

# HistoryHubUlster

## History Hub Ulster - Trustee Annual Report

1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025

This Trustee Annual Report details our activities during the year 2024-2025.

Charity Number: NIC106993

President: Karen O'Rawe

The Committee (Trustees) Members for the year 2024-2025 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.*

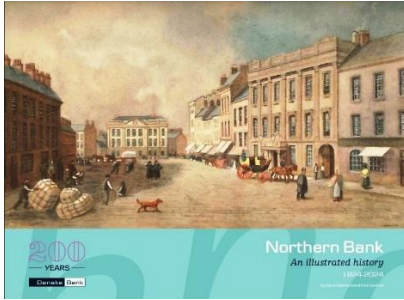
Group members were able to undertake a wide variety of activities this reporting year:

#### Karen O'Rawe

- Continuing with genealogical research for people in the UK, USA and Australia
- Research for local groups for VJ 80 and the impact of war in SE Asia
- Research for VJ Day exhibitions in local churches
- Continuing project on the Second World War in the Pacific to include the Kokoda Track campaign, Australians in the RAF and the Battle of the Coral Sea
- Completed historical children's project with UK Military in Brunei, and research for Sandakan Day 80 project

#### Gavin Bamford

- **Northern Bank Ltd** (t/a Danske Bank) launched their 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary book, '*Northern Bank, An Illustrated History, 1824-2024*', in September 2024. Gavin partnered with **Nick Garbett** (former Irish News editor) to research, write and source the many historical photographs. The book follows on from their 1924 centenary book, their 1970 Belfast Bank book, and their 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary booklet.



Over 2,000 hard copy editions were distributed to staff and pensioners. Free downloadable pdf copies were made available via their website: <https://danskebank.co.uk/about-us/about-us>. A launch video was created by Gavin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GlojSEf-u4>. Gavin, subsequently, made a substantial, voluntary donation to the group finances.

### **Catherine Burrell**

- Researching for the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council - Larne Second World War 'Additional Names' project

### **Nigel Henderson**

- Researching for the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council - Larne Second World War 'Additional Names' project
- Providing research, narrative, voice overs & presenting on future video reports on the recording of German bombing sites in Ireland & Northern Ireland 1939-1945

Nigel has now completed a draft book containing biographies of the fatalities - military and civilian - from the German air raids on Northern Ireland in 1941. The draft also contains:

- details of houses damaged or destroyed in the areas where there were fatalities and details of the building of replacement housing
- Great War veterans who died in the air raids
- churches damaged or destroyed during the air raids
- statistics of fatality numbers by ward, gender, age, and religious affiliation

It is hoped that this research will be published in book format in 2026 to tie in with the 85th Anniversary of the air raids.

Nigel has also been documenting the locations of the 2,000 Arcon prefabricated detached bungalows and the 2,000 Hawksley aluminium prefabricated semi-detached bungalows erected in Northern Ireland between 1946 and 1951, and developing biographies for long-term occupants.

He has developed four "My Google Maps" documenting the locations of:

- ISSLT Cottages for Great War veterans: <https://tinyurl.com/59eucemn>
- Arcon Prefab Bungalows: <https://tinyurl.com/5edv8vzk>
- Hawksley Prefab Bungalows: <https://tinyurl.com/msny9fzj>

### **Eddie Connolly**

- Assists with private research.
- Participated in the Ballyclare 'Family History Fair'.

### **Michael Nugent**

- Researching for the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council - Larne Second World War 'Additional Names' project
- Continuing to research service personnel of the Great War for relatives

### **Peter McCabe**

- Priory, Holywood cemetery tour
- Balmoral Cemetery tour (multiple events)
- Friar's Bush Graveyard tour (multiple events)
- Participation in the Eastside Arts Festival (multiple events)
- Participation in the C S Lewis Festival (multiple events)
- Presentations to local groups (multiple events)

***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 92 videos, 96.9 views and 774 subscribers as at 30th April 2025 (report date). One video was posted during this reporting year.

