

# ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE



**ANNUAL REPORT 2006 - 2007**

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Published by the Ulster History Circle

# **ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2006 – 2007**

### **Introduction**

This is the first new-style annual report of the Circles's operations intended to draw together the main strands of its activities in the preceding year.

### **The Circle**

The Circle is voluntary organisation that places commemorative plaques all over Ulster, to honour of men and women who have contributed to its history. The Circle was set up over 20 years ago. It has no earning capacity or trust funds of any kind. Unlike similar UK bodies, who receive generous government grants, the Circle has to depend on Local Authorities, individuals and businesses to fund individual plaques.

The general rule is that a proposal to put up a plaque is not considered unless the person to be commemorated has been deceased for at least 20 years - less if the deceased person was born more than 100 years ago.

The blue plaques draw attention to the association of a building or a location with an individual who has distinguished him/herself in some manner. This encourages local communities to identify with the person concerned, encourages local pride and often stimulates associated activity such as summer schools, festivals, lectures, commemorative events, general tourism.

Our forward programme has over 100 individuals and more are identified every month.

### **Dictionary of Ulster Biography**

The Dictionary, written by Kate Newmann, published in 1993, has over 1,800 entries and covers the period from the earliest records until the first years of the 1990s.

The Circle has digitised the Dictionary with the permission of the author and publisher and it is available on-line at its own web address - [www.ulsterbiography.co.uk](http://www.ulsterbiography.co.uk)

### **Attendances**

The Circle met 13 times (including the Annual General Meeting, with the exception of the August meeting (held in the Reform Club, Royal Avenue) in the Ulster Museum. The Circle is grateful to the Museum for making accommodation available free of charge.

## **Ave Atque Vale**

In September 2006 Jimmy Hawthorne, the Circle's founder and Secretary, passed away after a short illness, greatly missed by all his friends and colleagues.

## **Plaques**

Eight plaques were unveiled during the year (three more than in the previous year)

-

James Bell Crichton VC	24 April 2006
Willaim Gibson	19 May 2006
Amy Carmichael	14 November 2006
Philip Larkin	17 November 2007
Sir Edward Coey	18 November 2006
Joe Bambrick	23 November 2006
James Magennis VC	17 January 2007
William Steel Dickson	14 March 2007

All the events were well-attended and received extensive media coverage.

Notes about the events, and photographs, are published on the Circle's website.,  
Missing Plaque

Despite many contacts over the year, the plaque for George Dickson, Rose Grower, which had disappeared from the Strangford Arms Hotel in Newtownards, has not yet been replaced and efforts continue to get the owner to co-operate.

## **New Plaques**

The following new candidates were identified –

Belfast's First Lying-in Hospital  
Charlotte Milligan Fox  
Magdalane King-Hall  
Paul Rodgers  
Francis Fowke  
Henry Lynn  
John Spenser Dunville VC  
WS McAloney VC  
Montgomery and Hamilton  
Margaret Crilly  
Sam Thompson  
Kelly's Cellars

## **Dictionary of Ulster Biography**

Following clearance QUB, as publisher, the Dictionary of Ulster Biography was moved to its own website in May 2006. Up to the 31 March 2007, the site had registered just under 3,200 visitors. During the year the Circle also agreed to purchase the copyright, subject to the required funds being made available by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### **Heritage Lottery Fund**

Following the submission of a revised application to the Fund it was decided that the payment and monitoring regime of the over £50,000 grant sought was too onerous for a small organisation and a fundamental review of the requirement was undertaken. In consequence, a new application with scaled down plans was submitted in March and at the end of the year was under consideration by the Fund.

### **Other matters**

#### *National Grid for Learning:*

The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta), following a review of its website design and content, discontinued the National Grid for Learning. However, the Ulster History Circle's website continues to be available to teachers through the Agency's main website.

#### *Trade Mark:*

An approach has been made to have the Circle's logo and blue plaque design registered as a trademark. By the end of the year no progress had been made.

### **Financial Report**

The audited Accounts are attached.

