

# **FEDERATION FOR ULSTER LOCAL STUDIES**

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **MELLON CENTRE FOR MIGRATION STUDIES**

#### **ULSTER AMERICAN FOLK PARK, OMAGH.**

**SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2019.**

#### **Introduction.**

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

Catherine McCullough, Director of the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies, welcomed everyone adding that the Centre was delighted to host the Annual General Meeting of the Federation for Ulster Local Studies.

Referring to the solid foundation and easy access for the general public that Dr Brian Lampkin, the former Director of the Centre, had established she went on to describe the Centre as an interesting organisation; a Heritage Library within the NI Library Service, part of the Scots-Irish Trust Project and based on the site of a National Museum, the Ulster American Folk Park. Introducing various members of staff she added that Dr Patrick Fitzgerald, Head of Research and Development, would give a talk after the formal business of the AGM was concluded.

Ms. McCullough said that she had been a regular reader of Due North and its predecessor. She appealed to authors and researchers to remember the topic of migration in their research stating that the experience of dislocation is the same for anyone starting again and discovering a new community whether it be in another country, town, or street. In conclusion she wished that the meeting be fruitful and that we enjoy the visit to the Folk Park after Lunch

#### **The formal business of the Meeting began.**

##### **1. Apologies.**

The Lecale and Downe Historical Society.

##### **2. Minutes of the 2018 AGM.**

The Secretary, Patrick Devlin, presented the minutes of the 2018 AGM, which had previously been circulated to Societies. There being no questions or comments Graham Mawhinney proposed that they be accepted, this was seconded by Matthew Herbison and agreed.

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

The Report had been circulated with the AGM papers to allow members advanced knowledge about the activities of the Federation since the last AGM. There being no questions or comments about the Report the Secretary went on to update delegates about matters that had arisen since the Report had been circulated.

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- It had been hoped to launch the new website at the AGM, but this was not possible as work had still to be carried out on the very detailed specifications. It would, therefore, be some weeks before the website would be ready for presentation.
- Society News. The Newcastle Field Club had disbanded due to falling numbers and the Secretary had sent a letter wishing them well.
- Termonmaguirk Historical Society had applied for membership of the Federation but at this time the society still had to be formally accepted by the Executive Committee.
- Larne and District Historical Society would be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Secretary sent the Society best wishes for the next fifty years.
- The Local History Trust Fund held a seminar, 'Borders and Boundaries' in the Cardinal O'Fiaich Library in Armagh on 19<sup>th</sup> October. Johnny Dooher, Chairman of the Federation, gave a very fascinating talk on the work of the Boundaries Commission

Secretary concluded with a tribute to John Hulme a longstanding member of Carrickfergus Historical Society and the Executive Committee. He had been a stalwart of the Federation and one of the few remaining Executive Committee members who had helped to re-establish the Federation as a voluntary organisation after funding and the full-time staff had been withdrawn in 2007. John rarely missed an Executive Committee meeting and was the driving force behind the development of Hidden Gems and Forgotten Places. He worked tirelessly with his southern colleagues from the Federation of Local History Societies to set up this joint website and without his vision and input the website would not be as comprehensive as it is today. He was also responsible for setting up the Speakers Register. Today it has listed over 160 speakers covering 560 topics and 20 tour guides from all nine counties of Ulster. Maintaining this very useful online resource for Societies was indeed an enormous task.

On asking for questions or comments from the floor Patrick McGuigan from Strabane Historical Society echoed Secretary's remarks stating that John Hulme was a gentleman. There being no further questions or comments the Secretary formally proposed the adoption of the Report. This was seconded by Frank Collins and agreed.

## **4. Trustee's Report and Financial Statements/Independent Examiner's Report.**

The Trustee's Report and Financial Statements had been circulated to the delegates prior to the Annual General Meeting for their examination. The Secretary explained that the **Trustee's Report**, is a statutory requirement of Companies Acts and the Charities Commission with a more formalised structure than the Secretary's Report and covering the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

Robert Guthrie proposed that the Trustees Report be adopted, this was seconded by Bridie Bradley and agreed.

