

Cumann Geinealais na hÉireann

## Ireland's Genealogical Gazette

*(incorporating "The Genie Gazette")*

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## On-Line Access to 1911 Census Returns An Immediate Success with the Public

The launch last month by the National Archives of its new on-line facility offering "free-for-view" access to the 1911 Census Returns is arguably the most significant development in Irish genealogy for decades. The project has initially made the returns for Dublin City and County available and it is hoped to have the rest of the country on-line next year. Undoubtedly, the popular fascination with this resource has been phenomenal providing a real window on the lives and times of our ancestors. As the resource is fully indexed and linked to the actual images of the original Census Returns, the handwriting and signatures of grandparents or great grandparents can clearly be seen. When complete the project will have both the 1901 and 1911 Census Returns for the entire island of Ireland available on-line and, in many cases, linked to digitised photographic images of the areas concerned. By providing this service as a "free for view" facility and hopefully, maintaining that policy into the future, the National Archives of Ireland has championed the principle of public ownership and right of access to our genealogical heritage. Until relatively recently this principle

was under attack on all fronts as vested interests and some government agencies sought to commercialise all access to such records. Back in 2000 a proposal to centralise all free publicly accessible genealogical resources in a "pay for view" facility was advocated by the Heritage Council and some vested interests. But thankfully this ludicrous plan for a "super" Heritage Centre did not find any support amongst the directors of the major repositories. The Minister of the day, Ms, Síle de Valera, TD, swiftly binned the proposal and rightly rebuked the Heritage Council in the process insisting it was not the report that she had commissioned. The time and public money wasted in the production of that report deprived the country of an opportunity and the resources upon which to develop a comprehensive plan for the delivery of genealogical services in Ireland. At the same time, the local Heritage Centres were in terminal decline. But instead of consolidating matters in the public interest by transferring the computerised records to the local Public Library Service, as long advocated by this Society, vested interests and parish-pump politics prevailed with predictably disas-

trous consequences for public access to these records. Free public access to these computerised parish records through the Public Library Service would have boosted interest amongst locals and tourists alike. Despite the fact that these records were compiled with public funds, there is seemingly a reluctance at Ministerial level to take decisive action on the matter to secure these computerised records for the public. The Director and staff at the National Archives have taken a bold decision on accessibility to the census records. Free public access to such records is an educational, cultural and social resource to build upon. It also greatly enhances our national tourism product by creating an instantly free accessibility to a unique awareness, appreciation and knowledge of ancestral links with Ireland fuelling an affinity with the nation and feeding a desire to visit the country itself. This very welcome on-line development has opened up immeasurable possibilities for the future. These should include the digitization and uploading of the microfilms of the Parish Registers held by the National Library of Ireland and indeed, the early release of the 1926 Census Returns.

## Genealogy & Heraldry Bill, 2008

As reported in the December 2007 issue, **Senator Alex White** will shortly publish the *Genealogy & Heraldry Bill, 2008* and enter the Bill on the Order Paper of Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate) for Wednesday January 30th 2008. Pressure of other business prevented the Bill from being published as planned in December before the Christmas recess. This Bill seeks to firmly establish an

Irish heraldic authority in primary legislation and contains many provisions to both expand and improve the delivery of heraldic and related services. Recipients of Grants of Arms since 1943 will have such finally protected in a new *Register of Arms*. It also provides a unique and imaginative facility to officially recognize our meritorious citizens which is long overdue. The Bill provides for

coordinated planning in the delivery of genealogical services and the establishment of a *National Inventory of Genealogical Records*. The Bill has a facility for the registration of flags and emblems which would be of considerable benefit to sports clubs and other institutions. In short this new Bill provides Ireland with a model for other republics with a rich heraldic tradition to follow.

