

PRESS RELEASE 30/06/11

**'Martello Towers of Dublin'**

**A Joint Public Exhibition of Martello Towers Along Dublin's Coastline by Fingal and Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Councils and supported by the Heritage Council**

**The French are coming..... These iconic buildings along the Dublin coast are familiar landmarks. But how many people know anything about them?**

Martello Towers are familiar to everyone living in Dublin. We've all seen them and we probably all take them for granted. The reality is that most of us know very little about these strange buildings dotted along our coastline. And yet the towers have entered into our collective imaginations through their presence in street names, in the names of businesses and perhaps most famously in the opening chapter of *Ulysses*.

*Martello Towers of Dublin* documents the history of the Towers from their construction to the present day. It tells the story of each of the 28 Towers built from Balbriggan to Bray to defend the capital from French Invasion in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It looks at why they were built, where the idea for the Towers came from, their military role, how they are being used today, and where similar Towers are found across the globe. Terry Prone and Tom Savage who own the Tower in Portrane and other owners tell their stories and give an insight into what it's like to live in a Tower in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In July 2009, Fingal's Arts Office presented Tattered Outlaws of History, a 12 screen visual presentation of Fingal's Martello Towers designed by visual artist Dan Dubowitz (UK) and choreographer Fearghus Ó Conchúir (IRL). This well received exhibition was on display at Skerries Red Island Martello Tower, with the assistance of local volunteers during summer 2009 and is currently on display at Jaywick Martello Tower in Essex UK, receiving excellent reviews. Fingal Archives have also recently been presented with the original deed of conveyance for the site of Balbriggan Martello Tower by Hugh Cumisky (grandson of William J. Cumisky). This deed, or Indenture, is one of only two surviving deeds for any of the 28 Dublin Martello Towers, and the original will be on display as part of the exhibition.

We hope that this new exhibition will stimulate further interest and research into this fascinating group of buildings. Perhaps you have an old photograph or documents relating to the towers – if so we'd like to hear from you. As our knowledge and understanding grows we hope that the value of the Martello Towers as a unique part of Dublin's heritage will be more fully recognized.

This exhibition is the outcome of a previous research project between Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and Fingal County Councils, with the support of The Heritage Council.

### **Exhibition Dates:**

- **30<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm – Official Launch of Fingal Exhibition at Rush Library**
- 30<sup>th</sup> June – 8<sup>th</sup> July – Rush Library
- 8<sup>th</sup> July – 22<sup>nd</sup> August – Fingal County Hall (provisional)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> August – 2<sup>nd</sup> September – Rush Library

**The exhibition will also run at DLR County Hall, Dun Laoghaire from 30<sup>th</sup> June until the end of August.**

**ENDS 30/06/2011**

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. Martello Towers are not unique to Ireland and can be found in locations as diverse as Australia, the British Virgin Islands, India, Canada, the Caribbean, South Africa, the United States, and Britain. Many are in private ownership, some are used as museums or open to the public, and others unfortunately have been destroyed or fallen into ruin. In Ireland, the Towers can be found dotted along the entire coastline, and the one at Sandycove is famous for James Joyce connection.
2. Martello Towers in Ireland were constructed in two phases, the earlier one between 1804-1806 and the later between 1810-1815. Ireland was split into separate military engineering districts, and consequently the design of Irish Martello Towers differ in construction and design from place to place. Materials were usually locally sourced, such as cut stone used on the South Dublin Towers, and local rendered stone along the North (Fingal) Towers
3. Ireland's Eye Martello Tower is an unusual Double Tower, which allowed the use of 2 cannon.

4. The exhibition features 50 panels, and six sample panels are available to view at [www.fingalcoco.ie](http://www.fingalcoco.ie)
  
5. Further information on the exhibition running this summer at Jaywick Martello Tower in Essex is available at <http://www.jaywickmartellotower.org/Programme/>