ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE®

Annual Report and Accounts

2021 - 2022

Lady Mary Peters LG unveils the Circle's 250th Plaque at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, watched by Frank Pantridge, nephew of Professor Frank Pantridge, 'The Father of Emergency Medicine'.

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

Contents:

Members of the Ulster History Circle	page	2
Chairman's Foreword	page	3
The 2021-2022 Blue Plaque Programme and Background Note	page	4
Images from the 2021-2022 Blue Plaque Programme	page	5-8
Financial Summary	page	9
Proposing, Funding and Achieving a Blue Plaque	page	10
The Dictionary of Ulster Biography	page	10

Members of the Ulster History Circle 2021-2022

Officers:

Mr Chris Spurr	Chairman	
Dr. Peter Collins	Vice-Chair	
Mrs Maud Hamill	Secretary	
Mrs Mairead Ferguson	Treasurer	(Resigned January 2022)
Mr Tim Clifford	Treasurer	(From February 2022)
Mr Richard Froggatt	*Editor:*	*The Dictionary of Ulster Biography*
Dr. Nuala McAllister Hart		
Dr. David Hume MBE		
Mr. Kenneth Irvine		
Mr. Liam Logan		
Mr. Leslie McKeague		
Mr. Seamus McKee		
Mr. Brian McKeown		
Mr. Trevor Parkhill MBE		
Mr. Mike Catto		(From February 2022)
Dr. Eibhlin MhicAoidh		(From February 2022)
Mrs. Kirsty Raffan		(From February 2022)

This Report covers the period from April 2021 to March 2022. Due to Covid-19, the previously postponed Annual General Meetings were held in September 2021 (2020-2021) and in February 2022 (2021-2022). There was a total of 5 committee meetings held during the period.

Annual Report 2021-2022 Foreword

Of necessity the Ulster History Circle's work to erect commemorative blue plaques and organise unveiling ceremonies remained halted until it was considered safe to recommence our plaque programme. Before Covid-19 took hold, we had planned the unveiling of our 250th plaque for March 2020, and at long last we were able to achieve this in autumn 2021. For our milestone blue plaque, we had decided that a person would be commemorated whose innovatory work is internationally renowned. Our plaque to Professor Frank Pantridge was unveiled in September 2021 at Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital, but for this landmark event only a small number of people and no media were present, as restrictions on numbers at gatherings were in place there.

Since then, we are steadily delivering the backlog of plaques we have committed to previously. In October past Martha Craig's plaque was unveiled at Gleno, Co Antrim; Redmond Friel's "115th birthday" was marked by a plaque at Londonderry's Waterside in February this year, and in March we unveiled a plaque to Margaret Scott Hawthorne in Killeshandra, Co Cavan, to commemorate International Women's Day. These three plaques benefitted from a relaxation of the restrictions on gatherings, with family members, dignitaries and civic leaders present, to show that our events are returning to their regular pattern.

In line with government directions, we agreed that our committee meetings, where we discuss and decide the progress of future plaques, might safely recommence in August 2021 . Until then, our members continued to be kept in touch by monthly newsletters. We delayed having our 2019-20 AGM until we might meet together in company, and this was held in September 2021. We intended that our delayed 2020-21 AGM would then follow in November. However, a new covid variant disrupted the plan, so this AGM took place at last in February 2022.

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has been kept informed of the position. When we suspended our committee meetings between November 2021 and February 2022, again members received a monthly newsletter. Throughout these changing times, our volunteer members have continued to give their invaluable support to the Circle, by generously sharing their expertise and knowledge. All deserve thanks for the contribution they make to our efforts. After many years on our committee, in January 2022 our Hon. Treasurer, Mairead Ferguson, resigned from the Circle. At our February meeting she was thanked for her valued input to our work across the years. At this meeting four new members were voted in.

Thanks are due to those bodies who have supported the plaques we have put up during the past year: Belfast City Council, the Ulster-Scots Agency, and Derry City and Strabane District Council. In January 2022 that council confirmed that they have agreed to fund a second series of five plaques, to be delivered across five years. The Dictionary of Ulster Biography represents an important part of the Circle's work and includes thousands of entries. The Dictionary, much broader in scope than our plaque programme, 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

It is very welcome that our plaque unveilings have now recommenced, and the Circle has a busy programme of unveilings planned throughout 2022 and across most of 2023. We feel it is important first to unveil those plaques already funded, which we had originally agreed to deliver by 2020-21 , before committing to further proposals. It is also important to remember that any new plaque proposal must indicate how this might be funded, as the Circle has no money of our own. 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

In conclusion, it is my pleasure to thank all those who have supported the Ulster History Circle across these recent out-of-the-ordinary years, both with funding and in friendship, and to thank in advance those who will do so in the future.

Chris Spurr, Chairman, May 2022.