# North Dublin Vestry Records

*"The Vestry Records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St. Margaret's, Artane and the Ward 1657-1758"* editor Maighr ad N  Mhurchada. ISBN 978-1-84682-052-6 price  55.00. With the vestry books for the parish of St. John the Evangelist, Dublin and the parishes of St. Catherine and St. James, Dublin previously published by Four Courts Press in conjunction with the Church of Ireland's Representative Church Body Library, this third volume of vestry records is, once again, an immensely important contribution to the study of genealogy and social history. The area concerned is just north of the City of Dublin and stretching over three baronies, Nethercross, Coolock and Castleknock. These Protestant parishes were linked from pre-reformation times, two are dedicated to Irish saints, Finglas (St. Canice) and the Ward (St. Brigid) with Artane dedicated to a saint of the universal church (St. Nicholas). Vestry books are basically the minute books of the parish containing details of the day-to-day workings of the parish whether religious or secular. Subjects covered include the repair and maintenance of church buildings, the provision of plate, books and necessities for church services and, of course, the parish accounts. The parish had to collect the parish cess (tax) and to oversee and audit the disbursements of this money. These payments included to the parish clerk and other servants. From a genealogical point of view, the vestry books

contain the names of parishioners, whether actively involved in the administration of the parish or indeed, in receipt of alms and assistance from the parish. The local education needs were also met from the vestry funds which included the employment of schoolmasters etc. The names of the poor in receipt of assistance are of particular interest as they may be otherwise unrecorded elsewhere. Though, the majority of the surnames recorded are of English origin, native Irish surnames, though few, appear at all levels of parish society from curates and vicars to the assisted poor. The various duties of the parish in respect of the local public infrastructure is particularly interesting as mainly Catholics were employed as overseers of the highways. Evidently the collection of the cess payable by all in the parish irrespective of religious affiliation was a particularly unpleasant task as, once again, mainly members of the prominent Catholic were appointed for that purpose. Since no records survive for the baptisms etc of the Catholics in this area for this period, the vestry books recording the names of individual Catholics is immensely important. An interesting entry for June 13th 1710 deals with the allocation of the seats in the church at Finglas giving the seating arrangement for the local families, no doubt indicating their social standing in the parish. Some burials, marriages and baptisms for the same parish for the period 1664 to 1668 are recorded in the

vestry book. The provision of an appendix detailing statistical information on population and housing in each of the united parishes makes for a valuable and an interesting social history resource. The importance of these publications by Four Courts Press to the study of Irish local history, genealogy and social history cannot be underestimated. Indeed, arguably no other Irish publishing house has contributed more over the years to these areas of study than Four Courts Press. For further information see [www.fourcourtspress.ie](http://www.fourcourtspress.ie)

## REVISED & REPUBLISHED

Mr. Tim Carey, Heritage Officer of D n Laoghaire Rathdown County Council has revised, enlarged and republished his extremely popular *"In Honour & Memory—Memorials of D n Laoghaire Rathdown"*. Originally published with the assistance of the Heritage Council and amazingly distributed free of charge by D n Laoghaire Rathdown County Council copies quickly ran out. Calls for republication were loud and wide and thankfully, Tim Carey and the County Council agreed to publish a revised edition. It has been described as an on-going labour of love to record these memorials and no doubt, a third edition cannot be ruled out. Copies are now available from most good bookshops in D n Laoghaire Rathdown and from the County Council offices. Priced  10.00 contact Tim Carey at [tcarey@dlrccoco.ie](mailto:tcarey@dlrccoco.ie) for postage rates.

