

Cumann Geinealais na hÉireann

## Ireland's Genealogical Gazette

*(incorporating "The Genie Gazette")*

Vol. 3 No. 9

www.familyhistory.ie

September : Meán Fómhair 2008



GENEALOGY

HERALDRY

VEXILLOLOGY

SOCIAL HISTORY

Heritage Matters

Book Reviews

Open Meetings

News &amp; Queries

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## Television Programmes Boost Interest in Family History

Two current television programmes are responsible for boosting interest in family history both in Ireland and in the United Kingdom. The BBC production *Who Do You Think You Are?* is hugely popular as various British celebrities trace their roots back to sometimes the great and good, usually the obscure and very often, to the poor immigrant class in Great Britain. Some like the current Mayor of London have traced their lineage back to British royalty, others to less fortunate ancestors fleeing pogroms, wars and famine. The new RTÉ (Irish Television) programme *Where Was Your Family During the Famine?* deals with the subject from a different and indeed, peculiarly Irish angle. Tackling the issue of folk memory, stigma and the cold brutality of Ireland's greatest tragedy. Looking at the years 1845 to 1850 will not be simply a journey of discovery for each of the participants in this programme, it will most certainly test our twenty-first century view of the period. For most who have already traced their family history back to the years of the Great Famine it's a humbling experience saturated by very mixed emotions. The statistics speak volumes,

however, when names and, more especially, relatives or ancestors are added to our statistical information, the enormity of the horror, pain and suffering is fully realized. Since census records for the period no longer exist and civil registration at the time only applied to Protestant marriages, we rely heavily on the parish records kept by the Catholic Church in Ireland. These parish registers are a national treasure as they are often the only written record of the existence of our ancestors. The heritage contained within the pages of these parish registers is clearly the property of the Irish nation. The Catholic bishops, with some notable exceptions, willingly facilitated access to this heritage through the microfilms of the registers held by the National Library. The recent controversy over public access to the microfilms of the parish registers of the dioceses of Cashel & Emly, Kerry and Cloyne held by the National Library is unfortunately very damaging to the image of the Catholic Church as "custodians" of this heritage. The decision by the Board of the National Library to allow free and unfettered public access to these microfilms was absolutely correct.

The reported arguments against the decision of the National Library proffered by spokespersons for the dioceses make little sense. It should be remembered that (a) the original "closure" was entirely based on commercial considerations; (b) the use of records of sacraments (baptisms and marriages) for commercial purposes may contravene Canon Law; (c) there is no copyright subsisting in parish registers and (d) the allegation that the Mormons are using the records for posthumous baptisms is irrational, especially, if the Catholic Church does not recognize such baptisms. The latter point was clearly aimed at engendering a totally absurd fear amongst Irish Catholics that public access to these records on microfilm may result in their ancestors becoming Mormons. The huge interest generated by these two television programmes should create a general awareness, appreciation and knowledge amongst the public on the importance of public access to the heritage contained in the Catholic parish registers. Indeed, a deep sense of gratitude to the "custodians" of this heritage may yet be the enduring legacy of these two television programmes.

## Memorial Inscriptions on CD

Following a decision by the Board of the Society to make many of our publications available on CD, the Society's first CD has just been launched. The 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; Loughinstown; 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, the 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.

## Barack Obama's Irish Ancestry Traced by Eneclann

The following is an extract from a press release of August 6th 2008 issued by **Eneclann**. New research takes Barack Obama's Irish Family – The Kearneys, back to the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century and finds a family of wig-makers with an early involvement in local city politics. Up to now, what was in the public domain, brought us back to Falmouth Kearney, Obama's 2nd great-grandfather, from Moneygall Co. Offaly. Through extensive research genealogists at Eneclann have taken the Kearney family tree back to Obama's 6th great-grandfather, Joseph Kearney born ca. 1698. The Kearneys were skilled artisans, who prospered in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. One branch of the family did extremely well; Michael Kearney, (Obama's 6th great-granduncle), a peruke (wig)-maker, becomes embroiled in Dublin city politics and John Kearney, who would be a distant cousin of Obama's, went on to become the Provost of Trinity College Dublin, and later Bishop of Ossory. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progresses the family line from which Obama descends fails to prosper and they emigrate to the US. The Kearney family, were probably Gaelic Irish in origin, based on the family name, and the research has also discovered that the probable place of origin is Co. Tipperary. Our starting point was the records at [www.irishorigins.com](http://www.irishorigins.com) where we found Falmouth's mother, Phoebe Kearney in Griffith's Valuation. If we look at the Kearney family that settled in Shinrone, Co. Offaly from the 1740s onwards – Obama's direct line. Joseph Kearney from whom Obama is directly descended, was born ca. 1698, and had four known sons: Thomas born ca. 1725; Joseph

