

Cumann Genealais na hÉireann

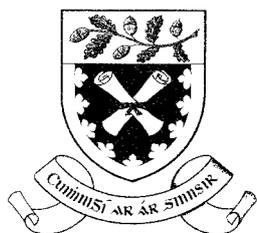
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GENEALOGY
HERALDRY
VEXILLOLOGY
SOCIAL HISTORY
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A New Purpose Built Facility for the National Archives Alone?

As our political parties put the final touches to their various manifestos in the run up to the General Election, genealogists and others concerned about our heritage resources are voicing their concerns. Understandably, the economy, the health service, traffic and other such issues will grab the lion's share of the headlines in these manifestos. However, this situation should not impact negatively on the need for investment and forward planning in heritage matters. The National Development Plan, for example, allocated €1.13 billion for Ireland's cultural infrastructure out of a total proposed expenditure of over €184 billion. This includes funding for a new National Concert Hall, National Theatre and funds to assist in the conservation and digitization of the national collections. The much needed new headquarters for the National Archives is included also but as part of a "Public Private Partnership" development or PPP. Whilst, all this investment is very welcome, are we sure that it represents sound planning or even good value for money? Many are beginning to doubt the benefit of PPP's to the State or the taxpayer in the long term. But leaving aside

the argument of whether a PPP is appropriate for the provision of non-commercial state heritage services or not, maybe a fresh examination of the objective is required. Given the rising costs of development land, salaries and, of course, the inflationary pressures in the services sector should we not be evaluating our national cultural institutions portfolio in a holistic manner? Should we not be considering the co-location of facilities or indeed, the creation of new joint or combined facilities as possible options for both the National Library and the National Archives? Some would consider such a proposition as heresy and others would never consider such an option for a number of reasons ranging from vested interests to our historical experience with the burning of the Irish Public Records Office in 1922 during the Civil War. But we must ask ourselves whether continually citing the fire of 1922 as an argument against such a development is really relevant nowadays. Building materials and techniques combined with the latest technology available to securely and properly store the collections can prevent such a disaster. Therefore, a feasibility study should be

commissioned, at least, to examine the benefits that could arise through not only the co-location of the National Library and the National Archives in a new purpose built facility, but actually merging the two institutions. Any new purpose built facility for a possible merged "National Library and Archives of Ireland" would have be located in the city of Dublin adjacent to public transport and providing car parking facilities. Though, it will be argued that the current institutions provide for different functions, these are not sufficiently removed so as to be incompatible or impossible to merge successfully. A state of the art modern facility where the user has access to the resources of the existing institutions from the one point has many costs benefits. The provision of purpose built storage areas would ensure that the national collections are held in the most secure environment possible. In considering the possibilities afforded by such a proposition we must look to the future requirements of both institutions. Why shouldn't the National Development Plan provide Ireland with a first class facility for both the National Archives and the National Library?

National Famine Victims Memorial Day

One hundred and sixty years after "Black '47" one of the worst years during "The Great Famine" and Ireland still has no officially designated National Famine Memorial Day. To most outside Ireland this must seem strangely ridiculous. Irish communities around the world, especially in north America, have increasingly chosen to commemorate this horrific episode in Irish history

through the erection of monuments, church services or other solemn events. Surprisingly, for the second year in succession, An Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, TD, has not acceded to the requests by a number of heritage organisations for the government to designate a National Famine Memorial Day. Campaigners have this year, once again, organised a National Famine Victims Memorial Day Walk

for Sunday May 27th 2007 at 14.00hrs from the Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Square, Dublin. Regrettably this will not be recognised as an "official event" but it will certainly have the support of many Teachtaí Dála (MPs) and Senators. Hopefully, next year the Irish government will finally agree to designate the last Sunday in May as an annual "official" commemoration day.

