Mosses Teggart

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The work of prolific local poet Moses Teggart is to be celebrated in a new publication. The book is the culmination of a year-long project by South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association supported with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and researched and edited by Dr John Wright.

The project aimed to celebrate the literary heritage of the area by exploring the life of the poet and sharing his work with the wider community. In excess of 300 poems were known to have been written by Teggart and although many had been published in local newspapers between 1880 and 1909, his works have never before been published as a collection.

A key aim of the project was to raise awareness of Teggart and his contribution to the cultural and literary heritage of the region. Teggart wrote in the vernacular, a style of writing that is now familiar to mainly older generations. Social events, walks and poetry readings were held to engage both older and younger members of the community with his work. Complimentary copies of the book will be distributed to local libraries, council buildings and schools to increase learning opportunities and further share this heritage with the community.

Funding for the project was awarded under the HLF Your Heritage programme, which aims to support projects that help people learn about, conserve and take an active part in their own and other people's heritage.

Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "We are delighted to support this project which has enabled the local community to learn about and celebrate the life and works of Moses Teggart. Teggart made a significant contribution to the literary and cultural heritage of not only the South Lough Neagh area, but also Scotland and America where he resided later in life. Now, thanks to the publication of his works, this heritage will be preserved for everyone to experience and enjoy."

The limited edition book is being launched at a special celebration event on Monday 30 June 2008 at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre. Guest of honour is the U.S. Consul General, Ms Susan Elliott and our MC for the evening is Dr Sam McAughtry, Author and Broadcaster. Entertainment is being provided by 'Piping Hot'. The group combines ingredients of the traditional Scots arts of Bagpipes, Drums, Fifes and Lambegs, with the Uilleann Pipes, Bodhrans, Whistles, Flutes and Fiddles of the traditional Irish idiom. It also allows the unique amalgamation of Irish and Scottish Highland dancers sharing the same stage.

The organisers are keen to get everyone involved. Project coordinator, Bernadette Donnelly, said: "The celebration event is open to everyone, and we would like to invite all members of the community to come along for an evening of dance, music and celebration."

The book, 'Moses Teggart- Bard of the Boglands', will be available from South Lough Neagh Publishing on 028 3585 2550 or slnra@btconnect.com; and from Winnie's Newsagents, Portadown, The Discovery Centre, Oxford Island, Lurgan, and selected local bookshops and general retailers.