

**CAIRNCASTLE ULSTER-SCOTS CULTURAL  
GROUP**

**YEAR END REPORT**

**YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2017**

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Tommy Stewart  
Hubert Hunter  
Adrian Rolston  
Jean Hunter  
Fraser Agnew  
Robert Stewart  
Bobby Hunter

## **OFFICERS**

CHAIRMAN	TOMMY STEWART
SECRETARY	FRASER AGNEW
TREASURER	BOBBY HUNTER

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## **CHARITY TRUSTEES**

Tommy Stewart  
Hubert Hunter  
Adrian Rolston  
Fraser Agnew  
Robert Stewart  
Bobby Hunter

**The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Number NIC104227**

**A Charity (Inland Revenue) Number XT31532.**

# **MISSION STATEMENT**

To Promote and Develop the understanding of History, Heritage and Culture of Ulster-Scots.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Promoting Ulster-Scots Culture in a rural area on the East Antrim Coast, through mainly arts and musical events, rejuvenating dormant songs, reducing attendee's loneliness and increasing their wellbeing through the provision of social occasions.

## **BENEFICIARIES**

Participants develop musical and presentation skills while performing at our wide range of events, and improve their competency in dancing and playing a variety of musical instruments.

Those Attending our arts, history and recreational events improves their knowledge and understanding of Ulster-Scots culture and tradition, developing friendships and increasing enjoyment.

Committee members and volunteers increase their skills in the execution of a variety of talks, while running their Group's programme of events and activities throughout the year, and increasing their knowledge in the event subject matter.

The local economy benefits from income generated by attendees at our events, which attract a significant number of regional, national and international visitors

## **CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE**

As another busy year comes to an end I am pleased to note that as Chairman of the Cairncastle Ulster Scots Cultural Group we have continued to go from strength to strength. It has been said that success breeds success and that is certainly the history of our Group.

With a clearly defined ethos we have endeavoured to promote our Ulster Scots Heritage through Arts, Culture, Music, Talks and Workshops. We have a strong cross community involvement at all of our events and that has had an important role to play in creating a mutual understanding of who we are.

We rely heavily on volunteers and that support has been exceptionally good. As a non-profit making organisation this is vitally important.

The monthly Soirees continued to play to a packed house and the special events held for Burns Night, St. Patricks Night and St. Andrews Night have been well supported. The Music Club continues to receive support particularly from Senior Citizens anxious to enjoy new skills.

Our five day Festival was again very successful. There was Bluegrass Music, Country Music, Scottish Music and Workshops on the impact that Ulster Settlers had on the development of American Country and Bluegrass Music. The week finished with a Praise Service with standing room only. All adding to the quality of life to an aging population but perhaps significantly we have seen lots of younger faces at our events.

If it wasn't for a hard working Committee it would not be possible to write such a positive report. All of our Committee members have vast experience and proper training and that in itself adds to the success to all of our ventures.

A special mention must go to Adrian Rolston in his important role of sourcing funding and developing our work. He has excellent administrative skills and quietly goes about his work helping to create a very successful Group of which I am proud to be Chairman.

As most of our Work is based in the Halfway House Hotel it is important that we acknowledge the Owners and Staff for all of their help and assistance. There is excellent hospitality and nothing is too much trouble.

## **REPORT ON ACTIVITIES**

### **FESTIVAL**

The Group was very grateful for ACNI, CRC and M&EAC funding and support from some suppliers, making it feasible to engage top class bands and develop the festival strategy. With the result we had a very successful festival, with large audiences at each event.

The musical evenings commenced with Bluegrass evening comprising Prairie Jaywalkers from Cork making their debut appearance in Cairncastle, Blue Stack Mountain Boys returning for the second year, followed with Ulster-Scots evening comprising Willie Drennan's band and Stonewall Group. The evening's finished with a Soiree of over twenty musicians playing a mixture of Scottish, Irish and Country music.

The festival also included a Cross Community evening of dance and music, comprising Irish, Scottish, Polish and Ugandan dancers, each performing their own dances and then performing as a group dancing a variety of Ethnic Minority dances. The evening finished with the local Grouse Beaters band and a Greek musician playing a variety of songs.

The festival also included workshops on the History of Bluegrass Music, playing a Keyboard, Manufacturing Bagpipes, Ulster Scots & Irish Languages, different tunes and sounds produced by the Accordion in various parts of Ireland and a discussion on the Battle of Passchendaele in summer 1917, when 36<sup>th</sup> Ulster Division and 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Division fought together against the German army.

As part of the festival a musical bus tour took place to Armagh City, with live music on coach and in Armagh City Hotel. The festival closed with an Ulster-Scots praise service on the Sunday, comprising musicians Full Armour Gospel Group, John Burns, Stewart Buchanan and others singing gospel hymns and songs.

## **SOIRÉES**

The monthly Soirees continue to increase in popularity. The main Function Room in the Halfway House Hotel is packed to capacity on the last Wednesday of each month. The Grousebeaters are the resident band with visiting singers and groups providing a variety of music ranging from Irish and Scottish music to Country music. Storey telling is a regular feature at the Soirees and we always welcome beginners whether they are singers or musicians.

## **BURNS NIGHT, ST ANDREWS NIGHT AND ST PATRICKS NIGHT**

We were successful in securing funding from M&EAC for the Burns Night, enabling us to engage for the event.

We also had a good variety of Artists participating at both St Andrews Night and Ulster-Scots at Patricks Night.

All events were well supported.

## **MUSIC GROUP**

Members continued to attend meetings developing their musical and presentation skills and successfully participated at Cairncastle Ulster-Scots Festival, on both the cross community evening and Ulster-Scots musical evening

## **CHRISTMAS DINNER & MUSICAL EVENING**

Thanks to M&EAC for funding the Christmas Dinner in early December. It enabled all those who gave their voluntary time to help run the activities in Cairnycastle, to meet on a social occasion, relax and enjoy themselves. The music afterwards, again by volunteers, was appreciated by all present.

## **Cultural Visits**

There was large attendance on the trips to both Donegal when we were joined by members of East Donegal Ulster-Scots Association, and West Scotland when we were joined by members of Ardrossan Ulster-Scots Society. Members of East Donegal Ulster-Scots Association accompanied us on the Scottish Trip. On both trips culture and historical tours of each region took place along with musical session each evening, provided by musicians from the three regions and time for shopping.