



TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2023 FOR THE CHARITIES COMMISSION OF NORTHERN IRELAND

**NMA IS DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION
OF THE HISTORY OF THE PORT OF NEWRY**

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: NIC 100431

COMPILED BY JAMES MC AREVEY.

Our Cover Photo



This is a most striking, atmospheric image of Haulbowline Lighthouse which stands sentinel-like highlighting the dangerous rocks below.

This magnificent feat of engineering took 7 years to complete and the first light was exhibited in September 1824.

NMA will mark the Bi-Centenary of the lighthouse with a dedicated programme of events leading up to the illumination of the tower in August.

We will be engaging with a host of contributors to deliver a stellar all-inclusive, cross-community and cross-border project.



Newry Maritime Association
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Chairmans Foreword



And so, another busy and productive year has concluded for our Association. Across 2023 we have been very active in the delivery of our stated aim,

“The preservation and active promotion of the history of the Port of Newry and those who created that narrative.”

Working in partnership with various individuals, groups and statutory bodies we delivered a range of events across the District. These events showcase our rich vein of maritime history, something which sets us apart from other towns and cities and must be cherished and protected. December was a busy and very rewarding month for NMA. We are fiercely proud of all our achievements in 2023 and none more so than our penultimate event. Our nomination of Sean Hollywood for Blue Plaque status was accepted by the Ulster History Circle and his plaque

was unveiled at St Colman’s College on 12th December in tribute to this iconic son of Newry. This is the 5th Blue Plaque that NMA has brought to Newry, a feat unrivalled in the community and voluntary sector.

We concluded a hectic programme with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque in tribute to the crew of “MV Olive”, the last newly built ship for Fishers of Newry, which arrived in the port 60 years previously in December 1963.

Our flagship project for 2024 is, undoubtedly, celebrating the Bi-Centenary of Haulbowline Lighthouse. We intend to have a programme of events leading up to the illumination of the tower in August.

We eagerly look forward to another year of vibrant activity promoting our maritime heritage and the bedrock of the development of Newry.



NMA WELCOMES

TINNELLY CONSTRUCTION.

We are delighted to have Rostrevor-based, Tinnelly Construction, joining our Corporate portfolio. Established in 1990 and headed up by Gerard Tinnelly, the firm enjoys a high profile and solid reputation across Ireland and the UK.

Tinnelly Construction is active in all sectors of the industry embracing private development, industrial and commercial projects. The German retailer LIDL is one of many blue-chip clients and the firm has completed a host of new build supermarket contracts across Ireland and Britain with more to come.

We wish Gerard and the team at TINNELLY CONSTRUCTION every success in 2024 and thank you for your support.



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NMA Congratulates.

SUREFREIGHT.

Surefreight is a market leader in the road haulage and logistics industry. Established in 1989, the firm is headquartered in Carnbane, Newry with depots in Cardiff, Bradford Manchester, Sheffield and Liverpool.

They recently completed their £2 million investment in a new depot in Heysham. Surefreight operates a fleet of over 200 lorries and 500 trailers and has just taken delivery of 20 Mercedes tractor units to service their cross-channel operations.

We are proud to have SUREFREIGHT as a valued Corporate Member and extend our best wishes to Vincent Waddell, Brian Mc Manus and the team.



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Congratulations to Ian Haldane



Ian Haldane, Chairman of leading builders merchant Haldane Group, has been recognised for his lifetime contributions to the industry at the widely acclaimed Builder Merchant Federation Awards. Ian, who was Group Managing Director at Haldane Group for over 25 years, was presented with the Honorary Achievement Award, celebrating his commitment to training and development, in addition to his impact to the wider sector.



Speaking of his achievement, Ian said:

“As an organisation, we continually strive for excellence and do our best to embody, on a personal level, best practice to remain at the forefront of the industry.

“To be recognised at such a prestigious and respected event is incredibly meaningful and speaks to the commitment of Haldane Group to facilitate the continued development of individuals, the business and the sector as a whole.”

Now operating across over 20 branches with more than 700 employees, the company has grown organically and through acquisition since it was founded over 75 years ago in 1946.



NMA Congratulates.

Supervalu Dublin Road.

Just before Christmas the Downey family opened their very impressive and well-stocked off-licence at their Supervalu Dublin Road premises.

The new facility will undoubtedly complement their very successful retail grocery and deli outlet. Full Post Office facilities and an ATM are also available on site and Supervalu Dublin Road is a valued community hub.

SUPERVALU DUBLIN ROAD is a valued Corporate Member and we thank the Downey family for their continued support.



Congratulations to Canal Court Hotel on their 25th year Anniversary



On the 17th February 1998 the Canal Court Hotel opened its doors for the first time, and now in 2023 celebrated its 25th anniversary.

IT has welcomed global leaders and people from throughout the World.

From the rich and famous to the sporting heroes.

To public meetings; gala balls; or just a great place to stay and relax.

A Wedding Day at the Canal Court & Spa is just full of wonderful memories.

Yes, Newry's Canal Court & Spa is recognised, not only here in Northern Ireland, but across the World, as one of the top Hotel Complex one is ever likely to step into.

The Canal Court Hotel is a leading 4 Star Hotel which is currently ranked in the top 100 Hospitality

Businesses in Northern Ireland and is located at the heart of Newry City sitting on the banks of Ireland's Oldest Manmade Waterway, the Newry Canal.

The Hotel boasts 4 Star Accommodation with 110 bedrooms which have been all recently renovated and upgraded.

The Co Down venue is synonymous with entertainment having established itself as the social hub of Newry. Some of the top artists from throughout Ireland have performed on stage in the last 25 years and that trend is set to continue for many years to come.

All at NMA appreciate the ongoing support from John and Paddy McParland and the team at Canal Court Hotel and Spa

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Congratulations to Mc Shane Solicitors on their 50th Anniversary



Established in 1973, McShanes is one of the leading law firms in Northern Ireland, with offices in Newry and Kilkeel Co. Down.

With a reputation for high-quality service it is built on first-class technical ability combined with commercial acumen.

They are also licensed to practice in the Republic of Ireland.

NMA is pleased to have McShane Solicitors as a valued Corporate Member and wishes them continued success.



Congratulations to Crilly Sweets



Thank you to CRILLY SWEETS for their ongoing support and we wish them continued success.

Proudly Supporting Local Producers

We're delighted to work with Newry-based family-run business, Crilco Confections, to develop our high quality homemade boiled sweets, gummies and bonbons now available in Lidl stores across the island of Ireland.

Using the secret Crilly's family recipe and only the finest ingredients, customers can pick up some traditional favourites from our sweet aisle including Bishops Rhubarb & Custard, Bishops Pear Drops, Crilly's Premium Jelly Babies, Crilly's Blueberry Bon Bons and Crilly's Fizzy Jelly Mix.



