

**FEDERATION FOR ULSTER LOCAL STUDIES**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**WALSH'S HOTEL, MAGHERA**  
**SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2018**

**Introduction**

Forty-seven delegates and guests attended the Meeting; Names and Societies are listed in Annex 1.

Before the meeting began the company was entertained by Hanna Ferguson, an All-Ireland Scor Winner, on her guitar, with a fine rendition of *The Maid of Culmore*. She was roundly applauded for starting the meeting on such a pleasing note.

James Armour, Chairman of the Maghera Historical Society welcomed the AGM to Maghera. Extolling the virtues of the town he suggested several tourist attractions and recommended a visit to the Seamus Heaney Homeplace in nearby Bellaghy.

Johnny Dooher, Federation Chairman, thanked James for his welcome and welcomed the Chairman of the Mid-Ulster District Council, Cllr. Sean McPeake, the delegates and guests, and Padraig Laffan, Chairman of the Federation of Local History Societies, and his wife Moira. There were 90-odd Society members, so this was an opportunity to put names to faces. He invited Cllr McPeake to address the meeting.

Cllr McPeake said as Chairman of the Council it was a great pleasure to welcome the Federation to Maghera. He could see there was a busy Agenda. As historical, archaeological, architectural and folklore groups they had a great role in studying and promoting our local heritage. The work of the Federation was important in studying where we came from and sharing this with the people. The Council was keen to help promote local history study through educational programmes and events at historical sites. He recommended a visit to the Seamus Heaney Homeplace. The Exhibition was very worthwhile – a fantastic look back, not just at Seamus Heaney but also the land and history where he came from. He thanked James Armour for the great work being done here including the Townlands Project in partnership with the Council. He wished to Federation all success in future.

The Chairman was presented with copies of the 2018 and 2019 of Due North.

The formal business of the Meeting then began.

**1. Apologies**

Patrick Cross – Lecale and Downe Historical Society

Mons. Raymond Murray – Federation Vice-Chairman

**2. Minutes of 2017 AGM**

The Secretary, Patrick Devlin, presented the minutes of the 2017 AGM. He said that although he had written them, he now realised that he had omitted to include the two-minute silence and reading of the verse from 'The Fallen' that was mentioned in the second paragraph of Item 1. He proposed the insertion of the following words –

*It being 11.00 a.m., Liz Hoy of the Cullybackey Historical Society, read the verse from 'The Fallen'. This was followed by a two-minute silence.*

The amendment was seconded by Finny O'Sullivan, Bronte Society

The amended minutes were proposed by the Secretary, seconded by Muriel Bell, individual member and agreed.

### **3. Secretary's Report**

The Report had been circulated with the AGM papers to allow members advance information about events since the last AGM. They are attached as Annex 2.

The Secretary formally proposed adoption of the Report. This was seconded by Robert Guthrie, Roe Valley Historical Society and agreed. There were no questions or comments.

### **5. Trustees' Report and Statement of Accounts**

Dealing with the Trustees' Report part of the Report, the Secretary explained that this Report was a requirement by Companies House and the Charities Commission. Unlike the Secretary's Report, which covered the period between the 2017 AGM and this one, the Trustees' report was for the Financial Year 2017-18, from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. It followed a standard pattern –

- Names and service periods of the Directors over the period, showing the dates of service.
- The structure, Governance and Management arrangements; including the way in which the Directors arrange how business is handled.
- The Federation's objectives and activities in the period and the strategies developed to achieve these
- A record of the Trustees attendance, and
- Performance and achievements; broken down into membership service and working with others

The Treasurer, Bridie Bradley, dealing with the Statement of Accounts prepared by the Independent Examiner, explained that pages 10 and 11 set out the overall income and expenditure for the year –

- Income - £15,615
- Expenditure - £10,615
- Surplus - £5,000

Page 12, Balance Sheet, showed the total assets (Bank balance) as –

- £24,117

Page 13, Income showed increases in

- Membership - £428
- Pl Insurance - £1864
- Publications - £102

The £3,106 income from Excursions and Events related to the Kilcronaghan Seminar and the aborted Joint trip to Armagh in July 2017.

The reduction in income from Excursions and Events, from £25,583 to £3106 was due to the late receipt of income and grants for the Battlefields Trip, jointly with FLHS, in September 2016.

In relation to Expenditure the position was as follows -

- Travel Costs, increase - £314. Expenditure refers only to costs incurred on Federation business, on receipt of claims and relevant receipts
- Office Expenses and Postage – reduced by £1,150, due to repayments to members for the cancelled Joint Armagh Trip and the late lodgment of cheques from the Wales Trip in the

previous year. Also includes the room hire and catering at the Spring Seminar and the 2017 AGM.

- Publications – increase £804. Refers to the set-up, typesetting and printing costs of Due North
- Other Expenses – reduction of £100. Comprised of small gifts to speakers at Federation events; e.g. launches of Hidden Gems & Forgotten Gems Exhibitions, Presentations to two Societies who had reached significant Anniversaries of their founding – 50 and 70 years respectively.

