or physical artefacts, but this is not always the case.

Gardener and Hamilton argued that this is why public history is one of the most important studies. They stated that it, 'may provide new knowledge or new ways of seeing things, sometimes through its transformation in different forms and at other times through research for the work itself.'[26] Public historians will have studied theoretical museology and will have worked directly with the public in organisations dedicated to public-facing heritage. Therefore, if museums want to avoid de Groot's warnings about museums being too narrowly focused on an elite membership base, they need to understand what Cameron and Gatewood discovered about the public's feelings towards heritage sites and thus utilize public historians' skills to create a presentation that is both completely accurate and accessible.

[23] Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, 'Excursions into the unremembered past: what people want from visits to historical sites', in *TPH*, vol. 22, no. 3 (California, 2000), p.109
[24] Cameron and Gatewood, 'Excursions into the unremembered past', p.121
[25] Cameron and Gatewood, 'Excursions into the unremembered past' p.127
[26] James Gardner and Paula Hamilton, 'Introduction: The Past, Present and Future of Public History' in James Gardner and Paula Hamilton (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Public History* (Oxford, 2017), p. 8

A central aspect of the operation of museums is the collections they hold. Artefacts relevant to the Spanish Armada in Ireland are primarily acquired through underwater archaeology, though some objects have washed ashore or were acquired by those who looted the wrecks in the immediate aftermath. Christopher F. Amer believes that underwater archaeology is one of the most important contributors to historical research since the artefacts are usually well-preserved and can lead to new discoveries or can contradict written sources.[27] As will be discussed later, the locations of the three wreck sites relevant to this dissertation – Lacada Point, Kinnagoe Bay, and Streedagh Beach – each have their own legal problems associated with diving and underwater archaeology. Organisations displaying these items have unique opportunities to let visitors interact with the objects since items are often forgotten after the wrecking. As Susan Pearce explains, collections provide chances for different people to interpret artefacts in different ways, although collection acquisitions are long processes that can take years to amass.[28] Thus, heritage sites displaying underwater artefacts must take care in presenting these items, since they hold original items that have lain undisturbed for centuries.

The most useful book for analysing the impact of the Spanish Armada in Ireland would be *The Downfall of the Spanish Armada in Ireland* by Ken Douglas, published in 2009. In this work, Douglas methodically analyses the lead-up to the launch of the Armada, the flight of the Armada from the Channel, and the eventual shipwrecks, as well as discussing the discovery of several ships (including the five relevant to this dissertation), explaining where and how the ships were found.[29]

[27] Cole, 'Public History', p.15
[28] Susan M. Pearce (ed.), *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London, 1994). p.p.157-158
[29] Douglas, *The Downfall* Contents page

There are two particularly useful aspects of this work for public historians. One is the detail Douglas gives to explain exactly why the Armada wrecked as and where it did due to the storms. He goes into detail explaining that this was not due to Protestantism triumphing over Catholicism and instead analyses contemporary weather patterns and explains that the Great Gale of 1588 was almost certainly a hurricane.[30] He thus dismisses any theories propagated by the English court that victory was due to English might; the Spanish were simply caught in an unfortunate combination of poor navigational skills and unprecedented weather. The second useful aspect is his praise of the divers and curators central to finding and presenting the previously lost history of wrecks and individuals. The chapters about the *Girona* (Ulster Museum) and *La Trinidad Valencera* (Tower Museum) he dedicated to the local divers from Derry and to Robert Sténuit, who discovered the former.[31] This makes the work more comprehensive than most since it not only deals with the history of the event, but also the contemporary discoveries and relevance of them to local communities, historians, and scientists, all of whom hope to glean new information about these infamous wrecks. As such, Douglas created a work vital to those studying the Tudor era, Irish history, or local archaeology, writing a cross-disciplinary book relevant to many.

Spanish Armada exhibitions could be defined as non-traditional war memorials since they commemorate the deaths of hundreds of soldiers. Elizabeth Crooke explains that memorial museums were created, ‘to extend the memory of injustice in order to grow awareness, seek acknowledgement and stimulate action.’[32] The Armada

[30] Douglas, The *Downfall* p.p.60-70
[31] Douglas, *The Downfall* p.p.132-133
[32] Elizabeth Crooke, ‘Memory politics and material culture: display in the memorial museum’, *Memory Studies* vol. 13, no. 2 (Ulster, 2016) p.1

exhibitions aim to remind visitors of the dangers of the Irish coast, of the great loss of life, and of Ireland's role in global politics and conflict. The events surrounding the Spanish Armada are still well-known today and the Tudor era remains one of the most popular topics among historians and non-historians alike.

Methodology

Ireland is rich with underwater archaeology, owing to the various shipping disasters and how many communities have built their lives along its coastline, a commonality with all coastal nations. An international project, created by the National Museum of African American History and Culture, is called the Slave Wrecks Project, which aims to use maritime archaeology of shipwrecks and historical investigation to study transatlantic slave ships that have sunk and to map out journeys, completed and failed, of these ships around the world, collaborating with the Smithsonian to teach those of African descent about maritime archaeology.[33] This example proves that Ireland should be leading underwater archaeology and the presentation of coastal histories. But this is not the case, owing largely to its own turbulent history.

Representations of the Spanish Armada in Ireland are usually found in coastal areas in the west of Ireland where ships are known to have anchored or sank, taking the form of memorials and monuments. There are some exhibitions found away from wreck sites, such as Belfast and Dublin, where artefacts can be afforded higher levels of conservation. This dissertation will look at three case studies which, as a group, best exemplify representations of the Armada. The Ulster Museum in Belfast

[33] The Slave Wrecks Project in *The National Museum of African American Heritage and Culture* https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/slave-wrecks-project (accessed 07 June 2024)

represents government-funded museums with high-quality preservation facilities. The Tower Museum in Derry represents smaller museums that receive much less funding and yet are deeply rooted in the community of the city. The Spanish Armada Interpretive Centre in Sligo represents community-led projects which, though having a physical base in Grange, transcend the traditional boundaries of a museum and depend heavily on community contributions.

The main sources for the dissertation will come from interviews with the curators of the Ulster Museum and the Tower Museum, who will expand on the history of the exhibitions and how they work to preserve the artefacts and maintain visitors' interest in this often-unknown part of Irish history. The dissertation will also use a short film produced by the Spanish Armada Centre which tells the story of Francisco de Cuéllar and his time in Ireland. Another key source will be looking at the 'Remembering the Armada' festival which takes place every September, looking at the events held, the associated material produced, and the general reception to it from locals and visitors alike.

Furthermore, field notes taken from visits to the various museums will be used to describe the presentation of the history and to compare the different representations. Important primary sources will also include government acts surrounding the difficulties of maritime archaeology and the subsequent problems of acquiring and presenting artefacts that may be found. Websites and social media accounts for each organisation will be central in highlighting whether the organisation is accessible or inaccessible to visitors and whether each exhibition or centre is promoted to an international audience.

Chapters

To analyse public history representations of the Spanish Armada in Ireland, this dissertation will use three case studies to explain different ways of presenting history in different parts of the island. Chapter One will place Spanish Armada heritage in Ireland within a national and international context. Chapter Two will look at the Ulster Museum and its exhibition on the Spanish Armada, particularly that of the *Girona*, which wrecked off the County Antrim coast. This is an example of a large-scale traditional museum, which receives state funding and has the appropriate conservation facilities for the delicate artefacts displayed. Chapter Three will focus on the Tower Museum in the city of Derry, which displays an exhibition on La Trinidad Valencera: although it was wrecked in County Donegal, a local dive team from Derry was the group to find the wreck. The museum is smaller than the Ulster Museum, with the latter loaning the artefacts to the Tower Museum. Chapter Four will analyse the Spanish Armada Interpretive Centre in Grange, County Sligo, a community-run organisation, which was started by locals interested in Sligo's Armada heritage and which today displays an exhibition on the Armada. The Centre receives minimal council funding and relies on volunteers and donations, with most money coming from a short film produced, an annual commemorative festival, and different annual events.

The dissertation will hope to showcase the different ways history can be presented, the various methodologies of explaining a centuries-old event to modern audiences, and to discuss what the future of Spanish Armada representations in Ireland may look like.

Chapter One – The Armada and its Public History in Ireland

To understand the importance of the Spanish Armada to both Irish public history representations and Irish maritime heritage, it must be placed within an international context. Maritime heritage is internationally recognised and can be seen as a shared culture and form of connection for otherwise unconnected nations. A useful website, the European Atlas of the Seas, offers a map of the locations of 36 maritime museums across Europe.[34] Understandably, the densest concentration of maritime museums is found in countries with famous maritime histories, such as Denmark and its Viking heritage and countries with imperial pasts (requiring ships to travel the continents) like Italy, France and England. Perhaps surprisingly, according to this map, countries with Mediterranean coastlines severely lack any significant maritime museums.

The Netherlands is a maritime nation, due to its colonising history and reliance on estuaries for trade. Thus unsurprisingly, the map mentioned above displays four important maritime museums in the Netherlands. Lars U. Scholl discusses two such museums in his article, 'Maritime History at Maritime Museums'. He first discusses

[34] European Atlas of the Seas, Maritime Museums https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/atlas/maritime_atlas/#lang=EN;p=w;bkgd=5;theme=25:1;c=221660.58762474544,6539223.267411765;z=4 (accessed 12 July 2024)

the Maritime Museum Prins Hendrik, Rotterdam, and explains that it simply displays ship-related artefacts, and is not actively involved with maritime research: the future of its previous research collaboration with Corpus Christi is in doubt.[35] Secondly, the National Maritime Museum, Amsterdam, has experienced declining visitor numbers since 2013, as the Museum has become commercial, which many claim is turning it into an 'amusement park'.[36]

These criticisms reflect the growing problem faced by museums. Many fear that museums are less preservation and research-focused, and more concerned with driving up visitor numbers of families seeking entertainment. Janet Marstine discusses that museum bosses feel that funding is a central concern, especially those lacking state funding, and therefore generating profits must be central to the decision-making process. [37] Therefore, museums are reliant on repeat visitors to the museum: to purchase in the coffee shop and gift shop. This was an issue highlighted by the archivist, who stated that the Tower Museum is reliant on repeat visitors.[38] Unlike the Dutch museums however, the Tower chooses to attract visitors through local events and activities, rather than fairground-like events, thus maintaining history and heritage at the core of all they do.

It is likely that Dutch museums are struggling to attract visitors because maritime museums are often overlooked by tourists. Difficulties arise from the challenges in presenting engaging maritime heritage, without falling victim to the tried and tested method of displaying artefacts accompanied by text. Further, some wrecks and artefacts cannot be removed from the seabed, either due to practical or legal

[35] Lars U. Scholl, "Maritime History at Maritime Museums." *International Journal of Maritime History*, vol. 32, no. 2, (Germany, 2020)
[36] Ibid
[37] Janet Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*. 1st ed. (New Jersey, 2006) p.11
[38] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum, Derry (28 June 2024)

reasons. As such, organisations, such as the Spanish Armada Centre in Sligo, struggle to present engrossing history when lacking artefacts. Perhaps the most innovative example of presenting maritime archaeology is 'Beacon Virtua', a virtual reality simulation of Beacon Island, a small island off the coast of Western Australia best known for the *Batavia* wreck, a Dutch East India Company ship that fell victim to a mutiny.[39]

The simulation explores the different periods in the Islands history and can serve as digital preservation, displaying the island as how it may have looked at different points in its history.[40] Further, allowing viewers to visualise an event enables them to interpret the cultural heritage and to interact with the island without destroying the delicate ecosystem.[41] Sharon Leon analyses public history within digital environments and explains how this newly emerging field presents a wide range of possibilities available for presenting history but also exemplifies public history itself: a collaborative venture requiring academic backing, community work, and individuals with broad skill bases.[42] While Beacon Virtua is a relatively small project in the Indian Ocean, it is exemplary of what maritime heritage could offer. The simulation shows not just the international context of the wreck, it also shows the fishing culture of the island. This idea could be applied to Irish maritime heritage, which is both culturally and politically important to Ireland in a national and international context.

While many projects lack the funding of national museums, like the Dutch Museums previously mentioned, or the innovation of the Beacon Virtua, the importance of

[39] Woods, Andrew, Nick Oliver, Paul Bourke, Jeremy Green, and Alistair Paterson 'Beacon Virtua: A Virtual Reality Simulation Detailing the Recent and Shipwreck History of Beacon Island, Western Australia' in *3D Recording and Interpretation for Maritime Archaeology*, vol. 31, (New York, 2019) p.p.197-198
[40] Ibid
[41] Woods et al, 'Beacon Virtua' p.198
[42] Sharon Leon, 'Complexity and Collaboration: Doing Public History in Digital Environments' in *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*, (Oxford University Press, 2017), p.47

community groups to maintaining local history cannot be understated: they are the only ones with the tools and passion to do so. National museums are often solely concerned with the most famous or politically significant historical events: thus, community groups and projects need greater funding and support to preserve their own history since a small fishing boat is equally as important as an ocean liner in the tales of an individual.

Irish Maritime History

The Inishowen Maritime Museum and Planetarium is found in Greencastle, County Donegal, offering visitors nautical exhibits, maritime equipment, and replica Irish boats.[43] The Inishowen Museum relies heavily on artefact donation and visitor fees to contribute to the maintenance and development of the Museum. The Museum collaborates with the Ulster Museum in Belfast, who loan artefacts found at *La Trinidad Valencera* wreck.[44] Therefore, there are clear similarities between the Tower Museum and the Inishowen Museum: each have its own links to this famous shipwreck yet neither have the facilities onsite to conserve artefacts nor the legal requirements to own the artefacts.

Maritime heritage is undoubtedly important to County Donegal. While the Museum does not exhibit the Spanish Armada exclusively, local historians are keen to underline the importance of the famous Armada wrecks. The Museum hopes to oversee the publication of a booklet about the Spanish Armada in Donegal.[45] The book will be written by local historian and one of the divers who originally found *La*

[43] Inishowen Maritime Museum and Planetarium, GoVisitDonegal https://www.govisitdonegal.com/things-to-do/activities/inishowen-maritime-museum-planetarium (accessed 12 July 2024)
[44] Inishowen Maritime Museum https://inishowenmaritime.com/ (accessed 12 July 2024)
[45] Creative Ireland, *The Spanish Armada in Donegal* https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/event/the-spanish-armada-in-donegal/ (accessed 12 July 2024)

Trinidad Valencera, David Atherton, and Paula Harvey, who works for the Inishowen Maritime Museum.[46] The organisers hope to reinvigorate interest in maritime heritage and launching the project from the Museum will allow locals and researchers to proactively engage with the story of one man in an international narrative.

