

Written by Antaine Ó Flannagáin

The Clans of Ireland Annual General Meeting was held in the Dublin City Library on Saturday 19 April 2008.

The morning started at 1100hrs with the first of two very informative talks titled The Irish Invention of Everything. This talk was given by Dr. Howlett and covered such things as the invention of punctuation with forays into mathematics and astronomy as detailed in ancient monastic works by Irish religious men.

The second but no less interesting talk was given by Mr. Morris O'Keefe who spoke about his work recording the oral histories of Ireland. He also played some small excerpts from his vast archives, accessible through the National Archives and National Library in Ireland.

This was followed by a very quick introduction and then launch of the new Clans of Ireland website which is based on the same Joomla CMS (content management system) as OFlannagain.org is based around. Reasons for the new site were given as, to expedite communication between all Clanns and the Clans of Ireland as well as updating software technology and a view to try and attract some younger folk to participate. All the reasons in fact, that OFlannagain.org was launched. Let's hope both sites do well.

After lunch at The Holiday Inn (less said about that the better), the AGM was called to order. Myself, Kathleen Flanagan from the UK and Chris Gardner from Australia were all at the meeting. After the reading of last year's minutes and the acceptance of said, the order of business was the various reports of the officers from the Board of Directors. All being in order, motions moved, seconded and carried by majority, the floor was open to general business/discussion and thus ensured an interesting discussion time that actually took us over our allotted time in the conference room.

Items arising for discussion included DNA studies and how the Clans of Ireland could and should help with individual clans undertaking such research. The question was also posed as to whether the new website would be used to generate income for the Clans of Ireland and with the response from the Board that in fact, the Clans of Ireland online shop was being set up, and that yes, advertising space on the site may also be sold subject to the Board's decision on the subject, but that content would need to adequately reflect the image of the Clans of Ireland by being "appropriate".

There was also some discussion about content on the Clans of Ireland website and the result as I saw it is that all the Clanns will have a greater input into what goes on to the CoI website.

It was mentioned several times and discussed in some detail about the importance of individual Clanns providing the information on gatherings, numbers, locations etc. for the Clans of Ireland to track in an effort to lobby for renewed funding from the Govt. which has been cut some years ago. We all need to pay more attention to ensuring we communicate with the CoI through our own executive committee with greater frequency and in greater detail.

To sum up, the day was a great success with a special mention of the Flanagan Clan being represented again and the appreciation of the Board of Directors was directed our way. The various clan displays were informative and it was good to catch up with friends and make new friends. It was over far too soon but it is with a glad heart that I say that the Clans of Ireland is progressive, positive and healthy. We as a Clann need to look to our current practices and tighten things up somewhat in the area of reporting back to the CoI, but that is a lesson for the Executive Committee to take on board and ensure we set the practices in motion to be continued by future Clann officers. I was both proud and humbled to be present at the meeting representing the Clann Ó Flannagáin.