"We are delighted that Lidl Northern Ireland has selected us as one of its suppliers and have no doubt our products will be a firm favourite for Lidl's customers."

David Crilly, Managing Director, Crilco Confections

Pictured L, R: David Crilly, Managing Director, Crilco Confections, Zoe Russell, Buyer, Lidl Ireland and Northern Ireland and Claire O'Leary, Managing Director, Crilco Confections



Thank you to The Bank Bar Newry.

The Bank Bar on Trevor Hill Newry is at the forefront of the hospitality industry and their name resonates with quality, value and ambience. The business, operated by the Downey family, is embedded in the local community.

They are readily identified with charitable events and fundraisers and this year put their facilities at the disposal of SOS DAISY HILL.

This group of local volunteers was formed to coordinate a protest campaign against the withdrawal of services from our local hospital.

The Bank Bar hosted the regular meetings at no cost to the group, true community activism! Massive thanks to the Downey family and everyone at the BANK BAR for their magnificent support of our community including NMA.



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All Change At Newry Reporter.



On Thursday 19th January National World announced that they had acquired our local newspaper, "The Newry Reporter"

The proprietors of the title, the Hodgett family published their last edition of the paper on Wednesday 25th January.

We wish to thank the Hodgett family most sincerely for their help and support over the years.

The new management led by Editor, Michael Scott, is continuing in the same vein and we really appreciate their support.



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The "Princess Victoria" Tragedy.

On Thursday 2nd February we travelled to the Mc Neill Theatre, Larne as guests of the eminent historian, Dr David Hume MBE.

We were attending the 70th Anniversary of the "Princess Victoria" tragedy which occurred on 31st January 1953.

It has largely been forgotten in most of Ireland and Britain, but the tragedy is still remembered and commemorated on both sides of the Northern Channel that divides Larne in Co Down and Stranraer in Scotland. The sea divides them

but the ports are linked forever by the loss of the Princess Victoria in one of the biggest peacetime maritime disasters that ever occurred between these islands.

It was while making its daily crossing from Stranraer to Larne on January 31st, 1953, that the car ferry was hit by a raging storm whose violent waves were to toss it helplessly around the sea until, despite the best efforts of its crew, it sank with the loss of 133 lives.

Only 44 people were saved, all of them adult males. Not one of the women and children on board survived. It is thought that they had all been in one lifeboat which was hit by a wave and thrown against the side of the ship just before it sank. There were 32 women – three of them crew members – listed among the dead. There were four small boys on board, travelling with their parents, all of whom also perished.

The ship was within sight of the Copeland Islands off Co Down when the order was given to abandon ship.

At 12.52pm the radio officer reported that the starboard engine-room was flooded and that the ship's position was critical. At 1.08pm, he tapped: "We are preparing to abandon ship."

Just before 2pm the Princess Victoria vanished under the waves. The sea was full of the dead and those about to die; people were clinging to rafts and to the few lifeboats that were still afloat. Ships from Belfast Lough attempted to rescue them, but again the mountainous seas made it impossible to lower boats to them or for more than a few of the passengers to catch the lifebelts thrown to them. It was not until the lifeboat Sir Samuel Kelly arrived from Donaghadee at 4pm that any survivors were saved.

The lifeboat had the grim task of returning later that evening to start recovering as many bodies as possible.



St Patrick's Day Parade, Newry.



Once again we facilitated the participation of our partner group, Camlough Brass and Reed Band, in the annual parade.

The Band are a regular contributor at our events and we appreciate their support. Sincere thanks also to Vincent Waddell and Brian Mc Manus from SUREFREIGHT who provided a lorry to transport the musicians around the route.

Surefreight has assisted us for several years now in this important role and once again, Neil Weir did an excellent job. His immaculately presented Scania is a tribute to his professionalism and he is a fine ambassador for the company.

A big thank you to Vincie Brian and Neil.



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Congratulations to Nomadic Caravans on their 50th Anniversary

The company are a market leader in the supply of quality mobile homes with customer service and support as the cornerstone of their business.

The business is celebrating its 50 Anniversary this year, founded by the late Michael Purcell (Mick). After the passing of his Father, John assumed control of the operation and expanded the business across Ireland with an excellent reputation for quality and service.

Today, Rev John Purcell is also a well-known evangelist and travels the world in his Ministry. Rev John supports us regularly at commemorative events and is always a welcome guest.

The Managing Director of Nomadic Caravans, Michael Purcell, is the son of John and Grandson of the founder, the late Mick.

NOMADIC CARAVANS is a valued Corporate Member and all at NMA appreciate your support.



Sacrilege at River Street.



Over the last 12 years, we have unveiled around 80 plaques, murals and memorials across the District and they have largely been treated with dignity and respect.

There have been occasional acts of mindless vandalism, such as the smashing of our mural illumination lights in Fisher Park a few years ago.

Another callous act occurred on 16th May when the commemorative plaque dedicated to Seaman Raymond Kelly GC was ripped from the wall in River Street, the very street in which Raymond was reared. The Kelly family sponsored the plaque which was unveiled by his brother, William. A local community activist, John Mc Cabe, informed us of this sacrilegious act and we are indebted to another community volunteer, Eamon Walker, who recovered it from undergrowth adjacent to the Clanrye River.

In this instance, good triumphed over evil and MICHAEL MC CAUL SIGNS refurbished the badly damaged plaque and refitted it in River Street on 16th June at no cost to NMA. Michael Mc Caul Signs is an original Corporate Member of NMA and we deeply appreciate their ongoing support and generosity.



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“PS Waverley” Visits Warrenpoint.



Warrenpoint Harbour Authority pulled off something of a coup when they secured a visit to the Port by the oldest sea-going paddle steamer, “Waverley”.

The ship was built on the Clyde and made her maiden voyage on 16th June 1947. The beautiful old lady brought a full compliment of passengers for an evening trip on the Lough and what a pleasure it was. There was a Mediterranean atmosphere as we ploughed through the shimmering calm waters of Carlingford Lough which was bathed in the resplendent rays of the evening sun on Tuesday 30th May.

Waverley entered service in 1947 and was the last paddle steamer built for service on the Clyde, for operator London and North Eastern Railway. In the following year due to Nationalisation of Railways, the vessel became part of the Caledonian Steam Packet Company (CSP) until 1972, a year before the the company became Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd (CalMac).

Following a major public appeal, the Waveley re-entered service in 1973 after the vessel was gifted for £1 and officially handed over to Waverley Steam Navigation Co. Ltd., a company formed by the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society.

