ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE®

ANNUAL REPORT 2008 - 2009

Accepted as a charity by HM Revenue & Customs under reference XR81640

ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE®

ANNUAL REPORT 2008- 2009

Copyright © Ulster History Circle 2009

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means; electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the express written permission of the publisher.

Published by the Ulster History Circle

Heritage
LOTTERY FUNDED

Introduction
The Ulster History Circle is a small, voluntary, not for profit organisation that places commemorative plaques in public places, in towns and villages all over Ulster, in honour of men and women who have contributed to the Province's history. The Circle is recognised as a Charity by HM Revenue and Customs.

The Circle was formed in the 1980s to fill what was believed to be a gap in the celebration of our history - the kind of history that all can share. The Constitution is set out in Appendix 4. The work is entirely voluntary and we have no earning capacity or trust funds of any kind. Unlike similar bodies in the rest of the United Kingdom, who receive generous government grants, we 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.

As an integral part of its work to commemorate eminent people, the Circle in 1996 digitised the entire contents of the *Dictionary of Ulster Biography*, which is available on its own website. This should to be a useful reference source to schools and colleges and to anyone interested in finding out about the province's past. It is referenced on the website of the Oxford University Library Services. A new and updated on-line Dictionary is being developed to replace the current one.

The Report
This report of the Circle's operations draws together the main strands of its activities in the year to March 2009.

After an extremely busy previous year when 20 plaques were erected (itself a major increase on our average of six), the current period proved a quieter one in that circumstances reduced the opportunities to complete the planning process for many of our pending projects. With over 30 plaques in the pipeline we managed to finalise only six. The reasons for the reduction were varied, none of them to do with funding; mostly difficulties in pinning down exact locations and finalising arrangements with property owners.

Plaques
Six plaques were unveiled during the year (14 less than in the previous year) -

Luke L. Macassey	- Belfast
Sarah Grand	- Donaghadee
Lady Mabel Annesley	- Castlewellan
Edward Bunting	- Belfast
Sir William Whitla	- Belfast
George Sheils	- Carnlough

Short biographies of the recipients, and photographs of the events, are published on the Circle's website, and in Appendix 3.

Future Programme
As the year ended, planning for 16 new plaques was well advanced, with funding secured. An additional 15 plaques were at earlier planning stages.

Trade Mark
The Circle's name was registered as a trademark.

Missing Plaque
As reported last year, the plaque for George Dickson, Rose Grower, which had disappeared from the Strangford Arms Hotel in Newtownards, has not yet been replaced. Efforts continue to have the plaque re-erected in its former position.

Membership Attendance

The Circle met 13 times, including the Annual General Meeting. Two new members joined during the year; John Dooher and Peter Cavan. One member, Marian Ferguson, resigned due to the pressure of her work. The Circle wishes to thank Marian for her contribution while she was a member. The record of individual attendance is shown below. Mere attendance (travel and work requirements permitting) is not an indication of input (some members are unable to travel to the meetings) and members' contributions in research and support are counted in other ways – see page 6.

Name	Possible attendance	Actual attendance
Doreen Corcoran - *Chairman*	13	11
Sean Nolan – *Secretary*	13	11
Pat Devlin – *Treasurer*	13	11
Marian Ferguson	10	3
Annesley Malley	0	0
Wesley McCann	13	11
Jim Crawford	13	9
Trevor Parkhill	13	4
Victor Price	13	13
Chris Ryder	0	0
Chris Spurr	13	6
John Dooher	10	5
Peter Cavan	9	8

Heritage Lottery Fund

The 'Celebrating Achievers' project covers a number of different but related strands. The agreed aims and outcomes, with progress to date, are set out in Appendix 1.

Dictionary of Ulster Biography

During the year the Dictionary's web site www.ulsterbiography.co.uk had over 3,000 visitors in the year to March 2009.

Work on the new on-line edition of the Dictionary made substantial progress during the year. There were three main strands –

a. The current dictionary did not identify occupation or calling of the listed individuals. Since one of the aims of the new dictionary is to permit search by this criterion as well as others such as name, pseudonym and dates of birth or death, an individual was contracted to extract and record this information.
b. The current dictionary, as the first to attempt to identify individuals worthy of inclusion, was remarkably successful. However, given the scope and scale of the task it was inevitable that there were some omissions. Also, we needed to identify those who had died since 1993, when the dictionary was published. The Circle contracted with an individual to carry out this task with the result that over 350 people were identified for possible inclusion. This task is not complete and it will also be an ongoing task to update the dictionary regularly.
c. Following the compilation of a detailed specification, tenders were sought from two website developers for the development of an on-line dictionary which would incorporate the entries in the existing dictionary, allow for the additional of the missing features and additional material, allow for the continuous addition, amendment and deletion of new biographical material and permit full search by name or pseudonym, dates, occupation or calling, location and author. Following evaluation of the tenders, which included interviewing the prospective contractors, Kpoint Solutions, Warrenpoint were selected in September 2008. Good progress was made and detailed development and testing continued beyond the end of the period under review. Given the time needed need to upload and amend the existing dictionary details, and to begin the task of adding additional material, it is likely to be the end of 2009 before the dictionary will be ready for launch.

