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GENEALOGY
HERALDRY
VEXILLOLOGY
SOCIAL HISTORY
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Battle of the Somme 90th Anniversary Officially Commemorated

The 90th anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme was marked by an official ceremony in Dublin on Saturday July 1st 2006. It was a deeply moving and solemn occasion as official recognition of the thousands of Irishmen who fell at the Somme and during the First World War was long overdue. The event was warmly welcomed by the families who never forgot their loved-ones who were lost to the slaughter of this terrible war.

President Mary MacAleese and An Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, TD, led the nation's tribute in a civic and military ceremony held at the Irish National War Memorial at Islandbridge in Dublin. The military element of this ceremony was organised by the Irish Defence Forces, the true inheritors of the men and women of the Easter Rising of 1916, the 90th anniversary of which was also marked by the State this year. As a fully inclusive national remembrance this special occasion brought together representatives of the Royal British Legion, regimental organisations, veterans' organisations, naval and other bodies. The Ambassadors of each of the nations concerned laid wreaths. The

readings and the pieces of music chosen for the occasion reflected the terrible sacrifice paid by so many during the First World War and especially, at the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

The wonderful ceremony at the War Memorial was followed by a State Reception at the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham. The representation of so many political and community organisations from north and south at this event reflected the all-island shared remembrance of the fallen from all corners of the land—unionist and nationalist, protestant, catholic and dissenter. This Society was represented by the Cathaoirleach, Rory Stanley and his wife Roz and Cemetery Projects Director, Barry O'Connor and his wife Theresa. Indeed, many other members of the Society were present representing regimental or veterans' groups. Over a thousand invitees and members of the public attended this ceremony for which the organizers and especially, An Taoiseach, should be congratulated.

In the run-up to the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, the Irish government's decision to mark the

90th anniversary was very timely and fitting with a commemorative postage stamp also issued to mark this important occasion.

The memory of the men of all sides who fell in the First World War and indeed, of the countless millions of non-combatants who also lost their lives is not, however, served by uninformed sentimentality. Our remembrance of the sacrifice of many thousands of lives in this terrible war should permit a fuller understanding that unlike the Second World War, the 1914-18 conflict cannot be viewed simplistically as good versus evil. The First World War was essentially a war of imperial powers, each of which, history will show has some culpability for the war. The lessons, if any, learned by the victors in this carnage were soon lost when an agreement on the spoils of war and reparations was discussed at Versailles. The great hope of mankind that this was indeed the war to end all wars was, within twenty years, lost forever. For all of us on the island of Ireland, a fitting remembrance for those who lost their lives at the Battle of the Somme ninety years ago would surely be our total abhorrence of war itself.

Feudal Baronies & Manorial Lordships

The introduction of the Land & Conveyancing Law Reform Bill, 2006 in the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) last month will finally see the repeal, in whole or in part, of about 150 pre-1922 statutes and their replacement, where appropriate, with statutory provisions more suited to modern Ireland. Much of the current law and practice relating to land ownership and land transactions is

based on the system introduced to Ireland by the Normans from the 12th century onwards. A key feature was the feudal notion of land tenure whereby all land was held from the Crown. The Bill abolishes feudal tenure in so far as it survives. This is important as many scams have been alleged in respect of the sale of "Feudal Baronies" and "Manorial Lordships" offering the purchaser the

right to use such titles as incorporate hereditaments. Many of these worthless titles with a topographical references to Ireland have been bought and sold over the past three decades. Most would suggest that the simple remedy would be "caveat emptor". But it is also hoped that this new legislation could end this trade by specifically and clearly abolishing such aspects of feudal tenure.