Society's Journal Publishes Major Study on the Legality of Irish Heraldic Services

A major study on the legality of Irish heraldic services has just been published by the Society following on from the Second Stage debate in Seanad Éireann on the *Genealogy and Heraldry Bill, 2006* in December 2006. The Bill was sponsored and introduced in the Irish Senate by **Senator Brendan Ryan** in May 2006 and was withdrawn at the request of the Minister for detailed examination by the Board of the National Library of Ireland. The objective of the Bill was to provide a proper legislative basis for the delivery of heraldic services by the Chief Herald of Ireland on behalf of the State. In the first comprehensive study of its kind dealing with Irish heraldry, **Professor Noel Cox**, provides a detailed analysis of the legal origins of Irish heraldry and its current legislative position following the implementation of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997. He forensically examines the various constitutional changes since the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 to the enactment of Bunreacht na hÉireann (Constitution of Ireland) in 1937 as a background to the "establishment" of the Genealogical Office in 1943 by the government of

Taoiseach Eamonn de Valera, TD. Indeed, as with much in Anglo-Irish relations since Irish independence was recognised in 1922 could be described as "deliberate ambiguity" on both sides, heraldry and heraldic services could hardly have been expected to escape this political ploy. Therefore, in his article Professor Cox argues for legislative clarity and a sound legal basis for the functions of the Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland. With copious notes and references, Professor Cox presents his case in an extremely accessible and very readable style which is important for the general understanding of the problems highlighted by this Society for many years and which formed the basis for the *Genealogy and Heraldry Bill, 2006*. It is clear that no future consideration of Irish heraldry can be complete without taking into account this very important in-depth analysis of the subject. Professor Cox is a Lecturer in Law at Auckland University, visiting Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge and a barrister at the New Zealand High Court, is also acknowledged expert on heraldic law and has published extensively on the subject internationally. Cop-

ies of the GSI Journal (Vol. 7 No. 2) may be obtained via the Society's website—Price €10 (postage €1.80 Ireland : €3.50 overseas). Other articles published in this issue of the Society's Journal are: "*Skeelyn Vannin—Stories of Mann—A Miscellany on the History, Culture and Language of the Isle of Man*" by Michael Merrigan; "*The Sinking of the 'Longford Canal Boat—November 1845*" by Caroline McCall; "*The Burning of Bridget Buckley*" by James Scannell; "*The Trouble with Wills*" by Rory Stanley; "*The Society's Lecture Programme 2006*" and "*Heraldic Legislation for Ireland—an update*" by Michael Merrigan; "*Stand and Deliver*" and "*Some 1916 Drogheda WW1 Casualties*" by James Scannell; "*Roches in Newfoundland*" by Jim Roche and "*Deansgrange Cemetery Burial Records*" by Margaret Conroy, Editor of the GSI Journal.

ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION

The Editor of the Journal warmly welcomes articles for publication from Members and others. Please send copy to **Margaret Conroy** by E-mail: mmeconroy@eircom.net

Nominating Bodies for Seanad Éireann

Following the Annual Review by the Seanad Returning Officer and in accordance with the Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Acts, 1947 to 1972, the Genealogical Society of Ireland is a Nominating Body for Seanad Éireann. The Society is on the register for the Cultural & Education Panel and entitled to nominate a candidate for the election to the Seanad (Senate) which takes place not later than 90 days after the General Election for Dáil Éireann. The electorate for the Upper House of the Irish Parliament is composed of Teachtaí Dála (MPs) and City and County Councillors, each of whom receives a ballot paper for each of the five panels. The ballot is by the single transfer-

able vote system of proportional representation. Amongst the bodies on the Cultural & Education Panel are the Royal Irish Academy, the Library Association of Ireland, The Law Society, Irish Georgian Society, The Old Dublin Society, Conradh na Gaeilge (Gaelic League), the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland and a number teachers' organisations. On this Panel the Society is the only body dealing with the genealogical and heraldic sciences. The full list of the Seanad Nominating Bodies was published in "*Iris Oifigiúil*" - the government gazette on March 23rd 2007 by the Seanad Returning Officer which is also available on line at <http://www.gov.ie>

SOCIETY SPEAKER PROGRAMME

The Society's Speaker Programme is arranged by **Séamus Moriarty**, MGSI. Here are the details for the next few months. On Tuesday April 10th **Patrick Lynch** will look at the lives of Irish veterans of WW1 (1914-1918) in "Veterans in a Virgin State – Homes for Heroes and Social Activities" and then on Tuesday May 8th we'll have "Tracing Your Family in the Medical Profession" by **Robert Mills**, RCPI. On June 12th **Seán Ó Dúbhghaill** will deal with "Death and Burial Customs in 19th Century Ireland". A précis of each of the lectures will be carried in the Society's monthly newsletter.

Who Do You Think You Are?

