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# **Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland**

## **NEWS SHEET**

**October 2010 – September 2011**

### **Move to 26 College Green**

The most important happening in 2010 was our move from Assembly Buildings to 26 College Green beside Union Theological College. Organising and packing up began in early July of last year so by mid September the library books had been cleaned and packed into crates, the museum items, including pictures, had been listed, labelled and bubble wrapped, and all the archive material was given an identifying number and crated. This material, together with all our moveable furniture, was transferred to the new premises in College Green in 2 consignments in the last week of September.

The library books moved first and it took just less than a day to shelve them with the help of students from Union Theological College and with voluntary labour. This part of the move was relatively straight forward. The second consignment to arrive at College Green was by far the largest and most difficult to unpack because of lack of space and the fact that workmen were still finishing off work on our ground floor accommodation. The crates were stacked up on the entire floor space in the front room of College Green. However, once we got the crates organised and with lots of voluntary labour the unpacking progressed steadily, so much so that by the 13<sup>th</sup> of October all the hired crates had been emptied.

It took several weeks to get the library into shape – moving furniture around to make the best possible use of the space and finding space for everything since the actual floor area is smaller than what we had in Assembly Buildings. All the microfilms of congregational records are now stored in cabinets, making them easier to access and the catalogues of the microfilm holdings have been put into new London binders which keeps them neat and tidy. Thanks to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland the Society was able to acquire 2 microfilm readers which were being disposed of. These are a very welcome addition as our existing microfilm reader is near the end of its lifespan but the latter has been retained as a back-up machine. Having 2 readers has proved very useful as there are many occasions when more than one person needs access to a microfilm reader. New leaflet holders have been erected on the Search Room walls to house our small booklets as horizontal space is at a premium. Venetian blinds were purchased for the windows in the 2 rooms housing the library books to reduce the harmful effects of ultra-violet light. We have tried to make the most of the space and to provide a pleasant environment in the Search Room for visitors.

Thanks to Union College a ramp has been built at the front entrance and with the addition of an access toilet our facilities are now accessible to anyone with a disability. We have managed to come to an arrangement with Fitzroy Presbyterian Church who have a photocopying machine on the first floor which enables us to continue to offer a photocopying service. There is still a lot of work to do but further progress is dependent on getting external funding.

If you haven't yet visited our new premises please feel free to drop in on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9.30am or Thursday morning from 9.30 to 1.00pm.

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## Managing the library and archive

New procedures have been introduced to ensure the preservation and security of the library books and archives. All visitors who are not members have to register and receive a ticket with the registered number which they then bring with them on future visits. Visitors have to sign the visitors' book and to comply with Data Protection guidelines simply sign their name and either their membership number or registered number. Belongings and coats now have to be stored in lockers beside the record store for security and health and safety reasons. Preservation Rules have been compiled and are now given to every visitor so that they know what we expect from them and what they can expect from us. We have also introduced a copyright declaration form which all customers requesting photocopies have to complete to keep ourselves covered in relation to breaches of copyright law.

We are working on a new leaflet which will help us with our PR.

## Networking

The Society contributed to the 'History of the World' project, a partnership venture between the British Museum, the BBC and museums in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Museums and history groups are adding objects to the website to create a big digital museum which tells 'A History of the World'. The images from the Historical Society that were contributed were a page from Adair's Narrative, a communion token and the Rev Dr Henry Cooke's walking stick – each image is accompanied by a short description. See Adair's Narrative image on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/nxZOnyKkRKeujfR-9rDIQ>

The Society is listed in '**The Irish Family and Local History Handbook**' which will be launched at 'Back To Our Past' 2011 on 21, 22 and 23 October 2011 at Industries Hall, RDS Dublin, Ireland and will be officially published in late January 2012. After publication The Irish Family and Local History Handbook will be distributed widely throughout the British Isles and the rest of the World particularly in North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The Irish Family and Local History Handbook will also be available through Amazon and its affiliated companies.