28 April 2007

**ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE  
BALANCE SHEET  
2006 - 2007**

	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05
<b>Opening Balance <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>£2,852.31</b>	<b>£1,393.87</b>	<b>£1,403.23</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Grants Received <sup>(2)</sup>	£4,600.00	£3,350.00	£4,266.23
Other income <sup>(3)</sup>	£700.00	£0.00	£323.68
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£5,300.00</b>	<b>£3,350.00</b>	<b>£4,589.91</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Plaque Manufacture and fitting	£4,570.80	£1,554.53	£4,003.25
Plaque replacement and repair	£152.75	£0.00	£0.00
Bank Charges	£24.80	£23.56	£166.02
Postage	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Printing and Stationery	£60.00	£0.00	£0.00
Meeting Expenses	£312.33	£152.85	£120.00
Travel	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Internet Charges <sup>(4)</sup>	£270.00	£19.98	£235.00
Insurance <sup>(5)</sup>	£0.00	£36.00	£50.00
Membership Fees <sup>(6)</sup>	£30.00	£30.00	£25.00
Other expenses <sup>(7)</sup>	£10.00	£74.64	£0.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£5,430.68</b>	<b>£1,891.56</b>	<b>£4,599.27</b>
<b>Uncleared Cheques</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£66.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>Closing Balance at Bank</b>	<b>£2,721.63</b>	<b>£2,918.31</b>	<b>£1,393.87</b>

**Notes (2006-2007):**

- (1) Taking account of £66 uncleared cheque 2005-2006  
(2) Samuel Beckett, Sarah Grand, William Steel Dickson, Edmund de Wind, Philip Larkin, Joe Bambrick, Sir Edward Coey and James Magennis VC  
(3) Agramatics (NI) and McFall Family (James Crichton VC)  
(4) UTV (2 years) for ulsterhistory.co.uk and Easily.co.uk for ulsterbiography.co.uk  
(5) Not incurred due to FULS financial difficulties  
(6) FULS  
(7) Refund of GRO charge

I have examined the Annual Accounts of the Ulster History Circle for 2006 - 2007 as supplied to me and on the basis of the information contained therein I am satisfied that they constitute a true and accurate record of the Circle's finances for that period.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

09 June 2007

# THE YEAR'S EVENTS

In the following pages are short biographies of the people honoured with a blue plaque in the year under review, and where available, a report of the ceremonies.

The Circle wishes to record its thanks to those bodies who generously supported the Circle in its work. We hope to continue to work constructively with them in the future.

## Sponsors

**Belfast City Council:** Joe Bambrick, James Magennis VC

**Newtownabbey Borough Council:** Sir Edward Coey

**North Down and Ards Borough Council:** Amy Carmichael, William Steel Dickson

**Banbridge District Council:** William Gibson

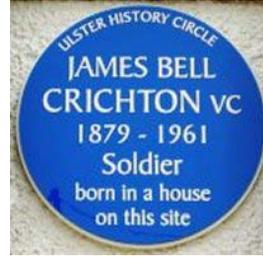
**Queen's University Belfast:** Philip Larkin

**Agromatics NI and the McFall Family:** James Bell Crichton VC

# JAMES BELL CRICHTON VC

Soldier

1879 - 1961



James Crichton was born at Carrickfergus on 15 July 1879. Before emigrating to New Zealand he served with the British Cameron Highlanders, and saw active service in South Africa. He enlisted in the 1st New Zealand Expeditionary Force on 22 August 1914 and embarked for Egypt in October of that year as a Corporal in the N.Z. Army Service Corps. He served on Gallipoli from October to December, 1915, and left for France in April, 1916, as a Company Quartermaster Sergeant.

In April, 1918, while serving as a Warrant Officer with 1st N.Z. Field Bakery, he voluntarily relinquished his rank and transferred as a Private to the Auckland Infantry Regiment. He won his Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty near Crevecoeur, France, on 30 September 1918. His citation reads as follows.

*"Although wounded in the foot, he continued to advance with the troops, despite difficult canal and river obstacles. When his platoon was subsequently forced back by a counter-attack, he succeeded in carrying a message. This involved his swimming a river and crossing an area swept by machine-gun fire before he subsequently rejoined his platoon. Later, he undertook on his own initiative to save a bridge which had been mined, and although under close fire of machine guns and snipers, he succeeded in removing the charges, returning with the fuses and detonators. Though suffering from a painful wound, he displayed the highest degree of valour and devotion to duty." (London Gazette, 12 November 1918).*

Crichton returned to New Zealand in June 1919 and was discharged in September of that year. In 1937 he attended the Coronation of King George VI as a Sergeant in the N.Z. Coronation Contingent. He died in Auckland on 27 September 1961 and is buried in the Soldiers' Cemetery at Waikumete, Auckland.

**Location of plaque:** Premises of Weston Engineering 75 Woodburn Road, Carrickfergus

**Date of Unveiling:** 24 April 2006

## 24 April 2006 - Blue Plaque Unveiling - James Bell Crichton VC

The Ulster History Circle joined with Carrickfergus Borough Council to celebrate the life and achievements of two Carrickfergus men who had the distinction of winning the Victoria Cross.



