

Cumann Geinealais na hÉireann

## Ireland's Genealogical Gazette

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## Where is the Vision, Imagination and Direction for Our National Heritage?

As election fever grips the island of Ireland with Assembly Elections in Northern Ireland next month and the General Election in the Republic no more than a few months away, heritage organisations await the publication of the manifestos. Though, cynically dismissed by some of our more seasoned observers as mere pre-election propaganda by the various political parties, it cannot be denied that most of these manifestos have a very short shelf life indeed. But cynicism aside, heritage organisations and ordinary citizens have a right to know what policies, if any, the various political parties have in respect of the arts, culture and heritage matters. The recently announced €184 billion National Development Plan (NDP) failed to capture the public's imagination. This was regrettable as many fine, worthy and very necessary heritage projects are envisaged by the Plan. But in reality the public cannot be blamed for having more than a slight feeling of déjà vu on this issue. Whilst, our politicians are earnestly trying to woo the voters on the bread and butter issues with promises on the health service, affordable housing and public transport etc., little is heard of

their vision for the arts, culture and heritage of our country. This is understandable given the gravity of the other issues. But as government also has an important role in the protection and promotion of our heritage and the funding of essential services such as the national repositories, should we not see the plans each of the political parties have in this regard? Where is the vision, imagination and desire amongst the parties and would-be ministers to improve and develop this sector? The current government's new National Development Plan promises that Ireland's cultural infrastructure will receive an investment of €1.13 billion under the Plan. The facilities of our National Cultural Institutions to display national collections will be enhanced. The plan will fund a new National Concert Hall, National Theatre and facilities for the safeguarding and the conservation of national collections and will include the commencement of a digitisation programme for the national collections. Work will continue on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. A programme of capital works will be undertaken on heri-

tage properties including improvements to public libraries. The provision of a new headquarters for the National Archives of Ireland is "included" as a Public Private-Partnership project. But this seems to lack the priority given to the other projects. So is a much needed purpose built facility for the National Archives merely an adjunct to the Plan? What about any vision for the development of a network regional archives possibly on the university campuses? Clearly, more than just infrastructural issues must be included in the heritage elements of the party manifestos. Issues such as a proper legislative basis for heraldry, accessibility of records, digitisation and the opening of the 1926 census are all of immense importance. As the various manifestos will be launched in the coming weeks, the priority given to heritage matters by each party will soon become very apparent.

### Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Society will be held on **Tuesday 13th March 2007** at 20.00hrs in the Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education, Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. New Members especially welcome.

## Minister Sends Bill to NLI Board

The Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, **Mr. John O'Donoghue, TD**, has confirmed that he has sent the *Genealogy and Heraldry Bill, 2006* to the Board of the National Library of Ireland. The Bill was withdrawn after its second stage debate in Seanad Éireann at the Minister's request. The Minister undertook to have all the issues raised in the debate and the Bill itself carefully examined by

the Board under the Chairmanship of **Mr. Gerard Danaher**, Senior Counsel. Confirmation that the Bill had been sent to the Board was received in writing by the Senator sponsoring the Bill, **Sen. Brendan Ryan**. The Society considers this move by the Minister to be a very welcomed development that, hopefully will lead eventually to the establishment of a proper legal basis for the State's

delivery of heraldic services. Given the myriad of problems, uncertainties and absurdities surrounding the current legislative position of Irish heraldry, it's hard to believe that anything other than new or amending legislation will offer any remedy. In this regard, the NLI Board is very fortunate to have a wealth of legal advice at its disposal. The outcome of its deliberations will be interesting indeed.

## Kildare—*History & Society*

Once again **Geography Publications** of Dublin have published a real gem for Irish local history and indeed, genealogy. "*Kildare—History & Society*" (ISBN 978-0-906602-57-7 price €60 h/b) is described as a collection of "interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county" and with the range of subjects covered it certainly provides the reader with a comprehensive resource on the County of Kildare. The editors, **William Nolan** and **Thomas McGrath**, have ensured that the natural, physical and built heritage is examined in a manner to facilitate a greater understanding of the human impact on the landscape of the county as presented in the series of essays on historical and cultural topics. Kildare is rich in archaeology covering the period from the earliest inhabitants of Ireland through settlement, invasion and conquest. Up to the end of the Tudor period the county's proximity to Dublin had a strategic importance as a buffer between the city and the Gaelic world beyond. This was reflected in the settlement of the county, its placenames and local surnames and, of course, in its architecture and agriculture. The ecclesi-