Since 1975 Waverley has carried over 6 million passengers and earned herself a loyal following in several areas around the UK including the South Coast and Thames. More recently in 2019 a public appeal raised £2.3m to replace the steam boilers and save the vessel from withdrawal.

A big thank you to our Corporate Member, Warrenpoint Port, for this marvellous community initiative and fingers crossed we will see “PS Waverley” in Warrenpoint again.

Community Engagement.



NMA continues to play a proactive role in 3 major local infrastructure projects and has been engaged at the coalface for a very long time.

Newry Greenway.

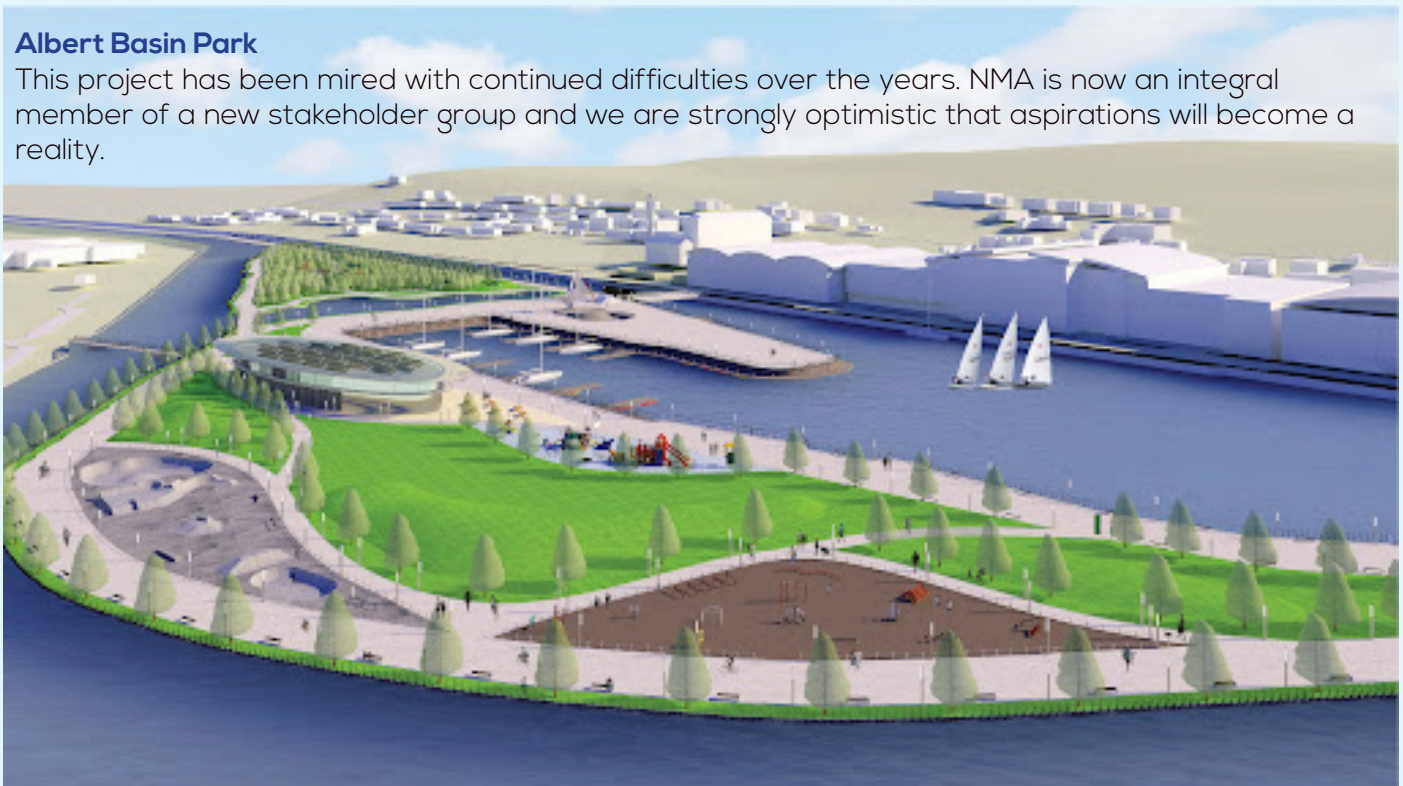
NMA was the first group to assist the Council in lobbying for funding to construct the Greenway from the Albert Basin to Victoria Lock in 2012.

Now the final stage is underway between the Lock and the Border with completion expected later this year linking up with the Co Louth section to Carlingford. We remain in constant dialogue with the Capital Projects Officer, Mr Seamus Crossey.



Albert Basin Park

This project has been mired with continued difficulties over the years. NMA is now an integral member of a new stakeholder group and we are strongly optimistic that aspirations will become a reality.





Southern Relief Road.

NMA has been engaged in this long-awaited project since 2014 and is a member of the stakeholder group. Progress to date has been painfully slow and the proposed bridging of the Canal is proving contentious. The new road is crucial to removing commercial traffic from the centre of Newry, a long-held aspiration of industry and commerce. NMA will continue to play an active and constructive role in the process.



**“SS Clonallon” Event.
St. Michaels Church, Killean.
Saturday 17th June 2023.**



s.s. Clonallon built 1899
lost 1904

NEWRY MARITIME ASSOCIATION
Giving the canal back to the people of Newry

St. Michaels Church, Killean.
Saturday 17th June 2023.

Today we are unveiling a commemorative plaque to complement the memorial dedicated to those men lost on “SS Clonallon” on 8th December 1904. The centenary of this tragedy was marked with the celebration of a special Mass in Killean on 7th December 2004.

The plaque chronicles events surrounding the loss of “SS Clonallon” and her crew, as we know them.

Supported by
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.

Compiled by James Mc Arevey.



"SS Clonallon" Event. St. Michaels Church, Killean. Saturday 17th June 2023.

This well-attended event in Killean saw a commemorative plaque unveiled by Mrs Susan Fisher in tribute to the 8 men lost on "SS Clonallon" and we printed a full-colour leaflet.

The ship disappeared with all hands in the Irish Sea on 8th December 1904.

A "Fisher Flag" wreath, sponsored by Mrs Fisher, was laid by Brendan Walsh and Owen Mc Donnell. We hosted hospitality in St. Michaels PS afterwards and we thank the Principal, Mr Conan Mc Ateer, for facilitating us.

