

ANTRIM AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CHARITY NUMBER NIC104890

CHAIRMANS REPORT

2023/24

Thankfully the past year, in comparison to the previous three years has been settled and we have been able to meet normally in Stiles Community Centre.

Following our Annual General Meeting in May 2023, our first activity was a visit to Hillsborough Castle and Gardens which took place on a beautiful day in June. This visit, originally was to take place in September 2022, but following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Castle and grounds were closed and so the visit was postponed. The feedback on the visit was indeed most positive.

The Committee worked hard to prepare a programme for the year September 2023 through until June 2024 and indeed the outcome of that work has proved most satisfactory.

September commenced our Autumn/Winter programme with Peter Dalton of the Enkalon Foundation enlightening us with a power point presentation about the coming to Antrim in the early 1960's of British Enkalon, a manmade fibre production factory, which at the heights of its tenure employed in excess of 2000 workers and indeed brought an influx of families to Antrim from all over the province. By the 1980's, however the factory has closed owing to production costs being too high. The evening was well attended and some former employees were in attendance.

On the 24th of October, we were privileged to welcome Victoria Millar from the Ulster Folk Museum, who introduced us to the early 20th century photographer, William A Green, who had made his home in Antrim and whose archive of photographs is held in the Folk Museum. It was indeed an enjoyable evening and some folk in attendance could remember Mr Green in and around the town. Indeed the present owners of his former home were at the meeting.

November was an in-house evening when a number of our Committee had prepared an inter-round quiz with picture tales and yarns being shown and told, whilst the audience tried to tell us what, where or who was being shown or described. The evening went exceptionally well with good audience participation.

After our Christmas break, we met in January 2024 at the Dunsilly Hotel, where we enjoyed an evening of 'Chit-Chat and Chew'. This evening had been prepared by Josephine and a goodly number attended, enjoying laughter, tales and of course something to eat.

A visit, from local artist Adrian Steel was our theme for February. Adrian is indeed a very talented sketch artist and showed us a wide selection of his pen and ink drawings of buildings in and around Antrim, Randalstown and Templepatrick and expanded on the

history of the building or piece of architecture. The evening was enjoyed by all with good audience participation. I feel that we all learned something more about a particular building or piece of architecture that we thought we knew about before.

'150 Not Out' was our theme for March, when we, with much anticipation, awaited a speaker from Muckamore Cricket Club, which in 2024 is celebrating its 150th Anniversary. We were indeed most surprised and delighted, when the Chairperson of the Club phoned me with an invitation for us as a Society to visit with them at their Clubhouse. We readily accepted this invitation with gracious thanks. The evening consisted of a Power Point presentation of photographs going back to the early days of the Club and a potted history of those players and officials, given by Michael Nutt who has prepared and edited a book on the history of Muckamore Cricket Club and also personal thumb nail sketches of characters over the years given by the Club President, Ivor McMeekin. The evening was brought to a close, with tea/coffee and snacks having been laid on for us. I, as chair, thanked the club for hosting the evening, for their hospitality and indeed for the part they have played in the community as a club, over the past Century and a half.

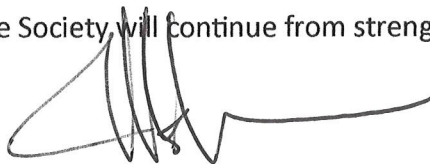
April, saw us welcome Clare Ablett, curator of Transport at the Ulster Transport Museum, who gave us, again a power point presentation about the history of transport in Northern Ireland. This was from the Horse and Cart, The Bicycle, Steam, the early years of the pioneers of the 'Air' through Trams, Trolley-Buses, right up to the modern jet age. We, as a Society are planning a visit to the Museum, where we hope to learn more and increase our knowledge of the history of transport in our province.

This evening is our Annual General Meeting. I hope you enjoy the tea/coffee and nibbles and indeed what comes later.

I wish to place on record, my thanks to the Secretary, Josephine, to the Treasurer, Anne and indeed to the Vice Chairperson and all the Committee Members for their help and hard work over, not only the last year, but indeed for some, this has been for many years. Lastly to you all, thanks for your support, we could not carry on without you. If you like what we do, then please make us known to your friends and neighbours. We would like to have this venue filled to capacity each evening we meet and if you know of any in the age group, teens, twenties and those not entitled to a bus pass, please ask them to come along, if they have an interest in local and indeed all aspects of our history.

Thank you all once again and I hope the Society will continue from strength to strength, as we continue in 2024 into 2025.

Matt Herbison (Chairperson/Trustee)



Josephine Herbison (Secretary/Trustee)



Date.

28/05/2024