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GENEALOGY
HERALDRY
VEXILLOLOGY
SOCIAL HISTORY
Heritage Matters
Book Reviews
Open Meetings
News & Queries

CONTENTS

<i>Big Houses and Landed Estates of Ireland</i>	2
<i>RMS Lusitania Remembered</i>	2
<i>Scottish Ire at Heraldry on UK Coins</i>	2
<i>James Scannell Reports...</i>	3
<i>Précis of the May Lecture</i>	3
<i>Diary Dates, Board News & Queries</i>	4
<i>Irish Airman's Remains Recovered</i>	4

Special Heritage Status for the 1926 Census Returns?

The 1911 census returns are currently being digitised and made freely available on the internet by the National Archives. Indeed, the public interest in this research facility has been nothing short of phenomenal. The 1901 and 1911 census returns have been open for public research for over forty years. However, census returns taken since independence are closed for 100 years by Section 35 of the *Statistics Act, 1993*. At the time of the passing of *Statistics Bill* through Seanad Éireann in 1993, this Society urged Senators to reduce the closure period to between 50 and 70 years. The importance of census returns to genealogy was recognised by the then Minister of State, Mr. Noel Dempsey, TD, when he introduced the *Statistics Bill* in Seanad Éireann on June 17th 1993, he said of the census returns "they provide an invaluable source of information for genealogical purposes, and many people call into the archives every day to find out more about their ancestors". In his reply Senator Maurice Manning, who agreed to support the amendment proposed by the Genealogical Society, argued that "at present Cabinet papers are made available after 30 years and they

frequently contain sensitive material which can make or break reputations, and provide a fuller picture of how Government operated on our behalf at that time. The data made available under a 50 or 60 year rule would largely be used by bona fide scholars and researchers". Senator Manning put down an amendment at the Committee Stage reducing the period of closure to 50 years however this amendment was withdrawn at the request of the Minister who would consider a 70 year closure period. Unfortunately the amendment was not pressed and the Bill finally passed all stages on July 7th 1993. This Society has campaigned ever since for a reversal of this 100 year rule. The period between the 1911 and 1926 was arguably the most turbulent period in modern Irish history. It included World War 1 which cost the lives of around 49,000 Irishmen and the Easter Rising in 1916 followed by the General Election in 1918 and the establishment of the First Dáil in 1919. The declaration of independence by the first Dáil on January 21st 1919, a date peculiarly not officially marked in Ireland, was followed by the War of Independence until a truce was declared in 1921. After difficult

negotiations a Treaty with Great Britain was signed in 1921 which established the Irish Free State in 1922, only to be followed by a bitter Civil War which ended in 1924. Four years after its establishment, the new Irish Free State held its first census in 1926 at the height of economic depression and emigration. Indeed, this 100 year closure is in stark contrast with other western democracies, except the UK. In the US, for example, the census returns for 1930 are available on-line. A Draft Bill was presented by this Society to Senators and it is currently under consideration with a view to publication. Whilst keeping the 100 year rule for all other census returns, the Draft Bill seeks to create an exception for the 1926 census by affording it a "special heritage status" by amending the 1993 Act. The huge interest that such a measure would have amongst our Diaspora would be welcomed by many sectors in the economy, not least, the tourism industry. The release of the 1926 Census Returns would be an enormously significant contribution to our understanding, knowledge and appreciation of the early years of the independence of our State and its people, our ancestors.

Sixteen Year Closure Ends A Victory for Common Sense

The denial of public access to the microfilms of the parish registers for the dioceses of Cashel & Emly and only very limited access to those of Cloyne and Kerry was widely criticized. Generally viewed as backward and wholly unjustified, the closure for Cashel & Emly lasted sixteen years. The recent announcement by the National Library that these records are now open for research was

widely greeted as a victory for common sense. The closure should not have happened in the first place and hopefully lessons have been learned in the interim. Public access to these microfilms of held by the National Library should be seen as a right and not a concession. The various reported reasons behind these closures remain controversial, although, they have been vigorously chal-

lenged by many over the years. This sixteen year closure was totally at variance with this Society's long-held principle of public ownership and right of access to our heritage, including the genealogical heritage contained in parish registers. Any future attempt at the closure of access to these records should be greeted with a firm and swift refusal by the Board of the National Library.

