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GENEALOGY
HERALDRY
VEXILLOLOGY
SOCIAL HISTORY
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Decisive Action by NLI Board Welcomed But Future of Irish Heraldry in Doubt

When the *Genealogy & Heraldry Bill, 2006* was withdrawn in December 2006 to allow for its thorough examination by the Board of the National Library some thought that the Bill and its objectives would simply fade away. Indeed, this may well have been a possibility were it not for the publication by the Society of an article by Professor Noel Cox of Auckland University, New Zealand. The article commissioned by the Society carefully examined the legal basis for the State's delivery of heraldic services. As a barrister of the New Zealand High Court, a Professor of Law at Auckland University and an internationally renowned heraldic expert, Professor Cox's arguments were compelling. As a matter of courtesy the Society presented a pre-publication copy of the article to the Chairman of the Board of the National Library of Ireland for his careful consideration. It seems that his response was swift and decisive, though no press release accompanied the posting of the following notice on the website of the National Library - "We are currently unable to process applications for Grants of Arms pending the clarification of the legal powers of the Board of the Na-

tional Library in relation to the issuing of Grants of Arms". The Board of the National Library and indeed, it's chairperson and eminent barrister, Mr. Gerard Danaher, SC have to be commended on this occasion as the fundamentally flawed legislative basis for the State's delivery of heraldic services was officially ignored and denied for years. Professor Cox's learned article very substantially supported the arguments proffered by this Society for the past seven years. Indeed, the basis for the introduction by Senator Brendan Ryan of the Society's *Genealogy & Heraldry Bill, 2006* was completely vindicated by Professor Cox. The article finally put an end to some fanciful and quite frankly, ridiculous notions about the rights, privileges and prerogatives of Irish heralds and heraldry in our constitutional framework. It has to be abundantly clear now to all that should it be considered desirable that our republic should have a State heraldic authority then a proper legislative basis is required for its operation and the regulation of its activities. Anyone now arguing for the maintenance of the status quo whether under Sections 12 & 13 of the *National Cultural Institutions Act,*

1997 or indeed, under the 1943 Statutory Instrument must certainly qualify for membership of the flat earth society. Though, the main legal problem can be traced back to the advice given by the Attorney General in 1943, erroneous assumptions about the exact role and authority of the Office of the Chief Herald complicated matters too. The decisive action by the Board of the National Library has provided an excellent opportunity for a thorough and open examination of all aspects of the State's delivery of heraldic services. Whilst, this examination must look at past controversies surrounding the operation of the Office of the Chief Herald, it must not dwell unduly on the past but should concentrate on the formulation of legislative measures to deliver a first class, modern heraldic authority. Drawing on a rich heraldic tradition, though not shackled by inappropriate custom, a bright and sustainable future for Irish heraldry can be assured. Ireland as a sovereign republic deserves a heraldic authority which meets its own requirements. Whether Minister Séamus Brennan, TD will initiate legislation to establish a modern heraldic authority remains to be seen.

Genealogy & Heraldry Bill

The current uncertainty over the legal basis for the State's delivery of heraldic services could well have been avoided. The *Genealogy & Heraldry Bill, 2006* introduced by former Senator **Brendan Ryan** received cross-party support during its Second Stage debate in December 2006. The Bill was withdrawn at the request of the Minister, **John O'Donoghue, TD**, in order that it

could be examined in detail by the Board of the National Library under the chairmanship of **Mr. Gerard Danaher, SC**. Whilst, the Board's advice, if any, to the Minister has not been published, it seems certain that new or amending legislation will be required to regularize matters. The new Minister, **Séamus Brennan, TD**, has yet to make a any statement on the issue. However, the option to seek

the reintroduction of the *Genealogy & Heraldry Bill*, with amendments, is still actively being considered by this Society. A decision on this issue will be made following a thorough consultation process by the Society. The full text of the Bill and its Explanatory Memorandum are available on the website of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) www.oireachtas.ie under "Bills" for 2006.

Censorship by Decentralisation?

The possible relocation of the records of the former Land Commission to Port Laoise could mean that public access to these records would be permanently denied. The Society has long argued that this valuable archive should remain in its present location in Dublin and be transferred to the care of the National Archives of Ireland. This would ensure that it would be made accessible to the public for historical, genealogical and social history research. Similar archives in relation to these various Land Acts are held in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland and available to the public. Clearly it would be nothing short of a disaster for Irish historical and social studies should this ludicrous relocation proposal proceed as planned. The records of the Land Commission form an integral part of the body of heritage and historical material held in other repositories in our Capital City. Dublin City has the main national repositories – the National Archives, National Library, Genealogical Office and General Register Office etc. – the latter, though relocated to Roscommon Town, has retained its vital research base in Dublin City. The National

