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"Demoted" to Arts, Sport & Tourism New Minister at the Helm

The news that the Minister for Arts, Sport & Tourism, Mr. Séamus Brennan, TD, was stepping down due to illness was not unexpected. This was certainly generally viewed as a loss of a hard working and dedicated Minister. There was much speculation as to a possible successor in the cabinet reshuffle following the resignation of Bertie Ahern, TD. The new Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowan, TD, announced his new cabinet on Wednesday 7th May with very obvious demotions and promotions therein. Media speculation about the demotion of some less performing ministers proved remarkably accurate. In what was seen as a very clear demotion, Mr. Martin Cullen, TD, was moved from the Department of Social and Family Affairs to the Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism. His department's responsibilities cover the National Library, National Museum, National Archives and, of course, the Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland. After a very short and uneventful stint at Social and Family Affairs, Mr. Cullen's removal to Arts, Sport and Tourism is, according to some commentators, placing him on the chair nearest to the exit from cabinet. His ministerial career to

date may not have covered Mr. Cullen with any glory, so it is hardly surprising that the arts, sport and tourism communities are not exactly jumping with joy at this appointment. Nevertheless, this Society wishes Mr. Cullen every success as this important portfolio covers the social and cultural life of the nation. In every city, town, village and parish throughout the land, sport and cultural activities form the essential bedrock of community life. Whilst, tourism is Ireland's fastest growing and most diverse industry, upon which, many areas are wholly dependent. No wonder talk of "demoting" a minister to deal with the arts, sport and tourism is causing some concern. The new Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowan, TD, in his acceptance address to Dáil Éireann following his election clearly displayed a great love for our native culture, our sports and the Irish language. Indeed, already Irish language enthusiasts are witnessing a greater use of the native language amongst our parliamentarians from all sides. So under the able stewardship of this new Taoiseach, is it not only fair and reasonable that the new Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism be given the opportunity to

prove his worth in his new department? His first challenge is to urgently address the appalling mess and utter confusion caused by relocating the entire department to Killarney, Co. Kerry, as part of the government's ill conceived decentralization programme. This has led, according to recent reports, to a loss of continuity, time and resources at upper management level in his department. Not his fault, but is this minister, once again, going to be left holding the can for another less than successful government policy? Mr. Cullen's new job has many challenges but it also has a great number of opportunities and, in some respects, unfulfilled potentials. He has a clear choice either to effectively manage and develop his department's potential or to simply bide his time and await the activation by the Taoiseach of the trap-door under his cabinet seat. But as an intelligent, energetic and affable politician Mr. Cullen could yet make his mark in his new job by clearly demonstrating that he has a vision for his department and for the effective delivery of its services. It certainly won't be an easy task, but if successful, this minister will have definitely proven his mettle!!

A National Scandal in the Making?

The new Minister for Arts, Sport & Tourism, Mr. Martin Cullen, TD, has, no doubt, a very full "In Tray" awaiting his attention. Most pressing of these files is the plea by the National Museum. Archaeologists employed by the National Roads Authority (NRA) have undertaken excavations along the route of each new stretch of roadway under construction. In the course of these digs they've un-

covered thousands of priceless artifacts some dating back millennia. So many are the finds that storage space is critically limited and due to staff shortages, the cataloguing procedures are hopelessly inadequate. Reports that some artifacts have been deliberately left on-site because of the lack of storage space cannot be substantiated. But if true, many of these artifacts are in danger of

weather damage or theft or simply, being removed from their correct archeological context. The loss to the study of the lives of our ancestors will be immense and irrecoverable. The National Museum must be urgently provided with all the resources required to ensure the preservation of these artifacts. The preventable loss of these treasures would be nothing short of a national scandal.

