Ulster History Circle®

Annual Report and Accounts

2014-2015

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

Contents:

Members of the Ulster History Circle and a Background Note……..……page 2
Foreword……page 3
The 2014-2015 Blue Plaque Programme……..……pages 4 & 5
Financial Summary……page 6
Proposing, Funding, and Achieving a blue plaque……page 7
The Dictionary of Ulster Biography……..……page 7
More from the Circle's 2014-2015 Blue Plaque Programme……..……page 8

Members of the Ulster History Circle 2014-2015

***Officers*:**

Mr Chris Spurr	*Chairman*
Dr Myrtle Hill	*Vice-Chair (from January 2015)*
Mr Alan Boyd	*Secretary*
Mr Patrick Devlin	*Treasurer (resigned 2014)*
Mrs Mairead Ferguson	*Treasurer (from June 2014)*
Mr Peter Cavan	
Dr Peter Collins	
Mr Johnny Dooher	*(resigned 2014)*
Sir Peter Froggatt	
Mr Richard Froggatt	*Editor, the Dictionary of Ulster Biography*
Mrs Maud Hamill	
Mr Liam Logan	*(from January 2015)*
Mr Leslie McKeague	*(from September 2014)*
Mr Hugh Odling Smee	*(resigned 2014)*
Mr Trevor Parkhill	

This report covers the period from April 2014 to March 2015. There was a total of 11 committee meetings held, and additionally the Annual General Meeting took place in May. This was adjourned until November 2014, when outstanding business was completed.

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 almost 190 plaques to celebrate achievers, in every county and city in Northern Ireland, and in many towns and villages too. There are three Circle plaques in the Republic of Ireland, two in Co Donegal, and one in Co Monaghan, and 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.

Previous page: Grace Avenue, east Belfast: Pat Jennings OBE, Northern Ireland and Spurs, interviewed at the unveiling of the plaque to Danny Blanchflower; Brookvale Drive, north Belfast: after unveiling the plaque to Patricia Mulholland, Cllr Nicola Mallon, Lord Mayor of Belfast, dances with former members of the Irish Ballet; Cahans, Co Monaghan: Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, unveils the plaque to David Nelson VC

Foreword

The past year has been one of the Ulster History Circle's most successful ever. A total of eighteen blue plaques were erected, across seven counties of Ulster, and in the city of Belfast. Between them, these eighteen unveilings attracted hundreds of guests and dozens of dignitaries. A first plaque was put up in Co Monaghan, to commemorate the first Ulster VC awarded in WWI, and at long last the first Circle plaque has been achieved in the historic city of Armagh.

Many of our plaque events had strong community support, and in Aghadowey a full evening of music, talks and re-enactments was staged to celebrate James McGregor, while in Brocagh the plaque to Mother Angeline occasioned the dedication of a new shrine to her memory. Nine plaque unveilings were performed or attended by the first citizens, or their deputies, of different council areas, and the Circle has also had an archbishop, a consul-general, a Queen's University professor, and three government ministers unveiling plaques this year, but it is always very special when family members take part in our plaque events. Those to George Barnett, Robert Bell, Peadar Barry, Dean Crooks, TGF Paterson, St John Ervine, Patricia Mulholland and Danny Blanchflower all had family members either performing the unveiling, or participating in a major way in the ceremonies. There were two plaques at schools, to James Dilworth and Willoughby Weaving, and by celebrating these achievers, our plaques now offer a permanent inspiration to future generations of pupils.

This year's plaque events have been well reported across the various media, and one, to Danny Blanchflower, attracted increased interest, including, in another Circle first, a live TV broadcast from the unveiling ceremony. The Ulster History Circle has a strong and established public profile, and is regarded as a heritage body of significance, both in Northern Ireland, and increasingly in the Republic of Ireland also. Our plaque programme always has several future projects planned, and the Circle 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, generously sharing their expertise and knowledge in order to help the Circle's work to progress. All these colleagues deserve the greatest of thanks for the efforts they contribute to our plaque programme, and elsewhere across our different outreach activities, which include giving talks to clubs and societies about our work. The many funding bodies for our plaques also warrant our thanks, for without them, we would cease to function. Our funding partnerships with Belfast City Council and the Ulster-Scots Agency are continuing to develop, and we hope to create further partnerships with the new councils in Northern Ireland, and also with the three Ulster counties in the Republic of Ireland. The Circle is most grateful as well to those heritage groups and other individual bodies which have raised funds locally for blue plaques, and given generous support to many of our guest receptions after the 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. However, the Dictionary is much broader than the plaque programme, and offers a rich and expanding base of entries, all written and edited in a voluntary capacity to an extremely high standard. The Dictionary has its own dedicated website, but our main Circle website has undergone a period of development over the past year, and is due to appear as a fresh new website, with a new web address. This new website is a significant part of a programme of restructuring and redevelopment which the Circle is undergoing, and associated with this have been not only the participation of the Circle's officers in a workshop programme for heritage sector voluntary groups on fundraising and best governance, but also the adoption of a new Constitution. This was a major item for consideration at our May AGM, and in order to allow time to redraft a constitution which complied with the requirements of the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland, exceptionally our AGM was adjourned until this could be done. The new Constitution was adopted at our reconvened AGM in November. It will be available to consult on our forthcoming website.