Archives, to which the records of the Land Commission should be naturally attached, is adjacent to its present location. It is absolutely imperative that access to the archives of the national repositories is not frustrated by the disintegration of this body of material through a politically motivated and poorly planned decentralisation policy. The ease of access by the general public to the Capital from all parts of the country makes the Capital the only viable location for important national repositories – decentralisation will most certainly deny and/or severely curtail this accessibility. The location of the national repositories in the Capital, each in easy walking distance of the other, creates an integrated educational and cultural resource much valued by students, researchers, overseas visitors and the general public. The removal of the records of the Land Commission to a location outside the Capital will be viewed as a retrograde step in the future development of "roots tourism" and an attempt to deny access to these valuable records. Put simply, it's censorship by decentralisation. As if to deliberately confuse this issue and to engender fear amongst

former clients of the Land Commission, some sources have argued that the records of the Land Commission are "working documents" and therefore, cannot easily be made publicly available for research. This "official" argument is as unsustainable as it is nonsensical. However, if legislative measures are required to absolutely ensure public access to these records, then a simple and short Bill could deal with the issue very effectively by declaring such to be public records. This Bill could also provide a mechanism whereby former clients of the Commission could, if they so wished, opt to have their file "closed" to public research on payment of an annual service charge. However, a lapse in such payments should mean that these files would automatically become public records after a specific period. The Society calls on our parliamentarians who genuinely value our rich archival heritage to proactively seek the integration of the Land Commission records in to the National Archives by whatever legislative measures are required. Also, to vigorously oppose the current proposal to lock away this valuable archive in a warehouse in Port Laoise.

GSI Lecture Programme

The coordinator of the Society's Guest Speaker Programme, **Séamus Moriarty**, MGSI has arranged the following programme. On Tuesday September 11th **John Heuston**, MGSI, will deliver a Sligo miscellany. On Tuesday October 8th **Mary Kelleher**, Archivist, Royal Dublin Society will introduce the archives of the RDS as a resource for the genealogist. On Tuesday November 13th **Seán Connolly**, Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association will speak on tracing a family member who fought in World War 1 and finally, on Tuesday December 11th **Steve Butler**, Elder, Church of Latter Day Saints will present an overview of the genealogical records of the Church of Latter Day Saints. Séamus is

always on the look out for possible speakers to include in future programmes, should you have any suggestions in this regard please contact Séamus by e-mail at Gazette@familyhistory.ie

Sr. SHEILA FLOOD, MGSI

It's with great sadness that we learned of the passing of our member **Sr. Sheila Flood** (St. Louis Sister) on August 31st 2007 in Newmarket, England. Sr. Sheila had been a member of the Society for a number of years and quite a frequent attendee at our Morning Open Meetings when home on short breaks from England where her convent is based. It was thanks to our

Co-Founder and then Archivist, Frieda Carroll, FGSI, for very soon after becoming a member, Sr. Sheila, soon discovered that she has a cousin in the Society, Mary FitzPatrick, MGSI, with whom, she became great friends. Sr. Sheila Flood was laid to rest in Newmarket on Monday, September 10th 2007 following requiem mass in the Parish Church of Our Lady and St. Etheldreda in Newmarket. The President, Tony McCarthy, FGSI; Cathaoirleach, Rory Stanley, FGSI; Board and Members of the Society extend their sincere condolences to Sheila's sister, Maeva, and her brother-in-law, Michael and to Sr. Sheila's fellow religious sisters in the St. Louis Community. *RIP.*

Adult Education Courses in Genealogy

The Adult Education Centre in University College Dublin is once again running genealogy classes, starting in late September 2007. A ten-week introductory course suitable for beginners will be held in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, on Monday afternoons, and at the Belfield campus on Monday nights. Topics to be covered include principles of genealogy, computers and the Internet, placenames and surnames, location and use of census, vital, valuation, church and other records. These courses provide each student with an excellent grounding in the subjects

and, in many instances, provide fascinating avenues for further study or research. Many members of this Society have successfully completed these courses and indeed, decided to take and to likewise complete the more advanced courses on offer. Students who wish to pursue the subject further can enrol for more advanced classes, leading to the award of a Certificate and Diploma in Genealogy/Family History. The successful completion of these advanced courses has led some former students to undertake genealogical research on a com-

mercial basis. Whether simply for the enjoyment of the subject or preparing for a possible career opportunity in commercial genealogical research, these courses come highly recommended by the many members of this Society who have successfully completed either the introductory or advanced level. For further information or application, please contact the UCD Adult Education Centre, Belfield, Dublin 4, telephone (01)7167123, or simply visit the UCD Adult Education Centre's website at <http://www.ucd.ie/adulted/>

Brief News Reports....