The Northern Ireland Publications Resource which preserves a copy of every book published in Northern Ireland has received a copy of our most recent publications.

The Society now appears on the 'Discover Northern Ireland' website of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board along with other libraries and museums in Northern Ireland.

## Volunteers

We are very grateful to our volunteers, two of which are former librarians and who help us out for a couple of hours each week. Tasks which they have been engaged on are: putting the library stamp on all our books, stocktaking our publications, classifying library books ready for input to the electronic catalogue, keying in the indexes to the births, marriages and deaths from the Witness, typing up the text of the Campbell Ms ready for publication.

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## Cataloguing

A backlog of publications not catalogued had built up over the last 2 years and this is now almost eliminated. In addition 127 pamphlets have been catalogued and added to our pamphlet collection. These included some very interesting items, for example, 'The Substance of Two Speeches delivered at the General Synod of Ulster at its annual meeting in 1812 by the Rev Robert Black, Presbyterian minister in Londonderry, about Dr Dickson of Portaferry, and 'A Plea for Hymns in Christian Worship – a Speech by the Rev Henry Wallace, Presbyterian College, Belfast, delivered to Belfast Presbytery, 1879.

In addition, 200 volumes of congregational records have been catalogued (the lists are still in manuscript form).

## Lectures

The lectures delivered in the past year have ranged from the life stories of ministers such as the Rev James Denham and the Rev James Glasgow (a pioneer missionary to India) to the history of Presbyterianism in Carlingford and the Laggan. A great day was had by all on our annual outing in June – this year visits were made to a number of churches in South Down. Members who attended thoroughly enjoyed the day. There was high praise for all our speakers at the various venues who just 'hit the right note' and for the food that was provided throughout the day. One attendee thought 'it was the best outing yet'. If you have never been on the Society's outing why not join us next year in June when it is proposed that we visit churches in the Newry and South Armagh area.

## Publications

The Publications Committee has been very busy in the past year. As well as publishing the Bulletin two other publications have been produced:

A re-print of the autobiography of *Robert Blair of Bangor* who was one of the outstanding early Presbyterian ministers who shaped the faith and practice of the Presbyterian settlers in Ulster in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (£20.00);

'*Presbyterian Origins in Ulster*', a series of lectures given by the late Rev Professor A F Scott Pearson delivered in the Presbyterian College between 1947 and 1950 and a re-print of an article that Scott Pearson wrote for the Ulster Journal of Archaeology (£3.00).

If you haven't yet purchased your copy you can do so by contacting the librarian by telephone or e-mail.

## Book Sale

We have a number of books for sale that are surplus to our requirements - see our website page for details - <http://www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com/index.php?id=59>

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## MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Membership of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland is open to anyone interested in researching Presbyterianism in Ireland.

By being a Member you:

- help in the preservation of records of the Presbyterian Churches in Ireland for historians, present and future
- help in the maintenance and spread of the knowledge of God's acts in the past and inspiration for the future
- support the maintenance of a library of priceless books and manuscripts, some dating back to the seventeenth century
- support the Society's educational programme through its lecture series and exhibitions

There are four categories of membership: Life, Annual, Student and Associate.

- Annual membership costs £15.00
- Life membership £75.00
- Student membership £5.00
- Associate membership £10.00 (only available via our website and only gives access to the members' area of the website)

Applications for Life, Annual and Student membership should be made to the Librarian.

## DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS

**Donations and bequests are very welcome.**

If you feel you can make a donation it should be forwarded to the librarian at the Presbyterian Historical Society Library at 26 College Green, Belfast, BT7 1LN. PayPal can be used to send a donation to our account - [Paypal@presbyterianhistoryireland.com](mailto:Paypal@presbyterianhistoryireland.com). When you are making your will consider adding the Society to the list of charities that you want to benefit from your estate.

### Gift Aid

The Society is an HMRC Recognised Charity - XT25385.

If you are a UK taxpayer, we can reclaim from the government 20p for every £1 you give through the Gift Aid Scheme at no extra cost to you. Please request a declaration form to complete.