Blue Plaque Guide
In agreement with the Heritage Lottery Fund it was agreed to reduce the number of editions from three to two, the first edition concentrating on the first 100 plaques erected by the Circle. As the year ended the 100th plaque had just been unveiled and work can begin on design and production of the published Guide. It was recognised that professional help would be needed for this phase and identification of such assistance was underway.

Leaflets
The general Ulster History Circle leaflets have been distributed and consideration of more targeted leaflets was under consideration.

Outreach Programme
The Circle decided that in future, where possible, local historical societies should be involved in the planning of unveiling events and has engaged with them in local arrangements and publicity. We are in the process of planning a major project designed to offer Circle members to address local society meetings -

a. to increase awareness of what we are seeking to do;
b. to demonstrate how our objective of preserving and widening knowledge of historical personalities, local as well as national and international, is fully in tune with the thrust of their own work; and
c. to encourage them to greater co-operation with and participation in the Circle's activities.

In addition, the Circle has given talks to a number of organisations including the Rotary Club, Business and Professional Women's Association, Probus Clubs and Mother's Union, initially in the east Antrim area, that we intend to build on over the next year.

Society Website
The Society's web site www.ulsterhistory.co.uk was updated continuously. In the year it received 4,800 visitors. Over 8,100 of the biography pages and 2,100 of the events reports were viewed.

Financial Report
The Circle's Accounts are in Appendix 2.

Conclusion
On behalf of the Circle I would like to say how much we appreciate the generosity of our sponsors, the Heritage Lottery Fund, City and District Councils, individuals and organisations without whose help and support the Circle could not have continued the work of honouring the many distinguished people from the Province who are exemplified by those remembered this year.

Doreen Corcoran – Chairman **May 2009**

APPENDIX 1
CELEBRATING ACHIEVERS PROJECT

AGREED AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Aims	Measure of Success	Progress to Date
We will research and erect 50 Commemorative Plaques in honour of men and women who have made significant contributions to the advancement of ideas and the benefit of society, particularly in such fields as the arts and sciences, industry, religion, sport and public and community service.	By the end of the project 50 plaques will have been erected	Twenty six Plaques erected by 31 March 2009.
We will research, compile, document and maintain on its own website an up-to-date Dictionary of Ulster Biography.	A revised edition of the Dictionary will be available on the internet	IT Development contract awarded following tender evaluation and work nearing completion by 31 March 2009
We will develop a comprehensive Outreach Programme connecting with schools, universities and other educational institutions, local history societies, community development organisations, tourism interests and museum and arts organisations to create wider involvement, interest and direct, co-operative participation in our work.	A comprehensive Outreach programme will have been successfully implemented	Some progress made in planning and a number of outreach meetings held, mainly in the Carrickfergus and Belfast areas, to begin with.
We will research, compile and publish a Blue Plaques Guide containing information about each plaque and a range of leaflets about the Circle and about individuals which would include details about the sources of further and more comprehensive material about the subject.	Three editions of the Booklet will have been published. A range of appropriate leaflets will be available in a wide range of outlets throughout the province.	Agreed with HLF to reduce editions to two. Draft guide available, needs additional work before production. General leaflet printed and distributed. Work ongoing on range of leaflet types.
We will work pro-actively with the Tourist Board and other organisations to promote the plaques and our associated resources as a social and cultural tourism asset for the entire community and visitors and to stimulate interest in the individuals commemorated by means of associated publications, tours, visits, lectures and seminars.	Extensive and effective liaison and co-operative arrangements with the Tourist Board and other appropriate organisations will be operating effectively	Not yet begun
We will exploit ongoing trends and developments in multi-media technology to maintain and further develop the Ulster History Circle Website as an easily accessible resource for the entire Northern Ireland community and a stimulus for tourists and others interested in exploring our history and heritage.	The Circles websites will provide an enhanced range of information of use to tourism, further and continuing education and to those interested in exploring our heritage and history.	When new on-line Dictionary is available later in 2009, the existing websites will be rationalized and enhanced.

