



MINUTES OF FULS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING PARISH HALL ST PETER'S AND ST JAMES' CHURCH OF IRELAND

ANTRIM ROAD BELFAST SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2013

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:

Roddy Hegarty, Chairman, welcomed those present to the 2013 at the Select Vestry of the Church. The minister had sent his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting but wished the group well in their endeavours. Roddy said that in his last day as Chairman it was a time for reflection. He advised that two current members of the Executive Committee had stood down due to ill health and he wished Dr Maurna Crozier and Liam Devlin well on behalf of the Federation members.

1. APOLOGIES AND ATTENDANCE LIST – APPENDIX 1

2. MINUTES OF 2012 AGM

The Chairman summarised the main points and gave the meeting a few minutes to peruse. The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the previous AGM. No questions or amendments were raised or requested. The minutes were proposed by Peggy Weir, North Belfast Historical Society and seconded by Pamela Hutchinson, Coleraine Historical Society. Matters arising were on the agenda for the 2013 AGM.

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the secretary's report to this year's AGM. Despite best efforts we were unable to fill the role of treasurer at the last AGM and thereafter Roddy Hegarty took on the role by default. On a positive note, however, I am happy to report that this year we have received an unopposed nomination from West Belfast Historical Society for Bridie Bradley. Bridie will be a very welcome addition to the Executive Committee.

Unfortunately the Executive Committee suffered the loss of Executive members during the year mostly due to ill health. This resulted in the Executive Committee failing to reach a quorum for some meetings and business had to be put back until a later date when this could be achieved. Hopefully this will not recur in the incoming year as we have nominations for some new committee members. Executive committee meetings were held at several locations including Belfast Central Library, Cardinal O'Fiaich Library and Archive, Jury's Hotel and Europa Hotel, Belfast.

FULS membership

Membership remains steady but renewals as ever can be slow to come in thus necessitating time and effort to send reminder e mails and letters. Members run the risk of having no insurance if they have not renewed their membership concurrently.

The ongoing lack of participation in events continues to raise concerns and any suggestions as to how this can be rectified would be very welcome.

Inniskeen seminar

The Celebrating Local History and Folklore seminar at Inniskeen in December 2012 proved to be a very successful event. The seminar was organised jointly by the Federation of Local History Societies and the Federation for Ulster Local Studies. It attracted a large audience of eighty people who were not disappointed by a series of lectures designed to whet the appetite of anyone interested in local history and their community. The location was well chosen and proved a poignant reminder of the great Patrick Kavanagh who had been both born and laid to rest in the village where he grew up. Disappointingly there were more members from FLHS than



FULS. A new promotional leaflet on the Hidden Gems & Forgotten People Project was officially launched by *Irish Times* Journalist Frank McNally.

People and Places Project

This project was launched and completed during this year. Seminars were organised in Dungannon, Omagh, Armagh and Lisnaskea. Johnny Dooher will give a report on the project.

Bath trip

The Bath trip was in April 2013. This was a thoroughly enjoyable trip to Bath and the surrounding area. The trip was organised by Larry Breen of FLHS. The group stayed in Bristol, visited Bath, Stonehenge, Lacock Abbey, Salisbury Cathedral and Tetbury. Friendships were renewed and some new ones made. There is a full report on the Federation website. Thanks to Larry for his usual skill and expertise in organising these field trips. They are not to be missed if you are lucky enough to get in in time!

Dublin Trip:

June 2013 Islandbridge, Arbour Hill and Collins Barracks.

This year the annual joint exchange visit saw representatives from both the Federation of Local History Societies and the Federation for Ulster Local Studies meet in Dublin. There was a very good attendance from both Federations with a total of sixty members sharing the experience with equal representation divided between both groups.

Johnny Dooher on behalf of the FULS thanked the FLHS for hosting the event. He commented on the strength of the co-operation and great friendship that continued between the two Federations. It is important to continue to meet and share our common interest in local history together.

Áras visit

In July 2013, an invitation was received to attend the President of Ireland's Garden Party. Representatives of both the FLHS and the FULS were present at a special Garden Party on July 2nd 2013 in Aras an Uachtarain, Dublin at the invitation of President Michael D Higgins. The FLHS was represented by Dick Ryan, Martina Griffin, Frank Taaffe and Larry Breen and the FULS was represented by Roddy Hegarty, John Dooher, Doreen Mc Bride and John Hulme.