Page 14, Governance Costs – unchanged from last year.

The Treasurer recorded her thanks to Roisin Shanks, the Independent Examiner, for her work on the Accounts, and for her unfailing courtesy.

The Report was adopted on the proposal of Matt Herbison, Antrim & District Historical Society, seconded by Tony McGurk

## **6. Chairman's Address**

The Chairman thanked the Secretary and Treasurer for the detailed and well-presented reports. These helped to provide for the record the work that has been done over the past 12 months to help ensure the smooth running of the Executive Committee and of the Federation in general. But of course, this was only a part of the work of the committee and much work was done at committee and sub-committee level that ensured a relatively smooth programme of activities relevant for the ongoing and future work of the Federation. He thanked all the members of the Executive committee for their work in planning the way forward and helping to ensure the smoother functioning of the programme.

Following on from last year's AGM there was a searching review of how the Federation functioned and an evaluation of how its working could be enhanced for the future and this had been substantially progressed. The Articles of Association and rules for the operation of FULS had been subject to close scrutiny and changes that were considered necessary were recommended; hopefully these would be approved today. Other areas examined and discussed included expanding co-operation with other groups and organisations with largely similar aims to those of the Federation, widening the readership and society ownership of Due North, upgrading the website to help the promotion of Federation activities and enhance its value to the membership and the wider local studies community.

The obvious discontent and divisions at last year's AGM persuaded the incoming committee that a thorough review of operational processes and procedures was both necessary and vital to help put the organisation on a more professional and harmonious footing. Advice was sought from NICVA and also from the Charity Commission on governance matters that were designed to move to a clearly defined system of operational effectiveness and harmonious working relationships while allowing scope for differences of opinion on the way forward. One such innovative area was the acceptance of a Trustee Code of Conduct to ensure that agreed positions can be paramount while also allowing scope for resolving internal differences.

Considerable discussion had taken place on how the executive committee could enhance the Federation and its role in the preservation and development of local studies in Ulster. Part of that would be in harmony and cooperation with the Federation of Local History Societies in the Republic of Ireland and he welcomed the Chairman of that Federation, Pdraig Laffan and his wife

Moir, who were here today. He had memories of working with Pádraig from the early 1990s and no doubt some others could go even further back in remembering the shared workings of the two Federations. It was worth reminding ourselves that only last week we had celebrated that ongoing cooperation in the Hidden Gems and Forgotten People project when an exhibition was opened at Carrickfergus Museum, with welcome enthusiasm being displayed towards this cross border programme. In this era of Commemorations and Centenaries it was important that the two Federations work together in examining the potentially difficult subject areas of Independence, Partition, and Civil War, with the often-diverse differentiations and evaluations of these subjects. There would be scope for working with other groups in trying to develop empathies and understandings of a range of subject matters that have helped shape who we are and how we respond to our present-day world. It was a challenge that we should not neglect.

It is not only the members of the Executive Committee that makes the Federation function in safeguarding and developing local studies. Every local branch had its officers and workers who initiate and carry out programmes of research and delivery and help rediscover forgotten aspects of the past. And so, our thanks went out to all those who make the Federation such a vital part of the local studies scene by their often-unsung dedication and work at the local level.

The Chairman wanted to pose some questions about our organisation and how well or not that it operates. It was worth asking perhaps how the aims of the founders of the Federation over 40 years ago were being addressed by the membership of today? How far do we reflect the sense of interaction and need for support and interaction that must have activated the early founders? How many societies still existed largely in isolation, though ostensibly part of a province wide structure of groups that was designed to be welcoming and supportive. How far do the local groups feel that connection and support? Over the past years the executive committee had sought to widen and deepen the sense of connectedness, and in regular newsletters, internet postings and email contact, had attempted to bridge the gap between the local and the centre. Yet in many ways it appeared to be very much a one-way communication with many society secretaries acting only as information receivers - often seen as personal communication rather than them as distributors to the other society members. Again, many local projects and publications were organised at local level and successfully carried out but without attempts made to publicize their undoubted success through the wider Federation network. The successful local project could very often be a very useful exemplar to other groups seeking to involve their communities.

There was a similar situation as regards publication. Several societies regularly produce local journals or short booklets and help in raising awareness of the richness of local heritage and often these could be very useful stimuli and examples to other societies or groups seeking to expand on their research into the locality. But too often the experience and the potential leadership was copyrighted for home use only and opportunities for enhancing connections lost. The Federation has produced a journal from its inception under different guises and for much of its earlier years had two issues per year. Over the past ten years that has been reduced to one issue and the pool of available contributors had gradually reduced. And this reduction was happening at a time when there has been much active research into various aspects of heritage studies. Why had the number of contributors lessened? Once again was it down to poor communication between the societies and the Federation? A survey was carried out three years ago into local society attitudes to Due North and there seemed a limited awareness of the role of publications in the local history world. Ideas for remedying the situation would be very welcome.