The guests assemble in front of the newly-unveiled plaque

The unveiling of the Circle's Blue Plaque at the site of James Crichton's former home on the Woodburn Road was followed by the unveiling of two panels in the town's Museum and Civic Centre, one to James Crichton and the other to Daniel

Cambridge who had received his VC at its first ceremony in 1857, having served in the Crimean war, where he won his award.

The Crichton Plaque was sponsored by Edward McBrien of Weston Engineering, on whose premises the plaque was erected and by the McFall Family. Mr McBrien was represented by his Manager, James Ross. The Royal British Legion was well represented by Ernie Scott, Chairman SE Antrim District, George Horner, President of Carrickfergus District, Alan Hamilton - also Vice Chairman of the Borough Council (who played the Last Post) and William Hamill, Chairman of the Council. The Mayor, David Hilditch, Deputy Mayor Eric Ferguson, Councillor Isobel Day and Helen Rankin were present. Helen Rankin delivered the address at the unveiling of the commemorative panels in the Museum.



Sounding the Last Post

There were many members of James Crichton's family at the ceremonies. These included Catherine and John Ogilby, Mary McFall and her friend Patricia Dalzell, Margaret Patterson, Rita Howes and George and Meta Robinson.

From the Ulster History Circle were Doreen Corcoran (Chairperson), James Hawthorne, Jim Crawford, Victor Price and Patrick Devlin. Doreen introduced the family and spoke of the life and work of James Bell Crichton, reading out the citation of his award.

# WILLIAM GIBSON

## Goldsmith and Philanthropist

### 1838 - 1913



William Gibson was born in 1838, the son of a small farmer in Drombroneth, Dromore. As a small boy he was apprenticed to his brother-in-law, James Crozier, who had an establishment in North Street, Belfast. At age 27 he set up his own business, first in North Street and then in Castle Junction at Gibson's Corner. His range widened to include silver and gold objects of very high quality. He exhibited in the U.S.A. and Paris, where he won prizes. He had his own registered assay mark. He presented elaborate silver cups to the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society and the new mace for Belfast Corporation, first used in 1913 for the tercentenary of the granting of the its Charter by James I. He also presented Queens University with a gold mace in 1909 to commemorate its new status as a University. Both maces are still in use today.

The business expanded rapidly and was eventually formed into a limited company with premises in Regent Street London which ultimately became the Goldsmith and Silver-smith company, the leading jewellery firm in the UK, producing goods of the highest quality. The company was acquired by Mappin and Webb for whom the late James Warwick, Headmaster of Belfast College of Art worked as a designer before World War II. Mappin and Webb was take over by Garrards, the present (2006) Crown Jewellers. He purchased the farm in Drumbroneth, Dromore where he had been born, and built a large house there, Drumbroneth House, in which he lived while on business trips to County Down

Gibson in his will set up The Gibson Trust Fund. The scholarships, for the promotion and encouragement of education in agriculture and the cultivation and management of land for profit, are awarded to undergraduates and postgraduates of Queens University who were born in Northern Ireland. Preference is given to students born in County Down or County Antrim

Gibson died on the 1st November 1913 at Hove, Sussex.

**Location of plaque:** Drumbroneth House, Dromore

**Date of Unveiling:** 19 May 2006

## 19 May 2006 - Blue Plaque Unveiling - Willaim Gibson

It was a fine May afternoon for the unveiling of a blue plaque to one of County Down's illustrious sons at his former home, now owned by Victor and Norma Shields who graciously hosted the event. The Ulster History Circle was represented by Jimmy Hawthorne, Sean Nolan, Victor Price, Jim Crawford and Pat Devlin. Councillor Jim McIlroy, Chairman of Banbridge District Council, which had sponsored the plaque, attended in his official capacity and when the time came performed the ceremony.

Also present were representatives of the Dromore Historical Society; John Davis, Queen's University; Walter Smyth, The Gibson Trust; Brian King of RUAS and his wife, Rev. Sam Peden and Raymond Kelly whose Count Down website profiled many local worthies including William Gibson and who had come over from Scotland to see



Cllr. Jim McIlroy, Chairman of Banbridge District Council, unveils the plaque



The guests gather for the group portrait after the ceremony

him honoured. The Plaque was sponsored by Banbridge District Council. The official proceedings were opened by Tom Shields. Jimmy Hawthorne gave a brief account of the Ulster History Circle's work and mentioned that there were two other plaques in the area, to Helen Waddell and John B. Yeats. He thanked the Banbridge Council for their sponsorship and Victor and Norma Shields for their hospitality. Sean Nolan spoke briefly about William Gibson and his achievements and Jim McIlroy unveiled the plaque.

