

Cumann Genealais na hÉireann

Ireland's Genealogical Gazette

(incorporating "The Genie Gazette")

Vol. 4. No. 5

www.familyhistory.ie

May : Bealtaine 2009



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

CONTENTS

<i>Marsh's Library A Mirror on the World</i>	2
<i>An Unexpected Bonus</i>	2
<i>Society's publications on CD</i>	2
<i>James Scannell Reports...</i>	3
<i>Précis of the April Lecture</i>	3
<i>Diary Dates & Archive News</i>	4
<i>Permanent Memorial Sought</i>	4

Ombudsman, National Consumer Agency to Examine Heraldic Mess?

Three years ago on May 11th 2006, Cork based Senator Brendan Ryan (Labour Party) published the *Genealogy & Heraldry Bill, 2006* produced by the Genealogical Society of Ireland. This Bill sought to provide a proper legislative basis for the State's delivery of heraldic services. These services began in 1943 following the transfer by the British government of the manuscripts, records and heraldic paraphernalia of the Office of the Ulster King of Arms held in Dublin Castle to the custody of the State. However, no legislative measures were enacted in 1943 to give the State the power to grant Arms. This position remained until the enactment of the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997*, however, the provisions of this Act which, was only implemented in May 2005, were fundamentally flawed. The Society's Bill was debated at Second Stage for two hours in Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate) on December 12th 2006 before it was withdrawn at the request of the Minister Mr. John O'Donoghue, TD. However, the Minister promised Senators that the Bill would be examined by the Board of the National Library of Ireland, including its

Chairman, eminent barrister, Mr. Gerry Danaher. Serious legal doubts over the State's power to provide heraldic services caused the suspension of those services for a period of eight months in 2007. On October 25th 2007 the then Minister, Mr. Séamus Brennan, TD, finally admitted to Dáil Éireann that the 'State probably had no power to grant Arms' until May 2005 when the 1997 Act was implemented. This statement effectively plunged all grants of Arms made by successive Chief Heralds between 1943 and May 2005 into a legal limbo. Though, Minister Brennan indicated in October 2007 that he believed that a 'short Bill' would rectify matters, this Bill has not yet been produced. The National Library and the Office of the Chief Herald refer queries regarding the legality of pre-May 2005 grants to the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, Mr. Martin Cullen, TD. In order to expedite matters the Genealogical Society of Ireland presented proposals for a 'short Bill' to Senator Alex White who published the *National Cultural Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2008* in December 2008 to provide for a new *National Heraldic Register* which would include

grants made since 1943. This proposed legislation also provided a much needed mechanism to finally 'clean up' the State's heraldic records by removing any remaining vestiges of the scandalous 'bogus chiefs' affair which brought Irish heraldry into such disrepute. The Chief Herald would be empowered to re-examine documentation presented by applicants for Arms or for confirmations of Arms and, should such be found to be deficient in anyway, to cancel such grants. Senator White's proposed legislation is a simple and cost effective remedy to a deplorable situation which has left the pre-May 2005 clients of the Office of the Chief Herald with purchases of doubtful legal standing. Indeed, it seems that the Board of the National Library and the Office of the Chief Herald are content to ignore the plight of their pre-May 2005 clients whilst simultaneously claiming (on www.nli.ie) an inherited heraldic jurisdiction right back to 1552. This ludicrously contradictory position only serves to further tarnish the reputation of Irish heraldry. Is it not time for this matter to be examined by the National Consumer Agency or indeed, the Ombudsman?

Uachtarán Nua

The College of Fellows of the Society has elected former Cathaoirleach, Mr. Rory Stanley, FGSI, to succeed Mr. Tony McCarthy, MA, FGSI as the third President of the Society. Rory was Cathaoirleach (Chairperson) of the Society from 1996 to March 2008. The election was conducted under the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system of Proportional Representation as used in

national and local elections in Ireland. Of the fourteen Fellows entitled to vote, nine exercised their franchise in a postal ballot. The votes were counted at the May meeting of the Board and with five candidates contesting this election the voting was very close indeed. Rory was elected on the Third Count. Though the new President assumes office immediately on election, no date has been

fixed for the formal inauguration of the President where he will receive the presidential chain of office bearing the heraldic badge of the Society. It is expected that the new President will appoint two new Fellows of the Society to mark his inauguration. Whilst, congratulating Rory on his election, the Board expressed its deep appreciation to outgoing President Mr. Tony McCarthy, MA, FGSI.

