

Cappagh Historical Society Chairman's Report 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

We had eight people attending our April 2023 Meeting in Erganagh Hall when there was discussion around the upkeep of the Reagan Air Crash site and the tidying up of the old Tircur School site which would be quite an undertaking.

Jimmy Smyth found a National Savings Cup in the old Dunmullan School in a drawer. He took it home, cleaned & repaired it and it is now on display at Cappagh Church. The cup had been presented by Duncan & Jean McKenzie in 1965. Jimmy brought the Cup, which had the names of winning schools inscribed on it, to our May meeting. The first School to win was the Loreto Convent Girls in 1968 followed by Dregish Primary School, next was The Loreto Convent and fourth was Dunmullan Primary School in 1970. This started a conversation around the work of the National Savings which encouraged children to save a little regularly.

Sean Harpur gave Elizabeth an email address which is best for contacting the local Council re Upkeep of the Ancient Church and Graveyard at Dunmullan. A letter from the Charity Commission was read out. There were details of a King Charles III Coronation Breakfast to be held in Dunmullan Hall.

The May meeting had eight people attending. Photos were taken by local photographer, Isobel O'Brien of the National Savings Cup and also of a commemorative spoon brought along by Kathleen Craig who had been presented with it (and to each of the pupils) in 1953 at Dunmullan Primary School to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The photos appeared in the local papers. Elizabeth read out pieces from a 1953 local paper which told of how the Queen's Coronation was celebrated in other parts of Tyrone with the local community and children taking part including children from the local Coneywarren Children's Home with games and picnics.

It was established that Robin Tait is the owner of the air crash site at Reagan and he has no objection to the area around the memorial stone being paved and seats provided. This is very much appreciated by the Historical Society.

We had seven people at our September meeting. Guest Speaker, Una Timoney gave an enthralling account of "John MacCrossan the Ill-Fated Attorney – Heinous Crime in Castle Street" in the mid 1860's. A lot of research had gone in to this and those attending were fascinated by this true account.

We had approx. 44 people attending our October meeting when Rev Andrew Lucas gave a well researched and very detailed account of the fascinating and incredible life of the Hymnwriter John Newton who went on to write the famous hymn "Amazing Grace". We have had requests for a follow up talk to this.

Our AGM was held on 20th November 2023 when we had 12 people attending. Sheena McClure was the speaker. Vincent brought along an ancient book from 1752 which had been rebound. Sheena gave an update on the digitising of Cappagh Church Records. She said the records were transcribed exactly as written. If one knew the correct spelling it could be put in brackets afterwards. There were some sad accounts for example Rev Taylor, curate who lost his 2 little daughters Fanny aged 5 on the 7 March 1765 and Rebecca aged 3 years on 25 February 1767. Sheena oversaw the election of officers when officers were re elected en bloc. Jimmy Smyth was proposed & seconded on to the Committee. We were informed that a local family were willing to carry out work in the spring at the Reagan Aircrash Site. They can submit a receipt/invoice to us for any expenses and we can reimburse them up to £150. The Society had a very enjoyable Christmas Lunch at the Millstone Restaurant when we joined up with the Glens Seniors Group