“Essays on the Early Irish King Tales”

edited by Dan M. Wiley

Unfortunately, with the lack of emphasis placed on the subject in our schools, there is a growing trend in Ireland to erroneously view the pre-Cambro-Norman invasion period of our history as somehow in the realm of the “prehistoric” or even “mythological”. This is most evident in the many tourist guides describing some historic figures or events as “legendary” and casting some doubt as to their authenticity. There is certainly no excuse for such given the many fine publications that are readily available on this period. This trend should be of concern to all historians and especially, to genealogists, as it cuts a vital link in popular culture to our own roots. “*Essays on the Early Irish King Tales*” ISBN 978-1-84682-045-8 edited by Dan M. Wiley and published by Four Courts Press (www.fourcourtspress.ie) is a particularly fine and very accessible read on some of the sources, upon which, in addition to the Annals, we base our understanding and knowledge of the Ireland of this early period in our history. In his introduction, Wiley takes us through the different categories of early Irish literature from the mythological to historical by firstly giving an over view of the political and social environment. The king tales are organised into separate groups, province by province, based on the dynastic affiliations of their protagonists. This is of particular interest to genealogists and sept/clan historians as it forms, in many cases, the origin story for our families.

Wiley lists the kings with their associated narratives and sources, however, with only the briefest of glimpse of the tale. The narratives deal with battles, triumphs, migrations, adventures, restitutions, births, prophecies, banquets, healings, violent deaths, defilements and life’s trials and tribulations generally. Joseph Falaky Nagy’s essay on Acallam na Senórach or the “*Dialogue of the Old Ones*” is an intriguing expedition for the reader into the world of the tale or more accurately, its mindset, its time and its function. Tragedy brought about by malevolent influences is matched by triumphant and just retributions. Though, sometimes couched in the supernatural, these narratives deal with the essentially human fears and desires not uncommon themes in the soap operas of today. In comparing passages from the Welsh *Mabinogi* with an Irish text, we even have the otherworldly *Doppelgänger* the modern favourite of many a Hollywood blockbuster. Kevin Murray deals with the tragic love affair between an Ulsterman for a Leinsterwoman, cross-border and inter-tribal difficulties. He also deals briefly with the *Dinnshenchas* or the “lore of places” - the basis for much of our corpus of placenames. Michael Byrne’s essay deals with the social issues surrounding the failure of a once powerful king to provide justice and protection for his people and the value and importance of honour and loyalty in the establishment of a just kingship. William Sayers expands on the

theme in his essay with some surprising references to incidents in the various tales, including the casual addressing of the king by a “man of the woods” in a manner that Sayers describes as “unsettlingly modern”. He also noted and agreed with Myles Dillon that we are only now beginning to have some notion of local Irish history in the early Middle Ages, and how kings’ tales and variants of them might have furthered dynastic ends among various publics. We must imagine, Sayers continues, that every personal name and genealogy in these tales resonated and evoked audience sympathies or antipathies in ways that are now difficult to recover. Clodagh Downey deals with the world of Niall Noígiallach and Lugaid Mac Con, the latter from west Munster and the former based at Tara and reputed to have brought St. Patrick to Ireland as a slave. The tales covered primarily reflect the sources of power, authority and rightful sovereignty. The latter depends largely on the administration of just law and righteous judgement. S. Elizabeth Passmore expands on the tale of how Niall Noígiallach obtained the kingship of Tara and deals with the notion of prophecy and counsel in the tales. The final essay by Morgan Thomas Davies explores how durable the international heroic biography was in early Ireland. His subject is a late 6th century AD king of Leinster. Such a “biographical template” maybe simply of human necessity—we need a good story!! MM

RMS Leinster Commemorative Stamp

On the morning of the 10th October 1918, just twelve miles out from Kingstown, as Dún Laoghaire was then known, the German submarine UB-123 fired two torpedoes which struck the RMS *Leinster* en route to Holyhead in north Wales. Despite efforts to turn the stricken vessel around and to return to port, she sank within eighteen minutes with the loss of 501 passengers and crew, including twenty-one of twenty-two mail sorters on board. Most of the casualties were military personnel returning to duty after a spell of leave with many hoping that hostilities would end before they returned to the front. On the 30th May, An Post (*Irish Postal Authority*) will issue a 55c commemorative

postage stamp featuring an illustration by Vincent Killowry showing the RMS *Leinster* in dazzle paint camouflage with an inset illustration of one her anchors recovered from the wreck site and currently displayed as a memorial to the RMS *Leinster* facing the Carlisle Pier (the old Mail-Boat Pier) in Dún Laoghaire from which the RMS *Leinster* set out on her last voyage. The beautiful First Day Cover depicts the crest of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company which operated the RMS *Leinster* along with her sister ships (Mail-Boats) *Ulster*, *Munster* and *Connaught* on the Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) Holyhead route. The company was not able to recover its WW1

loses and was finally liquidated in 1924. Further information from www.irishstamps.ie James Scannell