These annual general meetings were useful for exchanging information and developing contacts and there would be an opportunity later today for societies to tell one another, as well as the executive, of significant ideas or events that they had experience of. It was perhaps worth posing the question - were there enough planned opportunities for member societies and executive committee members to meet together throughout the year. The annual seminar this year was held at

Mossley Mill Newtownabbey and addressed issues like Women Suffrage, how to access Heritage Lottery grants, preserve local publications and plan for forthcoming events in the Decade of Commemorations. The topics were relevant, the venue appeared quite central and the cost was minimal. And yet an attendance of under 30 people was a poor return from an association of over 90 societies. It would be useful to learn why such events do not draw more people from the large numbers potentially available so that future events could perhaps be modified to help make them more accessible to the membership. There must be some way of persuading people to come together periodically to share views, experiences and suggestions and make their membership of societies and Federations more meaningful and rewarding.

The Chairman hoped he was not being too critical but felt he had to challenge members to help make their experience of belonging to a well-established Federation more rewarding and meaningful to them and to their fellow local study enthusiasts. Too often we took these organisations and events for granted and yet they might easily fade away. Would it matter if there was no Federation or even no local society? Would members lose out? Would the study and dissemination of local history fade away from local society and become the preserve of the historians, journalists or writers. He asked members to address such issues sometime soon - either in the seclusion of their own homes, in meeting in their local hall or in conversation or Facebook communication with their friends. And not to forget to share their views with the executive committee and with the wider Federation.

Before he finished, the Chairman paid tribute to two very active leaders in the local history scene who had passed away during the last year - Dr Eull Dunlop from Ballymena had been a very regular contributor to the Federation journals and to the lecture programmes of local societies; and Dr Brian Trainor, a vice president of the Federation and an innovator in developing contacts between the local societies and government bodies as well as carrying boxes of source material from PRONI out to the societies throughout the country. He was sure that local societies elsewhere had lost valuable support members during the year; so, he suggested that the meeting should pause briefly to remember those who had helped build up this vibrant local studies scene.

The meeting stood in silence for a short period

## **7. Proposed amendment to the Articles of Association**

The Secretary, introducing the proposed amendments, said that while it might seem to be a boring subject, in fact the Articles underpin the legality of all that we do and without them there would be anarchy.

The Articles were not cast in stone; they needed to be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they reflected contemporary conditions. They had been changed several times in the past – the last being in 2010. That had been a minor change. However, after what happened at AGM 2017, when the Articles were quoted and misquoted, the Executive Committee commissioned a complete review. The aims were to -

- verify that they remained fit for purpose,
- eliminate redundant terms and identify any matters that needed updating, particularly on the moderate focus on corporate governance,
- ensure that the voluntary nature of the Federation's management structure was fully reflected in the articles, and
- to make the text gender neutral.

The Management Committee spent many hours, over many meetings, going through the articles in detail. In the end, despite the amount of detail in the proposed amendments, the articles, in the main,

had stood the test of time. The proposed changes are therefore the distillation of that detailed process of analysis, discussion and debate. The format of the proposed amendment quotes the article, spells out the proposed amendment and explains the reasoning for the change.

Most of the proposals were minor 'tidying up' issues; to ensure consistency, add minor clarifications etc. There were only three major issues identified for change

- amendment to Articles 7, 28a, 31 and 37, to provide for matters relating to the AGM and the nomination for Officers and the Executive Committee to be sent to the 'Federation' rather than the 'Secretary',
- making the text 'gender neutral'. This involved, in 36 of the articles, in every place where they were encountered, changing the terms 'he', 'him', and 'his' to 'he and she', 'him and her', and 'his and hers', and
- a new article 49, requiring the Executive Committee to draw up a Code of Conduct for its members reflecting the modern focus on good governance advocated by Companies House and the Charities Commission NI.

Roddy Hegarty, Individual Member, commended the work of the Committee on the work done. He suggested that the Code of Conduct be presented to the AGM for absolute clarity in case it might become too restrictive.

The Secretary said that the Executive Committee had already developed and implemented a Trustees Code of Conduct. It had not been plucked out of thin air but was in line with best practice recommended by Companies House and the Charities Commission. It was the intention to place it on the website for public access. We had to get on with business and could not allow the position to continue that we had been in last year where, for six months, the business of the Executive Committee had been completely disrupted by members who were not prepared to accept collective decisions.

Adoption of the amendments was agreed on the proposal of Roddy Hegarty, seconded by Matt Herbison.

### **Election of Officers and Committee**

#### *Officers*

The Chairman suggested that, as there was no contest in the elections for the Officers, they should be collectively elected. This was proposed by Finny O'Sullivan, Bronte Society, seconded by Sheena McClure, West Tyrone Society and accepted by the meeting.

