

Glens and Dalriada u3a February Meeting

The Glens and Dalriada u3a held their February meeting in Cushendall Golf Club. Chairman Patrick O'Donnell introduced and welcomed Raymond Watson as our guest speaker who gave a most interesting and informative PowerPoint presentation.

Raymond, currently a resident of Cushendall, told us about his origins in Belfast where his family was evicted from two houses during the troubles. As a young man growing up in a period of conflict he got involved with an organisation and served seven years in detention.

Raymond cannot be defined by his past. On the contrary, he has utilised the experiences of conflict and incarceration to inspire and influence his artistic achievements.

Today he is an internationally recognised artist, woodcarver and bronze sculptor whose eclectic creations and exhibits find inspiration from mythology, history, political conflict, culture and his own personal experience.



Hands of History

He outlined the fascinating context for his creation of “The Hands of History” which are handcasts in bronze of significant individuals who negotiated the Good Friday Peace Agreement of 1998 - including John Hume, David Trimble, Tony Blair and George Mitchell.

Observing the activities of bees in his garden he took the opportunity to research the world of bees and has subsequently developed illustrations and a soundscape on The Bee Story.

Following the restrictions of lockdown he has created a Glens of Antrim board game aimed at encouraging people to get together and socialise.

It seems appropriate to apply the words of John Henry Newman to Raymond Watson: “To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.” Through his gifts and talents and the circumstances of his life, he records the past, celebrates the present, and has the vision to seize opportunities that the future may reveal.