born ca. 1730 [this is Obama's direct line]; John born ca. 1735; and Patrick bap. 9 Oct. 1741. Of these sons, Thomas followed in the business established by the senior branch of the family, and he became a peruke-maker; Joseph became a comber i.e. textiles/ weaving. The Kearneys were involved in the trade of peruke or periwig making. Wigs were not just a luxury item, they were worn by professionals, the gentry and the aristocracy, but also by many of the staff in big houses. Within the extended Kearney family, research revealed an early involvement in politics. Michael Kearney kinsman, (probably older brother) of Joseph Kearney, entered the Guild of Barber Surgeons & Periwigmakers in 1717, and was entered as a 'Capillamentarius' i.e. a hair dresser in the Freemens Rolls in 1718. As a Freeman of Dublin City, he had the right to practice his trade and conduct business in Dublin City, and he had a vote in elections for the city council. Michael Kearney was very active within the politics of his trade guild. In 1720 within three years of joining he was elected house warden. In 1724, he was openly critical of the master and warden of his guild, and led a petition against them. Although he was suspended at that time, clearly he had the support of his fellow guild members, and within two years in 1726, Michael Kearney was elected master of the Guild of Barber Surgeons. Research located a political pamphlet against Michael Kearney printed in 1726 called *Hue and Cry*. In the 1750s, when the aristocracy tried to gerrymander elections to Dublin City Council to put in their own candidates, Michael Kearney was

prominent among the Dublin Guildsmen in opposing them. Barack Obama is directly descended from the Kearneys of Shinrone & Moneygall Co. Offaly. The height of this family's prosperity was between the 1760s and 1780s, when the nephews from Offaly stepped into their Dublin uncle's business of wig-making. After the 1780s the fortunes of this line of the Kearney family went into fairly rapid decline due to a combination of the economic changes brought about after the Act of Union in 1801 and the decline in the fashion of wig wearing. Tracing the history of the Moneygall/Shinrone Kearneys, in the following generations William (1762-1828) and his son Joseph (ca. 1794-1861) both became shoe-makers. They retained some property rights in Moneygall and Shinrone, and it seems the family sold/ released their rights these properties in order to finance the family's emigration to the United States. Commenting on the research into Obama's Irish links **Fiona Fitzsimons**, Director of Research Eneclann Ltd. says 'Apart from the obvious interest of a link to a US presidential candidate, the story of the Kearney family of Moneygall is a fascinating story in itself. The Kearney family history, illustrates over five generations, a family history that was not untypical in Ireland, but which we don't often consider as a typical Irish emigrant story. However, we were taken by complete surprise to discover an early connection local politics and a distant cousin who becomes Provost of Trinity College Dublin and Bishop of Ossory.' Further details of this research can be found at [www.eneclann.ie](http://www.eneclann.ie)

## Revolutionary Lawyers

A very important and yet, a much overlooked aspect of the Irish Revolution would possibly have remained a mere footnote but for the publication by Four Courts Press of "*Revolutionary Lawyers—Sinn Féin and Crown Courts in Ireland and Britain 1916-1923*" by **David Foxton** ISBN 097-1-84682-068-7 (432pps hardback Web Price: €58.50). This volume could easily be described as both a legal history and a history of a political struggle. Indeed, it could be said that this important subject awaited the careful attention of a practicing barrister (lawyer) like Foxton. The book considers the use made by Irish republicans of the courts in Great Britain and Ireland from the 1916 Easter Rising to the Irish Civil War (1922-3). It outlines the legal framework employed by the British authorities to deal with the insurgency and the often ad-hoc nature of such as it strayed from the question-

bly legal interpretations of DORA to the arena of "government policy". Foxton introduces us to the various lawyers, judges, civil servants, military personnel and politicians involved in this courtroom war. Sometimes including amusing anecdotes to set the scene like the description of Earnest Bruce Charles, KC—famed for polishing off 'two dozen oysters, a porterhouse stake, and a suet pudding as chaser' in one sitting. He explores the types of courts-martial and whether a legal basis existed for the courts that condemned the leaders of the Easter Rising to death. The subsequent legal attempts to force publication of the transcripts of the 1916 courts-martial were met, not surprisingly, with something very reminiscent of Lord Justice Denning's "*Appalling Vista*" judgment in the Birmingham Six Case [1980] Q.B. 283. The 1916 transcripts were finally released to the public in 1999.

