# Annual Report and Accounts 2017-2018

Daniel J Lawton, US Consul General, his wife Paula Hawkins and Archbishop Eamon Martin with members of the Ulster History Circle.

Registered as a charity with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland: NIC100124

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## Members of the Ulster History Circle 2017-2018

**Officers:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr Chris Spurr | *Chairman* |
| Dr Myrtle Hill | *Vice-Chair* |
| Mr Alan Boyd | *Secretary* |
| Mrs Mairead Ferguson | *Treasurer* |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr Peter Cavan | |
| Mr Paul Clements | |
| Dr Peter Collins | |
| Sir Peter Froggatt | *(Resigned May 2017)* |
| Mr Richard Froggatt | *Editor: The Dictionary of Ulster Biography* |
| Mrs Maud Hamill | |
| Mr Liam Logan | |
| Mr Anthony Lundy | |
| Mr Leslie McKeague | |
| Mr Trevor Parkhill | |
| Mr Brian McKeown | *(from 28th February 2018)* |

This report covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018. There was a total of 11 committee meetings held and additionally, the Annual General Meeting took place in May prior to the regular monthly meeting.

## A Background Note

*The Ulster History Circle (the Circle)* was founded over thirty years ago by James Hawthorne CBE, the Controller of BBC Northern Ireland. Observing how people of achievement were often commemorated elsewhere by plaques, he realised there was no universal scheme in place locally to celebrate those persons whose achievements had made a significant contribution to the history of Ulster. Mr Hawthorne considered there was an opportunity for a blue plaque programme and his inspiration created *The Ulster History Circle*. The first Circle plaque was to the artist William Conor and is on Stranmillis Road, Belfast, opposite Botanic Gardens.

Since this beginning in the early 1980s, the Circle has put up over 230 plaques to celebrate achievers, in every county and city in Northern Ireland, and in many towns and villages too. There are nine Circle plaques in the Republic of Ireland, four in Co Donegal, two in Co Monaghan and three in Co Cavan. Every year the blue plaque programme continues to expand, thanks to those who support its activities. There is no similar body within the whole island of Ireland doing what the Circle does. With no monies of its own, *The Ulster History Circle* relies on finance from outside funders, and its activities depend on the efforts of its members, a wholly volunteer working committee, which has a number limited by constitution, to twenty.

## Annual Report 2017-2018 Foreword

Shortly before the end of March 2018 *The Ulster History Circle* unveiled our 231st blue plaque, the fifteenth in this past year across the wide breadth of Ulster from counties Donegal to Down. Our plaque unveilings attracted hundreds of guests and dozens of dignitaries, and over the year the Circle has commemorated persons renowned for their achievements across scholarship, music, sport, the church, stage and film, poetry, civil engineering, writing, heroism in war, peace advocacy, and caring medicine.

Amongst those supporting our events this year were Foras na Gaeilge; Music in Fermanagh; the Patrick O'Connell Memorial Fund; the Diocese and parishes of Clogher; Derry City and Strabane District Council; Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; the Ulster-Scots Agency; Newry Maritime Association; Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, and Belfast City Council. To all these supporters and funders, the Circle extends our thanks.

Many plaque unveilings have created a high public profile and the Circle is acknowledged as being skilled in adeptly managing these large scale events, and for achieving extensive press coverage for them across broadcast and print media. The Circle's plaques to Eoin MacNéill, to John Joseph Hughes, to Havelock Nelson, and to Saidie Patterson had, respectively, a senator, an archbishop, a lord mayor and a baroness unveiling the plaques. The Circle continued our commemoration of anniversaries linked to World War I, and across the year plaques were unveiled to Francis Ledwidge, Robert Hill Hanna VC, and James Duffy VC.

Our plaque unveilings regularly attract significant community recognition, and alongside the events already mentioned, the commemorations of Joan Trimble, Patrick O'Connell, Mabel Colhoun, Patrick Magee, Francis Ledwidge, Robert Hanna, Charles Blaney, James Duffy, Charles Duff, Margaret Anderson, and Mrs E.H. O'Doherty were supported by family members not only attending the event but also performing the honour of unveiling the individual plaques. Talks, exhibitions, readings and entertainment have been associated with many plaque unveilings, and thus have contributed significantly to further awareness of the persons commemorated. In what is now our annual pattern, International Women's Day 2018 was marked by a Circle plaque to a woman of achievement, the peace activist and trade unionist, Saidie Patterson.

Our plaque programme has many future projects planned, but the Circle always welcomes new proposals. However, as we have no monies of our own, obtaining assured funding remains a major consideration, however appropriate a plaque suggestion might be.