International Debate on Bill Continues

Genealogists, heraldists and other interested parties continue to enthusiastically welcome Senator Ryan's Bill and look forward to contributing in a meaningful manner to the upcoming parliamentary debate on the Bill. Without doubt, the publication of the Genealogy & Heraldry Bill, 2006 is certainly considered by many as representing an important milestone in the development of genealogical and heraldic services in Ireland. Indeed, messages received from observers overseas suggests that the impact of the introduction of this legislation may well go far beyond these shores. Australians and New Zealanders, in particular, are watching the unfolding debate with considerable interest. Whether there is going to be a move to introduce similar legislation in these jurisdictions only time will tell. Other messages received from the mainland of Europe indicate that heraldists are intrigued by the balancing of Irish heraldic traditions with our republican form of government as proposed by the Bill. English and Scottish heraldists welcome the possibility of a sound legislative basis for heraldry in the Republic. However, their knowledge of our

shared heraldic traditions is sometimes complicated by a less than full appreciation of the parameters of constitutional republicanism. But this aspect of the debate on the Bill will help to tease out a fuller understanding and appreciation of the place heraldry has in the Republic of Ireland and indeed, possibly in other republics. Americans with an interest in heraldic matters are viewing this Bill as a possible template for the regularisation of heraldic practices by and within the United States. Few will have realised that the United States has an Institute of Heraldry located, for historical reasons, within the US Army and delivering heraldic services to the Federal Government. But heraldry is not confined to the US military or government, it's widespread throughout American society especially amongst educational institutions and learned bodies. Across the border in Canada the heraldic services are provided under Royal Charter. Since June 4th 1988, the Dominion of Canada has its own Chief Herald and Heraldic Authority. Even in the short time since the establishment of its own heraldic services Canadian heraldry has a distinctive character reflect-

ing the origins and cultures of its native peoples and Europeans. Notwithstanding their support for their own heraldic authority Canadian observers have been actively comparing the provisions of the Bill with possible developments at home. This also has been the manner in which South African observers have viewed certain provisions of the Bill. The Republic of South Africa has heraldic legislation since 1962 and such services are delivered by the Bureaux of Heraldry under the direction of the State Herald. South African heraldry too has developed to meet the needs of many traditions in the post-apartheid era. Each of these cases emphasises the ability of heraldry to develop in accordance with the political, social, cultural and legal requirements of the nations concerned. Traditionalists may find this fact difficult to accept, however, it must be said that many of these see heraldry in terms of gentility and monarchical heritage. **Senator Brendan Ryan's** Bill envisages the establishment of a heraldic authority for our republic meeting the requirements of our people under our own circumstances—nothing more and most certainly nothing less.

Changes at British Family Records Centre

The UK National Archives (UKNA) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) issued a statement recently on the provision of services to family historians. As part of a review of strategy, the UKNA announced its intention to move its Family Records Centre (FRC) staff and services to Kew from their current location at Myddelton Street, Islington, by the end of 2008. The UKNA and ONS have for some time managed the FRC as a joint operation in Myddelton Street. Users can access historic census returns in the UKNA part of the Centre and establish basic details of births, deaths and marriages in the indexes maintained by ONS prior to ordering copies of relevant certificates.

ONS has an extensive project in hand to digitise registration records and modernise other aspects of service provision, but has not yet made data and documents available online to the same extent as the UKNA. Over the coming months ONS will be reviewing its future requirements for services at FRC in the light of this project and UKNA plans to relocate its service to Kew. The review will be carried out to ensure that service delivery by the two organisations continues to be as closely aligned. James Strachan, (UKNA), said: "We have already made most of our material housed at the FRC available online. We remain committed to providing high-quality services to family historians, and

are therefore planning to develop new online services that reflect customers' needs, and to integrate FRC onsite services at Kew during 2008. We will retain a dedicated family history service, and retain the jobs of our FRC staff in the new service at Kew." Peter Murphy, ONS, said: "The hard copy indexes of birth, death and marriage registration, which are available at the FRC, remain for now..... Clearly advances in technology now permit other approaches to providing public access and that is what our review will be concentrating on. We will work closely with UKNA colleagues in conducting the review and hope to be able to reveal its main conclusions by the autumn of this year."

