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A Victory for *Mná na hÉireann!* 90th Anniversary of Markievicz's Election

Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate) heard calls, once again, from **Senator Ivana Bacik** to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the right to vote for women and the election of the first women to the UK House of Commons in 1918. The General Election of 1918 was the last All-Ireland election to the UK House of Commons. The result was an overwhelming majority for Sinn Féin standing on an "abstentionist" platform. Taking 73 of the 105 Irish seats, these new MPs refused to go to London and established the First Dáil on 21 January 1919. In the election Unionists took 25 seats, Independent Unionist 1 and the Irish Home Rule Party just 6 seats. This election was the first in which women had the right to vote in the United Kingdom. The first women elected in 1918 to the UK House of Commons was Countess Markievicz of Sinn Féin. Like her colleagues she too refused to take her seat at Westminster and instead entered Dáil Éireann as the first women Teachta Dála (MP). She was appointed to the position of Minister for Labour—another milestone in the long struggle for gender equality. In the October issue we called for the commemo-

ration of the 90th anniversary of these two important events in our history, the election of the first women and the establishment of Dáil Éireann. Speaking on the Order of Business in the Seanad on Thursday 4th December 2008, Senator Bacik (Independent) said "as we are about to celebrate the 90th anniversary of women voting for the first time in this country and the 90th anniversary of the election of Constance Markievicz as the first woman to be elected to the Dáil and as an MP, I call for a debate on gender equality." On the participation of women in Irish political life since 1918, Senator Bacik told Senators "we have a particularly poor record of

women's participation in the Oireachtas. With 13% in the Dáil, we rank at 87th internationally. I recently examined the overall number of seats filled since the election of Markievicz in 1918 and only 6% of the more than 6,000 Dáil and Seanad seats filled since then were filled by women. That is an appallingly low performance." Senator Bacik said that "extensive research has been done and we know that child care, lack of access to cash and women's confidence are issues, as is the culture in which women are not advanced." These are the four "Cs" according to Senator Bacik that hinder women in Irish politics. This 90th anniversary should also highlight the important role played by women in the fight for Irish independence and other national campaigns. Indeed, a fine article on the Ladies' Committee of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the 1860s by Rose Novak appears in the current issue of *History Ireland*. As a nation we commemorate many tragedies and past wars. Now in this 90th anniversary, Ireland has a chance to commemorate a victory for "*Mná na hÉireann*" (*Women of Ireland*) and to reflect hard on the true meaning of gender equality.



New Year Resolutions—Again!

It is over the Christmas and New Year period each year that many people decide to embark on their ancestral quest. It is at this time of year we that especially remember those family members and relatives that are no longer with us. The holiday period brings family members together and inevitably memories of people, places and times past come flooding back in conversation. So we promise

ourselves that the quest will begin in the New Year to "do the family tree" - but then, didn't we say that last year too? Right, you tell yourself, it's time to take the bull by the horns and get started. But where do you start? There are a number of very accessible options open to you. Firstly, you purchase a good family history DIY guide book—John Grenham's *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors*. Secondly,

you could enrol in an adult education course on genealogy like those in University College Dublin. Thirdly, as the joys of family history are mainly in the searching, finding and sharing of the information, you should join a family or local history society. With these three simple options to the discovery of your own family history, this coming year you can keep that New Year's Resolution.

