

FEDERATION OF LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

Chairman's Report, Galway – May 2009

Since our last AGM we have had five meetings of the committee, in April, July and Nov. 2008 and Jan. and April 2009. Collins barracks has been established as our agreed venue and is working well. The meetings were well attended and thanks to all members who attended during the year.

Ulster Federation:

One of our main activities was a result of rekindling our relationship with the FULS. Joint meetings were held both in Drogheda and Belfast and totalled 4 in number. During the year we had a very successful joint visit to the Hill of Tara and the Battle of the Boyne Centre. Over 100 people from North and South joined together in a most interesting experience which allowed local historians from both traditions in Ireland to share in a meaningful way the diverse aspects of their history. We firmly believe that this sort of interaction is good for the development of local history throughout the island of Ireland and we will continue to engage with our friends in Ulster.

Monaghan Conference:

The FULS was involved in organising a conference on the anniversary of the Ulster Plantations which was attended by some members of the FLHS. The southern members found it a most educating and thought provoking exposure to a part of Irish history maybe not that well known south of the border.

Hidden Gems and Forgotten People:

This unique project again was a result of our joint activity with the FULS. The concept is for societies to identify interesting but lesser known places and people. Places that do not make it on to the tourist trail but which have some local historical interest or significance. Also there will be some local knowledge of men and women who have made a significant contribution to their own locality of more widely but which time has largely forgotten. We consider this an ongoing process but do plan to publish our findings by year end.

Local History Review:

We produced Vol. 14 during the year and I think all will agree that it was a fine production with many interesting articles. Contributions were from members of the Federation throughout the country. This continues to be an important part of our communication with member societies. Special thanks to Frank Taffee for his hard work in bringing it to completion. We hope to distribute next year's edition nationally through An Comhairle Leabharlanna to reach a wider audience.

Local History in Schools:

Contact was made with the Education Ministry suggesting that it would be beneficial if the Federation were to interface with young people with regard to local studies. The objective was to ask the Education Minister for help in promoting the study of local history in our schools and increasing awareness in the wider community. Secretary Dermot Ryan met with Batt O'Keeffe, Education Minister, and also spoke to Minister of State, Martin Mansergh. A meeting with Dept. officials was to be arranged and this process is ongoing.

Famine Commemoration:

We raised the importance of the Famine commemoration and have encouraged societies to consider doing something, however small, locally with their groups and possibility getting involved with the local school/s in some practical way. It might be an opportunity for younger people to learn more about what actually happened.

Group Insurance:

We have been revisiting the group insurance scheme and Frank Taaffe has been having discussions with our brokers, O'Connors with a view to better streamlining the service and seeking more clarity in the type and extent of cover we have. We are also looking at relative costs.

Membership:

We have been reviewing our membership base and are making efforts to encourage lapsed members to consider rejoining. This has been somewhat successful in many cases. We will continue to encourage groups who are not members to join and would ask current members if they would help in this regard.

Web:

Recently Kieran Hoare from the Galway Society has agreed to take the job of Web Master. This is a very much underused yet vitally important vehicle for communication and we would urge you to use Kieran and the web to post any material you may have.

Miscellaneous:

We did not manage to organise an Autumn Seminar. This was due in part to our commitments on the Tara/Boyne and Monaghan events. Also we had hoped to make a visit with the FULS to Brussels to see the European Parliament but again we encountered some problems which prevented us doing so. We hope to organise this trip in the coming year.

Thoughts for 2009/2010.

Continue to further develop our relationship with the FULS

Develop a better use of our Web Site.

Membership: Would like to see a more complete and informative data base of members with detailed contact details that we can share with each other in improving communications.

Media: Encourage Groups/Societies to use the local media; newspapers and radio. Somehow see how we can tap more into the National Media for wider exposure.

Schools: Encourage all our societies to consider interfacing with young people by getting more involved in schools, ex. Help students with the special project involving local studies in the Leaving Cert. Also continue to develop our links with the Dept. of Education.

Regional/County Structures: Look at the County/Regional idea as a possible means of improving communication, better promoting the study of local history and generally strengthening the Federation.

Autumn Seminar: Organise a Autumn seminar to include a presentation on recording local history.

Thanks: Just like to say thanks to all the committee who have done a great job during the year. Also thanks to all the Societies and their members for supporting us in our activities. It is all very much appreciated.

Larry Breen , Chairman, 9th. May 2009