Building upon its unprecedented success, the hugely popular British TV series "*Who Do You Think You Are?*" is to launch a major history show in London. **Who Do You Think You Are? LIVE** is sponsored by [Ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk), will be held from 5-7 May 2007 at the National Hall, Olympia, London. This new and exciting event will incorporate the annual and ever popular **Family History Show** organised by the London based **Society of Genealogists'** and sponsored by www.findmypast.com to create, it is claimed, what will be the largest ever event

of its kind held in the United Kingdom and indeed, possibly anywhere. Visitors to the Olympia will have the chance to discover more about their ancestors and how they used to live with the help of the largest collection of TV historians, family history experts and celebrity enthusiasts from around Great Britain. Some of the well known presenters of TV history programmes such as **David Starkey**, **Dan Snow**, **Neil Oliver**, **Bettany Hughes**, **Saul David**, **Nick Barratt** and **Jonathan Foyle** will be present. British celebrities such as **Colin Jack-**

son, **Ian Hislop** and **David Baddiel** will be at the show discussing the experience of having their ancestors revealed to them on the TV programme. The fantastic array of quality exhibitors and stands planned for this major event, which includes workshops and seminars and, of course, access to on-line resources, offers the visitor a unique opportunity to see and experience the latest resources and programs. There will be Irish exhibitors and stands at the Olympia also so for further information please see: <http://www.whodoyouthinkyouarelive.co.uk/>

James Scannell Reports.....

DUBLIN CINEMAS In March the Dublin City library and Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2, was the setting for the launch of "*The A to Z of all Dublin Cinemas*" by **Patrick Maguire** and **George Kearns** which took two years to complete and traces the history of the many cinemas that generations of Dubliners attended but have vanished with the passage of time. Many of the lesser known cinemas are also included in this book which is supplemented with an excellent collection of black and white photographs. In the course of their research the authors visited the site of every cinema they mention in the book and included information from local historians and the recollections of those who attended them and the authors believe they may uncover information on others cinemas in the future.

RMS LEINSTER There have been many calls from individuals and heritage organisations that the 90th anniversary of the loss of the '*RMS Leinster*' which was sunk off Dún Laoghaire in 1918 by a German subma-

rine, should be commemorated during 2008 by An Post (Irish Postal Authority) with the issuance of a special commemorative stamp. The sinking of the mail boat which has been the subject of 2 books "*Torpedoed !*" by GSI Member, **Philip Lecane** and "*Death in the Irish Sea*" by **Roy Stokes** and it is considered to be the greatest maritime tragedy to occur in the Irish Sea. The towns of Dún Laoghaire and Holyhead (Wales) came together to commemorate the 85th anniversary in 2003 with a major events held in the two ferry ports attended by hundreds from both sides of the Irish Sea.

OLD DUBLIN SOCIETY On Wednesday February 28th the Old Dublin Society was accorded a civic reception by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, **Alderman Victor Jackson**, following his invitation extended to the Society to visit the Mansion House last October in the course of his visit to the Old Dublin Society in the Dublin City Library and Archive to open the Society's Winter programme and to present the Society's Medal to the member who presented the most outstanding lecture during the previ-

ous year which on this occasion went to the Society's President, **Rev. D.A. Levistone Cooney** for his paper on '*A Dublin Architect: George F. Beckett.*' It is a long established Society tradition that the Lord Mayor of Dublin opens the Society's Winter Programme and presents the Society Medal on the 1st Wednesday of October every year and in turn is presented with his / her year's membership of the Society and is allocated Membership No 1. This tradition of the Lord Mayor's annual visit goes back to 1934 when the Lord Mayor of Dublin was one of those who proposed the establishment of the Old Dublin Society. During the February 28th visit to the Mansion House, the Lord Mayor of Dublin's official residence, the Society was presented with an illuminated scroll to recall its visit and this will be displayed at all meetings of the Society in the Dublin City Library and Archive over the coming year. City Archivist **Mary Clarke** outlined the history of the Mansion House after which those in attendance were taken on a tour of the building which concluded with a buffet supper.

Snippets from the A.G.M.