Foxton's treatment of the operation of the Dáil Courts as a conflict for legal supremacy in Ireland during the War of Independence is an extremely important contribution to our understanding of the period. From the first sitting on May 17 1920 in Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo, the reach of the Dáil Courts quickly extended to every county with only Co. Antrim and Belfast falling outside the ambit of the rival system. His descriptions of various cases provides wonderful source information for both local and military historians. Genealogists too will find much in this volume to build a narrative on the involvement of ancestors or relatives in the events of the period. His accounts of the various incidents, including many names of combatants and civilians, makes this publication a work of reference. This work is most certainly an essential read for any student of the 1916-23 period of Irish history. **MM**

## Certificates and Diplomas in Genealogy

Adult education courses are becoming very popular as more people understand and appreciate the value of lifelong learning. Indeed, many members of this Society have benefited greatly by attending structured courses in genealogy, in addition to attending the monthly meetings of the Society itself. University College Dublin offers a **Certificate in Genealogy/Family History**. Modules 1 and 2 would suit students seeking a basic introduction to Genealogy or Family History. After completing these modules, students may opt to

study Modules 3 to 6 over two further years to obtain a Certificate in Genealogy/Family History. Three additional modules are available, leading to the Diploma, which may be studied by those who have successfully completed the Certificate. Many members have also go on to the **Diploma in Genealogy/Family History**. This National University of Ireland Diploma provides an opportunity for those who have secured a Certificate in Genealogy/Family History to progress further with their studies and qualifications through

three further modules, 7 to 9. Lectures will again be interspersed with class discussion, group work and seminars, and there will also be a number of guest speakers. Credit students will submit an 10,000 word project on an agreed subject. The course lecturer, **Mr. Seán Murphy, MA**, is a graduate of the university, a professional genealogist and published author on genealogy, heraldry and history. For further information on these courses please checkout <http://www.ucd.ie/adulted/courses> or call UCD on Dublin 01. 716 7123

# James Scannell Reports...

## OLD AGE PENSIONS ACT, 1908

One of the major milestones in the social development of Ireland was the enactment of the *Old Age Pensions Act, 1908*, by the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland. Introduced by David Lloyd George, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was aimed "at lifting the shadow of the workhouse from the homes of the poor". This legislation sought to provide a guaranteed income for people who were too old to work and from January 1909 a non-contributory pension of 5/- (shillings) was paid to people over seventy years of age provided they had a weekly income of less than 8/- (shillings) per week. Most of the recipients were women and to eliminate any social stigma about receiving this payment, it was decided that the scheme would be administered by the Post Office rather than the Poor Law Guardians who delivered what now would be termed as "social welfare schemes" under the Poor Law. In 1970 a Retirement Pension was introduced in Ireland for people who retired at sixty-five as they had to wait until they reached seventy to

qualify for the Old Age Pension. Between 1973 and 1977 the qualifying age for the Old Age Pension was gradually reduced from seventy to sixty-six years of age. In 2006 the term "Old Age Pension" in Ireland was changed to the "State Pension".

## ADELAIDE HOSPITAL

Next year the Adelaide Hospital School of Nursing will celebrate its 150th Anniversary. Founded as a nurse-training school of young Protestant woman and reputed to be the first nurse training school in Ireland for lay women. The Nursing School quickly established a reputation for excellence. Currently under the auspices of the Adelaide Hospital Society, twenty five undergraduate students are admitted annually to the nursing degree programme at Trinity College Dublin. To mark this anniversary the Adelaide Hospital Society will publish a history of the school in 2009 which will record its legacy of education and its contribution to Irish nursing and Irish health care. The Hospital Society has commissioned Dr. Gerard

Fealy, Associate Professor, University College Dublin School of Nursing, to write this important essay. Adelaide alumni and especially former students of the Adelaide School are invited to submit photographs, relevant documents etc. Please contact Ms. Shirley Ingram, Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Ireland or phone +353.1.4142071 / +353.1.41422070; Fax +353.1.4142070 or E-mail: sjingram12@gmail.com. *James Scannell*