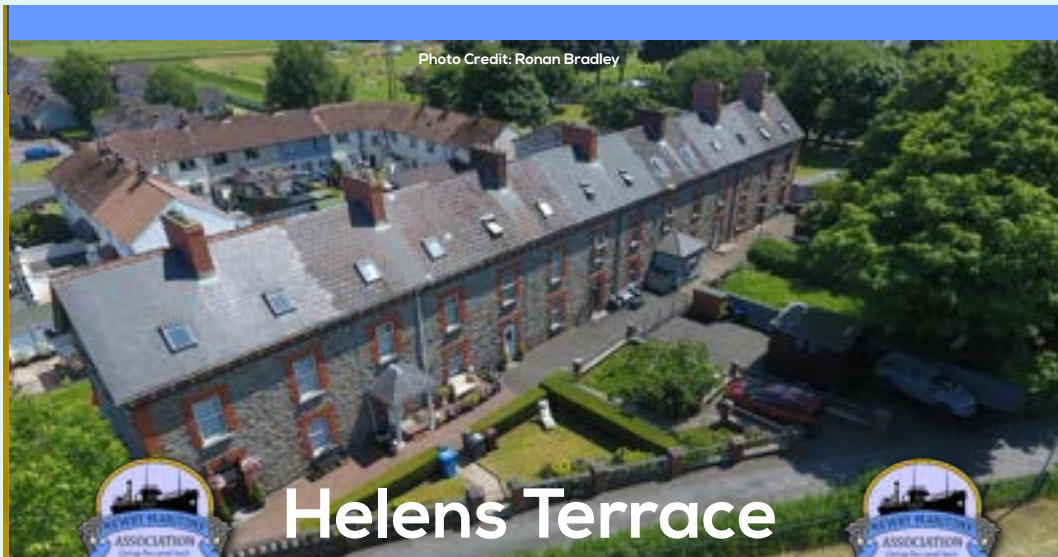
We were pleased to work in partnership with Killean/Edentubber Regeneration Group on this project. Of the 8-man crew, 5 hailed from Fathom, 2 from Killeavy and 1 from Bristol.



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HELENS TERRACE EVENT. HELENS TERRACE, NEWRY. SATURDAY 29TH JULY 2023



Helens Terrace

OUR SHARED HISTORY PROJECT

Saturday 29th July 2023.

Victorian architecture at its finest is manifested in this charming row of 3 storey terrace houses, faced with Newry granite and complimented by red bricks. This terrace of 7 houses each had a generous garden to the front and these would have been used as allotments by many residents to help feed their families.

Many would also have kept poultry and the little community would have been well sustained amidst a spirit of camaraderie.

The houses first appear in the Valuation Revision Book of 1887 and are valued at £9 each !!! The terrace is adjacent to Pig Hall Loanan which today connects Slieve Gullion Road with the arterial Camlough Road and was a residential outpost in the late 19th century, surrounded by rolling green pastures and overlooked by the formidable Newry Union Workhouse. This grim institution opened its doors on 16th December 1841. Occupying a 7 acre site, it was built at a cost of £8827 with a capacity for 1000 inmates.

The terrace was built by Robert Dempster, an industrialist, who arrived in Newry from Forfar in Scotland in 1855, aged 38.



Supported by
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.



Compiled by James Mc Arevey.



HELENS TERRACE EVENT. HELENS TERRACE, NEWRY. SATURDAY 29TH JULY 2023.

This charming example of Victorian architecture at its best was the focus of an event in July. There was a cloudburst just before we began but then blue skies appeared overhead and we were swathed in summer sunshine.

Our PRO Helena Young, a native of Rooney's Meadow, unveiled a plaque on Helens Terrace which is located on the periphery of the housing development.

The terrace of 7 houses was built by Robert Dempster, a mill owner, around 1885. Robert married Helen Halliwell and it is believed that he named the terrace after her.

The well-attended event included residents and many former residents. Following our presentation and unveiling we adjourned to Whitegates Community Centre where the Meadow/Armagh Road C.A very generously hosted hospitality.

Entertainment was provided by our partner group, CAMLOUGH BRASS AND REED BAND, whose conductor, Tom Mc Cabe, was celebrating a special occasion. We were delighted to make a presentation to Tom to mark his 90th birthday and a rousing version of "Happy Birthday" reverberated around the hall. Special thanks to the residents of Helens Terrace and Meadow / Armagh Road CA for their input to a most enjoyable and successful day.



The Red Star Passenger Ferry Havelock Place Warrenpoint 18th August 2023.



We delivered this tribute to the iconic "Red Star Ferry" beside the original pier from where it operated on the promenade in Warrenpoint.



The Red Star Passenger Ferry.

OUR SHARED HISTORY PROJECT

18th August, 2023

Havelock Place Warrenpoint.

Are event today, in association with Brendan O'Neill, encapsulates the history of the iconic Red Star Passenger Ferry service which operated between Warrenpoint and Omeath for over a century.

At the peak of its popularity the Red Star Fleet numbered 20 wooden boats and this was the largest number of wooden passenger ferries in a single coastal route - warrenpoint to omeath.

The O'Neill Family was one of the founding members of the enterprise and Brendan O'Neill was the last of the Red Star operators when the service ceased in 2018



Supported by
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.



Compiled by James Mc Arevey.



The Red Star Passenger Ferry Havelock Place Warrenpoint 18th August 2023.

The last "Red Star" operator wrote a comprehensive history of the business and those who operated it. Brendan O'Neill, charted the development and sad demise of the fleet of little boats which had plied between Warrenpoint and Omeath for over a Century. Brendan held very successful book launches in Warrenpoint and Omeath. The Chairperson of our Council, Councillor Valerie Harte, was in attendance as representatives from the O'Neill, Bradley, Mc Guigan and Dinsmore families unveiled our commemorative plaque.



Event Sponsored By Braham Group Warrenpoint

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Carlingford Lough Currach Club. 18th World Championships at Warrenpoint.



From a fledgling competition, this event has developed year after year and is now a firm favourite across the currach sporting fraternity.

We are very proud of the strong bonds which have developed between our groups over the years with the CLCC regularly visiting Newry Canal for outreach sessions with community groups and the general public. Our mantra, "Partnerships make Progress", is central to all our activities and effective networking delivers successful projects.

CLCC has worked very hard in this respect and has made tremendous progress in promoting the club with the currach rowing community across the island.

This was much evidenced at this year's championships which were held, as usual, at Warrenpoint in August. Clubs from Donegal, Galway, Limerick, Dublin, Skerries, Drogheda and Albany USA were represented in a vibrant weekend of competition. Even the wrath of Storm Betty failed to quell their enthusiasm and combative spirit !!!

The Presentation night on Sunday with inhouse music, song and a bite to eat is an eagerly awaited highlight and NMA is pleased to host the "Club Person of the Year Award. This year the popular choice for the award was Miriam Hogan, a very enthusiastic member of the club.



Photos courtesy
Miriam Hogan

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Remembering Baker.