The Treasurer, Bridie Bradley, referring to the **Financial Statements and Independent Examiner's Report**, explained that the Federation for Ulster Local Studies is a Limited Company listed on the National Charities Commission Register and, therefore, had to prepare formal accounts as laid down by Company House. The accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 were, therefore, prepared, agreed by the Executive Committee, presented at the AGM and would be submitted to Companies House before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

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Treasurer reported that the Independent Examiner, who had examined the Accounts in line with requirements of the Company's Act, had no concerns and no matters to bring before the Charity Commission.

Treasurer explained that the overall income and expenditure for the year could be found on pages 10 and 11

- Income - £11, 870.
- Expenditure - £8,262
- Surplus - £3,608.
- There are no restricted funds.

The Balance Sheet (page 12) showed the total assets as

- £27,723, there being no other capital assets.

The income and expenditure accounts itemized on page 13 showed a deficit of £3,745 from the previous year. The Treasurer explained that income of approximately £2000 because the PL Insurance for the year 2018/2019 had been collected before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 and had, therefore, appeared in the previous year's accounts.

Income had fallen by £3,745.

- The income from membership - £5,051 showed a slight deficit of £139.
- PL Insurance - £5,437 shows a deficit of £2,215 (see explanation above).
- The £934 was related to the spring Seminar in Armagh and the AGM. It included hire of venues and gifts to speakers.
- the £384 related to the sale of Due North and CD's.
- £100 related to the sale of a computer.

Expenditure had fallen by £2,353. Certain costs had risen

- PL Insurance - £1,363 had risen by £50 due to increase in Premium Tax,
- Office expenses - £1,579 had risen by £181 with postage being a major expense.
- Other expenses - £836 had risen by £57. This covered payment to newspapers re. Obituaries for people who were closely involved with the Federation and gifts to Societies celebrating special milestones.
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- Other Costs had fallen
- Travel expenses - £756 for official Federation business had fallen by £533
- Meetings/ Events/ Excursions - £1,573 had fallen by £1,630. These included venues for the spring Seminar, AGM, and committee meetings.
- Bank Charges £207 had fallen by £55
- IT costs of £206 had fallen by £45
- Publications cost of £1,470 had fallen by £424

The Governance Costs (page 14) remained unchanged,

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

The Report was adopted on the proposal of Patrick McGuigan, Strabane Historical Society and seconded by Mathew Herbison, Antrim and District Historical Society and agreed.

## 5. Chairman's Address.

The Chairman thanked the Secretary and Treasurer for their detailed and well-presented reports and welcomed the assembled delegates and guests thanking them for their attendance at the AGM and their support throughout the year. He went on to say that in the past the AGM had been a key event in the local studies calendar with 'bumper attendances' but that there had been a falling off in attendances in recent years.

He went on to say that concern about this issue had been voiced at the previous year's AGM and had resulted in the Executive Committee initiating a one day strategy and planning event in mid-January 2019 to examine issues like 'A Review of Federation's Aims and Objectives' and 'A Review of the Successes and Weaknesses of the Strategic Plan of 2015-18 and a 'Draft Action Plan' and a 'Draft Planning Calendar' were drawn up. The Chairman added that these actions followed.

- March saw a Seminar in Armagh which covered a range of topics – The Armagh Railway Disaster of 1889; the 1918 General Election and how to improve the running of a local society, a series of presentations given by Executive Committee members.
- September saw the resumption of joint events with the Federation of Local History Societies. This was a highly successful meeting held in Armagh and pointed the way towards further cooperation. He added that although the popular Hidden Gems programme had been scaled back it still had the potential to be an important aspect of joint activities.
- Alongside these events went the review and recast of the Federation website. Chairman informed the delegates that this project was currently a work in progress and while it was disappointing that it was not yet completed it was hoped that it would be brought to a successful conclusion fairly soon. The new website would make our tasks easier and our programme more enticing to outside viewers. Chairman added that he wanted to pay tribute to the sub-committee who had spent many hours at the revision and review of tasks and the selection of a designer.