APPENDIX 2

FINANCIAL REPORT 2008- 2009

Accounts

The Income and Expenditure account, for the year is attached.

Grants Received

The Society is grateful to the following for sponsoring blue plaques during the year.

From	Amount
Institution of Professional Engineers	£700
Strabane District Council	£400
Friends of Stewart Parker	£252
Heritage Lottery Fund *	£21,070

* Remainder of first grant instalment. Also covers expenditure other than plaques.

Financial Code of Practice

The Code of Practice, adopted by the Circle at its meeting on 5 November 2004, sets out officers' roles and responsibilities and the processes of record maintenance, budgetary control, financial reporting, account preparation and audit.

ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE
INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2007-2008

		2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Opening Balance at Bank		**£22,859.81**	**£3,296.21**	**£2,852.31**
	Deficit in Petty Cash 1 April 2008	£24.07		
INCOME				
	Grants Received (1)	£1,100.00	£36,694.25	£4,600.00
	Other income (1)	£262.03	£10.00	£700.00
	TOTAL INCOME	**£1,362.03**	**£36,704.25**	**£5,300.00**
EXPENDITURE				
	Plaque Manufacture and fitting	£4,848.20	£11,773.61	£3,996.22
	Plaque replacement and repair	£164.51	£41.13	£152.75
	Bank Charges	£35.31	£32.68	£24.80
	Postage	£47.01	£38.46	£0.00
	Printing and Stationery (2)	£1,161.41	£110.12	£60.00
	Meeting Expenses (3)	£675.45	£548.45	£312.33
	Travel (4)	£546.00	£18.00	£0.00
	Audit Fees	£600.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Internet Charges (5)	£149.68	£163.06	£270.00
	Insurance (6)	£42.00	£32.00	£0.00
	Equipment (7)	£1,648.35	£735.57	£0.00
	Membership Fees (6)	£30.00	£30.00	£30.00
	Catering (8)	£357.45	£0.00	£0.00
	IT Contract (9)	£1,900.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Other expenses	£85.10	£3,067.06	£10.00
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**£12,290.47**	**£16,566.07**	**£4,856.10**
	Petty Cash	£28.41		
	Uncleared Cheques	£47.65		
Closing Balance at Bank		**£11,926.54**	**£22,859.81**	**£3,296.21**
	Payments due (10)	£2,200.00		
	Bills outstanding	£0.00		
Notes:	(1) Institution of Civil Engineers, Glenelly Historical Society and Friends of Stewart Parker			
	(2) Includes leaflets and Annual Report			
	(3) Accommodation and refreshment costs at monthly meetings			
	(4) Visits to service suppliers, potential sites and some launch events			
	(5) Service charges for two websites plus email			
	(6) Membership of FULS and PL Insurance Costs			
	(7) Digital camera, portable computer, video projector and screen			
	(8) Light refreshments at unveiling events			
	(9) For classifying the existing dictionary, compiling potential entries since 1993 and first stage payment for website design			
	(10) Outstanding invoices for events			

ALLOCATION OF COSTS

GENERAL ACCOUNT			**LOTTERY FUND GRANT** [9]	
Carried forward from 2007/08		**£22,859.81**	**£21,070.62**	
INCOME				
	Grants Received [1]	£1,100.00	£0.00	
	Other income [2]	£262.03	£0.00	
	TOTAL INCOME	**£1,362.03**	**£0.00**	
	TOTAL RESOURCES	**£24,221.84**	**£21,070.62**	
EXPENDITURE				**Allocation**
	Plaque Manufacture and fitting	£4,848.20	£2,793.08	As appropriate
	Plaque replacement and repair	£164.51	£0.00	n/a
	Bank Charges	£35.31	£17.66	50%
	Postage	£47.01	£23.51	50%
	Printing and Stationery	£1,161.41	£1,029.71	50% **
	Meeting Expenses	£675.45	£313.15	50%
	Travel	£546.00	£546.00	100%
	Audit Fees	£600.00	£600.00	100%
	Internet Charges	£149.68	£132.34	50%
	Insurance	£42.00	£21.00	50%
	Equipment	£1,648.35	£1,648.35	100%
	Membership Fees	£30.00	£0.00	n/a
	Catering	£357.45	£357.45	100%
	IT Contract	£1,900.00	£1,900.00	100%
	Other expenses	£85.10	£85.10	As appropriate
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**£12,290.47**	**£9,467.33**	
BALANCE	(Resources minus Expenditure)	**£11,907.30**	**£11,603.29**	

Tracking expenditure: Tracking the expenditure of the Lottery Fund is not straightforward. Some costs are directly attributable e.g equipment, plaque manufacture and fitting where no other sponsor is involved. Other costs are shared e.g. printing, stationery and postage, meeting costs, bank charges, insurance etc. Some are not attributable e.g. membership fees, plaques with other sponsors only etc. The above table shows the effect of this approach in relation to the estimated expenditure against the grant.