The Officers elected were -

Chairman – John Dooher, Strabane History Society

Vice-Chairman – Josephine Herbison, Antrim & District Historical Society

Secretary – Patrick Devlin, Lecale & Downe Historical Society

Treasurer – Bridie Bradley, West Belfast Historical Society

#### *Executive Committee*

The Chairman noted that only three nominations for the Committee had been received. He proposed to take nominations from the floor. The only conditions were that nominees had to be members of a

member society or an individual member, that they had to be present and commit to serving in the position.

There were two nominations

Joseph McCoy, Maghera Historical Society. Proposed by Carol Collier, seconded by Annette Rafferty

Katie Orme, Antrim & District Historical Society. Proposed by Josephine Herbison, seconded by Bridie Bradley.

Both nominees were present and agreed to serve.

As there were no further nominations, all five of the nomination were agreed.

The Executive Committee has the following members -

James Armour, Maghera Historical Society

Patrick Bonner, County Donegal Historical Society

John Hulme, Carrickfergus and District Historical Society

Joseph McCoy, Maghera Historical Society

Katie Orme, Antrim and District Historical Society

#### **8. Appointment of Auditor**

Bridie Bradley proposed the appointment of Roisin Shanks for the incoming year. This was agreed.

#### **9. Election of vice-President**

The Chairman then moved the resolution to appoint Angelique Day as Vice-President.

*Pursuant of Article 82.2. of the Articles of Association, The Executive Committee recommends the appointments of Angelique Day as Vice-President of the Federation*

The Chairman said that Angelique had been involved for many years in local studies. He recalled her work on the Ordnance Survey Memoirs project and had the opportunity while working under her direction and seeing the wealth of material involved. She had also been involved in other local study organisations. It was with great pleasure that he proposed her for the office of Vice-President.

The resolution was seconded by Finny O'Sullivan, Bronte Society and adopted by the meeting.

Angelique thanked the meeting for the appointment and looked forward to the role.

#### **10. Welcome to Chair of the Federation of Local History Societies**

At this point the Chairman invited Padraig Laffan, Chairman of the Federation of Local History Societies, to address the meeting.

Padraig said how pleased he and his wife were for the great welcome they had received this morning. It was 20 years since he was last Chairman and he had been persuaded to take it up again because of the recent difficulties between the Federations. He had been advocating the return to the previous good relations so the Executive Committee to undertake this task. He recalled that through all the troubles of the 1980s and 90s and afterwards, the two Federations had managed to undertake several joint projects and kept the integration going. When the joint North/South visits started half of the coach passengers had never been across the border. People came down to Dublin or up to

Belfast and some were nervous at first. That had been cracked. A lot of people had said that it was difficult, but progress was made. Occasionally things could get a bit fraught, but each had given the other space, so as to continue the relationship. In October a meeting in Dublin with Johnny and Pat was very positive and he thought they were back on course to resuming the mutually beneficial cooperation.

Padraig, noting that the next item on the Agenda were Society Reports, mentioned the similar item on the FLHS Agenda called 'Society Spake' where societies gave a short report of some project they had during the year and thought other Societies might be interested in. To avoid repetition, a PowerPoint page was prepared in advance with standard information such as; Society Name, number of members, fees, lectures and topics, outings and publications. The sessions are very useful as they get people interacting.

Padraig went on to talk about the need to preserve local historical society records and research material. Many Societies had been set up many years ago and unless action was taken most of this material could be lost. He told of the experience of one of the members, Liam Clare, a great historian, who realised that his papers needed to be archived, and had arranged with one of the repositories in Dublin to accept them when he was ready to hand them over. When he later went to arrange the handover with them, they repeated what a lot of repositories are also saying, that because of the recession their staffing had been reduced, they were now busy digitizing what they already had, and could no longer accept great bundles of paper from amateurs, and suddenly there was no place to deposit them. As a result of this the Federation had arranged a Seminar in Dún Laoghaire dedicated to the topic of archives and how people should prepare their personal archives. It was a great session and it was now planned to bring the Seminar around the country.

He thanked the Federation for the invitation and wished it well for the future. The Chairman presented Padraig and presented him with a copy of the new edition of *Due North*.

## **11. Speaker on the Seamus Heaney Centre**

Booked for later, the session was advanced to accommodate the speaker, Maria McCann-Russell.

Maria said the Seamus Heaney was born and reared in Bellaghy, just a short drive from here. His family were farmers, attended Anahorish Primary School and boarding school in Derry City before going on to QUB. In 1995 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. His poetry is known throughout the world because it is relatable to everyone. He wrote about the ordinary people; his parents and family, where he came from, but he made them extraordinary. He was an educator, teaching in some of the most prestigious Universities throughout the world, including Oxford, Berkley and Harvard. He remained loved and cherished throughout Ireland.