After the splendid repast provided by Victor and Norma the company dispersed well satisfied with a impressive event, well attended, humourous and convivial.

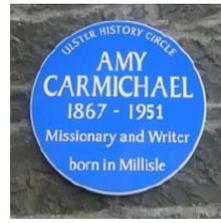


Victor and Norma Shields

# **AMY CARMICHAEL**

## **Missionary and Writer**

### **1867 - 1951**



Amy Carmichael was born on 16 December 1867 in Millisle, the oldest of three sisters and four brothers. When her father, a mill owner died the family moved to Belfast where Amy became involved in the city mission work that awakened in her a desire for missionary service. With the blessing of the chairman of the Keswick Convention she made her way to the mission field, starting in Japan.

In 1893 she served the Japanese mission as 'Keswick missionary' developing health problems the following year. Despite these she journeyed to India in 1895, joining the fiery Rev. Thomas Walker of Tinnevely District in 1896. In 1897 she formed the evangelizing 'Woman's Band', taking in the first woman refugee the following year and the first girl refugee the year after that. In 1900 she moved to Dohnavur. It was there that she realized her life's work - rescuing children from the 'secret' Hindu practice of temple prostitution. Dohnavur Fellowship, the name of her organization, was soon actively involved in the rescue, care, feeding, and education of hundreds of children. She and her co-workers, primarily converted Indian women, adopted Indian dress and voluntarily forsook marriage for the sake of their work. This eventually became the Sisters of the Common Life - a Protestant religious order.

The years 1903 to 1912 were years of growth. 1912 brought recognition from Queen Mary. In 1916 Amy founded the 'Sisters of the common Life', a spiritual support group. In 1918 she took in first baby boy, being awarded Kaiser-i-Hinds Medal for service to India. In 1925 she broke ties with all mission societies after a takeover attempt. In 1929 a hospital was added. In 1931 she was injured by a fall. In 1935 her health worsened and she became bed-ridden. A fall in 1948 immobilized her. She died 18 January 1951 and is buried at Dohnavur.

Amy's published works included 'Things as They Are' (1903), 'Gold Cord' her Dohnavur Fellowship history (1932), 'Windows' (1937) and 'Though the Mountains Shake' (1943), both Dohnavur Fellowship updates.

**Location of plaque:** Baptist Church Millisle

**Date of Unveiling:** 14 November 2006

# PHILIP LARKIN

Poet

1922 - 1985



Philip Arthur Larkin was born on 9 August 1922, in Coventry, the only son of Eva and Sydney Larkin. He attended the City's King Henry VIII School between 1930 and 1940 where he helped to edit the school magazine, *The Coventrian*. He went to St. John's College, Oxford, graduating in 1943 with a First Class Honours in English.

The first of his poems, *Ultimatum*, was published in *The Listener* in November 1940. In June 1943, three of his poems were published in *Oxford Poetry*. In November 1953 he was appointed Librarian at Wellington, Shropshire.

In 1945, ten of his poems, which later that year would be included in *The North Ship*, appeared in *Poetry from Oxford in Wartime*. Two novels, *Jill* and *A Girl in Winter* were published in 1946 and 1947 respectively.

In 1946, Larkin was appointed assistant Librarian at the University College of Leicester and in October 1950, he became Sub-Librarian at Queen's University, Belfast, where, in 1951, he privately published a small collection, *XX Poems*.

He was appointed Librarian at the University of Hull in March 1955, and it was in October of that year that *The Less Deceived* was published. It was this collection that would be the foundation of his reputation as one of the foremost figures in 20th Century poetry. In 1965 he was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. He edited the *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*, which was published in 1973. His last collection *High Windows* was published in 1974. *Aubade*, his last great poem, was published in *The Times Literary Supplement* in December 1977. A collection of his essays and reviews in November 1983 as *Required Writing: miscellaneous pieces 1955-1982*, won the W.H. Smith Literary Award for 1984.