Whilst 2023 may arguably be the most successful yet for the Club it was touched with profound sadness with the passing of its esteemed Chairperson.

Tom Mc Cann, known to all as "Baker" is accredited by his peers as the man who introduced currachs to Carlingford Lough. A lifelong community activist whose interests lay with his beloved Warrenpoint, he fully appreciated the importance of partnerships and alliances.

He developed links with the Albany Currach Club in Albany, Washington DC and this interaction led to the innovative creation of the Currach Championships. The host of debilitating health issues which he endured never altered his community focus and his dedication to CLCC. He gathered a dedicated team around him and under his shrewd guidance the Club has grown exponentially. New currachs were built in Connemara which sparked added interest and an increase in membership. A building was leased from the Council as a clubhouse and new infrastructure was commissioned to the slipway. Participation in events hosted by other clubs across the island has resulted in the delivery of strong bonds of friendship and cooperation and the creation of newfound vibrancy and positivity. Even as his health deteriorated still further, Baker was looking forward to a bigger and better championship event next August.

Sadly that wasn't to be and Baker finally succumbed to his travails on 23rd December. His standing in the community and the esteem and affection in which he was held were evidenced by the large cortege which followed his funeral procession.

Tom Mc Cann has generated his own legendary status across the community and in particular, within the confines of CLCC where his name and memory will live on.

RIP Baker.



Photos courtesy
Liz Boyle

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NMA Presentation to Eddie Murtagh. Saturday 23rd November 2023. Old Dublin Road Newry.



We were very pleased to make a dedicated presentation to a very good friend of our Association, Eddie Murtagh.

Eddie is a well-known and reputable commercial diesel fitter by trade with a passion for Clydesdale horses as his hobby. He and his horse, "Dan", are a familiar sight at shows and festivals around the country.

When we hosted our heritage events at Finnegans Forge and the Watering Trough on Old Dublin Road we thought of asking Eddie to participate.

Without hesitation, Eddie agreed to bring "Dan" to both events. Their presence lent added integrity and authenticity to both days out. "Dans" immaculate appearance, down to his hairy hooves, was a credit to Eddie who attended in a voluntary capacity. The partnership was admired and appreciated by all those in attendance.

As a token of our appreciation, we commissioned a talented young artist to paint a portrait of the pair. Ashlene Mc Anulty delivered a striking portrayal of Eddie and "Dan" at Finnegans Forge. We presented the framed portrait to Eddie and thanked him and "Dan" for their unique contribution to these events. Hopefully, we will engage with them again.





Finnegans Forge event October 2022



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Event Sponsored by Country Carpets



SS Orior Event. Friday 29th September 2023. River Street, Newry.



SS Orior Built 1903
Lost 1908



**"Yew Tree Park",
Kilmorey Street, Newry
Friday 29th September 2023.**

OUR SHARED HISTORY PROJECT

Our event today, in association with Libraries NI, is dedicated to the Captain and crew of the ill-fated steamer, "SS Orior," which disappeared without a trace, somewhere in the Irish Sea on 7th March 1908.

The ship was owned by the Newry firm, Joseph Fisher & Sons, based at the Albert Basin and her loss replicated the loss of a sister ship, "SS Clonallon", in tragically similar circumstances on 8th December 1904. By a further twist of fate, the Captains of the ships were brothers, James and Michael Hollywood from Fathom

The plaque chronicles events surrounding the loss of "SS Orior" and her crew, as we know them.



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Compiled by James Mc Arevey.

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Event Sponsored by Country Carpets



SS Orior Event. Friday 29th September 2023. River Street, Newry.

This event to commemorate the crew of the Fisher vessel, "SS Orior" lost when their ship disappeared in the Irish Sea on 7th March 1908 echoed the loss of "SS Clonallon,, 4 years earlier.



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Remembering Jimmy Gill, Steeplejack and Newry Character of Note.



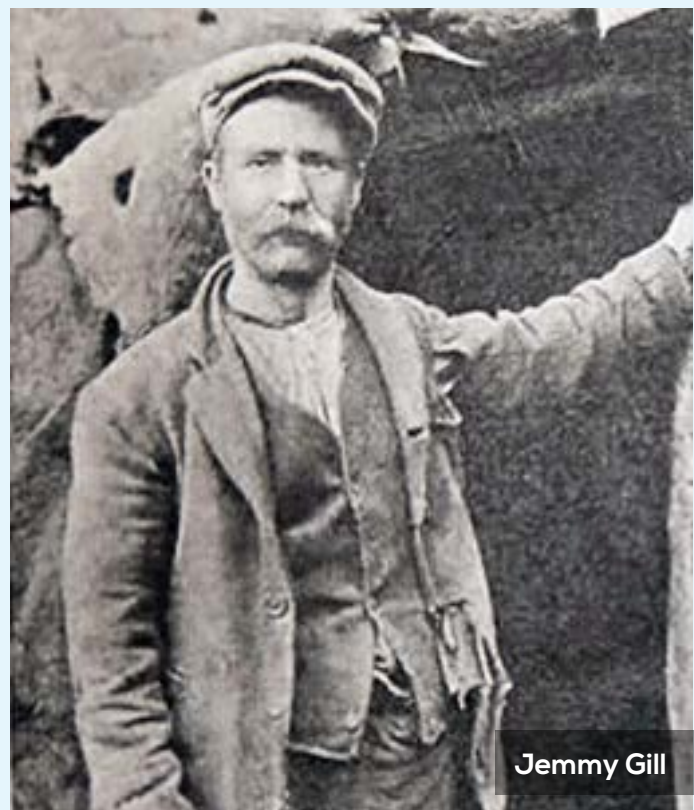
Whilst researching our “SS Larne” we came upon an article in the local press highlighting the ingenuity of a local steeplejack, Jemmy Gill.

His exploits whilst atop a mill chimney in Sugar Island earned him notoriety and celebrity status in equal measure across Ireland and Britain.

Mill chimneys were a familiar sight on the landscape of Newry in the 19th and early 20th centuries and steeplejacks were much in demand for maintenance and demolition.

From 1850 through to the mid-1870s Newry’s milling capacity increased 5-fold. By the 1880s, the availability of cheap American flour on the market brought an end to the boom. Few of the then 35 mills in existence survived into the 20th century. Today, Sands Mill which is owned by Fane Valley Co-Op, is the only manufacturing mill in Newry.

