

COVID-19 (1) A Message from the Chairman

At this worrying time I hope that you are all keeping well and safe and looking forward to as much a return to normality as possible.

No societies are active at present and until social distancing is abandoned it is unlikely that normal business, including meetings and events, can be resumed. It is not at all clear when the distance restrictions will be lifted so it is not certain that normal activity can be resumed in the Autumn. This does not necessarily mean that other activities such as research or planning, or work on publications, has also stopped, and there is some evidence that social media is being used to maintain membership contact.

As with Societies, the Executive Committee has ceased to meet. However, some work continues e.g. administration activities e.g., finance, collecting and coordinating work on the next edition of *Due North*, and maintenance of the new website.

A way forward?

In the vacuum created by the cessation of normal activity the Executive Committee is seeking to maintain regular contact with the membership and encouraging them to participate in the debate about how we can keep in touch with each other and develop alternative approaches to keeping the work of the Federation and the societies alive. One approach is to use social media and we would welcome suggestions on how this idea might be developed.

A new *Members Forum* will be available on the website soon where members can share information about how they are coping with the shutdown and share ideas and projects, seek help in project planning or publications, or other aspects of Society administration or development.

The pandemic is an event of global historical importance and we are living in the middle of it. It is not only global; it is local as well and taking its toll on everyday life in every city, town, village, and townland. It will be important for future generations to have a clear and detailed account of the effect it is having on the current one and how we coped with the disaster. Local societies might consider documenting examples of how their area is coping; local responses to the lockdown and social distancing, looking after the vulnerable, remote working, voluntary input to local communities etc.

'Federations Trip Down Memory Lane - Reeling in the Years'

Working with the Federation of Local History Societies

The history of cooperation with FLHS is a long one, extending back over 30 years. In that time we have cooperated on a number of joint projects, exchange visits and extended trips to Europe and Great Britain.

FLHS has decided to share these with its members and hopefully it will bring back happy memories to those who were actually on the trips and at the same time let those who were not, see what they may have missed, and maybe whet their appetite to join us in the future. They plan to post a few of our past trips each week. We will circulate them to members as they are received.

Due North 2020-2021: Can your Society help?

Articles and other material is being sought for the next issue of *Due North* to enable the Federation journal to be more representative of the whole range of member societies and interest groups. Contributions can cover a range of topics on history and heritage and should be original work. In general articles should be between 2500 - 5000 words and typed up in MS Word or similar format. Book reviews and evaluations of new research on historical matters should aim to be of 500 — 1000 words. Queries on the possible eligibility of subject matter should be directed to the editor and guidance will be provided to first time contributors.

The editor would also welcome information on innovative work being undertaken at local level and would hope that those societies who are celebrating an anniversary this year or next year would provide a short report for inclusion in *Due North*. As a Federation of near 100 societies, *Due North* can be a vital vehicle in keeping the wider membership informed of what is happening throughout the local history scene in Ulster and beyond.

Contact current editor John Doohar at johndooher@btinternet.com for further information or phone 07713636362.