In 1975 he was awarded the CBE. He chaired the Booker Prize Panel in 1977, was made Companion of Literature in 1978, and served on the Literature Panel of the Arts between 1980 and 1982. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Library Association in 1980. In 1982 the University of Hull made him a Professor. In 1984 he received an honorary D.Litt. from Oxford University, and was elected to the Board of the British Library. In 1984 he declined the position of Poet. In 1985 he was admitted to hospital and when he was awarded the Order of the Companion of Honour he was unable, because of ill health, to attend the investiture. He died on 2 December 1985.

**Location of plaque:** Old Library, Queen's University, Belfast

**Date of unveiling:** 17 November 2006

## 17 November 2006 - Blue Plaque Unveiling - Philip Larkin

It was raining heavily and very cold as we gathered at an early hour to honour Philip Larkin and celebrate his time in Belfast in the early 1950s. The Circle had been planning the event for years, and had foreseen a leisurely process. However a fortuitous combination of circumstances, including the presence of Larkin's biographer and Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion, led to a flurry of activity culminating in a month's work being compressed into a few days.



Doreen Corcoran sets the scene



Andrew Motion unveils the plaque

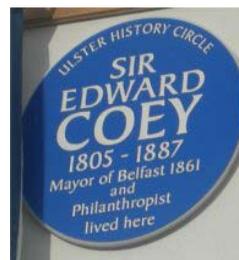


Pro Vice Chancellor Gerry McCormack, Jill McKnight, Ian Hill,  
Andrew Motion and Victor Price

## SIR EDWARD COEY

Mayor of Belfast 1860 and Philanthropist

1806 - 1887



Born in Larne in 1805, into a family with strong Ulster-Scots Presbyterian roots, Sir Edward Coey was one of the generation of visionary businessmen who helped make Belfast one of the most prosperous manufacturing centres in the world during the industrial revolution of the 19th century.

Coey started off as an apprentice butcher but his entrepreneurial flair quickly became evident and by the 1830s, in partnership with his brother James, he was the proprietor of the enormously successful 'Northern Shoe & Boot House' in the centre of Belfast.

Coey soon tired of the trade, sold out and, for a time emigrated to America. There as his brother James later recalled, he "got a smell of the ham trade" and in 1841 came back to Belfast where he established a provisions and curing business, Coey & Co. Ltd, which operated from 21-29 Gamble Street in the docklands area of the city. Coey's pioneering American-style cured ham and bacon was an instant success and by 1846 additional premises had been acquired. As the company prospered it provided a lucrative foundation for a host of other entrepreneurial activities. Coey accumulated a portfolio of business and residential property in Belfast, London, Liverpool and in the United States.

Coey for many years represented the St George's Ward in south Belfast as a councillor and later an Alderman of the city. Although a member of the influential Liberal Party, Coey opposed Gladstone's efforts to give Ireland Home Rule as being detrimental to Ireland's economic well being and its place within the British Empire. Nevertheless with the support of such local Liberal personalities as Thomas Gaffikin (1811-93) and the Catholic master baker Bernard 'Barney' Hughes (1808-78), Coey became the first and only Liberal Mayor of Belfast in 1861. The same year he was knighted for his public works, and in 1867 was appointed Deputy Lieutenant of County Antrim and High Sheriff for the prefecture. He was also a Borough Magistrate in Belfast, member of the Grand Jury and Belfast Harbour Commissioners and in July 1869, was one of the eight founding subscribers of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, an organisation that still survives.

As his prosperity increased, Coey shared his great wealth with the less fortunate through an association with various Belfast charitable associations include the Belfast Charitable Society, Presbyterian Orphan Society, the Presbyterian Sabbath School.

He was Patron of the Belfast Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Belfast Sailors Home in Corporation Street. He was also a Patron of the Malone Protestant Reformatory, Lisburn Road, a life Governor of the Belfast Royal Hospital, then located in Frederick Street, as well as a Governor of the Belfast District Hospital for the Insane Poor (Lunatic Asylum), Falls Road, and Belfast Ophthalmic Hospital, the Eye and Ear Dispensary in Great Victoria Street. Membership of the Belfast Poor Law Union, which operated the city Workhouse, was another of his philanthropic interests.

The most enduring testament to his extensive philanthropy is undoubtedly the Grammar School in his home town of Larne which he co-founded in 1886 with John Crawford, making an initial £1,000 endowment. Situated on the Lower Cairncastle Road, it occupies a beautiful location with stunning views across the town of Larne to the sea and the hills of Wigtownshire in Scotland beyond, the site secured at a rent of one shilling a year for ten thousand years.

Coey invested substantially in his new residence, which was originally built in 1799, and installed his Coat-of-Arms in a window at the head of the grand stairs, where it remains today. He died at Merville on 27 June 1887.