The American Civil War (1861- 1865) gave a huge boost to the linen industry with the scarcity of cotton which was mainly derived from the Confederacy. This conflict was of particular local interest through the support of the Confederacy from John Mitchel, the prominent Irish patriot. Mitchel spent his formative years in Newry where his Father, Rev. John Mitchel, was the Unitarian minister. Having been transported to Australia in 1848 for treason, he escaped in 1853, eventually settling with his wife and family in the state of Virginia. This was one of 11 states that seceded from the Union and formed the Confederacy. Mitchel’s support was to cost him dearly. Two sons, Willie and John were killed in the conflict while a 3rd lost an arm. Mitchel later returned to Ireland and died in his home at Dromalane in 1875. John Grubb Richardson built his imposing mill in Bessbrook, opened offices in New York and Philadelphia, and Bessbrook linen was exported globally. In Newry, Hill Irvine, Robert Dempster and Ambrose Wilson were major players in the industry. In 1882, Richardson bought Dromalane Mill which had been built by Mitchel’s brother-in-law, Hill Irvine.



Jemmy Gill

While researching this project we uncovered a rather amusing tale concerning one man employed in this long-forgotten occupation, a steeplejack. Certainly, it provides respite from the melancholy of the “SS Larne” tragedy. The owners of the ship were Newry Saltworks Company of which Mr Felix O. Hagan was the Principal. They had a large mill chimney on their Sugar Island premises and in 1904 a decision was taken to demolish it.

A Mr James Gill, known as Jemmy, undertook the task. Jemmy was living in spartan accommodation in Boat Street, Newry with his wife, Margaret and their 2 sons, James (Jr.,18) and Walter (14). Jemmy had a reputation as a



Remembering Jimmy Gill, Steeplejack and Newry Character of Note.

“colourful” character about town and whilst engaged in the demolition of the chimney he received a fine in court for drunkenness. When the fine wasn't paid, police arrived at his home to arrest him.

Jemmy eluded capture, escaping through the back door, and ran to the Salt Works and hoisted himself in his chair to the chimney top. This was the beginning of a scenario that would last for almost 3 weeks and gain Jemmy national publicity and notoriety. The Salt Works became a focal point of attraction for the locals and visitors who came from near and far. They brought food, clothing and bedding which Jemmy hoisted to his airy perch much to the chagrin of the disgruntled police below.

From the census of 1901, we learn that Jemmy and Margaret were both illiterate but this disadvantage obviously didn't prevent the assimilation of information.

Jemmy soon found out that the arrest warrant was unenforceable on a Sunday and would descend the chimney at a minute past midnight on Sunday morning. He spent the day socialising with friends and basking in the glow of his newly acquired celebrity status. His photograph even appeared in the prestigious London publication, “The Tatler” and newspaper titles across Ireland and Britain reported on every detail of his elevated sojourn. Drunk or sober, Jemmy made sure to be high above the ground before the clock struck midnight to usher on Monday morning.
So how did it all end???

A popular version reported that Jemmy was sitting at home on a Sunday night but unbeknown to him a mischievous person had set his clock back by an hour. When the clock struck 11 pm, in reality, it was midnight and Jemmy's amnesty from the law had expired. Police arrived and duly executed their warrant.




The press reports relate a very different version of events. During a descent of the chimney, Jemmy's chair became unstable and he fell some 18 feet to the ground sustaining serious leg injuries. He was conveyed to his home and when the police saw the extent of his injuries, they gave priority to compassion ahead of duty leaving him in the bosom of his family.

Happily, Jemmy recovered and was a regular guest in music halls, fetes and of course, public houses, where the events in Sugar Island were recalled and fully ventilated.

In 1980, Damolly Mill closed and the famed Bolton steeplejack, Fred Dibnah, was commissioned to demolish the mill chimney which he did in his own inimitable style.

The exploits of Jemmy Gill over 75 years previously were not revisited by Mr Dibnah.

Fisher Flag Handover. Heritage Gallery, Newry City Library. Friday 29th September 2023.



Newry City Library.
Friday 29th September 2023.

OUR SHARED HISTORY PROJECT

Today, we are pleased to donate, on permanent loan, our Fisher House Flag to the Heritage Section of Newry City Library. We are very proud of the strong bonds we have forged with the Library and in particular with the Heritage Officer, Mr Chris Cassidy. House Flags and designated funnel colours were adopted by shipping companies as their identity. The red white and blue ensign emblazoned with a black "F" flew proudly from the mastheads of the Fisher fleet whilst the black funnels carried bands of red over white over blue.

Our flag was donated to NMA by the late Mr. John DF Fisher, an enthusiastic member and generous benefactor of our Association.

Supported by
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.

Compiled by James Mc Arevey.

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Fisher Flag Handover. Heritage Gallery, Newry City Library. Friday 29th September 2023.

Our donation of the Fisher Flag to the Newry City Library on a permanent loan was well-received and attended.

We were pleased to be joined by Adrienne Adair, a senior executive of Libraries NI, and Chris Cassidy, our local branch heritage officer. Miss Adair is no stranger to NMA and has attended previous events.

The Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Councillor Valerie Harte, was present also and spoke of the importance of preserving our local history.

Previously, we donated models of "SS Connemara", "SS Retriever" and an oil painting of the legendary Town Surveyor of Newry, Charles Blaney MBE.

After the formalities, guests enjoyed our hospitality and a most pleasant sojourn.

We thank Adrienne, Chris and the Libraries NI team for facilitating our event.

This was our second event of what was a very busy and productive day.



Chair Person of NMDDC, Councillor Valrie Hart, Ms Adrienne Adair Librarys NI, James McAreyve, Chair Person NMA, Chris Cassidy Newry Librarys NI

SS Larne Margaret Street Newry 28th October 2024



SS Larne Built 1876
Lost 1884



"SS Larne" Margaret Street, Newry. Saturday 28th October 2023.

OUR SHARED HISTORY PROJECT

Our event today recalls the tragic events of Sunday 23rd October 1881 and the circumstances leading up to the deaths of the Captain of the "SS Larne" and 3 of his crew.

The irony is that the fatal incident occurred within Carlingford Lough where Captain Quinn had sought refuge from a fierce gale raging across The Bar. On a pleasant sunny day, the Lough and its waters assume a Mediterranean appearance with calm and tranquil waters but that can suddenly change to a boiling cauldron with winds whipping up the "Carlingford Kettle", a mini tornado unique to the waterway.

Sadly, the men from "SS Larne" succumbed to the icy waters on a dark, stormy October night whilst rowing back to their ship from Rostrevor. We are delighted to be joined today by Ian Noble and his wife, Leona, along with other family members who have travelled from their home in Barrow in Furness, Cumbria to be with us for this tribute.

Ian is a great, great, Grandson of the late Captain John Quinn and proudly unveiled our commemorative plaque today.



Supported by
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.



Compiled by James Mc Arevey.



