

Cumann Geinealais na hÉireann

## Ireland's Genealogical Gazette

*(incorporating "The Genie Gazette")*

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

<i>Medieval Ireland (review)</i>	2
<i>President of the Society</i>	2
<i>Society Publications on CD</i>	2
<i>James Scannell Reports..</i>	3
<i>Précis of the October Lecture</i>	3
<i>Diary Dates &amp; Darwin 200</i>	4
<i>Painters in Union (review)</i>	4

## Amalgamation of Institutions Good Decision—Flawed Motive

The Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism, **Mr. Martin Cullen, TD** has recently proposed to combine the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Crawford Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Ireland, while retaining separate identities and to merge the National Archives and the Irish Manuscripts Commission into the National Library. These proposals were contained in the statement of cuts and amalgamations proposed by the Irish government as budgetary measures to cut government spending. Under a 2003 OPW commission the National Archives was to get a new purpose-built premises in Dublin with around 12,000 square metres of storage space which was designed to meet its requirement under the *National Archives Act, 1986*. However, in the much heralded *National Development Plan*, the government announced that this facility was to be provided by a public-private partnership (PPP) development. In the April 2007 issue of this newsletter, we questioned the appropriateness of the use of a PPP to provide the National Archives with a new home. Certainly the value for money questions that inevitably accompany PPP developments remain unanswered in respect of this

proposal. In the same issue the lead article maintained that we should be evaluating our national cultural institutions portfolio in a holistic manner and considering the co-location of facilities or indeed, the creation of new joint or combined facilities as possible options for both the National Library and the National Archives. It also recognised that some would consider such a proposition as heresy and others would never consider such an option for a number of reasons ranging from vested interests to our historical experience with the burning of the Irish Public Records Office in 1922 during the Civil War. Though, it will be argued that the current institutions provide for different functions, these are not sufficiently removed so as to be incompatible or impossible to merge successfully. A feasibility study, according to the article, should be commissioned, at least, to examine the benefits that could arise through not only the co-location of the National Library and the National Archives in a new purpose built facility, but actually merging the two institutions. But now the hope of any new purpose built facility for a merged "*National Library and*

*Archives of Ireland*" is possibly completely off the agenda due to the downturn in the economy. Therefore, serious questions arise as to benefit of merging the two institutions if they could not be co-located in a new premises or at least, adjacent buildings. The latter option could be achieved by moving the National Museum to Collins Barracks and then refurbishing the Kildare Street premises to house the National Archives. However, this amalgamation requires detailed planning and careful execution, possibly over a period of years. It cannot be merely a quick cost cutting budgetary measure to meet the 3% cuts in departmental spending demanded by the Minister of Finance. The future development of these important national cultural institutions requires vision and a clear understanding of the role of these bodies. New legislation will be required to give effect to any merger and hopefully, a meaningful public consultation process will be initiated by the Minister in advance of the production of the legislation. Without doubt this proposed amalgamation makes perfect sense, however, the reasons for making this decision now may be fundamentally flawed.

## Arms for President Obama?

With the election of Senator Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States, the people of Shinrone and Moneygall, Co. Offaly have been celebrating his Irish connections. As reported in the September issue, Fiona Fitzsimons of Eneclann researched Mr. Obama's ancestry back to the Kearneys of these two villages. So now with his Irish roots confirmed, will the State be

presenting President Obama with a Grant of Arms? Former presidents Clinton, Reagan and Kennedy all were recipients of a Grant of Arms from the Chief Herald. Mr. Obama has more recent connections with Kenya where his father was born. There is already speculation that he may receive a Grant of Arms from the College of Arms in Nairobi, Kenya. Kenyan heraldic authority stems from

an Act of the Kenyan parliament which established a College of Arms, provided for the granting of arms and the registration of such grants, and to prohibit the misuse of Arms which have been granted. No doubt such a Kenyan grant would highlight his African heritage and rightly so. But couldn't an Irish grant honour the totality of Mr. Obama's ancestral heritage—American, Kenyan and Irish?

