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GENEALOGY
HERALDRY
VEXILLOLOGY
SOCIAL HISTORY
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National Heraldic Register

To Give Legal Status to Coats-of-Arms!

Senator Alex White introduced a short Bill in Seanad Éireann aimed at regularizing hundreds of Grants of Arms made by the Chief Heralds of Ireland since 1943. The *National Cultural Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2008* was published on Friday December 19th 2008 — the last sitting day before the Christmas and New Year recess. The Bill provides a purely administrative solution to the problem created by the implementation in May 2005 of the fundamentally flawed Section 13 of the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997*. The 1997 Act is the only legislative basis for Ireland's heraldic services as the necessary legislation to give the State the power to grant arms was not produced at the commencement of the Irish heraldic services in 1943. With the implementation of the 1997 Act in May 2005 hundreds of Grants of Arms made by the Chief Heralds of Ireland since 1943 were thrown into a legal limbo as the State had no power to make such grants. Besides ordinary grantees from home and abroad, this "heraldic legal limbo" embarrassingly includes some high profile grants like those to US presidents Kennedy and Clinton and, of course, grants to

senior churchmen, national institutions and prominent business personalities. In 2006 this Society produced the *Genealogy & Heraldry Bill, 2006* which aimed to establish a proper heraldic authority for Ireland and to incorporate all previous grants in the scope of the Bill. This Bill was presented in Seanad Éireann by Senator Brendan Ryan, however, it was withdrawn at Second Stage after a two hour debate at the request of the Minister who promised to examine its proposals. In 2007 the Board of the National Library suspended heraldic services for a period of eight months because of doubts about its legislative powers to provide such services. In October 2007 the Minister, on the advice of the Attorney General, finally admitted to Dáil Éireann that the State "probably had no power" to grant arms from 1943 until May 2005. He confirmed that a "short Bill" would be needed to "regularize" matters. This "short Bill" never materialised nor did it appear on the Government's legislative programme, therefore, this Society proposed a purely administrative solution to the problem—the creation of a National Heraldic Register. Senator Alex White agreed to bring

forward a Bill encompassing the measures proposed by the Society including: the *National Heraldic Register*; the inclusion of the pre-May 2005 Grants of Arms; clarifying the establishment of Irish heraldic services and the relationship with the Office of the Ulster King of Arms founded in 1552; the provision of a register of flags and emblems; the provision of computerised Grants of Arms to make such more affordable and thus making heraldry more accessible to our citizens and our Diaspora; the provision of a mechanism to examine and, if necessary, cancel grants based on incorrect documentation (clearing up any residues of the "Bogus Chiefs" affair and related matters); the provision of a facility whereby agreements for the mutual recognition of grants can be made between different heraldic authorities and finally, disposing of the current anomaly concerning copyright matters. The Bill is simply an "administrative" and "corrective" measure seeking to bring closure to nearly sixty-six years of uncertainty as to the legislative basis for the State's involvement in the provision of heraldic services. It's time to get matters right, once and for all.

Important Anniversaries Marked

The October issue of this newsletter called on the Government to mark the 90th anniversaries of the election of Countess Markievicz and the convening of the First Dáil. **Senator Ivana Bacik** was instrumental in the organisation of the commemoration last month of 90th anniversary of Markievicz's historic election in December 1918 as both the first woman elected to the UK House of Commons and to Dáil Éireann. Senator Bacik appropriately used the occasion to highlight the low number of women

members in the Oireachtas. **Senator John Carty** read from the October issue of this newsletter on Nov. 11th 2008 when he made a proposal in Seanad Éireann [Irish Senate] to celebrate on 21st January 2009 the 90th anniversary of the First Dáil. The Leader of Seanad Éireann, **Senator Donie Cassidy**, responding said "Why not? What a wonderful idea. Let us see how we can progress this. With your permission, a Chathaoirligh, [Chairperson] I will take the proposal to the Committee on Procedure and

Privileges under your stewardship to see how we can progress it with your colleague, the Ceann Comhairle [Chairperson of Dáil Éireann]". The government has agreed to host a special joint meeting of the House of the Oireachtas on Tuesday 20th Jan. 2009 at 11.00hrs in the Round Room at the Mansion House in Dublin. The first meeting of Dáil Éireann was held here on 21st Jan. 1919. Marking special anniversaries promotes a greater awareness, understanding, appreciation and knowledge of our nation's past.