## "Love Tokens"

On a recent visit to the United States I encountered some coins which sometimes are referred to as "Love Tokens". The name derives from the fact that they were usually given as a "love piece" but sometimes they were intriguingly engraved for other less romantic reasons also. These included the recording of events such as the transportation of a criminal to the colonies in the Americas—before that nefarious penal traffic was closed off to the British by American independence. Never mind, Australia was set to benefit from this minor inconvenient setback. Some of the pieces depict scenes on-board the ships and others record elements of family history. The three pieces that I came

across in the States included a copper halfpenny with the engraving *Charlotte Mills York Dec. 18th 1788* on one side with the letters "CM" on the other; an early 1800s George III Irish bank token with the engraving *From Miss Mary Aiken to Miss E Angus / B. Shane* and with the touching words *"Dimna Forget"* on a separate line; and the last piece was a William III British crown with the names of the husband and wife *John Lawson & Christian Thomson married 13th October 1797* and remarkably, also engraved are the names of *Children Born* to this couple with their dates of birth. Their names were *James, 9th Nov. 1798; Helen, 9th Apr. 1800; John, 15th Dec. 1801; Janet, 6th May*

*1803; John, 12th Dec. 1804; Janet, 29th Apr. 1807; Alex, 30th June 1809; Alex Thomson, 28th May 1811; Christina, 30th Apr. 1812; John, 18th Jan. 1814; Christina, 18th Jan. 1816; Eliz, 10th Dec. 1818.* Then to my surprise, on the reverse engraved we find *Children Dead* including their names and the dates of death. These are: *John, 23rd Apr. 1802; Janet, 1st June 1804; Alex, 26th Sept. 1810; Christina, 3rd Apr. 1813; Alex Thomson, 7th Febr. 1814.* This is certainly a remarkable piece which could possibly date from the 1830s or later and was probably a much cherished token of one of the surviving children. **David Paling** (contact: e-mail: [david.paling@hotmail.com](mailto:david.paling@hotmail.com))

## Support for County Placenames Policy

At the December 5th meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) on Arts, Community Development and Amenities of D n Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, a proposal by this Society for the adoption of a County Placenames Policy was discussed in detail. Committee members, both County Councillors and Sectoral Representatives, strongly supported the call for the adoption of a County Placenames Policy to protect the placename heritage of the county. The six page *Draft County Placenames Policy* included the definition of placenames as

part of the intangible cultural heritage of our nation and proposed a number of measures to protect and promote this important aspect of our heritage. The document sought to integrate the policy with the objectives of the County Heritage Plan prepared by **Mr. Tim Carey**, Heritage Officer.. During the presentation of the document several references were made to the many incorrect and totally absurd Irish language versions of existing placenames including, An Naig n (Sallynoggin), and C b n tS ile (Cabinteely) both of which are basically non-

sensical bureaucratic fabrications with little or no regard to topography, history or linguistics. The quality of Irish language signage was also considered by the SPC which noted that the Council was currently conducting a field survey. The issue of naming new developments or roadways was also covered by the document and concern was expressed that old placenames could be lost in the process. The SPC adopted a proposal agreeing to recommend to Council that a Placenames Policy be adopted and sent the document to the Legal Dept. for examination.

# James Scannell Reports...

## REGISTRY OF DEEDS

The Registry of Deeds first opened in 1708 and is one of the oldest continuous operating offices in the State. Established under the *Registry of Deeds Act, 1707*, and later moving to King's Inn Quay in 1805, it is now located in Henrietta Street, Dublin. The 1707 Act initially provided a system for the legal registration of title to land confiscated earlier during the Williamite Plantations. The Registry contains the history and provenance of all deeds registered from 1708. Currently some five million Memorials are filed. These Memorials are an invaluable source for genealogical research, especially for the 18th and 19th centuries. Figures in these Memorials include Jonathan Swift, Wolfe Tone, Henry Grattan, Daniel O'Connell, William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, William Cosgrave and Éamon de Valera. The Registry of Deeds building is the third and last of James Gandon's major public buildings and the only one not to have been destroyed and re-constructed.

## JAMES FINTAN LALOR

2007 was the bicentenary of the birth of James Fintan Lalor (1807-1849) an inspired political writer who fostered a renewed sense of ownership of the land of Ireland in the minds of the dispossessed peasants and their leaders. He had a primary influence on Pearse, Davitt and Connolly. Through his uncompromising

stance on land ownership many view him as an extreme nationalist. Nevertheless he went against the political mainstream and left his mark on Irish history. He died in Dublin's Newgate Prison in 1849.

## NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Celebrating its 150th Anniversary in 2007, the Natural History Museum in Dublin has been closed since last August when a stairway collapsed. It is unlikely to re-open to the public until 2010. Built in 1856 as the Museum of the Royal Dublin Society it opened to the public in 1857. It's a zoological museum containing diverse collections of over 10,000 animals and it is also a major scientific institution holding significant research collections from both Irish and international scientists. The museum moved to the present building in 1857 and became part of the National Museum of Ireland in 1877.

## CHARLES WESLEY

2007 was the 300th anniversary of the birth of Charles Wesley, younger brother of John Wesley, founder of Methodism, in Lincolnshire, England in 1707. While John Wesley focused on preaching, Charles Wesley was one of the most notable English hymn writers composing over 6,500 hymns. Some of Charles Wesley's best known hymns are found in most contemporary hymn books used for worship in Christian

Churches around the world. Although he was very close to his brother, Charles and John did not always agree on questions of faith. Charles strongly opposed breaking with the Church of England into which the two brothers had been ordained. The devotional nature of his compositions were more than just a testament to his faith and are an enduring musical and spiritual legacy. On Tuesday December 16th 2007 Rev. Dudley Levistone Cooney, President of the Old Dublin Society and a retired Methodist Minister, presented a special lecture on "*The Underestimated Mr. Wesley - Charles Wesley 1707 - 1788*" hosted by the Dublin City Library and Archive. **EDITOR:** A little known fact about Charles Wesley is that his distant relative Garret Weisley of Dangan Castle, Co. Meath wrote to Charles's father offering to provide for the boy's education and to adopt him as heir to his estate. Garret, a Protestant, had secured title to his lands in 1702/3 when other relatives Christopher, Joseph, James and William Weisley (Wisely), as Catholics, lost their lands in Co. Kildare under the Williamite confiscations. However, Charles Wesley, it appears, was unwilling to come to Ireland so when Garret Wesley (Weisley) died on September 23rd 1728, a distant cousin, Richard Colley (Cowley) of Castlecarbury, Co. Kildare inherited the Weisley estates and took the surname. This Richard Colley's grandson was Arthur Wesley (Wellesley), Duke of Wellington. *MM*

## Précis of the December Lecture

On Tuesday December 11<sup>th</sup> Steve Butler an Elder of the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and his wife presented an overview of the genealogical records of the Church of Latter Day Saints. This overview went further than just looking at the microform collections available through the various Family History Centres throughout the world. Steve provided an insight into the reasons and philosophy behind the LDS Church's interest in genealogy. He briefly brought us through the origins of his Church and especially, though the history of the Genealogical Society of Utah. His presentation showed the development of this society and its vast collections, including the very secure

vaults in which the primary resources are stored. Steve very ably fielded questions on all aspects of the work of the GSU and members were genuinely impressed by his very affable, knowledgeable and sometimes necessarily candid responses. Steve also based much of his explanations on his own research into his Irish origins by taking us through the resources of the GSU which are available at the LDS centres around the world, including Dublin, Cork and Belfast. In thanking Steve and his wife, the coordinator of the Guest Speaker Programme Séamus Moriarty, MGSJ explained that he is currently arranging the speakers for the coming year and hopes to focus on the primary sources.

