

**Strabane History Society: Charity Commission - Trustee Report  
April 2018 – March 2019 Charity Ref. NIC 103363**

### **Aims**

The main aims of the History Society are to promote the study of and active participation in the study of local history and folklife, the archaeology and antiquities of the local area and to use the shared interests in such pastimes to help people to come together in a shared understanding of the past and a deeper appreciation of the common strands in local and communal development. The programme of the society is designed to encourage a wider participation in the researching and presentation of the past and providing opportunities for people of varying ages and interests to challenge misinformation and selective misuse of the past that fosters prejudice and intolerance. The society programme attempts through its programme of meetings, talks and visits to demonstrate the variety of approaches to historical study and encourage members to become actively involved in research, discussion and sharing ideas and methodology. Local and national/international topics are encouraged and meetings are open to non members and to the wider community.

### **What it does**

From time to time outings are arranged to places of historical interest, such as the Titanic Quarter in Belfast or the Lakeland are of Co. Fermanagh. On the occasion of book launches members are invited to attend and share in the celebration, normally marked with the attendance of the Mayor or other local celebrities. To date the Society has published more than twenty titles and it is planned to digitize earlier publications in order to widen the availability of earlier research work.

The programme of talks and events for April 2018 to March 2019 was as follows:-

- March 2018 – Returning Home from World War I – Seamus Breslin
- April 2018 – The Conscription Crisis & the Collapse of the Irish Convention – John Doohar
- May 2018 – Local Doctors, Chaplains & Prisoners of War – Leslie Craig, John Doohar & Michael Kennedy
- September 2018 – Speeches, Strikes & Struggles, The Civil Rights Movement 1968-73, by Emma McGarrity from the Tower Museum.
- October 2018 – The increasing role of Women in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by Pat McGuigan & Michael Kennedy
- November 2018 – The War is over - Songs of World War I by Tracy McCrory
- December 2018 – The election of 1918 – 1<sup>st</sup> time vote for women and workers by John Doohar
- January 2019 – Local People in World War I by Strabane Research Group
- February 2019 – Bishop Hervey, 18<sup>th</sup> century Reformer, Reconciler, Renegade by Ken McCormack
- March 2019 - Spanish Flu & it's influence on local society by Patricia Marsh Q.U.B.

## Working for the Wider Public

The World War 1 project which has now ended involved a group of ten researchers and the fruits of their labour is presented in three volumes on different periods of the conflict, a compilation of newspaper archives in book form for the local library and a database of all those actively involved in the campaign both in the battles and those working on the home front. This involved working with the Heritage Department of the DerryCity.Strabane District Council and resulted in the publication of *Strabane and World War 1 – Book 3* and a local promotional display of WW1 items linking the local to the wider international picture of 1917-18: this provided opportunities for community groups and school groups to develop a closer awareness of the international as well as the local impact of the World War 1 period and to challenge some of the over simplifications of Past events.

A data-base of casualties and participants from the district in World War 1 has been developed and will be available for searching from early 2020.

### Promotion and Communication:


The full programme for the year is issued to members at the September and October meetings. Posters are sent by post, e-mailed or delivered to every members one week before each meeting, and the local press and parish bulletins carry information of the monthly meetings. Local radio is contacted if there is an event which merits wider circulation.

Strabane History Society is active on social media, using the website to broadcast all the above information and making available relevant articles and updates / changes to the programme. There is much activity from the world wide audience as people from as far away as the U.S.A., Australia and New Zealand contact the Society for advice on family searches and on items of interest. On occasions meetings have been recorded and streamed to an interested audience overseas.

### Administration

The society is run by a committee who plan the programme of meetings and seek involvement from the wider community. An AGM is held at the start of the society year and officers and committee elected for the year ahead. Due to exceptional circumstances the AGM had to be postponed this year from May until November when reports were presented by the secretary and treasurer and elections held for the various positions. This resulted in two new members in the overall committee and a change of personnel in positions – Michael Kennedy moved from secretary to chairman while John Dooher moved from chairman to secretary with Paul McElwee becoming vice chairman and long time society member, Bridie McGillian becoming President. The treasurer's report suggested a favourable credit balance and the external audit found the society finances in a healthy position.

This trustee report was provided by Secretary John Dooher and approved at the November society meeting.

Signed  John Dooher – outgoing chairman