The Foyle Maritime Festival took place from the 27 to 30 June 2024, with tens of thousands of visitors exploring the quayside of Derry. The Tall Ships took centre stage as the image of maritime power and the quayside was transformed into a replica maritime village, offering fairground rides and food stalls.[47] The programme provides a huge variety of activities to a wide range of visitors and keeps maritime heritage at the centre.[48] And yet, there is no mention of the Spanish Armada in the official programme. Certainly, the DNA Museum is featured, but as this is still in development, it was a showcase of what will be on offer. Although *La Trinidad Valencera* wrecked in County Donegal, it is imperative to the history of Derry, and the reason its exhibition will continue to be displayed in the new museum is because the ship was found by local divers. This festival would have offered the ideal opportunity to present this example of history to a much wider audience than the Tower Museum may usually get.

As can be seen, maritime heritage is thriving internationally and there can be no doubt that there is real interest among tourists to learn about different countries links to the waters that connect us. Further, the Inishowen Museum and the Foyle Festival

[46] Ibid
[47] Derry-Strabane Council, *It's finally here! Maritime Festival to bring four days of fun on the Foyle* (27 June 2024) https://www.derrystrabane.com/news/it%E2%80%99s-finally-here!-maritime-festival-to-bring-four-days-of-fun-on-the-foyle (accessed 12 July 2024)
[48] Foyle Maritime Festival 2024 Programme https://www.foylemaritime.com/programme/ (accessed 12 July 2024)

each reflect that there is a desire among citizens of the island to maintain their cultural heritage and links to the sea and that there is much history and culture around maritime lifestyle. So why, given this interest and wealth of material, is limited attention paid to Irish maritime history among the organisations that have the power and knowledge to do so?

Titanic Belfast

Northern Irish maritime heritage has been reinvigorated with the creation of Titanic Belfast. Construction began in 2009, and by 2012 the project that would become Titanic Belfast opened its doors.[49] Titanic tourism is a global phenomenon and other cities with their own links to the ship (such as Liverpool, Cherbourg, and New York), have all been developing their own storied connections to the Titanic. Therefore, as Jason Grek-Martin points out, Belfast, the city that built the *RMS Titanic*, needed to create a heritage site that was equally authentic and unique.[50] The story of the Titanic is a point of pride for the city, a showcase of their design and construction talents. Post-industrial and post-Troubles Belfast needed an experience that would bring back international tourists and that would unite locals around a politically neutral topic, given the recently signed Good Friday Agreement. As will analysed later, this project is criticised for excluding working-class communities.

Titanic Quarter is exemplary of the boost that maritime heritage can provide a country's tourism and economy. This was both an expensive and collaborative venture, that required much investment, many hours of work, and employees with a

[49] Titanic Belfast, *About Titanic Belfast* https://www.titanicbelfast.com/explore/about-titanic-belfast/#:~:text=Constructed%20by%20Harcourt%20Developments%2C%20who,in%20time%20for%20the%20centenary. (accessed 12 July 2024)

[50] Jason Grek-Martin, 'Heritage trails and the framing of place authenticity in Belfast's *Titanic* memoryscape' *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 19 (2), (London, 2023) p.p.151-152

wide range of skills. As such, it is, by definition, public history, and the methodology used could be applied across Ireland to boost public history practices on the island. Leonie Hannan and Olwen Purdue discuss this in their work, 'Public History in Ireland', where they state that, 'Ireland raises important questions for public historians across the globe who engage with contestation, conflict and trauma in the past and present.'[51] Though it is clear that the Spanish Armada has no direct links to the Troubles, the Partition of Ireland, nor the Famine (arguably both the most traumatic and represented events in Irish history), the methodologies used by the organisations that will be discussed in the following chapters could be applied more broadly.

Irish Maritime Public History

Public history requires practitioners to use varying mediums to present the same event. The Ulster Museum exhibition on the *Girona* uses the traditional museum technique of displaying artefacts with accompanying text. The Tower Museum uses oral testimonies and BBC footage of the dive (accompanied by text) to explain the history of the ship (*La Trinidad Valencera*) and the importance of Derry to its discovery. The Spanish Armada Interpretive Centre in Sligo works with the community and local historians to present an intimate display and host an annual commemorative display, as well as having created a short film. Oral histories are becoming increasingly relevant to the latter two case studies (and could be applied to the Ulster Museum as will be discussed. Hannan and Purdue discussed that

[51] Leonie Hannan and Olwen Purdue, 'Introduction: telling difficult histories in Ireland' *in Public History in Ireland: Difficult Histories* (London, 2024) p.21

“shared authority” is becoming increasingly relevant in the Irish public history context as a way of both telling and preserving historical narratives. [52]

This chapter has analysed international maritime heritage and has looked at other examples of Irish maritime heritage that are not just the Spanish Armada, in order to put the following case studies in context. The next chapters will analyse the chosen case studies, using interviews and other primary sources to describe the exhibitions displayed, and to analyse what the organisations have done, what they could change, and how each fit in the international context.

[52] Hannan and Purdue, ‘Introduction’ p.10

Chapter 2 – The *Girona* in the Ulster Museum

The exhibition for the *Girona* in the Ulster Museum lies between the Modern History section and the Saints and Scholars exhibition, nestled in the original part of the current museum building. Though the Museum was first opened in 1929, 1972 saw the brutalist concrete extension to the building, designed by Francis Pym to combine traditional architecture with the modern.[53] That same year, the Museum sought public donations to acquire the trove of artefacts and treasures from the wreck of the Spanish Armada ship, the *Girona*, which had been found by Belgian diver Robert Sténuit in 1967 at Lacada Point, near the Giant's Causeway. The opening of the Museum and acquisition of treasures in 1972 coincided with the worst decade of violence in the Troubles. This chapter will analyse the museum's Spanish Armada exhibition, discussing issues such as ownership, preservation, and public engagement, and will use an interview conducted with a curator in the museum.

History of the Girona

The *Girona* was one of four galleasses in the Armada that had been badly damaged by the storms of that fateful September and thus found themselves sheltering in the Donegal coast alongside other ships. The crews of the *Girona* and the *Rata Santa*

[53] Ulster Museum website, history of the Ulster Museum https://www.ulstermuseum.org/serial/ulster-museum-50-1970s (accessed 18 July 2024)

Maria Encoronada discussed the best course of action and determined that as the *Girona* was larger, they would work to repair her and aim for Scotland.[54] The *Girona* was now full of crew and items, both insignificant and valuable, and as such, had to creep slowly along the coast.

However, as she moved along the County Antrim coast, she came upon the Giant's Causeway. There, she hit an outcropped rock, known as Lavada Point, on 26th October. What followed was the greatest tragedy and loss of life of any ship in the Armada, with around 1,300 Spaniards, nobility and everyday soldiers, lost in a single night.[55] It was not just the sinking that caused so much death; Port na Spaniagh, named after the tragedy, is the area where the wreck was found, next to Lacada Point, which has 400ft vertical cliffs that are only accessible by sea, meaning escape for those who survived the initial sinking was virtually impossible.[56]

Only nine survived the disaster and managed to reach Sorley Boy MacDonnell, a Gaelic chieftain based in Dunluce Castle, who helped them in their eventual escape to Scotland.[57] It is said that locals recovered around 260 bodies and gave them a Christian burial in a graveyard near the castle, though, to this day, there is no concrete evidence of this.[58] Further, the MacDonnells took the opportunity to, "scavenge cannons and treasure, the latter probably in the form of coins and jewels from the bodies washed ashore."[59] Again, there is no evidence of this as any items that were rumoured to be scavenged have been lost, either to history or to buyers throughout history. It appears that wreck scavenging is a common theme in Armada

[54] Laurence Flanagan, *Irish Wrecks of the Spanish Armada* (Dublin, 1995) p.p.15-16
[55] Ibid
[56] Douglas, *The Downfall*, p.94
[57] Francisco De Cuellar, Hugh Allingham and Robert Crawford, *Captain Cuellar's Adventures in Connaught and Ulster, A.D. 1588* (2014), p.27
[58] Douglas, *The Downfall*, photos page
[59] Philip Watson, *The Giant's Causeway and the North Antrim Coast* (2018), p.37

history, since the archaeology curator, brings this theme up in her interview, explaining that the items were taken from the wreck of *La Trinidad Valencera* when she was discovered in 1971.[60]

Remarkable discovery

For over three hundred years, the *Girona* existed only in local legend. Historians knew that the wreck existed but could not agree on where it was located; the most common belief was that it could be found near Portballintrae. It wasn't until Robert Sténuit, a Belgian diver and underwater archaeologist, decided to look in Port na Spaniagh in 1968.[61] There was nothing left of the main ship, having been destroyed over the years by the shallow waters and breaking winds; thus, any evidence of it would come from the artefacts, made up of cannons, ingots, and coins.[62] Sténuit was amazed by the unique nature of the discovery and the wealth of personal treasures found; none of the items were of monetary value, but were instead composed of personal tokens from loved ones or small items of jewellery, thus telling personal histories within a broader context and which makes the Armada a significant story in the history of the island, as explained by the curator.[63]

As an underwater archaeologist, Sténuit understood the significance of many of the items found. For instance, a Cross of Malta led him to investigate holders of Knighthoods on the Armada; most notably, the captain of the *Girona*, Fabricio Spinola. This discovery was made even more astonishing since it had not been known before, as these items were the first to be recovered under such

[60] Interview with curator at the Ulster Museum (09 August 2024)
[61] Douglas, *The Downfall,* p.p.129-130
[62] Interview with the curator
[63] Douglas, *The Downfall,* p.130

archaeological conditions.[64] Thus, the discovery of the Girona and the wealth of artefacts uncovered makes the site archaeologically significant in a global as well as local context.

Ownership

This section will discuss the benefits of national museum ownership of collections but also the problems that can arise from this. There can be no doubt that the Girona and Sténuit have become synonymous, both in Armada history and underwater archaeology circles, and none could blame Sténuit if he wanted to keep his finds, either in his private collections or to travel the world and lecture with them. In fact, Sténuit won a court case that allowed him to claim ownership of the artefacts under the Law of Salvage.[65] Yet in demonstration of his appreciation for artefact preservation, Sténuit decided to donate the artefacts to the Ulster Museum, after undertaking lengthy negotiations with the staff to ensure proper conservation and curation.[66] In June 1972, the Girona exhibition was opened to the public, displaying the unique history of the Armada and the artefacts found. Above all, in the opinion of Ken Douglas, Sténuit deserves much respect for providing physical evidence of the ship, mythology, and personal lives of the crew on board.[67]

The Ulster Museum does not only own the objects from the *Girona,* it also owns items from *La Trinidad Valencera* (and the *Santa Maria de la Rosa*, found in County Kerry. The Ulster Museum loans many items to other organisations with exhibitions dedicated to the Spanish Armada, such as the Inishowen Maritime Museum in

[64] Douglas, *The Downfall,* p.132
[65] Interview with the curator
[66] Ibid
[67] Douglas, *The Downfall,* p.133

County Donegal and the Tower Museum, in Derry.[68] The Inishowen Museum was discussed in the Introductory Chapter and the Tower Museum case study will be analysed in the following chapter. These organisations are ideal locations for Armada exhibitions due to their physical closeness to wreck sites or dive teams. Yet they cannot own any of the items on display, largely due to the cost of preservation. However, while there can be some regret that the artefacts are displayed miles from where they had rested underwater for centuries, museum loans can foster close relations between different organisations or groups. When interviewed, the curator explained that, when loaning additional artefacts to mark the 50th anniversary of the discovery of *La Trinidad Valencera*, she had the opportunity to meet several of the divers of the sub-aqua club who had originally found the ship.[69] This meeting allowed for greater research into the history of the Armada and associated discoveries; it should thus be encouraged that the Ulster Museum use its exhibition space to tell stories of those who found the *Girona* or grew up locally and heard stories about her. Further, meetings like this between curatorial teams from large, funded museums and small local ones allow for greater sharing of resources, knowledge, and expertise, and boost how an area or nation shares and disseminates heritage and history.

Links between the Inishowen Museum and the Ulster Museum exemplify the possibilities that can arise from close collaborations, and how heritage can transcend county or national borders. The Ulster Museum should thus look to sharing artefacts or collections with other heritage sites across the island, to improve understanding of local history. A location that could place great attention on the *Girona* is the Giant's

[68] Interview with the curator
[69] Ibid

Causeway since the ship was found along its coastline. However, a visit here is disappointing for those seeking history. There is one reference to the Armada on the walk, a small map with the Girona wreck site plotted, and inside there is a short video that references the Armada, though this was not working at the time of visiting.[70] It is likely that the visitors centre feels they will appeal to a wider tourist base if they lean into the mythological and folk tale beliefs of the Causeway, such as that of Finn McCool. It is also possible that they feel the Ulster Museum is the better location to display such a history, where the artefacts will avail of conservation facilities on site. While certainly true that artefacts owned by a national museum are guaranteed better conservation, it cannot be understated that those visiting the Causeway deserve to understand the importance of the location in an international context. There are many foreign tourists to the Causeway all year round, and it is undeniable that they would like to witness how County Antrim fits into an internationally renowned historical event.