Chairman then went on to pay tribute to the members of the Executive Committee hoping that they had found satisfaction and fulfilment in the tasks that they had carried out. Not everyone, he said, had found fulfilment and two members of the Committee had withdrawn at different times during the year. He continued that it is regrettable when blame is directed towards certain individuals on the committee and that there can be no justification for the maligning of reputations that can follow some of these 'fallings-out.' He added that all members who work on Federation Committees do so in a voluntary capacity and that while Trustee membership brings opportunities it also brings responsibilities.

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Referring to the work carried out on the Articles of Association, the new website, and the aims of increasing the efficiency of the organisation and bringing benefits to societies the Chairman raised the following questions -

- As there is still much work to be done where does the Federation now stand?
- How do most societies see the Federation and the Executive Committee?
- How far do they look upon it as a bringing together of like-minded people to explore and share the rich heritage they have been favoured with?
- Should there be more interaction opportunities for people to meet and learn?
- Would they be prepared to actively participate in such events?

The Chairman, after twenty years of involvement in the Federation, doubted their participation stating that while new enthusiastic societies are being established and bring a ray of hope to the Federation others, some long established societies, are withdrawing, and still others maintain a skeleton presence for the sake of the public liability insurance. While some societies are very active and outward looking others would seem to exist in their local sphere and rarely peep outside.

Returning to the planning day the Chairman suggested that we had, perhaps, tried to do too much and failed to turn our attention to the needs of more isolated societies. He therefore, asked how the Federation could help those seeking assistance and support. He suggested that if funding was to be made available it would be important to have plans and strategies in place to ensure best use was made of it. With these thoughts in mind he suggested that the incoming committee should only take on what is manageable, look at the areas of greatest need and concentrate their efforts there. That it should harness the expertise of the members of the 90 plus societies in the Federation while remembering that members are volunteers with other commitments. As there is no quick solution and tasks ahead are challenging small targeted steps would be beneficial.

Chairman then paid tribute to the efficient and effective work of the outgoing committee with special reference to Patrick Devlin for his role in administration saying that on his imminent retirement it would be very challenging to replace such a long serving official. Chairman also paid tribute to John Hulme on his retirement explaining that he had been responsible for the Federation's contribution to Hidden Gems and Forgotten People and the setting up of the Speaker's Register adding that his contributions were much appreciated by the wider Federation and beyond. Chairman then wished both men good health for the years ahead.

In conclusion Chairman wished the incoming Committee every success and hoped that he would still be able to contribute to the ongoing work of the Federation, stating that he had been involved with it since 1992 and hoped that he had made some contribution to its work. He thanked everyone for their ongoing support and assistance.

Finally he thanked Ms Catherine McCullough and Dr Patrick Fitzgerald for willing assistance in hosting the meeting and the staff of the Ulster American Folk Park for organising the lunch and the tour of the Park after lunch.

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## **6. Election of Officers and Committee.**

The Chairman invited Evelyn Cardwell of Donaghmore Historical Society to conduct the election of Officers and Committee. She thanked Chairman for the opportunity and paid a personal tribute to the outgoing committee for their productivity during the past year.

### **Officers.**

Ms Cardwell stated that under the Articles 31 and 37 of the Articles of Association the following nominations had been received –

Chairperson– Josephine Herbison, Antrim & District Historical Society.

Vice – Chairperson – No Nominations

Secretary – No Nominations

Treasurer – Bridie Bradley. West Belfast Historical Society.

Ms Cardwell stated that as there had been no other nominations for Chairperson and Treasurer Josephine Herbison and Bridie Bradley were thereby elected to the posts. She congratulated them. She added that the other unfilled positions would be filled at a future Executive Committee as set down in Article 32.