## LECTURE PROGRAMME

**Tuesday 8th Jan.** Padraic Gallagher, Valuation Office Records; **Tuesday 12th Feb.** Noelle Dowling, Dublin Diocesan Archives; **Tuesday 11th Mar.** John Colgan, Forensic Genealogy, Origin of Family Names; **Tuesday 8th Apr.** Frank Pelly, Records of the Commissioners for Irish Lights; **Tuesday 15th May.** Patricia Boyd, Registry of Deeds. All meetings are at 20.00hrs at the Dún Laoghaire College for Further Education, Cumberland St., Dún Laoghaire. Buses no. 7, 46A & 75, DART, Salthill & Monkstown Station. Any suggestions or comments on this programme, please contact Séamus Moriarty by e-mail at [Gazette@familyhistory.ie](mailto:Gazette@familyhistory.ie)

## Membership Subscriptions Now Due

Membership fee renewals fall due in January each year. The Board of the Society at its November 2007 meeting conducted the normal annual review of the **Membership Fee** structure and under **Res: 07/11/573** the Board adopted the following equalised Membership Package for 2008:- **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. The modest increase in the Membership Fee, which hadn't changed since 2004, was unavoidable as costs continued to rise sharply. The production of a biannual Journal became prohibitive when printing and postage costs eroded any savings that were to accrue in the change from a quarterly journal. Unlike many other similar organi-

sations faced with the same problem, 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. However, in many respects our Membership Package, offers considerably better value for money. Remember, you can download the **Membership Renewal Form** from the Society's website [www.familyhistory.ie](http://www.familyhistory.ie) and forward it with your remittance to the Society's Hon. Treasurer, **Mr. Denis Ryan, MGSJ**, 6, St. Thomas Mead, Mount Merrion, County Dublin, Ireland.

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

Tuesday Jan. 8th &amp; Feb. 12th 2008

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

Wednesday Jan. 23rd &amp; Feb. 27th 2008

**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**

**Denny McMahon**, 914 Belmont Ave., North Vancouver, BC, Canada, V7R 1J8 E-mail: dennymcmahon@shaw.ca Wrote:- Seeking info. on my great grandfather Francis **McMahon**, born in Co. Dublin c.1843 and was the cousin of Michael **Connolly**, the musical director of the Theatre Royal in Dublin in 1901. Francis was an actor and musician and performed throughout the UK in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His sister Ester McMahon was born around 1835 in Cabinteely in County Dublin. Her father Henry McMahon was a coach maker for the gentry working for Charles Bianconi.

**Arthur Gans**, E1391 Gurholt, Scandinavia, Wisconsin, 54977 USA. E-mail: nagamon@execpc.com Wrote:- Seeking info. on Francis **McCready**. Born c. 1819 in Ireland moved to Northumberland, ENG. Wife Sara born in Alwork, Northumberland, 1921. Children: Francis 1850, Edward 1854, George 1856, Patrick 1860, and Elizabeth 1863 all in Durham, Sunderland, England. George's daughter, Sarah Elizabeth, was my Grandmother born in 1877.

**Patricia Rush Gilbert**, 52167, Worthington Lane., Chesterfield, MI 48051 U.S.A E-mail: familyseeker@aol.com Wrote:- Searching in Bryansford, Co. Down, for info. of a possible marriage of John **Rush** to Susan **Cummings** and their children Mary Rush born in County Down c. 1839 and son Peter Rush born in Co. Down c.1841.

**Michael Sullivan**, 8495 Church Road, Grosse Ile, MI, 48138, USA E-mail: msullivan6@mac.com Wrote:- Seeking info. on **Sullivan** great uncles and aunts. Patrick (1860), Mary (1863), James (1869), Martin (1861) and Anne (1873). They were all born in Cloonlaheen East, Kilmurry, Ibrickane, Co. Clare. Their parents were Laurence Sullivan (died 1897) and Margaret **White** married in the parish of Miltown Malbay 7th March 1859.

**Migs Eder**, 384 Keyes Rd, New Brighton, Christchurch, New Zealand E-mail migseeder@clear.net.nz Wrote seeking info. on Winifred Mary Minnie **Callaghan** born c. 1836, Famine Orphan of Dublin Workhouse, parents dead (William and Mary), was shipped to Australia in 1850 on the *Maria*.