Winifred Glover gives much credit for the acquisition of *Girona* artefacts to Wilfred A. Seaby (museum director) and Laurence Flanagan (Keeper of Antiquities), who each worked at the Ulster Museum at the time, and each of whom recognised the material and historic potential of the finds.[71] In fact, Flanagan wrote a detailed work on the finds of the Armada, going into detail on the items found, and offering poignant stories or interpretations; for instance, he discusses a ring that is currently on display in the Ulster Museum, with the phrase, 'No tengo más que darte' (I have nothing more to give you), inscribed on the side, which he believes was given from the lover of someone on board.[72] The inclusion of this ring in the collection on display shows

[70] Appendix 1: Photograph of *Girona* wreck map
[71] Winifred Glover, *Exploring the Spanish Armada* (Dublin, 2000), p.p.77-78
[72] Flanagan, *Irish Wrecks,* p.33

that the curators acknowledged that the public often grasps onto stories that they can relate to or those that humanise players in history; this ring is evidence of a past love and, unfortunately, heartbreak, which adds another layer to the tragedy.[73]

Preservation of artefacts and exhibition

This section will discuss how the artefacts acquired are preserved and will then critique the exhibition space, examining its strengths but also what might be done to improve it. The wealth of artefacts owned by the Ulster Museum – not just from the *Girona*, but other ships in the Armada – is staggering. As part of Northern Ireland's national museum collective (including the Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra and the Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh), it is unsurprising that historians and archaeologists are reliant on this collective to guarantee the continued preservation of ancient and important artefacts. It is undeniable that historical artefacts are vital to the understanding of specific historical events and figures, and as such, items must be kept with experts who can conserve these items correctly. As Geoffrey Cubitt explains, artefacts are important not just for historical interpretation, but also to represent their survival, either through human intervention or, in the case of the Armada, temperate natural conditions, thus not just acting as a key piece of evidence in Irish maritime history, but also as a symbol for the environmental conditions found in Irish waters.[74]

When interviewed, the curator went into great detail about the Armada exhibition, in particular how objects are preserved. She explained that the museum had been advised by their preventative conservator to lower the blinds to protect any organic items, while the curators made the decision to not display many iron items since

[73] Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections* p.157
[74] Geoffrey Cubitt. *History and Memory*. 1st ed., (Manchester, 2013)

these items would be the most vulnerable and challenging to protect.[75] The exhibition space is relatively small, when compared to other galleries in the museum, and has not changed much since its opening in the 1970s, though did experience some modernisation in 2009, to mark the reopening of the museum. Among the most interesting items in the collection is the jewellery, particularly the twelve cameos, which are synonymous with portraits of Renaissance-era Spanish nobility and, according to the curator, draw in many international researchers interested in Renaissance jewellery and art.[76] However, while there is much that can be learned from the exhibition, the gallery is permanent and as such, there is little change in the appearance of the gallery or the items displayed. The curator admitted this and explained that the museum needs to upgrade the gallery, though changes like this require much time, money, and museum coordination since many teams across the museum are involved in the permanent galleries.[77] This is understandable, however change should be encouraged. The Ulster Museum relies on repeat visits, often families and casual visitors availing of free entry, and it is important that they do not grow weary of the exhibition, feeling that they should just skip the gallery since it has not changed since their last visit. The Armada is an important history in medieval Europe and Ireland's links to the event should be highlighted in the national museum of Northern Ireland by continuously changing what is shown and how.

Public engagement

This section will explore public engagement carried out by the Ulster Museum, aimed at visitors, school groups, and researchers, and suggest some ways in which current

[75] Interview with the curator
[76] Ibid
[77] Ibid

practice might be enhanced. Appendix 2 shows a screenshot of an email received in response to questions about how the Armada exhibition is received by visitors, stating,

> We don't really have anything touching on the Armada exhibition or how it is received in comparison to other exhibitions. We don't have any sort of evaluation form for it.[78]

This was disappointing to hear, as listening to the public is key to understanding if the exhibition needs to change, and if so, in what direction; do visitors find the space interesting? Is there too much written information? Do they find the artefacts easy to interpret? These questions and similar are important to know should the gallery change.

The curator explained that the museum does run classes for schools, specifically using the Armada exhibition to explain how to handle collections, adding that the gallery is going to become more relevant now that the Armada is back on the curriculum.[79] She went on further to explain that,

> We have an awful lot of interest in the Spanish Armada … through public enquiries and specific research requests. So yeah … it seems to be a topic that is on lots of people ['s minds] and a lot of those requests would be international… So like in September, there's somebody coming from Australia, studying the Spanish Armada to look at a particular aspect of that.[80]

[78] Appendix 2: Email from the curator at Ulster Museum about exit surveys for the Ulster Museum (12 August 2024)
[79] Interview with the curator
[80] Ibid

It is thus clear that, even without sufficient visitor surveys, the Armada is popular among visitors, mainly from an educational perspective. The Ulster Museum is an important place, due to its broad artefact collection (which would appeal to international researchers) and modern conservation facilities (which are important when teaching about museum management and preserving artefacts for future generations). Therefore, the museum must listen to visitor's opinions on the exhibition before changing, in order to understand what it is that families, researchers, and casual visitors find most engaging in exhibitions like the Armada. Public opinion is vital to the longevity of any museum, particularly those that receive funding from governments. If the public understands that their taxes go to the government, who then decides where funding goes, the public would like their feelings known and thus that their national museum, which is supposed to represent their history, listens to their opinions about what is displayed and how.

Thomas Woods presents an interesting argument about the need for museums to both be popular with the public and to present displays that are open to interpretation and new understandings.[81] His work discusses the importance of balancing the fine line between entertainment and education, since museum governing bodies require high visitor numbers to generate income, while curators desire to offer new ways of thinking about historical events or themes.[82] This is particularly relevant to the Ulster Museum, for although entry is free and the Museum is government-funded, generating high visitor numbers is vital to maintain such funding. The Spanish Armada exhibition has not changed significantly since it was first curated and as such, hampers appreciation for the scale of the disaster, since repeat visitors may

[81] Thomas A. Woods, 'Getting beyond criticism of history museums: a model for interpretation', *TPH*, vol. 12, no. 3 (California, 1990), p.77
[82] Woods 'Getting beyond criticism of history museums', p.83

skip past the exhibition, feeling they have already seen and understood the exhibition. As Woods explains, it is vital that the exhibition changes regularly, if not in terms of content, in terms of display, in order to continue to engage visitors and to remind visitors of the importance of Ireland to this event.

An interesting initiative that the Ulster Museum could take inspiration from, if not work with, would be the Group for Education in Museums (GEM).[83] This group aims to create a museum community across different heritage and cultural sites or organisations that work together to encourage education, equality, and training. The group works across the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, working to promote the natural environment and tell complex historical narratives.[84] It aims to create a shared heritage space in a post-conflict society and to share ideas about how certain histories can be told and how to create a welcoming environment at a heritage site. The group also has many resources for all museum and heritage sites, aimed primarily at educating different publics and age groups. For instance, it has resources on blended learning, creating environments for families with special educational needs, and black history resources.[85] It is clear that the group has worked in collaboration with different communities and historical organisations to create educational resources and to offer advice on how to present history to diverse audiences.

The Ulster Museum lacks educational resources on its website: there are very few available, and those available are old. Providing educational resources should not just be aimed at school trips but also at visiting families, perhaps offering booklets

[83] Group for Education in Museums website, https://gem.org.uk/ (accessed 29 July 2024)
[84] Ibid
[85] Ibid

that could be taken home or offering short sessions to educate said families. The Ulster Museum is rich in terms of local history and artefacts and should utilise this wealth to educate the next generation. An interesting issue raised by the curator is the museum's 'Inclusive Global Histories' exhibition, which displays several objects from the Armada in an attempt to decolonise history and think about the complexities of empire.[86] The salamander, a gold and ruby item closely associated with the Spanish Armada in Ireland, was chosen to both represent the wealthy nobility on board the *Girona*, but also to place a new interpretation on the item, with gold coming from South America and the rubies from Burma, both Spanish territories at the time.[87] The museum feels that it is important they understand their role in acquiring and displaying items that came from colonialism and want to help visitors interpret the items they are seeing from a different perspective; in other words, rather than just marvelling at the beauty of an artefact, they must understand where it came from and who may have suffered to get the item to where it ended up. As such, the museum could utilise GEM's educational packs to help visitors understand why discussions around colonialism are so relevant today.

This is applicable to museums across former empirical countries, where so many of the artefacts displayed have difficult colonial histories and which critics call 'loot'.[88] Such museums are facing greater pressure to return the artefacts to the former colonies they were taken from. This exhibition, the Ulster Museum hopes, is a step towards making amends for the destructive colonial past that their collections are benefitting from.

[86] Interview with the curator
[87] Ibid
[88] *Bella Caledonia*, 07 June 2024

Conclusion

When asked why she thinks the Armada exhibition is so important to the Ulster Museum today, the curator replied,

> it's very distinct from the rest of the museum in many ways. And that's what makes it special because … if you're going to ask me, but I look after the collection, remember …. it is the most significant international collection on display in the Ulster Museum.[89]

The Armada is clearly important to the museum, having been one of the exhibitions that accompanied its reopening in the 1970s and having survived until the present day. And it is clear that it is held dear to many visitors, as well as to the curators. The Ulster Museum benefits from government funding to enable them to continue to preserve the artefacts and to loan them to like-minded organisations. However, more must be done to establish working relations with other organisations, groups, or individuals with close links to the Armada, and to ensure that education is at the fore of their presentations. Change may be the way forward, to offer fresh perspectives on this internationally significant event, and to reinvigorate interest in the Armada across the island. However, it is important that the exhibition changes for the better and that energy is put into ensuring that the exhibition is informative and loyal to the histories of those who found the *Girona* and those who lost their lives in September 1588.

[89] Interview with the curator

Chapter Three – *La Trinidad Valencera* in the Tower Museum

Settled within the centuries-old city walls lies the Tower Museum in Derry, home to two permanent exhibitions. One, *The Story of Derry*, walks visitors through the history of the city, from a dimly lit exhibition on prehistoric times through to a modern exhibition of contemporary artwork and political posters. The other, entitled, "*An Armada Shipwreck – La Trinidad Valencera*", tells the story of a wreck found just across the border in Donegal by a Derry diving team. This chapter will analyse the Armada exhibition and will focus on how smaller museums rely on council endorsement for funding and on the community to tell local history and to continue to visit. The main primary source used will be an interview with the archivist in the Tower Museum, who works not just within an archival role, but also a curatorial one and played a key role in the curation of the *Trinidad* exhibition.[90] The museum opened its doors in 1992 and is mostly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board; though receiving less money than a state-funded museum, the money allows the museum to display and preserve history specific to Derry and the surrounding area.[91] The *Trinidad Valencera* exhibition opened in 2007, after applying for funding in 2005, and tells the story of the eponymous ship and how Derry ties into this story, since the ship was found by a team of local divers.[92]

[90] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum, 17 June 2024
[91] Appendix 3: Image of organisations and individuals who helped the development of the *La Trinidad Valencera* exhibition in the Tower Museum
[92] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum

There had been plans to have an exhibition in Derry since the discovery of the wreck in 1971 however the city lacked a heritage site and thus National Museums NI, based in Belfast and Cultra, took the collection, under the assumption that, should a suitable location in Derry appear, the collection would be loaned back to the city.[93] In 2005, funding came from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Tourist Board, and it was agreed that the Tower would host this impressive collection.

History of *La Trinidad Valencera*

La Trinidad Valencera, like most ships in the doomed Armada, had been blown from Scotland south towards Ireland and her crew found themselves with little to no control over where the ship went. After taking aboard the crew of a failing ship, *La Trinidad Valencera* realised that, as the strength of the winds reached a fever pitch, the crew would be unable to return to Spain intact and so decided to anchor somewhere along the Inishowen Peninsula: this place would be in Kinnagoe Bay, a beach several miles north of Magilligan Point.[94] This plan seemed logical: the crew would be able to rest on shore while awaiting another ship that would inevitably pass by. However, as they headed inland, they hit a submerged rock and over the course of about two days, the ship slowly began to lean forward.[95] As the ship did not sink immediately, the crew were all able to make it ashore mostly unharmed. However, they, along with some Irishmen who came to the wreck site, attempted to recover as many supplies and treasures as possible from the ship. About forty men, a mix of Spanish and Irish, died on board after a spate of bad weather caused the keel of the ship to shatter and collapse.[96]

[93] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum
[94] Douglas, *The Downfall,* p.p.31-32
[95] Ibid
[96] Ibid

Those who had remained on shore were not out of the woods, however. English soldiers attempted to massacre all remaining survivors, and those who fled, managed to escape to Dunluce Castle with the assistance of the Bishop of Derry, from which they were eventually taken to Scotland.[97] The plight of *La Trinidad Valencera* is perhaps symbolic of the plight of the Armada in general: a sinking ship, vengeful English soldiers, and the generosity of the Irish. Further, as with all ships and crew, none aboard *La Trinidad Valencera* consciously headed towards Ireland: they simply found themselves there and had to use all their skills and luck to survive.

This specific event is as heroic as it is terrifying and yet for about three hundred years, the Spanish Armada in Ireland was largely forgotten about, only existing in local mythology and fishermen's tales.[98] This all changed in 1885 when the Calendar of State Papers for the years 1587-92 were published, allowing historians to learn about what really happened three hundred years ago.[99] The research possibilities were endless. In 1906, *The Wrecks of the Spanish Armada on the Coast of Ireland* was published by the Chief Inspector of Irish Fisheries, William Spotswood Greene.[100] He delivered a lecture on this work to the Royal Geographical Society in London, combining the relatively recently published State Papers with his personal experience of life on and the dangers of the Irish coast.[101] The work also attempted to identify the wreck sites littering the Irish coast. For years, this work was seen as the main source for the Armada in Ireland and yet it was clear that more research

[97] Ibid
[98] Douglas, *The Downfall* p.127
[99] Ibid
[100] William Spotswood Green, 'The Wrecks of the Spanish Armada on the Coast of Ireland' *The Geographical Journal* 27, no. 5 (London, 1906) p.p. 429–48.
[101] Ibid

would need to be done as no ship had been found and thus the locations were likely incorrect.

Significance of Derry

Derry is inextricably tied to *La Trinidad Valencera*, from the aid provided by the Bishop to the discovery of the wreck centuries later: this section will explore the importance of the city in relation to the wreck. The City of Derry Sub-Aqua Club was a local diving group comprised of amateur, yet passionate divers founded in 1968 during the Troubles[102]. Its members had been diving in Kinnagoe Bay for several years and had heard about *La Trinidad Valencera:* however, no sign of the ship had ever been found despite the wide dissemination of Spotswood Green's work.[103] Previous searchers had looked around the Glenagivny River and near the shore; however, a member of the Club eventually found the wreck by stubbing their toe on the now famous seven-inch cannon.[104] The cannon is currently on display in the Tower Museum in Derry and can be seen from the Walls, connecting the efforts of Derry locals to one of the most iconic examples of Derry architecture and tourism,

In 1972, four of the guns found were taken to Moville, a nearby town in Donegal, and placed in water to prevent further exposure as they awaited proper conservation; a laboratory was later built in Magee College in Derry, which had the correct facilities

[102] Appendix 8: Image of display explaining the discovery of the Canon
[103] Douglas, *The Downfall,* p. 143
[104] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum

to preserve these artefacts.[105] Throughout 1972 and 1974, more items were discovered, from military equipment to pottery, from clothes to wheels. This assortment of artefacts is a treasure trove for any researcher since they provide a full insight into life on a working ship, rather than one like the *Girona*, which held monetarily valuable items like gold and jewels.[106] The discovery and preservation of these artefacts is crucial to maintaining the history of the Armada for generations; as Cauvin explains, 'Objects are wonderful sources and tools for storytelling.'[107] Different groups, especially families and young people, feel that traditional museums, full of long textual displays, do not appeal to them and are often exclusionary. Therefore, sites like the Tower Museum have a unique opportunity to present a visual history and must use the exceptional artefacts they own to attract a broader audience.