**Location of plaque:** Merville House, Newtownabbey

**Date of Unveiling:** 18 November 2006

## 18 November 2006 - Blue Plaque Unveiling - Sir Edward Coey

The only Liberal Mayor of Belfast, a pioneer food processor magnate, benefactor of many good causes - all aspects of Sir Edward Coey, whose memory was marked with a blue plaque at his home, Merville House in Newtownabbey, where he lived between 1855 and his death in 1887. The project had been initiated by Stephen Hamilton of Melville Residents Association, who had approached the Ulster History Circle, and backed by the Newtownabbey Borough Council, which had sponsored the plaque.



Mrs Mary McBride (GGG-Neice of Sir Edward), Councillor Lynn Frazer, Mayor of Newtownabbey and Councillor Ruth Patterson,

her made a substantial donation. The school attendees were the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Albert Wilson, the Principal, Mr John Wilson and three senior pupils, Catherine Semple, Ashley Thompson and Adam Young.

The unveiling ceremony was unusual, with three participants, representing - Sir Edward's family (in the person of his great great great niece Mrs Mary McBride); Newtownabbey Borough Council (through Councillor Lynn Frazer, Mayor) and Belfast City Council (Councillor Ruth Patterson, Deputy Mayor). Other dignitaries present were Councillors Vera McWilliams and Paula Bradley, respectively Chair and Vice Chair of Newtownabbey's Arts and Heritage Committee and Samantha Curry, Heritage Officer.

Also represented at the ceremony was Larne Grammar School, for which Sir Edward had donated the land for its construction and to which he had later



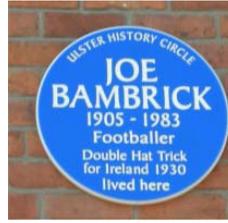
Adam Young, Ashley Thompson and Catherine Semple, all of Larne Grammar School



Councillor Lynn Frazer, Catherine Semple, Ashley Thompson, Adam Young, Mrs Mary McBride and Councillor Ruth Patterson

# JOE BAMBRICK

Footballer  
1905 - 1983



When Northern Ireland beat Wales 7-0 at Celtic Park Belfast on 1 February 1930, the undoubted man of the match was centre-forward Joe Bambrick who scored a double hat-trick, an unprecedented achievement which has never been equalled by any other international footballer in the seventy-five plus years since.

Chided by the defeated Welsh goalkeeper afterwards for 'six kicks of the ball and you get six goals', the usually taciturn Bambrick corrected him. 'Wait a minute, Taffy, one of them was a header', he said.

A week later a local soft drinks producer marketed a beverage which they called 'Joe Six' to mark his feat.

During his football career Bambrick was credited with almost 1,000 goals and his prolific scoring ability was encapsulated in a fully justified couplet: 'Head, heel or toe, Slip it to Joe'.

The rhyme originated with Eddie Matthews, another Linfield player, who cried out 'slip it to Joe' while coming round after an operation for a knee injury. In the same ward at the Royal Victoria Hospital was a music hall comedian, who turned the cry into a catchphrase for his act at the Empire Theatre.

The football memory Bambrick cherished most himself, however, was the 1929/30 Irish Cup final when he scored all the goals in a 4-3 Linfield victory over Ballymena United.

In December 1930, his career was threatened when he slipped coming out of the bath at Windsor Park, Belfast and put his hand through a pane of glass but skilled surgeons were able to repair the injury and enable him to continue playing.

Joseph Gardiner Absolom Bambrick was born in Burnaby Street, in the Grosvenor Road area of Belfast on 3 November 1905. When he was five the family moved nearby to 219 Roden Street, where he would live for the rest of his life.

His football career started with the junior teams Bridgemount, Ulster Rangers and Broadway before he joined local top-flight football with Glentoran in 1926/27, scoring 44 goals in 37 appearances.

Linfield then managed to prise him away from their greatest rivals and he notched up an incredible 81 goals for them during the 1927/28 season. He succeeded even this

profligacy two seasons later when he hit 94 goals, including his amazing double-hat-trick for the national team.

His scoring consistency attracted the interest of the big British clubs and on Christmas Eve 1934, Chelsea paid Linfield the then astronomical transfer fee of £2,500 for him, of which the player received £750. Over the next few years he made 66 appearances for them and scored a total of 37 goals, for two seasons being the club's leading scorer. Among the most memorable performances was his four goal contribution to a 7-1 defeat of Leeds in early 1935.