Voluntary Input: The Circle is required by the arrangements with the Heritage Lottery Fund to collect data on the extent and cost of the voluntary input of the Circle members in delivering the programme. No account is taken of the voluntary help made available by other organisations and individuals. Obtaining this information is far from easy since members do not routinely collect it. Each month members provide a rough estimate of their input under different headings. Based on these returns the following table sets out the estimated cost of the voluntary activity involved in the year. It is an underestimate but does give an indication of the value of such effort. The cost of travel is additional to that paid in respect of Lottery funded activity

SUMMARY		
Hours	1962	£49,050.00
Miles	1919	£768.00
Calls	936	£93.00
Letters	264	£660.00
TOTAL		**£50,571.00**

APPENDIX 3

THE YEARS EVENTS

The following pages contain short biographies of the people honoured with a blue plaque in the year under review. Photographs from the events are included.

	Page
Luke L. Macassey	8
Sarah Grand	9
Lady Mabel Annesley	10
Edward Bunting	11
Sir William Whitla	12
George Sheils	13

MACASSEY, LUKE LIVINGSTONE (1843 – 1908) | Civil Engineer and Barrister

Luke Livingstone Macassey was born in Carickfergus in 1843. He studied engineering in England and Belfast before setting up as a Consulting Engineer in Rosemary Street in 1871.

During the nineteenth century the population of Belfast grew from 22,000 in 1807 to 270,000 in 1890. Such a leap in population created many problems, one of which was the increasing need for a reliable supply of water for domestic and industrial use. During the century there were several outbreaks of cholera and many deaths from typhoid.

Belfast Lord Mayor, Jim Rodgers, before unveiling the plaque

In 1840 the Belfast and District Water Commissioners body was set up with the express purpose of ensuring such a supply. In 1874 they appointed Macassey as their consultant hydraulic engineer. He designed and built reservoirs above Carrickfergus and Lisburn that were sufficient for Belfast's needs until the 1890, when it became clear that drastic action was required.

In 1891 the Commissioners instructed Macassey to advise on the position. He investigated five possible sources of water supply and ruled out four of them, including Lough Neagh. He recommended that a virtually inexhaustible supply from the Mournes be implemented in two stages. Firstly, a pipeline supply directly from the Annalong and Kilkeel rivers followed by storage reservoirs to be built later. His proposals were accepted.

The pipeline began to deliver water to the Knockbracken reservoir in the 1905 and after a monumental struggle the Silent Valley reservoir was completed in 1933. Belfast has had a plentiful water supply ever since.

In the mid-1880s Maccassey became a Barrister with a large parliamentary practice in Westminster. At the same time he moved his practice to Chichester Street. He also authored three books, on law and water supply.

Macassey died after a short illness on 9 May 1908 at his home in Cadogan Park, Belfast. His professionalism and foresight has made an incalculable contribution to the development, prosperity and health of Belfast over the past one hundred years.

Sean Nolan, Ulster History Circle, Mark Lowry, Lord Mayor and Philip Donald

Location of plaque: 7 Chichester Street, Belfast

Date Unveiled: 9 May 2008

GRAND, SARAH (1854 - 1943) | Novelist and Suffragette

Born *Frances Elizabeth Clarke* at *Rosebank*, Millisle Road, Donaghadee, Co. Down on 10 June 1854 of English parents, she was sent to English boarding school at fourteen and at sixteen eloped with thirty-nine year-old naval surgeon, David Chambers McFall. They had one son, David Archibald Edward and lived in the Far East, Norwich and Warrington before separating after which Sarah moved to London to pursue her own career.

Her first book, *Two Dear Little Feet* was published in 1873. Her novel *The Heavenly Twins* (the first of what came to be known as 'new woman' novels), published under the pseudonym *Sarah Grand* was rejected by numerous publishers because of the frank way it dealt with the effects of the spread of syphilis from men to their wives and children.

When eventually published in 1893 it created a sensation and was reprinted six time in its first year. It was condemned on moral grounds but defended by Mark Twain and George Bernard Shaw. The novel changed Frances' life and and created the new persona, *Sarah Grand* (often called *Madame Grand*), the matriarch, the beautiful female prophet.

Mayor Jim Fletcher

Her later works include *Our Manifold Nature* (1894), short stories. Her autobiographical novel, *Beth Book: A study in the Life of a Woman of Genius* (1897) sold 20,000 copies in its first week, *Adnam's Orchard* (1912) and *The Winged Victory* (1916).