The Big Houses and Landed Estates of Ireland

A Research Guide

"The Big Houses and Landed Estates of Ireland—A Research Guide" by **Terence Dooley** ISBN 978-1-84682-039-4 (pbk) €14.95 published by Four Courts Press (www.fourcourtspress.ie) is a wonderful journey into the world, often described as the *"Irish Raj"* - the British and Anglo-Irish ascendancy class in Ireland. It was an Ireland that began to fall apart after the Great Famine to finally disappear during the latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century due to land reform. Ireland within a relatively short time changed from a land of large estates with tenant farmers to the country of owner-occupier farmers we know today. Terence Dooley brings us through the development of the landed estate from the Cromwellian and Williamite confiscations of Catholic lands and their distribution to British and protestant supporters of their wars in Ireland. Irish Catholics, both native Gaelic Irish and the descendants of the "Old English" or Anglo-Norman families were systematically dispossessed during the latter half of the seventeenth century and by 1780, by which time the mass plantation had long come to an end, the Catholics' share of the land ownership had fallen to 5%. Legislation enacted in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries sought to keep the overwhelming majority of the population in perpetual servitude and poverty. More commonly referred to as the Penal Laws, they were especially effective when it came to land ownership and inheri-

tance. By 1800 nearly one third of landlords owing estates in Ireland were absentee, however, Dooley correctly makes the point that absenteeism did not always go hand-in-hand with poor estate management. He explains that the Great Famine alone was not responsible for the bankruptcy of many landed estates nine hundred estates in 1845 with a combined annual rental of £750,000 were in the Court of Chancery. He covers the period immediately before the Great Famine in a manner that perfectly sets the scene for the almost total demise of the landed estates by the turn of the twentieth century. The Great Famine, the Land War and the direct, albeit belated, significant intervention by the British parliament finally brought an end to a system that had lasted for barely two hundred years. Dooley deals, in chapter two, with the various sources available for the study of these estates and describes each in detail, some well known and others less so. In chapter three, Dooley explores the world of the "Irish Big House" - the homes of the estate owners. In the next chapter he outlines the sources available for the study of the "Irish Big House" and this is of exception interest to genealogists as often, not only the names of the landlords are found, but also of their tenants and servants. He outlines the type of information to be found in each of the sources and sometimes, cautions on the drawbacks. In his excellently presented work, Dooley, never ceases to surprise with information on a

wide range of associated subjects such as architecture, garden design and even the introduction of that famous escapee of those gardens, the rhododendron much in evidence throughout the country today. The "Irish Big House" in its heyday of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a conspicuous and opulent patron of the fine arts and even Irish courtly music. From an interesting 1848 quote from D. Owen-Madden in the concluding chapter Dooley points out the nature of difficulties he encountered in compiling this guide—"there has never existed a taste in Ireland for preserving papers. In this respect our Anglo-Irish nobility differ very much from the peers of England and Scotland. I was once told by a living distinguished peer, the representative of an Elizabethan family, the he remembered a room full of family papers at his grandfather's seat. Among them were the correspondence and letters of a celebrated Irish lawyer of the seventeenth century, one of the ancestors of the family, and very eminent in history. 'But', said the Lord- 'my brother and I made kites of them. I perfectly well remember that when we were schoolboys we tore up the judge's letters'. Similar instances of destruction could be told. This paucity of family papers is a great loss to the historian". Dooley has to be commended for presenting this subject in a clearly accessible and dispassionate manner. It's an exceptionally useful reference book for the genealogist and local historian alike. MM

RMS Lusitania Remembered

On Monday May 5th 2008 the sinking of the *RMS Lusitania* on 7th May 1915, 10 miles off the Old Head of Kinsale, while sailing for Cobh, with the loss of 1198 passengers and crew was commemorated in Cobh, Co. Cork, with prayers music and the laying of wreaths. Formerly known as Queenstown, Cobh was the port of call near Cork City passengers sailing on transatlantic liners. The commemoration ceremony was organised by Cobh Tourism and involved wreath laying ceremonies at the Lusitania Peace Memorial which was erected in 1995 at the Old Head of Kinsale to mark the 80th Anniversary of this great tragedy, and at the Old Church graveyard in Cobh which holds