National Library Strategic Plan 2007-2009

On June 12th 2006 the Board of the National Library of Ireland placed advertisements in Irish daily newspapers seeking submissions from the general public, interested groups and organisations on the formulation of a Strategic Plan. The opportunity to participate in the consultative process on such a plan for one of Ireland's premier cultural institutions was, no doubt, availed of by many. However, the period covered by the Strategic Plan seems rather short in comparison with similar exercises elsewhere in the provision of services to the public. Nev-

ertheless, the National Library of Ireland like all sectors of this rapidly changing Ireland must adapt to meet many challenges and opportunities. Irish society is increasingly dependent upon information technology and this is amply reflected in our expectations of service delivery. In this environment the National Library must be capable of meeting the needs of visitors to the premises on Kildare Street and also providing a comprehensive service via the Internet. The digitization of certain research resources and various collections must be a priority for

any strategic plan. Whilst, the period is very short, just three years, it allows for policy decisions to be made and feasibility studies to be undertaken to provide a framework for further developments. How this cultural institution provides for the needs of a progressively multi-ethnic and multicultural Ireland also requires careful consideration. As an institution of international renown the National Library of Ireland has many challenging times ahead as it strives to fulfill its role in a period of rapid technological, cultural and social change in Ireland.

James Scannell Reports....

IRISH LANDED GENTRY Irish Family Names has published *'The Landed Gentry & Aristocracy of County Wicklow - Volume 1'* by Turtle Bunbury in which the author turns his attention to 9 of the most prominent landowning families in County Wicklow. Beautifully illustrated with many rare and carefully sourced photographs. Other similar titles from Irish Family Names include:- The Landed Gentry of Meath; The Tipperary Gentry; The Landed Gentry of Kildare; The Kavanaghs Kings of Leinster; The O'Callaghans of Cork; O' Nolan - The History of a People; Ireland 1798 - The Battles.

COLIN TOBIN'S PAPERS The National Library of Ireland has acquired the papers of Colm Tobin, novelist, journalist and one of Ireland's most internationally acclaimed contemporary writers. The collection consists of material ranging from manuscripts, type scripts and correspondence to material relating to his 5 novels, 3 travel books, a short story, and 3 non-fiction works in addition to correspondence from his publishers, agents and readers

as well as correspondence from fellow writers. Additional items include a substantial and significant number of reviews by him and about his work, video recordings, a large number of invitations, posters, exhibition catalogues, theatre programmes and copies of students' theses on some of his novels. When cataloguing is complete, the material will provide a valuable source for researchers and others interested in Irish writing in latter decades of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century.

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY The Heritage Council of Ireland has awarded a grant to the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin Castle, Dublin 2, under its Museums and Archives Programme to re-house the Library's Arabic manuscript collection. A major project to produce a new and comprehensive catalogue of the collection is already under way, funded in part by the Getty Foundation. The Chester Beatty Library is now seeking additional private funding to continue this project and to treat those manuscripts in need of conservation. Also in late 2005, the Heritage Council awarded a

generous grant to the Library to support its participation in the Heritage Council's standards and accreditation scheme for museums.

ON-LINE SURVEY

Readers are invited to participate in the **Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology** 2006 On-Line Survey of Genealogy Tourists and Researchers to Ireland. The survey asks questions about where you are from, your holiday preferences and some information connected with genealogical research. It will take approximately 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. However if you have any questions or wish to add any comment contact **Jon Towler** at E-mail: jontowler@eircom.net Jon visited the June Morning Open Meeting and discussed this survey in detail with our members. The text of the survey is available at <http://gmitweb.gmit.ie:8080/genealogy> our members are readers are encouraged to assist Jon Towler with this important research project.

Précis of the June 2006 Lecture

"The most friendly repository in Dublin" was how many members described the Dublin City Library & Archive during the question and answer session which followed a very interesting talk by **Dr. Máire Kennedy**. The talk covered the many resources available to researchers at this wonderful facility. Dr. Kennedy understanding that many of the listeners were regular visitors to Pearse Street gave the meeting a flavour of things to come. Developments and acquisitions were outlined and some on-going difficulties were explained. However, as some may not have fully appreciated the history of the institutions that now constitute the Dublin City Library and Archive, Dr. Kennedy gave a

brief account of the redevelopment what was known as the Gilbert Library and the transfer of the Dublin City Archives to the new building on Pearse Street. This facility now houses the Dublin and Irish Local Studies Collections of the Dublin City Libraries and is one of the premier research libraries in Ireland. The facility has fully embraced technology and acquired many computerised resources for the family historian. The microform collections include Parish Registers and the Indexes to the Registers held at the General Register Office, though, not yet a full set. For anyone with Dublin city or county ancestry a visit to this facility will be most rewarding and indeed, with late opening

until 20.00hrs on Mondays thru Thursday and until 17.00hrs on Friday and Saturday—its very accessible. Checkout the website for further information: www.dublincitypubliclibraries.ie