None of the Circle's success could be achieved without the support of our volunteer members, who attend our busy monthly meetings, there generously sharing their expertise and knowledge to help the Circle's work to progress. All these colleagues deserve the greatest of thanks for the efforts they contribute both to our plaque programme and elsewhere across our various outreach activities. To discover more about our work, I encourage you to read the information included in this Annual Report, or to access our website at www.ulsterhistorycircle.org.uk

Without the many funding bodies that support our work we would cease to function. The Circle is especially grateful to those heritage groups and other individual bodies which have raised funds locally, and have given generous support to many of our guest receptions after the plaque unveilings.

*The Dictionary of Ulster Biography* represents another important part of the Circle's work, and its entries complement the persons commemorated by our plaques. The Dictionary is much broader in scope than the plaque programme, and offers a rich and continually expanding base of entries, all written and edited in a voluntary capacity to an extremely high standard, and has its own dedicated website at www.ulsterbiography.co.uk

Meanwhile *The Ulster History Circle* website continues a process of development, but it is available for all to appreciate the breadth of our work over three decades and more.

Once again it is my pleasure to thank those who have supported *The Ulster History Circle* over the past year, both with funding and in friendship, and to thank in advance those who will do so in the future.

**Chris Spurr, Chairman, May 2018.**

## The Blue Plaque Programme 2017-2018

| Plaque Number | Person Commemorated | Location of Plaque | Date of Unveiling | Unveiled by | Funding Body |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 217 | **Eoin MacNéill (1867-1945)** Scholar, Co-Founder The Gaelic League | St. Malachy's College, 36 Antrim Road, Belfast | **2017** April 7th | Sen. Michael McDowell, grandson | Foras na Gaeilge |
| 218 | **Joan Trimble (1915-2000)** Composer, Teacher and Concert Pianist | The Impartial Reporter Office, 8-10 Bridge Street, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh | April 27th | Nick Gant, son and family members | Fermanagh & Omagh District Council and Fermanagh Trust |
| 219 | **Patrick O'Connell (1887-1959)** Footballer: Belfast Celtic, Manchester Utd., Manager: Real Betis, FC Barcelona | 121 Albert Street, Belfast | May 12th | Michael O'Connell, grandson | Patrick O'Connell Memorial Fund |
| 220 | **John Joseph Hughes (1797-1864)** First Archbishop of New York, Founder St. Patrick's Cathedral 5th Avenue | St. Macartan's RC Church, Augher, Co. Tyrone | June 24th | The Most Rev'd Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland | The RC Parish of Clogher |
| 221 | **Mabel Remington Colhoun (1905-1992)** Educationalist, Historian, Archaeologist | Tower Museum, Union Hall Place, Derry-Londonderry | July 7th | Kyleen Clarke, niece | Clarke Family |
| 222 | **Patrick Magee (1922-1982)** Stage and Screen Actor | 2 Edward Street, Armagh City | July 29th | Stephen Rea, actor | Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council |
| 223 | **Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917)** Poet and Soldier | Building No. 46, Ebrington Square, Derry-Londonderry | August 4th | Eileen Ledwidge Wilson and Catherine Liggett, great-grandnieces | Derry City and Strabane District Council |
| 224 | **Robert Hill Hanna VC (1887-1967)** Soldier, Lens, France 21st August 1917 | Kilkeel Presbyterian Church, Kilkeel, Co. Down | September 21st | Robert Hill Hanna, nephew | The Ulster-Scots Agency |

Senator Michael McDowell unveils his grandfather's plaque at St.Malachy's College, Belfast.

(left -right) Cllr. Mary Garrity, Chairman of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Chris Spurr and Alan Boyd, Ulster History Circle, celebrate the life and legacy of the late Joan Trimble with her son, Nick Gant, and her daughter, Joanna McVey.