Government, War and Society in Medieval Ireland

Peter Crooks, *Editor*

Any reader of Irish history would have encountered the monumental works of three giants in the field of Irish medieval history, Edmund Curtis, A.J. Otway-Ruthven and James Lydon. As three successive holders of the Lecky Chair of History at Trinity College Dublin, they've provided an invaluable legacy for modern scholarship. "*Government, War and Society in Medieval Ireland - Essays by Edmund Curtis, A.J. Otway-Ruthven and James Lydon*" edited by Peter Crooks and published by Four Courts Press (ISBN 978-1-84682-105-9 408 pp h/bk Price: €45.00. Special Web Price: €40.50) brings together in one volume twenty-one of the most important essays by these three major historians. The most poignant, from the perspective of a twenty-first century reader, is the prologue by Edmund Curtis – '*Irish history and its popular versions*' which was a lecture he delivered in Dublin in 1925. Curtis asks 'will Irish history be, as it was mainly in the past, a fictitious version of the nation's story, one-sided in putting all the blame on the English and other foreigners, unreal in expecting us to believe in a pious, noble and patriotic race led by gallant, brilliant and wise soldiers and statesmen, who, strange to say, lost every time, and concerned in wanting us to believe in some extraordinary virtue and intellect in the Irish people, marking them off from all others. Or shall we, Curtis continues, 'have what other nations consider 'scientific history', founded on fact and judicial research, putting us in our place as members of

the European family and as having the ordinary defects and virtues of ordinary human beings acting under extraneous circumstances of climate, religion, geography etc?' This is indeed a wonderfully sobering question for all historians from the, so called, 'romantics' of the nineteenth and early twentieth century to the ever controversial 'revisionists' of more recent vintage. This prologue sets the tone for this exceptional volume. The essays are grouped thematically in three sections covering 'government', 'war' and 'society' and take the reader through from the creation of the 'Lordship of Ireland' in 1171 following the Anglo-Norman invasion to the creation of the 'Kingdom of Ireland' for Henry VIII in 1541. James Lydon unravels the legal ties which bound variously the 'land', 'lordship' and 'kingdom' of Ireland to the English crown and the latter's obligations in respect of his 'liege subjects' and their protection from the 'king's enemies' – namely, the native Irish. Certainly the seeds for centuries of conflict were firmly sown in this assiduously crafted legal distinction between subjects with rights and obligations and those with nothing but obligations. The latter, the native Irish, were perceived to be 'wild', 'treacherous', 'natural enemies' and, of course, 'not fit to be subjects of the king'. This first section 'government' explores the development of the civil and legal frameworks upon which English rule was established and maintained in medieval Ireland. Otway-Ruthven provides a fascinating account of the

operation of native Irish law (Brehon Law) alongside English law in Ireland, especially in comparison to the successful amalgamation of Anglo-Saxon laws and customs with Norman feudal law in England following the Norman invasion of 1066 and the later coexistence between Welsh law and Anglo-Norman law in Wales up to the sixteenth century. In the second section 'war' the military establishment and the various campaigns at home and overseas are explored. Indeed, long before the Wild Geese the Irish were mercenaries in Scotland, Wales, Flanders and France. Lydon details the use of the Irish 'hobelar' or troops mounted on native Irish small ponies by Edward I in his Scottish wars. The third section 'society' is most interesting to genealogists for here we have each of the essayists exploring the impact of the Norman settlement on the cultural, linguistic and social fabric of society. Otway-Ruthven's essay on the character of the Norman settlement is a particularly interesting account of the composition of the population in the manorial system. Curtis explores the often fractious relationship between the English and the descendants of the Irish-Vikings or Ostmen. In another essay, Curtis, looks at the adoption of the 'clan' system by the English settlers and continues with a linguistic account of medieval Ireland. Lydon explores the concept of 'nation' in medieval Ireland including Dónal Ó Néill's remonstrance to the Pope in 1317. Peter Crooks ends with an excellent guide to recent works on the period. *MM*