### **Executive Committee.**

Ms Cardwell noted that the following Nominations had been received –

James Armour – Maghera Historical Society.

Robert Guthrie – Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers.

Joseph McCoy – Maghera Historical society.

Kathleen Orme – Antrim & District Historical Society.

The above had indicated their willingness to serve as Executive Committee Members and were duly elected to the Committee. There being two unfilled positions on the Committee nominations were requested from the floor. The only conditions being that nominees had to be a member of a member society or an individual member, they had to be present and commit to serving in the position.

There were four nominations put forward but three stated pressure of other commitments leaving one nominee.

Miss Liz Hoy - Cullybackey & District Historical Society. Proposed by Kathleen Orme, seconded by James Armour.

Ms Hoy was present and agreed.

There being no further nominations and all five nominations were agreed.

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The new Executive Committee –

James Armour – Maghera Historical Society.

Robert Guthrie – Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers.

Liz Hoy - Cullybackey & District Historical Society.

Joseph McCoy – Maghera Historical Society

Kathleen Orme - Antrim & District Historical Society.

Outgoing Chairman stated that as not all positions on Committee had been filled the Committee would go back to Societies and request further nominations. He then thanked Ms Cardwell for conducting the election.

## **7. Appointment of Auditor.**

Bridie Bradley proposed the appointment of Rosin Shanks for the incoming year. This was seconded by Kathleen Orme and agreed.

At this point the Outgoing Chairman invited Brian Turner President of the FULS to say a few words. The President thanked everyone for coming and said that, while he would have more to say when launching Due North, he would like the Federation to think hard about solving the issue of how to involve members and member societies as there were approximately 11,000 members.

## **8. Welcome to Secretary of the Federation of Local History Societies.**

The Outgoing Chairman invited Mairead Byrne, Secretary of the Federation of Local History Societies (FLHS), to address the meeting

Mairead thanked the Federation for the invitation to the AGM, she brought apologies from Padriag Laffan (Chairman) and Larry Breen who were at a seminar in Galway but added that she had copies of the FLHS journal for everyone.

She explained how delighted she had been to have worked on both a formal and informal basis with the members of the FULS Executive Committee. She and paid tribute to Patrick Devlin and Johnny Dooher for the very successful weekend trip to Armagh which they had organised for the members of the FLHS. Their members had been very impressed by the welcome they had received from the FULS members, the staff at the venues they had visited and also at the reception in the Mayor's office.

Mairaid went on to talk about the importance of the joint ventures emphasising how meeting with others gave encouragement and inspiration to societies as they waxed and waned pointing out that it is getting ever more difficult to replace people in the societies. She then turned to future joint events mentioning the upcoming meeting of Committee Members from both Federations in Dublin in December adding that the main topic to be discussed would be the preparations for the FULS visit to the 26 counties in 2020. She emphasised the 26 counties saying that this would allow for the trip be to somewhere beyond Dublin. With this in mind she suggested that it would be useful to consider

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staying overnight to allow for a two-day visit spending more time together getting to know people better and not rushing between venues. She commented that the last trip had been too short.

In paying tribute to John Hulme and Larry Breen for their contribution to the great venture, Hidden Gems and Forgotten People, Mairead suggested that it would be worth considering making it into a book or booklet form. She said that this would take it to a wider audience as not all local historians looked at web sites.

Before thanking the Federation for the invitation and wishing it well in the future Mairead informed the meeting about the next FLHS trip to Guildford, England with trips to London in spring of 2020. She also invited members of FULS to the FLHS Annual General Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020. Johnny Dooher presented her with a copy of the latest edition of Due North.