Despite the desire of many to keep the artefacts in Derry, the home of those who found and preserved them, the artefacts were sold to the Ulster Museum, which would be better equipped to conserve the items, and which would loan the items to Derry City long-term, once an appropriate location was found.[108] The Tower Museum opened in 1992, to display the history of Derry, in the hopes of uniting the city around their shared heritage in the wake of the Troubles, and the opening of the Spanish Armada exhibition in 2007 finally gave the divers and others connected to the discovery of the ship the chance to tell their experience.

An Armada Shipwreck – La Trinidad Valencera

[105] Douglas, *The Downfall,* p. 145
[106] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum
[107] Cauvin, *Public History*, p.87
[108] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum

This section will look in detail at *La Trinidad Valencera* exhibition. The exhibition is outstanding, both visually and in terms of education. Starting perhaps confusingly from the top, visitors are first given context to the causes of the Spanish Armada and the downfall of the Armada.[109] This floor covers the main political and religious reasons for the creation of the Armada and gives a well-laid-out chronological route of the Armada, from where they began to where many found themselves wrecked in Ireland. Travelling one floor down – quite literally submerging the depths – visitors are greeted with displays explaining the discovery of the wreck, some four hundred years after the events displayed one floor above.[110] The Museum begins to explain what could be gleaned from the wreck, even before proper analysis was conducted: a basic timeline of the survivors, what the items recovered could tell us, and how the discovery of the artefacts put the tragedies suffered into greater perspective.

Moving down, visitors are then placed symbolically at the bottom of the seabed, represented by the design of the floor, where most of the remaining artefacts were found.[111] This is the most visually innovative floor in the museum, with a two-level wall display showing different artefacts found at different levels in the sea.[112] Level Three aims to show the variety of artefacts recovered from the wreck: food and drink, weaponry, and clothing. This is done to show visitors that *La Trinidad Valencera* is one of the wealthiest shipwrecks ever uncovered in Irish waters due to the wide variety of items found that show life in 1588 that is not simply weaponry or ship-specific items.

[109] Appendix 5: Image displaying wide-angled photo of top floor of *La Trinidad Valencera* exhibition in the Tower Museum
[110] Appendix 7: Image of room displaying information on discovery of *La Trinidad Valencera*
[111] Appendix 9: Image showing floor displays at the Tower Museum
[112] Appendix 10: Image showing wall display at the Tower Museum

The final floor hosts the most famous item of the entire collection: the two-tonne siege gun and carriage wheel.[113] This floor specifically focuses on the excavation of the gun and carriage wheel, detailing how they were found, excavated and preserved. The floor is primarily aimed at children, teaching them how archaeology, and more specifically underwater archaeology, works. The gun is visible from outside the museums through large, room-length windows that display clearly onto the popular destination of the Derry Walls. Despite being visually prominent, advertising for the Armada exhibition itself is minimal, with the city seeming to promote its past conflictive and present-day peaceful history. Cauvin discusses the presentation of history in museums and the importance of how certain objects are displayed. In particular, he describes the importance of context: for instance, objects could be laid in particular ways to generate discussions among visitors.[114] The gun is perhaps the best example of this thinking and directly contradicts the point that the Museum focuses too heavily on recent conflicts: the gun is the most visible artefact from the outside and was positioned to lure in visitors who may be curious about the history of the gun.

Often, historical presentations in areas with difficult pasts have taken a black-and-white approach: using the example of the Tower Museum, to present the history of the Troubles, the curators must forgo a focus on other histories, namely that of the Armada. This, as David Glassberg explains, originates from the belief that began in the academic field, that, 'primarily sought to characterize a single group or institution's belief about its past'.[115] The Tower seeks to move away from this position, away from placing community memory and lived experiences into a

[113] Appendix 11: Image showing siege gun at the Tower Museum
[114] Cauvin, *Public History*, p.p.188-189
[115] David Glassberg, 'Public history and the study of memory', in *TPH*, vol.18, no. 2 (California, 1996), p.9

vacuum, and towards a more integrated approach. Though the Armada tragedy occurred centuries ago, and no direct descendants remain today, unlike a more recent event like the Troubles, the experiences remain relevant to the contemporary audience. Children can use the discovery of the wreck as a foundation to develop an interest in, and to learn more about, archaeology, while researchers can use the artefacts discovered as evidence to prove or disprove previous theories about sixteenth-century ships and Irish maritime heritage. Thus, by acknowledging that each event is equally important and by presenting the history of the city and the Armada equally, as the Tower does, visitors can expect to learn more not just about textual history but also about practical history, about how to apply theoretical historical methodologies into real historical practice.

Community and the Tower

This section will highlight the importance of community to the longevity of the Tower Museum. A key factor highlighted by the archivist was that the Tower deemed it important to work closely with the diving groups, to ensure that the exhibition was centred on the wreck and its discovery, as opposed to the typical Armada history found in textbooks and museums across the British Isles.[116] Further, she felt that what makes this wreck, and by extension, exhibition, unique is the fact that the *Trinidad* was a working ship, which is reflected in the artefacts discovered and displayed.[117] Full of clothes, guns, and food supplies, this ship is more of the typical working ship from the era, as opposed to the *Girona*, with its hoard of gold, which would have included more important, wealthier men among its passengers. The museum must also address the challenges of conservation. When asked whether

[116] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum
[117] Ibid

there are difficulties in conserving these items, given the centuries that have elapsed following the sinking, she admitted that the Tower has no conservator on site and must rely on Ulster Museum conservators to visit every few months to ensure that the artefacts remain intact.[118] However, the Tower does have humidity control and temperature settings in each gallery to ensure that the artefacts, many of which, such as items of clothing, are extremely delicate, survive for many more generations.[119]

Given its prime location beside the Derry Walls, between the Magazine Gate and Shipquay Gate, it is unsurprising that visitor numbers remain steady.[120] Admitting that a failing of the Tower is a lack of in-depth feedback from visitors, the archivist stated that the Tower is popular among tourists, often those coming from Spain or France, who tend to know more about the Armada and are surprised by the links between Derry and this internationally known tragedy.[121] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the archivist stated that the Tower is most popular among schools and families. Education is a central part of the services offered by the Tower, and on the first floor of the *Trinidad* exhibition, there is an interactive space offered for families, providing chances for children to read more about the history and discover more about archaeology.[122]

Community engagement is exceptionally important, especially during and following the COVID-19 lockdowns, when it was almost impossible for museum and heritage sites to bring in international visitors. The exhibition has always been popular among school groups, less so recently since the curriculum has changed, but the museum

[118] Ibid
[119] Ibid
[120] Appendix 11: Map of Derry City Walls
[121] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum
[122] Ibid

still provides a space for groups to visit when in the city, offering a dry space for a couple of hours. The archivist explained how they have produced worksheets and backpacks for children, which they could take home after the visit, to guarantee they remember what they learned.[123] She highlighted the importance of community, stating that, since the museum is funded by the Council and thus by ratepayers, it is vital that they give back to the public, providing them with educational and entertainment possibilities, and teaching them more of their history and heritage. The need for repeat visitors is paramount and as such, the Tower have held many talks and lectures, and has relied heavily on volunteers since the lockdowns, thus implanting themselves deeply into community life.[124]

Another way the Tower seeks to engage with the community is by using the digital space. Digital methods to present history have been growing at around the same pace that the Internet itself has developed. However, the primary goal of digital histories was in an academic context, rather than a public one, producing history courses for classrooms rather than living rooms.[125] Therefore, while it is crucial that schools improve history education, it is also important that the general public, those without direct links to school curriculums, are able to utilise digital tools to educate themselves. Digital presentations or collections have the potential to remove accessibility barriers (though do create some, for those unable to access computers or mobile devices) and to reach audiences they may not have previously had access to.

[123] Ibid
[124] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum
[125] Sheila Brennan, 'Digital history' in *The Inclusive Historian's Handbook*, 2019 (https://inclusivehistorian.com/digital-history/.) (23 August 2022)

Much like every organisation or job role, the Tower had to adapt to the online world very quickly during the pandemic, redesigning its collections website and creating a 360-degree virtual tour of the *Trinidad* exhibition.[126] The Tower had a physical exhibition planned for the Decade of Centenaries, but due to the speed at which the first lockdown was announced, the exhibition was cancelled. Yet the team at the Tower knew that they had to continue to engage with the public at a very difficult time, to continue to provide them with education and entertainment. They decided to design the virtual tour, which gives users an opportunity to see the exhibition and move at their own pace. Adaptability and perseverance were key themes emerging from the interview since it is clear that the team had to move quickly, within the space of only a couple of weeks, to replan and redesign their entire set-up, and to come up with new engaging and accessible ways to maintain connections with the local and digital communities.

Future of maritime heritage

An exciting new project for the whole of the city of Derry is underway: a new museum, that will be known as the DNA (Derry~Londonderry on the North Atlantic) Museum, is being designed and built in Ebrington Square.[127] The Tower Museum is going to move to this new premise, hopefully by Autumn 2026, and this museum will offer a different perspective on the history of the city, with all archaeology, prehistory, immigration, and conflict going back to the River Foyle yet also tying each theme and gallery back to modern day discussions and problems.[128] The *Trinidad* will remain an important player in telling the history of Derry, yet will no longer have its own

[126] Appendix 10: Screenshot of online tour of La Trinidad Valencera exhibition
[127] Derry City & Strabane District Council, *Committee welcomes good news for DNA Museum Project* (13 February 2024) https://www.derrystrabane.com/news/committee-welcomes-good-news-for-dna-museum-project (accessed 06 June 2024)
[128] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum

exhibition, instead being placed in an exhibition about shipwrecks more generally, including the *Laurentic*, a British ship that sank off the coast of Donegal after hitting German mines.[129] The archivist stated that the Tower Museum has remained in contact with the divers who found the *Trinidad* and that the DNA Museum will keep the detailed stories provided by the divers and will display paperwork and photos donated by the divers.[130] Further, it is hoped that the new exhibition will be even more engaging, with the curators and designers planning a blue-themed gallery with low-lying cases to mimic the wreck under the sea, and will use more updated technology; thus, the museum will be aimed at different audiences such as families, while maintaining its structure as a traditional museum.[131]

Funding often dictates the presentation of history and the operation of heritage sites. It is important to attract and maintain donors for any heritage site, private or public, and thus there are parameters that must be met.[132] Donors may have personal interests or connections to a specific event and as such it is important that these events are displayed, to keep funding. Therefore, while it is vital to listen to the public and what they want to see in a museum, it is also crucial to keep donors on side if the museum wants to continue to receive donations. The DNA Museum is being funded by a variety of organisations, such as the local council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Tourism NI, and private investors. The archivist admits that while this level of funding is fantastic, it can make it hard to manage a museum that keeps all those involved happy.[133] There are often competing demands that can be paradoxical; one may want a traditional museum that simply displays and explains the history of an

[129] Ibid
[130] Ibid
[131] Ibid
[132] Cauvin, *Public History,* p.183
[133] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum

era or of the artefacts, whereas another may want to visibly and dynamically engage with audiences, using modern technology and sensory galleries. The archivist admits that this is difficult yet underlines that the Museum will have a good team of curators, designers, and tech crew who will communicate closely to ensure that all parties remain pleased.[134]

The exhibitions and museum team at the Tower Museum will have to leave their current premise since it is privately owned, and while this is a bittersweet moment for many of those working in the Museum and the local community, since the Tower has represented a central part of the city's history for decades, the archivist explains that the new location at Ebrington will provide the curators with more space to increase visitor numbers and to design temporary exhibition spaces and room for educational workshops.[135] Most excitingly for the archivist, the new museum will be able to provide a reading room and discovery archive space, which will be a unique gallery that will teach the public and visiting groups how to study and work with history.[136] It is hoped that there will be thirty-minute workshops that will provide visitors with the necessary skills to conserve their own history and study their genealogy independently, such as interpreting historical text or preserving items of clothing that have been in the family home for generations.[137] This is yet another example of the Tower looking to give back to the community.

This chapter has highlighted the importance of smaller museums in telling the history of a city, event, or artefacts discovered. The Tower Museum certainly tells the history of the Spanish Armada yet does so through the lens of the wreck of the Trinidad and

[134] Ibid
[135] Ibid
[136] Ibid
[137] Ibid

the divers who discovered it. The museum is reliant on oral testimonies to guarantee historical accuracy yet also relies on council funding to maintain the exhibition and artefacts. It is hoped that the DNA Museum will bridge the gap between council-funded museums and community-led histories.

Chapter Four – Spanish Armada Interpretive Centre, Sligo

Grange is a coastal village in County Sligo where Streedagh, a townland a short distance away, can be found. Here, the location of three Spanish Armada wrecks can be found.[138] The wrecks were discovered in 1985 however there has been limited exploration due to legal problems. In 2018, the former courthouse was converted into an interpretive centre to tell the history of this event. The three ships relevant to Sligo were *La Lavia, La Juliana,* and *Santa Maria de Visón,* which had to contend with perilous weather, eventually wrecking in Streedagh Bay after five days, killing many immediately.[139] It is estimated that about 110 survived the initial wrecks and fled inland before the arrival of English forces who sought to execute them, one of which was Francisco de Cuéllar. He is perhaps the most famous of all Armada survivors in Ireland, as will be discussed later. This chapter will use the Spanish Armada Interpretive Centre in Sligo as an example of community-led public history, in which locals unite around a shared heritage or history and work as a collective to present a

[138] Sligo Walks, *The De Cuéllar Trail* https://sligowalks.ie/walks/the-de-Cuéllar-trail/ (accessed 04 June 2024)
[139] Douglas, *The Downfall,* p.36

broader narrative. For instance, this centre relies on volunteers and local historians to present Sligo's role in an international tragedy.