# Medieval Ireland

## by Paul MacCotter

*"Medieval Ireland—Territorial, Political and Economic Divisions"* by Paul MacCotter, (ISBN 978-1-84682-098-4 hardback 320pp illustrated €55.00) is a very significant contribution to study of medieval Ireland. In many ways, such a publication is long overdue as few works on the period pay as much attention to the actual structures of Irish society. The various tiers of kingship and over lordship, the land units and territorial divisions, the relationship between various strata of society and even the development of surnames are considered and explained by MacCotter. For local historians, genealogists or those with an interest in Gaelic Irish surnames MacCotter's work provides the essential understanding of the period, the origin and meaning of "place" in Medieval Ireland. The homogeneity of Irish society and culture is very evident throughout this work. His inclusion of a "gazetteer" of the various indigenous spatial units upon which the cantreds of the later period are based is an excellent resource for the local historian and genealogist. For example, *Fir Chualann*, MacCotter explains was an area of south Dublin and northeast Wicklow, of which, the earliest kings were Uí Théig. He then provides a brief history of the area down to circa 1130 AD. This area, Fercoulen, was one of four cantreds of Dublin—the name survives today in *Bri Cualann* (Bray, Co. Wicklow). MacCotter provides a coloured map indicating each of the cantreds throughout Ireland. The etymology of "baile" and its equation

with the Latin "villata" has given rise to the erroneous belief that the word (modern prefix "Bally") is a post Anglo-Norman development. MacCotter believes that the "villata" (Norman French "village") in the Irish medieval context was a "terminological re-christening of an indigenous system". This "baile-estate" was a socio-economic spatial unit found throughout pre-invasion Ireland. Many of the names of these "baile-estates" included sept/clan names and have survived as our placenames of today. An interesting example of an ancient pre-invasion estate is Cloghran Swords, Co. Dublin. This was the estate of the FitzRery alias MacCynan family who were descended, according to Welsh genealogists, from a branch of the Welsh royal family of Gwynedd. This family was established in Cloghran over a century before the Anglo-Norman invasion. The "baile" system based on the Irish concept of kinship land-holding was incompatible with the Anglo-Norman system of land managed by "a hierarchy of nuclear families of freemen and nobles" MacCotter explains in chapter 5. The following chapter deals with the "tuath" - the basic socio-political and jurisdictional unit of society as MacCotter explains, it was "the basic unit of citizenship, outside of which an individual lacked full legal rights". Here also he examines the development of surnames and the emergence of "baile" as a placename element in Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man. MacCotter in chapter 7 sets out the international context—*The 'hundred systems' of*

*northern Europe* where he deals with Wales, England, Scotland, Isle of Man and Scandinavia and explores a possible common origin of the "hundred system". His concluding remarks regarding the spatial landscape organisation are certainly worth quoting here for all interested in genealogy and local history—"that historical curiosity, the Irish barony, must be, in many cases, the descendant of an ancient unit of civil administration with communal/dynastic origins linking us to our very distant ancestors." The appendices and the extensive bibliography provide excellent source material for students of the period, local historians and genealogists. It is certainly an essential read for anyone interested in the origin, history and development of Irish placenames Paul MacCotter holds a post-doctoral fellowship with the Department of Archaeology, University College Cork. His previous publications include *"Colmán of Cloyne: a Study"* (2004) and his co-authorship with Dr. Kenneth Nicholls of *"The Pipe Role of Cloyne"* (1996). For further information please checkout [www.fourcourtspress.ie](http://www.fourcourtspress.ie) MM

### DONATIONS TO THE ARCHIVE

The Board of the Society wishes to thank Ms. Chris Ward for the kind donation of a microfiche reader and a large collection of fiches. Also, Mr. Richard McCormack for seven filing cabinets and Mr. Tom Delaney for transporting the cabinets to the Archive.

