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## SDA Wins Community Award



**Pictured at the presentation are Lily Henderson, Paul McGeown, John Branch, Ian Mack, Peter Gregg and Martyn Todd (seated) Chair of Saintfield Development Association.**

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council hosted their annual Community Awards Event on Sunday 9th June in McCann's, Newcastle. The function was an afternoon tea for community groups in the Council area.

Representing the Saintfield Development Association were Ian and Norma Mack, Paul

McGeown, Peter Gregg, Lily Henderson, John Branch and SDA Chair Martyn Todd. Pamela Ballantine, the well-known media personality, presented the awards to both community groups and individual volunteers.

The Saintfield Development Association received an award

"in special recognition for volunteers going the extra mile".

This referred to the Association's efforts and determination for more than 10 years to deliver a community centre to the residents of Saintfield and district.

## Wanton Destruction

The efforts of the SDA to keep the village attractive are being undermined by a few mindless individuals among us. In recent weeks they have damaged or destroyed a number of hanging baskets and window boxes on Main Street. They have also smashed two ceramic planters and uprooted plants in the beds at Fair Green.

The Green committee of the SDA are frustrated and angry at this vandalism, especially in the judging period for the Ulster in Bloom competition. Obviously Saintfield is not immune from the curse of anti-social behaviour, so please be watchful and report any instances of this wanton destruction.

## Chair's Viewpoint



**Martyn Todd**  
Chair of Saintfield  
Development  
Association

*"Forty-two new  
volunteers signed up  
for SDA and the  
Saintfield Community  
Trust (the team  
running the new  
community centre)"*

In the 2018 Summer Edition of Saintfield News I said "My personal goal as Chair of SDA this year is to encourage more people who live in the Saintfield area to find ways to participate in Saintfield community events and programmes and so strengthen Saintfield's community spirit." I am delighted that Discover Saintfield Community, the series of events reported in the last edition of Saintfield News, was such a great success.

The final event of the series, the Community Fair, was also very successful, with around 2,000 people visiting the event. The main purpose of the Fair was to engage more residents of the area in community activities. Forty-two new volunteers signed up for SDA and the Saintfield Community Trust (the team running the new community centre) and many others signed up for some of the other community activities who were at the Fair.

During the past year SDA has continued its business as usual to a very high standard. The Christmas Fair was another great success; the floral displays were

spectacular; this newsletter was edited, published and delivered to every house in Saintfield by a team of volunteers; more grants were successfully applied for; statutory bodies were lobbied about infrastructure issues, including sewage treatment capacity; and the governance of the Association was held to the standards required of a registered charity.

The Saintfield Development Association's AGM was held on Monday 10th June in the new Saintfield Community Centre on Belfast Road. Ten new volunteers joined the Association as a result of the Community Fair and the National Trust had two representatives present, seeking closer cooperation with SDA in the future.

Councillor Terry Andrews, the Deputy Chair of Newry, Mourne and Down Council was present and commended the SDA for all its work for the benefit of the community. He said it was especially fitting that the AGM was held in the new community centre in view of their recent award from NMD "in special recognition for volunteers going the extra mile" in

delivering a community centre to the residents of Saintfield and district.

At the AGM, I was re-elected as Chair of the Association, with Janice McHenry continuing as Vice-Chair. Also re-elected for a further year in office were Barbara Graham (Infrastructure committee), David Greer (Events committee), Lawrence Murphy (Green committee) and Brian Gamble (Communications committee). Kevin Young was elected to take on the Chair of the Funding and Finance committee. A new member, Jen Smith, was elected to take on the role of Secretary. I am particularly pleased to see some new faces representing a younger generation joining the SDA team. I would like to thank Bob Pollock, Pamela Dooley and Peter Gregg for their invaluable contributions as committee members of SDA in recent years.

Now that the new community centre has been delivered and will be taken forward by the Saintfield Community Trust, SDA can focus on new projects, news of which is in this issue.

## Community Centre Up and Running



Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Councillor Charlie Casey, officially opened the new £1.4 million Saintfield Community Centre on Thursday 26 June at a ceremony attended by MLAs, councillors and community representatives.