SS Larne Margaret Street Newry 28th October 2024

We are indebted to Mr Ian Noble for drawing our attention to this tragedy in Carlingford Lough. Ian worked in partnership with ourselves, Maud Hamill and Chris Cassidy researching the project.

We are deeply appreciative of the generous donation from Ian Leona and the family towards the project.

Ian, a 4th generation Grandson of Captain John Quinn Master of "SS Larne" travelled from his home in Barrow in Furness with his wife Leona and 8 family members to unveil a memorial plaque. The plaque is sited on the former business premises of Felix O Hagan now the Phoenix Bar.

The tragic episode highlights the career of a quintessential businessman Felix O Hagan, whilst giving us a cameo of industrial Newry in the Victorian era.



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SS Larne Margaret Street Newry 28th October 2024





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Flooding Devastates Sugar Island, Newry.



The devastation visited in the local area by Storm Ciaran will live long in the memory. Unrelenting torrential rain led to Newry Canal overflowing in the early hours of Tuesday 31st October. Sugar Island, Bank Parade, Basin Walk, Canal Quay and Sugarhouse Quay suffered the worst with damage estimated to run into millions of pounds.

Worse still, many businesses have no flood insurance cover as the area is deemed high-risk. **The property of our valued Corporate Member, Charles Digney & Sons, is situated adjacent to the canal at Sugarhouse Quay and succumbed to the flood waters causing very extensive damage.**

Given the current bleak economic situation, this was a cruel blow to businesses already struggling.

They all need and deserve our support more than ever.



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O Rourke's Sign Repainted.

The iconic "O Rourke's" name emblazoned on a boundary wall of the former coal yard is the last remaining visible artefact at the Albert Basin.

It was last repainted in 2014 after we successfully lobbied the Council to have it done.

Recently, it was looking the worse for wear and we approached the Council again. Within weeks the job was done and the sign was once again its imposing self with a commanding presence overlooking Albert Basin.

We wish to thank, Mr Conor Haughey (Head of Outdoor Leisure), Mr Joe Henry and the maintenance team at NMDDC Greenbank Depot, for their skilful, efficient and professional delivery of the project.



Remembrance Sunday, Newry. 12th November 2023.



NMA laid two tributes in Newry a fisher flag Sponsored by Mrs Fisher was laid in remembrance of all the crew of the fisher ships, the fisher laid by Murtagh Duffy . A Merchant Navy wreath in Memory of all the merchant sea men who perished in two world wars.

Was sponsored by our members Helen Carr and Bridie Kane. This wreath was laid by Brendan Walsh



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Remembrance Sunday, Whitehall, London.



Once again the "Fisher Flag" featured prominently in the BBC televised coverage and was placed in a prime location at the base of the Cenotaph. Once again NMA where represented by Mr Adam Fisher, who sponsored the wreath

Newry Maritime Association
Newry, Co .Down

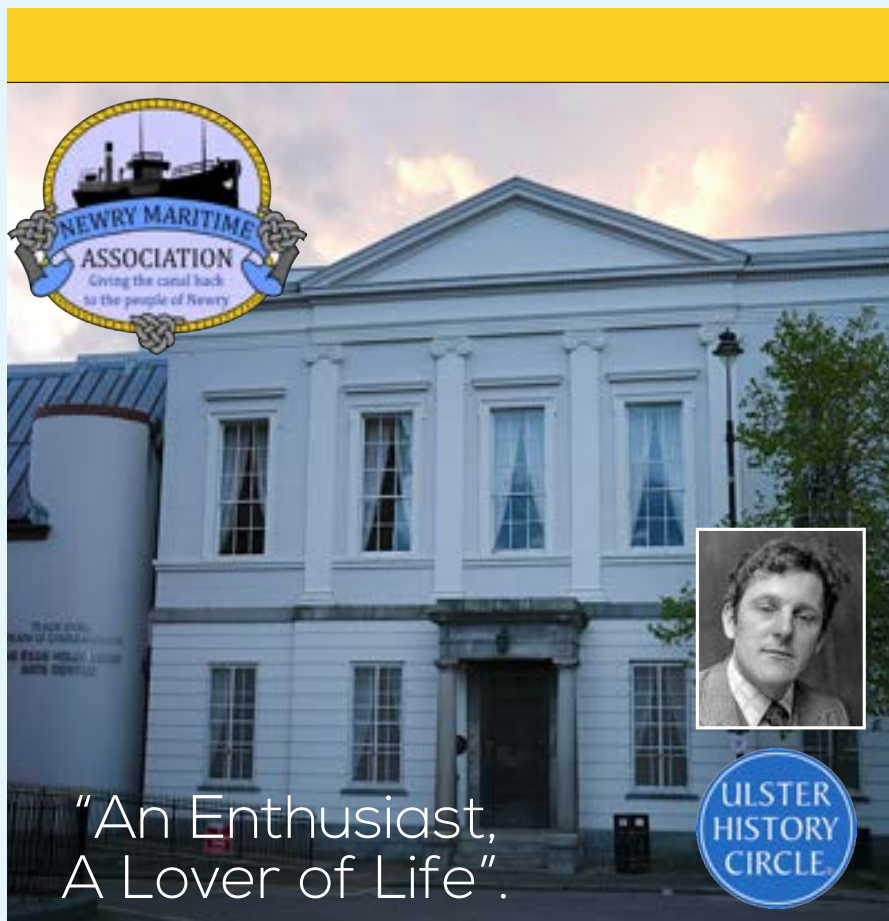
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Blue Plaque Award to Sean Hollywood.



Tuesday 12th December 2023 was a most memorable day when almost 300 people gathered at St. Colman's College Newry for a very special event. Without a shadow of a doubt, this was the highlight of a most successful NMA year.

The Ulster History Circle (UHC) were bestowing a coveted Blue Plaque to Sean Hollywood, former Head of English and Drama and a highly respected member of staff for 31 years.



"An Enthusiast,
A Lover of Life".

**Sean Hollywood Blue Plaque Unveiling
At St. Colman's College, Newry.
Tuesday 12th December 2023..**

OUR SHARED HISTORY PROJECT



Sponsored By



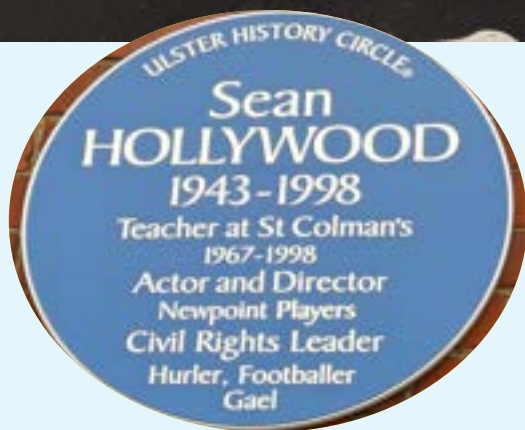
Mickey Keenan
Modern Fireplace Company & Monumental Works Newry.