astic history of the county dates from pre-Patrician times and the later establishment of the monastery of Kildare by St. Bridget to the turbulent times of the reformation and the wars of the seventeenth century. All had a profound impact on the county and its population with the dispossession of the Catholic Old English and remaining Gaelic landowners by the end of that century. The various authors in this publication provide copious references and many fine illustrations, maps and photographs to accompany their excellent articles. The county was also heavily involved with the 1798 rebellion and religious tensions were much in evidence up to Catholic emancipation as the population became more politicised. Various periods of political activity are also explored from the land wars, through the home rule movement and the War of Independence. The examination of local government in the county from pre-independence times to the last decades of the twentieth century gives a unique insight into the political character of the county which was increasingly facing the urban encroachment of Dublin city. The population changes over that

period are also examined in detail. The many aspects of economy of the county are covered from the development of the landed estates to the harnessing of the great Bog of Allen and the development of the equine industry for which the county is internationally renowned. The essay covering the period 1820 to 1850 and dealing with poverty and famine brings home the fact that the devastation of the Great Famine was not confined to the west but impacted severely on the poor throughout the country. The inclusion of an essay on the sources for the history of women in the county is to be applauded as this very important aspect of our nation's history is frequently overlooked. As a person with ancestral connections with the county through my grandmother (Wisely : Weisley : Wesley : Wellesley) I very much looked forward to this publication and without a shadow of a doubt, it's simply a must for all with Kildare ancestry. This publication and others in this series can be ordered through local bookshops or from **Robert Towers**, 2, The Crescent, Monkstown, Co. Dublin, Ireland. E-mail: rtowers@indigo.ie **MM**

## Electronic Services for Members

The Board of the Society has always welcomed comments and suggestions from members on the services provided by the Society for its membership. Therefore, it is very pleased to have received some ideas from a member in Spain. The member said that he had just received the Gazette and the Journal and examined the costs of the postage thereon and knowing what printing and stationery costs are like in Ireland, he recommended the following. The Society's website, though excellent, should be maximized by developing on-line membership packages at a cheaper rate as certain publications could be uploaded and password protected for members only. The development of a full e-

mail newsletter would avoid the spiraling postage costs. Also, the creation of members' bulletin board or special area would allow for more interaction between members from around the world. Look-ups could be offered and other data could be exchanged enhancing the membership experience. Whilst, congratulating the Society for the high standard of its services and facilities, he proffered these suggestions for consideration by the Board and the membership generally. The Board would welcome the views of the membership on these suggestions and in doing so, it extends its sincere gratitude to the member based in Spain for these very helpful comments and ideas on these issues.

### An Daonchartlann

The Society's Archive based at the Martello Tower at Seapoint is closed to visitors until further notice to facilitate conservation works. Preliminary assessments indicate that these works will take some months to complete. An off-site storage facility has been acquired for the Archive for the duration of these essential works. The Archivist, **Mr. Séamus O'Reilly**, **MGSI**, and the Board apologises to Members for any inconvenience. Items for deposit in the Society's Archive are still being accepted as usual. Further details will be published as they become available in this newsletter.

## The Society's Lecture Programme

The Society's lecture programme is one of its most important endeavours each year and has provided a wealth of new and valuable information. Many exciting resources were revealed and thoroughly explained in a manner appropriate to the requirements of a genealogist. The following is the Society's Lecture Programme planned and arranged by **Séamus Moriarty**, **MGSI**, for the next five months. On Tuesday February 9<sup>th</sup> we will have **Liz D'Arcy**, Paperworks Studio on the topic "Manuscript and Photo Preservation". The genealogy and history

of a single family – the Gilmartins will be **John Gilmartin's** topic for March 13<sup>th</sup> and for April 10<sup>th</sup> **Patrick Lynch** will provide a closer look at the lives of Irish veterans of World War 1 in his lecture "Veterans in a Virgin State – Homes for Heroes and Social Activities". The medical profession will be centre-stage on May 8<sup>th</sup> with "Tracing Your Family in the Medical Profession" by **Robert Mills**, **RCPI** and then this period of six months will end with **Seán Ó Dúbhghaill** on the fascinating subject of "Death and Burial Customs in 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Ireland". The subjects chosen appeal to a wide variety of interests and cover a number of resources, all of which, are extremely important to genealogy and social history. The latter allows us to broaden the story of our family to include aspects of their daily lives. A précis of each of the lectures will be carried the following month in this newsletter and hopefully, this will encourage more of our own Members to participate in the Society's lecture programme. The Board of the Society always welcomes comments on this programme from Members.