The Home Place is situated in Bellaghy. Opened in 2016, it is run by the Mid Ulster District Council. It is called Home Place because it is close to where he was born and raised, and which he chose as his final resting place. Although he spent most of his life in Dublin, Bellaghy is where he called home.

The Exhibition itself is a very emotional experience. To date visitors had come from 46 countries, with many countries delivering media events.

Maria then gave an illustrated tour of the Exhibition Centre, taking the audience through each of the areas, describing the personal interactive nature of much of it e.g. seeing and hearing Seamus reciting his poetry, memorabilia e.g. his duffel coat and his school desk; voices from around the world describing what his poetry meant to them; his brother, neighbours, schoolchildren etc. ; Bono, Bill Clinton on how he had inspired them. There was an exact replica of the annex in his Dublin home with



manuscripts and videos with his family; a creation zone for children, with permanent Education Officers to help draw out their talents. There was a sensory garden with blackberries, turf and a functional well. A café serving locally-produced food served all day. Finally, Seamus' grave was a short walk away.

The Exhibition was permanent event; with an all-year-round Events Programme involving world-renowned poets, writers, book launches, actors and week-end theatre. Thousands of people had attended the Exhibition. The Centre had yet to find a single person who had written to Seamus who had not received an answer. His wife Marie had said that the postman came twice a week with satchels of letters and Seamus answered all of them.

To finish up, Maria played a video of Liam Neeson, a huge fan of Seamus, reading from some of his poems.

The talk was well received by the audience. The Chairman thanked Maria and encouraged visits to the Centre.

## **12. Society Reports**

There were several contributions from Societies, as follows -

1. Matt Herbison, Antrim & District Historical Society, gave a short exposition on a project to record reminiscences since the society's formation was being collected in time for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; the compilation of a book 'Antrim in the Trenches' about people from the greater Antrim area who served in WW1; a number of society visits to a variety of historical locations, and the voice recording of the memoirs of their oldest member, since deceased.
2. Patrick Bonner, County Donegal Historical Society; the Society had been operational for 70 years; it published an annual journal; there was a schools programme, currently being revamped; a project was underway to digitize and republish all the early annuals, that were very hard to find now; identified a need to address the issues of age and gender in the membership.
3. Graham Mawhinney, Ballinascreen Historical Society; Society in existence almost 40 years; doesn't publish a journal but produces at least one publication each year, currently on No 43; in last year has been concentrating on townlands, starting with own parish with 38 townlands; then publishing one for the neighbouring Parish of Kilcronaghan with 22 townlands, and a longer-term series of Parishes right around Slieve Gallon.
4. Pat McGuigan, Strabane History Society; the Society had been focusing for several years now on researching the economic, social and community impact of the events of WW1 on the town and surrounding area, the main sources being the two local newspapers. Two Booklets had already been published and the third would be out in a month. Local response had been enthusiastic. There was a need to identify a suitable archive for the voluminous material collected.
5. Maud Hamill, Abbey Historical Society, 25 years established; in last year undertook a 20 strong historical trip to Scotland, a trip to Collon House and Monasterboice and the Cooley Peninsula. Not produced any publications. Involved in the restoration of the Old Bawn of 1680 through the White House Preservation Trust and had a Museum there until it had to be dismantled; most of the exhibits being widely gifted to other societies and institutions.
6. Jane Woods, Donaghadee Historical Society; two projects in year, both now written up in Due North. Firstly, to remember the 90 men from the area who died in WW1, developed a field of poppies, one for each man, with name attached, prepared by the membership, displayed at the commemoration, with family members attending and being given the

- poppy. A booklet prepared by Barry Niblock, a historian of both world wars, remembered each man and said something about him; where he grew up, his parents, siblings, children. Also planted a memorial oak tree that could live for 400 years. The second event was a 'Tell us your story' aimed at people who had lived Donaghadee all their lives and others had come later; age range 60-90; great turn-out at event in June; questions about their childhood, games they played, what was school like, what Christmas was like and what did they get for Christmas.
7. Rosemary Bunting, Lisburn Historical Society; visit to Seamus Heaney Centre, great experience; 80 members, meet monthly; on 22 November celebrated 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, meet in Lisburn Museum. In April visited Paris to celebrate the bi-centenary of Sir Richard Wallace's birth. Had an interesting talk from Johnny McNee who had been involved in digging up the Spitfire from the Inishowen peninsula
  8. Roddy Hegarty, O'Fiaich Library and Archive, regarding the comments on archiving materials, said that Monica Devlin, widow of the late Liam Devlin, former Federation Secretary, had contacted him for advice. Liam had been researching the Irish College in Paris for many years and had amassed a great amount of material. This was now in the O'Fiaich Library & Archive and was being cataloged and should be available next year for consultation.
  9. James Armour said that the Maghera Society had been formed in 2014 – it had three branches and 92 members. Currently undertaking a townland project involving 6 or 8 townlands around Maghera; identifying residents and recording their stories, field names and land use in the 1900s. Also, a Famine Trail taking in a Famine Graveyard and Walsh's Hotel that had distributed food and retained some records and artefacts of the Famine. Three thousand people attended the Agricultural show this year raising funds for the Society. Will publish a short book, written by Sean Henry from the Mid-Ulster District Council. Have published four magazines and six other books.