The Saintfield Community Centre has been designed as a shared neutral space with a range of facilities to suit local sports clubs and organisations or individuals who need a space to interact with the local community. The latest in building technology has been used to create a carbon neutral building. Among the systems employed are heating panels on the roof, heat pumps and rain-water catchment to further reduce the running costs.

The Centre is managed by volunteers who formed the Saintfield Community Trust, a limited company with charitable status.

Local groups are invited to use the centre to help make the centre a success. Please come and view the facilities by arrangement - phone Anna on 07568 268986.

The Centre needs your support. If you are able to spare a few hours or days in the month to help the Trust run the centre, please email:

[reception.saintfieldcc@gmail.com](mailto:reception.saintfieldcc@gmail.com)

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# A letter to the Citizens of Saintfield from David Moffett

In the preface to my book, 'The Moffetts of Leggygowan and the Land of Lincoln', is the following quote, "No greater calamity can happen to a people than to break utterly with its past." This quote is attributed to William Gladstone, Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1868 to 1894. Even as a young college student in the 1970s studying English History, this quote resonated with me. How profound it must be to have no knowledge of those who came before me. At that time, I had some vague notion I was of Scottish roots given that my grandparents surnames were Moffett, McRae, McKenzie and Bishop. But it was my own surname Moffett, which later in life, would lead me down the path to discover my own past.

In 1986, at a family wedding, my Aunt pulled me aside and sternly insisted I sit with her to review a document in a discoloured old folder taken from a chest in her attic. Inside the folder she removed three pages of mimeographed paper from 1900. She said, "The Story of the Moffetts, as told by your Great Grandfather, John Bigham Moffett, in Decatur, Illinois at a family reunion on Christmas Day." I have reread that story dozens of times and it was the beginning of my research to discover all I could about my ancestors.

My Aunt read the family story to me, beginning "Our oldest known ancestor, a young Scottish man named William Moffett, who was born in the lowlands of Scotland in 1685. At a very young age, William came across the channel to the north of Ireland and to him and his Scottish wife were born several children, one of which was named James Moffett. James was born in 1720 about a mile from Belfast. In 1748, James married Jane Bigham who was also born near Belfast in 1722. James and Jane later settled on a farm in Leggygowan where they raised nine children." The story goes on to list the names and dates of birth of their children, one of which was named William from whom the author of this article descends. The story then recounts the migration of three of the couple's young sons to America. David, William and Thomas Moffett had caught the

rebellion fever and had grown tired of the political and economic hardships in their homeland and sought to find a better life, despite the uncertainties and perils of the journey, to America. David, the eldest of the three, departed for Pennsylvania with his wife Mary and child in 1777. There they settled on a farm in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania alongside two other Saintfield families, the Robinsons and the Trimbles. David joined the Pennsylvania militia in 1778 and served until 1783 as a private in the American Revolution. In 1784, the younger brothers, William and Thomas, sailed for Philadelphia to join their brother David, as the American Revolution was coming to an end. By 1787, David had relocated to western Pennsylvania and became employed as a mason. Also, in that year, William married Rebecca Robinson and shortly afterwards they began their journey, along with younger brother Thomas, to the frontiers of Kentucky. After settling in Bath County, Kentucky, William and Rebecca had ten children. Thomas later settled in Lexington, Kentucky where he soon died from chest wounds suffered in a horse racing mishap.

After learning of Thomas's death, older brother Samuel in Leggygowan wrote of young Thomas's journey to America and the sad ending of his life in the new world. The passage reads, "At the age of 17, he (Thomas) crossed the Atlantic with his older brother. He had the courage at an early age to do what those of mature years would quail before. A mere boy, he bid a lasting farewell to his parents and native land, passed from under the paternal roof out onto a stormy ocean and was borne more than 2000 miles away over its bosom to a land full of peril. As we contemplate the heroism, the pluck, the fortitude that animated such a boy, we might well wish he had been spared to enjoy the reward to which he was entitled."