the remains of 193 passengers, 45 of whom were never identified and whose coffins were merely marked with a number. The St. Colman's Pipe Band provided music for the ceremonies. The parade was led by the Organisation of Irish National Ex-Servicemen and representatives of the (British) Royal Navy Association. Speaking after the ceremonies, **Hendrick Verwey**, Chairman of Cobh Tourism said that the event was a fitting memorial to all those who lost their lives on the voyage. 93-year old British woman **Audrey Lawson-Johnston** is the last living survivor of this tragedy who was a baby when this liner was torpedoed by a German submarine. Mrs. Lawson-Johnston's

two sisters were lost though her parents and brother survived. Her nanny was drowned but not before she grabbed Audrey from her cot and placed her in a lifeboat which saved her life. Being saved by a lifeboat left an indelible impression on both Audrey and her mother, Amy Lea Pearl, who both went on to devote a great amount of time and money to the R.N.L.I. In 2004 Mrs. Lawson-Johnston raised Stg£26,000 for a new lifeboat stationed at Newquay. In April the other living survivor, **Mrs. Barbara McDermott**, of Connecticut died. As Barbara Anderson, she was a month short of her third birthday and traveling with her mother when the German torpedo struck. James Scannell

Scottish Ire at Heraldry on UK Coins

The new coins to circulate in the UK appear to have stirred up some controversy in Scotland according to well known numismatist and Society member, **David Paling**. Referring to the piece published in the April 2008 issue of this newsletter, he told the Gazette that it had been pointed out to the Royal Mint that it was the English Royal Arms that featured on the new coinage. The English Royal Arms differ from those used in Scotland. The Scottish Royal Arms show the lion of Scotland in the first and fourth quarters of the shield, with those of Eng-

land in the second and the harp of Ireland in the third. Irrespective of the inappropriateness of the continued inclusion of the Arms of Ireland on both versions of the Royal Arms, the Scots are now insisting that Royal Mint should produce a Scottish version of the coins for circulation in Scotland. According to Mr. Paling, between 1937 and 1990 Scottish coins freely circulated in England without controversy. Perhaps, he said, if Scotland gains independence it will have the chance to use its own heraldry on its coins, possibly even the Euro!!.

ANTHONY P. QUINN, RIP

The news of the death recently of onetime member of this Society, **Tony Quinn**, was greeted with great sadness by our members. Tony was well known for his interest in genealogy and in particular, his exceptional knowledge of Irish police history. Tony, was described in an obituary published in *The Irish Times* of June 2nd 2008 as a "writer, barrister and credit union activist". He wrote extensively on many subjects, including numerous letters to the Editor of *The Irish Times* on a range of subjects. He was a fluent Irish speaker and a member of the Executive of the Irish Writers' Union. Tony who was 75 years of age is survived by his wife, Ann, four children and his four grandchildren. RIP

James Scannell Reports...

ANNUAL FAMINE MEMORIAL DAY

The Minister for Community and Gaeltacht Affairs, **Mr. Éamon Ó Cuív, TD** announced during May that the Government is now in the process of setting up an expert group which will decide on the best way to organise the official Famine Memorial Day. The establishment of the Famine Memorial Day has been lobbied for five years by the Dublin based Committee for the Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims. A spokesperson for the Committee said that this announcement was a great day for the victims of the Famine and generations of Irish emigrants who will finally receive the respect they deserve.

PRESERVING THE CURRACH

Clare County Council's Heritage Section has embarked on an audit of currachs, the traditional wooden framed canvas covered boats associated with the west coast. Experts also want to establish a priority list of these boats that require urgent conservation in order to

keep them in good condition. The Clare Traditional Boat and Currach Project 2008 has a budget of €14000 and the audit will also examine local variations in traditional boat and currach as well as regional customs and uses. A spokesperson said that the ultimate aim of the project is to generate an increased awareness of boats and currachs and general traditional boat building in Clare. Currachs were used for sea fishing or transport along rivers and inlets along the west coast. It is claimed that St. Brendan the Navigator made the first transatlantic crossing in a currach in the 6th century.

KILKENNY COLLEGE

Kilkenny College has commissioned a history, to be published in 2009, of the college and the schools with which it amalgamated - The Pollock School and Collegiate School, Celbridge and is current looking for papers, photographs and other memorabilia which can be lent or donated to the newly established archives in Kilkenny College. All inquires / request for further information to **Philip Gray**, Headmas-

ter, Kilkenny College, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny.

IRELAND'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER.

