

Cumann Genealais na hÉireann

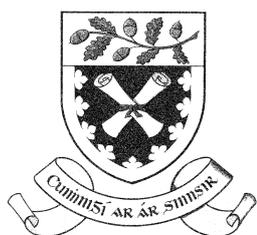
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GENEALOGY
HERALDRY
VEXILLOLOGY
SOCIAL HISTORY
Heritage Matters
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Television Creates a New and Much Older History for "Britain"

Over the past ten years two British television channels BBC2 and Channel 4 have produced many fine "television histories" on a range of topics and events. Undoubtedly, these series have immeasurably contributed to the popularisation of history and things historical in Great Britain and for this, their producers are to be warmly congratulated. The long-running series "*Time Team*" has created a totally new phenomenon "the arm-chair archaeologist" each carefully shifting and sifting trowel loads of earth in search the next Anglo-Saxon hoard. Other programmes focused on the broader history like the "*Seven Ages of Britain*" presented by Bethany Hughes and Simon Schama's "*A History of Britain*" - the latter consisted of fifteen programmes. New and exciting advances in the study of DNA have given rise to the latest of such programmes from Channel 4 "*Faces of Britain*" presented by Scottish archaeologist, Neil Oliver. The objective of this programme was to produce a genetic map of "Britain" under the direction of Oxford University geneticist, Sir Walter Bodmer. Each of these programmes was produced in a manner that made

history and indeed, genetics, popularly and generally accessible as primetime television. Stunning visuals and engaging presenters captivated audiences throughout the United Kingdom. Clearly as popular television productions the attention to detail could not be expected to match that required of an in-depth documentary or of an academic audiovisual presentation. This is not their function nor should it be. But should simplicity be permitted to create or advance a fiction, especially if that fiction is politically sensitive? Common to many of these programmes is a single notion of a place called "Britain" and its existence from prehistory right up to the present. Irrespective of the period under examination or of the actual geographic location concerned the term is liberally employed accompanied by a London centred historical timeline. This has facilitated the creation of a popular single historical timeline running from the Ancient Britons (Celts) through the Roman Invasion, the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, the Norman Conquest and through the Tudors, and on to Empire!! So the entity popularly known as "Britain" is an ancient one with its roots stretching back to prehis-

tory—isn't that correct? Well, no, in fact the popular concept of "Britain" is relatively recent and arguably just a lazy rendition of the official name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Indeed, even as "Great Britain" it's only 300 years old this month following the Act of Union between Scotland and England in 1707. The problem with each of these programmes, with the exception naturally of "*Time Team*", is that the history of the island of Great Britain is only portrayed in an English and London centred context. This is hardly relevant prior to 1707 or indeed, the union of the English and Scottish Crowns in 1603 when King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England. The total absurdity of the situation is compounded when these programme makers include the island of Ireland as part of this "Britain". This over simplification by the producers of "television histories" creates a historical, geographic, political and cultural nonsense which totally undermines the serious academic research behind each production. Sceptics may see another agenda, let's hope not. But is historical and geographic accuracy too much to ask for?

New Minister Needs to be Proactive, Innovative and Imaginative

Whatever combination of political parties come to power following the General Election on May 24th 2007, the new Minister with the Arts and Heritage portfolios faces many challenges. Not least, is the widespread believe that following the splitting of these portfolios in 2002, Arts and Heritage policy became marginalized within government departments with significantly different goals. Each re-

ceived much lip-service from its respective Minister and arguably little else. Gone was the very visible enthusiasm and dynamism that accompanied the establishment of the Department of Arts, Culture & the Gaeltacht back in 1993 and its successor in 1997. Pressures from powerful lobby groups ensured that this honeymoon for Irish Arts and Heritage would not survive the General

Election of 2002. Five years on and heritage policy languishes in the Dept. of Environment whilst Arts plays a poor hardly audible third fiddle to Sport and Tourism. Coherent strategic planning for heritage matters by government is no longer in evidence as the Heritage Council is certainly between a rock and a hard place. Care for our heritage must be prioritized again under a dynamic Minister.