Compiled by James Mc Arevey.





Blue Plaque Award to Sean Hollywood.



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Remembering "MV Olive". The last new vessel for the Fisher Fleet. 16th December 2023



**MV Olive Built 1963
Lost 1984**

**"MV OLIVE".
Dublin Bridge Newry.
Saturday 16th December 2023.**

OUR SHARED HISTORY PROJECT

Joseph Fisher & Sons was a highly successful business which traded at the Albert Basin Newry for over a century. The firm was a coal and timber importer and also operated a fleet of coasters which were a very familiar sight in ports across Ireland, Britain and North-West Europe.

In December 1963 the last newly built ship for Fishers arrived in Newry with a cargo of coal from Ayr. The new ship had been built by Scotts of Bowling, Glasgow who had been the preferred builder of the firm since 1932.

The ship, named "MV Olive", was the largest yet built by Fishers with a capacity to carry just over 1,000 tons. Barely 3 years later, on 10th November 1966, Joseph Fisher & Sons was sold to Cawood's Holdings Ltd but remained in Fishers colours until 1979. The ship was sold to the Ulster Steamship Company on 1st May 1981 and in 1983 "MV Olive" was sold to Omega Maritime Corporation, Panama and renamed "Omega Lady".

On 12th February 1984, "Omega Lady" sank after developing leaks 70 miles off Puerto Cortes, Honduras. The ship had been on a voyage from Aruba to Puerto Cortes with a cargo of sulphur. There were no casualties.

Supported by
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Compiled by **James Mc Arevey.**



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Mayor of Bolton



Mayor of Bolton 2014



Mayor of Bolton 2024

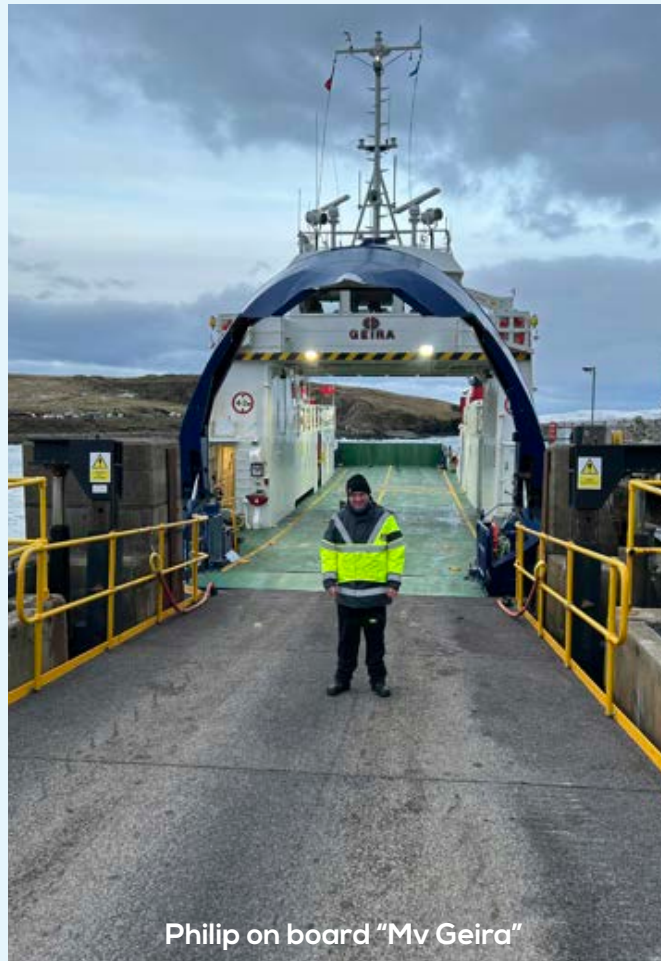


This year will mark the 10th anniversary of a visit to Newry by the then Mayor of the City of Bolton and a party of colleagues.

Bessbrook native and member of NMA Martin Donaghy returned in August to celebrate his 65th birthday and we were delighted to join the party in the Canal Court Hotel.



Ahoy There.



Philip on board "Mv Geira"

For the last 3 years we have monitored the progress of Philip Fitzsimons who enrolled as a cadet attending South Shields Marine College. In October 2023 Philip received his Officer of The Watch Certificate (unlimited) from the Marine and Coastguard Agency and began his ascent of the Maritime ladder.

Philip has taken up a position with Shetland Islands County Council on board "MV Geira" which is deployed on their inter-island ferry service. The ferry is based on Fetlar Island.

We extend our congratulations and best wishes to Philip going forward. Formerly, Philip was a crewman with Captain Sean Cunningham on his vessel "William John" and was involved in the logistics of our lighthouse illuminations.

Warrenpoint Port Community Fund 2023



All at NMA were delighted to receive an award of £500 from the Port Community Fund. The money will be used to finance a coach tour for senior citizens around Carlingford Lough.



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Flash Back to 2018

“SAVE OUR WALL”

A planning application lodged by the Southern Regional College (SRC) to demolish part of the boundary wall of the former livestock mart in Patrick Street caused a lot of anger in the close-knit Ballybot community and further afield. Livestock sold in the mart had, for generations, been walked through the streets to the Albert Basin for export. This trade created a lot of employment and memories. The export of livestock was an integral element of the trade of the Port for decades until cessation in 1964. Local community representatives asked us to support the “Save Our Wall” campaign and we readily agreed.

NMA anchored the community protest and partnered community representatives in discussions with the senior management of SRC. To their credit, they listened and they withdrew their planning application. Common sense and logic prevailed and they normally good working relationships have been restored.



THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS WHO SUPPORTED US THROUGH 2023.



TRAINOR TRANSPORT.
NOMADIC CARAVANS.
KC HIRE.
CRILLYS SWEETS.
MEDICAL HALL.
MALLONS HARDWARE.
MULKERNS EUROSPAR.
JOHN TINNELLY & SONS.
SUPERVALU DUBLIN ROAD.
FELIX O HARE & CO.
BEN WILSON STEEL.
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CANAL COURT HOTEL.
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DINEEN OFFICE SUPPLIES.
BOYDS STORES.
THE BANK BAR.
PHELAN & PRESCOTT.
PKF-FPM.
TIERNANS SOLICITORS.
AJ PLUMBING SUPPLIES.
NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL.
DESTINATION NEWRY.
MC SHANE & CO SOLICITORS.
NW KEHOE & SONS.
WARRENPOINT PORT.
SEATRUCK FERRIES.
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