

Chairman's Address AGM

Ladies and Gentlemen are most welcome to Galway and the Federation of Local History Societies AGM 2017.

## **Why Local History Matters**

The major processes and events of history, were made up of individuals, families, locals and communities, that all played their part in shaping and being shaped by history.

Above all, studying local history highlights the fact that history is all around you!!!

Promoting interest in local history is a corner stone activity for the federation, A joint venture undertaken with the Federation for Ulster Local Studies epitomises the prominence the Federation places on this ideal. The Hidden Gems project exemplified the fruits of working together to promote local history study' throughout the whole island of Ireland. Local history is to be found in every community, urban and rural, in every part of Ireland.

This project highlighted the need for those involved in historical societies, and the general public, to remain vigilant in protecting and recording local features and people of historical interest within their respective communities. It is imperative to preserve both the physical artefacts and information gathered for future generations.

Speaking at the Federation for Ulster Local Studies Hidden Gems and forgotten people launch in the central library in Belfast recently.

I alluded to a case in point, that a recent discovery a 17<sup>th</sup> Century castle which was found in Clones Co Monaghan in June 2016. The castle was "lost" for more than 250 years and has been rediscovered in the centre of a town. It was found behind a Georgian terrace known as **Castle Street**, which contains a building called **Castle House**. Shirley Clerkin Monaghan county heritage officer said, and I quote it shows

"when you start opening your eyes, looking afresh at things, you can rediscover really, really interesting buildings".

Sometimes Local familiarity, and the fact of being taken for granted, can prevent many of these gems becoming more widely recognised, and thus they can remain hidden from the rest of us. However each one has a story to tell and that story is part of our wider local history

History matters. And it doesn't have to be history on a world or national scale. You can reduce it down as far as you want. The history of your town, history of your parish.

In the overall scale of historical research I cannot but fail to mention the real importance of ORAL history, a primary source material recording and preserving the spoken word.<sup>2</sup>

Oral History makes a valuable contribution to the any local history collection, and can help to solidify the accuracy of local historical happening.

The Federation continues to seek ways for the promotion of interest in local history, we eagerly look forward to another eventual year of activity, as we continue in the promotion and popularisation of local history and heritage within our communities.

The Federation is currently working on developing and improving present committee structures, in order to improve its ability to deliver a better service to our membership and further develop its communication links with member societies. The federation is also anxious to expand its activities into the regions and assist local societies to hold open days and create awareness of the activities of the Federation.

To fulfil these plans I am anxious to recruit additional members on to committee who are interested in developing the federation ideals into the future

Organising Seminars and workshops are a key part of the education and training aspect the Federation offer to our member societies.

Plans are already being made for a workshop /seminar in Oct November, exploring modern history research methodology.

We endeavour to make these events relevant and meaningful to the needs of local history societies and their members. I would earnestly request that societies put forward suggestions to the Federation so that we can expedite the suggestion in line with the perceived needs of our membership

A special thanks to Martina Griffin our Vice Chair, Betty Quinn or Secretary-Mairead Byrne or Treasurer and of course the man of many parts Larry Breen PRO/ Journal editor etc

I would like to thank Eugene Jordan  
For his work in organising and developing our new IT platforms

I would also like to thank the officers and committee for their HARD work during the year and for the support they have afforded me in my first year as chairman, and I look forward to the future development of the federation, and I am confident that it will continue to impact as a resource, for every local history society throughout the country.

Finally

I look forward to your contributions and constructive inputs over the day

ENDS