A memorable day concluded with a most interesting guided tour of Aras an Uachtarain. It was a great privilege to be invited along with other voluntary and community groups and again exemplifies the close relationship and friendship existing between both Federations.

Derry Trip – October 2013

The FLHS visit to Derry on the weekend of 11 October 2013 started with a visit to the Ulster American Folk Park. After dinner in the Tower Hotel, Roy Hamilton, local historian, gave a most interesting talk. Roy interspersed the history of Derry with the history of the river Foyle. It was a most entertaining lecture which was enjoyed by all. Saturday saw the coming together of both Federations when the FLHS was joined by twenty six members of the FULS representing societies from around Ulster. The day commenced with a walking tour of the City Walls by award winning tour guide Martin McCrossan. Martin presented a fascinating, thought provoking and interesting history of the City from the walk around the walls. After lunch there was a visit to the newly refurbished Guildhall where we were met by the deputy Mayor. This was followed by a stroll across the Peace Bridge ending up in the newly developed space of Ebrington Square which was where the former Army Barracks had been sited. The event continued into the



Sunday when the group visited the Bogside and then made their way to Grianan Fort before setting off homewards towards Dublin.

Armagh Leuven Links

The ALL project completed this year and the final report was sent to the EU at the end of September. The project has been very successful and has resulted in continued communication between the volunteers who participated both from FULS and the Stad Archief in Leuven.

Hidden Gems, Forgotten People

HGFP is growing from strength to strength. From a FULS perspective this is due to the enthusiasm of John Hulme who seizes potential articles for inclusion at any given opportunity, so be warned!! Please take some time to have a look at the website and you will see how it has developed over the last few years. Details of how to send submissions is clearly documented on the website.

Due North

Johnny Dooher is editor of **Due North**. This year, as before, it has been a struggle to get sufficient articles for the magazine. Discussions have taken place at executive committee meetings as to the future of Due North. This was an important question in the recent questionnaire that was sent out to Societies and feedback and suggestions will be welcomed.

Libraries NI agreement

This agreement has been written to guide and shape the working relationship between Libraries NI and The Federation for Ulster Local Studies (FULS). This was facilitated by Liam Devlin.

Both organisations are committed to an open and transparent working relationship and will declare any interests which impact on the agreement.

Objectives are:

- To implement actively the study of Culture and Heritage in the concept of Lifelong Learning,
- To increase Library use and raise the profile of libraries as learning environments.

This agreement will be reviewed in 2 years.

Conclusion

This has been a difficult year for the Federation. The Executive Committee give of their time voluntarily and have to juggle this with competing priorities. We welcome fresh ideas and energy at any time. Members can be co-opted to the committee any time during the year.

A recent questionnaire has been sent to societies. Analysis of this will be carried out in the near future by myself and John Hulme. We took some time and effort to get this compiled, and look forward to reviewing the replies that we have received to date. If your Society has not yet completed one, or need to have it resent, please let me know.

We keep in contact with members via e mail communications and newsletters. Please let us have an e mail address for you or your society as this is the quickest means of communication nowadays!

Looking forward to 2014 and beyond, in order for the Federation to remain stable we need members to be involved both with the Executive and support its role in keeping the FULS going.



There were no questions raised. The secretary's report was proposed by Bridie Bradley, West Belfast Historical Society and seconded by Maud Hamill, Abbey Historical Society.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Roddy Hegarty presented the financial report for the period ending 31/03/13. He said that the Federation for Ulster Local Studies was governed by the Articles of Association and aimed to provide more than public liability insurance. The Federation aims to promote and further a local study which includes involving and engaging with the membership. It should provide networking opportunities both with membership and attending external events such as engaging with the Federation of Local History Studies.

The chairman advised that the Federation's income was mainly from fees and sales of publications such as *Due North*. Funds were currently in a healthy state and it would be in a position to survive and strive financially.

Current income stands at £24,671 with £10,491 allocated to the Armagh Leuven Links project. Membership remains static with £2,800 being received in fees. Some societies have been lost due to varying reasons but the public liability insurance is the mainstay of the Federation. Many organisations depend on the insurance and it would not be feasible for them to continue if this was not available. Sales of *Due North* provide a steady income but we need more societies to sell copies locally. The Heritage Lottery funding grant will need to be spent in the current financial year.

