



IRISH EXHIBITION

On the weekend of April 14 and 15, the Ballarat Diocesan Archive held its first exhibition in around twenty years. Almost two hundred people filed through to view 'The Irish as Represented in the Archive'. People travelled from as far as Colac, Stawell, Daylesford and Melbourne despite atrocious weather conditions. The display highlighted artefacts that reflected Irish influence as preserved in the archive including the foundational books from the Ballarat Hibernian Society 1868. Vestments in elaborate brocade with satin panels of embroidered shamrocks and Illuminated Addresses with Celtic motifs in gold raised many exclamations of pleasure.

The Hibernian regalia and records, combined with a map of Ireland with family names and 1916 Irish newspapers, linked many visitors with memories of their fathers and grandparents. The exhibition followed on the work that opened up the full realisation of the scope and worth of this collection by the assessment team, following National Library Community Heritage and State government Heritage grants in 2016 -2017.

Thanks to the volunteers who made this exhibition come to life including parishes who promoted it on their bulletins and Fr Justin Driscoll who promoted it at the Cathedral Masses on the day. Federation University was responsible for its promotion in Melbourne and thanks also to the Ballarat City Library for loan items. Only by support of parishes, groups and individuals across the diocese for this valuable resource, can we preserve our stories for the future to build on.

Michael Taffe – Archivist