He moved to Walsall in 1938 but after 35 appearances, in which he scored 5 goals, he decided to return home after the outbreak of the Second World War and rejoin Linfield, rekindling an association that would see him move progressively from playing to coaching to scouting and enjoy distinction as one of the club's immortals for the rest of his life.

Despite his double-hat-trick record, he only played for Northern Ireland a total of 11 times scoring just another six goals, one of them an equaliser thirty minutes into his debut match against England on 22 October 1928, although the team finally lost 2-1.

Malcolm Brodie, the former Sports Editor of the Belfast Telegraph, knew Bambrick in the latter stage of his life: 'There was never any sign that he had been a super-star of the 1920s and 1930s when achieving soccer fame was much more difficult than now. Not from him any prima donna gestures. He was shy, reticent, droll.'

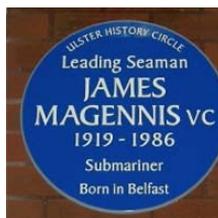
Bambrick, who never married, died on 13 October 1983, aged 79.

**Location of plaque:** 219 Roden Street, Belfast

**Date of unveiling:** 23 November 2006

# JAMES JOSEPH MAGENNIS VC

Submariner  
1919 - 1986



James Joseph Magennis was born on 27 October 1919 at 4 Majorca Street, Belfast. He attended St Finian's School, Falls Road, Belfast until 1935, when he enlisted in the Royal Navy. He served on several warships before being posted to HMS Kandarhar in October 1939. In May 1940 he saw action in the North Sea and later served in the Mediterranean. In December 1941, when his ship was sunk by a mine off Tripoli, he had to swim to safety.

In December 1942 Magennis entered the Submarine Service and volunteered for special service in X-class 'midget' submarines, training as a diver. In September 1943 he took part in the first major use of the X-craft when two submarines penetrated Kaafjord, north Norway, and disabled the German battleship Tirpitz. For his part Magennis was mentioned in dispatches.

In 1944 Magennis was promoted to leading seaman and trained on a new class of XE submarines designed for use in tropical waters. Early in 1945 his unit was sent out to Australia. In July 1945 they attacked two Japanese cruisers, Myoko and Takao, moored in the Johore Strait. Magennis's submarine, XE3, was given the Takao as target. For their part in the operation Magennis and the commander of the submarine, Lieutenant Ian Fraser, were each awarded the Victoria Cross. The formal citation reads -

*The King has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Victoria Cross for valour to Temporary Acting Leading Seaman James Joseph Magennis, D/KX144907. Leading Seaman Magennis served as diver in His Majesty's Midget Submarine XE3 for her attack on 31 July 1945 on a Japanese cruiser of the Atago class. Because XE3 was tightly jammed under the target the diver's hatch could not be fully opened, and Magennis had to squeeze himself through the narrow space available. He experienced great difficulty in placing the limpets on the bottom of the cruiser owing both to the foul state of the cruisers bottom and to the prominent slope upon which the limpets would not hold. Before a limpet could be placed therefore Magennis had thoroughly to scrape the area clean of barnacles, and in order to secure the limpets he had to tie them in pairs by a line passing under the cruisers keel. This was very tiring work for a diver, and he was moreover handicapped by a steady leakage of oxygen which was ascending in bubbles to the surface. A lesser man would have been content to place a few limpets*

*and then to return to the craft. Magennis, however, persisted until he had placed his full outfit before returning to the craft in an exhausted condition. Shortly after withdrawing Lt. Fraser endeavoured to jettison his limpet carriers, but one of these would not release itself and fall clear of the craft. Despite his exhaustion, his oxygen leak and the fact that there was every probability of his being sighted, Magennis at once volunteered to leave the craft and free the carrier rather than allow a less experienced diver to undertake the job. After seven minutes of nerve racking work he succeeded in releasing the mine carrier. Magennis displayed very great courage and devotion to duty and complete disregard for his own safety.*

Magennis's award led to a period of great celebrity just after the war. He was given a civic reception in December 1945 and the £3000 proceeds of a public subscription. However, the Belfast city fathers refused to grant him the freedom of the city. In 1946 Magennis married Edna Skidmore. He left the navy in 1949 and returned to Belfast, where he found it hard to make a living and in 1952 sold his medal for £100.

Magennis left Belfast after his son David, six, was killed by a trolley bus, settling in his wife Edna's home town, Bradford, west Yorkshire in 1955. He died of cancer in 1986, aged 66.