Marsh's Library A Mirror on the World

Law, Learning and Libraries, 1650-1750

'*Marsh's Library A Mirror on the World—Law, Learning and Libraries, 1650-1750*' edited by **Muriel McCarthy** and **Ann Simmons** (ISBN 978-1-84682-152-3 312pp ills. h/b Price €55.00 or €49.50 on line at www.fourcourtspress.ie) This collection of essays celebrates one of Dublin's finest institutions and indeed, one of national and international importance. In 1707 an Act of the [Old] Irish Parliament established Marsh's Library as 'a publick library for ever'. This volume contains the papers presented at a conference to commemorate the tercentenary of the 1707 Act which took place in the library in October 2007. The topics covered by the conference were 'Parliament and Legislation', 'Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment' and 'Collectors and Collections'. As relatively little attention has been afforded to Ireland in the 'Enlightenment' or indeed, to the wider history of Ireland in the eighteenth century with the notable exception of the period surrounding the Great Rebellion of 1798, this volume is a major contribution to addressing this void. This is especially the case when one can actually visit this wonderful institution and view its extensive and rare collections. Essays include **Jack P. Greene** on the expanding British world at the turn of the seventeenth century. This explores the transition from an 'English Empire' of the late Tudor period to new a 'British Empire' following the 1707 Act of Union. **W. N. Osborough** on 6 Anne, chapter 19: 'settling and preserving a publick library for ever';

David Hayton on Bishops as legislators: Marsh and his contemporaries. This essay deals with the Lords Spiritual attending the Irish House of Lords and their impact upon the legislative business of the kingdom. **Thomas O'Connor** on aspects of the role of the Holy Office in Irish church affairs in the seventeenth century. The role of the Holy Office, or Roman Inquisition, was a sort of doctrinal police that expanded its jurisdiction from the Italian peninsula to the wider European context in the early seventeenth century; **Michael Brown** on the location of learning in mid-eighteenth-century Ireland which looks at the readership of the library and with a burgeoning print culture, it examines Dublin's public sphere. **C.D.A. Leighton** on Philip Skelton and the Irish origins of the British Protestant Counter-Enlightenment; **Ruth Whelan** on memorials and martyrs in French Protestantism after the Revocation—the case of Louis de Maroles;; **Philip Benedict & Pierre-Olivier Léchet** on the library of Élie Bouhéreau; **Toby Barnard** on Bishop John Stearne's collection of books and manuscripts; **Elizabethanne Boran** on writing history in seventeenth-century Ireland: Dudley Loftus' annals; **Raymond Gillespie** on manuscript collectors in the age of Marsh which included many Gaelic manuscripts like Richard Plunkett's Irish dictionary of 1662. Indeed, a catalogue of 1697 included 670 Chinese, oriental and Latin manuscripts in the Library. **Archibald Elias** on Richard Helsham, Jonathan Swift, and the library of John

Putland; **Marie-Louise Legg** on the Synge library catalogue of 1763. Editors:- **Muriel McCarthy** has been Keeper of the library since 1989. The second edition of her book on the library, *Marsh's Library: old graduates and gentlemen*, was published by Four Courts Press in 2003. **Ann Simmons** has worked at Marsh's Library for fifteen years and is Deputy Keeper of the library. **MM**

WEBSITE NEWS

As reported last month, the Society's Director of Internet Services, **Bartosz Kozlowski**, MGSi has uploaded a Members Only Area (MOA) to the Society's website. However, the Board has yet to appoint a Moderator for the MOA and will do so at its meeting in June. Therefore, the MOA will operate by the end of June. The MOA will enable members to assist each other with research problems and to exchange tips on sources etc. In the meantime, Bartosz welcomes comments and suggestions on the design, layout and content of the website. Please contact Bartosz by e-mail on b.k.webdesigner@gmail.com



AN UNEXPECTED BONUS

When members of An Garda Síochána (Irish police) recovered goods stolen from a burglary in Strokestown, Co. Roscommon, in a house in Dublin, they discovered two previously unrecorded gold artefacts in the form of a gold lunula and two gold sun discs. The lunula is a crescent shaped ornament (like the example shown on the right) worn around the neck or chest on ceremonial occasions and the National Museum of Ireland believes that less than two hundred lunulae are known to have been made by a small number of master craftsmen. The two gold discs are similar in size to a small saucer. Director of the National Museum of Ireland, Dr. Patrick Wallace, said that the



items would have been used on ceremonial occasions between 2000 and 1900BC and that he considered them to be a very important discovery. Gardaí believe that these items were part of a safe contents containing drugs, cosmetics and antique jewellery stolen from a pharmacy. When Gardaí recovered the artefacts they immediately contacted the National Museum of Ireland and two archaeologists from that body are now trying to trace the original of these artefacts as it unclear how they would up in the safe. Under the National Monuments Act, any artefact discovered should be surrendered to the State through the National Museum of Ireland and it is expected that in the case of these artefacts there will be no prosecution under the Act and they will now be purchased by National Museum. For further information on the collections at the National Museum see: www.museum.ie