The Blood of the Irish

In a two part documentary on RTÉ on the 5th and 12th January 2009, the true genetic origins of the population of Ireland were explored and compared with popular beliefs and ancient lore. Presented by celebrity TV gardener, **Diarmuid Gavin**, the series sought to establish when the first inhabitants arrived and from where. Beginning with the movement 'out of Africa' around 65 million years ago, though, the first settlers only arrived on our shores around 10,000 years ago. Gavin reiterated the point noted by Irish people around the world that we can easily pick out the Irish face and physical characteristics 'from a mile away'. So why is this, he asked. He explained the recent developments in the science of DNA with the assistance of Prof. David McConnell of Trinity College Dublin. Samples of saliva from participants were to be tested to establish their genetic markers and to compare these with a wider European study, of which, Trinity College Dublin is a partner. Though, Gavin made many references to the Celts, the Milesians and the "Book of

Invasions" - it seems that programme editing allowed little time to examine the 'Celtic question'. Samples of saliva were tested by EthnoAncestry, a company specialising in DNA testing. Such research has proven that one in ten Irishmen, one in five in the north west, are descended from a common male ancestor 1600 years ago, possibly, Niall of the Nine Hostages. Also, the DNA extracted from a bone of a child buried in a cave in Co. Clare 3,500 years ago was examined against that of the local population and remarkably three matches in the small sample were identified. Gavin travelled to mainland Europe to explain the migrations caused by the advancing and ultimately receding Ice Ages. He noted that facially the Irish and the Basques are almost identical. This is important since the earliest Irish lore maintains that our ancestors came from northern Spain and not via Britain. A study of the Y chromosome in the Irish male population indicated that our closest European relatives are the Basques. This marker was present in 80% of the Irish males with 98% in Connacht, therefore, most of us are descended from the earliest inhabitants of Ireland. For further info. see: www.rte.ie/tv/bloodoftheirish/

GSI ANNUAL JOURNAL

Articles are sought for the GSI Annual Journal. Subjects could include family histories, biographies, military or social histories, resource information, heraldry or vexillology etc. The publication of your own family history is the best way to ensure that future generations will have the benefit of your research. It also allows for the recording of family lore, special events and, where appropriate, family tragedies such as losses in war or natural disasters. Biographies of family members who may have contributed to their community, country or field of endeavour, should be published in order to record their stories. Black and white photographs or drawings are also most welcome. Ideally articles for publication should be of between 1000 and 2500 words in length and must not have been published elsewhere and, of course, they must be original works by the author. Therefore, the Board reserves the right to seek assurances on the source, ownership and originality of any article submitted. If you would like to submit an article for publication, please do not hesitate to drop the Editor, Margaret Conroy, an e-mail at Gazette@familyhistory.ie

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. Currently the Society is preparing a new publication that will be of immense assistance to those tracing ancestors in the British forces in Ireland up to 1922. "*Memorial Inscriptions of Military Personnel and Their Families*" has been painstakingly researched by Barry O'Connor and his team and should be available shortly. In the meantime, for a full listing of the Society's publications of memorial inscriptions, including other military cemeteries, please see the Society's on-line shop on the website www.familyhistory.ie/shop

James Scannell Reports...

CARROL COLLECTION

Limerick University has acquired the Carrol Collection of family heirlooms and military memorabilia which dates back to the 1700's and covers the military careers of 5 generations of this family beginning with the exploits of Major-General Sir William Parker Carrol in the Peninsula War and also includes material from the Anglo-Boer War and both World Wars.. Many of the items are in the form of handwritten documents including a letter from the Duke of Wellington to Major-General Parker Carrol. The collection also includes the diaries of his wife for the years 1817, 1818, and 1819. In 2002 the Limerick City Trust acquired the collection from Ms. June O'Carrol Robinson and has now placed the collection on loan to the Gluckman Library at Limerick University to facilitate access by researchers.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2008