A Manx View of the JGSI Article on the Isle of Man (*Skealyn Vannin—JGSI Vol. 7 No. 2*)

The following piece was written by **Adrian Cain**, Manx Language Development Officer, regarding the article "*Skealyn Vannin—Stories of Mann—A Miscellany on the History, Culture and Language of the Isle of Man*" published in this Society's Journal (Vol. 7 No. 2, 2006). Adrian provides details on some very informative websites for those seeking to find out more about this fascinating and historic island, its language and culture. Copies of this issue of the Journal are available for purchase, price €10 plus p+p, on the Society's website www.familyhistory.ie

Thrown headlong into the world of global capitalism the Isle of Man has seen some dramatic changes in the last 10 years. It isn't an Island that the last of the native Manx speakers would recognise; however, one thing that would surprise them is the revival in fortunes of a language long-since consigned to the history books. Not only would this surprise the likes of Ned Maddrell and Harry Kelly but it probably comes as a shock to our 'Gaelic cousins' in Ireland and Scotland. In this respect the excel-

lent and perceptive article by Michael Merrigan may go some way to informing Irish readers of what is a significant upturn in fortunes for Gaelg / Manx in the Island. The article intelligently outlines the history of Manx and brings the language debate in the Island up to date by outlining the important work of Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, Mooinjér Veggey and the Manx Heritage Foundation. As a consequence of the work of these organisations the language has a genuine future. The Island is struggling to assert a new identity for itself; one which both embraces the history and culture of the Island but which is also accessible to the 'new residents' of Ellan Vannin which now make up over 50% of the population. In this sense the language has to be open to people regardless of whether they were born in Douglas, Durban or Derby. In re-asserting the Gaelic identity of the Island and ensuring that that identity is one of which has a role to play in a modern multicultural Island it is incumbent on those in the Manx language community to strengthen the links with language campaigners in both Ireland and Scotland. As Michael Merrigan's article illustrates

up to recently those cultural and linguistic ties have been very strong. His article reminds us that we still have much to offer each other. For further information about the language try some of the following.

For general information about Manx Gaelic, contact Adrian Cain, Manx Language Officer at the Manx Heritage Foundation at E-mail: Greinneyder@mhf.org.im

For information on Bunscoil Ghaelgagh—the Manx language primary school see its website www.bunscoil.iofm.net/

For information on Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, the Manx Language Society's website is www.ycg.iofm.net/

Mooinjér Veggey, the Manx play-group organisation www.mooinjerveggey.org.im

Finally, for information on the work of the Manx Heritage Foundation, including its publications etc., please see its very informative website: www.manxheritage.org

Sunday May 27th & The Great Famine

Sunday May 27th 2007, as the last Sunday in May, is the date for the Famine Victims Memorial March in Dublin City. The organizers of the event seek to highlight the need for the State to designate the last Sunday in May each year as the "National Famine Victims Memorial Day" to commemorate the millions of lives lost during the Great Famine. As reported last month, An Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, TD, did not accede to the calls by opposition deputies to officially designate a day of commemoration for the Great Famine. Though, officials at the Department of An Taoiseach will, according to Mr. Ahern, look at the proposal. It is hoped that this event on Sunday 27th May 2007 will

demonstrate the deep sense of connectivity still felt by the people of Ireland with the terrible plight of our ancestors during the period 1845-1850. The dignified and solemn nature of this "National Famine Victims Memorial Walk" each year has been reminiscent of similar events held around the world for national tragedies. Indeed, few would argue that a greater tragedy ever befell the Irish people than the Great Famine. Whether it was the lack of any political capital surrounding the issue or just political apathy most believe that the State should assume the responsibility for the organisation of a "National Famine Victims Memorial Day" in future years. This year the Walk will

commence at 14.00hrs at the Garden of Remembrance at Parnell Square and proceed along O'Connell Street to the "Famine Figures" sculpture on Custom House Quay. All welcome to attend and participate.