## The Blue Plaque Programme 2016-2017

| Plaque Number | Person Commemorated | Location of Plaque | Date of Unveiling | Unveiled by | Funding Body |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 225 | **Charles Blaney (1887-1975)** Civil Engineer, Pioneer of Social Housing, Newry Town Surveyor | 65 Bridge Street, Newry, Co. Down | October 27th | Michael Blaney, grandson | Newry Maritime Association and the Blaney Family |
| 226 | **James Duffy VC (1889-1969)** Soldier Kereina Peak, Palestine 27th December 1917 | Castle Street, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal | November 10th | Nellie O'Donnell, daughter | The Ulster-Scots Agency |
| 227 | **Havelock Nelson (1917-1996)** Conductor, Pianist, Composer, Broadcaster | 30 Rosetta Park, Belfast | December 6th | Cllr. Nuala McAllister, Lord Mayor of Belfast and Nelson family members | Belfast City Council |
| 228 | **Charles Duff (1894-1966)** Writer and Linguist | 66-68 Forthill Street, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh | **2018** January 25th | Sir Anthony Hart, great nephew | Fermanagh & Omagh District Council and Fermanagh Trust |
| 229 | **Margaret Anderson (1881-1956)** Mourne's Florence Nightingale, Nurse WWI and WWII, Royal Red Cross 1919 | Mourne Presbyterian Church Hall, Greencastle Street, Kilkeel, Co. Down | February 22nd | Charles Annett, great nephew | The Ulster-Scots Agency |
| 230 | **Saidie Patterson (1904-1985)** Trade Unionist and Peace Activist | Shankill Road Methodist Church, Belfast | March 8th | Baroness May Blood of Blackwatertown | Belfast City Council |
| 231 | **Mrs. Edward Henry (Rose) O'Doherty (1879-1969)** Teacher of Music, A Founder of Feis Doire Colmcille 1922 | 29 Francis Street, Derry-Londonderry | March 23rd | Cahal MacCabe, grandson | Derry City and Strabane District Council |

O'Connell family members supported by Maureen O'Sullivan TD, Marti Estruch Axmacher, Director of Diplocat, Barcelona, with Alan McClean and Fergus Dowd from the Patrick O'Connell Memorial Fund.

Members of the extended Colhoun family and the Ulster History Circle with the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council celebrate with staff from the Tower Museum, Derry-Londonderry.

## Ulster History Circle

**Financial Summary 2017-2018**

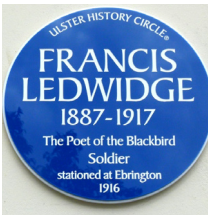
**Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2018**

| **Receipts** | | **Payments** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ulster Scots Agency | £8,000 | Plaque Manufacture and Fitting | £9,972 |
| Belfast City Council | £800 | Plaque Design | £560 |
| Clogher Historical Society | £800 | Meeting Expenses | £745 |
| Personal donations | £800 | Events | £446 |
| Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon B.C. | £800 | Administration | £717 |
| Derry City and Strabane District Council | £800 | Printing and Stationery | £358 |
| Newry Maritime Association | £1,000 | Insurance | £328 |
| Fermanagh Genealogy Centre | £800 | Internet Charges | £319 |
| Mid-Ulster District Council | £800 | Accounting | £50 |
| Abbey Historical Society | £800 | Other | £108 |
| **Total Grant Income** | **£15,400** | **Total Expenditure** | **£13,603** |
| Other Donations/Income | £40 | **Net Income** | **£1,837** |
| **Total Income** | **£15,440** | | |

**Statement of Assets/Liabilities**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Opening Resources** | **£10,769** |
| **Net Expenditure** | **£1,837** |
| **Net Assets carried forward** | **£12,606** |
| **Represented by:** | |
| **Balance per Bank Statement** | |
| **31st March 2018** | **£13,493** |
| **Uncashed Cheques** | **£887** |
| **Net Bank Balance** | **£12,606** |

Stephen Rea, actor, Alan Boyd, Chris Spurr and Myrtle Hill of the Ulster History Circle with the Deputy Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Sam Nicholson, and John Hewitt Society members Paul McAvinchey and Daragh Carville.



Eileen Ledwidge Wilson and Catherine Liggett, great-grandnieces (left and centre), with Gerald Dawe, former Professor of English and Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, Mayor Maoliosa McHugh, Chris Spurr, Chairman of the Ulster History Circle and Rosemary Yore, Chair of the Francis Ledwidge Museum, Slane.

## Proposing, Funding, and Achieving a Blue Plaque

An *Ulster History Circle* blue plaque unites a person with a location in their life, and the Circle carries out careful and extensive research into the site of each plaque. Street Indexes are checked over, site visits made, and owners and tenants consulted for permission to allow the plaque on their premises. These activities can take considerable time, especially when seeking permission to put up a plaque. The plaque wording is carefully chosen; invitations are designed and issued; a person to unveil the plaque invited; guest speakers arranged, as each unveiling is accompanied by a talk on the person being honoured, and family members, as well as members of professional bodies associated with the plaque recipient, are contacted and invited. The whole is carefully planned and co-ordinated, towards creating a single special event.