Guests, including Lady Sylvia Herman, MP, Mayor Jim Fletcher and house owner Morris Reid

She was an active member of the Suffragette movement, lecturing in America. Mark Twain and George Bernard Shaw both held her in high regard. She moved to Bath in 1920 and was Lady Mayoress on six occasions between 1922 and 1929.

In 1942, when a bomb damaged her home, she moved to Caine, Wiltshire where she died on 12 May 1943. She is buried in Lansdown Cemetery, Bath.

Location of plaque: *Rosebank* 8 Millisle Road, Donaghadee, Co Down

Date Unveiled: 5 September 2008

ANNESLEY, LADY MABEL (1881 - 1859)| Artist and Wood Engraver

Mabel Marguerite, daughter of the fifth Earl Annesley, was born in the family's London home on 25th February 1881, but always regarded Castlewellan Castle in Co. Down as her real home. She was educated privately, but from the age of fourteen also studied at the Frank Calderon School of animal painting in London. At eighteen she was elected a member of the Belfast Art Society and exhibited with the Society for many years, as well as at numerous other venues. She married a naval officer, Gerald Sowerby in 1904; they had one son, Gerald (1904-1992). Her husband died in 1913, and a year later she inherited the Castle following the deaths of her husband and father, after which she resumed the name of Annesley.

Diane Egerton, Lady Mabel's biographer

She first learned the technique for which she became best known, wood engraving, at the Central School in London when she was about forty, and soo n became regarded as one of its three or four leading exponents in Britain, especially in the field of book illustration (along with people like Gwen Raverat and Robert Gibbings). From the Ulster point of view, her illustrations of works like Richard Rowley's *Apollo In Mourne* are particularly notable; she and William Conor also designed the costumes for a pageant which Rowley wrote in celebration of the 1500th anniversary of St Patrick's landing in Ireland, performed at Castleward in 1932. In 1939 she presented the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery with a fine collection of contemporary wood engravings, including twenty of her own works.

Victor Price, Ulster History Trust, Prof. Patrick Murhy, Heritage Lottery Fund, Diane Egerton, Cllr. Eamon O'Neill and Doreen Corcoranl

Ill health, from which she regularly suffered, did not prevent her from producing a continuous stream of artistic work, nor indeed from moving house several times: She lived in Connemara and in Rathfriland, Co. Down, as well as in England. During the Second World War, when Castlewellan was taken over for military purposes, she was bombed out of her Belfast house and emigrated to New Zealand, where for a number of years she was a trustee of the Bishop Suter Art Gallery in Nelson, South Island.. She exhibited in the Festival of Britain in 1952, and returned to England for good the following year, settling in Suffolk, where she died in 1959. She was buried in Long Melford. She left behind a remarkable, if unfinished autobiography *called As The Sight Is Bent*, which was published by the Museum Press with quotations from her equally remarkable letters filling in the gaps.

Annesley's work is represented in the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and the National Gallery of New Zealand in Wellington, as well as in Belfast, Nelson and many other places.

Location of plaque: Entrance to Arboretum, Castlewellan Forest Park

Date Unveiled: 26 September 2008

BUNTING, EDWARD (1773 – 1843) | Folk Music Collector

Edward Bunting was born in February 1773 at Armagh, the youngest of the three children of a mining engineer at Dungannon colliery in Coalisland. In 1782 he went to live with his organist brother Anthony in Drogheda, continuing his musical education. In 1784 he moved to Belfast as apprentice to William Ware, organist at St Anne's. There he rapidly demonstrated his musical talent, becoming deputy organist, and, although still a boy, coached many of Ware's adult pupils.

Bunting lodged for the next thirty-five years in Donegall Street with the McCracken family. In 1792 a festival of the last of the great Irish harpers was held in Belfast in the Assembly Rooms (later Northern Bank), and Bunting was given the task of copying their music which he eventually published in three volumes. In the early years of the nineteenth century Bunting promoted several successful series of concerts in the town. St Anne's was the only church in Belfast at that time with an organ, but in 1806 a second Presbyterian Church was built (demolished 1964) and, contrary to the usual practice in Presbyterian churches, an organ was installed. Bunting was appointed as the church's organist. It was here that in 1813 he organised a great music festival at which a large portion of Messiah was performed for the first time in Belfast.