PIONEER BUS COMPANY

Information is sought on the Pioneer Bus Company and any other bus companies operating in Co. Wicklow in the 1920's and the 1930's by the Bray Heritage Centre to answer a query received. Replies to **James Scannell**, Hon. Research Officer, Bray Heritage and Tourist Centre, The Old Courthouse, Main Street, Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

National Memorial for Irish Army

On Thursday 22 March 2007, Mr. Willie O'Dea, T.D., Minister for Defence, announced the commission for the first public National Memorial to Defence Force members who died in service had been awarded to artist Brian King. The Minister stated that the Memorial would be located in the park in Dublin's Merrion Square (Archbishop Ryan Park) and that both Dublin City Council and the R.C. Archbishop of Dublin supported the project and agreed to make this site available. The Minister pointed out that many states have a National

Memorial located in their capital city. There is no public memorial in Dublin dedicated to members of the Defence Forces. Throughout history sovereign states recognize the contributions made by members of the Defence Forces whether at home or on peace support operations overseas. It will also acknowledge the loss and bereavement of those left behind. The Minister went to say that members of the Defence Forces who died in service are remembered annually in July on the National Day of Commemoration at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

Ceremonies are also held annually in all military barracks on November 2nd which is the traditional day of commemoration for deceased members of the Defence Forces. The National Memorial will be an appropriate public monument to reflect the sacrifice by members of the Defence Forces and their families and it is my intention that the annual commemoration for deceased members of the Defence Forces would take place at The National Memorial according to Mr. O'Dea. The cost of the project is €175,000 **James Scannell**

James Scannell Reports...

ADMIRAL BROWN It's understood that the Foxford, Co. Mayo, house of Admiral Brown, founder of the Argentine Navy, has been demolished by its present power who said that it was done on the basis of professional advice due to the danger that the front wall leaning out in to the street posed. The owner said that the local Admiral Brown Society was aware of the structural problems with the building and proposed that the house should be re-erected at a new town park to be constructed in honour of the admiral and said that he donated all the stone for this purpose. While the president of the Admiral Brown Society was disappointed over this course of this action he said that it was not the end of the world and said that some visiting Argentine navy personnel would be invited to lay some of the stones during the reconstruction of the house in the town park. However some local people maintain that the demolished house, which was marked with a commemorative plaque 20 years ago, was not the admiral's childhood home and that he came from the hill-top Townland of Coranaragh outside Foxford.

IRISH BATTLEFIELDS Mr. Dick Roche, T.D., Minister for the Environment, has suggested that major Irish battlefields will be given protected status similar to that given to buildings based on a similar move in Britain and that this development would be considered by new expert group advising the Government on this issue. A group consisting of archaeologists and academic experts has now been established and is to produce a study identifying the number of potential battlefield sites in the country and to advise on what protection should be given to them. Currently there are more than 75 battlefields recorded on Irish maps but there is concern as to the level of protection they will receive from development. There has only been limited research carried out on the size and extent of many of these Irish battlefields and there is a growing concern about the encroachment of development on them and that a new system is required to protect them.

DONEGAL CORRIDOR During April granite commemorative plaques were unveiled in Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal (Republic of

Ireland) and Belleek, Co. Fermanagh (Northern Ireland) to publicly record for the first time the existence of the secret WW2 Donegal Corridor through which the British Royal Air Force flying boats were able to fly through Irish air space from their bases in Lough Erne into the North Atlantic to protect convoys bringing essential supplies from America to Britain. The corridor was set up in 1941 after secret discussion between Taoiseach Eamon De Valera and Sir John Maffey, the U.K.'s Representative in Éire. During World War 2 330 air crew from Lough Erne were lost in operational missions. The story of the Donegal Corridor is contained in a new book "*Voices of the Donegal Corridor*" by Joe O'Loughlin, published by Non-Such Publishing Ltd., which brings together a collection of memories, from home and abroad, of the Donegal Corridor, a place where allied soldiers trained for combat., where aircraft landed and refueled and where many crashed with loss of life. This book is excellently illustrated with pictures of those lost heroes, their aircraft and the memorial sites to those who never made it home.