The Blue Plaque Programme 2021-2022

Plaque Number	Person Commemorated	Location of Plaque	Date of Unveiling	Unveiled by	Funding Body
250	**Professor Frank Pantridge (1916-2004)** Cardiologist Developed the world's first portable defibrillator 'The Father of Emergency Medicine'	Royal Victoria Hospital Grosvenor Road Belfast (Entrance to main hospital building)	29th September	Lady Mary Peters LG	Belfast City Council
251	**Martha Craig (1866-1950)** Writer, Lecturer, Explorer	The Dairy, 5 Waterfalll Road Gleno Co Antrim	21st October	Gordon McDowell great, great nephew	The Ulster-Scots Agency
252	**Redmond Friel (1907-1979)** Composer, Arranger and Church Musician	Chapel Road Primary School Waterside Derry City	**2022** 19th February	Graham Warke, Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council. Phil Coulter, international musician Mary Nicell, daughter of Redmond Friel	Derry City and Strabane District Council
253	**Margaret Scott Hawthorne (1869-1958)** Pioneer for Women's Rights in New Zealand	Killeshandra Church of Ireland Main Street Killeshandra Co Cavan	26th March	Heather Humphreys TD Minister for Social Protection and Rural and Community Development	The Ulster-Scots Agency

A Background Note

The Ulster History Circle (the Circle) was founded over thirty-five years ago by James Hawthorne, the then 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 the Stranmillis Road, Belfast, opposite Botanic Gardens.

Since this beginning in the mid 1980's the Circle has put up 253 plaques to celebrate achievers, in every county and city in Northern Ireland, and in many towns and villages too. There are ten Circle plaques in the Republic of Ireland, four in Co Donegal, two in Co Monaghan, and four 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 of the 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.

1. Professor Frank Pantridge plaque.

2. Professor Pantridge.

3. Lady Mary Peters with Chris Spurr, Chairman Ulster History Circle.

4. Chris Spurr, Lady Mary Peters, Bernie Owens, deputy CEO-Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, and Chris Hagan, Medical Director, Belfast H&SC Trust.

5. Jonny Ravey, Estates Officer, Belfast Trust, Chris Spurr, Lady Mary Peters and Frank Pantridge, nephew of Professor Frank Pantridge.

1. Martha Craig plaque

2. Sketch of Martha Craig (Boston Post)

3. Gordon McDowell, great great nephew of Martha Craig unveils the blue plaque.

4. Cynthia Paulding from New York, Leslie McKeague, Co. Cavan, Ulster History Circle, Dr. Peter Collins, Vice-Chair, Ulster History Circle. Chris Spurr, Chairman Ulster History Circle, Dr. David Hume, Ulster History Circle, Gordon McDowell and Tim Clifford, Abbeydene House, Newtownabbey.

5. Gordon McDowell with the extended families of the explorer.

6. Dr. David Hume, Nevin Taggart, Gordon McDowell, Sandra McDowell of The Dairy, Gleno with Chris Spurr.

1. Redmond Friel plaque

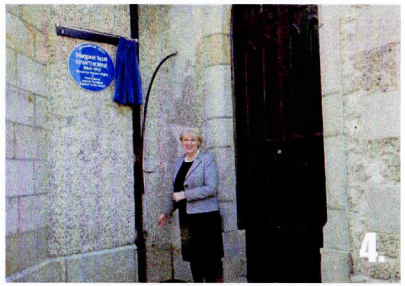
2. Redmond Friel

3. Unveiling the blue plaque, Graham Warke, Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Mary Nicell, daughter of Redmond Friel and international musician, Phil Coulter.

4. Back row - Chris Spurr, Chairman Ulster History Circle, Mayor Graham Warke.(Front row) - Isolde Watts (nee Friel), Dr. Nuala McAllister Hart, - Ulster History Circle, Mary Nicell (nee Friel), Phil Coulter, former pupil of Redmond Friel, and Head of Composition at Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM), Dr. Kevin O'Connell.

5. Graham Warke, Mayor of Derry City & SDC with guests and the family of Redmond Friel outside Chapel Road Primary School where Redmond was a pupil, teacher and Principal.

6. After a talk on the life of Redmond Friel in the Guildhall, Derry City Dr. Nuala McAllister Hart, Ulster History Circle.



1. Margaret Scott Hawthorne plaque

2. Margaret Scott Hawthorne in New Zealand 1905.

3. Canon Hazel Hicks of Killeshandra Church of Ireland, with Senator Joe O'Reilly, Cathaoirleach of Cavan County Council, Clifford Kelly, New Zealand Ambassador to Ireland, Brad Burgess and Heather Humphreys T.D. Minister for Social Protection and Rural and Community Development.

4. Heather Humphreys TD unveils the blue plaque.

5. Guests at the unveiling in front of Killeshandra Church of Ireland where Margaret Scott Hawthorne was baptised in 1869.

6. Chris Spurr, Chairman Ulster History Circle, New Zealand Ambassador to Ireland, Brad Burgess and Maud Hamill, Hon. Secretary Ulster History Circle.

7. Leslie McKeague, Co Cavan, Ulster History Circle with Heather Humphreys TD.

Ulster History Circle

Financial Summary 2021-2022

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2022

Receipts	**£**	**£**
Total Grant Income	**0**	
Other Income - McKelvey Construction	0	
Total Income		**0**
Payments	**£**	
Plaque Manufacture & Fitting	(2,160)	
Plaque design	-	
Meeting Expenses	(300)	
Events	(327)	
Administration	(145)	
Printing & Stationery	(145)	
Insurance	(496)	
Internet Charges	(149)	
Accounting	(30)	
Other	-	
Total expenditure		**(3,752)**
Net expenditure		**(3.752)**

Statement of assets / (liabilities)		
Opening resources	12.300	
Net expenditure	(3,752)	
Net assets carried forward		**8,548**
Represented by:		
Balance per bank statement		**8,643**
Uncashed cheques		(95)
Net bank balance		**8,548**

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

The Circle's website has undergone a significant improvement and redevelopment 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 two thousand 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 up until March 2022.

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 at the *DUB* website, which is at: www.newulsterbiography.co.uk