Expenses included purchase of posters and flyers. Some events were subsidised, postage cost £120 (2nd class post). Most communication is sent via e mail.

For the Armagh Leuven Links project the EU held back £2000 which has now been received that the project has been fully signed off and was a successful project.

The Heritage Lottery Fund for the People and Places project included funding for pop up stands, sundries and hiring of venues to run the sessions. £10,000 was received but less than £3000 spent.

The Chairman commended the financial statement to the meeting. No questions were raised. The statement was proposed by Trevor Adams, Coleraine Historical Society and seconded by Helen Meehan, Donegal Historical Society and Individual Member.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS:

Mr Roddy Hegarty said that the AGM was a necessary evil and highlighted its importance to the Federation membership. He said that this was his last day as chairman and he wanted to reflect over the last 2 years.

Forty years ago in 1974 the Federation was formed there was a different local studies environment. There is now a more positive environment and working with the Federation of Local History Societies has been one of the successes. Roddy welcomed Anne and Larry to the AGM in Belfast and thanked them for making the journey today.

Local History is an amateur pursuit for some individuals. Some Professors of History mime and steal the ground of local history societies. Societies are more sophisticated nowadays and look after the needs of their own membership by organising seminars, printing journals and books dedicated to local history. Roddy said that he had his own personal struggles over the last 24 months and found it difficult to do justice to the role of chairman. He was grateful for the support of the current Executive Committee over this period.



The chairman would welcome new members to the Executive Committee to help support and educate people and societies to methodically research their local area and its history. He said that the connection with the Public Records Office Northern Ireland had been somewhat disjointed in recent times. It is important to re-engage with PRONI, museums and libraries. He said it was heartening to see the room full and hoped that we could focus on positive elements. He asked those societies who received the recent questionnaire to complete and return as soon as possible. The results of this will influence what FULS needs to do in the next year and representation on this year's Executive Committee is imperative.

Roddy invited Helen Rankin to pay tribute to Mrs Doreen Corcoran who passed away after a long illness since the last year's AGM. Helen said that Doreen was a great friend since 1960. She epitomised local history and was great ambassador for the whole of the island of Ireland. It was a great privilege to have met her. Doreen was a wonderful character, a great companion and she missed her dreadfully. (Note the tribute article in Due North 2013 by Pat Devlin).

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mr Johnny Dooher, Strabane History Society - Chairman

Mr John Hulme, Carrickfergus and District Historical
Society – Vice-chairman

Mrs Bridgeen Rutherford, New Buildings and District Archaeological and Historical Society -
Secretary

Miss Bridie Bradley, West Belfast Historical Society - Treasurer

Mr Roddy Hegarty, ex-officio

Mr Pat Devlin, Ulster History Circle

Mr William Devlin, Trinity College Dublin, Association of NI Mrs Aine Ni Dhuibhne, County
Donegal Historical Society Mr David Cook, Loughbrickland Historical Society

7. REPORT ON JOINT FULS//FLHS COMMITTEE:

John Hulme provided the report on the Joint Federation working. He said that this was the most rewarding for him and said that it was a pleasure working with Larry and Anne. He said that the members had enjoyed the various trips over the last few years and the opportunity to meet such interesting people and make new friends. He was already looking forward to the Scotland trip next year.

John spoke of the Hidden Gems, Forgotten People project and thanked Pat Devlin for his editing of this. Progress was currently being made over the 9 counties with some potential contributions from Co Fermanagh.

INCOMING CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:

Johnny Dooher took the chair and thanked John Hulme for this report. He went on to say that new officers were needed for the Executive Committee. Co-options were still available and these could make a valuable difference. Five co-options are available to anyone who can contribute to the working of the Federation Executive Committee. The Federation belongs to Societies and it is important to keep this going.

