

Visit the Limavady Heritage Centre to see a portrait of a former prime minister of New Zealand

The painting of William Massey, a native of the town, was specially commissioned to mark 105 years since the Co Londonderry man assumed the highest political office in his adopted country.

Massey's portrait, a reproduction of a drawing by Sir William Orpen from 1919, was unveiled in 2017 at in Limavady's Orange Heritage Centre. The painting was recreated by local artist, Brian John Spencer, and will hang permanently in the outreach facility. Mr Spencer expressed delight at his involvement, describing it as a "joy" to recreate the work of an acclaimed artist. "Sir William Orpen is a colossus in Irish and world art and a huge inspiration to me," he said.

Aaron Callan, secretary of the William F Massey Foundation, said the portrait served to symbolise the historic association between Limavady and New Zealand.

He said: "The painting was commissioned to mark the 105th year since Massey became prime minister of New Zealand and to celebrate our local links to him. Massey was an active Orangeman in New Zealand becoming grand master of the North Island. We also have photos of Massey from his visit to Limavady and Londonderry in 1916 in our collection. Brian has done an excellent job in recreating the image of Sir William Orpen's portrait."



"Massey himself was instrumental in shaping New Zealand in the early 20th century and in shaping the global architecture - signing the Treaty of Versailles - and I proudly pay homage to that. Blending two loyal Irish heroes was a unique and special privilege and one I will never forget."

A farmer and entrepreneur, Massey emigrated to New Zealand from Co Londonderry in 1870. Having first entered Parliament in 1894, he served as prime minister from 1912 to 1925, incorporating the First World War.

The Heritage Centre is open to the public every Wednesday and Saturday (10am to 3pm). Group visits can also be facilitated outside these hours. For more information, email limavadyorangeheritagecentre@gmail.com.