CEMETERY PROJECTS

The Society's project to record memorial inscriptions is continuing a pace under the direction of **Barry O'Connor**. Already this summer his team have recorded the Curragh Military Cemetery, Arbor Hill Military Cemetery and a few smaller graveyards. The objective is to collate the memorial inscriptions from various military cemeteries and to make these available in a single publication. Most of the inscriptions concern men who served in various British army regiments prior to Irish independence. But some inscriptions deal with soldiers' families. This volume will certainly be of considerable interest to military historians and, of course, those with military ancestry or connections.

LEARN MANX

The Manx Language Development Officer, **Adrian Caine**, has advised the Society of the launch of a new website for learners of Manx Gaelic. The language is, of course, very closely related to Irish and Scots Gaelic, though, its

orthography is somewhat strange to speakers of the other two Gaelic languages. The website www.learnmanx.com is designed to meet the needs of beginners and others and indeed, it provides a unique cultural resource for those with Manx ancestry. For those with no connections with the Isle of Man (*Ellan Vannin*) but with an interest in the Irish language, this website provides a fascinating insight in to the development of the Manx language and its revival over the past fifty years. Congratulations to Adrian and his colleagues for producing this fine linguistic and cultural on-line resource.

ANNIE MOORE

"From Cork to New York: The Annie Moore Story" This is short film celebrating the life of Annie Moore, the first immigrant to pass through Ellis Island, of whom, a statue was erected in Cork and New York. It was written, produced, directed, and cast by 11-year-old students from Scoil Oilibhéir in Cork. The film features several locations identified by the students, including St. Patrick's Church, where

Annie was baptized, and the house on Rowland Lane where she lived. Checkout the website:- www.rootstelevision.com

PLACENAMES POLICY

The Society's proposal to have a County Place-names Policy adopted by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council received a setback earlier this month. The draft policy document, prepared by the Society, was presented to the *Strategic Policy Committee on Culture, Community Development & Amenities* (CCDA) for its meeting of September 5th 2007. However, following lengthy presentations on the County Biodiversity Policy and the County Library's Cultural Strategy, it was discovered that a quorum no longer existed to take other matters. This situation was most unsatisfactory, however, the CCDA Director, **Mr. Charles McNamara**, stressed that such a detailed document deserved a proper debate and he promised to have the item placed on the Agenda for the next meeting in December. A copy of the document may be viewed on the Society's website.

Précis of the August Lecture

Malachy McVeigh recently retired from the Ordnance Survey and his last project was scanning in of Historic Ordnance Maps dating back top 1830s and the creation of a digital Archive. This achievement created the most comprehensive database of historic mapping available for Ireland but also ensured that, using modern day technology, there will be ready access to public to this hugely important archive via the Internet. Malachy McVeigh gave a presentation on the Ordnance Survey's Historical Maps Archive most of which has now been digitised and is available on line and in public libraries. He gave a brief History of the Ordnance Survey and how they had gone about mapping the

entire country and information on some of the personalities involved **Lt-Col. Thomas Colby** and **Lt. Thomas Larcom** and **Lt. Col. Thomas Drummond** who devised the intensely bright limelight. This was used so survey points could be observed from great distances and angles between survey points measured. The limelight was later adopted as stage lighting in theatres. Malachy pointed out the original plan was for a survey of townland boundaries. The first maps published for the northern counties had only topographical detail associated with the boundary. This was changed when they had reached Monaghan on the recommendation of **Richard Griffith** (of Griffith's valuation) The survey

had commenced in the north and moved south. The maps in the database are. 6 inch mapping series (1:10,560) colour 1837-1842, 6 inch mapping series (1:10,560) greyscale 1837-1842, 25 inch mapping series (1:2,500) greyscale 1888-1913 (over 18,000 sheets). It is planned to digitise the 1:500 or 10 foot to the mile maps of many urban areas. These date from 1857-1879. The original maps were published as county maps with each county having its own 'grid'. This is why the maps don't fit very well together along county boundaries. This problem was over come in the digitising by adjusting each map to fit on the one grid the result is a seamless map of the entire country. (*S. O'R*)

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 also renew your membership on line on the Society's website—www.familyhistory.ie/shop

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DIARY DATES

Tuesday Sept. 11th & Oct. 9th 2007

Evening Open Meeting

Dún Laoghaire College of Further
Education

Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire
20.00hrs—22.00hrs

Wednesday Sept. 26th & Oct. 24th 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)