# Institute of Genealogical & Heraldic Sciences

The decision of the Board of the Society at its November 2006 to proceed with its proposal to seek the establishment of an *Irish Institute of Genealogical & Heraldic Sciences* could yet be another milestone in the development of the Society. The Board's two resolutions (*Res: 06/11/515 & 06/11/516*) adopted at the November meeting were based on an earlier 1994 proposal to establish such a facility in Dún Laoghaire. One outcome of that campaign was the development of the facility at the Martello Tower at Seapoint which was acquired in 1997 and officially opened in 2004. Following the extensive works carried out by the Society on the Martello Tower the expansionary plans for the establishment of the institute were put on hold. However, in the intervening years since the original paper was prepared by the Society in 1994, Irish society generally has undergone many radical changes including the near total collapse of volunteerism. This phenomena is not restricted to Ireland as many similar organisations in the United Kingdom have also experienced the impact of such on their activities over the past five years or more. Whilst, there

has been a drastic reduction in the numbers of hours devoted to voluntary activity, there has been an almost explosion in the numbers taking up adult education courses and night classes. Some may argue that this phenomena represents a shift from the traditional communal responsibility to a more overtly individualistic approach to life and society. Irrespective of the reasons and motives underpinning this change in the lifestyle of the Irish, the Genealogical Society of Ireland and other national voluntary bodies must adapt to this new reality and plan accordingly in order to survive and indeed, thrive in modern Ireland. Therefore, the Society's proposal for the establishment of this educational and research facility for Ireland is an imaginative and innovative response not only to the changing needs of our own membership but of society generally. A detailed submission has been prepared by the Society and it is currently being examined by the appropriate authorities. However, it is difficult to see how the Society's current headquarters could accommodate the various elements of this proposal and therefore, the Board is currently considering its options in

this regard. The Society's proposal focuses on the provision, in a single location, of a range of diploma courses and academic research facilities for the genealogical and heraldic sciences. It also proposes a national cooperative approach to the development of this institute whereby Ireland would be provided with a state of the art facility comparable with the best in the world dealing with these subjects. Though, negotiations on the furtherance of this proposal are at an early stage, the Board does not currently foresee any changes to the corporate structure of the Society emanating from the implementation of any aspect of the proposal. The Society will continue to be a membership based educational organisation with charitable status promoting the study of genealogy and heraldry both at home in Ireland and overseas amongst the Irish Diaspora. The proposal is undoubtedly the most ambitious initiative untaken by the voluntary sector in Ireland in relation to genealogy and heraldry and if successful, could see Ireland as a world leader in the development of facilities and courses for the advancement of the genealogical and heraldic sciences.

## Elections to the Board of the Society

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held next month and, as usual, the AGM will hear the Annual Report of the Board and the Annual Financial Report for the period up to 31st December 2006. Another major function of the AGM is the election of the officers and other Board members for the coming year. All positions on the Board are up for election at the AGM including An Cathaoirleach (Chair), Leas-Chathaoirleach (Vice-Chair), Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Public Relations Officer and up to six other Board members who receive their portfolios at the first Board Meeting following the AGM. The Board of the Society meets every month on the 1st Thursday

with the exception of January when it meets on the 2nd Thursday and these meetings are each of two hours duration. The business conducted includes all aspects of the Society's operations, policy formulation, reports and, of course, financial matters. All members of the Society who attend in person at the AGM are entitled to vote for candidates nominated from the floor at the AGM. There is no provision for voting by proxy or by mail under the Society's Standing Orders. Ordinary members of the Society have always been encouraged by the Board to consider volunteering for election to the Board. As with any organisation, this Society too can and does benefit greatly from the new ideas, vitality

and a fresh outlook that comes to the Board with the election of new members to the various positions. The decision making process is usually by consensus and the working atmosphere is always very cooperative and supportive of each other. This coming year will be both an exciting and a challenging one for the GSI Board as new initiatives, fund raising opportunities, electronic membership services, archival re-organisation, group projects, publications and the Seanad nominations are on the Agenda. As members of this Society we all share an equal responsibility for the efficient operation and good governance of the Society, so why not consider volunteering for election this year?

## Membership Subscription Renewals Now Due

Membership fee renewals are now due this month for the period January 2007—December 2007. The Board of the Society at its November 2006 meeting conducted the normal annual review of the **Membership Fee** structure and under *Res: 06/11/514* the Board agreed that the following Membership Packages should remain unchanged. **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. Remember you can save time by renewing your membership on line on the GSI website [www.familyhistory.ie/shop](http://www.familyhistory.ie/shop)

New Members are always very welcome whether from home or overseas.