Confederate Ireland 1642-1649

There is no doubt that now, 350 years after his death, Oliver Cromwell, continues to haunt the Irish consciousness and, in the eyes of many, stands accused of war crimes, religious persecution, land theft, cruelty, genocide and ethnic cleansing. This contrasts very sharply with his legacy in Great Britain where he is hailed as a staunch defender of the rights and liberties of parliament. "*God's Executioner*" a recent two-part television documentary by Micheál Ó Siochru dealing with the nine months that Cromwell spent in Ireland between 15 August 1649 and 26 May 1650 has re-examined the man and his place in our history. Micheál Ó Siochru's book of the same name, published by Faber and Faber of London, is a wonderfully researched and very illuminating study of the period. But whilst "*God's Executioner*" deals with Cromwell's invasion and the final defeat of the Irish, another earlier publication by Ó Siochru deals with the seven years leading up to Cromwell's arrival in 1649. First published in 1999 and now republished by Four Courts Press "**Confederate Ireland 1642-1649—A Constitutional and Political Analysis**" by Micheál Ó Siochru (ISBN 978-1-84682-149-3 295pp p/bk Price: €27.50 : Web Price: €24.75). This book chronicles the only period of sustained self government by the Catholic Irish until the establishment of the first Dáil on 21 January 1919. The confederacy based in Kilkenny City controlled most of the country and indeed, was very modern in its political framework.. Ó Siochru carefully

and methodically examines the period and especially, the workings of the general assembly of the confederacy. The members of the general assembly were very conscious of the precarious balancing act of appearing to be Catholics loyal to the crown and yet, mindful of the consequences of any allegations of treachery— forfeiture of lands, exile or worse. The confederacy was an uneasy alliance between the native Gaelic Irish and the "Old English" Catholics—the descendants of the Anglo-Norman planters in Ireland, many of which, had become increasingly Hibernicised over the previous four centuries. Though, united in religion, tension continuously surfaced on how to deal with London. The main issues underpinning the Confederacy's demands were religious freedom, security of land tenure, restoration of confiscated lands, a free parliament and non-interference by the parliament at Westminster. In short, equity with Scotland. Ó Siochru introduces the reader to the complex and shifting alliances between and within the two main groups, Gaelic Irish and "Old English" and explains how Rome and continental politics entered into the fractious set-up with disastrous consequences. The first six chapters deal chronologically with the events between October 1641 and December 1649 when, in total desperation, the Catholic bishops meeting in Clonmacnois called for a united opposition to the parliamentarians (Cromwell's forces), but with the fall of Kilkenny in March 1650 and followed by crushing defeats in

Munster and Ulster, the confederacy was doomed. The author's examination of the workings of the confederate government and the general assembly's consideration of constitutional matters, which appear to have been remarkably sophisticated by seventeenth standards, certainly contributes greatly to our understanding of this much neglected period of Irish history. The upheavals in Ireland during the 1640s, the author explains, were by no means a unique experience at a time of general crisis throughout the continent of Europe. He quotes Jeremiah Whittaker's Westminster sermon of January 1641 that 'these days are shaking and the shaking is universal: the Palatinate, Bohemia, Germania, Catalonia, Portugal, Ireland, England'. When Cromwell's terror came to an end around 20% of the Irish population were dead due to a combination of fighting, famine and disease. For the genealogist, Ó Siochru provides lists of the members of the general assembly and more importantly, a vivid account of one of the most turbulent periods that our ancestors had to endure. Through his meticulous research and expert evaluation of original documents, contemporary accounts and drawing upon some unpublished theses, Ó Siochru is certainly one of the most important post-revisionist historians in Ireland today. Without reading Ó Siochru's brilliant account of the period, no full appreciation of the political sophistication, reform mindedness and administrative competence of seventeenth century Confederate Ireland is possible. **MM**

GSI Annual Journal

At its December 2008 meeting, the Board of the Society was advised that there was a serious shortage of suitable articles received for publication in the Society's Annual Journal. Apparently calls for articles from members at home and abroad have been unsuccessful or have delivered very few contributions. This is a very serious set-back to the Society's publications programme, though, it seems that the Society is not alone with such problems. In an effort to attract new articles for publication in the GSI Annual Journal, the Board under *Res: 08/11/636* offers **one-year free membership** to persons undertaking an accredited genealogy course in exchange for the submission of a

suitable article for publication in the Society's Annual Journal. The Board adopted this initiative following a detailed examination of the Society's membership services by a Select Committee of the Board. Articles ideally should be of 1000 to 2000 words. They must not have been published elsewhere and must be original works by the author. The Board, as always, reserves the right to seek assurances on the source, ownership and originality of any article submitted under this initiative. Persons wishing to avail of membership of the Society under this initiative should contact the Society's Director of Membership Services, Ms. Sharon Bofin, by E-mail at sharonbofin@eircom.net