Précis of the April Lecture

On Tuesday April 10th 2007 the Evening Meeting heard a fascinating talk by **Patrick Lynch** dealing with the lives of Irish veterans of WW1 (1914-1918). The title of the lecture perfectly captured the theme and content of Mr. Lynch's paper—"Veterans in a Virgin State – Homes for Heroes and Social Activities." For those who may be unfamiliar with early 20th century Irish history, the period between the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 was one of tremendous political and social upheaval. Mr. Lynch focussed on those Irishmen who left their homeland before the 1916 Rising to fight in the "Great War" in the ranks of the British Army.

For those who were fortunate to return from the slaughter and horrors of the war, the Ireland they left, only a few years earlier, was gone and gone forever. Mr. Lynch argued that the new Irish State should have shouldered its responsibilities to these returned veterans and provided housing and a means of a livelihood to each. He outlined the many efforts by prominent Irishmen, mostly former British military, to have both the British and Irish governments jointly provide for the welfare of these veterans. He then outlined the development of the *Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust* and its administration on both sides of the Irish border. Mr. Lynch hopes to publish his paper on this topic.

SOCIETY SPEAKER PROGRAMME

The Society's Speaker Programme is arranged by **Séamus Moriarty, MGSI**. A full listing on the programme for the coming months will be published next month in this newsletter. 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". See page four for details on the venue and times for the Evening Meeting where these lectures are to be held. A précis of each of the lectures will be carried in the Society's monthly newsletter.

Membership of the Genealogical Society

The Board in November 2006 conducted the normal annual review of the **Membership Fee** and no changes to the existing packages were made for this year. New Members are always welcome. Membership rates are as follows:-

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 May 8th and June 12th 2007

Evening Open Meeting

*Dún Laoghaire College of Further
 Education*

*Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire
 20.00hrs—22.00hrs*

Wednesday May 23rd & June 27th 2007

Morning Open Meeting

*Weirs, Lower George's St., Dún Laoghaire
 10.30hrs—12.30hrs*

Contribution €3.00 p.p.

*(Coffee/Tea included at Morning
 Meetings)*

QUERIES

Ian McKeer, 34 Woodland Drive, Worksop, Notts, S81 7JU England, UK E-mail:- ianm@srs-ltd.co.uk Wrote:- I'd like to hear from anyone who is interested in tracing the ancestry of the **McKerr** family. I suspect my surname has been changed from McKerr sometime after the oldest ancestor I know of moved to Cornwall in the mid 1700s. I don't know where he came from so would like to find if there's a connection to the McKerr family.

Kirk Bogle, 3107 Vinburn Rd., Sun Prairie, WI 53590, USA. E-mail:- kbogle1@verizon.net Wrote:- Seeking information on the following: 1) Mary Elizabeth **McKinney**, married Rev. Walter Allen **Bogle** of Edinburgh around 1830. May have emigrated to Philadelphia, PA, USA around 1836. Had son, Rev. Samuel Jas. Bogle. 2) Family/ancestry of David **Bradish** from Cork, worked at exchange around 1830's? Possibly Married Mary Anne **Good** on 12 June, 1847. Had son John Greenleaf Bradish, born Cork I believe on 1 December, 1851 Have information about their descendants.

Pauline Woodcock, 8, Parkside, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0HU. England, UK E-mail:- robson.woodcock@btinternet.com Wrote:- I am trying to trace the birth place of Henry (born 1829) and Maria **Phillips** (born 1837). When they left Ireland they had four children, Patrick, (my grandfather) Robert, George and Mary Ann. I believe they left Ireland during the potato famine. They first appeared on the 1881 census living at 51 St. Anne Street, Birkenhead. Also William **O'Day** and Bridget O'Day (née **Melia**), they lived at 33 Field Street, Birkenhead in 1871. William died on 16 Sep 1871. Bridget gave birth to a daughter Bridget 7 Oct 1871, she remarried 23 Aug 1874 to Patrick **O'Grady**.