Cllr Michael Browne, Belfast City Council unveiling the plaque to Bunting

Chris Spurr, JohnnybDooher, Victor Price and Sean Nolan, All Ulster History Circle, and Jane Williams, Heritage Lottery Fund

In September 1817 after a dispute with the church he was asked to hand over the key of the organ and he became the first organist of St George's. In 1819 he brought the men of the two Dublin cathedrals, Christ Church and St Patrick's to St George's to chant the service and sing anthems and excerpts from Messiah. In the same year he married and moved with his wife to Dublin. He was organist at St Stephen's, and later also a partner in a music warehouse. In 1827 he secured a well-paid position as organist at St George's.

Although he was an intimate of the major figures in the Society of United Irishmen of the period, Henry Joy McCracken, Thomas Russell and Wolff Tone, Bunting avoided political entanglements.

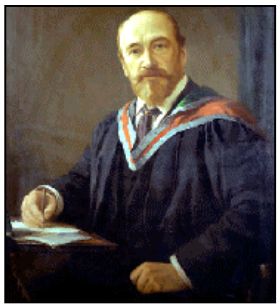
Without Bunting's work our knowledge of tunes and techniques would be immeasurably poorer. Bunting's own musical abilities were considerable. In 1795, on Wolfe Tone's last night in Ireland, his rendition of 'The parting of friends' reduced Mrs Tone to tears.

On 21 December 1843, mounting the stairs at home, he suffered a heart attack and died within an hour. He is buried at Mount Jerome cemetery in Dublin.

Location of plaque: St George's Church - High Street, Belfast

Date Unveiled: 17 December 2008

WHITLA, SIR WILLIAM (1851 – 1933) | Physician and Philanthropist



William Whitla was born on 13 September 1851 in Monaghan. He was educated at the Model School there, and, after a brief spell working for his chemist brother James, in Monaghan, he moved to Belfast to the work in Messrs Wheeler and Whittaker, dispensing chemists, at 37 High Street. He studied medicine at Queen's College Belfast and in Dublin and Edinburgh, after which he joined the staff of the Belfast General Hospital, Frederick Street, Belfast (which received the Royal Charter in 1875) as Resident Medical Officer, for one year. He spent some time in St. Thomas' Hospital, London, where in 1876 he married Miss Ada Bourne. Between 1877 and 1882, when he became a consultant physician, he was Assistant Physician to the Belfast Charitable Society. About this time he was accepted an honorary appointment to the Belfast Hospital for Women and Children.

In 1882 he was appointed Physician to the Belfast Royal Hospital in Frederick Street where he was to remain a visiting members of the staff, and later of the Royal Victoria Hospital, until 1918.

In 1890 Whitla was appointed Professor of Materia Medica at Queen's College, Belfast. He built an international reputation on several remarkably successful textbooks, e.g Elements of Pharmacy, Materia Medica and Treatment (1882) and A Dictionary of Treatment (1892), which were translated into many languages, including Chinese. The income from these, from his private practice and from private sources made him in his time probably one of the wealthiest professors on the staff and much of his wealth eventually was left to Queen's. He was twice president of the Ulster Medical Society (1886-7, 1901-2) and in 1909 was elected President of the British Medical Association. As Pro-Chancellor of Queen's he represented the University in Parliament from 1918 to 1922 having been knighted in 1902 for distinction in medicine. From 1884 to 1906 he lived and practised at 8 College Square North, moving in that year to Lennoxvale, while retaining the professional house in College Square. He was appointed honorary physician to the king in Ireland in 1919.

During his life his gifts to his profession included the Good Samaritan stained glass window in the Royal Hospital, and a building for the Ulster Medical Society. On his death he left Lennoxvale to Queen's University as a residence for the vice-chancellor. He died at Lennoxvale on 11 December 1933.

Belfast Lord Mayor Tom Hartley unveils the plaque

Doreen Corcoran, Chairman Ulster History Circle, with the Lord Mayor and Professor Peter Gregson

Location of plaque: Sir William Whitla Hall, QUB

Date Unveiled: 25 February 2009

SHIELS, GEORGE (1881 – 1949) | Playwright

George Shiels was born near Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, on 24th June 1881. He emigrated to America as a young man. There, an accident while working on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1913 confined him to a wheelchair for life. He returned to Ballymoney, where he opened a shipping agency with his brother and began to write stories based, to begin with, on his experiences in America. For a time he used the pen-name George Morshiels.

His first play, *Away from the Moss*, was staged by the Ulster Literary Theatre in 1918, and this was followed by *Felix Reid* and *Bob and The Tame Drudge*, both in 1919. In 1921 The Abbey Theatre in Dublin staged his one-act comedy *Bedmates*. His first major success was *Paul Twyning* (1922), and his popularity with Dublin audiences did much to restore the theatre's fortunes. His plays were equally successful in Belfast's Group Theatre.