## Fr. SEÁN CASSIDY, RIP

The death has taken place on August 27th 2008 of a great and loyal friend of this Society, Fr. Seán Cassidy. A curate at St. Michael's Parish, Dún Laoghaire for sixteen years before transferring to Airfield on Dublin's north side, Fr. Seán had a keen interest in history and genealogy, contributing a number of items to the Society's archive. He was a member of the Society for a number of years and on October 25th 2005, together with Rev. Kevin Dalton, DD (Church of Ireland), he participated in the celebration of the Society's fifteenth anniversary and the inauguration of the President of the Society, Mr. Tony McCarthy, MA, FGSI, at Monkstown Parish Church. He is sadly missed by all. *MM*

# Précis of the August Lecture

On Tuesday Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, **Ms. Bernadette Galloghly**, Senior Librarian, Dublin City Public Libraries, Pearse Street, Dublin gave a very interesting and informative lecture on the new genealogy resources at Dublin City Libraries, including the databases of Dublin Parish Registers, City Councillors and Memorial Plaques. With the assistance of a PowerPoint presentation, Bernadette explained each of the resources, the reasons for their compilation and more importantly, the vital genealogical information that may be had or gleaned from the various resources. Whilst, most genealogists are aware of the exceptional helpfulness of the staff of the facility at Pearse Street few, if any,

would have known of the personal endeavours of some of its staff, like Bernadette, who personally collect and research the information for these databases. The compilation of the database, including photographs, of the Memorial Plaques involves visiting churches, public buildings, schools etc throughout the City of Dublin to record the information. With the change of use of some of these buildings, access is at times difficult and requires considerable research and negotiation. Bernadette recalled many funny incidents encountered during her quest and her on-site visits. Following the lecture there was a very lively question and answer session on the resources covered.

## GSILECTURE PROGRAMME

**Tuesday Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>** John Hamrock, MGSI, a county's resources for family history research: the Roscommon experience; **Tuesday Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>** Rory McKenna, Martello Towers in Ireland; **Tuesday Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>** the Society will host a speaker from the Grand Lodge of Ireland. topic:- 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. Please send any comments on the lecture programme to: 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](http://www.familyhistory.ie/shop) 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.

**IRELAND'S GENEALOGICAL GAZETTE**

is published by the

**Genealogical Society of Ireland**

11, Desmond Avenue, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland

E-mail: GAZETTE@familyhistory.ie

Charity Reference: CHY10672

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

Tuesday Sep. 9th &amp; Oct. 14th 2008

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

Wednesday Sep. 24th &amp; Sep. 22nd 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**

**Elaine Goode**, 309 Ohio St., Bangor, Maine, 04401, USA. E-mail: mag1938@aol.com Wrote:- Seeking information on Daniel **Toomey** born about 1811 in Ireland but don't know where. He came to the United State and lived in Bangor, Maine but went to Salem, Massachusetts in 1842 and had a son name Thomas Toomey born 1842. Daniel married Margaret **Casey** in Bangor, Penobscot, Maine in 1836 or 8 in the Catholic Church. Any information much appreciated.

**Laine Clancy**, 78, Douglas Street, Stockton, NSW 2295, Australia. E-mail: Moreta\_C@hotmail.com Wrote:- Searching for any information of the family of Patrick Clancy. From discharge & enlistment papers Patrick **Clancy** - Labourer - Born in the Parish of Kildallen in or near the town of Killashandra in County Cavan and enlisted at Belturbet in County Cavan on 18th February 1824 aged sixteen. So born I believe on 18 February 1808. I don't know where or when he married or any other information than her name was Mary. He served overseas in both the West Indies & Cape of Good Hope for seventeen years and emigrated to Australia in 1849 with his wife and four children. Family oral history says he had a brother James that enlisted at the same time as him. Any information on this family much appreciated.

**Rick Carroll**, 5671, Poohs Path, Garden Valley, CA 95633, USA. E-mail: rjcarroll46@yahoo.com Wrote: My great grandfather Michael Joseph **Carroll** (supposedly O'Carroll in Ireland) was born in 1834 in Ireland and emigrated to Boston, Massachusetts, sometime between 1840-70. He lived in San Francisco in 1870. Michael married Bridget **Clancy** who was born in Ireland on November 17 1842 and supposedly arrived in the USA between 1872-78. My problem in finding information on them is that they lived and died in San Francisco before the 1906 earthquake that destroyed many records. Both are buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Oakland, California. The cemetery has no data on either individual. Any assistance, advise or information very much appreciated.