### GSI BIENNIAL JOURNAL

The Board apologises for the late publication of the Society's biannual journal which should have been despatched in June 2006. We had problems with our regular printer but new printer has been sourced and the first volume was despatched in November 2006 with the second due out this month. The Editor is seeking articles so why not preserve your family's story in print in the pages of the journal? Contact the Editor, **Ms. Margaret Conroy, MGSI** at [editor@familyhistory.ie](mailto:editor@familyhistory.ie)

**IRELAND'S GENEALOGICAL GAZETTE**

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**[www.familyhistory.ie/shop](http://www.familyhistory.ie/shop)****DIARY DATES***Tuesday Jan. 9th & Feb. 13th 2007***Evening Open Meeting***Dún Laoghaire College of Further**Education**Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire**20.00hrs—22.00hrs**Wednesday Jan. 25th & Feb. 28th 2007***Morning Open Meeting***Weir's, Lower George's St., Dún Laoghaire**10.30hrs—12.30hrs**Contribution €3.00 p.p.**(Coffee / Tea included at Morning Meetings)***QUERIES RECEIVED**

**Derek W. Dwine** 73, Old Hall Drive, Bradwell, Newcastle-under-Lyme. Staffs. ST5 8RQ. England. E-mail:- [derekdwine@talktalk.net](mailto:derekdwine@talktalk.net) Wrote:- Seeking info.Thomas Dwine [Divine/Devine] born in Ireland in 1785.

**Mike Powter**, Post Office Box 1045, Darlinghurst, NSW 1300, Australia, E-mail:- [shumbaroo@ozemail.com.au](mailto:shumbaroo@ozemail.com.au) Wrote:- Seeking info on James Coffey b. Co. Westmeath marr Honora(h) Ryan b. Limerick dau. of John Ryan (Regan) & Magaret Hafey. Honora(h) to Aus c. 1843 Had 10 children incld. my g-grandfather Timothy Joseph Coffey, publican, Crookwell NSW.

**Jerry Turner**, 12965 Quarter Horse Rd., Marion,IL.62959,USA. E-mail:- [jjdturn@verizon.net](mailto:jjdturn@verizon.net) Wrote:- Seeking info. on Arthur Dempsey (Dempsey, O' Dempsey) b.1812 parents unknown. Marr. Mary A. Smith dau. of Robert Smith of Dublin. Arthur studied for RC Priesthood, never ordained, poss. Medicine, physician in USA. Died 1895 Washington Co. Illinois USA.

**Jean Cloherty**, 2 Almond Road, Glasgow G33 6LZ, Scotland E-mail:- [jeancloherly@btinternet.com](mailto:jeancloherly@btinternet.com) Wrote:- Seeking marr. of grandfather Thomas Nagle / Neagle & Margaret O'Loughlin from Carrowduff, Kilshanny, Co. Clare & their places of burial.

**Mary Kay Kuhfittig**, 2590 N. Farwell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211, USA. E-mail:- [pkihfittig@wirr.com](mailto:pkihfittig@wirr.com) Wrote:- Any info. on Brett (Britt) family. Cultromer, Culmullen. Co. Meath.

**Keith Darroll**, 9 Vander Stel Avenue, Kenridge, Durbanville 7550, South Africa. E-mail: [darroll@xsinet.co.za](mailto:darroll@xsinet.co.za) Wrote:- Seeking info on my g-grandmother Frances Elizabeth Furney, b. 1850 in Cork(?) Emigrated to South Africa & mar Robert George Darroll (from Shropshire, Eng) in 1880 Cape Town & had 8 children, 6 survived. Mother's maiden name was Worrell.

**NOTA BENE:-** Queries are only published at the discretion of the editor and where a mailing address and e-mail address are provided.

