

## SECRETARY'S REPORT 2021/23

Sadly the Society was unable to enjoy the usual varied talks during the period of Covid, but when allowed to mingle more freely we had lunches and gatherings in the Belmont Hotel in Banbridge.

Our Member Mrs Doreen McBride came up with an idea of Members writing their memories of the Second World War and life following into the 1950's. These were published in the local Banbridge Chronicle for a number of weeks and gave local people some inspiration to add their memories. Finally Doreen collated the information and wrote the various stories in specific chapters in the book "We Just Got on With It". Each contributor received a free copy and the extra copies are for sale in various outlets.

There was a special Council Sponsored evening in September when Captain Crozier was discussed by the author Michael Smith on his tour of Ireland etc. We had a very large audience including pupils from Ballydown Primary and Banbridge High School.

Our programme started in October with Larry Breen discussing the regency boxer Dan Donnelly.

November was the usual War themed evening with Nigel Henderson discussing the local housing provided for WW1 veterans.

In December we had our Christmas lunch.

Local man Gary McDonald told us of his career in Journalism from Banbridge papers to now Business Editor of Irish News.

The townland of Gransha near Dromara was the subject of a lively talk by Trevor Martin. Such a rural place provided many interesting stories.

March talk had to be abandoned because of the serious forecast of snow and it certainly proved difficult driving from about 5.00pm, just as we would have been getting ready to listen to Jim Conway of Lurgan on the Clan McCann. We hope to reschedule his talk into the next season.

Railway talks always prove attractive and in April we were not disappointed in Charles Friel's account of local trains and how they opened up the countryside.

In May Aidan Campbell will give us a talk on the large houses of East Belfast with the history of the families who lived in these wonderful buildings.

Again thanks are to be paid to all who make our meetings so enjoyable, Pat Hanna doing a wonderful job as Treasurer, Esther Ervin and her team providing the tea/coffee etc at all the meetings, Joe Furphy as our wonderful Chairman and Geraldine Foley for deputising. Doreen McBride for publicity each month with the local newspaper. Clive Rippon who manages the Old Town Hall for setting up the facility with chairs etc and looking after us all with his safety warnings.

Florence A Chambers, Hon Sec  
May 2023