

HistoryHubUlster

History Hub Ulster - Trustee Annual Report

1st May 2023 to 30th April 2024

This Trustee Annual Report details our activities during the year 2023-2024.

Charity Number: NIC106993

President: Karen O'Rawe

The Committee (Trustees) Members for the year 2023-2024 were:

Chair: Gavin Bamford
Secretary: Vacant
Treasurer: Catherine Burrell

Activities

History Hub Ulster aim to promote and produce interesting and innovative projects and partnerships which are engaging to all members of the community, enhancing the individual's understanding of their shared heritage.

Group members were able to undertake a wide variety of activities this reporting year:

Karen O'Rawe

- Research Irish men who died on Borneo, including on the Sandakan Death March during the Second World War and at various POW camps. Included visiting Sandakan and the Australian War Memorial.
- Research Irish men who are buried or memorialised in Malaysia (in particular Labuan) and Singapore. Included visiting Labuan and Singapore.
- Research the Royal Marine Commandos who took part in the Raid on Limbang during the 1962 Revolt. Included visiting Limbang and Singapore.
- Research for a UK group who aim to undertake part of the death march route for the 80th anniversary in 2025.
- Genealogical research for people in the UK and USA.
- UK Military research project in South East Asia.

Gavin Bamford

- Partnered with **Nick Garbett** (former Irish News editor) and **Northern Bank Ltd** (t/a Danske Bank) to research, write and source many historical photographs for a book celebrating the 200th anniversary of Northern Bank being the first joint stock bank in Ireland. 'Northern

Bank, An Illustrated History, 1824-2024' follows on from their 1924 centenary book, their 1970 Belfast Bank book, their 175th anniversary booklet and is due out in summer 2024.

Catherine Burrell

- Attended a meeting with members of the **Ballinderry War Memorial Hall** Committee along with Nigel Henderson and John McCormick (friend of our group) to discuss how to celebrate and commemorate its centenary in 2024.

Nigel Henderson

- Cregagh Colony Ex-Servicemen's Homes
- Cambrai Colony Ex-Servicemen's Homes
- 'Belfast Blitz' tours to various groups
- 'Belfast Blitz' presentation to various groups
- 'Great War Veterans Cottages' (Homes for Heroes) presentation to various groups
- 'RUC in the Second World War' presentation to various groups
- Publication jointly with Michael Nugent of their book *'Killester Garden Village. The lives of Great War Veterans and their families'*.
- Continuing to develop biographies for publication for Homes for Heroes in Greater Belfast and German Air Raid fatalities.

Eddie Connolly

- Participated in the Ballyclare 'Family History Fair'.

Michael Nugent

- Publication jointly with Nigel Henderson of their book *'Killester Garden Village. The lives of Great War Veterans and their families'*.
- Publication of my third book, *'A Bad Day I Fear. The Irish Divisions at the Battle of Langemarck, 16 August 1917'*.

Peter McCabe

- Priory, Holywood cemetery walk with Peter McCabe
- Launch of 'A A S Barbour – 70 years not out' book with Peter McCabe
- Balmoral Cemetery tour with Peter McCabe (multiple events)
- Carnmoney cemetery 'Troubles' tour with Peter McCabe
- Friar's Bush Graveyard tour with Peter McCabe (multiple events)
- Participation in the Eastside Arts Festival (multiple events)

- Participation in the C S Lewis Festival (multiple events)

HHU Chair, Gavin Bamford and Treasurer, Catherine Burrell along with associate member, Michael Nugent attended the rededication service of the Ballymena WW2 War Memorial as guests of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Various members attended in person or via video, activities that included:

- Talks by the Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum ‘Still Over Here; US Forces in NI 1941-1945’ and ‘Honouring the Dead and Serving the Living; The History of the Northern Ireland War Memorial’
- Zoom session on ‘Watchmakers Slavery’ – a Zoom session presented by Mark Doherty
- Visiting the Overloon War Museum, Netherlands to further research Gordon Kerr, RAF Lancaster pilot, Belfast Bank
- Visiting the Ulster Tower, Thiepval, France followed by a visit to the Somme Museum, Conlig
- Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum talks

Throughout the year we have continued to make use of our website and social media as a signpost educating and sharing information from like-minded organisations, groups and partners.

Our book ‘Ulster War Memorials from History Hub Ulster’ which highlights unusual, hidden and missing War Memorials around the Province of Ulster is still available. Copies can be obtained via our Facebook page or our website.

Our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@historyhubulster7891>) now has 91 videos, 83.9k views and 661 subscribers as at 30th April 2024 (report date). 3 videos were posted during this reporting year.

- Walking Tour of the Ex-Servicemen’s Colony at Cregagh, east Belfast with Nigel Henderson. This was our first film length video of a walking tour giving viewers who were unable to attend on the day. Our thanks go to Justin Macartney for undertaking the video work.
- The 1886 Albert Bridge Collapse with Gavin Bamford
- Ypres Park ‘Homes for Heroes’ Colony Tour with Nigel Henderson

We continue to share interesting and innovative articles on our Facebook page with 7,888 followers <https://www.facebook.com/HistoryHubUlster> and via our Twitter account @historyulster

Our popular posts on Facebook have included:

- 50k reach – Ulster Covenant database – over two posts
- 42k reach – ‘A Women’s Working Day, 1963’ – over two posts
- 25k reach – Dennison Bros, Bradbury Place
- 18k reach – Arthur Square & Cornmarket – a photo in the Guy Butler archive
- 15k reach – Libraries in Belfast – collection of newspaper clippings
- 14k reach – 2024 Civic War memorial centenary dates
- 13k reach – Moneybroom Lime Kilns destruction