SPEAKER PROGRAMME

Tuesday 11th July 2006

Mr. Gregory O'Connor,

"The National Archives as a resource for family history research"

Tuesday 8th August 2006

Ms. Caroline McCall, MGS,

"Where there is a will there is a relative"

Membership of the Genealogical Society

Membership of this Society is open to all persons with an interest in genealogy, heraldry, vexillology or social history whether based in Ireland or overseas. The Society strongly advocates the "Principle of Public Ownership & Right of Access" to our heritage in all its varied forms. Therefore, members are always encouraged to contribute to the heritage resources of future generations by recording their own family history, story and lore for deposit in the Genealogical Society's Archives or publication in the Society's biannual journal.

As members of the Society we appreciate the importance of our heritage not only to people in Ireland, north and south, but also to Ireland's vast Diaspora. We have links with similar organisations overseas and we exchange journals with over sixty societies. Our activities are many and varied—full details on the website. For many, membership of this Society, means playing an active and vital role in the study and promotion of Irish heritage.

Membership Packages. **Ireland:-** Offering

ordinary membership of the Society, Membership Card, voting rights, use of the Society's Archive, monthly newsletter by mail, biannual Journal by mail, and the right to purchase the Society's publications at Special Members' prices of up to 50% off selected publications. This also includes an optional second Membership Card for a household member, including voting rights, for an all inclusive cost of just €30.00 per annum. **Overseas:-** Offering the same at €40.00 per annum. Join OR renew membership on line on the Society's website www.familyhistory.ie/shop

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www.familyhistory.ie/shop**DIARY DATES***Tuesday July 11th & Aug. 8th 2006***Evening Open Meeting***Dún Laoghaire College of Further
Education**Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire
20.00hrs—22.00hrs**Wednesday July. 26th & Aug. 23rd 2006***Morning Open Meeting***Port View Hotel, Marine Rd., Dún
Laoghaire**10.30hrs—12.30hrs**Contribution €3.00 p.p.**(Coffee/Tea included at Morning
Meetings)*

QUERIES

JAMES SCANNELL, 19 Hazelwood, Shankill, Dublin 18, Ireland. Wrote:- Seeking information on a Rathmichael, Shankill, Co. Dublin Victoria Cross Winner from the Indian Mutiny – Pt. Denis **DEMPSEY**, born Rathmichael, 1826, died Toronto, Canada, 10 January 1896. Rathmichael is a townland / civil parish in Shankill, Co. Dublin. E-mail:- jamescannell@eircom.net

VICTOR MATHER, MGSJ, P.O. Box 230, Coburg, Victoria, 3058, Australia. E-mail: vee-jay9@bigpond.com Wrote:- Searching for Sarah **BRADEN** born in Co. Fermanagh circa 1829. Sarah married John **CROSS** on 23rd Feb. 1846 at Sydney, New South Wales, and they had eight children—Benjamin Francis, Louis (Lewis), Peter, Roslia, Sarah Ann, John, Mary Victoria, and Louise. John **CROSS** (husband) died on 17 Dec.1877 at Spring Gully, Victoria. Sarah then married Giovanni (John) **VICTORINE** at Castlemaine, Victoria, on 7th April 1879, and they had 4 children—Mary Louise, Emmanuel, Sarah Amelia (my Great-Grandmother) and Joseph Edward. Sarah died 25 Oct. 1912 at Balaclava, Victoria, aged 83 years. Any information at all

LORRAINE ALLEN HUGHES, 11995 Sutter Ave., Yucaipa, California, 92399 USA E-mail:- Gabtall@aol.com Wrote:- Searching for the parents of Peter **ALLEN**, born Wexford, Wexford, Ireland ca 1798. His father's name poss. Arthur. Peter m Sarah before 1823 when their son Arthur was born in 'Dublin City'. Also would like to find Sarah's maiden name.