The Ulster History Circle enjoys a warm and universal degree of appreciation for its work, and continues to develop and thrive. Thank you once more to those who have supported the Circle over the past year, both with funding and in friendship, and thank you in advance to those who will do so in the future.

Chris Spurr, Chairman, May 2015

The Blue Plaque Programme

Person Commemorated	*Location of Plaque*	*Date of Unveiling*	*Unveiled by*	*Funding Body*
George Barnett, local historian, geologist, and poet	Sixtown Road, Owenreagh, Draperstown, Co Derry	**2014** April 12th	The Dempsey Family	Ballinascreen Historical Society
Robert Huddleston, poet, the Bard of Moneyrea	Church Road, Moneyrea, Co Down	April 12th	Cllr. Anne Marie Beattie, Deputy Mayor, Castlereagh BC	Castlereagh Borough Council
Robert Bell, geologist	Charleville Street, Belfast	April 25th	Mrs Margaret Kennedy	Belfast Naturalists' Field Club *and* others
Art McCooey, file, *poet*	Creggan Church, Crossmaglen, Co Armagh	May 14th	Mrs Mary Cumiskey	Newry and Mourne District Council
Robert Adrain, mathematician, Vice-Provost, University of Pennsylvania	The Library, Carrickfergus, Co Antrim	May 29th	Ald. Billy Ashe, Mayor, Carrickfergus BC	Ulster-Scots Agency
Thomas Hunter, educator and social reformer, founder of Hunter College, NYC	Kildare Street, Ardglass, Co Down	June 21st	Mrs Loretta Brennan Glucksman	The Ireland Funds
Peadar Barry, Secretary, Down County GAA	Corrags Road, Newry, Co Down	July 4th	Mr Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht *and* Dr Maurice Hayes	Down County Board, GAA
James McGregor, leader of the Great Migration, 1718, founder Londonderry, New Hampshire	The Presbyterian Church, Aghadowey, Co Londonderry	July 28th	Mr Gregory S. Burton, USA Consul General, *and* Rev Robert Kane	Ulster-Scots Agency
David Nelson, VC, soldier, first Ulster VC, WWI, September 1st, 1914	The former church, Cahans, Co Monaghan	September 1st	Mrs Heather Humphreys TD, Minster for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	Ulster-Scots Agency
James Dilworth, philanthropist, founder of the Dilworth School, Auckland, NZ	The Royal School, Dungannon, Co Tyrone	October 7th	Dr David Burnett *and* Mr Donald MacLean	The Royal School, Dungannon
Mother Angeline (Brigid McCrory) founder of the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm	St Brigid's Church, Brocagh, Co Tyrone	October 24th	Dr Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh	Brocagh Heritage Group
Willoughby Weaving, teacher, poet of WWI, co-founder Elm Park School, Co Armagh	Rockport School, Craigavad, Co Down	November 14th	Prof Fran Brearton *and* Mr George Vance	Rockport School *and* the Old Rockportians Club
Samuel Bennett Crooks, first 'Black Santa', founder of the Dean's Sit-out for Charities	St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast	December 12th	Mr Sam Crooks Jr	Belfast City Council
Sarah Leech, the poet lass of Lettergull	William Street, Raphoe, Co Donegal	December 13th	Mr Joe McHugh TD, Minister of State, Arts Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs	Ulster-Scots Agency
Patricia Mulholland, violinist, creator of Irish Festival Dance and Ballet	Brookvale Drive, Belfast	**2015** March 6th	Cllr Nicola Mallon, Lord Mayor of Belfast	Belfast City Council
Thomas George Farquhar Paterson, historian, founder and first curator Armagh County Museum	Armagh County Museum, Charlemont Gardens, Armagh	March 12th	Mr Roger Weatherup *and* Mrs Patricia Paterson	Friends of Armagh County Museum *and* Friends of the Ulster Museum
St John Ervine, writer and playwright	Susan Street, Belfast	March 21st	Mr Brian Ervine	Belfast City Council
Danny Blanchflower, footballer and journalist	Grace Avenue, Belfast	March 27th	Ms Gayle Blanchflower	Belfast City Council

Eighteen blue plaques in total were erected by the Circle throughout the year. Also, the vandalised plaque to James (Jemmy) Hope was replaced at Mallusk Cemetery, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, and the plaque to Chaim Herzog was removed for safe keeping from premises at Cliftonpark Avenue, Belfast, at the request of the occupants.