The Society held its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday March 13th 2007 at the Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education, Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire. Business commenced at 20.00hrs with the Minutes of the 2006 AGM being read by the Company Secretary. Following the adoption of the Minutes, the Annual Report of the Board of Directors (published in this newsletter last month) was formally adopted by the Members. **Séamus Moriarty**, Leas-Chathaoirleach (Vice-Chair) assumed the chair of the AGM to permit **Rory Stanley** as Acting Hon. Treasurer deliver the Annual Financial Report which was duly adopted by the Members present. Moving to the

election of the in-coming Board of Directors of the Society for the period March 2007 to March 2008—the Members agreed to the Company Secretary assuming the chair of the AGM for the election. The Company Secretary called for nominations for the various positions which were then proposed, seconded and duly elected as follows:- Cathaoirleach (Chair) **Rory Stanley**; Leas-Chathaoirleach (Vic-Chair) **Séamus Moriarty**; Company Secretary/ Hon. Secretary **Michael Merrigan**; Hon. Treasurer **Denis Ryan**; Public Relations Officer **Luke Martin** and then the following who will receive their portfolios at the first Board Meeting were elected. **Barry O'Connor**, **Iris O'Connor**, **Liam Mac**

Alasdair, **Gerry Hayden**, **Hilary Byrne**, **Albert Long**, **Margaret Conroy** and **Séamus O'Reilly**. Following the election of the new Board, **Stuart Rosenblatt, PC, FGSI**, Vice-President of the Society, duly installed the in-coming Cathaoirleach by placing the Chain of Office on **Rory Stanley, FGSI**. The Guest Speaker for the AGM, **Prof. John Gilmartin** gave a fascinating and thoroughly enjoyable account of his maternal ancestors and their connections in Ireland, Great Britain, Chile and elsewhere. The style of delivery and the depth of knowledge kept everybody enthralled with both speaker and subject matter which was excellent. There followed a lively Q&A session ending at 22.00hrs.

Membership Subscription Renewals Overdue

Membership fee renewals are now overdue. The Board of the Society at its November 2006 meeting conducted the normal annual review of the **Membership Fee** and no changes to the existing packages were made by the Board.

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.

The avoidance of any substantial increase in the Membership Fee was achieved by the adoption of **Res: 05/11/455** with the production of a biannual Journal instead of a quarterly Journal with no reduction in content or overall size of the annual volume. The savings here are en-

tirely on postage costs as the cost of mailing the Journal overseas was becoming greater than the unit cost of the publication. This situation was totally unsustainable. However, the Board will keep this important matter under review.

The Board trusts that this measure aimed at tackling spiralling postage costs will be fully supported by our Members at home and overseas.

Remember you can renew on line on the Society's website—www.familyhistory.ie/shop

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DIARY DATES

Tuesday April 10th & May 8th 2007

Evening Open Meeting

Dún Laoghaire College of Further
Education

Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire
20.00hrs—22.00hrs

Wednesday April 25th & May 23rd 2007

Morning Open Meeting

Weir's, Lower George's Street, Dún
Laoghaire

10.30hrs—12.30hrs

Contribution €3.00 p.p.

(Coffee/Tea included at Morning Meetings)

QUERIES

Ted Anderson, 40 McCurdy Road, Herne Hill, Victoria, 3218, Australia E-mail:- tedanderson@ozemail.com.au Wrote:- seeking information on my great great grandfather and grandmother **William Anderson** and Letitia née **Dingle**. William Anderson was a coachbuilder in Dublin in 1840 when his son, also William migrated to South Australia. (E-mail address printed incorrectly in last month). Any assistance much appreciated.

Roger Jermyn, Plug-n-Play PC Inc, 461A, Main Street, Waltham, MA 02452 USA E-mail:- rogerjermyn@plug-n-playpc.com Wrote:- Seeking info on Henry **Jermyn** et al, father of George who emigrated to the Boston area of United States in late 19th century. They were from Bantry in County Cork. Any information please.

Sandra Smith, 17, Highfield Avenue, Driffield, YO25 5ER, East Yorkshire, England. E-mail:- nep.sand@tiscali.co.uk Wrote:- I am trying to find information regarding Matthew **Sherry**, who I believe was born in the Dublin area. He was working and living in the Marsden area of Huddersfield West Yorkshire in England around 1944/45. At the moment I am drawing a blank with my efforts to find any information however small. Any info. greatly appreciated.