## 9. Society Reports.

1. Matt Herbison, Antrim & District Historical Society, wished the incoming Committee every success before reporting that the Society's numbers were holding up, although, it was difficult to attract younger members. This incoming year the Society was celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a number of events were being planned based on the history of Antrim town from its early years until recent times beginning with an exhibition in Antrim Library in January. He added that visitors would be made very welcome to any of the meetings

2. James Armour, Maghera Historical Society, reported on the projects that the Society were undertaking; the ongoing Field Naming and Townlands project; a project creating a Famine Trail from Maghera via Glen Chapel graveyard to Swatragh, funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund had meant that they had been able to employ one full time researcher and one part-time to work on the project. Fundraising e.g. musical evenings was still needed to supplement their funds. The Society had bought a building which was in process of being developed to accommodate a Heritage Centre with internal and external exhibition areas, research facilities, The Men's Shed and a Craft Area for ladies. He added that visitors would be very welcome.

3. Helen Meehan, Donegal Historical Society, stated that although the Society was still strong it was having difficulty maintaining numbers due to the 'happy situation' where a number of small societies were starting up. They still had great belief in the connection with the Federation, although they were so far from the mainstream meetings in Belfast that travel was an issue. Alongside their usual field days and lectures they had held a successful 'Hidden Gems' exhibition in Letterkenny. She supported Ms Byrne's suggestion of producing a book/booklet based on the 'Hidden Gems' stating that not everyone is computer literate.

4. Michael Kennedy, Strabane Historical Society, congratulated the Federation for all work done and thanked the Committee. The Society was celebrating 30 years and in that time the number of members had grown, they had produced 20 publications and were now in the final stages of the project based on WW1. This had produced three books/booklets in three years as they look at the effects of the war both at home and at the front. They had also created a data base which now has 750 subscribers and produced a book of all the local newspapers reports during the war. All this



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information, put together by 10 researchers, is available at the local library and a great legacy to leave for future generations.

4. Betty McNerlin, Roe Valley Ancestral Research, reported that the Society was founded 5 years ago, and their numbers were increasing steadily as people came along with local stories. They had recently become a Limited Company and had been involved in various projects including heritage stories e.g. Women in WW1 with particular reference to part time nurses, this could be found on their data base and it was also hoped to publish the research.

5. Douglas Bartlett, Roe Valley Historical Society, the original Society had been founded in 1950s and the present Society dated back to 1908. They meet regularly with an audience of about 30 people and a programme covering local and national events with 'crowd pleasers' such as photographs of Limavady or an audience with Mark Carruthers and more academic topics like the N.I economy and O S Memoirs. He added that John Steinbeck had family connection with Limavady and having had a John Steinbeck Day for Children they were planning a Festival of music and readings in February 2020 based on the topic of John Steinbeck to which everyone will be very welcome.

5. Graham Mawhinney, Ballinascreen Historical Society, reported that he had been working on a project the 'Graham Letters' and produced a private publication based on a series of letters written by his ancestors. These letters can be found in PRONI and were kindly lent to him so that he could transcribe them and build up a family tree.

6. Evelyn Cardwell, Donaghmore Historical Society, repeated the problem of getting young people to join societies but added that one person under the age of 25 had joined their committee. He had carried out research for European Heritage Day based on the old castle at Castlecaufield, produced a 3D model on computer and an exhibition. The Society is hoping to organise a Father and Son project. Prior to the start of a local building development Society members had carried out research to see if the site was that of an old graveyard attached to the workhouse. While the development in the form of a carpark and nurses' home is going ahead the Society had persuaded the Health Trust to erect a plaque commemorating the people buried nearby.

7. Joseph McCoy, Maghera Historical Society, talked about the annual walking tours that he organises and which will be the subject of a book entitled 'Where Once Long Ago an Abbey Stood.' They are also feature in an article in the new edition of 'Due North'

## 9. Members Treasures.

As there were no **Members Treasurers** the business section of the Annual General meeting was brought to a close.

## 10. Incoming Chairperson – Looking Ahead.

Josephine Herbison thanked the members of the Federation for electing her as Chairperson adding that she would endeavour to do her best to serve the Federation in the capacity of Chairperson.