Tom Hindley, 'Ty Dwr', Gwalchmai, Holyhead, Anglesey, LL65 4SS, Wales, UK E-mail:- thindley@supanet.com Wrote:- My mothers parents were Delia **Shannon** born 1875-1885 Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare (dressmaker) and Patrick **Healy** born 1875-1885 Co. Clare (farmers son) who left to work in the Manchester coal mines where I believe he met Delia and married in Wigan Lancashire area Any information or pointers for where else to look please to

Dondura Miller, 4852 Westgrove Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455 USA E-mail:- grammieof9@yahoo.com Wrote:- I am searching for my great grandfather John Michael **Kane** and his wife Mary Elizabeth. They came to America before August of 1888. My grandfather was born here then. The only information I ever received was that they were from either the Belfast area or Dublin and that my great grandfather had a considerable land holding that was taken for taxes. We have family names of William, Robert, Thomas, Frederick and of course Mary & Elizabeth. If anyone can be of assistance I would be very grateful.

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

Publication of Your Family History is an Important Gift to Future Generations

Many genealogists and family historians labour for decades accumulating a mass of information and supporting documentation on their subjects. Much care has been taken to file, sort, collate and present the material for our own benefit and that of our immediate families. To our horror, many of us soon realise that the initial interest shown by our immediate families in our charts, photographs and accompanying stories is very short lived indeed. Many members of our immediate families are quite happy and prepared to have someone in the family "doing the family history" whilst stressing their own personal disinterest in the subject. This poses a serious dilemma for all family historians—what will happen to my precious files and records after I am gone? Not everybody in our family may place the same value on these treasures as we currently do and therefore, it is wise to make provision for our papers after we've gone. The thought of all our lovingly collected papers and files ending up as nothing more than recycled paper or dumped in some landfill would fill any genealogist with despair. But this happens more often than we care to think as family members clear out after a bereavement. It's not that they're in anyway callous or vindictive—simply a different value is placed on these piles of paper. The Society's archive was established primarily with this dilemma in mind by offering a safe haven and a loving home for the files and

papers of our members and other genealogists. But whilst making provision for our papers we can and should consider placing some of our family records in print. Ever since the foundation of this Society back in 1990 members have been encouraged to publish their family histories in the Society's journal. Whether it be a simple Birth Brief or a biography of an ancestor or relative, these details are then preserved by their publication. This method of preserving family history is immensely important as many of us, in the course of researching our family history, collect stories on the lives of individuals in our family tree and indeed, on the places, occupations and times associated with these individuals. Our paper records and our collection of photographs may not, in themselves, be capable of telling this story. Therefore, it is important that we capture the story in an article or in a short biography and publish it in the Society's journal. We must tell the story or risk having this aspect of our family history being lost to future generations. Last year, in the April issue of this newsletter, we spoke of the "obligations of a genealogist" and the need to ensure that we provide our research for future generations. It is a central tenet of genealogical and historical research that such research data should be preserved. Our members are very fortunate to have at their disposal the Society's biannual journal in which to preserve their

family histories and biographies, however, it is disappointing that very few regularly avail of the opportunity. Besides being delivered to each member of the Society and exchanged with other societies around the world, copies of the Society's journal are held in the National Library of Ireland, the British Library, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales, Oxford and Cambridge Universities in Great Britain and all Irish universities, including Queen's University, Belfast. This ensures that the publication is available to a wide readership now and that the valuable information on your family history is also available to future generations of researchers around the world. Remember it's a small but important gift to future generations!

SEANAD ÉIREANN

Official notice has been received from the Returning Officer for Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate) that the Society has the right, under the Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Acts 1947 and 1954, to nominate one person as a candidate in the Seanad Election on the Cultural and Educational Panel. The closing date for the receipt of the nomination is noon of June 15th 2007. The Board of Directors of the Society will consider the matter at its scheduled monthly meeting on June 7th. *Hon. Secretary*