## President of the Society

The Board of the Society at its November meeting has authorised the holding of an election to choose the President of the Society. The current holder of the Society's highest office is Cork based **Tony McCarthy, MA, FGSI** who was elected in 2005 for a term of three years. The function and duties of the President are purely ceremonial and mainly involve representing the Society at events around the country. The election of the President of the Society is one of the functions of the Society's College of Fellows and the ballot will be conducted in accordance with the single transferable vote system of proportional representation. This year the Board has decided to permit a postal ballot of

the Fellows rather than convening a meeting of the College of Fellows which could involve some of its twelve members travelling great distances to such a short meeting. There is also a vacancy amongst the Society's three Vice-Presidents and this vacancy will usually be filled by the candidate who receives the second highest number of votes in the presidential election. However, should that person already hold such a position then the Board will fill the Vice-Presidential vacancy in due course. Though, the incoming President takes up office immediately on election, the Society may organise a formal inauguration ceremony early in 2009—possibly at the Evening Meeting.

### LEGISLATION

As reported last month **Senator Labhrás Ó Murchú**, is currently working on the publication of the *Statistics (Heritage Amendment) Bill, 2008*. The purpose of the Bill is to have the 1926 census of Ireland released for research at the National Archives. A detailed account of the campaign for the release of the 1926 census is carried in the Sept./Oct. 2008 issue of *"History Ireland"* see [www.historyireland.com](http://www.historyireland.com) Also, **Senator Alex White** is due to publish the *National Cultural Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2008* which aims to provide a proper legal basis for grants of Arms made between April 1943 and May 2005. The Bill will also address the issue of the cancellation of grants and provide greater transparency in the delivery of heraldic services in Ireland.

## 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 completed 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.

# James Scannell Reports...

## RMS LEINSTER COMMEMORATION

On Friday 10 October St. Michael's R.C. Church, Dún Laoghaire, was the venue for a special inter-faith service to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the sinking of the Kingstown-Holyhead morning mail boat RMS *Leinster* operated by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. by the German submarine UB-123 near the Kish Bank. The service was organised by **The Friends of the Leinster** and the attendance included the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, two government ministers, Labour Party leader, local Teachtaí Dála (MPs) from the area, the Cathaoirleach of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and county councillors, local schools from the area and relatives from Ireland and overseas of those who sailed on it that fateful 10 October 1918 morning. Music for the service which was led by **Fr. Patrick Mangan**, former parish priest of St. Michael's who was invited out his retirement to conduct it, was provided by the Band of An Garda Síochána. During the service hymns were sung by choirs from local schools with pupils reading a representative selection of names of those lost while **Philip Lecane** read a selection of names of those lost on the UB-123 as this submarine was lost in an anti-submarine minefield a week later. Following the service, the Garda Band (Police Band) led the congregation in procession to the RMS *Leinster* memorial on

the seafront where wreaths were laid by a number of organisations. The memorial consists of one of the Leinster's anchors which was raised from the seabed a number of years ago and there are plans to raise its other anchor and erect in Holyhead as memorial in that town to all those who were lost – some 501 passengers and crew were lost out of total compliment of 771. Ironically bad weather conditions in the Irish Sea resulted in the cancellation of that morning's HSS sailing from Holyhead thus preventing a large Welsh contingent from taking part in the Dún Laoghaire ceremonies so they organised their own remembrance service in Holyhead at short notice.

## 50th ANNIVERSARY OF AIR CRASH

On 12 August the 50th anniversary of a KLM (Dutch airline) Super Constellation flight which crashed off the west coast of Ireland in August 1958 with the loss of ninety-one passengers and eight crew was commemorated by Galway City Council at a special ceremony in New Cemetery, Bohermore. Twenty-three of the thirty-four recovered bodies were interred in the cemetery. Another twelve bodies were identified and eleven were repatriated for burial. The aircraft was en route from Amsterdam to New York and stopped off at Shannon to refuel and to take on six passengers, five of whom were Irish Americans and the sixth a U.S.

social worker. Also on board were a United Arab Republic fencing team along with Dutch, British, U.S., Polish and Israeli nationals. The aircraft departed from Shannon at 16.00hrs and sent its last radio message at 16.35hrs. No distress call was ever sent and the cause of the crash has never been determined. Wreckage was located by a British RAF aircraft 90 miles off the Irish west coast with a French fishing vessel '*General Leclerc*' being the first vessel to locate wreckage, bodies and partially inflated life rafts.