She thanked Johnny Dooher for the sterling service he had given as Chairman over the previous two years stating that whenever we needed a speaker Johnny knew just the right person to ask. She then went on to thank the two other people who were retiring from Committee. Patrick Devlin , who she

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said kept us all updated with the business matters of the Federation and other historical organisations and John Hulme, a quiet man, a good listener who only spoke when he had something worthwhile to say and the person who made Hidden Gems and Forgotten People what it is today.

Looking to the future she reminded those present of the Lord Kitchener's poster 'Your Country Needs You' and changed the words to 'Your Federation Needs You' adding that some Societies seemed to be only interested in what they can receive and overlook what they can give to the Federation but they should be both receiving and giving. She pointed out that, despite there being approximately 90 member societies, attendances at organised events could be poor and went on to promote the Spring Seminar at the Seamus Heaney Home Place inviting those present to attend.

In conclusion she thanked everyone, hoped that they would have a successful winter programme and wished the Societies well.

## **Launch of Due North.**

Brian Turner, as Federation President, expressed his gratitude to Mairead Byrne for coming to the AGM and for her wise and measured words. He thanked those who spoke from the floor for their contributions, saying that these were very valuable and would be an encouragement to local societies although it was unfortunate that so many of them were not represented at this meeting.

He congratulated Johnny Dooher and the Committee for continuing to publish Due North as 'not everyone looks at a website' before adding that we should be able to integrate all our methods of communication. Dr Turner identified the purposes of the journal as an inspiration to local history societies; a vehicle for local historians to publish their work and share information that might be useful to others; an opportunity for authors to express their ideas on issues that have more than a local application and, therefore, could be of interest others..

He then described the content as firstly looking inward as in the case of Helen Meehan article on the traditions Blue Stack Mountains of Donegal; and secondly looking outwards as in the articles by Keith Haines on Otto Jaffa, one time mayor of Belfast, who was driven out of the city due to anti-Jewish feeling during in WW1 or William Roulston's story of James Capston, a spy for the Confederate forces during the American civil war, whose gravestone can be found in an Antrim Graveyard. Sean Beattie's item about Sarah Leech the Ulster Scots poet from the Lagan area of Donegal lead Dr Turner to suggest that the Federation could create a register of publications produced by writers of past times. Turning to the reviews, Dr Turner suggested that the Federation must have more publications available for review and more people to review them.

In his role as President of the Federation Dr Turner in looking back at its beginnings said that the founders, while thinking of the study of local history as a hobby, considered it to be a civilising influence, enabling people to see their neighbours as human beings, individuals and not just anonymous blocks. He considered this useful in present times and it shows how local history can contribute to national history. He suggested that the great rise in Local History Societies during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was the result of a search for identity and a need to understand our communities. He added that the Federation is more significant to our community than we, perhaps, think.

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In closing, he reminded those present that, with approximately 11,000 members, the Federation had a huge reserve of expertise to call on and that the key to success was to do everything in a generous and friendly way. He suggested that we should be contacting as many members as possible and personally inviting them to events. With that he launched 'Due North.'

**Dr Patrick Fitzgerald, whose talk entitled 'The Role of the Centre of Migration Studies,' was welcomed by the incoming Chairperson.**

Dr Fitzgerald referred to the 'Graham Letters' a book by Graham Mawhinney and to which he had contributed. He described it as a wonderful example of the connection between the local story, migration studies and diaspora studies.

He then turned to the history of the Centre. The Ulster American Folk Park was founded in 1976 and the library opened in 1992 leading to co-operation with Queen's University Belfast in 1996 with a two years Master's Degree. In 1998, with Dr Brian Lampkin as its first director, the Centre of Migration Studies was founded. This became known as the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies when, in September 2011, J. Mellon came to launch it. In March of 2011, along with QUB, the Irish Immigration Data Base was developed, into a valuable package of resources for study known as DIPPAM – Document, Irish, People, Parliament and Migration.