Much of Shiels' work can be simply categorised as kitchen comedy, and plays such as *Professor Tim* (1925) and *The Old Broom* (1944) are constantly performed in the amateur theatre. He was a shrewd observer of the changing world around him. *The New Gossoon* (1930) skilfully recorded the impact of radio, cinema, dance hall and the internal combustion engine had on traditional rural life.

Group after the unveiling

When he turned to tragedy, as in *The Passing Day* (1936), Shiels could be equally effective. Originally a radio play, it uses flashback technique to portray the miserly life of a small merchant; Tyrone Guthrie revived the work for the 1951 Festival of Britain. *The Rugged Path* (1940), which has a record-breaking run at the Abbey, and its companion piece *The Summit*(1941) contrast a tyrannical mountainy clan with law-abiding lowland farmers, and question the traditional Irish revulsion towards informers.

Roma Tomelty, Jane Williams, Heritage Lottery Fund, Lord Mayor, James Ellis, Doreen Corcoran and Roy Beggs

In 1932 success as a playwright enabled him to give up business in Ballymoney and he moved to 'New Lodge' in Carnlough. A modest man, he refused an honorary degree from Queens University and membership of the Irish Academy of Letters. He died on 19th September 1949 and was buried in Ballymoney.

Location of plaque: 14 Shingle Cove, Carnlough, Co Antrim

Date Unveiled: 5 March 2009

CONSTITUTION

(As amended by AGM 11 May 2007)

1. Title

The name of the Circle is "The Ulster History Circle" (hereinafter called "the Circle").

2. Aims

The aims of the Circle are

i. to erect commemorative plaques in public places in honour of men and women who have made significant contributions to the advancement of ideas and particularly in such fields as the arts and sciences, industry, religion or sport;

ii. to expand public knowledge of oft-neglected aspects of our history and to increase, through visible and permanent plaques, public awareness of cultural and historical strengths; and

iii. to co-operate with other historical and architectural groups with a view to promoting interest in the study of our history.

3. Membership

The Circle is non-political and non-sectarian. Membership shall be open to all who subscribe to its aims, are admitted to membership by the Circle, and who pay the membership fee.

4. Meetings

i. The Circle will meet at least eight times a year.

ii. Notification of meetings of the Circle, specifying the business to be transacted, shall be transmitted by post, or email, to all members seven clear days before the said meeting.

iii. All meetings of the Circle shall be called by the Secretary or Chairman or by such other of its members as the Circle may decide.

iv. The meeting in May will be deemed the Annual Meeting. The business of the Annual Meeting shall include presentation of the minutes of the previous annual meeting, reception of the report for the previous year and the audited accounts of the Circle; agreeing the annual subscription; election of Officers and the appointment of the honorary auditor.

v. In the absence of the chairman, the Annual meeting shall be chaired by such other member as may be temporarily elected by those present.

vi. At any meeting each member shall have one vote, except that in the event of a tie, the chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

vii. The quorum for any meeting shall be five.

viii. In any matter of the interpretation of the constitution the decision of the Chairman shall be final.

ix. If any member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without apology, or alternatively at least six meetings in a twelve-month period, it will be open to the Circle, entirely at its discretion, to terminate that individual's membership without further explanation.

5. Officers

The Officers of the Circle shall be the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. With the exception of the Chairman, one person may undertake both of the other Offices.

6. Finance

i. The Treasurer shall keep a full record of the income and expenditure, and the assets of the Circle. The accounts of the Circle shall be audited annually and presented to the members at the Annual Meeting.

ii. If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Circle there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, including the repayment of any unspent grants or donations given for the erection of specific plaques or other Circle activities, any property or assets whatsoever, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Circle, but shall be given to or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Circle, and which similarly prohibits the distribution of its or their income or property among its or their members, such institution or institutions to be determined by the Circle members within three months of the resolution passed initiating the winding-up, failing which, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to such provision, then to such other charitable objects as the Circle shall decide

7. Amendment to the Constitution

i. Amendments to the constitution may only be made at an Annual Meeting, provided that notice of motion to propose any such amendment has been given in writing to the Secretary at least fourteen days before the date of the meeting.

ii. No amendment shall be made to the constitution of the Circle unless approved by two-thirds of the members present and entitled to vote.

