

# FEDERATIONS' JOINT EXCHANGE VISIT TO NORTH DOWN & ARDS

SOMME CENTRE – MOUNT STEWART- GREY ABBEY

**SATURDAY 4 JULY 2015**

As in past years, this trip is an opportunity to meet with our friends and colleagues from the Federation of Local History Societies.

The trip will take in three interesting and attractive locations in North Down and Ards.

## The Somme Heritage Centre

The Somme Museum opened in 1994 as an educational facility and tourist attraction. It examines Ireland's role in the Great War with special reference to local cross-community involvement in the three volunteer Divisions raised in Ireland: the 10th and 16th (Irish) Divisions, and the 36th (Ulster) Division. Since 2000 the Museum's remit has expanded into World War Two and other modern international conflicts. The Museum has increasingly focused upon the community relations potential of this shared history as a vehicle to further cross-community and cross-border contact, mutual understanding and reconciliation.



## Mount Stewart House



Mount Stewart house was bought by the Stewart family in 1744 when it was known as Mount Pleasant. In later years the building was expanded with work by George Dance and William Morrison. The house has now reopened after a three year restoration project, bringing

back the elegance and charm of the house when it was home of the 7th Marchioness Edith, Lady Londonderry and her family in the early 20th century

The garden reflects a rich tapestry of design and great planting artistry that was the hallmark of Lady Londonderry. The formal areas exude a strong Mediterranean feel and resemble an Italian villa landscape; the wooded areas support a range of plants from all corners of the world, ensuring something to see whatever the season.

## Grey Abbey

Grey Abbey is a ruined Cistercian priory on the Ards Peninsula, seven miles from Newtownards and close to Mount Stewart.

Affreca, daughter of the King of Man and wife of John de Courcy, Anglo-Norman invader of East Ulster, founded the abbey in 1193. The Abbey was colonised by Cistercian monks from Cumbria. The construction of the stone



church began almost immediately. Architecturally, it is important as the first fully gothic style building in Ulster. It is the first fully stone church in which every window arch and door was pointed rather than round headed. The old graveyard is the burial place of Rev. James Porter, hanged in 1798 as a United Irishman. Porter in his writings had annoyed Lord Londonderry - and thus he was allegedly a marked man. The actual case against him of treason, rebellion and sedition was very weak but the false testimony of informers and the influence of Lord Londonderry ensured his execution. Despite the peer's wife's pleas for clemency, which her husband forced her to retract; Porter was hanged in the sight of his church and of his home.

## Itinerary

A coach will leave Derry/L'Derry (Ulsterbus stop at Altnagelvin Hospital) at 7.30 a.m calling at Dungiven (Ulsterbus stop at Glenshane Road) at 8.00 a.m., Castledawson Roundabout at 8.20 a.m., Dunsilly Roundabout at 8.35 a.m., Glengall Street, Belfast at 9.30 am; and Somme Centre at 10:30 a.m. There will be refreshments in the Somme Centre at 10:30am. There we will meet with our FLHS friends for a guided tour of the Museum.

For those arriving by car it is recommended that you use the municipal car park, on the left as you approach the Museum, rather than the Museum's car park as that one closes at 5.00 pm

After the guided tour, the Federation participants, both those who arrived on the coach and those who made other arrangements, will be encouraged to mingle on the coaches for the next part of the tour, the visits to Mount Stewart and Grey Abbey. The intention is for the coach to return to the Somme Centre for those who left their vehicles there before making the return journey to Derry/L'Derry.

**Cost - £25/ €35** - includes coach, tea/ coffee, scones on arrival at the Somme Museum, entrance fees to the Museum and Mount Stewart, and lunch at Mount Stewart. See lunch menu below. As the cafe needs to know to total number of each choice, please indicate your preference on the booking form.

### LUNCH MENU

No.	Menu Choices
1.	Homemade Soup with a selection of freshly made sandwiches Tea/coffee and Tray Bake
2.	Stew/Hotpot served with a Homemade Crusty Bread/Wheaten Tea/Coffee and Tray Bake
3.	As 2, with sandwiches

*The FLHS visitors are continuing their visit until Sunday 5 July, staying overnight in the Loughshore Hotel in Carrickfergus and visiting Carrickfergus Castle, St Nicholas' Church and the Carrickfergus Gasworks Museum. Anyone wishing to join the group for dinner and/or the following day's programme should contact John Hulme, Carrickfergus Historical Society – Phone No. 02893361215 : email [leslie.hulme@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:leslie.hulme@mypostoffice.co.uk) for additional information and costs.*

**A Booking Form is attached**

# JOINT FULS/FLHS NORTH DOWN TRIP - 4 JULY 2015

## BOOKING FORM

I wish to book places on the above trip for the following people.

Name	Address	Phone number	Lunch Choice (Menu No.)	Pick-up point 1. Derry/L'derry (Ulsterbus stop at Altnagelvin Hospital) 2. Dungiven (Ulsterbus stop at Glenshane Road) 3. Castledawson Roundabout 4. Dunsilly Roundabout 5. Glengall St. Belfast

I enclose a cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_ (@ £25 / €35 per person)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques should be made payable to "Federation for Ulster Local Studies" and crossed. They should be sent, with this form, to Mr P. Devlin, 18 Ardmore Avenue, Downpatrick, Co Down BT30 6JU to arrive no later than 30 June 2015.