**Ash McKnight**, 329 Main Street, Sussex, New Brunswick, E4E 1R8, Canada E-mail: as373795@dal.ca Wrote: Seeking info. on William **McKnight**, b. 1801 married Margaret, b. 1799 both from Co. Waterford. 4 children Ireland and 2 in Canada. I am descended from their son George McKnight (1831-1903) married Elizabeth **Patterson** (1835-1932) and George's son Charles E McKnight (1874-1950) married to Laura **Anderson** (1885-1918). Their son, Thaddeus (Ted) Phillip McKnight (1909-1990) was my grandfather.

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

**“Tracing Your IRISH Family History”***New Collins Publication by Anthony Adolph*

Occasionally new books on the subject of tracing your Irish ancestry appear from publishers at home and overseas, but few are genuinely aimed at the widest possible popular international market. With a foreword by Irish radio and TV personality Ryan Tubridy this new book by Anthony Adolph published by Collins of London is certainly designed to meet the needs of an international readership in the age of the Internet. Its layout is cleverly designed to capture the on-line experience with windows and textboxes and yet, all in the print format so familiar to us all. Its illustrations, photographs and diagrams are wonderfully presented in a style that would normally grace an expensive full colour catalogue. All this is quite surprising considering the cover price for this hardback is just Stg£17.99 from www.collins.co.uk But what of the actual information on the subject itself? Well, given the target readership for this book, its layout and content does not follow the more specific county by county resource information, but yet deals with the subject comprehensively giving a flavour of the many aspects of genealogical research. Whether you're based in any part of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States or Argentina, the book aims to provide information on research avenues back to Ireland. At each stage, websites and further reading material are suggested to provide more detailed information on

sources and historical topics of interest. After describing the Irish connections with each of the main areas of emigration and following by a brief but informative chapter introducing Ireland from a genealogical point of view, the reader is brought through each of the primary sources with a chapter devoted to each. Again each is wonderfully illustrated and the author's style is flowing direct and immensely informative. He avoids burdening the reader with, at this stage, needless minutia, however, he provides information on where to find such. Besides dealing with the major sources, in Chapter 17 he provides a well presented “dictionary” of Irish sources, each in a very readable manner. We in Ireland often underestimate the fascination that others, especially our Diaspora, have with Irish names and the origins of our surnames. The author caters for this interest by explaining the nature of these names, their construction, history and meaning. Dealing with the more ancient recorded pedigrees, the author takes the reader through the manuscript sources and provides details on the published sources. The illustration of the Uí Néill pedigree in the typical family history computer program format is, once again, ensuring accessibility and clarity for the reader. The format is again employed in Chapter 21 to explain the mythical connections Irish Septs have claimed to Milesius and his sons. The chapter on heraldry again deals very

well with a subject that is often seen as inaccessibly stuffy and arcane. He even mentions the *Genealogy & Heraldry Bill* and the issue of “Emeritus Arms”. Ancient Irish roots and the emerging use of DNA is also covered with reference to current studies undertaken at Trinity College Dublin. He deals with the modern Gaelic chieftains and doesn't, to his credit, shy away from the MacCarthy Mór scandal. Generally in dealing with the sensitivities of Irish history and identity the author is carefully sympathetic and in some ways, emotionally connected with our turbulent past of invasions, war, dispossession and famine. However, it is unfortunate that the nomenclature employed for the State and the neighbouring island, both geographically and politically, is disappointingly inaccurate. For example, he has the Irish Free State appointing the first Chief Herald six years after that state ceased to exist. He uses terms such as Éire, mainland Britain, British Empire etc instead of Ireland, Great Britain and Ireland left the British Commonwealth in 1949 not the British Empire. But these issues do not take away from this very well researched and wonderfully produced book and, indeed, the format employed for the delivery of the information will greatly influence future publications on the topic. All in all, Anthony Adolph has produced a very enjoyable, informative and accessible read for anyone embarking on the roots quest.