In 2008 a book, Migration in Irish History 1607-2007, was published. Using the SDO3 model this describes the 'migration manifesto' in three stages - leaving the old world, crossing an intervening obstacle and arrival in a new world. Dr Fitzgerald went on to describe the structure of migration as having three directions - movement into (immigration), movement within, and movement outward (emigration) with three possible outcomes of segregation, integration, and modulation i.e. a movement between the first two which, he suggested, affected most immigrants.

He explained that the Migration Centre was one organisation within a partnership organisation, funded by the Government Department for Communities and under the supervision of an Advisory Committee. The partnership has at its core the Scots-Irish Trust of Ulster founded in the late 1960's funded by the Mellon family; the Library Service NI; PRONI; Queen's University Belfast; Ulster University; National Museums of N I. The Centre also works closely with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

The wide-ranging Library collection, which began in the late 1970's, has many dimensions relating to worldwide migration but particularly the USA and the Irish Diaspora. It includes maps, periodicals, microfilms, an extensive biography section, family history material, Public Access Terminals and digital resources allowing for the collection of original material. Currently there are 33,000 transcribed digitalised documents which are keyword searchable and widely available in library branches. The family history hub creates a useful source for genealogy and 'root tourism' with a forty-year collection of material e.g. shipping lists and crucially the personal service and face to face contact provided by the staff.

Dr Fitzgerald outlined another role of the Centre as research and learning base through its connections with QUB and a master's Programme in Public History. Also included in the Centre's role

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are publications, events, school visits, academic links through holding international conferences and engagement with the local community through events like Foodfest.

In conclusion he explained that an important role of the Centre was 'busting myths' as popular understanding of migration heritage was/is often distorted. It is, therefore, important that through local studies and local history people see and understand the broader picture. He then expressed his best wishes to Societies and their local studies projects.

The Chairperson thanked Dr Fitzgerald for his interesting and informative talk and the Centre Staff for hosting the Annual General Meeting.

The morning session was followed by lunch and the delegates enjoyed a very interesting tour of the Ulster American Folk Park.

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## ANNEX 1

### ATTENDEES

<b>NAMES.</b>	<b>SOCIETY.</b>
Josephine Herbison	Antrim & District Historical Society
Matthew Herbison	Antrim & District Historical Society
Josephine Gaynor	Antrim & District Historical Society
Katie Orme	Antrim & District Historical society.
Graham Mawhinney	Ballinascreen Historical Society.
Helen Meehan	County Donegal Historical Society
Aine Ni Duibhne	County Donegal Historical Society
Elizabeth Boyd	Cullybackey Historical Society
Elizabeth Hoy	Cullybackey Historical Society
James Armour	Maghera Historical Society
Joseph McCoy	Maghera Historical Society
Jean Dunne	Maghera Historical Society
Robert Guthrie	Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers
Matthew Ferguson	Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers
Betty Nerlin	Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers
Douglas Bartlett	Roe Valley Historical Society
Fiona Pegrum	Roe Valley Historical Society
Michael Kennedy	Strabane Historical Society
Joseph O'Kane	Strabane Historical Society
Patrick McGuigan	Strabane Historical Society
John Sheldon	Templepatrick Historical Society
Helen Sheldon	Templepatrick Historical society
Bridie Bradley	West Belfast Historical Society
Frank Collins	West Tyrone Historical Society
Hazel Henderson	West Belfast Historical Society
Sheena McClure	West Belfast Historical Society
Evelyn Cardwell	Individual Member
Patrick Devlin	Individual member
<b>Hon. Officers</b>	
Dr. Brian Turner	President
Dr Brian Walker	Vice President
Mons. Raymond Murray	Vice President
<b>Others</b>	
Mairead Byrne	Federation of Local History Societies
John Bradley	
Dr Patrick Fitzgerald	
Ms Christine McCullough.	