### **Conference End**

The Chairman declared the formal part of the AGM closed and asked the new Vice-President to address the group.

### **Guest Speaker**

Angelique said it was a pleasure to address the meeting. She paid tribute to the late Brian Trainor, a pioneer in publishing the Ordnance Survey Memoirs. He had helped many local societies to transcribe their local memoirs and had published the Parish Register of Antrim Town with a useful introduction showing the different sections of the OS archive in Dublin, where most of the papers of the OS, produced during the mapping of Ireland in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, were stored. They were inaccessible to NI historians, until a major initiative involving the Institute of Irish Studies in Queens, PRONI, the Royal Irish Academy and the National Library, together with Phoenix Park, which contained most of the records, came to a working arrangement to provide access.

Angelique had worked on the records for a long time, on the Memoirs of Counties Cavan and Monaghan. The Memoirs stopped in 1840. The accounts of the parishes, written to go with the maps, preceded the Valuation of the whole country. The maps went from Barony to Parish and townland levels. The Duke of Wellington approved the survey in 1824. The time period was between 1830, when the Royal Engineers started writing statistical reports, and 1840. Civilians were employed on some aspects from 1826. As the survey was planned to start in the north, Counties Antrim and Londonderry had the most material. In 1837 the memoir on The City and Liberties of Co Derry which was the parish of Templemore was published, an enormous volume of material. It was too big to be repeated with the result the general memoir scheme was halted in July 1840, leaving many parishes such as the Cathedral of Armagh, incomplete, without a memoir. For

those that were lucky enough to have a memoir they provide a remarkable view of the country at that period, just before the Famine.

The Memoirs, apart from the statistical material compiled by the soldiers, devised by Lieutenant Larcom, was structured in three main ways; a section on name and natural features, a section on topography and a section on social economy which included masses of observations about how people lived – an anthropological insight into the Ireland of the time. Also, material on the social economy produced huge volumes of statistical information. Larcom's main objective was to collect as much information as possible for the benefit of every class in society. To him it was an improving project and would result in the effective use of the material by government and other leader in society resulting in more effective decisions in public policy matters.

When the Memoirs stopped Larcom went on to a distinguished career as Secretary of State for Ireland. He knew how valuable the Memoirs were, so he made sure that the records remained there, and all his correspondence was left to the National Library of Ireland.

There were 22,000 papers describing parishes in the north that had not been published. The project began under prof. Ronnie Buchanan and continued under the direction of Prof. Brian Walker. Unused material from other authors was available, including the great scholar John O'Donovan researching place names. George Petrie was a great artist who contributed to the Memoir and wrote some of the material. There were over 1,600 drawings in the Memoirs.

Angelique went on to mention other contributors to the Memoirs including 'informers', local people who contributed information about monuments in the landscape.

The meeting enthusiastically applauded the presentation and the Chairman thanked Angelique for her excellent address.

### **Launch of Due North**

Vice President Prof. Brian Walker launched the 2018 edition of Due North, which he said was a credit to Johnny Dooher and an acknowledgement of the hard discipline of producing an annual journal. It looked well and read well. Irish Historical Studies, which has the most demanding level of scholarship in the world of Irish Studies would be proud of this journal. He commented on some of the articles including one from Keith Haynes about the *Irish Fishing Fleet* that was not about Ardglass or Portavogie, but Madras and Delhi. It referred to Irish girls who went to India in the nineteenth century in search of husbands in the Colonial Service and the Army!

### **Conclusion**

The Chairman thanked all who had come along today and participated in the discussions, Dr Brian Turner, President, Vice-President Brian Walker for launching Due North and our new Vice-President, Angelique Day and Padraig Laffan for his address. He declared the AGM closed.

Attendees then made their way to lunch before visiting Gortead Cottage, the ancestral home of Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress 1774 to 1789.