Issues of ownership

Ownership of historic artefacts is contentious in history circles: does ownership lie with local governing bodies or with the discoverers? In the 1980s, plans were developed to find the mythologised ships in Sligo, however, legal problems began almost as soon as the plans were made. In 1987, the Irish government passed the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, which granted the Irish State ownership of all historic artefacts within Irish territory, including shipwrecks in Irish waters.[140] Therefore, divers would be unable to possess any of the items found. Though seeming harsh, it was logical as the government wished to distinguish more clearly archaeologically significant finds from those that would be classed as commercial salvage.[141]

There has since been little movement between the Office of Public Works (an Irish Government body that manages state-owned property and heritage sites) and the divers. For instance, divers removed a gun carriage themselves and presented it to the Office of Public Works, though this was declared legal, as the judge felt the Office had been unreasonable in refusing permission.[142] Bureaucracy aside, both sides of this debate are understandable. Divers want the enormous potential of the site to be recognised, while the government believe that, if there are no preventive measures, significant artefacts may be destroyed by unregulated, amateur divers. Further, as Flanagan explains, 'Without adequate pre-arranged conservation

[140] Irish Statute Book, National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1987/act/17/enacted/en/html (accessed 04 June 2024)
[141] Douglas, *The Downfall* p.p.150-151
[142] Douglas, *The Downfall* p.151

facilities, it is the utmost folly even to contemplate the excavation of such a site.'[143] There can be no doubt that if artefacts lying on the seabed are to be removed at all, they need to be preserved correctly to guarantee their survival. Questions over physical ownership can lead to debates over historical ownership, over who 'owns' history and who has the right to tell the story.[144] In the case of Sligo, if the Government owns the wrecks, are they the only ones with the right to present the history? Or does this responsibility lie with the local community, who live with the Armada legacy?

Historical memory into historical presentation

This section explores how historical presentation is adapted over time by community memory, who turn history into myths. Mythology in the west of Ireland has developed around the Spanish, since many native Irish sheltered and helped Spanish survivors return home. The legend of the 'Black Irish' (native Irish people with dark hair and eyes) has arisen from possible relations between the two.[145] Unsurprisingly, for almost five hundred years, Sligo locals continue commemorating the ships and their own role in rescuing the survivors. In 1988, a group of volunteers created a constitutional committee to host lectures and create a monument dedicated to this tragedy.[146] In 2018, this committee, now known as the 'Grange Armada Development Association', took over the former courthouse to develop a Spanish Armada Interpretative Centre.[147] This centre, chaired by Eddie O'Gorman and mostly run by

[143] Flanagan, *Irish Wrecks* p.p.43-44
[144] Cauvin, *Public History* p.57
[145] *The Irish Times*, 30 July 1999
[146] Sligo.ie, *Spanish Armada Ireland* https://www.sligo.ie/spanish-armada-ireland/ (accessed 04 June 2024)
[147] *Irish Independent*, 01 September 2018

volunteers, is open at weekends in the summer and offers visitors a chance to see artefacts relevant to the ships that wrecked along Streedagh centuries ago.

The Centre received a grant of €100,000 through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2018, for artefact preservation and to ensure that the former courthouse be restored to working order.[148] [149] This was part of an overarching scheme to improve the facilities of Irish towns. Grange is located along the famous Wild Atlantic Way, and it was feared that poor facilities, such as toilets or walkways, would deter potential tourists. The Centre relies on both those specifically interested in the Armada and those travelling the Wild Atlantic Way; thus, functional facilities are vital to guarantee repeat visitors.

The Centre is one room with several tables and sparse posters. Yet it is the rich tapestry of artefacts and information, and the collaboration between local historians and community that make the Centre central to representations of the Armada. The Centre displays a thirty-minute screening on the history of Francisco de Cuéllar and the Armada, familiarising visitors with the history of the event. Visitors can read the numerous displays explaining the history of the Armada wrecks, Francisco de Cuéllar, and the work done by the local community and Association to preserve history and the artefacts. These displays are high quality and offer visual as well as textual analyses of key events in the Armada story and the role of Sligo in this international event.

The Centre displays donated replicas of Spanish weapons and armour. Therefore, despite not receiving the same level of funding as national museums, the Association

[148] *The Sligo Champion*, 26 November 2019
[149] Village Renewal Scheme 2019 https://assets.gov.ie/38269/44d780f59a3b4856bbc3abad6d918b3f.pdf (accessed 04 June 2024)

works tirelessly to ensure that visitors gain a tangible understanding of the Armada. The Centre fulfils the role that Cauvin describes as public participation: visiting, contributing, donating, and collaborating with academic experts.[150] Community heritage sites differ from traditional museums in that local groups and repeat visitors are vital to the longevity of the site, for the donation of the artefacts and for their valuable opinions of the presentation of local history.

Although the wrecks cannot legally be removed from the seabed, several items have washed ashore or have been found by divers before the Bill was enacted; The Underwater Archaeological Unit of the National Museum of Ireland, in Dublin are working to preserve these items.[151] It is clear to many that these items should eventually be returned to Streedagh to allow visitors to see these items in context, but it is also clear that the Centre lacks the conservation facilities necessary to maintain these items and the links between preservation and public history are well-established, since the character of a place or item is paramount to the presentation of its history.[152] Thus, the Centre works well within its parameters to both preserve and display local history.

Armada 1588: Shipwreck and Survival

In 2020, an exciting venture was launched that would tell the story of the Streedagh wrecks and of Francisco de Cuéllar. In 2020, the Department of Rural and Community Development with the support of Sligo County Council, offered €100,000 to produce a docudrama that would tell the story of Francisco de Cuéllar and his time

[150] Cauvin, *Public History*, p. 185
[151] National Museum of Ireland, *Armada Cannons and Gun Carriage Wheel* https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Collections-Research/Conservation/Conservation-Projects/Armada-Cannons-and-Gun-Carriage-Wheel (accessed 04 June 2024)
[152] Cauvin, *Public History*, p.110

in Ireland, entitled *Armada 1588: Shipwreck and Survival*.[153] The film was produced by Mediacoop, a Dublin-based production company, which hired local and international actors, including Fernando Corral, a Spanish actor, to play the protagonist, Francisco de Cuéllar.[154]

Released in May 2020 and costing viewers €5 (with the proceeds going towards the Centre), the script is based heavily on a letter from de Cuéllar upon his safe return from Ireland to the Spanish Netherlands.[155] The film was almost entirely shot on-site and uses local landscapes, while high-quality CGI is used for the images of the ships and the battles against the English fleets. The film begins with a dramatic reconstruction of the wrecking of ships: the unrelenting winds, the catastrophic waves, the thrashing rain. The film spends time explaining the causes of the Spanish Armada, intending to be as neutral as possible when it comes to explaining the origins of the conflict.

It was on the journey around Scotland that de Cuéllar was charged with dereliction of duty and placed into custody on *La Lavia*. Weeks later, in September 1588, three ships, *La Lavia, La Juliana,* and *Santa Maria de Visón,* broke from the main fleet and were blown towards the Sligo coast. Chaos ensues. The film shows that many are immediately killed and that de Cuéllar only escapes English soldiers by sheltering in a dune. After scavenging supplies from a wreck, he reaches O'Rourke's castle in Castletown after journeying across the countryside. Although O'Rourke is not there, his people are more than willing to help the Spaniards. They hear that a passing ship will collect the survivors, but de Cuéllar states that he is too weak to go and will

[153] Media Coop, *Armada 1588: Shipwreck and Survival* (24 May 2020) https://vimeo.com/422231205 (accessed 04 June 2024)
[154] *Irish Independent*, 06 March 2024
[155] Omedia, *Armada 1588: Shipwreck & Survival - Behind the Scenes of the Armada Film* (29 September 2020) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ1Uw9YaRXE (accessed 04 June 2024)

remain in Ireland. This unintentionally saves his life, as this ship was the doomed *Girona*, which would eventually wreck at Lacada Point, killing all but nine on board.

After leaving and finding the keep of Tadhg Óg McClancy, English forces warn they will murder Spaniards and those sheltering them if they refused to surrender. De Cuéllar rejects this and, with the help of the Irish, outlasts the siege. The English must retreat due to snowfall and de Cuéllar is able to go north, where a ship has been arranged to sail him safely to Flanders. The film ends explaining that de Cuéllar was pardoned and returned to Spain, that O'Rourke and McClancy were both executed for treason, and that over the course of a month, twenty-six ships were lost across the Irish coast, killing north of five thousand men.

Though only thirty minutes long, the film is excellent at providing auditory, visual, and textual representations of the Spaniard's experience. By using a local film company, working in collaboration with the Centre, and hiring Spanish actors, the film is an excellent demonstration of public history in action, interconnecting various mediums and groups to present a specific history to a general audience.[156] The creators of the film and the Armada Association are likely unaware of public history, and yet the film they produced is a clear example of it. As Sharon Leon explains, public history is a collaborative field: using academic knowledge in combination with practical presentations, such as exhibitions, artwork, and digital media.[157]

Cauvin has an interesting chapter, 'Radio and audio-visual production' in regard to public history.[158] In this chapter, he discusses how academic historians have previously been critical of presenting history on the screen, believing that the

[156] Cauvin, *Public History* p.14
[157] Leon, 'Complexity and Collaboration' p.p.44-66
[158] Cauvin, *Public History*, Chapter 12

medium is too unreliable because production may take artistic liberties, and it is unclear how different audiences may receive the final product. However, Cauvin argues that public historians have a responsibility to use cinema as a tool to retake control over historical presentation. If a historian is responsible for the production, they can guarantee that the narrative presented is accurate and having an unknown audience can be to the crew's benefit: they have a unique opportunity to display a historic event to a broad audience that was previously inaccessible.

In March 2024, the film was screened in Madrid, where representatives from the Centre presented the story of the De Cuéllar and Sligo and discussed the recent finds in Sligo waters, including the Armada cannons found in 2015, and explained their annual commemoration event. This event placed Streedagh firmly in the international spotlight. The film has been well-received by all those who viewed it and it is very successful in telling the history of the Armada and de Cuéllar in clear, and simple terms, reminding viewers that though the tragedy took place over four hundred years ago, the legacy left behind continues to thrive in both Ireland and Spain.

'Remembering the Armada' festival

For fourteen years, the Grange Armada Development Association, with the support of local authorities, have held a commemorative festival in September: 'Remembering the Armada'. This festival has grown in notoriety and duration every year, now lasting four days and hosting a variety of unique events that all use the Armada and local tradition as a focal point. Streedagh is not unique in using commemorative ceremonies to present history. Thomas Cauvin and Ciaran O'Neill explain that "Certainly the most symbolic aspect of public history in Ireland, official

commemorations have been the source of many historical projects and practices."[159] They further state that often, commemorations have been looked down on by historians as being superficial and inaccurate depictions of the past.[160] Yet this is not accurate. Such ceremonies provide opportunities for historians to present unique events to wide audiences and organisers typically work with local historians to ensure that what they are remembering is both historically accurate and publicly accessible.

Attendees are usually locals and Armada enthusiasts, as well as local dignitaries and Spanish representatives: in 2023, two Spanish navy officers laid wreath, in sombre memory of the 1,100 lives lost on that fateful day.[161] The main event is the Remembrance Parade, a walk from Streedagh to the Spanish Armada monument accompanied by bagpipes. At Streedagh, crosses are drawn in a circle in the sand around a straw boat, to represent the three ships lost, while at the memorial, wreaths are laid by local dignitaries and Spanish representatives.[162] In 2020, the event was placed online, with skeleton attendance due to the COVID pandemic. Yet, the organisers made the event reflective of the current suffering of international communities under the Covid lockdowns, dedicating the ceremony not just to those who died in 1588 but also to those who had died or been bereaved due to COVID.[163] Thus, this made the event transcendent and adaptive, maintaining the Armada at its core yet acknowledging the present-day suffering.

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[159] Thomas Cauvin and Ciarán O'Neill, 'Negotiating public history in the Republic of Ireland: collaborative, applied and usable practices for the profession' in *Historical Research*, 90:250 (London, 2017), p.813
[160] Ibid
[161] *Irish Independent,* 18 September 2023
[162] Ibid
[163] Omedia, *Remembering the Armada 2020 – Spanish Armada Commemoration in Sligo, Ireland* (29.09.2020) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMpQb3uuYQo (accessed 04 June 2024)

The four-day event is diverse in terms of what it offers visitors yet maintains Armada history and local heritage at its core. Appendix One shows the programme offered for September 2024.[164] The first day provides visitors the chance to experience the sea that claimed so many lives, while the second day offers the academic context and artistic interpretation. The third day is the main event with the commemoration event sandwiched between boat trips, historical reenactments, food festivals and traditional music. The final day allows visitors to reconnect with the natural environment, partaking in an 8km walk and run, a climate change event, and finishing with a writer's workshop. The timetable therefore allows visitors to learn the importance of this event before attending the Parade, meaning they have an opportunity to understand the significance of this annual event. Concerts are held, playing both traditional Irish music and the "de Cuéllar Suite", composed by Michael Rooney.[165]

"Remembering the Armada" would not be possible without the value placed on the history and heritage. Locals, volunteers, and visitors are central to every level of planning, performance, and attendance, and they, along with support from local officials, have made the event into what it is today. What is chosen to be remembered by the Centre is symptomatic of what the community wants to remember, evidence that public history has become deeply entrenched in community life.[166] The festival, which began as a simple remembrance ceremony at the Spanish Armada memorial, now lasts half a week and offers historical and traditional events: from heritage walks to traditional music, from history tours of Sligo city to road races. The events are mostly free, and the proceeds raised from those few events that

[164] Appendix 14: Screenshot of Festival Programme 2024
[165] Livetrad*, Michael Rooney De Cuéllar Suite: Traditional Irish Music from LiveTrad.com* (26 June 2012) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zURoFqK76xY (accessed 04 June 2024)
[166] Diane F. Britton, 'Public History and Public Memory' in *The Public historian* 19.3 (California, 1997) p.19

require visitors to pay (such as the concert, festival launch, and lectures) go to the Centre, who in turn use these funds to improve facilities and to plan the next year's festival.

The Centrality of Community

What is clear is the importance of community to the memory of the Armada and sustained public history representations of this event. Though the Centre is only physically open on weekends in the summer, the social media pages, particularly that of Facebook, are updated almost daily about new developments in Armada heritage, the work of the Association, and of other activities or news relevant to the Centre. For instance, in May 2024, the Centre shared an article by *Ocean FM*, which tells of how Eddie O'Gorman, Chair of Spanish Armada Ireland, was awarded the Cross of Naval Merit at the Spanish Embassy in Dublin.[167] This was in recognition of the work that O'Gorman and his team have done in resurfacing and promoting the Armada history and heritage of Sligo.