8. PEOPLE AND PLACES PROJECT REVIEW

Johnny spoke of the People and Places project which had been financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The funding was given to enable FULS to help local groups to develop local history



studies. Six groups participated in the beginning and 3 participated right through to the end of the project period. Those groups who participated fully were very enthusiastic. The U3A in Armagh looked at the development of the streets of Old Armagh. The Lisnaskea group looked at development from the 1800s upwards with a 3D model of the 1900s and progress since then. This group worked with the local primary school. Banbridge group examined the Old Coach Road from Banbridge to Hillsborough taking account of the whole area from 1700 upwards. Their aim is to be able to present this as a digital display.

The learning from this project was how groups can learn from one another and how they can research at a local level. Exemplars of this will be published in a future edition of Due North.

9. INDIVIDUAL SOCIETY UPDATES ON ACTIVITIES: Ulster History Circle

Pat Devlin remarked that Doreen Corcoran was a good friend of their group and was always there and had a very calming effect on the group.

The Ulster History Circle put Blue Plaques up in public places. Currently there are approx. 160 plaques with at least 2 nominations being received per month. Funding is always tight but they hope that the International Fund for Ireland project will be beneficial next year. 12 plaques have already been put up this year with a further 4 being unveiled in December 2013. He advised the group to visit the Ulster History Circle website. <http://www.ulsterhistory.co.uk/>

Abbey Historical Society

Maud Hamill told of the restoration of the White House, Newtownabbey which has recently been restored and is available to rent for exhibitions and meetings. Abbey Historical Society have their 20th anniversary this year and meet every 3 weeks May to September. They have an annual dinner in May and plan a trip to Donegal in the near future.

Coleraine Historical Society

Jennifer Cunningham thanked the office bearers as it is difficult to get people to take on the roles. She said that Peggy and Dan McLaughlin founders of Coleraine Historical Society both passed away this year.

She said that it had been a busy year for Coleraine with the 400 year Charter commemorations. They had a trip to Bellaghy and Ballyscullion House. They have just published the 20th edition of the *Bann Disc* with the facility to purchase this on line now being available on the website.

FEDERATION OF LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES REMARKS:

Larry Breen spoke on behalf of the Federation of Local History Societies. He said that it was pleasure for both himself and Anne to attend today. He thanked Roddy and Johnny for their kind words and the successful relationship between both Federations over the last few years. He says that communication was essential. The success of the trips to Arbour Hill, Derry and the Aras Visit were evident in strengthening the communication between both Federations. Larry wished the Federation good luck in 2014 and looked forward to attending next year's AGM.

Following the business of the AGM there was a presentation on:

Local History publications and the Northern Ireland Publications Resource- Joan Crooks, NIPR

The Rise and Fall of Belfast Castle – Mr John Gray, former librarian Linenhall Library, Belfast.



Appendix 1

ATTENDED	SOCIETY
George Musgrave	Dromara History Group
Helen Rankin	Carrickfergus & District Historical Society FLAME – the Gasworks Museum of Ireland
Lorraine Shearer	Abbey Historical Society
Maud Hamill	Abbey Historical Society
George Elliott	Carrickfergus & District Historical Society
Jim Lemon	Saintfield Heritage Society
Pat Devlin	Ulster History Circle
Trevor Adams	Coleraine Historical Society
Pamela Hutchison	Coleraine Historical Society
George Rutherford	New Buildings & District Archaeological and Historical Society
Bridgeen Rutherford	New Buildings & District Archaeological and Historical Society
Jane Edwards	Antrim & District Historical Society
Katie Orme	Antrim & District Historical Society
Josephine Herbison	Antrim & District Historical Society
Matthew Herbison	Antrim & District Historical Society
Peggy Weir	North Belfast Historical Society
Daphne McClements	North Belfast Historical Society
Patsy Rainey	North Belfast Historical Society
Johnny Dooher	Strabane Historical Society
Margaret Cartwright	North Belfast Historical Society
Joan Crooks	NIPR, The National Collections of Northern Ireland Publications
Aine Ni Dhuibhne	Co Donegal Historical Society
Helen Meehan	Co Donegal Historical Society and individual member
Jennifer Cunningham	Coleraine Historical Society
Rosemary Bunting	Lisburn Historical Society
John Hulme	Carrickfergus & District Historical Society
Roddy Hegarty	North Belfast Historical Society

APOLOGIES	SOCIETY
George Beattie	Banbridge Historical Society
Finny O'Sullivan	Lisburn Historical Society
David Cook	Loughbrickland Historical Society