Margaret Peina, 20 Main Road, Clinton, 9534, New Zealand E-mail maggiep2nz@yahoo.co.nz Wrote:- Looking for information about **Bridget O'Brien** born Ennis Co Clare May 1863. Mother Ann **O'Halloran** born c. 1840, father Michael O'Brien came to New Zealand 1872/73. Bridget is my great grandmother her parents died in Dunedin New Zealand 1894 and 1895 any info greatly appreciated.

Mark Savickas, 285, Hanover Street, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, USA. 03801 E-mail:- markas2@verizon.net Wrote:- Seeking information on James **Casey** born early 1800's sailed to Nova Scotia from Cork Ireland about 1837 with his wife **Mary McEwan** (?) with 2 children James and Mary both under 7 years of age I think on the ship "*Robert Watt*". I know this a long shot but any help would be appreciated

NOTA BENE:- Queries are only published at the discretion of the editor and where a mailing address and e-mail address are provided. The need for the mailing address is to ensure that as people change their e-mail address, contact through the mailing address supplied is still possible for those with information on the above queries.

John Redmond Papers are Catalogued

Dr. Brian Kirby has completed his cataloguing of the papers, held by the **National Library of Ireland**, of Irish politician **John Redmond** who was the outstanding of the post Parnellite political era an served as elected leader of the Irish Parliamentary party from 1900 to 1918. The National Library's John Redmond Collection reveals much about the distinctive political temperament of a man who long distinguished of service to the Irish cause remain largely unrecognized. The collection of papers span 40 years from his emergence as a Parnellite, his assumption of the chairmanship of the of the re-united Irish Parliamentary, his campaigns for peasant proprietorship and later for Home Rule, the 1914-1918 Great War, the 1916 Rising, the Irish Convention to his death in 1918. The Collection comprises nearly 12,000 items, the bulk of which relates to his public career. *The correspondence has been divided into three categories* - The first spans the period 1882-1918 and consists of letters from minor correspondents covering extremely varied subjects with letters from party loyalists and grass roots predominating. These letters will be of importance to historians interested in the working of the United Irish League which was the Irish Parliamentary Party's local constituency machine on the ground between 1896 and 1920. Other letters in this category offer intriguing insights into local concerns, petty

rivalries and blatant jobbing which frequently marked local nationalist politics during the Redmondite era. The second category contains letters from major correspondents of from those of political; and national significance and relate to Redmond's position as a leading public representative, distinguished public orator and political leader of Irish nationalism. These letters chronicle Redmond's stewardship of the national campaigns for peasant proprietorship and for Home Rule during which he corresponded with many foremost British parliamentary figures. Letters from **Joseph Devlin**, **John Dillon** and **Laurence Ginnell** reveals much about the Irish Parliamentary Party's highly effective political apparatus. There are also numerous references to Redmond's efforts to encourage recruitment particularly for the newly formed 16th (Irish) Division. This collection of material also contains a great deal of material relating to the 1916 Rising and its aftermath and of particular importance are letters from General **Sir John Maxwell** concerning Redmond's attempts to secure the release of prisoners. The third category includes letters from individual correspondents or from Irish political organisations in other countries and contain a great deal of information relating to the influence of the Irish abroad on Home Rule nationalism with a significant number of them referring to the

Irish States of America and Australia. Other letters relate to tours taken by Redmond overseas or trips undertaken by his representatives with some of the Irish-American letters highlighting the importance of Irish-American support in fortifying his constitutional nationalist movement. **James Scannell**

AN DAONCHARTLANN

The Society's Archive (An Daonchartlann) remains closed to researchers due to emergency conservation works on the Martello Tower at Seapoint which dates from 1804. The Society has obtained a secure off-site storage facility for the Society's archive from Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and plans for the placing of the archival collections in storage are at an advanced stage. As reported in the Annual Report of the Board of Directors (see last month's issue), the Board is reviewing the future needs of the Society to facilitate the expansion of our services. In this regard proposals for the relocation of our headquarters from the Martello Tower at Seapoint to a premises which would facilitate such growth in the Society's services are currently under consideration by the Board. The Archivist, Séamus O'Reilly, MGSI, is still accepting items for deposit in the Society's Archive and he encourages Members and friends of the Society to continue to donate material. In the meantime, the Board of the Society sincerely regrets any inconvenience to Members or others caused by this unavoidable temporary closure of the Society's Archive.