On Sunday November 9th 2008 Her Excellency, Mrs. Mary McAleese, President Ireland,

attended an ecumenical Service of Remembrance organised by the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland Branch) in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and was one of number of events held in the Republic to commemorate all those who lost their lives in war. In Thurles, Co. Tipperary, An Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowen, TD, was represented by Captain Michael Treacy, his Aide de Camp, at ceremonies to mark 50 years of participation by the Irish Defence Forces in the United Nation's Peace Missions overseas. Following Mass in Thurles Cathedral there was a parade to St. Mary's Garden of Remembrance where a Roll of Honour of all Thurles men killed in the First World War was read by Mr. John Wort, chairperson of the memorial committee. In Limerick City, Mr. Willie O'Dea, TD, Minister for Defence, attended the Royal British Legion's annual remembrance service at the war memorial in Pery Square. While in Northern Ireland about 1000 people attended remembrance services in Belfast and laid wreaths at the Cenotaph outside Belfast City Hall. On Sunday afternoon the Irish United Nations Veterans Association held

its annual wreath ceremony in Dublin's Arbour Hill to pay tribute to all Irish Defence Forces personnel who had served with the United Nations. The attendance included representatives of the Irish Defence Forces, Cllr. Eibhlin Byrne, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Maj. Gen. David, The O Morchoe, representing the Royal British Legion in Ireland, Mr. John Moore representing the Royal Navy and Mr. Patrick Whelan who represented the Royal Air Force. Later that evening RTÉ television, the Irish state broadcaster, screened a thirty minute documentary 'Shot at Dawn' in its 'Would You Believe' series on three soldiers who were shot during WW1 and were subsequently pardoned – it can be viewed at www.rte.ie In Cork City on Saturday November 8th there was a concert to honour the 2600 Cork men who died in battle during the First World War.

EDITOR: An excellent book on the War was published in 2008 by the Royal Irish Academy in conjunction with RTÉ—"Our War— Ireland and The Great War" edited by John Horne (ISBN 978-1-904890-50-8) See: www.ria.ie

Précis of the December Lecture

On Tuesday Dec. 9th 2008, Ms. Ciara Kerrigan, Assistant Keeper at the Department of Manuscripts of the National Library of Ireland delivered a very informative talk on the **Estate Records** held at the National Library. These records can be a wonderful treasure trove for the genealogist, however, not without undertaking some preliminary research, Ms. Kerrigan explained. If your ancestors were part of the landlord class then a simple search would establish whether any estate records exist for their holding. But since most of our Irish ancestors were tenant farmers we must locate the estate, the landlord's name and other details to proceed to make use of the estate records at the National Library. Ms. Kerrigan with the aid of a Power-Point presentation went through the various types of documents one can expect to find amongst the estate records ranging from rental rolls, lease books and

account books to heart rendering pleas for assistance during the Great Famine. Also amongst the estate papers one can find information on tradespersons who provided services to these estates. In some cases assisted emigration records survive. Most of these landed estates were broken up in the late 19th century as the land was transferred from, in most cases, English or Anglo-Irish landlords to native Irish farmers under various British government funded schemes. Ms. Kerrigan explained the various finding aids available at the National Library for those wishing to consult the collection of estate records. However, as with all other Irish genealogical sources, this Society highly recommends that you start your research by purchasing a copy of John Grenham's invaluable "*Tracing Your Irish Ancestors*" published by Gill & Macmillan and available through www.gillmacmillan.ie

GSILECTURE PROGRAMME

Tues. Jan. 13—Digitising Sources: Eneclann's plans for the coming year. Brian Donovan, Director CEO, Eneclann **Tues. 10 Feb.**—The Parker Families of north Munster and Kingstown. Paddy Waldron. **Tues. Mar. 10**—The new Freeman and Trade Guilds Database. John Grenham **Tues. Apr. 14**—The Irish Historic Towns Atlas as a support for the family history researcher. Jennifer Moore, Royal Irish Academy. **Tues. May 12**—Church of Ireland records in the RCB library, Raymond Refausee, Librarian and Archivist, Representative Church Body Library (Church of Ireland). **Tues. June 9**—The Student Records of Dublin University. Alumni Office, TCD. Any comments on the lecture programme 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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JOIN ON-LINE