HOLYHEAD-DÚN LAOGHAIRE LINK

The Board appointed Pádraic Ingoldsby, National Projects Director, and Denis Ryan, Finance Director, to succeed the General Secretary as the Society's alternating delegates to the Link. The appointees will rotate in order to ensure that the Society is represented at each meeting of the Link Committee to be held during the coming year. The Society's existing delegate, David Paling, who is Irish Branch Treasurer of the Link will continue to be the members' delegate to the Link. This combination of Board and ordinary members representing the Society on such bodies dates back to 1992 and the GRO Users' Committee.

Society Publications on CD

The ever increasing costs of printing and postage both here in Ireland and in Great Britain has forced many family history societies to review their publication policies and programmes. Some have exited the publication arena completely which is regrettable though, nevertheless completely understandable as costs mount. Therefore, Board of this Society had some hard decisions to make on our own publication programme and it decided to make many of our publications available on CD. Thanks to the hard work of Barry O'Connor and Liam Mac

Alasdair, the Society's first publication on CD was launched last month. This new CD contains all three volumes of the **Memorial Inscriptions of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, Co. Dublin, Ireland – Vol. 1** includes the following graveyards:- Barrington's Burial Ground; Blackrock College; Dominican Convent, Dún Laoghaire; Old Glencullen; Kiltiernan Church of Ireland; Loughlinstown; Old Connaught; Rathmichael (Old Church); St. Brigid's Church of Ireland and Tully Graveyard. **Vol. 2** is a special publication on the Friends Burial Ground, Temple

Hill, Blackrock and **Vol. 3** contains the following graveyards: Carmelite Monastery; Carrickbrennan Cemetery; Kill of the Grange Cemetery and Sion Hill Cemetery. This CD is fully searchable and easy to use. Normally these three volumes would cost €7.00 each plus postage, however, this new CD has been launched at a **special introductory price** of just €15.00 including postage. To obtain a copy send a cheque for €15.00 (payable to the Society) to the address (Director of Finance) on the bottom of page 3 of this newsletter.

Clare Traditional Boats & Currachs

The first ever conference on traditional boats and currachs in Ireland was held in Ennis, County Clare, on Saturday, 6 December 2008. "Boats, Place, People" heard presentations from nationally renowned maritime experts. The event was organised by the Clare Heritage Section of Clare County Council, in association with the Heritage Council and commenced with a presentation on the findings of the Traditional Boats and Currachs Study. The study was undertaken in 2008 by **Darina Tully**, an expert in the areas of maritime collections, under the direction of the Clare Heritage Section and the Heritage Council. The pioneering project involved an audit and inventory of traditional boats and currachs in Co. Clare, and the establishment of a priority list for their future conservation. The study also examined the local variations in traditional boat and currach building, associated customs, and usage and typology. According to **Tomás Mac Conmara**, Project Manager, Clare Traditional Boats and Currachs Study: "Together with a tangible renewal of interest across Co. Clare, the publication of the Clare Traditional Boats and Currachs Study will help explain, in a Co. Clare context, the distribution, diversity and structural intricacies of Clare's boats and currachs, as well as contextualising their profound role in Clare's history and culture". Mac Conmara continued: "Although, the study placed an emphasis on the artefact, its greatest achievement will be to reveal the

human dimensions of currachs and boats. The boat remains a conduit for understanding far reaching cultural meanings, customs and traditions. Their preservation should be associated with the safeguarding of the communities that used them. It is hoped that this study will contribute in some way to the renewed interest in our enduring maritime tradition". **Richard Collins**, founder of the West Clare Currach Club and a member of the Clare Traditional Currachs and Boats Steering Group explained: "Through geographical proximity to the water, interaction with boats has been both a necessary and fundamental part of Clare life. Latterly, this relationship has been reinforced by a conscious effort of groups and individuals across the county to re-engage the people of Clare with their maritime heritage." The steering group assisted in identifying the artefacts in local areas throughout the county where local knowledge is so important. Darina Tully outlined the findings of the Traditional Boats and Currach Study. Darina has been researching and collecting data on traditional Boats in Ireland over the last two decades. Her work is a known quantity to the Heritage Council, having completed Heritage Council projects such as "Audit of Maritime Collections" (2005/2006) along with contributions to "The Future of Maritime and Inland Waterways Collections" (2006). **Ted Creedon**, a member of the Heritage Council and currently Chairman of the Heritage Coun-