Rev. **HARRY S. ROSE**, 533 Hurry Ave NW, Cranbrook BC, V1C 4C2, Canada. E-mail:- n_hrose@telus.net Wrote:- Searching for a James **COYLE** born 1819 in Ireland, the son of James **COYLE** born 1771 in Co. Cavan The family emigrated to Ontario, Canada where James (1819) married someone from Scotland. Also a James **COSBEY** born Sloanstown Ireland 13 May 1833 son of Thomas **COSBEY** and wife Jane Thomas emigrated to Ontario, Canada and married a Susannah **McMULLIN** in 1861. After her death in 1865 he remarried a Margaret **REID** in 1869 and the couple had 6 children. Any information greatly appreciated.

LAURIE THOMPSON, 14 Amber Grove, Mt. Waverley, 3149 Australia. E-mail:- lt030329@bigpond.net.au Wrote:- Searching for Winifred Jane **NEALIS** born c1830 I think Crossmolina, Co. Mayo. She left a Sligo orphanage, workhouse or assembly point and was shipped to Plymouth in 1848 as a famine orphan and came to Melbourne Australia on the Lady Kennaway. Are there any Irish records of this movement of girls to Australia please

NOTA BENE:- Queries are only published at the discretion of the editor and where a mailing address and e-mail address are provided. These queries are also published on the Society's website to increase the opportunities for a positive response for each contributor.

Volunteerism and the Cyber Age

The June 2006 issue of "Newsflash" the newsletter of the UK based Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) carried the headline "Family History Societies have a challenging future" and amongst the issues cited was that of a falling volunteer base. Indeed, most voluntary and community organisations in Ireland would very readily agree with the unpalatable proposition that volunteerism has collapsed in Ireland. Whether it be political parties, sports clubs, residents' associations or heritage organisations, all report a dramatic reduction in the numbers of their members volunteering for tasks etc. Some organisations, according to the FFHS, have identified an ageing membership and low attendances at meetings as contributory factors in the decline in volunteerism. The FFHS findings are most certainly not confined to Great Britain but in fact describe the situation here in Ireland too.

The FFHS article maintains that in the economic climate of the early 1990s in Great Britain a number of budding family historians were either made redundant or were able to take early retirement leading to an infusion of some younger blood in to British societies at that time. But the pendulum is now swinging the other way, according to the article, as pensions fail to meet the cost of living forcing employees to work on beyond what has been the normal

retiring age. However, it is uncertain whether such criteria could be applied to the Irish situation in order to explain a fall-off in the numbers taking up genealogy as a hobby here.

Some commentators claim that the interest in family history in Ireland peaked around the late 1990s and then leveled off with fewer people joining societies thereafter. But it is impossible to determine whether it was the subject matter that caused this decline since other hobby interests also suffered in the same period. Others blame the Internet and the sedentary lifestyle it encourages and indeed, since this phenomenon coincides perfectly with the period, it may well be the real cause of this decline. However, it must be remembered that membership of family history societies was always very transient with people joining for a few years until they have exhausted the available resources for their own research. Some may well continue to undertake genealogical research on the Internet or indeed, take up an entirely different hobby.

The FFHS article suggests that the "cyber age" should be fully embraced by societies by using the Internet to their advantage. Creative thinking could and should provide in cyberspace a virtual meeting place for members and non-members alike. Articles, research information, news and opportunities to participate in projects

should be available on-line. It may well be that our thinking of what constitutes volunteerism needs to come into the "cyber age" as far as this is achievable. Volunteerism may not have collapsed but simply requires repackaging and restructuring to facilitate the lifestyle changes since the late 1990s. Clearly the hands-on approach to volunteerism means no further than the keyboard, therefore, whatever we think of this sedentary lifestyle we cannot but accept it as a reality for which we must plan and adjust.

AN DAONCHARTLANN

The Society's Archive is based at the restored Martello Tower at Seapoint, County Dublin. "An Daonchartlann" as it is called, is open to members and visitors at various times during the month. As it is entirely staffed by our volunteers, the times of operation may vary. Therefore, the Archivist, **Mr. Séamus O'Reilly**, MGSJ, advises all intending to visit the Society's Archive to telephone (01) 202 0464 to ascertain opening times. Persons visiting the Martello Tower are advised to use public transport—DART (rail) to Seapoint Station approx. 4 minutes walk.