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

**FOUR COURTS PRESS***Irish History, Genealogy, Local History  
and much more at....*[www.fourcourtspress.ie](http://www.fourcourtspress.ie)**An Garda Síochána and the Scott Medal**

by Gerard O'Brien

It has been said that policing by consent is the essence of a true and stable democratic society and indeed, from the foundation of the State in 1922, its police force, An Garda Síochána, can be justly proud of its members commitment to the fundamental principle of public service. In the aftermath of the turmoil of the War of Independence (1919-21) and the bitter Civil War (1922-23) which followed the Treaty with Great Britain, the establishment of an unarmed police service, An Garda Síochána, by the new State was quite a unique and, in many respects, a very daring experiment in "community policing". The fact that it worked so well and continues to do so, is an enormous credit to its founders and, especially, to its individual members over the past eighty-six years. However, like in all societies around the world, in Ireland too situations occur which test the fortitude, bravery and the all-round qualities of individual police officers in the course of their daily duties. Unfortunately, some of these situations have resulted in the death or severe wounding of officers. Many citizens owe their lives to the bravery and sometimes, physical strength of officers who risked their own lives to save them from fire, drowning or other forms of personal injury or possible death. A new book published by Four Courts Press "*An Garda Síochána and the Scott Medal*" ISBN 978-1-84682-124-0 (208pp, hardback €35.00) by **Gerard O'Brien** tells the story of hundreds of recipients of the *Scott Medal for Valor*. Introduced in 1924 at the behest of Canadian born American philanthropist, Col. Walter Scott, it remains today a much respected mark of exceptional bravery. Oddly enough, its design does not afford heraldic preeminence to the symbol of Ireland but to the shield and eagle of the United States. No explanation for the design is pro-

vided by the author other than saying that Scott Medals were awarded to other police departments in United States and Argentina. A volume honoring the recipients of the Scott Medal is certainly an important contribution to the history of Irish policing. However, the potential offered by the subject matter was far from fully exploited by the author. Indeed, an inconsistency of nomenclature throughout was certainly avoidable and should a second or revised volume be under consideration, then more detailed biographies of the recipients, and of Col. Walter Scott himself, would greatly improve the publication as a resource for further research. From a genealogical and local historical viewpoint, details of the parents and families of the recipients would have been a welcome addition to the volume. Constructing such a volume as a reference work with the information accessible by year of award would greatly assist the reader. Nevertheless, this present volume fulfils a certain undeniable need amongst serving and past members of An Garda Síochána for a public recognition of their colleagues who were the worthy recipients of the Scott Medal. The style employed by the author certainly provides the sort of familiarity one would normally associate with a college yearbook. This may be understandable as the source material, according to the references, was largely based on "in-house" Garda publications such as the "*Garda Review*" and the "*Garda Review Yearbook*". Whilst, most would view such a narrow sourcing of information to be lacking in objectivity, however, given the subject matter and possibly, an intended appeal to a particular readership, this may not apply. Irrespective of the above, this volume will certainly have its place amongst the very few published works on the history of Irish policing. **MM**

**AN DAONCHARTLANN**

As reported last month, the Society's Archive based at the restored Martello Tower at Seapoint, County Dublin. "An Daonchartlann" as it is called, is soon to be transferred to a temporary location in Dún Laoghaire. The relocation is required in order that the Martello Tower can be fully surveyed to ascertain what works would be necessary to make the building atmospherically suitable for the Archive. Therefore, the Board of the Society is making contingency plans for the possibility that the building will be deemed unsuitable for the archive. These plans include the possibility of linking up with a third level college and locating the archive within the college's library. The temporary location at 111, Lower George's Street, Dún Laoghaire will enable the archive to be fully catalogued and made accessible to our members. The cataloguing will require volunteers and the Archivist, Séamus O'Reilly, MGSi, will be making an announcement on this project in due course. However, those wishing to assist with the moving of the archival collections from the Martello Tower to Lower George's Street are invited to make contact with the General Secretary. The Board wishes to thank members for their patience and support on this matter over the past three years.