

THE FEDERATION OF LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, THE GRAND HOTEL MOATE CO WESTMEATH

SATURDAY 22ND MAY 2010

Apologies were received from: Dermot Ryan and Frank Taaffe.

The Meeting was hosted by the local – Moate Historical Society whose members very efficiently handled the administration of the event including welcoming and registering the arriving delegates.

Proceedings were started by Brendan Cullen of Clane History Group Society who introduced the speakers and generally acted as MC for the event.

Martina Griffen of Moate Society welcomed the delegates on behalf of Moate Society.

Councillor Joe Whelan of Moate made a formal welcoming speech in which he commended the dynamic members of the local historical society for giving Moate a distinctive identity, and praised this feature of historical societies in general.

The Hon. President of the Federation Rev. Fr. Seán O'Doherty spoke briefly, and remembered the great work of the late Jerry Sheehan of Moate both in Moate, and for many years with the Federation. He expressed the pleasure of the delegates in seeing both Jerry's wife Theresa Sheehan and son John, now Prof. of History at U.C.C. present.

He also welcomed John Doohar of The Federation for Ulster Local Studies and described the continuing great relationship between the two federations.

The Keynote address was then given by Dr. Patrick M. Geoghegan Dept. of History U.C.D., Himself a native of the area.

The presentation was "King Dan." The rise of Daniel O'Connell 1775-1829.

The formal business matters of the AGM then took place.

Minutes of last years meeting were read and agreed.

The Chairman Larry Breen gave his report. He welcomed delegates and especially John Doohar of FULS. He outlined various projects in hand by the Federation and said that difficulties with the website should shortly be resolved. The Local History Review is delayed because of a shortage of contributions from member societies.

The Hon Secretary's and Treasurer's report was read and agreed.

Election of Officers

In the absence of the Hon Sec. Pádraig Laffan Vice Chairman presided for this business, and listed the outgoing committee as:

President	Fr. Seán O'Doherty
Chairman	Larry Breen
V. Chairman	Pádraig Laffan
Secretary/Treasurer	Dermot Ryan
Editor	Frank Taaffe
PRO	Mary O'Connor

Federation Committee (whose members normally serve for three years and include two co-opted members).

Celbridge	Maura Gallagher
Charleville	Philip O'Connell (Ceasing this year)
Clare	Myra English (Ceasing this year)
Clondalkin	Joe Williams
Clontarf	Kay Lonergan
Galway	Kieran Hoare
Mayo North	P.J. Lynn
Moate	Martina Griffen

Old Drogheda	Betty Quinn
Rathmichael	Richard Ryan
Slane	Clare Ring
Tipperary	John Bradshaw

Nominations:

Chairman: Larry Breen, proposed by Joe Williams, Clondalkin, seconded by P. Jennings — Elected

Vice Chairman: Pádraig Laffan, proposed by Fr O'Doherty, seconded by J.J. Woods — Elected

Secretary/Treasurer: Dermot Ryan, proposed by B. Cullen, Clane, seconded by Cath. Boylan, Clane — Elected

PRO/Editor: Frank Taaffe proposed by Larry Breen, seconded by Mairead Byrne — Elected

New Committee members

Society	Delegate
Rathcoffey	Mairead Byrne
Maynooth	Maeve Maloney

Chairman Larry Breen gave a short presentation on the Hidden Gems Project. He demonstrated and presented a computer CD describing the project to all societies represented at the meeting.

He also described the "Grandparents Project" which is planned to go forward in the coming year. This involves societies contacting local Primary schools and arranging to speak to the classes after which the students would interview their Grandparents or relatives of that generation, about life when they were young. The students would then produce descriptions of these lives which would form an archive similar to the great national Folklore Project of the nineteen thirties. Full details sent to all societies.

Society Spake

Many societies' representatives spoke briefly on matters related to the operation of their own groups providing a widely varied insight into the operation of societies across the Country.

Joe Williams asked that the Federation issue a bulletin to societies giving information on all the local history websites and the site for the Hidden Gems project.

