

Federation of Local History Societies
Chairman's Address to AGM on 10th May 2014

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to start by expressing my pleasure at being here in the very historic locality of Clontarf in this, the 1000th year since the famous battle. We have had a marvellous few months of commemorative lectures, seminars and battle re-enactments and for those I would like to thank the Clontarf Historical Society, the Raheny Heritage Society and Comhaltas Ceoltoiri na hEireann , who are our hosts here today.

The purpose of a Chairman's statement is to account to you, the members, for what we are doing and also to discuss how we in the Federation can stay relevant to the needs of the member societies.

So, what were the things we did?

The Secretary will talk about the events organised during the year – the visits to Bath, Derry, Aras an Uachtaráin and Islandbridge/Arbour Hill – all jointly with the Federation of Ulster Local Studies. That North/South theme is now very strong in our ethos and I would like to thank Larry Breen for pushing that.

Apart from these visits/trips, we pursued the following issues:

- Hidden Gems and Forgotten People: ongoing project. Display placards being prepared. Thanks to Larry Breen and FULS.
- Social media workshop attended by over forty people in Athlone. Many thanks to Eugene Jordan and Michael Gaynor.
- Abolition of County Councils: representations made regarding the importance of looking after records and artifacts belonging to abolished councils.
- Successful negotiations with our insurance broker to re-instate cover for trips and outings which had been dropped when the policy was renewed this year.
- Circulation of society events to all member societies so that we can all see what everybody is doing. Thanks to Larry Breen for this ongoing work.
- Discussions with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht regarding financial and other assistance to member societies organising events during the decade of commemorations.

And the things we did not succeed in finishing? :

- Local History in Schools project: more time needed.
- County History project in conjunction with the Library Service of Ireland: it is difficult to get volunteers to write histories of their counties for this project. Some have been completed and efforts will continue to complete the job.

One of the challenges we face as a Federation is to try to stay relevant to the needs of the members. Examples of this are the Social Media workshop where the need was identified at last year's AGM, the insurance issue which potentially affected all member societies and the discussions regarding the decade of commemorations which could be of benefit to many societies. But are there others? Please let me know.

With regard to future events, we hope to organise a joint visit to the Fermanagh area later in the year and a visit to Galway with the Royal Society of Antiquaries early in 2015. In addition there will be a seminar on World War 1 in Dundalk on 11th October which is being organised in conjunction with FULS.

I want to conclude by thanking a number of people for a lot of work throughout the year. The Federation's annual journal, Local History Review, is a really professional job with very high production standards. This is entirely due to JJ Woods and Larry Breen. Once again I would like to thank Eugene Jordan and Michael Gaynor for their work in organising a very successful workshop on using social media. I would like to thank Kay Lonergan, Larry, Comhaltas and O'Neill's Supermarket for together organising this AGM and finally Betty Quinn, Mairead Byrne and all the committee members for their support to me during the year. Thank you.