THE SOCIETY'S JOURNAL

Members will have noted that there has been a considerable delay in the publication of the Society's biannual journal this year. This unfortunate situation is due to the dearth of suitable material being received by the Editor. This problem is now, it seems, common to many similar societies around the world, some of which, have been forced to cease the publication of their journals or to reduce the frequency of their publications. The publication of a journal by this Society is an important part of its objective to promote, preserve and collect material on our genealogical heritage and therefore, the Board is committed to the publication of the journal. Just recently members at the Morning Open Meeting petitioned for the return of the quarterly journal as a means to both encourage the submission of articles for publication and to maintain the currency of the journal. Whether or not this is a viable solution to the problem of the dearth of articles for the publication of a biannual journal, of course, is very debateable. However, in the meantime the Editor appeals to all members and friends of the Society to utilise the Society's biannual journal to preserve their family histories and to create a record of the lives and times of ancestors who may have made a special or extraordinary contribution to their world, community or profession. Biographical works are of immense importance to genealogical research. Articles on specific historical events or occurrences are of particular interest as the link between local history and family history is well established. This type of article provides valuable information for the genealogist on sources and indeed, on how and where to access these sources. Other items welcomed for publication include memorial inscriptions, shipping lists, extracts from census returns or other such data. Most genealogists love lists—school registers, petitions, land records, lists of tenants/occupiers and, of course, extracts from parish registers are always very useful to other researchers. In short, articles on genealogy, heraldry and related subjects are always most welcome. Please contact the Editor, Margaret Conroy, MGSJ on mmeconroy@eircom.net

QUERIES

The publication of queries in the newsletter is currently under review and therefore, the acceptance of research queries for publication has been temporarily suspended. Any inconvenience is regretted. *Editor*

Our "fadaless" Police Service

The annual silly season in Ireland draws to a very welcome closure this month with the return of our parliamentarians to the Oireachtas following their long and well deserved summer recess. Each year during the "silly season" issues are raised that would otherwise be totally ignored by our politicians and the media. Our national television station cuts the length of its very popular nightly Six-One News in response to the perceived "news vacuum" of the silly season. Newspapers find time and space for the cuddly, nice, feel-good and leisure articles on hobbyists, artists and green-fingered folk. Other fine articles published in the season deal with issues of marginal and dubious concern to all but the "anoraks" of this world. Some may say that the spat about the alleged unauthorized commercial use of the "logo" of the Irish police force by a manufacturer of novelty goods was one such story. But maybe not, as the issue was also carried in this newsletter in July, however, with the more serious angle concerning the Arms of the Garda College at Templemore. This newsletter sought to highlight the lack of copyright protection to the Arms of the Garda College. But as reported last month, many readers commented, and continue to do so, on the spelling of the name of the Irish police force and whether there was a "fada" (accent) or not over the first 'a' in Garda. The Society was also contacted by the Garda Press Office with the

advice that under Section 6 (1) of the *Garda Síochána Act, 2005*, that there was no "fada" in the word Garda. The advice was that the 2005 Act had amended the 1924 Act mentioned in last month's edition of this newsletter. For readers who may be unfamiliar with the Irish language the difference in the pronunciation approximates to "garr-dah" versus "gore-dah" the latter with the accent or "fada" - Gárda. Though, the "fada" (pronounced "fad-dah" - meaning "long" in Gaelic) in this word has been dropped in recent years, speakers of the Irish language still tend to habitually pronounce the word as if it still had its accent. So what's all the fuss about? Whether "fadaless" or not, don't our policemen and policewomen do an admirable job on behalf of the citizens of the nation? Of course they do and few will seriously dispute this fact. Although the issue of our nation's "fadaless" police force will hardly feature on the political agendas of any of our erstwhile public representatives in Leinster House, it does pose certain interesting questions. For example the 1924, Act, states in **Section 1. (1)** *It shall be lawful for the Executive Council of Saorstát Éireann to continue to raise, train, equip, pay and maintain in Saorstát Éireann the force of police called the Gárda Síochána.* ("fada" included). However, in the 2005, Act, it states in **Section 6. (1)** *The police force called the Garda Síochána continues*

inbeing under this Act as a police service. ("fada" excluded). Therefore, it is very unclear whether Section 6 (1) of the 2005 Act, did in fact amend Section 1 (1) of the 1924 Act. Indeed, on the contrary it would appear that it sought the continuance of that section of the 1924 Act regarding the correct name of the force. The Oireachtas debate on the Bill (2005 Act) centred on whether it was correct or not to insert the Gaelic definite article "An" before the name and little, if any, attention was paid to the "fada". Whilst, it could be argued that an oversight in the drafting of the legislation meant that the "fada" was omitted in the 2005 Act, it is more likely that the current spelling was adopted without amending the actual name of the force. So the question remains, do we now have a "fadaless" police service or not? Whether the interest shown by readers in the spelling was merely a phenomenon of the "silly season" or a fadeless and genuine interest in the development of the Irish language by amateur linguists – we may never really know. Will we?

EDITOR'S NOTE

The publication of this issue of the newsletter was delayed by a week due a computer problem. We apologise to our members and readers for this delay—the first time in 17 years. *Sorry.*