- 12k reach – 200th anniversary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)
- 11k reach – Scaffolding coming down on the former Presbyterian War Memorial Building
- 10k reach – Belfast Streetnames Project

Our webpage, www.historyhubulster.co.uk is for articles written mainly by our members and invited guest authors. It has a worldwide audience of over 15k readers of which over 11k live in the United Kingdom and over 1k live in Ireland. It is promoted via our Facebook page. During this reporting period, we have published informative articles on such diverse subjects as:

- Homes for Heroes in Glengormley by Nigel Henderson
- The Last Man to Let You Down by Chris Scott, Wilton Funeral Service
- Albert Bridge, Belfast collapse 1886 by Gavin Bamford
- Sheila the Belfast Blitz Elephant by Nigel Henderson
- The Belfast Blitz: Lost Church Memorials by Nigel Henderson

We continue to extend our invitation to guest authors to send us suitable articles.

Partnerships

Our partnership with newspapers continues with articles submitted to and published in the **News Letter ‘The Roamer’** page.

With great regret, our ‘Trace a Relative’ research contract with the **Inniskillings Museum** came to an end with the reorganisation of army museums in Northern Ireland. We offer the museum team best wishes as they take on their own research.

HHU partnered with **Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council** on a project to commemorate the various ‘Homes for Heroes’ sites in the council area. This was led by Nigel Henderson. Plaques were erected in July 2024.

HHU researchers, Nigel Henderson, Catherine Burrell and Michael Nugent undertook considerable preparation work for the **Mid and East Antrim Borough Council** on a research programme to identify further names that could be added to the Larne WW2 War Memorial. It is hoped that further work on this project will take place in the coming year or two.

HHU linked up with the **Friar’s Bush Graveyard, Belfast** team of Peter McCabe and Mark Doherty to successfully apply for funding from the **Belfast City Council ‘Belfast Learning Festival’**. Three separate events were run entertaining circa 60 members of the public to an ‘actor led’ tour of the graveyard.

We continue to promote and produce interesting and innovative projects and partnerships which are engaging to all members of the community whilst also enhancing the individual

Our members continue to add to their websites and Facebook pages/groups:

[Belfast Paper and Ephemera](#) Facebook

[Belfast Shipyard of Workman, Clark](#) webpage

[Castleton Lanterns](#) webpage & [Facebook](#)

[Eddies Extracts](#) webpage & [Facebook](#)

[Family Photos of Old Northern Ireland](#) Facebook

[Friends of Neill's Hill Railway Station](#) Facebook

[Great War Ulster Newspaper Archive](#) Facebook

[Homes for Heroes NI \(1921 to 1939\)](#) Facebook

[Missing War Memorials in Ulster](#) a History Hub Ulster Facebook page

[Northern Bank War Memorials](#) webpage & [Facebook](#)

[Ulster Bank War Memorials](#) webpage & [Facebook](#)

[Ulster War Memorials](#) a History Hub Ulster Facebook page

[William J English VC](#) webpage

[Workman Clark in the Great War](#) Facebook

[WW1 Research Ireland](#) webpage & [Facebook](#)

In addition to the above websites and Facebook pages/groups, our members own subjects include cemetery tours with Nigel Henderson, Richard Graham and Peter McCabe; talks by Nigel Henderson and Richard Graham; books on cemeteries by Peter McCabe; blitz tours with Nigel Henderson; local banking by Gavin Bamford, and historic railway infrastructure with Gavin Bamford and Eddie Connolly (*Friends of Neill's Hill Railway Station*).

We were pleased to support our associate member Peter McCabe with the gift of an ISBN for his 7th book:

- 'A A S Barbour; 70 years not out' in association with Stewart Barbour who has now raised close to £40k for Cancer Focus NI (as at 30th June 2024) in many varied tasks.

As a group, History Hub Ulster funds subscriptions to various research sites to which all its members have access. These have proved invaluable to our members' ability to research cases for their own projects as well as our History Hub Ulster contracted cases and also the individual research undertaken on behalf of members of the public.

Financial Reserves Policy

No awards were granted in this reporting year under our 'Reserves Funding Award' policy.

Summary

2023/24 has been our 10th year in operation and my 7th year as Chair. The group continues to be a trusted source that can deliver accurate research on many subjects. We take pride in offering voluntary and commercial research to individuals and groups alike.

Although there continues to be less money around in the council and museums communities, work by the team has mostly been in the background as we prepare research quotations and funding applications. Unfortunately, our partnership with the Inniskillings Museum came to an end. However, we were pleased to receive funding from Belfast City Council to support the great work being undertaken by the Friar's Bush team. In addition, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council have now erected the 'Homes for Heroes' plaques in various locations.

It was a great honour for me to be asked by Northern Bank to write the 200th anniversary book for them, joining the ranks of E D Hill, Director and Noel Simpson, Head of Finance with their associated books.

The team have continued to provide research information and interesting articles via our various social media platforms and newspapers alike.

Finally, on a personal note, I wish to thank the team for their support during the year.

Gavin Bamford

Chair, History Hub Ulster

1st September 2024

Well done to everyone for another great year! This year, 2014 is our tenth since we formed. That the group is still in existence through so much change and adversity is a testament to your dedication. The content produced by our members is outstanding and well received. In addition, our channels are sharing relevant and interesting content, and engagement is high. It's really important to note our successes and move forward with our aim to instil a sense of pride in our ancestors' achievements. I wish you luck with the team endeavours, as well as your personal projects.

I want to thank the committee and members for all their work over the past year and hope to see you all later this year.

Karen O'Rawe

Honorary President, History Hub Ulster

1st September 2024