EDITOR: Philip Lecane, MGSI, published an excellently researched book on the sinking of the RMS *Leinster*. “*Torpedoed—The RMS Leinster Disaster*” ISBN 1-904381-30-80 is available from bookshops in the Dublin region and from Periscope Publishing Ltd., on www.periscopepublishing.com Her sister ship the “*Connaught*” was sunk by a German torpedo off the coast of France on March 3rd 1917 with the loss of three lives, including Able Seaman **John Moran** (33) from Kingstown.

GSI Lecture Programme

The Society’s lecture programme until the end of the year is as follows. **Tuesday 15th May** Patricia Boyd, Registry of Deeds, the records of the Registry of Deeds and the genealogist; **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 family 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. Buses no. 7, 46A & 75 all stop near the college. DART, Salthill & Monkstown Station. Parking at the college may be difficult during the academic year due to evening classes, however, on street parking is also available. Any suggestions or comments on this Lecture Programme please contact Séamus Moriarty by e-mail at Gazette@familyhistory.ie Séamus Moriarty is always looking for new ideas and topics for the programme.

James Scannell Reports...

THE IRISH HISTORIC TOWN ATLAS

On Friday May 23rd the Royal Irish Academy will host a one-day conference on "*The Irish Historic Town Atlas*" in its premises at 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2, from 09.30hrs to 16.30hrs. Under the auspices of the Irish Historic Towns Atlas project, this one day conference aims to bring atlas contributors together with practitioners and postgraduate students in various fields:- urban history, archaeology, historical geography, planning and surveying to look at new research in these fields. The IHTA, which now runs to eighteen published fascicles, each with its maps, essay and gazetteer of topographical information, now on CD as well as the traditional paper format, is widely recognised as a treasure house for those researching the urban past. This conference aims to move beyond methodologies or approaches to using the atlas in teaching and research towards deeper and searching matters. It aims to stimulate to new thinking and to point towards new lines of inquiry; what new research questions are now deserving of exploration? Where

has the inherited, accepted story been overturned? What innovations in methodology has the atlas made possible? On what bases might comparative research be constructed? There is no registration fee for this conference but places are limited so please call 01.676257 ext. 241; email:- ihtaconference@ria.ie Dinner and lunch are not provided.

MEMORIES WORKSHOPS

For those who are considering recording their own "*Life Story*" for future generations (or even for the fun of it), Dublin City Council is providing two opportunities to help you. Think how pleased your grandchildren (or even your children) would be if they were to receive a personal story from you. Both workshops are being led by Douglas S. Appleyard. The first Memories Workshop took place in Coolock Library on Saturday May 10th. The second opportunity is a longer series of four sessions in the Dublin City Library and Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2 at 14.30hrs on Wednesday, May 21st., Thursday, May 22nd, Wednesday,

May 28th and Thursday, May 29th. To book a place call 01.674 4873.

MEDIEVAL SYMPOSIUM

On Saturday May 24th the *Friends of Mediaeval Dublin* will hold their 10th Annual Medieval Dublin Symposium 2008 in the Robert Emmet Theatre (Room 2037) in the Arts Building, Trinity College, Dublin 2. Admission is free and all are welcome. Further information from 01.8961801, email: sduffy@tcd.ie

HOLYHEAD-DÚN LAOGHAIRE LINK

The Dún Laoghaire Branch of the Holyhead-Dún Laoghaire Link elected Society member, **David Paling**, to the position of Branch Hon. Treasurer. At the subsequent reconvened Annual General Meeting of the Link held in Holyhead Town Hall on April 29th, the new Constitution of the Link was finally adopted. The next Plenary Session of the Link will be held in the County Hall, Dún Laoghaire in June. *MM*