cil's Standing Committee on Archaeology, officially launched the study. TG4 (Irish Language TV) presenter **Pádraig Ó Duinnín** and founder of Ireland's foremost maritime cultural and education centre 'Meitheal Mara', provided a presentation entitled "Muintir na Mara – The People of the Sea". Writer and broadcaster **Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh** presented a talk entitled "Traditional Boats of Ireland – the Clare dimension". Mac Cárthaigh is the editor of *Traditional Boats of Ireland* and is an Archivist-Collector in the UCD Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore and the National Folklore Collection. **Risteárd Ó Cróinín**, Architectural Conservation Officer with Clare County Council and **Flan Gibson** presented "Clare Maritime Placenames – Placing names from a boat". Founding member of the West Clare Currach Club, Richard Collins spoke about how the club has successfully revived an interest in currachs in Kilkee and the broader county. He initiated a Leader-funded building project to train local people to build currachs. **Mick Carrig** presented "Forth they go to rescue or to die" – The Rescue of the Leon XIII in 1907. The Principal of Quilty National School was a member of the LEON committee which organised the 100th anniversary of the historic rescue of the LEON XIII in 1907. For further information on this conference please contact: **Mr. Mark Dunphy**, Dunphy Public Relations, E-mail: media@dunphypr.com

Précis of the November Lecture

On Tuesday Nov. 11, 2008 the Society's Open Meeting heard a fascinating lecture by **Rebecca Hayes** on the **Grand Lodge of Ireland** and on the Archives of the Society of Freemasons as a genealogical resource. This PowerPoint presentation covered the history of Freemasonry in Ireland and its reputed origins which are steeped in Biblical history dating back to the construction of King Solomon's Temple. The myths surrounding Freemasonry and the operation of the Lodges were explored, including, religion and politics. But, in reality, the lecturer explained that her focus would be on the records of the Grand Lodge of Ireland and especially, the membership rolls. Membership of the Lodges around Ireland differed greatly depending on population groups and religious or political factors. Some of famous Irishmen, including, Daniel O'Connell (later resigned), Edmund Burke, Oscar Wilde and

the Duke of Wellington were members of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. For persons seeking information on ancestors who may have been Freemasons, the membership rolls can be consulted at the Lodge's headquarters in Dublin City. Further information on the Grand Lodge of Ireland can be found on the Grand Lodge's website: www.irish-freemasons.org

GS I LECTURE PROGRAMME

Tuesday Dec. 9th Ciara Kerrigan, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts, National Library of Ireland, Estate Records of the National Library. **Tuesday Jan. 13th 2009**—Eneclann on electronic published sources. Any comments on the lecture programme or suggestions for Guest Speakers to: Séamus Moriarty at e-mail:- Gazette@familyhistory.ie

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Membership of the Genealogical Society

Membership fee renewals fall due in January each year. The Board of the Society at its November 2008 meeting conducted the normal annual review of the **Membership Fee** structure and under **Res: 08/11/632** the Board adopted the following equalised Membership Package for 2009:- **Ireland & Overseas:** Offering ordinary membership of the Society, Membership Card, voting rights, use of the Society's Archive, monthly newsletter by mail, Annual 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 €40.00 per annum. Therefore, despite tighter economic conditions, there was no increase in the Membership Fee this year. Unlike many other similar organisations faced with the problem of rising costs of printing and postage etc., the Board decided to keep publishing the Society's journal but as an annual publication only. The Membership Fee is now in line

with similar organisations in Ireland. Another new feature introduced was the offer of one year free membership to persons undertaking accredited genealogy courses on the condition that they supply a suitable article for the Society's journal. Also persons under twenty-five years can avail of 50% reduction on the membership fee. Membership can be renewed on-line or, if you prefer, simply download the form and forward it with your remittance to the Society's Director of Finance, **Mr. Denis Ryan**, MGSI, 6, St. Thomas Mead, Mount Merrion, County Dublin, Ireland.