April 2014 – March 2015

Ulster History Circle

Financial Summary 2014-2015

Opening Balance at 31 March 2014 **£10,766.48**

Income		**Expenditure**	
Belfast City Council	£4,800.00	Plaque Manufacture and Fitting	£12,174.00
Castlereagh Borough Council	£1,000.00	Plaque Design	£800.00
Down County GAA	£1,000.00	Plaque Repairs	£780.00
Brocagh Heritage Group	£1,000.00	Bank Charges	£40.69
Dungannon Royal School	£1,000.00	Internet Charges (2)	£169.15
Rockport School		Meetings Expenses (3)	£699.10
& Old Rockportians Club	£1,000.00	Events (4)	£659.20
Friends of Armagh Co Museum		Accountancy Fees	£150.00
& Friends of Ulster Museum	£1,000.00	Membership Fees (5)	£80.00
Belfast Naturalists' Field Club	£800.00	Printing and Stationery (6)	£449.00
Other Income(1)	£905.00	Petty Cash	£210.52
		Administration Expenses (7)	£388.04
		Workshops and Courses (8)	£50.00
		Constitution Redraft (9)	£95.00
		Sundry Expenses	£160.60
Total Income	**£12,505.00**	**Total Expenditure**	**£16,905.30**

Total Resources **£23,271.48**

Closing Balance at 26 March 2015 **£6,366.18**

(1) Gifts and donations
(2) Website hosting and email
(3) Room hire and refreshments at monthly meetings
(4) Refreshments and associated costs at plaque unveilings
(5) Federation of Ulster Local Studies membership and associated insurance costs
(6) 2013-14 Annual Report, paper, and other items
(7) Postage, printer ink, press releases, plaque certificates, photography, etc
(8) Northern Ireland Environment Link and Community Change Governance Programme
(9) NICVA Governance and Charity Unit

Previous page: St Brigid's Church, Brocagh, Co Tyrone: after the unveiling by Archbishop Eamon Martin of the plaque to Mother Angeline; Aghadowey Presbyterian Church, Co Londonderry: at the plaque unveiling to James McGregor - Ian Crozier, Ulster-Scots Agency, Rick Holmes, Londonderry New Hampshire, Cllr.George Duddy, Mayor of Coleraine, Gregory S. Burton, USA Consul-General, poet Wilson Burgess, Rev Robert Kane; St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast: Mr Sam Crooks unveils the plaque to his father, Dean Samuel Crooks, as Dean John Mann and Bishop Lord Eames look on; Raphoe, Co Donegal: Joe McHugh TD unveils the plaque to Sarah Leech; The Royal School Dungannon: boys from the Dilworth School, Auckland NZ, perform the haka as the plaque to James Dilworth is unveiled; Ardglass, Co Down: Michael Howland, Dr Maurice Hayes and Mrs Loretta Brennan Glucksman of The Ireland Funds and Albert Colmer at the plaque unveiling for Thomas Hunter; Brookvale Drive, north Belfast: Cllr Nicola Mallon, Lord Mayor of Belfast, unveils the plaque to Patricia Mulholland; Craigavad, Co Down: pupils of Rockport School and guests at the plaque unveiling to Willoughby Weaving

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 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 coordinated, towards creating a single special event.

There are a few basic criteria for being awarded an Ulster History Circle blue plaque:

- 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, or work, or similar

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

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 2060 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 the eighteen people celebrated by the Circle's plaques in 2014-2015.

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 at: newulsterbiography.co.uk

More from the Circle's 2014-2015 Blue Plaque Programme

This page: Armagh County Museum, Charlemont Gardens, Armagh: Roger Weatherup and Patricia Paterson unveil the first Ulster History Circle plaque in the city to TGF Paterson; Charleville Street, west Belfast: Margaret Kennedy unveils the plaque to her grandfather Robert Bell; Owenreagh, Draperstown, Co Derry: the Dempsey family at the George Barnett unveiling; Moneyrea, Co Down: Rev Chris Wilson, Robert Campbell, Cllr. Anne Marie Beattie and Mairead Ferguson sign the Guest Book at the Robert Huddleston unveiling; Creggan, Co Armagh, guests at the Art McCooey plaque unveiling; Corrags, Newry, Co Down: Dr Maurice Hayes and Jimmy Deenihan TD unveil the plaque to Peadar Barry; Carrickfergus, Co Antrim: Ald. Billy Ashe unveils the plaque to Robert Adrain at Carrickfergus Library; Susan Street, east Belfast: Brian Ervine speaks about his relative St John Ervine, before unveiling his plaque