- 'Greater Shankill Presbyterians in the Great War' with Nigel Henderson

We continue to share interesting and innovative articles on our Facebook page with 8,171 followers <https://www.facebook.com/HistoryHubUlster> and via our Twitter account @historyulster

Our popular posts on Facebook have included:

- 93k reach – Updated timings on the final PUMA helicopter flight
- 67k reach – Boyne Bridge & Saltwater Bridge commentary (over two posts)
- 27k reach – Grand Hotels of Belfast (Great War time)
- 21k reach – The Changing Face of Armagh City
- 17k reach – Belfast 1977 photographs
- 16k reach – Northern Bank – 1823 map

- 15k reach – Sir Wm F Coates
- 13k reach – The elephants at Belfast Zoo

Our webpage, [www.historyhubulster.co.uk](http://www.historyhubulster.co.uk) is for articles written mainly by our members and invited guest authors. It has a worldwide audience of 18k readers of which:

- 11,670 - United Kingdom
- 994 - Ireland
- 1,500 - USA
- 1,369 - Germany
- 350 - Australia.

It is promoted via our Facebook page. During this reporting period, we have published informative articles on such diverse subjects as:

- Montgomery's of Ballydrain by Gavin Bamford
- Operation Overlord: Northern Ireland Connection by Nigel Henderson
- Cliftonville Golf Club – Victory Prize by Nigel Henderson
- Gallaher and Company Second World War Memorial by Nigel Henderson
- Captain Alexander Joseph Molloy MC by Nigel Henderson
- On This Day 80 Years Ago: The Bombing of Dresden
- Public Call for Missing Names in Larne by HHU

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.



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 various locations in July 2024.

After completing major preparatory work, HHU researchers, Nigel Henderson, Catherine Burrell and Michael Nugent for the **Mid and East Antrim Borough Council**, the project to identify additional

Second World War names for the Larne War Memorial was officially started in late 2024. The project was managed by Gavin Bamford.

Our partnership with the **Friar's Bush Graveyard, Belfast** team of Peter McCabe and Mark Doherty continues.

In May 2024, we applied for funding from **Belfast City Council 'Bank of Ideas'** for work to be undertaken at the former Neill's Hill Railway Station on the Comber Greenway. We passed the first hurdle and moved to the 'public vote' in Belfast City Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024. Although 59.41% (300) of the 505 people attending the presentations, unfortunately we were not one of the 28 projects out of 93 ideas to be chosen. The experience of 'public voting' will help us in future years.

In August and September 2024, we hosted stands at the **North of Ireland Family History Society**, Europa Hotel and the **Carrickfergus 50** celebrations, Carrickfergus Town Hall.

The European Heritage Open Days in September 2025 saw us partnering with **Eastside Partnership** and **Hometown Tours (Steve Patterson)** to deliver a walk from Eastside up the Comber Greenway to the former Neill's Hill Railway Station where Gavin Bamford delivered a talk about the station.

In October 2024, we partnered with **The Irish Military Heritage Foundation CLG** to provide video footage of two 1941 German bombing sites.

The 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day 80) provided us with the opportunity to successfully apply for funding from **Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)** to run two wartime themed cemetery tours during the commemorative period in May 2025.

***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 [Facebook](#) together with an active presence on X and Bluesky platforms

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**

*2024/25 has been our 11th year in operation and my 8th 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.*

*The group re-entered the funding application stage and were successful in obtaining VE Day 80 commemoration funding. Unfortunately, our Neill's Hill application did not win over the public vote.*

*Once again, after delivering similar projects, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has engaged our group to undertake a major research project to identify additional Second World War names to go on the Larne Urban District War Memorial (commonly known now as the Larne War Memorial).*

*Further project partnerships were developed with diverse organisations and groups such as News Letter (The Roamer); Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; Friar's Bush Graveyard; Belfast City Council; North of Ireland Family History Society; Carrickfergus 50; Eastside Partnership, Hometown Tours; The Irish Military Heritage Foundation CLG; Northern Bank (t/a Danske Bank) and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.*

*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**

**September 2025**

*As we close another great year, I want to express my thanks for everything you've accomplished.*

*Your dedication and commitment make me so proud to be a member of History Hub Ulster. Thank you for your creativity, collaboration and the passion you put into both your own personal projects and the bigger group projects.*

*It's important to reflect on this year's achievements, but as we look ahead to the future, I'm excited for what new ideas we can come up with together. I want to thank the committee and members for all their work over the past year and I wish you luck with the next year of historical endeavours.*

**Karen O'Rawe**

**Honorary President, History Hub Ulster**

**September 2025**