**Saint David's Day Dinner 2007**

The Annual **Holyhead-Dún Laoghaire Link** Dinner will be held on Saturday March 3rd 2007 in the Kingston Hotel, Adelaide Street, Dún Laoghaire at 20.00hrs. This is a fine celebration of the on-going cooperation between Wales and Ireland under the auspices of the European Union. It's also an unsurpassed networking opportunity for the business and voluntary sectors to meet their Welsh counterparts from Holyhead and Anglesey. Tickets €50pp from **John Moore**, Chairman, Holyhead-Dún Laoghaire Link, 15, Lea Rd., Sandymount, Dublin 4, Ireland or in person from Costello Jewellers, 1, Northumberland Ave., Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

# Précis of the January Lecture

The following is a short précis of the lecture delivered to the January Open Meeting by **Richard McCormick**, MGSi on the subject of "*Tracing Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Maritime Ancestors*". Finding details on the careers of merchant marine and fishing industry maritime ancestors prior to the Merchant Shipping Act 1835 requires reliable evidence detailing the extent of an ancestor's maritime activities and the ships on which he served. The Merchant Shipping Act, 1835 required masters of merchant ships or fishing vessels greater than 80 tons to file written Crew Lists and Agreements ashore on termination of voyage, from which Indexes and Registers of Seamen were compiled, primarily as a means of manning the Royal Navy in time of war. The indexes and registers compiled by the Registrar are therefore the principal keys to tracing seamen during the period 1835 – 1857. Those tracing maritime ancestors today must reverse the process and work from the Registers back to the Crew Lists and Agreements. The Registers of Seamen I – III (1835 – 1857) archived in The National Archives (TNA), London are difficult records to master with the Register of Seaman, Series II requiring a 40-page explanatory finding aid available in TNA. The Merchant Seaman Act of 1844 required every British seaman, irrespective of rank, leaving the United Kingdom to hold a Mariners Register Ticket. A total of 546,000 were issued and the application forms are very comprehensive indeed and are useful for ascertaining the year of birth for seamen prior to the advent of civil birth records. The Register of Seamen, Series III was discontinued in 1857, as it was considered that statutory Crew Lists and Agreements were sufficient to comply with legislation. Anyone seeking records after 1857 must therefore use Crew Lists and Agree-

ments, which are widely distributed and unfortunately have no nominal indices thus making the tracking of seamen extremely difficult. However, they are extremely useful records for tracing the career of a seafaring ancestor if they can be located and are very often the only extant record sources between 1858 and 1913 in most cases. TNA Kew and the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (for years ending in '5') hold approximately 10% each of these Crew Lists and Agreements, whilst the vast majority (c.70%) are held in the Maritime History Archive, Memorial University Newfoundland. Another 10% are held in local repositories throughout the UK and Ireland including 52,000 in the National Archives, Dublin relating to southern Irish vessels from 1863 – 1969 and a similar number in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast for Northern Ireland vessels from 1863 – 1938. Identifying ships is also a vital component of maritime genealogical research. The Merchant Shipping Act 1854 provided that every British registered ship should have a Ship's Official Number placed on her Certificate of Registry and marked on her main beam. The Ship's Official Number is therefore the principal means to reference a vessel on which an ancestor may have sailed from its implementation in 1857 In 1845, the Board of Trade introduced voluntary Certificates of Competency examinations to improve navigation standards, which eventually became compulsory for all deck and engineer officers. Tracing the career of an ancestor who became an officer is easier than an ordinary crewmember, as in many cases the acquisition of qualifications would have been published in the Mercantile Navy Lists, Lloyds Captains Registers, Lloyds Register of British and Foreign Shipping or an officer may be mentioned

in Lloyds List. The application forms for examinations also provide a wealth of valuable detail for genealogists. From 1917 foreign flag vessels docking at US ports had to file a Manifest of Aliens Employed on the Vessel, some of which held in the US National Archives may contain information gleaned from British Seamen's Identification Cards. From 1917 the US issued their own Seamen's Identity Cards to foreign seamen and from 1940 – 1944 foreign seamen registered by the US authorities may be traceable in the US National Archives. The UK Board of Trade in 1910 set up a Central Indexed Register in 1913 covering the period up to 1941 and those records that survived official destruction are archived in four main card indexes in TNA. Unfortunately card indexes for the period 1913 – 1920 have been destroyed, though some may have been transferred to the Central Register of Seamen 1941 – 1972, where those with five years sea service prior to 1941 were registered. Those records not destroyed are available in TNA. From 1973 onwards the records of seamen sailing on British ships are only available to the person concerned or in the event of death, the next of kin may have access. Post independence Ireland continued to operate a Mercantile Marine Office similar to its UK counterpart and indeed many Irish Shipping officers obtained British Certificates of Competency until the 1980's. These can now be studied for at the new National Maritime College of Ireland in Cork, whilst fishing Certificate of Competency training is provided by BIM. In summary, while maritime records are complex and widely scattered in repositories world wide, they are not impossible to master and with persistence a maritime ancestor's career can be traced.