APPENDIX 5

COMPLETE LIST OF PLAQUES

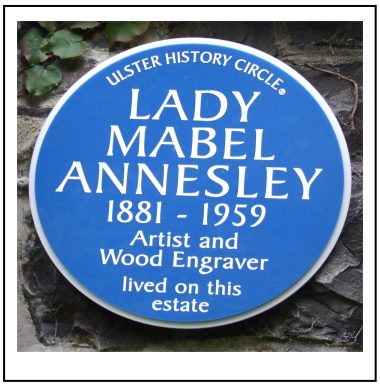
Alexander, Cecil Frances- Londonderry
Andrews, Thomas – Belfast
Annesley, Lady Mabel - Castlewellan
Bambrick, Joe - Belfast
Beckett, Samuel - Enniskillen
Black, Dr Samuel - Newry
Bland, Lilian – Carnmoney
Bunting, Edward - Belfast
Byers, Margaret - Belfast
Cambridge VC, Daniel - Carrickfergus
Campbell, Joseph - Belfast
Carey, Joseph William - Belfast
Carmichael, Amy – Belfast & Millisle
Cary, Joyce - Londonderry
Clarke (nee Crilley), Margaret - Newry
Coey, Sir Edward - Newtownabbey
Conor, William - Belfast
Coyle, Kathleen - Londonderry
Crichton VC, James Bell - Carrickfergus
Crolly, William - Downpatrick
De Wind VC, Edmund – Comber
Dickson, George - Newtownards
Dickson, William Steele - Portaferry
Dill, Field Marshall Sir John - Lurgan
Dillon, Gerard - Belfast
Drennan, William - Belfast
Dunlop, John Boyd - Belfast
Eaton, Timothy - Ballymena
English VC, Lt. Col. William John - Belfast
Evans, E Estyn – Belfast
Ewald, Clara - Belfast
Ferguson, Henry George (Harry) - Belfast
Foster, Vere Henry Lewis - Belfast
Gibson, William – Dromore, Co Down
Grand, Sarah - Donaghadee
Green, William Alfred - Belfast
Henry, Paul - Belfast
Hewitt, John Harold - Belfast
Herzog, Chaim - Belfast
Hugenot Community - Lisburn
Hughes, Barney - Belfast
Hucheson, Francis - Saintfield
Johnston, James - Belfast
Irvine, Alexander - Antrim
Kelvin (Lord), of Largs - Belfast
King, John – Moy, Co Tyrone
Lanyon, Sir Charles - Belfast
Larkin, Philip - Belfast
Lavery, Sir John - Belfast
Lever, Charles - Portstewart
Lewis, Clive Staples - Belfast
Lucas VC, Charles Davis - Poyntzpass
Luke, John - Belfast
Lynd, Robert - Belfast
McAdam, Robert Shipboy - Belfast
Mac Aingil, Aodh - Downpatrick
McCabe, Thomas & William Putnam – Belfast
Macassey, Luke L. - Belfast
McCaughey, Samuel - Ballymena
Macoun, John - Magheralin
McCracken, Henry Joy - Belfast
McCracken, Mary Ann - Belfast
McLaverty, Michael – Killard, Co Down
McKimm, Charles - Belfast
MacNeice, Louis - Belfast
Magee, Martha - Londonderry
Magennis VC, James Joseph - Belfast
Marconi, Gugliamo - Ballycastle
Marshall, W.F – Sixmilecross, Co. Tyrone
Middleton, Colin - Bangor
Monaghan, John 'Rinty' - Belfast
Murray, Sir James - Belfast
Nichol, Andrew - Belfast
Noble, Margaret - Dungannon
O'Byrne, Cathal - Belfast
Phillips, H.B. - Londonderry
Pottinger, Sir Henry - Belfast
Praeger, Robert Lloyd - Holywood
Praeger, Rosamond - Holywood
Rowley, Richard - Belfast
Staples, Sir Richard P. Bt. Cookstown
Ritchie, William - Belfast
Robert the Bruce – Rathlin Island
Rodgers, Paul - Carrickfergus
Russell, George William – Lurgan
Sheils, George - Carnlough
Society of United Irishmen - Belfast
Stewart, George Vesey – Martray, Co Tyrone
Sullivan, Robert - Holywood
Swift, Jonathan – Ballynure
Thompson, Hugh - Belfast
Trollope, Anthony - Belfast
Waddell, Helen - Banbridge
Walton, Ernest - Belfast
White, Sir George – Portstewart
Whitlaw, Sir William - Belfast
Wilde, Oscar - Enniskillen
Wilson, Guy -
Yeats, John B. - Banbridge
Young, James - Belfast

ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE®

The blue plaques draw attention to the association of buildings with individuals who have distinguished themselves in some way. This encourages local communities to identify with the people concerned, encourages local pride and often stimulates local activity such as summer schools, festivals, lectures, commemorative events and general tourism.

By actively involving local communities and schools in the plaque research and siting process, we are creating new opportunities to explore and learn about heritage issues.

Plaques erected in 2008 - 2009



Ulster History Circle **May 2009**