@

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

Tuesday Jan. 13th & Feb. 10th 2009

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

Wednesday Jan. 28th & Feb. 25th 2009

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)

An Gorta Mór

As reported in the August 2008 issue of this newsletter, the Irish government has finally agreed to organise an annual commemoration of the Great Famine and established the National Famine Commemoration Committee to organise suitable events. On Thursday January 8th 2009, the Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, Mr. Éamon Ó Cuív, TD announced that May 17th would be designated as the Annual Famine Memorial Day. Besides local events, the State's official commemoration will be rotated annually amongst the four provinces of Ireland. In addition, a special ceremony will be held on May 10th in Canada to commemorate the circa 250,000 Irish people who arrived on Canadian soil between 1845 and 1855. The first Irish official commemoration will be held on May 17th 2009 in Skibbereen, Co. Cork, and nearby, Abbeystrewery, the location of the mass graves of between 8,000 and 10,000 famine victims. No doubt, in time the Irish Diaspora may also commemorate An Gorta Mór (The Great Famine) on this day and thus, creating an international recognition of this tragedy caused by the catastrophic failure of successive potato harvests from 1845 to 1850. The conditions were exacerbated by the social structure of Irish agrarian society which was designed in the 1650s to support an alien landlordism and further exacerbated by the Malthusian policies adopted by the British government in its pitifully poor responses to this disaster. However, in finally achieving their goal of an annual official commemoration of An Gorta Mór all credit must go to Michael Blanch and his wife Betty who have striven for such since 2003.

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Irish Emigrants Commemorated

James Scannell Reports...

On Saturday 11 November 2008 a monument in the form of a memorial cross was unveiled over the grave of Annie Moore in Calvary Cemetery, Queens, New York. Annie Moore had lain in an unmarked grave for eighty-four years. She was seventeen years of age when she arrived at Ellis Island, New York, on 1 January 1892 and was the first person to register there. Moore sailed from Cork to the USA in December 1891 on the *SS Nevada*. Up to 2006 it had been believed that she had moved to the west coast of the USA and was reputed to have married a descendant of Daniel O'Connell. But then research carried out by genealogist Megan Smolenyak revealed that she had married a German-American baker and had lived on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, New York. The attendance at the ceremony included three generations of Moore's descendants, the Smiths and the Donovans, her two descendant families, who unveiled the memorial cross which commemorates her significance in American history and who worked for the past two years to make the monument at her grave a reality. Irish tenor Ronán Tynan sang Brendan Graham's song about Moore called "Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears" while Ms. Smolenyak read a letter from Mr. Barack Obama in which he said that "The idea of honouring those who came before you by sacrificing on behalf of those who followed is at the heart of the American experience. Irish Ameri-

cans like your ancestors, and mine from County Offaly, understood this well." Sheleen (Donovan) Peterson, a new Jersey school-teacher, said that she remembered a school project she did when she was eleven in which she wrote of her link to the first person registered at Ellis Island and the scepticism shown by her teacher at that time. Niall Burgess, Consul General of Ireland in New York, said that Moore was "as the human face of a tremendous story" and adding "I don't think that there is Irish family that does not connection to this country somewhere." Meanwhile, during her recent visit to the United States of America, Her Excellency, Mrs. Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, unveiled a memorial in the form of a Celtic Cross to survivors of the Great Famine in the Mount Calvary Cemetery in Portland, Oregon. The memorial is a replica of the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise carved out of sandstone by Brendan McGloin from Co. Donegal. Prior to the Famine about 1% of the population of Portland was Irish born. A decade later the Irish were city's largest ethnic group comprising 10% of its population. The cross was four years in the making and cost some \$200,000 / €149,700. It was funded by private donations. Following the ceremony the President greeted about five hundred people at a special event marking the 70th Anniversary of the All-Ireland Cultural Society of Portland.

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. Only new entries will be published and then "banked" on a database on the 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 who may place as many entries as they wish on this database. The Gazette will "flag" new entries or any alterations to the database as soon as sufficient entries are received for publication. Whilst, in future general research queries will not be published, consideration will 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 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.