Précis of the April Lecture

On Tuesday April 8th **Mr. Frank Pelly** gave a very interesting talk on the records of the **Commissioners for Irish Lights** which are currently being catalogued at its archive based at the Bailey Lighthouse on Howth Head outside Dublin. This lighthouse at the tip of the peninsula of Howth was the last permanently manned lighthouse in Ireland and it became fully automated in 1997. Founded in 1867 the Commissioners for Irish Lights are currently charged with the maintenance of eighty automated lighthouses, one hundred and thirty two buoys, fifty beacons and perches, seven helicopter shore bases and other navigational aids around the coasts of the island of Ireland. In times past this

was a labour intensive operation from the building of the facilities to their operation and on-going maintenance. Therefore, besides lighthouse keepers, the service also contained a vast array of craftsmen, tradespersons, ship maintenance staff, clerical and supervisory grades and, of course, the masters and sailors of the ships used to service the lighthouses. Mr. Pelly's main concern was to give an overview of the work of the Commissioners as an introduction to the types of records held that would be of interest to genealogists. Staff records can often be a gem for the genealogist, however, accessing the information is rarely as straight forward as one would expect. These records were cre-

ated and maintained to meet the needs of the employer and therefore, they are arranged in accordance with function, rank, pension status and, of course, injury and death. The information contained is naturally streamlined to function and therefore, the researcher must be armed with some basic facts on the subject of their research i.e. years of service, function and/or location. Mr. Pelly pointed out that in many cases families were associated with the service over generations and often intermarried. As the cataloguing work is still in progress, researchers are asked to contact the Irish Lights head office on (+353.1) 271 5400 or by e-mail: info@cil.ie to ascertain accessibility. Website: www.cil.ie

Joining 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 May 13th & June 10th 2008

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

Wednesday May 28th & June 25th 2008

Morning Open MeetingWeir's, Lower George's Street, Dún
Laoghaire
10.30hrs—12.30hrs

Contribution €3.00 p.p.

(Coffee/Tea included at Morning
Meetings)**QUERIES**

Ron D Boyle, 50 Parsonage Lane, Windsor, SL4 5EN, England, UK. E-mail: ron.boyle@virgin.net Wrote:- My father, Robert John **Boyle** born 15 Mar 1892 at (15 or 75) Duncain Gardens, Belfast. He was the 4th of nine children born to Joseph Boyle and Elizabeth Boyle (her maiden name also) between 1892 and 1916. Handwriting on the birth certificate difficult—not sure whether he was born at no. 15 or no. 75. When alive he told me that the parents of his father, Joseph Boyle, were Robert Boyle who died in Belfast aged 97, and Mary Bole, who died in Belfast aged 103. The father of Robert Boyle was John Boyle. No information any siblings of his father Joseph. I am willing to share the information I currently have. Elizabeth Boyle also descended from a grandparent having the name John Boyle. Through his son David Boyle. John and David are both buried in Old Carnmoney Grave Yard Belfast, Co Antrim That gravestone also lists "and five others who died young". The stone was erected by Jane Boyle, widow of John Boyle. I have no other details. When did my father's family move to England? Any help will be appreciated and reciprocated.

Jean Brosnan, 106 Clinton St., Dowagiac, Michigan, USA E-mail: jeanbrosnan@comcast.net Wrote:- I am looking for information on Cornelius **Brosnahan** family. Cornelius was born 1805. He came to the USA from Castleisland, County Kerry in 1865. He is the son of Hugh and Caroline Brosnahan. He married Bridget **O'Keefe**. They had at least 7 Children. Hugh b. 1840, Thomas b. 10-26-1845, Daniel b. May 6, 1847, Michael b. 1849, Bridget b. 1855, and Dennis b. 1857. Hugh, Thomas and Daniel came to the USA together in 1863. After arriving in the USA some of the children went by **Bresnahan** and most of the family took the name **Brosnan**.

Camille Stephenson (née Lashley) 900 Peques St, #1702, San Marcos, Texas 78666, USA E-mail: sacecamille@hotmail.com Wrote:- I was born with the surname of **Lashley** on the island of Trinidad, although my father's family came from Barbados. I was always told my great grand father that I should remember 'that we are Irish'. I have been searching for 'Lashley' without success. Any suggestions please.