**Appendix 1  
ATTENDEES**

NAME	SOCIETY
Maud Hamill	Abbey Historical Society
Lorraine Shearer	Abbey Historical Society
David Smyth	Abbey Historical Society
Jane Edwards	Antrim & District Historical Society
Josie Herbison	Antrim & District Historical Society
Matt Herbison	Antrim & District Historical Society
Katie Orme	Antrim & District Historical Society
Graham Mawhinney	Ballinascreen Historical Society
Finny O'Sullivan	Bronte Society
George Elliott	Carrickfergus & District Historical Society
John Hulme	Carrickfergus & District Historical Society
Ernest Hunter	Coleraine Wildlife Trust
Patrick Boner	County Donegal Historical Society
Angelique Day	County Donegal Historical Society
Aine NiDhuibhne	County Donegal Historical Society
Fergus Hanna Bell	Donaghadee Historical Society
Julie Maxwell	Donaghadee Historical Society
Jane Woods	Donaghadee Historical Society
Patrick Devlin	Lecale & Down Historical Society
Rosemary Bunting	Lisburn Historical Society
James Armour	Maghera Historical Society
Jean Dunne	Maghera Historical Society
Joseph McCoy	Maghera Historical Society
Raymond McNamee	Maghera Historical Society
Pat Rafferty	Maghera Historical Society
Annette Rafferty	Maghera Historical Society
Martin McKeown	Maghera Historical Society
Will Gribben	Maghera Historical Society
Tony McGurk	Maghera Historical Society
Elizabeth Shields	Maghera Historical Society
John Marquies	Maghera Historical Society
Ann Brennan	Maghera Historical Society

Carol Collier	Maghera Historical Society
Robert Guthrie	Roe Valley Historical Society
John Dooher	Strabane History Society
Pat McGuigan	Strabane History Society
Joseph O’Kane	Strabane History Society
Evelyn Caldwell	Ulster Local History Trust
Sheena McClure	West Tyrone Historical Society
John Bradley	West Tyrone Historical Society
Muriel Bell	Individual member
Mildred Moore	Individual member
Roddy Hegarty	Individual member
Padraig Laffan	Federation of Local History Societies
Moira Laffan	Federation of Local History Societies
Dr Brian Turner	President FULS
Prof. Brian Walker	Vice-President FULS

## ANNEX 2

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

#### Introduction

This is the first time that the Secretary's Report to the Annual General Meeting has been issued to members with the other papers prior to the meeting.

In its review of corporate governance, the Executive Committee determined that the text of the Secretary's Report must be agreed by it before being delivered at the AGM. In addition, instead of being read out at the AGM, the report will be sent to the membership with the rest of the AGM papers so that societies may be better briefed on issues that might arise. A similar rule was agreed for the Treasurer's Report.

This process will ensure that the reports have the approval of the Executive and will reduce the time taken up at the AGM.

#### Governance

The attendance record of the members of the Executive Committee in between the 2017 AGM and 8 October 2018 is recorded in the following table.

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Possible</b>	<b>Actual</b>
James Armour	7	4
Bridie Bradley	11	10
John Bradley	11	6
Florence Chambers	11	8
Patrick Devlin	11	11
John Dooher	11	11
Patrick Greer	5	4
John Hulme	11	11
Patrick McGuigan	8	4
Josephine Herbison	11	10
Dr Janice Holmes	9	6
Elizabeth Hoy	11	8
Aine Ni Duibhne	11	9
Bridgeen Rutherford	1	0

At its first meeting on 27 November 2017 the new Executive Committee, in reviewing the events at the AGM, decided that the primary need was to restore normality as quickly as possible and act so as to ensure that what had happened at the AGM would not be repeated. As one of the seven Executive Committee members specified in the Article of Association was the immediate past Chairman, the number of Committee members elected at the AGM exceeded those allowed by the Articles. This was resolved by one member of the Committee resigning, and then being co-opted.

The Committee then focused on three major issues that needed to be resolved as quickly as possible so as to enable the Federation to fulfil its mission

- a new and more effective sub-committee structure and working rules to allow for a more focused approach to planning and implementing Committee initiatives and involving more committee members
- the aim was to have every member directly involved in committee work.
- a comprehensive review of corporate governance, including the Executive Committee's acceptance and practice of collective responsibility.
- a full review of the Articles of Association

One result of this programme of work was an acceptance that the Committee's capacity to plan and implement a programme of events, such as seminars and workshops, would be limited in the current year.

A new, more inclusive, sub-committee structure was introduced, with clear rules and structures. The Committees; a Management Committee, Publications Committee and Programme Committee, several times before the end of the period to consider a range of issues identified by the Executive Committee and advise the Committee on options for action. The Committees considered a wide range of issues, only some of which had been progressed by the end of the financial year. The most important of these, on which work continued included –

- organising an early Summer Seminar,
- reviewing the Articles of Association,
- corporate governance issues,
- the future production of Due North,
- reviewing scope for an investment policy,
- improving communications with members and the wider community,
- the use of newsletters and social media,
- the modernisation of the website

The review of good governance took account of the guidance issued by Companies House and the Charities Commission in relation to charity trustee rights and responsibilities. The claims made at last year's AGM that the Charity Commission had expressed concern at the management of the Federation were proved to have been inaccurate and advice was sought from NICVA, of which the Federation had become a member in March 2018, on the way forward. This work resulted in the adoption of a Trustee Code of Conduct Declaration that was signed by all Executive Committee members. Other work included the adoption of a Financial Code of Practice, and procedures governing the nomination for and election of the Officers and Executive Committee.