- A person must be deceased at least twenty years, unless they would have reached their 100th birthday by the date of the proposed plaque unveiling.
- The person must be associated with Ulster (nine counties) by reason of birth, education, work, residence, or vocation.
- The person should be acknowledged and recognised as having made a significant contribution to education, industry, commerce, science, arts and literature, international affairs or other calling anywhere in the world.
- The person must have a building associated with them in Ulster: a place of birth, education, residence, work, or similar.
- The Circle's plaques are to persons of achievement and do not commemorate buildings, places, organisations or movements.

A proposal for a plaque should contain the reasons for a person's nomination, a short biographical note, and a suggestion of where a plaque might be located. All proposals should also give an indication of how the plaque will be funded. The Circle has no funds of its own and relies on such as local authorities, businesses, organisations, and individuals to pay for its plaques.

Each proposal is carefully considered by the Circle committee, and if accepted, it joins the list of prospective plaques. The list always has a considerable number of plaques pending, so a new acceptance can take considerable time to process. The Circle undertakes all the necessary work as outlined above in order to achieve the plaque unveiling, but can only undertake a plaque project when funding is agreed beforehand, and in place.

Proposals for plaques can be submitted to the Circle at: ulsterhistorycircle1@gmail.com. Please note that the Circle's website is currently undergoing significant redevelopment and improvement and can be accessed at www.ulsterhistorycircle.org.uk

## The Dictionary of Ulster Biography

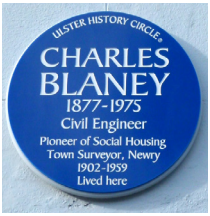
*The Dictionary of Ulster Biography (DUB)* has its origins in the published work (1993) of the same name, compiled by Kate Newmann. Its initial 1644 entries were digitised by the Circle in 2007, and form the basis of the present on-line *DUB*, which is edited, in a voluntary capacity, by the Circle to a very high standard. Many of the original entries now include additional details, and new entries are added every month, with the result that the *DUB* currently offers information on over 3000 people. By publishing on-line, the *DUB* benefits from regular updating, and there are many contemporary entries, for although a person must be deceased to be included in the dictionary, the 20-year delay related to blue plaques does not apply. The *DUB* contains biographical information on all the persons commemorated in the Circle's Blue Plaque Programme, including many of those people celebrated by the Circle's plaques in 2017-2018.

The *DUB* has the special advantage of being free for all to access, and is easily searchable. It is recognised as a valuable reference source, and the *DUB* website receives tens of thousands of visitors every year from across the world.

As with the Circle's plaques, the *DUB* concerns itself with persons born in, or strongly associated with Ulster. The Editor always welcomes suggestions for entries from new contributors, who will receive full acknowledgement of authorship, and copyright, although there is no payment made for entries.

The Editor can be contacted via the *DUB* website, which is a www.newulsterbiography.co.uk

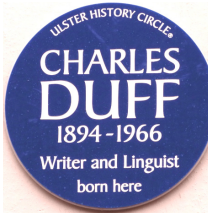
Bertie Hanna, nephew of Robert Hill Hanna VC who unveiled his late uncle's plaque at Kilkeel Presbyterian Church.



Michael Blaney, grandson of Charles Blaney, with his wife Kiera and their children at the plaque site in Newry.

Nellie O'Donnell, daughter of James Duffy VC who unveiled her late father's plaque with her daughters, Margaret O'Neill and Evelyn Gallaher.

The daughter and sons of the late Havelock Nelson celebrate the unveiling of their father's plaque with the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr. Nuala McAllister outside their former home, in the company of its current residents, Joe Duffy and Clare Coulter.



Sir Anthony Hart (centre), great nephew of Charles Duff with Tony Lundy, Alan Boyd and Chris Spurr, Ulster History Circle, Frank McHugh, Fermanagh Genealogy and Cllr. Stephen McCann, Chairman of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

The Rev'd William Bingham of Mourne Presbyterian Church, Kilkeel with Charles Annett, great nephew of Margaret Anderson, his wife Eunice, Catriona Holmes, Ulster-Scots Agency, Patricia Mackintosh, Mourne Local Studies and Chris Spurr, Chairman of the Ulster History Circle.

(left-right) Dr Myrtle Hill, Vice Chair of the Ulster History Circle, Ald.Brian Kingston, the Rev'd Harold Good, a holder of the World Methodist Peace Award, Gillian Kingston, Vice Chair of the World Methodist Council, Baroness May Blood who unveiled the plaque to the late Saidie Patterson and Chris Spurr, Chairman of the Ulster History Circle outside Shankill Road Methodist Church.

A large gathering of Mrs E H O'Doherty's family, friends and former music pupils gather in Francis Street, Derry with members of the Ulster History Circle to celebrate the unveiling of her plaque.