## GAA PROJECT LAUNCHED

Ireland's largest sporting organisation, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) has embarked on a massive four year project '*The GAA – a People's History*' in which a team of researchers from Boston College, Dublin, will conduct over three thousand interviews with fans, officials and players of all ages with the team hoping to assemble seven hundred visual interviews to television broadcast standards and two thousand audio interviews for radio broadcast as well gathering up to twenty-five thousand documents in the form of letters, photos and reminiscences of peoples involvement with the GAA down through the years. The project is the centre piece of the Association's 125th anniversary celebrations and when complete, it will be of enormous benefit to local history studies.

# Précis of the October Lecture

On Tuesday Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 **Rory McKenna** delivered a fine lecture on the history and use of the **Martello Towers** in Ireland. He also provided a great deal of information on the **Sea Fencibles**—the body of men raised to guard the coastal areas in the event of a Napoleonic invasion of Ireland. As the Society had an interest in the development, history and on-going maintenance of the Martello Towers of Ireland, Rory McKenna brought us through the two hundred years of the existence of these towers. The use of the Towers by the British military forces in Ireland was for a very brief period from circa 1804. The war in Europe did not reach these shores and most of the Towers were simply

abandoned and fell into a ruinous state. Others became homes or sometimes the masonry for other buildings. Rory McKenna's power-point presentation endeavoured to meet the genealogical interests of his audience and provided lists of the men who served as Sea Fencibles and the contractors who built the Towers for the British military authorities. He concentrated heavily on the Towers to the north side of Dublin Bay and along the northern coast of the county. Many of the Towers have been restored as modern homes or indeed, more fittingly as heritage centres or local museums. He spoke of the restoration of a Martello Tower in Killiney, Co. Dublin and the commissioning and mount-

ing of a fully working cannon on the roof of the Tower. He explained how the land for these Towers was acquired from the local farmers or landed gentry. A lively question and answer session followed this lecture.

## GSILECTURE PROGRAMME

**Tuesday Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>** the Grand Lodge of Ireland on the Archives of the Society of Freemasons as a genealogical resource. **Tuesday Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>** Ciara Kerrigan, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts, National Library of Ireland, Estate Records of the National Library. Any comments on the lecture programme or suggestions for Guest Speakers to: Séamus Moriarty at e-mail:- 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 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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### **DIARY DATES**

Tuesday Oct Nov.11th & Dec. 9th 2008

#### **Evening Open Meeting**

Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education  
Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire  
20.00hrs—22.00hrs

Wednesday Nov. 26th 2008 & Jan. 28th 2009

#### **Morning Open Meeting**

Weir'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)

## 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. This facility will be directly linked to the Society's website inasmuch as only new entries will be published in the Gazette and then "banked" on a database to be developed on the Society's 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 of the Society who may place as many entries as they wish on this database. The Gazette will essentially "flag" new entries or any alterations to the database starting in January 2009 issue. Whilst, in future general research queries will not be published in the Gazette, consideration will always 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.

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#### GUIDE TO TRACING YOUR DONEGAL ANCESTORS

By **Helene Meehan** and **Godfrey Duffy** New Edition (Nov. 2008) ISBN: 978-0-9539974-9-7  
Price: €13.00. Donegal families are an interesting mix of native Irish families and of Scots-Irish who came to the county from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It experienced a high level of emigration to North America, Scotland and England. This new and greatly expanded edition sets out the range of Donegal genealogical sources available and it devotes a chapter to each source type explaining what information each contains, and where each record can be accessed. Common names in the county include O'Neill, O'Donnell, Bonner, Barr, Bradley, Duffy, Friel, Gormley, O'Kane, Gallagher, Harkin, McBride, McCafferty, McDaid, Patton, Morrissey, Ward, Sweeney. Flyleaf press publish a range of books dealing with county based research—see [www.flyleaf.ie](http://www.flyleaf.ie)