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www.familyhistory.ie/shop**DIARY DATES**

Tuesday Dec. 9th 2008 & Jan. 13th 2009

Evening Open MeetingDún Laoghaire College of Further
EducationCumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire
20.00hrs—22.00hrs

Wednesday Jan. 28th & Feb. 25th 2009

Morning Open MeetingWeir's, Lower George's Street, Dún
Laoghaire

10.30hrs—12.30hrs

**(NO MORNING MEETING IN
DECEMBER)**

Contribution €3.00 p.p.

(Coffee/Tea included at Morning Meetings)

NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

For the contents of the newsletter prior to July please see page 4 of the July 2008 issue.

July 2008: Public Ownership & Right of Access—A Fundamental Principle / New Irish Armiger Strikes Gold / Ireland and the Renaissance (review) / GSI Journal Published / New Ideas for the Gazette? / Limerick's Franciscans / Irish Army & Un Missions / GPO Easter 1916 / Local History Courses / June Lecture: Pat Lynch on the Royal British Legion in Ireland / Lecture Programme / Teachtaí Dála say Níl to Logoism / Newsletter Contents January to June 2008 / **Queries:** none

August 2008: An Gorta Mór—Annual Commemoration of the Great Famine / 1926 Census Campaign / Ulster-Scots Writing—An Anthology (review) / G & B Records Now in NY Public Library / A True Ranger—The Life and Many Lives of Major Robert Rogers / WWI Soldiers Honoured / Darine Vanston / Andrw McMaster / Seeking Joseph Read / July lecture: Cecile Chemin on the records of local authorities in Ireland / Lecture Programme / Access to Genealogical Records On-Line / An Daonchartlann / **Queries:** McMenamin; Cain; Cane; Bonneau; Ewing; Denend; Floyd.

September 2008: Television Programmes Boost Interest in Family History / Memorial Inscriptions on CD / Barack Obama's Irish Ancestry Traced by Eneclann / Revolutionary Lawyers (review) / Certificates and Diplomas in Genealogy / Old Age Pensions Act, 1908 / Adelaide Hospital / Fr. Seán Cassidy, RIP / August lecture: Bernadette Galloghly on the resources of Dublin City Public Libraries and Archives / Lecture Programme / An Garda Síochána and the Scot Medal (review) / An Daonchartlann / **Queries:** Toomey; Clancy; Carroll; O'Carroll; Clancy.

October 2008: Lest We Forget—What Do We Commemorate? / Irish America—Spoiled for Choice / Georgian Dublin (review) / What's in a Placename? / Late News: Sen. Labhras Ó Murchú and 1926 Census Campaign / Society Publications on CD / Remains Date to the Famine / Statue to Irish Balloonist / Protestant Missions in Connemara / World War 1 Soldiers Remembered / Artefacts Destroyed / Clock Gets Facelift / September lecture: John Hamrock on Roscommon genealogy / Lecture Programme / Members' Interests / Henry Matthews, RIP / A Biographical Dictionary of Irish Quakers (review) / An Daonchartlann (transfer of archival collections). **Queries:** none

November 2008: Amalgamation of Institutions—Good Decision—Flawed Motive / Arms from President Obama? / Medieval Ireland (review) / Donations to the Archive / President of the Society / Legislation—Statistics (Heritage Amendment) Bill & National Cultural Institutions (Amendment) Bill / Society Publications on CD / RMS Leinster Commemoration / 50th Anniversary of Air Crash / GAA Project Launched / October lecture: Rory McKenna on the history of the Martello Towers and of the Sea Fencibles / Members' Interests / Guide to Tracing Your Donegal Ancestors / Painters in Union—The Irish National Painters' & Decorators Union and its forerunners (review). **Queries:** none

Editor: I wish to express my sincerest thanks to Mr. James Scannell for his excellent contributions to this newsletter during the past year—these are very much appreciated.