This ceremony highlights two important facts. One, is that O'Gorman has been central to the surviving legacy and public history representations of the Armada. The other, is that the legacy of the Armada in Ireland is important to the histories of each nation: thus, close collaboration between the two is important to keep this history surviving. These links are also clear when looking at the Facebook posts by the Spanish Armada Centre. For instance, many Spaniards commented their

[167] *OceanFM,* 06 May 2024

appreciation of the Centre and volunteers on a post from 12 May 2024.[168] Therefore, it is clear to see that the Centre is not just important to the local community and heritage, but also to many Spaniards who feel close connections to this tiny island nation to their north.

So, why is the Armada so important to Grange and Sligo? The answer is multifaceted. For one, the history of the Spanish Armada is vital to European history in general, representing the importance of naval power and religion to the development of Western European empires. The power of the Spanish Armada, the cunning of the English fleets, and the dangers of the Irish coast are important elements of the national identities of each nation. Thus, remembering the Armada ships that wrecked on Streedagh ties Sligo into an international narrative significant to European history. Another reason, as previously mentioned, is the links made with Spain. The two nations have always felt close connections: largely because they each are majority Catholic, and each has had rocky relations with England. Each nation would like to remain close to remember a tragic element of history that affected each, though in different ways.

The final reason is the importance of community, which cannot be ignored. O'Gorman is from Sligo, as are many of the volunteers and members of the Association. As Shelley Bookspan explains, public historians are the first group of historians who are truly interested in working directly with communities and analysing different approaches to presenting history.[169] It is unlikely that O'Gorman is truly aware of the field of public history, and yet the work he continues to do exemplifies

[168] *Spanish Armada Ireland* Facebook account (dated 12 May 2024) https://www.facebook.com/SpanishArmadaIreland (accessed 11 June 2024)
[169] Shelley Bookspan, 'Liberating the Historian: The Promise of Public History' in *The Public historian* 6.1 (California, 1984) p. 59

all it is that public historians aim to do: to work with a small community to present a heritage to a broad audience.

Grange is an isolated rural village and therefore requires community assistance to continue to survive. Local authorities have invested in restoring the former courthouse and ensuring the Centre can continue to provide history and heritage to visitors. Further, the cast and crew of the film were largely from the local area and most, if not all, of the landscapes shown were of Sligo and Streedagh. The continued growth of the festival would not be possible without local assistance and investment, to set up, help during the event, fund the displays, and, of course, attend. It is therefore clear that while the Armada is important to international history and Spanish heritage, the work and importance of locals is the main reason for the creation of the Centre in the first place, and without it, the Centre would not be able to continue.

Conclusion

The sea is a form of connection, of uniting otherwise isolated communities. It offers livelihoods and resources to millions around the world and presents a place of peace for many. The sea is not to be underestimated: even experienced seamen misread the waves and the wind, falling foul to a lapse in judgement during a storm. Excluding the forty or so landlocked countries, maritime heritage has played a key role in the histories of almost every nation. And yet many of the state-provided histories tend to focus on internal events, of civil wars, military victories, and nobility, with maritime history taking a secondary role.

The future of Irish maritime heritage

It is undeniable that Ireland is rich with maritime heritage and full of passionate individuals and organisations who have worked tirelessly to ensure that future generations may continue to appreciate it. And yet, as with everything in the arts sector, the survival of such groups and heritage is reliant on funding. So, what does the future of Irish maritime heritage look like?

A Visitor Attitudes Survey was carried out by Fáilte Ireland (the National Tourism Development Authority of the Republic of Ireland) in 2015, in the various airports and seaports of the Republic of Ireland. Just under 2000 interviews were conducted between June and October 2015, asking tourists a wide variety of questions about

their experiences and opinions of Ireland.[170] It was found that the heritage and the environment of the island were key to attracting tourists, but that many were deterred by the poor facilities and high prices. This is as unsurprising as it is worrying. Visitors to Ireland want to see the unique castles and villages and to experience the might of the Wild Atlantic Way; but if they feel that the facilities (such as public bathrooms or roads) are inadequate and that prices for a trip are too high, they will be less likely to come. And if tourists stop visiting, the country will not have the finances to improve these sites and thus a vicious cycle will begin. It is thus imperative that local councils and national governments fund heritage sites if they wish to maintain high visitor numbers. As can be seen in Titanic Belfast, while these projects may be costly in the short term, the benefits to the economy and the multitude of jobs offered are not to be understated.

The archivist made an interesting point,

> …there's been a few attempts to create kind of Armada trails over the years. And I think there is a group trying to establish something at the moment . . . I think there needs to be a little bit more working kind of in partnership. With a number of groups of people, and I know we have tried it in the past and a few people have tried to pull little trails or walking trails or, you know, driving trails where you could go and visit different sites.[171]

A Spanish Armada Trail could be exactly the way to improve maritime heritage in Ireland to attract visitors to the often-isolated west coast of the island. The trail could start at the Giant's Causeway, where the *Girona* met her fate, before travelling along

[170] Fáilte Ireland , Visitor Attitudes Survey - Main Markets 2015 https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/4_Visitor_Insights/The-Visitor-Attitudes-(Port)-Survey-2015.pdf?ext=.pdf (accessed 12 July 2024)
[171] Interview with the archivist at the Tower Museum

the coast through counties Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Clare and finishing in Kerry. These are the counties that each host at least one Armada shipwreck, and each county has at least one memorial site to the ships. The Ulster Museum, alongside the National Museum of Ireland, in Dublin, would play a key role in this potential project, loaning out items for either permanent or temporary display along the proposed route. To achieve this, greater links would need to be established across the island between each museum, organisation or county council.

A trail would not require much monetary investment from the government: signage and advertising would be the key requirements. Certainly, one issue may be the collaboration between the Irish government and the British Government, since if the trail wishes to include all wrecks, the cross-border initiative would need to happen. As this is not a political trail, discussions may go more smoothly but may be time-consuming. Potential political and financial difficulties aside, a trail of this kind would do wonders for local heritage projects and communities. Smaller centres, such as Sligo, may see greater footfall from visitors travelling the trail. Additionally, there would be greater opportunities for coffee shops, gift shops, and heritage sites along the trail, since the growing number of visitors would want places to stop. As such, local councils may see increased revenue and spending. Therefore, the potential trail would improve the tourism economy and improve understanding of local maritime history and heritage.

There are numerous examples of such trails, like the Maritime Mile in Belfast. Bringing in over 800,000 visitors annually and generating around £430 million for the Northern Ireland economy, Titanic Belfast is a feat of architecture and a display of

local talents from the past and present.[172] Yet the Museum is not the only example of Titanic heritage in Belfast. Jason Grek-Martin analyses the so-called 'maritime memoryscape' and the role of heritage organisations in curating Titanic heritage trails.[173] The Titanic Trail guides tourists from one maritime heritage site to another, having been designed to display the unique nature of each one yet showing how they are connected. Tourists will arrive at the Maritime Mile from the City Hall and walk along the River Lagan, offering a connected maritime experience along the famous waterfront where so much of Belfast's history occurred.[174] The aim of the Trail is to teach users about Belfast's maritime history, while also connecting the city centre with the rapidly developing Titanic Quarter. However, if an Armada Trail were to take inspiration from the Titanic Trail, it would have to learn from its failings as well as successes. As Pete Hodson explains in his article, 'Titanic Struggle', working-class communities often feel disconnected from the work at Titanic Quarter and indeed left behind in its regeneration.[175] Hodson analyses how the legacy and future of the Titanic are fraught with divisions within Belfast: during her construction, Catholic shipyard workers faced discrimination and sectarianism, while the modern communities around the former shipyard are struggling with high levels of economic deprivation, as, 'Four out of the five lowest-achieving wards in Northern Ireland are Protestant'.[176] Thus, while the Maritime Mile and Titanic Quarter have done wonders to boost tourism figures, little has been done to work with local communities. An Armada Trail would pass heavily through coastal, rural areas, which are often low-

[172] Titanic Belfast, *Northern Ireland celebrates ten years of Titanic impact* (31 March 2024) https://www.titanicbelfast.com/news/northern-ireland-celebrates-ten-years-of-a-titanic-impact/ (accessed 12 July 2024)
[173] Grek-Martin, 'Heritage trails and the framing of place', p. 153
[174] Grek-Martin, 'Heritage trails and the framing of place', p.p.157-158
[175] Pete Hodson, "Titanic Struggle: Memory, Heritage and Shipyard Deindustrialization in Belfast." *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 87, no. 1, (Belfast, 2019), p.p.224-49
[176] Hodson, 'Titanic Struggle', p.p.234-235

income, farming areas. Work would need to be done with local groups to ensure that they both feel their opinions are heard and that they are able to reap the benefits this potential trail could bring.

While certainly the Centre in Sligo lacks the monumental funding, technology, and expertise required to create a simulation quite like that of Beacon Virtua, they may take inspiration from the project. For instance, they could generate a 3-D model of each ship, allowing visitors to move around the ships when they would have sailed and around the wrecks lying at the bottom of the sea just a few miles away. The Centre could also move to an online exhibition space. At present, the website and social media accounts are useful in providing up-to-date information about the Centre, visitors must go to the Centre in person if they wish to experience all it has to offer. Moving online would create a more inclusive experience for those interested in the Spanish Armada and could encourage potential visitors to visit if they find they are interested in what is offered online. Each case study analysed presents unique abilities: the Ulster Museum has the funding required to create unique digital experiences, the Tower Museum collaborates closely with amateur and professional divers with great knowledge of the wrecks, and the Sligo Centre is located on-site with a deeply passionate community. By working together, the organisations could create a unique visitor experience for tourists onsite and online, and thus close collaboration must be encouraged.

As this dissertation has demonstrated, maritime heritage is vital to different groups around the world, and it is vital to preserve this heritage to allow different cultural and national communities continue to their way of life. The Spanish Armada is a unifying event for unconnected groups (across county borders) to unite around a shared part of their history, as well as a reminder for Ireland that, though their heritage can often

be divisive, there are also points of commonality. The Armada offers a unique vantage point for heritage organisations in Ireland, not least Northern Ireland, because it is wholly unpolitical and in a country that is living in relative peace and looking to move beyond the Troubles that plagued their society for decades, the Armada offers a chance for different community groups to discuss and disseminate their role in an international event.

Drawing on three case studies, this dissertation examined different public history presentations of Spanish Armada history in order to analyse how public history can work. The Ulster Museum represents a traditional museum, in that it owns artefacts from several ships and tells a general, largely unchanged story of the event and of one ship in particular: the *Girona*. The Tower Museum is a smaller museum which, though also receiving funding (albeit much less from the local council), relies much more heavily on the local community and which tells the story of the importance of the divers from the city in recovering this monumental wreck. Finally, the Spanish Armada Interpretive Centre in Ireland is unique: it lacks funding, annual council funding, and ownership of any original items, yet it more than makes up for it with community engagements, links with Spain, and the release of its very own docudrama. Each organisation receives vastly different levels of funding and visitor numbers, and uses different methodologies to present the history of the Armada: yet it is clear that though each uses a different ship and is located in different parts of the island, the Armada remains a key component of the story of the island that each aims to tell.

Many in Ireland view the events surrounding the wreck of the Spanish Armada with national pride: pride that it was their weather that caused ships to wreck on their land and pride that they were able to acquire the wealth of artefacts. Others view the

events as a tragedy, with a popular view that many Spaniards had to die alone on a strange island, surrounded by sympathetic Irish, too fearful of repercussions to help, and vengeful English soldiers, following orders to execute any Spaniard they found. The title of this dissertation is ‘Flavit et dissipati sunt’, which was chosen not just because it is engraved on a medal displayed in the Tower Museum, but also because it encapsulates the importance of Ireland to the tale of the Armada. Elizabeth I acknowledged, with this medal, that it was not the English power nor the Spanish failures that led to the latter’s downfall: it was the misfortunate of running straight into the terror of the Irish Atlantic storms. Perhaps that is why the Armada is so important. Or perhaps it is because it is simply the most obvious example of maritime heritage on this island. Regardless of the reason, there can be no doubt that Armada heritage is going nowhere quickly, and that heritage and government organisations would be wise to capitalise on it now, to bring in tourists, to preserve unique history, and to remember the thousands of lives lost over the course of several days four hundred years ago.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Photograph of *Girona* wreck map (author's photograph)

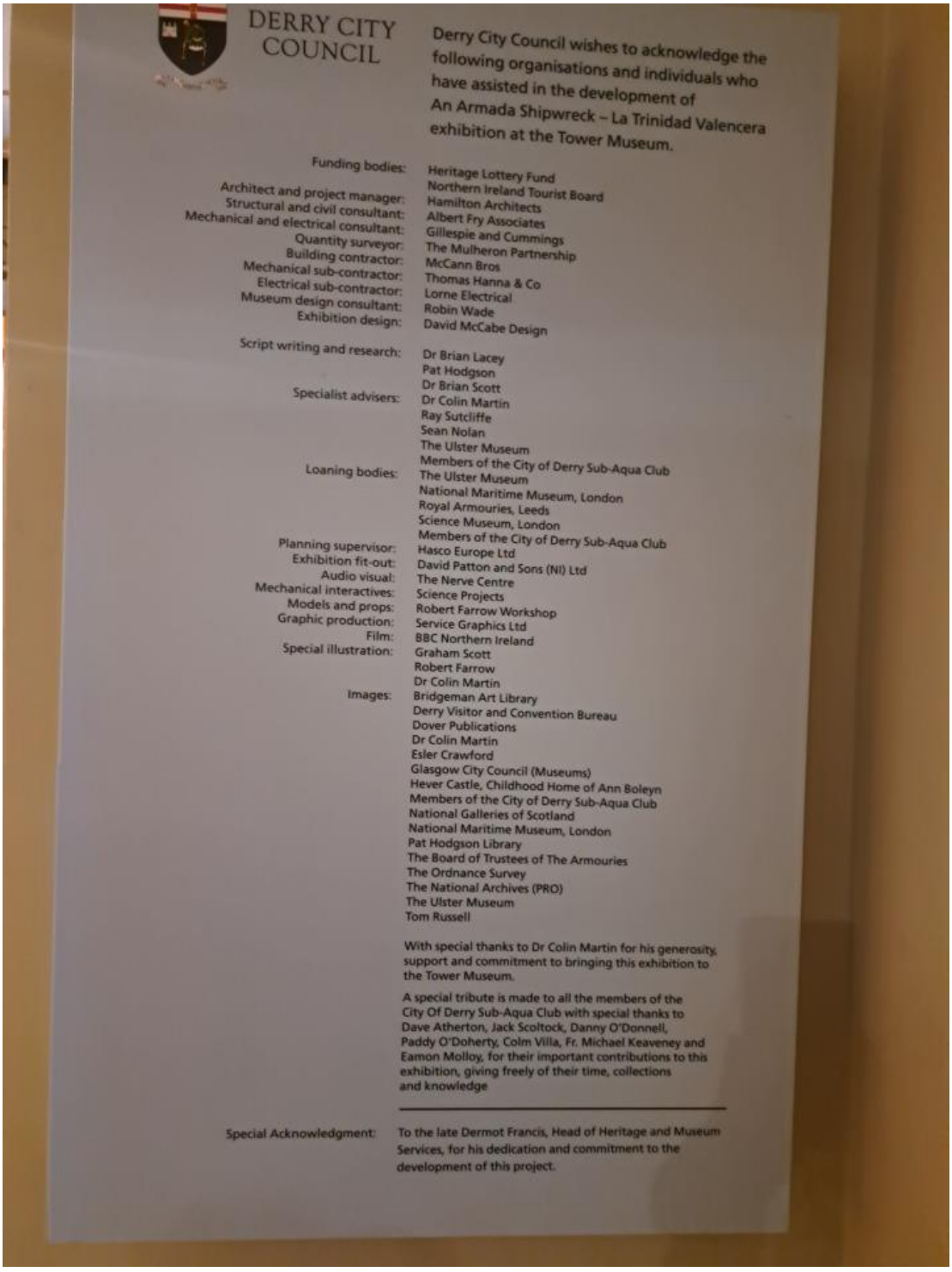
We don't really have anything touching on the Armada exhibition or how it is received in comparison to other exhibitions. We don't have any sort of evaluation form for it.