Brendan Cullen of Clane said the group had a very active year and outlined some talks that took place during the year. These included Ghost Stories; How to research your family Tree; The Book of Kells; The story of Richard Griffith, of "Griffith's Valuation" fame and the story of Distilling in North Kildare. He mentioned that the group's visit to Millicent House, the home of Richard Griffith, clashed with the Federation's AGM in Moate.

Kay Lonergan of Clontarf described a very successful event getting many local groups in their area to come along to Clontarf over a period of three days with memorabilia and photographs.

Maeve Maloney of Maynooth described a Geraldine's walk which included descendants of the Geraldine's, also the Maynooth Festival an evening of Maynooth events and among other events , a talk on Carton House.

Martina Griffen, Moate Society revealed that Moate Historical Society won first prize for a float in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. There was a talk on John Carney, RIC, Constable of Tralee

P.J. Lynn, N. Mayo, described much of their activities related to genealogy, and collecting Local History, examining local crafts particularly blacksmithing, and this year hosting the Bord Na Mona exhibition. He is searching on information concerning a 'Ram Pump' and particularly if anyone knows of an operational pump.

Dermot Rattigan of Rathcoffey described talks given including presentations on The Book of Kells and High Crosses of Ireland. There was also a very successful trip to Belfast. In 2010 they will celebrate the longest serving Barn Church in use for 300 years. For Heritage Day they had "mince pies and memorabilia".

Joe Williams of Clondalkin described a novel idea his society had in producing their season's programme on a bookmark which they then distributed widely. They also found great value in advertising in *History Ireland* as well as the *Irish Times* "What's On" column. They had talks on the 'Clondalkin Round Tower', 'The Boer War', 'Church St. Disaster of 1913' and Michael Fewer spoke on 'Doorways of Ireland'. They had a day outing to Lismore. And a walk through Georgian Dublin. On the last Friday of the month they simply arrange to meet at a local bus stop to see who turns up, and then go to various events from there.

Fohenagh Society – a new society represented by Frank Gavin, visited Clonbrock Estate and brought local children on a tour. Talks included 'Big Houses of East Galway'. They published a pamphlet on local items of interest. An evening event was "A Trip Down Memory Lane" with music, dance and Seanacai.

Betty Quinn of Old Drogheda Society described their wonderful local museum, also their creation of a €1,000 bursary on offer to local schools. They had four lectures from September to Christmas. Evening outings to local venues and involvement in the Walled Towns Network, and a visit to Avondale.

Clare Ring described her group walking on the canal route from Drogheda to Navan, their local booklets, talks on Palladian Architecture and Genealogy

Dorothy Donnelly of Foxrock described their arrangement for meetings whereby the main lecture is preceded by a short talk of 15 to 20 minutes, usually by a local member, and how this gives people a less rigorous transition into giving a public presentation. They have eight lectures in the season. Their main lectures included "Communications from Morse code to Twitter," "Dargan, The Railway builder", "The Sinking of the Rochdale and the Prince of Wales". Outings to Government Buildings, to The Writer's Museum, and this year the all day outing will be to Cahir Castle and the walled town of Fethard Co. Tipperary.

For Celbridge Catherine Boylan described visits including Ferns Cathedral and Wexford. They are also dealing with An Bórd Pleanála concerning proposed bridge and road developments detrimental to the town of Celbridge. They have good links with other groups notably in Northern Ireland.

John Doohar of The Federation For Ulster Local Studies (FULS), the sister federation to FHLS in the Republic, spoke about the joint FULS/FHLS trip to Brussels, and how the hiatus due to the volcanic ash resulted in greater bonding between the members. All those on the trip were indebted to The Irish College in Leuven for providing extended accommodation and great assistance with the emergency arrangements. He also mentioned the great co-operation between the two federations on projects like the Hidden Gems and exchange visits. He mentioned the need for members in the Republic to be vigilant and not to lose our great historical and cultural townland names as post codes come into use. He also referred to the great work of Pat Devlin on their web site and also on the site for the *Hidden Gems – Forgotten People* project

The meeting then broke for lunch in the Grand Hotel.

After lunch Fr. Jim Murray took the members on a guided and highly informative tour of Moate. This concluded the AGM of 2010 in Moate

Pádraig Laffan