

FEDERATION OF LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, MOATE — MAY 2010

Meetings:

Since our last AGM we have had three committee meetings. This is one short of our quota as we missed one due to members being caught in the air disruption as a result of the Volcano eruption. Collins Barracks, Dublin, continues to be our venue for meetings and these were generally well attended.

Joint North/South Activities:

This continues to be an integral part of our yearly programme. During the year the North/South sub committee met on four occasions, two in Drogheda and two in Belfast. The joint visit this year was north of the border with a memorable trip to Belfast City. The highlight of the day was a visit to the Government Buildings at Stormont Castle. The group had the privilege of dining in the members dining room. The afternoon saw both groups mix together on a guided bus tour of the City. The second venture was a joint visit to Belgium which included a sponsored tour of the European Parliament in Brussels. Staying in the Irish College in Leuven the group visited the West Flanders War Fields at Ieper, Medieval Bruges, Brussels, the Irish Peace Park at Messines and explored the beautiful University town of Leuven. There was, however, another twist in the tail as the group were stranded for an extra 5 days by the air disruption. However it did not deter the group and making the best of it and they managed to visit other places like Gent, Antwerp, Aachen, and revisit Brussels and Bruges. I have to say that without the help and hospitality of the Irish College, who took us back in again and looked after us, we would have been lost. No words can describe the debt of gratitude we owe them.

Projects:

Hidden Gems and Forgotten People. We feel that this was a major achievement by the Federation in 2009. We managed to document a total of almost 200 items from 20 Historical Societies representing 10 counties across the country. This represents a remarkable archive of local history, hitherto undocumented and accessible to the public on a unique website. I will talk a little more about this before we finish. Grandparent's Project. We are currently asking Groups to get involved in this very interesting project. The aim is to promote the interest in local history in our primary schools and make teachers and parents aware of the history societies in the locality. Members of the local history group will visit the 5th and 6th year classes to give a short talk on life in Ireland when they were young. The children will then ask their grandparents or parents to tell their stories and record them. Details and guidelines of this have been circulated to all groups.

History Review:

We are disappointed that we were not in a position to publish the Review before today's AGM. We have just not received enough material from across the societies to make it a national publication. We would ask again that societies revisit this and send on any articles to our Editor, Frank Taaffe.

Web:

Again we have to say that it is disappointing that we have not made the progress we had hoped for. We did manage to appoint a webmaster but unfortunately he was ill during the year and this seriously affected our progress. The good news is that Kieran has recovered and we plan to press forward with the revitalisation of the web as a means of communication.

Membership:

We are continuing to review our membership base in an attempt to update it, make the necessary corrections and help to encourage new members.

Joint Visit – 2010.

This will be to Naas, Co. Kildare, on Sat. 3rd. July. Details will be circulated closer to the date.

Thoughts for 2010- 2011.

Continue to encourage and promote the joint North/South activities.

Improve communications. Develop better use of the web and improve communications between HQ and members and also encourage more interaction between groups.

Further develop the data base of all federation member groups to include phone contact and e-mail addresses.

Encourage societies to use the local media, press and radio, to promote the local history message.

Recommend that groups within a county investigate the possibility of a county grouping to help stimulate group to group interaction or indeed look at the possibility of several regional groupings.

Organise an Autumn Seminar on a suitable topic of general interest.

THANKS:

Just like to say thanks to all the committee who have worked so hard and done a great job during the year and for their continued support .Also thanks to all the societies and their members for supporting the Federation in its activities. It is all very much appreciated.