The only information that I can think of that we have is regarding the Ulster Museum generally is from our exit surveys.

2023-24	
UM Level of interest in museums	YTD
Strong interest	14%
Specific interest	13%
General interest	57%

76% of visitors engage with the history galleries.

Appendix 2: Email from the curator at Ulster Museum about exit surveys for the Ulster Museum (12 August 2024)



DERRY CITY COUNCIL

Derry City Council wishes to acknowledge the following organisations and individuals who have assisted in the development of An Armada Shipwreck – La Trinidad Valencera exhibition at the Tower Museum.

Funding bodies:	Heritage Lottery Fund Northern Ireland Tourist Board
Architect and project manager:	Hamilton Architects
Structural and civil consultant:	Albert Fry Associates
Mechanical and electrical consultant:	Gillespie and Cummings
Quantity surveyor:	The Mulheron Partnership
Building contractor:	McCann Bros
Mechanical sub-contractor:	Thomas Hanna & Co
Electrical sub-contractor:	Lorne Electrical
Museum design consultant:	Robin Wade
Exhibition design:	David McCabe Design
Script writing and research:	Dr Brian Lacey Pat Hodgson
Specialist advisers:	Dr Brian Scott Dr Colin Martin Ray Sutcliffe Sean Nolan The Ulster Museum
Loaning bodies:	Members of the City of Derry Sub-Aqua Club The Ulster Museum National Maritime Museum, London Royal Armouries, Leeds Science Museum, London
Planning supervisor:	Members of the City of Derry Sub-Aqua Club
Exhibition fit-out:	Hasco Europe Ltd
Audio visual:	David Patton and Sons (NI) Ltd
Mechanical interactives:	The Nerve Centre
Models and props:	Science Projects
Graphic production:	Robert Farrow Workshop
Film:	Service Graphics Ltd
Special illustration:	BBC Northern Ireland
	Graham Scott Robert Farrow Dr Colin Martin
Images:	Bridgeman Art Library Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau Dover Publications Dr Colin Martin Esler Crawford Glasgow City Council (Museums) Hever Castle, Childhood Home of Ann Boleyn Members of the City of Derry Sub-Aqua Club National Galleries of Scotland National Maritime Museum, London Pat Hodgson Library The Board of Trustees of The Armouries The Ordnance Survey The National Archives (PRO) The Ulster Museum Tom Russell

With special thanks to Dr Colin Martin for his generosity, support and commitment to bringing this exhibition to the Tower Museum.

A special tribute is made to all the members of the City Of Derry Sub-Aqua Club with special thanks to Dave Atherton, Jack Scoltock, Danny O'Donnell, Paddy O'Doherty, Colm Villa, Fr. Michael Keaveney and Eamon Molloy, for their important contributions to this exhibition, giving freely of their time, collections and knowledge

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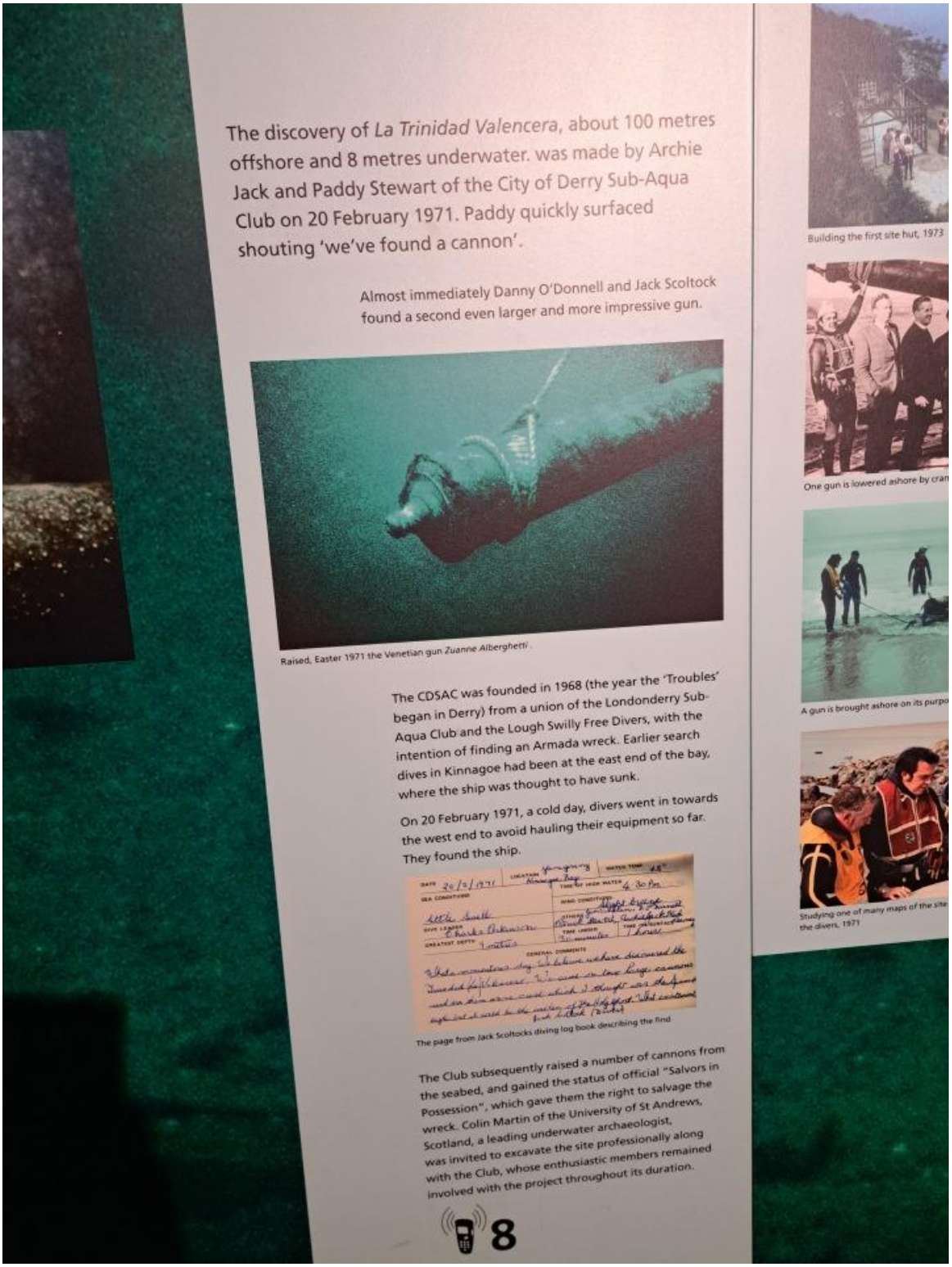
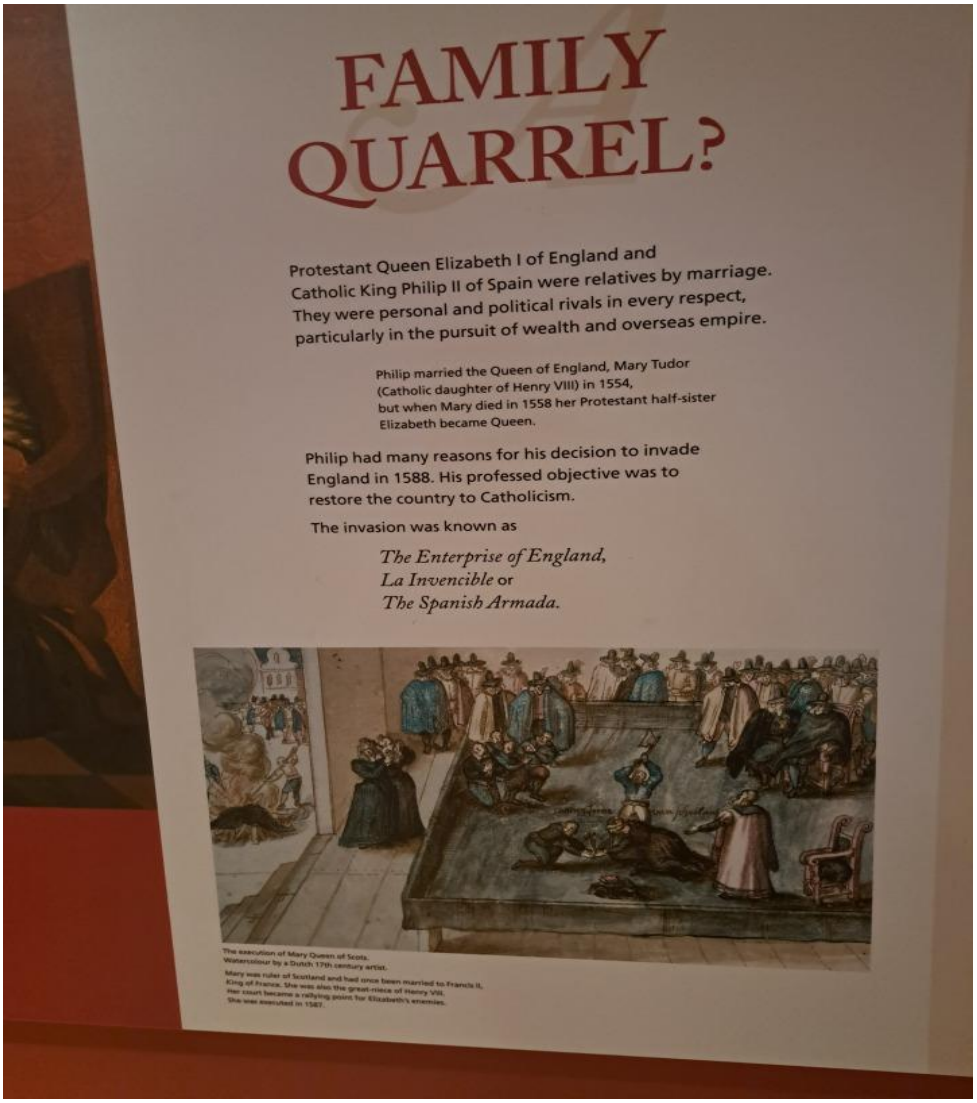
Special Acknowledgment: To the late Dermot Francis, Head of Heritage and Museum Services, for his dedication and commitment to the development of this project.

Appendix 3: Image of organisations and individuals who helped the development of the *La Trinidad Valencera* exhibition in the Tower Museum



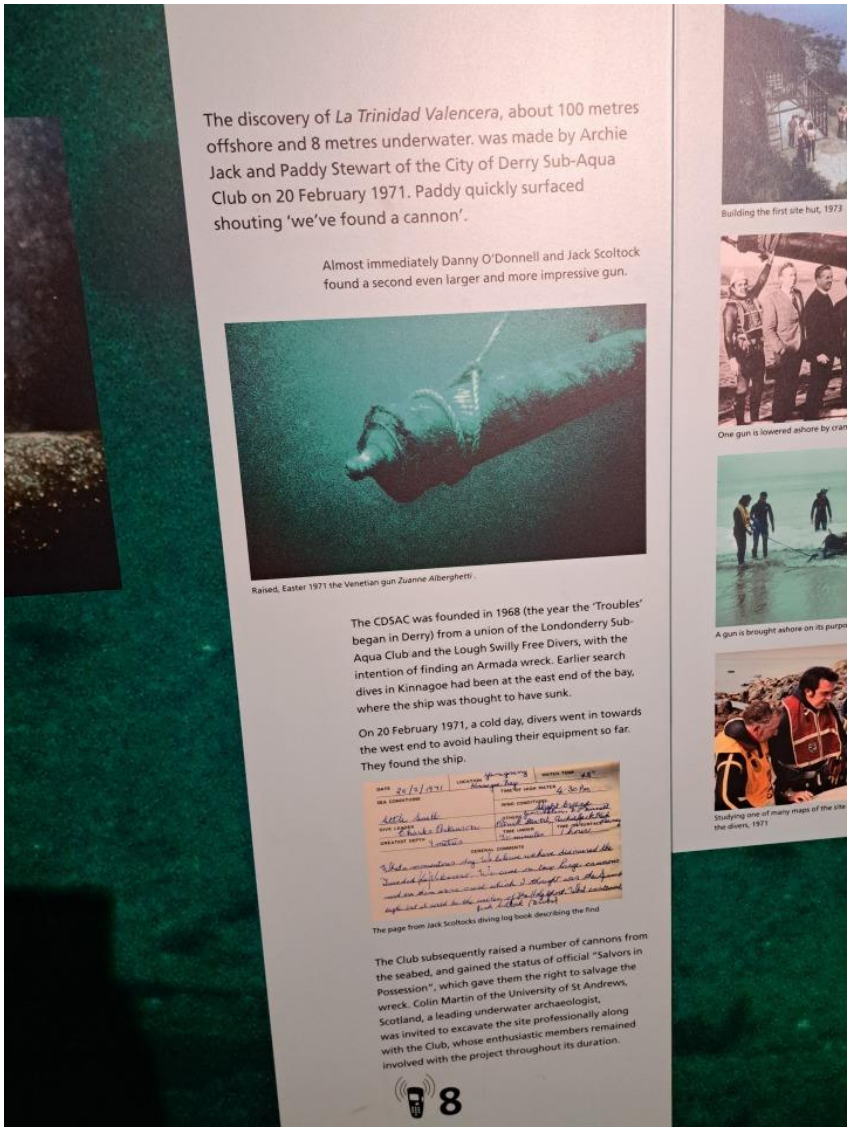
Appendix 4: Image of display board in La Trinidad Valencera exhibition in the Tower Museum, explaining the work of the City of Derry Sub-Acqua Club in finding the wreck