In January 2018, Bridgeen Rutherford resigned as Secretary and was succeeded by Pat Devlin. Patrick Greer resigned as Vice-Chairman in April and Josie Herbison was appointed in his place. James Armour, Maghera Historical Society, who had been nominated for the Executive Committee at the 2017 AGM but had lost out when the President rejected the nomination process, was co-opted. Dr Janice Holmes, who had been co-opted at the November 2017 meeting, is moving with her family to another European country and as a consequence resigned in August. Patrick McGuigan had informed the committee in July that he was withdrawing from the executive and this was accepted with regret. The Committee thanked all those who resigned for their work for the Federation and wished them well for the future.

### **Hidden Gems and Forgotten People**

Two Exhibitions for the HG&FP project were held, in Letterkenny Library from 16 to 30 October 2017 and Enniskillen Library from 19 February to 3 March 2018. Full illustrated reports of both Exhibition launches are available on the website.

An additional Exhibition will be held in Carrickfergus Library from 10 November to 8 December. Two further venues, in Counties Cavan and Monaghan, which were in the original programme, were postponed until a later date.

### **Other Activities**

During the year-

- Three newsletters were issued, with news of planned events and enhanced services;
- The Speaker's Register has had an extensive overhaul, thanks to John Hulme, who spent weeks and weeks following up existing speakers and identifying new ones; the revised Register at the end of the period had over 150 speakers covering some 560 topics – a herculean effort indeed;
- a new edition of *Due North*, with a new design was launched in at the AGM on 11 November 2017;
- the Federation's Exhibition and Programme, supported by Libraries NI, to publicise and promote the joint FULS/FLHS joint *Hidden Gems and Forgotten People* project and website continued throughout the period. In the financial year exhibitions were held in Omagh Library (8<sup>th</sup> – 26 June 2017); Letterkenny Library (31<sup>st</sup> Oct – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2017) and finally in Enniskillen (19 February – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018). A further Exhibition is planned for Carrickfergus Museum from 10 November to 8 December 2018.
- The Early Summer Seminar was held in Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey on Saturday 9 June 2018 with useful advice and guidance from James Laverty of the Heritage Lottery Fund, on the funding available from the Fund. Trevor Gordon spoke on the many roles of the Northern Ireland's Publications Resource including being a repository and publishing adviser. The main focus of the Seminar was the Suffragist movement in Britain and Ireland in the early 20th century. Josie Herbison and Pat McGuigan, speaking in tandem, took us through the development of the movement from its earliest beginnings in the early nineteenth century up to the present day and Carol Walker, from the Somme Centre concentrated on the impact of WWI on voting rights and social change in Ulster. A lively Q&A section elaborated on some of the themes. The day was rounded off with a discussion, led by Johnny Dooher, on the options for further seminars on the theme of the Centenary of Anniversaries and ideas from member societies are always welcome.
- the Federation's website continued to provide additional information about members' programmes and events of general interest and its news section carried 15 updates of information since the last AGM.

### **Working with others**

The Executive Committee continued to develop working relationships with other groups-

1. Federation of Local History Societies in co-operating in joint events and programmes. Activities include: joint membership trips in Ireland, joint seminars and workshops covering the whole of the island of Ireland; joint projects e.g. a joint website on *Hidden Gems and Forgotten People*. In the current year, these included -
  - i. Continuing work on the joint *Hidden Gems and Forgotten People* project.



- ii. A meeting of the Joint Federation/FLHS committee was convened in Belfast on 26 February 2018, with the chairman and one executive committee member from the FLHS attending. The main focus of discussion was on restoring the good working relationship between the Federations after the disputed events of the previous year. Good progress was seemingly made but unfortunately difficulties remain. The Executive Committee remains confident that these can be resolved and will continue to strive for success.
2. Libraries NI, in planning, mounting and delivering the Hidden Gems and Forgotten People project.

## **Society Matters**

### *Lecale & Downe Historical Society*

Congratulations to the Lecale & Downe Historical Society which celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding at an event on 24 September. The Executive Committee was pleased to receive an invitation to the celebrations and presented the Society with the gift of an inscribed gavel to mark their appreciation and best wishes for the next 70 years. It is possible that there are other societies out there who are approaching important anniversaries and the Executive Committee would like to provide whatever assistance they can in these landmark events for local studies.

### *Maghera Historical Society Townlands project*

One recent project was the launch, on 30 June, of a Townlands Project by the Maghera Historical Society. The project aims to build up a detailed picture and history of the townlands in the area. The project will engage with local people to record field names, stories, memories, traditions, customs and folklore, and the results will be published. The Federation can advise and facilitate any societies who may wish to carry out townland studies and the Maghera Society, as they gain experience with their project should be able to help also.

### *Maghera Agricultural Show*

The Federation provided a stand at the show, offering copies of Federation literature for sale. The Show was well attended and although few publications were sold, it did provide an opportunity for the Federation to publicise its presence and its services. Thanks to Liz Hoy for running the stand.