Chris Tracy, 125 Wickham Farm Dr. Englewood, OH 45322, USA E-mail: chris_tracy76@yahoo.com Wrote:- Searching for more info. on the **Baxter** family. Can trace lineage back to John S. Baxter, Sr., born around 1750 in Dromore Parish, County Down and died in 1815 in Cadiz Township, Harrison County, Ohio, USA. He was married to Mary **Moore** (b: c1750 Ireland d: after 1840 in Harrison County, Ohio, USA) According to the information I have, he and his wife and at least some of his children came to the United States on May 4, 1808 on the Schooner *Mississippi* from Belfast to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I would appreciate any information on this family or on the Baxter surname (history, heraldry)

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

Theo Mortimer, R.I.P.

The death took place on April 10th, following a short illness, of Theo Mortimer, Honorary Editor of the "Dublin Historical Record" which is published twice yearly by The Old Dublin Society. Theo was born on September 14th 1931 in Rialto, Dublin. He entered the printing trade and served his apprenticeship with Bailey Gibson Ltd. He continued his education in Bolton Street College of Technology where he took first place in both the junior and senior printing certificate examinations. After working as a journeyman printer in Dublin he went to Heidelberg in Germany for training as an instructor in print training for Schnellenpress-fabrik AG. From Germany he went as a training instructor to its western United States subsidiary. After a year he returned to Ireland as print supervisor at Bailey Gibson. Continuing with his studies he was awarded the *Certificate in Supervision*, achieving first place in the examination. In 1965 he became the training manager at Bailey Gibson where he introduced training programmes in various departments. In 1969 he joined AnCo which was later absorbed into FÁS (*Irish Employment Training Authority*) where he worked with printing firms throughout Ireland advising and assessing them on their training needs, later drawing up schemes for submission to the European Union for training grants. He also dealt with apprentices throughout the country and later specialized in assisting and advising companies in the selection of appren-

tices which later included revising the training programme for printing apprentices nationally. He was awarded the *Con Kelleher Memorial Trophy* for "outstanding contribution to training in the printing industry in the Munster area." Theo eventually retired in 1996. His hobbies included music, history, reading and gardening. With his great love of music, Theo was a founder member of the John McCormack Society. During the 1980's he gave classes in music appreciation at Ballyfermot and Fairview vocational schools in Dublin. As a member of The Old Dublin Society he won the Society's medal for his paper on Michael Kelly, the Dublin born-tenor and friend of Mozart who sang in the first performance of "The Marriage of Figaro" in 1786. From 1997 until his death, Theo held the position of Honorary Editor of the "Dublin Historical Record" and brought this publication to new standards of excellence. Just two years ago Theo oversaw the compilation and production of "The New Index to the Dublin Historical Record: 1938 – 2003" which was compiled by Dr. Fergus Mulligan. Theo was an active member of the Methodist Church and held various positions at Dolphin's Barn, Drimnagh and Sutton churches. He compiled the history of Sutton church to mark its centenary celebrations in 2003. He is survived by his wife Patricia, daughter Celine and son Justin; his son Theo predeceased him. Sincere condolences to his wife, family and friends. *James Scannell*

AN DAONCHARTLANN

The future of the Society's archive was discussed at the April meeting of the Board of the Society. Many options were considered, however, the most pressing concern is one of storage. Despite the best efforts of the Society, the difficulties surrounding the atmospheric control in the Martello Tower at Seapoint are insurmountable and therefore, vacating this premises is inevitable. All of the collections have been boxed ready for storage, however, questions have arisen over the eventual cost of storing the archival collections. This matter is being examined with officials of the County Council and others. In the meantime, Séamus O'Reilly, Director of Archival Services, continues to receive items for the archive. Whilst, it is envisaged to eventually co-locate with the Maritime Museum in Dún Laoghaire, this option, due to the on-going building works at the Mariners' Church, is not possible for at least two years. The rental of a suitable premises in the Dún Laoghaire area which would permit access to the archive would cost circa €25,000 per annum. This is clearly way outside the Society's budget, therefore, locating the archive within the Public Library Service or in a third level college in the Greater Dublin Area could be a possibility. The possibility of co-locating the Society's archival collections with those of a similar body or institution was also considered as a viable possibility by the Board. The Board would welcome any suggestions in this regard and indeed, it would be happy to follow-up on any constructive suggestion that would provide access to the Society's archive.