

Work begins on museum revamp

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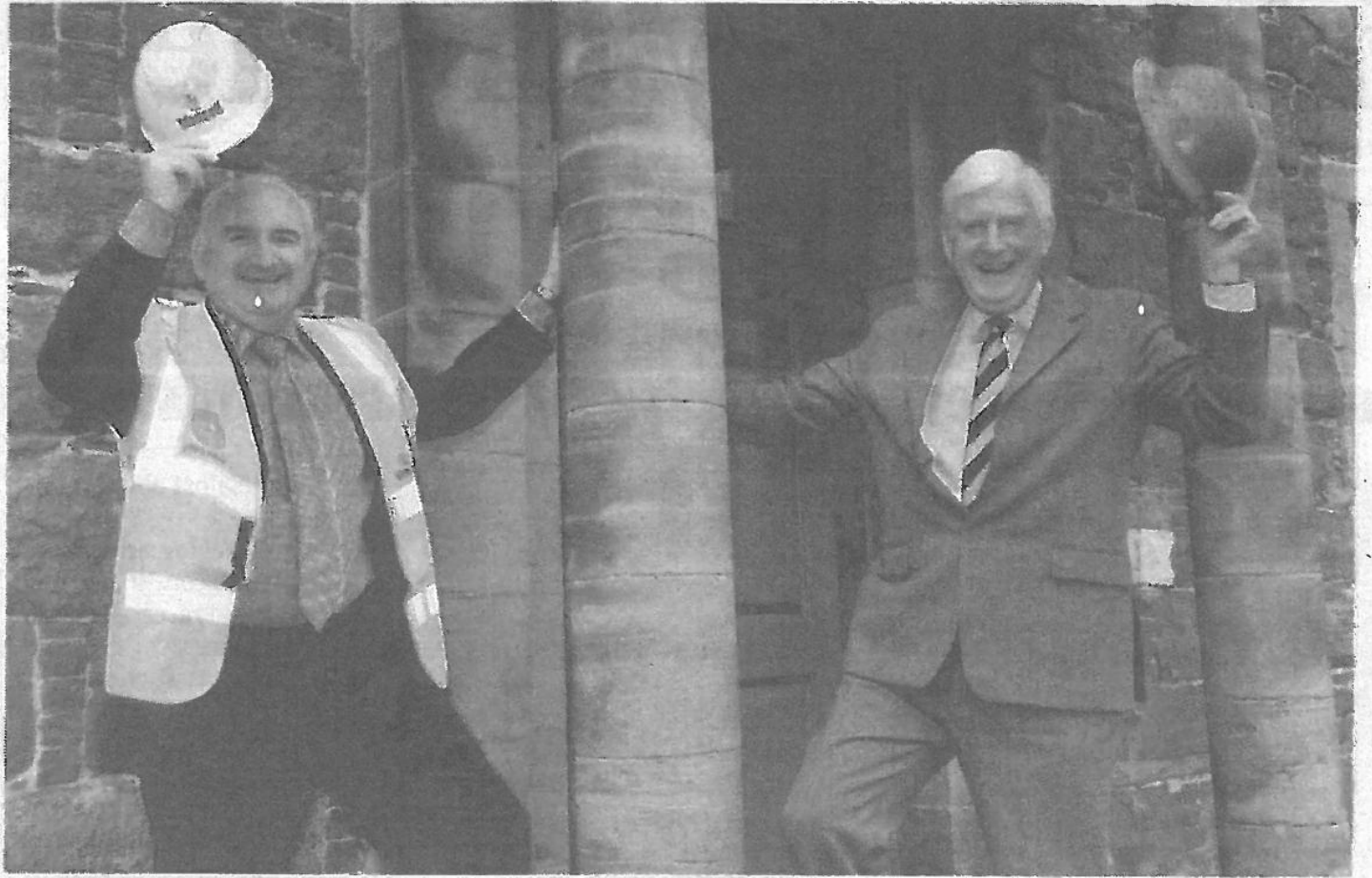
A £2.9million upgrade of a Highland military museum near Inverness got under way yesterday.

Construction firm Mansells has been contracted to revamp the Highlanders' Museum at Fort George, Ardersier, which tells the story of more than 300 years of Highland military history, from the Battle of Culloden to campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. The refurbishment includes creation of a new archive and study centre, interactive exhibits and restoration of the museum building, a scheduled ancient monument.

There will also be new display cases, improved access for the disabled and interpretation for visitors who do not speak English.

The appeal for the museum development fund was launched last year by film star Hugh Grant, who has family links to the fort.

Museum chairman Major General Seymour



HATS OFF: Alex Sutherland, left, and Major General Seymour Monro celebrate work starting at the museum

Monro said yesterday: "It's fantastic we're starting the construction phase and I'm very pleased that Mansells, which has a great reputation for heritage work, is

doing the job for us. We still have £150,000 to go to achieve our target of £2.9million for the project. We would love to have more donations." He added

there were still rooms, display cases and artefacts available to sponsor.

Mansells construction manager Alex Sutherland said the company felt

"proud and privileged" to be involved with the project as a lot of the firm's workers had family connections with the museum and Fort George.

Work begins on £2.9m Fort George museum project

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Alexander Sutherland (left), of Mansell Construction with Major General Seymour Monro, chairman of the museum board at the start of work on the £2.9 million Highlanders' Museum project. Picture: Alison White. Image No. 018626

A MAJOR project to transform the Highlanders' Museum at Fort George has taken a significant step forward with workmen moving on to the site.

Elgin company Mansell Construction Services has been awarded the contract for the £2.9 million facelift to create an interactive heritage centre which is due to open next Easter.

The appeal, launched by Hollywood actor Hugh Grant last year, now needs £150,000 to reach its target.

Peter Guthrie, the museum's development director, is delighted by the start of work this week.

"I have been working on this for three years, during which time it has been building up to the start of the project," he said.

"It has been a long gestation but it is quite gratifying to have the design work and most of the funding together, especially in this economic climate."

He is also pleased that a local company has won the contract. "We had tenders from all over Europe," revealed Mr Guthrie who said that Mansell had been involved in similar projects including the Knockando Woolmill heritage centre in the Spey Valley.

The Highlanders' Museum houses the regimental collections of the Seaforths, Camerons, Lovat Scouts, Queen's Own Highlanders and now The Highlanders.

The main building work is expected to be finished by November after which work will start on the displays and interpretations panels.