The National Library of Ireland has purchased fifty six editions of the Limerick Chronicle newspaper which was published between 1783 and 1827 and are currently being repaired and preserved before they will go on public display. According to National Library of Ireland spokesperson this acquisition has further expanded the library's holdings and provides additional evidence of Irish print culture in the 18th century. Other copies of this newspaper within their collection date back to 1771. The editions were purchased by **Patsy Peril**, a fisherman and environmentalist from Coonagh, Co. Limerick who accepted a nominal amount from the National Library despite the offer of substantial sums from overseas buyers. The Glucksman Library at the University of Limerick also expressed interest in acquiring these fifty six volumes having acquired the earliest copies of this newspaper last year.

Précis of the May Lecture

On Tuesday 15th May, Patricia Boyd, **Registry of Deeds**, delivered an illustrated lecture on the records of the Registry of Deeds and the genealogist. The Registry of Deeds was established by the old Irish Parliament in 1707 to effectively "rubber stamp" the often illegal confiscations of the land of the native Irish during the 17th century. It provided a means of registering ownership of the lands by the occupiers and thereby establishing legal title. Over its three hundred year history, the Registry has amassed an invaluable resource for the study of land ownership and, of course, the persons associated with each transaction or event registered. For further information see www.landregistry.ie

GSI LECTURE PROGRAMME

The Society's lecture programme for the rest of the year is as follows:- **Tuesday June 10th** Pat Lynch on the Royal British Legion, People, Places and Politics; **Tuesday July 8th** Cecile Chemin, Archivist, Wicklow County Council, local authority archives as a resource for the genealogist; **Tuesday Aug. 8th** Bernadette Galloghly, Senior Librarian, Dublin City Public Libraries, Pearse St. on the new genealogy resources at Dublin City Libraries; databases of Dublin Parish Registers, City Councillors and Memorial Plaque; **Tuesday Sept. 9th** John Hamrock, MGSI, a county's resources for fam-

ily history research: the Roscommon experience; **Tuesday Oct. 14th** Rory McKenna, Martello Towers in Ireland; **Tuesday Nov. 11th** the Society will host a speaker from the Grand Lodge of Ireland. (name to be confirmed) topic:- the Archives of the Society of Freemasons as a genealogical resource. **Tuesday Dec. 9th** Ciara Kerrigan, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts, National Library of Ireland, Estate Records of the National Library. All meetings are held at the **Dún Laoghaire College for Further Education**, Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire at 20.00hrs. Any comments on the Programme contact Séamus Moriarty by e-mail at Gazette@familyhistory.ie

Membership of the Genealogical Society

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. You can renew your membership online at www.familyhistory.ie/shop or, if you prefer, simply download the form and forward it with your remittance to the Society's Hon. Treasurer, **Mr. Denis Ryan, MGSI**, 6, St. Thomas Mead, Mount Merrion, County Dublin, Ireland.

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www.familyhistory.ie/shop**DIARY DATES***Tuesday June 10th & July 8th 2008***Evening Open Meeting***Dún Laoghaire College of Further
Education**Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire
20.00hrs—22.00hrs**Wednesday June 25th & July 23rd 2008***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)***QUERIES**

Christine L Asher, PO Box 510535, Saint Louis, Missouri, USA 63151 E-mail:- christine@lostbranches.com Wrote:- Seeking info on my ancestor, **John Donohue** (may have been spelled differently) was born about 1839, his wife, Honora (possibly "**Long**") was born about 1840 in Limerick. They married around 1857. In March, 1859, James Donohue was born (his death certificate states he was born in Newcastle), and in June 1863, his brother Michael J Donohue was born (his death record states he was born in County Cork). Soon after Michael's birth, his father John left the family to come to the US. Sometime after, Honora, James and Michael followed. They settled in NJ and their daughter Mary was born in 1866. They then travelled to the mid-west. I am attempting to trace my family for my grandmother. I am not sure if they originated from Limerick, New Castle, or Cork, however, Michael always claimed the family was from County Cork.

Arthur G. Fritz, 18364 Grace Ave., Port Charlotte, Florida, USA, 33948-7411 E-mail:- agrobin_70@hotmail.com Wrote:- This is the information we have: Our Great Great Grandparents were: James and Julia (**Russell**) **Gorman** both born in Ireland, he December 1837, Old Parish, County Waterford; she 1844. They emigrated to the US around 1870, believed to have arrived in Boston, MA. They had four children: Mary E., our great grandmother, born about 1863 in Ireland, Margaret, per film record born March 8, 1865 in Clashmore, County Waterford. Their other children Delia born 1872, and James born 1875 were both born in Portsmouth, NH, USA James parents were James **Gorman** and Mary **Owen**. We are interested having further research in Ireland at a reasonable cost.

