



# LAGAN NEWS

FROM TERRY NEEDHAM



Period costume

## AGM

Our AGM took place on 20 November 2013 in the Island Centre of Lisburn City Council who have been generous hosts for most of our indoor occasions. Chairman Jim Henning summarised the programme for 2013 and outlined hopes for

2014. The barge *Industry* originally owned by Barbour Threads mill at Hilden is commencing its new career as a restoration project. It is planned to locate this at Lock 3 for use as an interpretation facility by Castlereagh Borough Council.

Hon. Treasurer John Ferron reported a healthy financial position. Most activities are self-financing and the largest expense in the year was safety equipment for work-parties.

Peter Scott, on behalf of Lagan Canal Trust, spoke about the Union Locks project. Phase 1 is complete but further work is scheduled to clear out the dry basin upstream. Grant applications are in progress for a similar treatment at Becky Hogg's Lock. The Trust is developing its 'Just Add Water' project to involve schools and the wider community in greater awareness of the Lagan environment.

RADIO ULSTER repeated a short series of programmes called Our Rivers including the Bann and Lagan. Brian Cassells was on hand at Lambeg to give some historical background. No better man!

it was founded in 1789 by Archbishop Robinson. For a topical example, the observatory has the longest series, 215 years, of rainfall data from a single site in Ireland and Britain. Following the catastrophic 'Big Wind' of 6/7 January 1839 (which, as you are all aware, blew the fairies out of Ireland) the director of that time, T R Robinson, invented the first measuring instrument for wind-speed, the cup anemometer.

Later generations of astronomers realised the Irish weather is not helpful for observation of the heavens so Armagh, Dunsink and Birr don't place much emphasis on their own working telescopes anymore, but Armagh now has an active research team in online communication with the most modern facilities across the world and beyond in space.

Dr Bailey also conducted us through the Astropark in the grounds. His explanation of the scale model of the solar system, continuing on to the universe was fascinating. The day finished with a show at the Planetarium.

Lagan Branch look forward to another active year of talks, outings and work parties. We are pleased to encourage participation with our neighbouring groups in any projects and welcome visitors to our river.

**Photos: Terry Needham**



- Sheltered location just off the Erne
- Generous floating jetties with power and water
- Boatlift capable of up to 50 feet
- Large area of hard-standing
- Showers, toilets and carparking

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## ARMAGH VISIT

Although not immediately associated with navigation, our trip to the city on 30 November was very educational. Armagh put on a fair day and brought out many people in period costume... not just for us of course. The 'Georgian Day' is a big annual event and it made for an entertaining stroll. Dr Mark E. Bailey, director of the Observatory, took a tour of the building and its many treasures. The sense of history is strong as



The Grubb telescope