Appendix 5: Image displaying wide-angled photo of top floor of *La Trinidad Valencera* exhibition in the Tower Museum

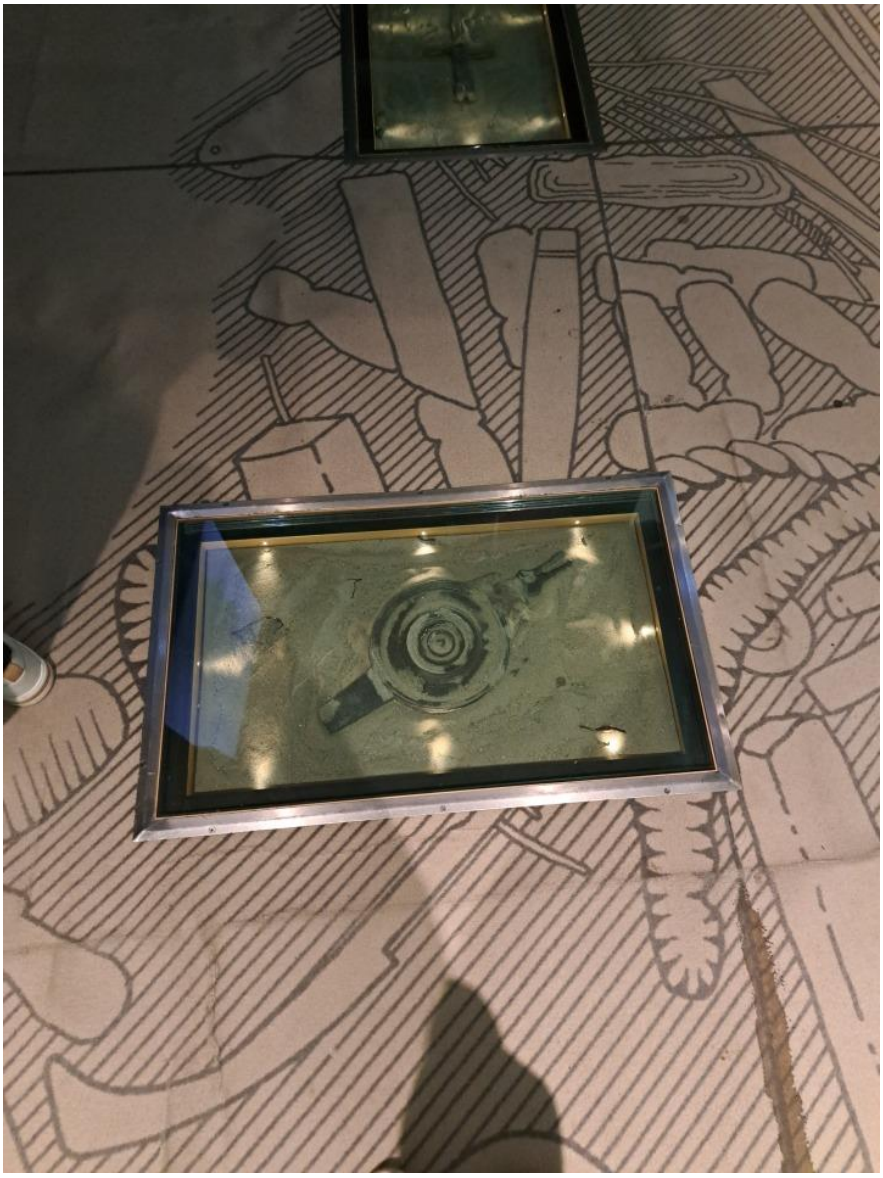


Appendix 6: Image of display about the familial causes for the launch of the Spanish Armada

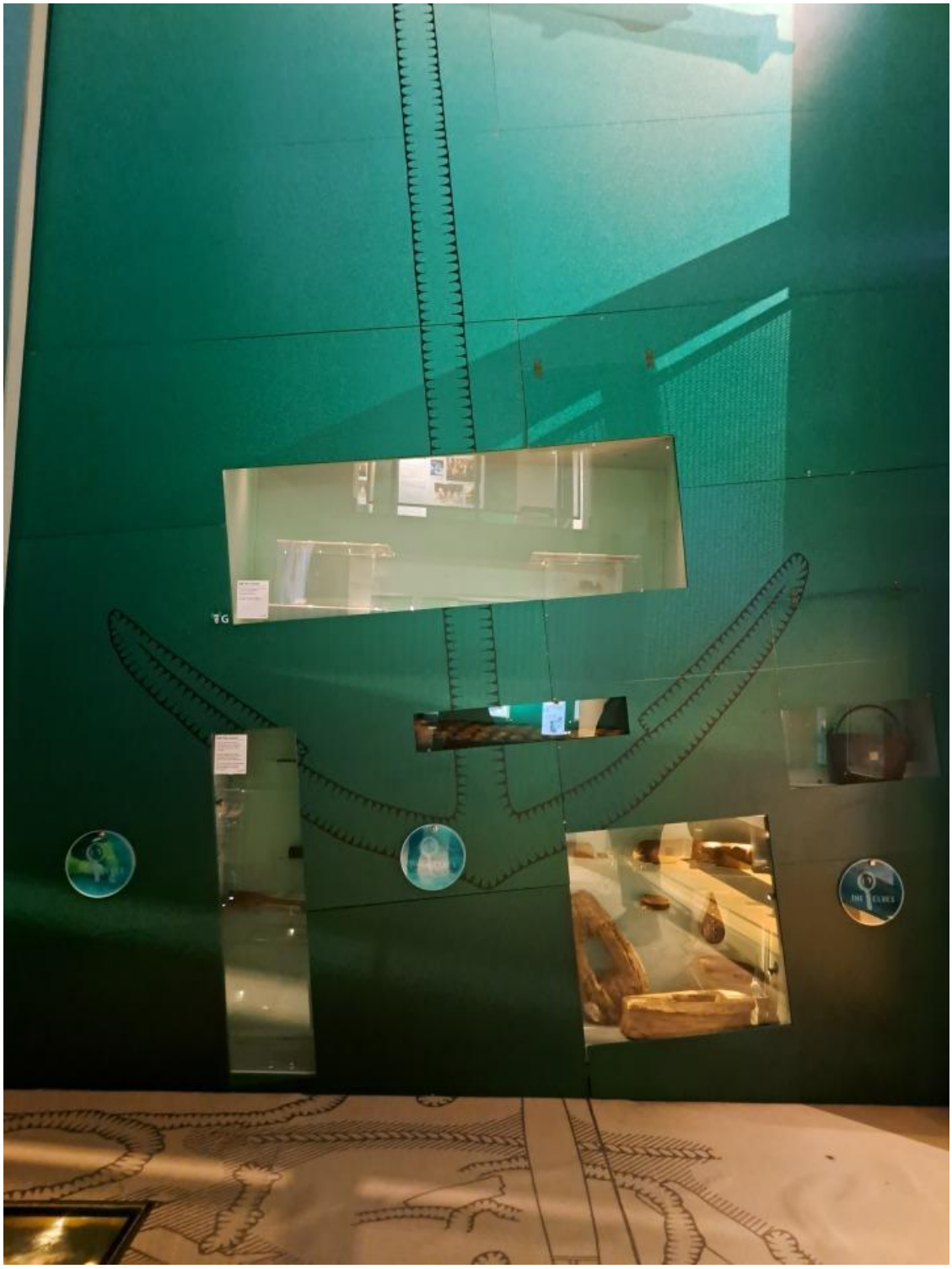
Appendix 7: Image of room displaying information on discovery of *La Trinidad Valencera*



Appendix 8: Image of display explaining discovery of the Canon

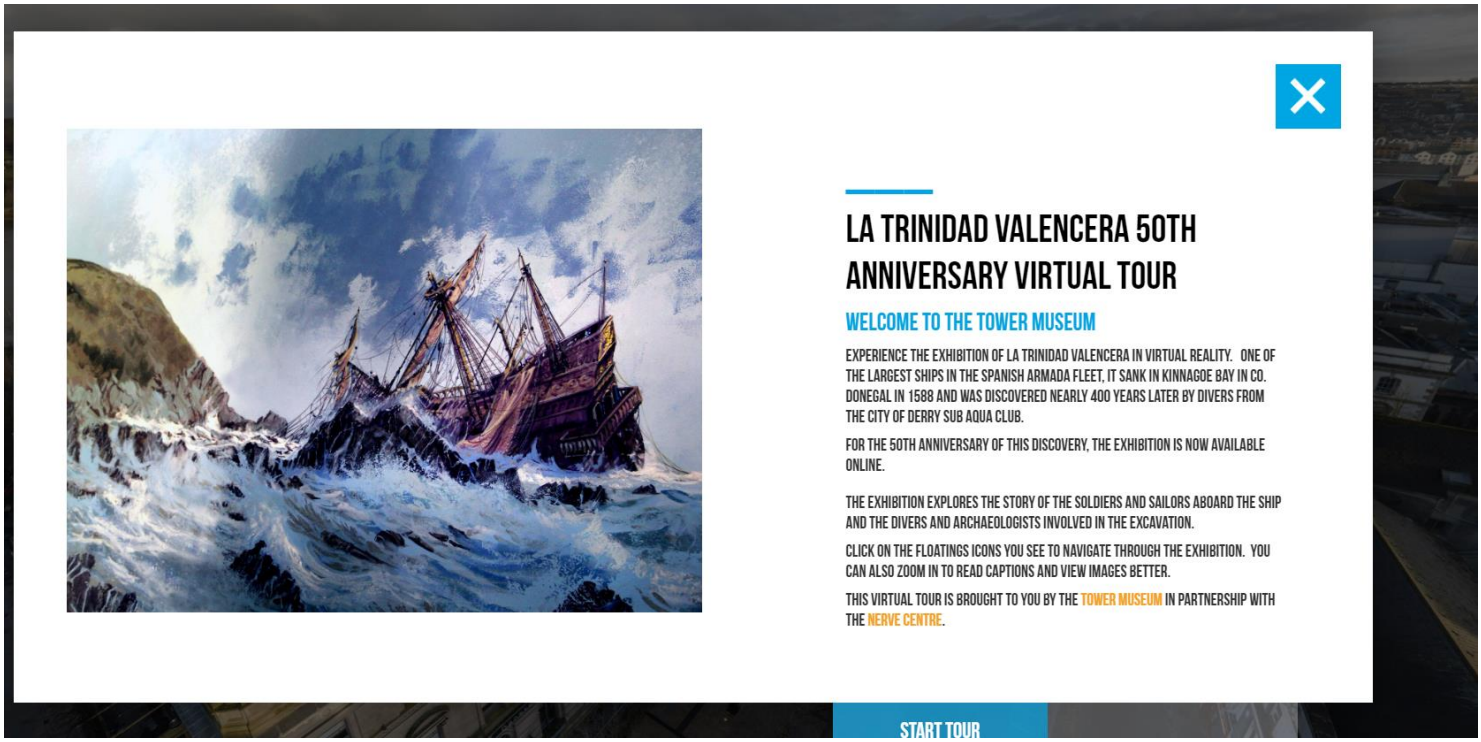


Appendix 9: Image showing floor displays at the Tower Museum

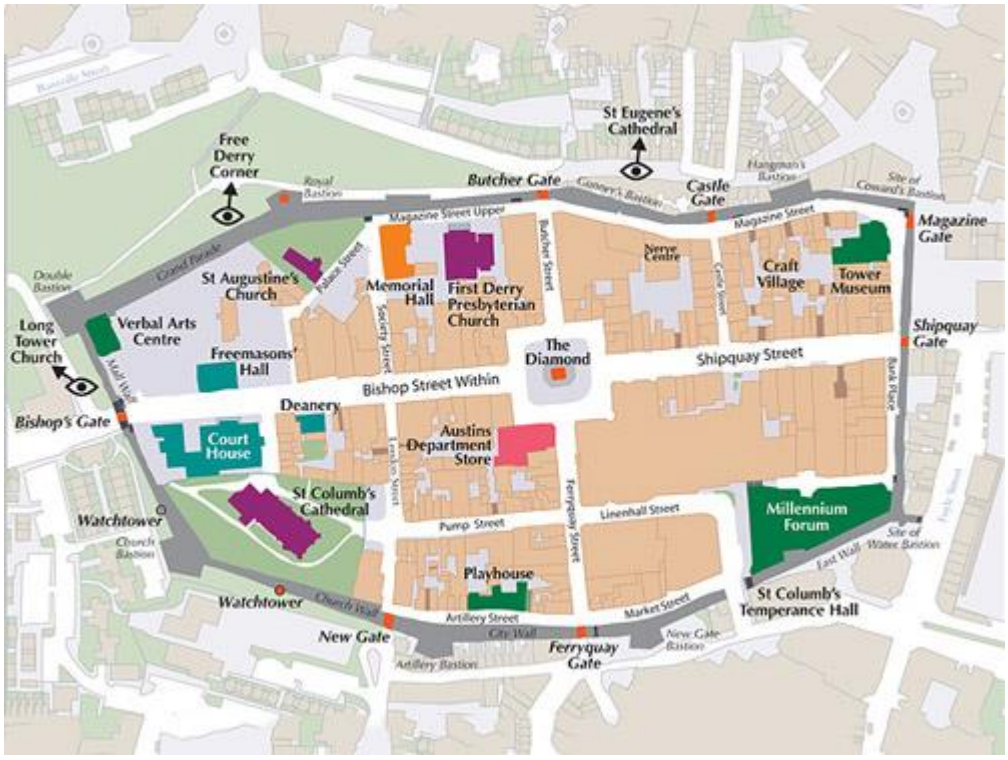


Appendix 10: Image showing wall display at the Tower Museum

Appendix 11: Image showing siege gun at the Tower Museum



Appendix 12: Screenshot of online tour of La Trinidad Valencera exhibition



Appendix 13: Map of Derry City Walls

Appendix 14: Screenshot of Festival Programme for 2024

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