Kimberleigh A. R. Denison, P.O. Box 287, City of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada E-mail: kimberleigh@hotmail.com Wrote:- My Great-Great-Great grandfather William **Denison**, b: 1819 emigrated to Montreal, QC, Canada from Castlederg, County Tyrone. I am in search of his parents, siblings and any other information I can get. He married a Lydia **Coulter** around 1850 in Canada, although no Methodist records exist for this marriage. I think his father's name was William, born about 1790. Does anyone have any information or know where I can turn for Will? I can help those who need information about Irish Canadian databases, etc

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

Irish Airman's Remains Recovered

In our November 2007 issue of this newsletter we reported on the search for the remains of an Irishman in the Netherlands. Last September excavations commenced at the village of Berkhout in northern Holland to try and recover the remains of Irish air-gunner **Sgt. John Edward Kehoe**, from New Ross, Co. Wexford, one of the four man crew of a British Royal Air Force (RAF) Hampden shot down by a German Messerschmitt fighter on 8th November 1941 while returning from a bombing raid over Essen. The bodies of the pilot and co-pilot were thrown clear of the crashed aircraft and were buried locally with the crash site being marked with a simple cross by German soldiers billeted in the village at that time. But the bodies of Sgt. Kehoe and the other crewmember **Stanley Mullenger** were not recovered and remained with the buried wreckage. Following the exhumation of remains in late September, detailed investigation of the recovered bones by the Dutch authorities showed that they were so badly deteriorated that it would take several years to identify and separate the two sets discovered. It was subsequently decided that the remains of both airmen would be interred at a nearby Commonwealth military cemetery where the other two crew members were interred. While **Peggy Kehoe**, Sgt. Kehoe's sister, was determined to honour a deathbed pledge to her mother to bring his

remains back to Ireland and to have them buried in the family plot, she accepted that the next best thing was to have him interred in concentrated ground with his comrades. In an interview **Peggy Kehoe** said that getting her brother home to Ireland would have been a dream come true but that she was still delighted that the remains of her brother had been found after all these years and that he would receive a Christian burial and be laid to rest with his comrades. She said that she was delighted at how things worked out - it was a long search with many false leads and disappointments but that she was more than satisfied and that her mother would have been very happy. On Tuesday May 6th 2008 the remains of Sgt. John Edward Kehoe and the other crewmember **Stanley Mullenger** were interred with full British military honours in a Commonwealth military cemetery near Berkhout where the other two crewmembers are also interred.

*James Scannell***RMS LEINSTER STAMP**

As reported last month, the Irish Postal Authority, An Post, on May 30th launched a commemorative stamp marking the 90th anniversary of the *RMS Leinster*. The Society wishes to congratulate all involved for a most enjoyable and yet solemnly respectful event. The loss of its sister ship *RMS Connaught* was also remembered by speakers at the County Hall, Dún Laoghaire, especially by An Cathaoirleach, **Cllr. Denis O'Callaghan**.

News from the Board

The Board accepted with regret the resignation of our Membership Officer, **Hilary Byrne**, due to business commitments. At its June meeting the Board co-opted **Sharon Bofin** and duly appointed Sharon to the position of Membership Officer. The Board also reviewed the current position of the Society's two legislative proposals being considered by Senators for publication as Bills. One deals with the 1926 Census and the other with the deplorable position of all grants of Arms made by the Chief Heralds of Ireland between 1943 and May 2005. Though, both of these issues were covered by the *Genealogy and Heraldry Bill, 2006*, it was decided to deal with these matters separately and entirely on their own merits. In order to resolve the long delay in publishing the GSI Journal due to work commitments of the Editor, **Margaret Conroy**, the Board has temporarily assumed the direct responsibility for the gathering of articles and the publication of the Journal. The Board also received a report from **Pádraic Ingoldsby** on a number of possibilities to either house or store the Society Archive. The Board is dealing with this matter with great urgency as accessibility to our Archive for Members is of primary concern to the Board.

General Secretary