

CO LOUTH ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hon. Secretary's Report for 2009 to the Annual General Meeting

Membership: Thirty-seven new members were welcomed to the Society during the year; their names are given in the final paragraph of this report. Losses numbered thirty; thirteen were deemed to have lapsed, seven resigned and ten were taken from us by death. These last were Mr Michael Carson, Mrs Sinead Farrelly, Miss Josephine McCann, Mr Paddy McCarthy, Mr Tom McCullagh, Mrs Anne Martin, Mr Raymond Monaghan, Mr Eamon O'Hanlon, Dr Harold O'Sullivan and Dr G.B. Plunkett. At the end of the year membership stood at its highest ever level at 741, including one honorary member and 42 life members.

The late Dr Harold O' Sullivan: By the death of Dr Harold O'Sullivan County Louth has lost its most distinguished historian. A frequent contributor to our *Journal* from as far back as 1961 his early researches covered the development of National Education in north Louth and many aspects of the history of Dundalk, his adopted town. Following the completion of his M.Litt thesis on the Trevors of Rose Trevor and his Ph.D 'Land Ownership changes in the County of Louth in the Seventeenth Century' he largely concentrated on that century. A founder member of the Old Dundalk Society he published a history of Dundalk in the revived *Tempest's Annual* in six issues from 1965 to 1971-1972. The final part of his history of the Catholic parishes in Cooley appeared in *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* just a few weeks after his death.

His books include *Dundalk: A Military History* (with Joe Gavin), *The House on the Ridge of the Weir* (a history of St Mary's, Drumcar), *A History of Local Government in the County of Louth*, and a biography of the 'great survivor' whom he greatly admired *John Bellew, a Seventeenth-Century Man of Many Parts*.

The Irish Historic Towns Atlas for Dundalk, published in 2006, contains a vast amount of detailed data for the town, the compiling of which occupied him for a considerable time. A similar project for Carlingford was nearing completion at the time of his passing.

For many years he was in constant demand as a lecturer on local subjects and as a guide to groups visiting the county. A full tribute will appear in the next issue of the *Journal*.

Lectures: Six lectures were held during the year: 'The Wreck of the Mary Stoddart in Dundalk Bay, 1858' by Charley McCarthy in Dundalk on 12 February; 'The Placenames of the Cooley Peninsula' by Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig in Carlingford on 11 March; 'Exploring the Lands of the Augustinian Priory of Llanthony in Louth and Meath 1172-1541' by Dr Arlene Hogan in Drogheda on 25 March; 'Louth in the Library: Collections and Resources relating to Co Louth in the National Library of Ireland' by Ms Joanna Finegan in Ardee on 15 October; 'Steamers, Schooners & Submarines – An Overview of Shipwrecks recorded off the East Coast of Ireland' by Karl Brady in Dundalk on 12 November; 'The Drogheda Boat – Excavation, Recording and Analysis of a 16th-Century clinker-built wreck' by Holger Schweitzer in Drogheda on 26 November.

Excursions: The excursion programme started with an evening visit to the North Strand, Drogheda to view the 'Drogheda Boat' on 20 May. A very informative PowerPoint presentation was provided by Holger Schweitzer, followed by a tour of the tanks where the parts of the boat are currently stored. The boat has been dated to the 1520s/1530s through the use of specialized technology.

Dr Christine Casey gave a comprehensive account of the building and architecture both at Collon Church of Ireland and Townley Hall on 24 May. Brendan McKiernan also spoke on various aspects of Townley Hall.

The all-day outing on 27 June was to Kilruddery and Powerscourt, Co Wicklow. The trip started with a visit to Kilruddery House, home of Jack Brabazon, the current Earl of Meath. The group was given a guided tour of the house and was free to tour the 17th-century gardens. Next stop was at Powerscourt waterfall where people enjoyed their lunch and viewed the waterfall on what was one of the sunniest days of the summer. The final stop on the tour was at Powerscourt House where a guided tour was provided followed by a visit to the gardens or shops. The FBD Hotel in Castleknock provided a welcome and enjoyable meal on the way home.

On Sunday 12 July the Society visited Dunleer, Dromin and Barnaveddodge. The tour which was lead by Fr Michael Murtagh P.P. took in Fr Larry Murray's grave followed by a visit to the Church of Ireland at Dunleer. Next stop was Dromin where the motte, medieval church and graveyard were visited. Final stop was the Barnaveddodge ogham stone. The outing was well attended and enjoyed.

The last outing of the summer on 22 August was a full and comprehensive morning and afternoon led by Dr Conor Brady that took in the megaliths of north Co Louth. The tour included Drumnasillagh court tomb, Proleek dolmen and wedge tomb, Rockmarshall court tomb, Ravensdale Park stone circle and court tomb and finally Clermont passage tomb. We thank those who led tours during the year.

Journal: The 2008 *Journal* (Vol. 26, No. 4) was distributed in March to members in good standing. Members in arrears with their subscriptions did not receive the *Journal* but may obtain a copy by forwarding the appropriate amount to the Hon. Treasurer. Members are reminded that contributions to the *Journal* are always welcome. Articles, long or short, notes and queries may be sent to the editor at any time.

Council meetings and general meetings: The business of the Society was transacted at eleven Council meetings, which were held in Ardee (4), Drogheda (4) and Dundalk (3). Our thanks are renewed to those who provided accommodation and hospitality for these meetings. The Annual General meeting was held in Ardee Community School on 28 January.

Planning Matters: The proposed development at Annagassan Mill was refused. The linen watch-house at Doolargy has been submitted by the Society for protection in the County development plan. Planning permission has been sought for the demolition of the Park Hotel at Omeath. The Society has put in a submission stating that there are two recorded monuments on the site.

Archaeological Discoveries: A souterrain was discovered at Grange Irish. The Society had the souterrain surveyed and hope to publish it in the next *Journal*. Archaeological testing at Glydefarm, Tallanstown, in fulfilment of a planning condition, located the ditch of a probable ringfort first revealed on a Cambridge University aerial photo in 1967. Pre-planning test trenches at Mulladrillen, Ardee, uncovered the walls of an unroofed souterrain together with associated archaeological deposits. The souterrain is recorded on the OS 6-inch and 25-inch maps

New Members (37): Michael Arthur, Ollie Arthur, Alan Byrne, David Byrne, Eamonn Coffey, Laura Corray, Mairéad Crinion, Seamus Crosson, Gerry Duffy, Kevin Gurry, David Humphries, Paul Lennon, Mary Lynch, Theresa McArdle, Clare McCarthy, Liam McCauley, Andrew McGuinness, Niall McGuinness, Jack McHugh, Paddy McKenna, Ronan McKeown, Laetitia MacMahon, Winnie Markey, Eamonn Marrett, Valerie Moulton, Newry and Mourne Museum, Fr Denis Nulty PP, Colm Ó Maolmhuire, Mark Pinkerton, Frankie Roche, Michele Ryan, Audrey Smith, Seamus Tiernan, Colin Toner, Clára Uí Rinn, Anne Whately and Pat Woods.