After the death of William Moffett, his youngest son, John Bigham Moffett (from whom the author descends), left Kentucky for the westward frontier in

Illinois and settled across the river from another Kentucky family, the Lincolns. Their son, Abraham, became a friend of the family and the family attorney. He would later become the 14th President of the United States. The Moffetts were among the first to promote the young backwoods lawyer as a Presidential candidate. It is in Decatur, Illinois where the family homestead was finally established and where many generations of Moffetts were born. The Moffett family still holds an annual reunion to commemorate the history of the Moffetts and to tell younger generations the family's story.

As my Aunt finished reading the story, she turned to me and said, "It is your responsibility and duty to our family to further add to the story and retell it to successive generations before time and neglect causes us to lose memory of all those courageous Moffetts who came before us. Her words of admonition, recalled the words spoken by Prime Minister Gladstone, "No greater calamity can happen to a people than to break utterly from its past "rushed into my consciousness. I have lived with these words and my Aunt's directive ever since.

Twenty years later, after combing volumes of research and books as well as travelling to archives throughout Scotland and Northern Ireland and conversing with my American cousins, I finally completed my book about my ancestors, "The Moffett's of Leggygowan and the Land of Lincoln". My commitment to my Aunt was now fulfilled! But my real joy and source of pride erupted on my very first visit to Saintfield. There, in the graveyard of the Church of Ireland, was an old grave marker commemorating the life of James Moffett and his wife Isabella McMullen Moffett. This James was the grandson of William Moffett, the Scottish immigrant. I never found the grave of James, the son of the William Moffett, much less William Moffett himself.

Continued on Page 4

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# A letter to the Citizens of Saintfield from David Moffett

## Continued from Page 3

I returned home to the US feeling a real sense of connection to the village of Saintfield, but disappointed that James Moffett, son of the Scottish immigrant, was lost to history and his remembrance would be forever forgotten. I felt my job was incomplete and my family home of Saintfield was never thoughtfully recognised by our family.

After many sleepless nights pondering my emotional plight, I decided I needed to do something to both express my gratitude to my family home of Saintfield and erect an outwardly visible expression of remembrance to James and Jane Bigham Moffett.

To fulfill my desires, I contacted the Saintfield Heritage Society and requested my family and I return to Saintfield and meet with citizens and explore opportunities that would align my own wish to remember my ancestors with the priorities of the village.

We were overjoyed by the reception we received and the outpouring of support for such a project. I felt like a long-lost son of Saintfield, returned to the roots of his family. It was as if those three Moffett brothers, who left Leggygowan in 1777 and 1784, were returning home.

Next year, 2020, will be the 300th anniversary of the birth of James Moffett. It is on this occasion that I wish to

donate \$100,000 to assist the Saintfield Development Association, in cooperation with the Saintfield Heritage Society, to establish the Saintfield Heritage Centre.

By honouring Saintfield, I honour my own heritage alongside the many sons and daughters who gave birth to this village and who played such an important role in the history of Ireland, America and indeed the World.

It is with great pride and a sense of belonging that I, in my own way, desire to play a role in honouring such an historic place as Saintfield. Once completed, I will feel a small part of this community forever. I will have returned home.

## Profile of David Moffett

David Moffett was born in Florida and raised in Oklahoma. He holds an undergraduate degree in economics from the University of Oklahoma and an MBA degree from Southern Methodist University. His entire 33-year career was spent in several commercial banks. Most recently, he retired in 2007 from US Bank, Minneapolis as Vice Chairman and Chief Financial Officer.



David Moffett

Since retirement he has served as a governance advisor to Bridgewater Associates, a \$160 billion hedge fund located in Westport, Connecticut, and a financial advisor to The Carlyle Group, a \$212 billion private equity fund located in Washington, DC.

In 2008, he was installed by the President George W. Bush administration to serve as CEO of Freddie Mac during the financial crisis and to serve as an advisor to Secretary of Treasury, Henry Paulson. He continued on in the same role in the Obama administration until he

resigned in 2009 as the US economy and Freddie Mac recovered from the financial crisis. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of three US public companies; PayPal, the global payment company; CSX, the eastern railroad, and Genworth Financial, a long-term care and mortgage insurance company. In addition, he serves as Trustee of Columbia Threadneedle, a global mutual fund company and Chairman, University of Oklahoma Foundation.

He lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida and Jackson, Wyoming with his wife Lori and son William. David has five adult children and three grandchildren.



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# Saintfield Fair A Success



The Saintfield Community Fair, held on the afternoon of Sunday 26th May, was a great success, according to the organisers. The event was held at the new Community Centre in Saintfield and attracted an estimated 2000 people through the gates during the course of the afternoon.

The Fair comprised a series of demonstrations by local sports clubs, presentations by schools, a range of stalls put on by traders, an art exhibition and a range of musical entertainment which ran throughout. The children were catered for with a range of activities especially for them.

Organised by the Saintfield Community Trust, the event was planned with four objectives in mind.

Firstly, to afford an opportunity for residents to explore the excellent facilities the new community centre had to offer and at the same time encourage usage from the community.

Secondly, to provide an arena for local sports clubs, associations, clubs and societies to demonstrate their disciplines and to recruit new members.

Thirdly, to attract volunteers for the Saintfield Community Trust, a body set up to manage and run the community centre on behalf of the Newry, Mourne and Down district council.

The fourth and possibly most

important objective was to engender a feeling of pride in the Saintfield area and to encourage more engagement in community activities by local people.

Damian Scarlett, Chair of the Saintfield Community Trust, said "The Fair exceeded our expectations in terms of participation from local organisations and attendance from the public. We hope that the community centre will now become a focal point for the community and provide a shared space where all residents can enjoy a wide range of sporting and social activities." He added "Bookings for the 3G pitch and meeting rooms are encouraging, even at this early stage, and we are confident that we will meet the revenue targets to justify our faith in the project".

Martyn Todd, Chair of the Saintfield Development Association, said "The SDA has worked hard over the past 12 years or so, together with Council and relevant bodies, to see this project through to fruition. It has been a long road, beset with obstacles. However, our persistence has paid off and with the help of our supporters in Council, donors, local business and the private sector, the hurdles have all been overcome."

He added "Now we need to engage with the community for them to step forward and lend their support and expertise to

help manage and maintain the facility for the benefit of all".

Phoenix Natural Gas Sales and Marketing Director, Jonathan Martindale, said, "Phoenix Natural Gas is currently working to extend the natural gas network to 13 new towns in County Down, including Saintfield. As a company actively engaged in the communities it serves, we were delighted to support the Saintfield Community Fair which showcased the new Community Centre and brought so many local people together for a fun-filled and entertaining afternoon."

The organisers would like to thank the sponsors who gave financial support to make the Fair possible.

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Residents and business owners are being urged to get behind Saintfield as the town gears up for the Ulster in Bloom contest.

Co-ordinators of the contest say support is vital this year if Saintfield is to maintain its high standard.

Saintfield in Bloom chair Lawrence Murphy said: "It's not only about making Saintfield look pretty – it's about maintaining a vibrant town and encouraging people to shop locally so that money goes back in the local economy."

We encourage all residents and businesses to brighten up their properties with flowers and by cleaning up frontages of weeds before the Ulster in Bloom judges make their secret visit sometime in July.

Our green volunteers do their best to look after the flowers funded by our business owners, community organisations and local residents.



## Saintfield Heritage Society News



36 members of the Saintfield Heritage Society visited parliament buildings, Stormont Estate on Thursday 13 June.

After some light refreshments, the group had a guided tour of the building where we were well informed, and even entertained, by our guide who had a wealth of knowledge to share. The visit concluded with a light lunch.

The next series of Heritage talks will start on Thursday 12th September. Due to the construction work in the Parish Church Hall, the meeting will be held in the studio at the new Saintfield Community Centre. As soon as the new programme has been finalised it will be added to the [discoversaintfield.com](http://discoversaintfield.com) website.



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**DTP: Ian Mack**

**Editor: Brian Gamble**

[editor@discoversaintfield.co.uk](mailto:editor@discoversaintfield.co.uk)

**Newsletter Distribution: Vivien Lovell**



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**Peter Bowles & Company**, Solicitors  
35, Main Street, Saintfield, BT24 7AB.

**WEB:** [www.bowles-law.com](http://www.bowles-law.com)

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