Photographs & Photography in Irish Local History

(Maynooth Research Guides for Irish Local History)

"Photographs and Photography in Irish Local History" by **Liam Kelly**, published by Four Courts Press (ISBN 978-1-84682-126-4 128pp p/bk Price: €19.95). Published as part of the *Maynooth Research Guides for Local History* series, Liam Kelly brings us through the early years of the development of photography in Ireland and describes the various photographic processes in use over the past century and a half. Photography has a long history in Ireland back to the early 1840s and it is a surprisingly rich resource for researchers. However, much of our extant archival collections of photographs date from circa 1860 and more again from the 1880s onwards. Far from being a mere technical account of the development of photography, this book also looks at the lives and photographic interests of the main practitioners of the art in Ireland, some of whom, were pioneers in their field. Though, the equipment was expensive and the photographic development process difficult, it wasn't just the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and the emerging Irish mercantile class that had their photographs taken. In 1854 when Sir Walter Crofton was appointed chairman of the newly established Convict Prisons Board in Ireland, as part of his improvements, he introduced the process of photographing convicts. There is an exceptionally good collection of these photographs covering the period 1881-1927 held at the National Archives in Dublin. Kelly's biographies of the individual photographers like James Stack Lauder who changed his name to the "chic sounding" French name Lafayette to boost business and the famous William Mervyn Lawrence who gave us the acclaimed Lawrence Collection, make for interesting reading in themselves. The latter employed men like Robert French to travel around Ireland to take photographs of virtually every

town, village and scenic view in Ireland. The Lawrence Collection has approximately 40,000 glass negatives and 15,000 photographic prints and it is housed in the National Photographic Archive in Dublin. Another wonderful legacy of these pioneering photographers are the collections of "documentary photography" consisting of the everyday activities, in many cases, highlighting poverty and inequalities they saw in society. They also included the world of work, commerce and agriculture—a treasure trove of photographs for the historian and genealogist. Kelly provides details on the various archival collections including, subject matter, location, accessibility and period covered. He provides a listing of circa 211 collections. Given the importance of Kelly's book, it is unfortunate that its title may appear to restrict its scope of interest to the realm of local history. This is unfortunate because this book is really the story of photography in Ireland and should have a wider appeal. Indeed, in his final two chapters, Kelly deals with the vitally important process of reading photographs, examining the authenticity of the scene, where and when it was taken and by whom—all central to our understanding of the photographs and their meaning and context. He deals with using photographic evidence, for example, William McKinney's 1910 photograph of John Condy of Carrmoney, Co. Antrim, dressed formally standing against a background of a substantial house and yet, the photograph is more about John's new bicycle which he displays in the photograph. We cannot, Kelly tells us, draw any conclusions about the prevalence of bicycles, new or otherwise, in the area at this time—we need to question and explore the scene. There is so much more to photography and certainly this book by Liam Kelly is a wonderful place to start. **MM**

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

An editorial decision has been taken to cease publishing general research queries in the Gazette and to replace that section with one dealing with Members' Interests. Only new entries will be published and then "banked" on a database on the website. The type of information will include, **Surname, Forename, Dates, Occupation, Location** and the name, address and E-mail address of the Member concerned. The facility will be restricted to Members who may place as many entries as they wish on this database. The Gazette will "flag" new entries or any alterations to the database starting in January 2009 issue. Whilst, in future general research queries will not be published, consideration will be given to exceptional or topical research queries received. This may include queries regarding special historical or biographical research been undertaken for possible publication in the Society's Journal or elsewhere. Items for inclusion on the Members' Interest database should be sent by e-mail to GAZETTE@familyhistory.ie and include the details outlined above.

NOTA BENE:- Members' Interests are only published or placed on the database at the discretion of the editor and only where a mailing address and e-mail address are provided.