James Scannell

GUILD OF ONE-NAME STUDIES

Michael Merrigan has resigned as Ireland Representative of the UK based Guild of One-Name Studies, however, he has also recommended a possible successor. No doubt, the Guild will make an announcement shortly in this regard. The Guild is the only organisation wholly dedicated to this special aspect of genealogy. Guild members research the origin, history, distribution etc of particular surnames and their variants. Their research encompasses all events concerning the surname and not just following particular genealogical links. Whilst, this type of research is quite popular in England, it is less so in the Celtic nations of the archipelago where surnames tend to be patronymics. Much work remains to be done on Irish surnames in particular and therefore, the Guild is anxious to promote one-name studies in Ireland. Further info. www.one-name.org

New 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. Another new publication of immense assistance to those tracing ancestors in the British forces in Ireland up to 1922 "**Memorial Inscriptions of Military Personnel and Their Families**" is now available at €10.00 including postage. It has been painstakingly researched by Barry O'Connor and his team. To obtain a copy of either publication please send a cheque for the amount required (*made payable to the Society*) to the address (Director of Finance) on the bottom of page 3 of this newsletter. 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...

THE REMARKABLE CAPT. HALPIN

On Wednesday 22 April in celebration of the theme 'Heritage and Science' as part of International Day for Monuments and Sites, the Heritage Office of Wicklow County Council (Heritage Officer Ms. Deirdre Burns) in association with ICOMOS hosted a lecture by noted Arklow local historian and author Jim Rees on '*The Remarkable Captain Halpin*' in Tinakilly House, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow, which was his residence in the 1890s. Captain Halpin was noted for his navigation and mariner skills and played a leading part in revolutionizing world communications in the 19th century by laying over 2000 miles of transatlantic telegraphic cable in 1865 which linked Europe and America for the first time using the former passenger liner 'Great Eastern' which had been converted into a cable laying ship. Although Captain Halpin's residence 'Tinakilly House' is now a leading restaurant, a great deal of his family memorabilia is still on display. Jim Rees's biography on the life and career of Captain Halpin has run to four editions. Jim Rees had

also written a history of Arklow, one on the Fitzwilliam land clearances and more recently his NUI Maynooth local history studies M.A. thesis on the fishing industry in Arklow has been published by the Four Courts Press as part of Maynooth series of local history publications.

SYNGE CENTENARY

When John Millington Synge's most famous work '*The Playboy of the Western World*' was first staged in Dublin's Abbey Theatre in August 1907, the productions led to riots breaking out in the theatre on the opening night and with the passage of time is now regarded as a classic play. Synge was born on 16 April 1871 in Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin, and after graduating from Trinity College, Dublin, went to Europe and was residing in Paris when he met William Butler Yeats who encouraged him to return to Ireland to write. When he returned to Ireland he helped to establish the Irish National Theatre Society which in turn later established The Abbey Theatre. Synge wrote several other

highly acclaimed plays in addition to prose and poetry. Shortly before his death in Dublin on 24 March 1909, he got engaged to the actress Máire O'Neill. Every year a Synge Summer School is held in Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, in his honour.

VINEGAR HILL

Concern was expressed at the April meeting of Wexford County Council that an individual had been granted planning permission to erect a large metal shed behind his house on the site of the rebellion in 1798 at Vinegar Hill. Some Councillors consider the work to be nothing more than a desecration of a national heritage site. At a meeting of Enniscorthy Town Council a number of Councillors could not understand how officials at the Planning Department could reach such a decision given that Vinegar Hill had been identified as amongst seventy-five heritage sites in Ireland as being of historical interest under a committee established by Mr. Dick Roche, T.D. in 2007 as Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

Précis of the April Lecture

On Tuesday April 14th 2009, Ms. Jennifer Moore of the Royal Irish Academy gave an illustrated talk on the Irish Historic Towns Atlas as a support for the family history researcher. The RIA's Irish Historic Towns Atlas project was established in 1981 with the aim to record the topographical development of a selection of Irish towns both large and small. Each town is published separately as a fascicle or folder and includes a series of maps complemented by a detailed text section. The Irish Historic Towns Atlas is part of a wider Europe project with towns' atlases containing broadly similar information available for a number of countries. Thus Irish towns can be studied in

their European context. To date twenty atlases have been published including, Kildare, Carrickfergus, Bandon, Kells, Mullingar, Athlone, Maynooth, Downpatrick, Bray, Kilkenny, Dublin, Belfast, Fethard, Trim, Derry/Londonderry, Dundalk, Armagh, New Ross and the latest Tuam published last month. Jennifer outlined the detail of the maps and in particular, those features that would be of assistance to genealogists and local historians. Further details on the Irish Historic Towns Atlas can be obtained by visiting the RIA website www.ria.ie where information on other publications and projects by the RIA may be of considerable interest to genealogists and local historians.