Magennis is commemorated by a memorial in his adopted home of Bradford. In October 1999, following a lengthy local campaign, a 6 foot-high Portland stone and bronze memorial to him was unveiled in the grounds of Belfast city hall. There is also a mural to him in Tullycarnet Estate in East Belfast

**Location of plaque:** RNA club Gt Victoria St, Belfast

**Date of unveiling:** 17 January 2007

## 17 January 2007 - Blue Plaque Unveiling - James Magennis VC

Councillor Diane Dodds, MLA, tonight unveiled a blue plaque to Leading Seaman James Magennis VC at a well attended ceremony at the Royal Naval Association premises in Gt. Victoria Street, Belfast. The plaque was sponsored by Belfast City Council



Councillor Diane Dodds, MLA, addresses the company, with Mrs Doreen Corcoran, Chair of the Ulster History Circle

Leading Seaman Magennis, born in Belfast, undertook a hazardous mission to destroy a Japanese cruiser on 31 July 1945 in the Jahore Strait, using a midget submarine. It proved to be an extremely difficult and dangerous endeavor and an exhausted Magennis afterwards placed himself in the way of harm to free the submarine from an obstruction that could have endangered the crew.

Councillor Dodds said that she was privileged to carry out the unveiling as the debt owed to such brave

men could not be repaid.

After the ceremony the RNA laid on truly splendid refreshment and the convivial event continued for some time



The colour party



Cllr. Dodds unveils the plaque

Old salts enjoying the occasion



# WILLIAM STEEL DICKSON

United Irishman  
1744 - 1824



Born on 25 December 1744, William Dickson was the eldest son of John Dickson, a tenant farmer of Ballycraigy, Carnmoney, Co Antrim. He received his early education from the Rev. Robert White, the Presbyterian Minister of Templepatrick. In Glasgow University he studied under Adam Smith and John Millar. Pastor of Ballyhalbert in 1871 and Portaferry 1780, in 1793 he was chosen Moderator by the Synod of Ulster.

An enthusiastic member of the Volunteers he was a strong and consistent advocate of immediate Catholic emancipation and of parliamentary reform. He took an active part in the political campaigns of Robert Stewart Sen. - later Lord Londonderry (1781) and the young Robert Stewart - later Lord Castlereagh (1790).

When in 1791 the Society of United Irishmen was formed in Belfast. Dickson became a member. In 1798 he was reputed to have been Adjutant General of the County Down forces and, while this was never proved, he did not deny it. On 5 June 1798, two days before the attack on Antrim that started the Rebellion in Ulster, Dickson was arrested in Ballynahinch. Not charged with any offence, he was moved, in August of that year, to a prison ship in Belfast Lough where he remained until transferred, with the other State Prisoners from Dublin to Fort George in Inverness, Scotland. Set free on 13 January 1802 he found himself without employment until he was called by the new Congregation of Second Keady and installed in March 1803.

His campaign to clear his name from the imputations of being implicated in treasonable or seditious practices leveled at him by the Synod of Ulster in 1799 succeeded when, in 1813, a meeting of the Synod declared that the words were inaccurately used of him. In 1812 he published his "A Narrative of the Confinement and Exile of William Steel Dickson, DD". In 1815 he resigned from his congregation and retired to Belfast where he died on 27 December 1824. He is buried in Clifton Street burying ground.

Dickson surviving written works are a testament to his progressive mentality and his detestation of the arbitrary abuse of power by government. His was the driving force in the spread of the gospel of liberalism, from which the United Irishmen derived much of their strength.

**Location of plaque:** Portaferry Presbyterian Church

**Date of unveiling:** 14 March 2007

## 14 March 2007 - Blue Plaque Unveiling - William Steel Dickson

A fine spring afternoon, turning cooler as the day went on, greeted the guests to the unveiling of a blue plaque in commemoration of a former Minister of Portaferry Presbyterian Church.



Doreen Corcoran, Chair of the Ulster History Circle , starts the ceremony .

Amy Anderson, President of the Upper Ards Historical Society, gave a short talk about Steel Dickson, his involvement in the United Irishmen movement, his internment and subsequent life. The group then fell on the magnificent repast prepared by the congregation and consumed it with gusto (not 'a sauce', more 'with relish').



Doreen Corcoran, Chair of the Ulster History Circle; Amy Anderson, President of Upper Ards Historical Society; Angus Carson, Mayor of North Down and Ards Borough Council, John McMullan, Rev. David Gray and Jeannie Croskerry, Portaferry Presbyterian Church

**Ulster History Circle April 2007**