## PAINTERS IN UNION

### *The Irish National Painters' & Decorators Union and its forerunners* by Charles Callan

Published last month by **Watchword**, 146, Sundrive Road, Dublin 12—*Painters in Union— The Irish National Painters' & Decorators Union and its forerunners* by **Charles Callan**, (ISBN 978-0-9557249-2-3 349pp . Price €20.00) is a monumental study of trade unionism in Ireland. Indeed, it is the product of nearly four decades of collecting material on the history and development of INPDTU culminating in the construction of a coherent story of the Union in the 1990s. The author makes the point that the story of one union, its leaders, members, activities and achievements are but one stream in the broad confluence that is Irish labour history. Whilst that is certainly true, this work on INPDTU provides the reader with an invaluable insight into the development of trade unionism in Ireland from the mid 1870s and up through the last century. In setting the background to the organisation of painters into guilds, associations and unions, the author explores the history of the guilds in Ireland from 1670, especially the Guild of St. Luke which admitted its first Roman Catholics in 1793—John O'Neill of Capel Street and Anthony Dempsey of Bolton Street.. The language used to describe these workers' associations is a testimony to the difficulties faced by the members—'idle, profligate and insolent journeymen' and 'persons of evil name, fame and conversation' - no wonder as the Irish House of Commons introduced Bills in the 1790s to 'prevent unlawful combinations in the different trades'. Workers' organisations were illegal until 1824-1825. The relationship between the workers' organisations and the political structures of the day is explored in detail throughout beginning with the politically turbulent years of the mid-eighteenth century and especially, with the Society of the United Irishmen and later with

the *Act of Union, 1801*. The thorny issues of Catholic Emancipation of 1829 and the Reform Bill of 1831 split the Guild members on sectarian lines. The passage of the *Reform Act, 1832* greatly diminished the influence of the guilds. In the mid-nineteenth century trade unions of modern era came into existence. Here the author provides such detail as to ensure that this work establishes itself as a major resource for the study of Irish labour history. The study of the union and its forerunners through each chapter involves a methodical examination of the establishment and structure of the organisation and the political, social and employment rights issues of the day. The study of the union as a *Friendly Society* is of particular interest to local and social historians and, of course, genealogists. The work also explores the bitterness associated with the various lockouts, inter-union strife and the later fragmentation of the union in the early years of independence. The author's examination of the development of the union since independence is a very important contribution to the study of Irish social history as it brings home the constant struggle of organised labour for the rights and welfare of workers. The inclusion of many rare photographs is an exceptional resource as is the extensive bibliography and copious notes. This work is, without doubt, one of the most comprehensive studies of an Irish trade union published to date and as such, it will provide an invaluable resource for students of Irish labour history for many years to come. **Charles Callan** joined the INPDTU as an apprentice in 1961 and was an Instructor of apprentices in Painters' and Decorators' Work for twenty years. Active in the Labour Party from 1965 to 1998 and in the FWUI, he was elected a Worker Director in 1988 and served on the Board of FÁS and

the National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee until 1996. He served as President in 1981 and as Secretary from 1988 to 2001 of the Irish Labour History Society. He is also a member of the Genealogical Society of Ireland. For further information E-mail: [watchwordinfo@gmail.com](mailto:watchwordinfo@gmail.com) **MM**

#### DARWIN 200

**Maureen Seeley** (*Chairperson of Devon Family History Society, UK*) has been contacted by Plymouth University, asking if any Family History Societies or their members would be interested in contributing to the "Darwin 200 Plymouth" event in 2009. Charles Robert Darwin was born on 12 February 1809. When the HMS *Beagle* sailed from Plymouth at the end of 1831, the crew consisted of seventy-five people. There were sixteen officers and trainee officers aboard, nine petty officers, eight marines, six boys, three supernumeraries including Charles Darwin, three Fuegians and thirty sailors. All the members of the crew were volunteers. Are there any descendants of the HMS *Beagle* personnel who would be interested in contributing information to the 2009 Darwin 200 event? Maureen has already been in touch with two Devon FHS members, one whose great great grandfather joined as a Boy and later became a Main Top Man; the other member's great great great uncle was a Gun Room Boy on HMS *Beagle*. Contact Maureen Seeley at [chairman@devonfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman@devonfhs.org.uk) For further information on Darwin 200 please checkout the following:- [www.darwin200plymouth.org](http://www.darwin200plymouth.org) This notice was supplied by the Administrator of the Federation of Family History Societies in the UK.