GSI LECTURE PROGRAMME

Tues. May 12—Church of Ireland records in the RCB library, Mr. Raymond Refausee, Librarian and Archivist, Representative Church Body Library (Church of Ireland). **Tues. June 9**—The Student Records of Dublin University, Alumni Office, TCD. Details on the Guest Speaker Programme for the remainder of the year will be published in the June issue of this newsletter. However, in the meantime, should you have any comments, suggestions or queries on the lecture programme please contact **Séamus Moriarty, MGSI** by e-mail on 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.

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

The Society is a Nominating Body for Seanad Éireann

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DIARY DATES

Tuesday May 12th & June 9th 2009

Evening Open Meeting

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

Wednesday May 27th & June 24th 2009

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)

GSI Archive News

Over the past few months, the Society's Director of Archive Services, **Séamus O'Reilly, MGSi**, has successfully relocated the Society's archival collections from the Martello Tower at Seapoint to the premises at 111, Lower George's Street, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. In that time he has also organised the resumption of the cataloguing of the collections and indeed, he has formulated a scheme for the sorting and cataloguing of the Society's extensive manuscript collections. Séamus aims to have the catalogue of the Society's archival collections to be available in the Members' Only Area of the Society's website. Currently Séamus and his dedicated team of volunteers are computerising the collections of overseas journals and other publications which are received on a daily basis from all around the world. At the May meeting of the Board the General Secretary passed the Minute Books of the Society from 1990 to 2004 into the custody of the Director of Archive Services. Arrangements are being made for the transfer to the Society's Archive of the files of correspondence covering that period. These files, once sorted and catalogued, along with the Minute Books will provide an invaluable resource for the study of the history of the Society and indeed, the story of the development of Irish genealogy generally. Members wishing to assist with the sorting and cataloguing of the archival collections should contact Séamus O'Reilly directly by e-mail on jsoreilly@eircom.net or via the Gazette on GAZETTE@familyhistory.ie

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 family history at home or overseas.

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Permanent Memorial Sought

On Easter Monday (April 13th) the Dublin North Inner City Folklore Project organized a 1916 Commemoration Event which began at Liberty Hall, Dublin. In the presence of over two hundred people Tom Moran of the Project revealed how Molly O'Reilly carried messages for James Connolly and was a dispatch carrier between Dublin City Hall and the General Post Office (Rebellion HQ) on Easter Monday 1916. Her daughter Constance Corcoran Crowley said that there was no family history of political activity or association until her mother got involved. The raising of the flag by Mollie O'Reilly in 1916 was then reacted when James Connolly-Heron, James Connolly's great grandson, handed the flag to Susan Healy, a niece of Molly O'Reilly, who climbed up a ladder to raise the flag. Then crowd then marched to the General Post Office (GPO) carrying a banner 'Honoring all women in the struggle for Irish freedom' where wreaths were laid in front of it and the Proclamation read by Aidan Ring, whose five uncles took part in the Rising. Noifín Byrne, whose grandfather was a captain in the

Irish Citizen Army (regarded as the world's first workers' militia) the urged the public to get behind the campaign for the establishment of a permanent memorial to the women of 1916, pointing out that only 13% of the members of the Dáil were women some ninety-three years after the Rising. Calls were made for the protection and preservation of the national moment site Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street as flowers were laid outside No 16 which was the last headquarters of the GPO garrison before the leaders took the decision to surrender. Although the site has been declared a national monument, preservation campaigners believe that the Dublin City Council decision to grant planning permission for a retail and commercial development around the site could cause major damage to the building. Terry Fagan of the North Inner City Folklore Project reminded participants that women such as Mary Florence Fitzpatrick, Nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell, Winnie Carney along with others had been airbrushed out of history and yet played key roles in the Easter Rising.

James Scannell

GSI ANNUAL JOURNAL

At the May meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society, **Sharon Bofin, MGSi** was appointed to the position of Director of Publications. Sharon will therefore be the Editor of the Society's Journal. The appointment was made on an interim basis due to the resignation of **Margaret Conroy MGSi** who has held the position for the past number of years. Sharon has just completed the Annual Journal for 2008 and it will be despatched to members shortly. Articles are now sought for the next 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, Sharon Bofin on e-mail sharonbofin@eircom.net