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Book Reviews

Open Meetings

News & Queries



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CONTENTS

<i>The Annals of the Four Masters</i>	2
<i>Garda Memorial Garden Opened</i>	2
<i>Irish Govt. to Commemorate the Somme 2016</i>	2
<i>James Scannell Reports..</i>	3
<i>GSI Lecture Programme Membership of the GSI</i>	3
<i>The Most Tragically Titanic Story</i>	4
<i>Diary Dates</i> <i>GSI Archives News</i>	4

'Separate Bodies, Separate Roles'

During Ministerial questions in Dáil Éireann on Wednesday May 19th 2010 the Minister for Culture, Sport & Tourism, Mary Hanafin, TD acknowledged the sorry state of the National Archives facility at Bishop Street. In reply to Deputies Olivia Mitchell (Fine Gael) and Mary Upton (Labour) the Minister said that 'the storage difficulties at the National Archives are widely acknowledged. A permanent solution would be a new storage building, but in the current economic climate it will not be possible to set aside the necessary resources to construct a new building. However, I am concerned that the best possible use should be made of the accommodation that is currently available to the National Archives. There is a large warehouse behind the National Archives' Bishop Street offices in which many archives are being stored. Unfortunately, the roof of the warehouse is of poor quality. As a result, many of the records have to be stored in waterproof plastic bales to protect them from damage and are not readily accessible to the public. The other main National Archives record store is located within the Four Courts complex, which makes retrieval difficult and relatively expensive.' However, besides asking the Office of Public Works to keep the matter under

review and to undertake certain remedial works the Minister ruled out any further investment in the building. On the issue of the proposed amalgamation of the National Archives, Irish Manuscripts Commission and the National Library the Minister appears to have taken on-board this Society's position on the merger. The Minister assured Deputies that she was 'absolutely satisfied that whatever processes and procedures are put in place will ensure the existence of two separate bodies with two independent directors and two separate roles. Moreover, these roles and the services provided will not change. This proposal is to ensure that such services are improved and that best use can be made of the facilities that would be available for both.' The matter was raised again by the Leaders of the Fine Gael and Labour Parties on Tuesday June 1st 2010. An Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, TD, in reply to parliamentary questions from Deputies Enda Kenny (Fine Gael) and Éamon Gilmore (Labour) clarified his governments plans for the merger of these institutions. He told the Dáil 'that the Government has indicated that the National Archives, the Irish Manuscripts Commission and the National Library of Ireland shall be merged into a new national library and archives of Ireland. That merger will require amendment of the National Archives Act 1986 and the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997. The

Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, Deputy Mary Hanafin, proposes to update the relevant archival legislation as part of that process. The new draft legislation will abolish three separate existing bodies and establish a new body. The initial draft of the legislation has been completed and transmitted to the directors of the National Archives and National Library and to the chairman of the Irish Manuscripts Commission for their observations. It is intended to bring the legislation before the Houses this year and it is the Minister's intention to reappoint the council in a new guise in order to advise on the amalgamation process as soon as she has the observations of the directors and the chairman of the Irish Manuscripts Commission.' Some degree of clarity is slowly emerging on this proposed merger but unfortunately there is still no commitment to any meaningful public consultation. But the continued insistence that this merger will result in savings through the sharing of 'back-office services and technology' requires greater scrutiny as such savings, if any, could simply be achieved contractually between the institutions without costly and cumbersome legislative measures. The Minister should focus instead on the benefits of modernising the legislative basis for the State's archival services.

Census Records On-Line

Thursday June 3rd—a date that all Irish genealogists looked forward to with great excitement when it was announced that the 1901 Census of Ireland would go on-line on that date. All credit to the staff at the National Archives of Ireland as this wonderful new resource was made available, free of charge, on June 3rd. Now both of the existing pre-independence census returns, 1901 and 1911, are searchable on-line on the website of the National Archives (NAI) — www.census.nationalarchives.ie

This new resource provides the Irish people and the Irish Diaspora with the greatest accessibility yet to their genealogical heritage. However, as we come ever closer to a decade of centenaries of some of the most momentous events in our nation's history, we are still denied access to the first census taken after independence. The 1926 Census of Ireland is closed for one hundred years under the Statistics Act, 1993 and though, this Society successfully urged senators in 1993 to cut the closure period to seventy years, this measure was

reversed at the Report Stage of the Bill. The 1911 and 1926 census returns stand as large bookends to a period of great change in Ireland and therefore, our understanding of this period is greatly hampered by the closure of the 1926 census. This Society has proposed amending the 1993 Act to provide the 1926 census with a 'special heritage status' allowing public access in time for its study prior to the commencement of the coming decade of so many contentious centenaries, north and south.

The Annals of the Four Masters

'The Annals of the Four Masters – Irish history, kingship and society in the early seventeenth century' by **Bernadette Cunningham** (ISBN: 978-1-84682-203-2 : 348pp ; Price €50.00 h/bk) was published last month by Four Courts Press. The author is the Deputy Librarian at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. Although, many Irish genealogists and local historians have come across references to the annals of the Four Masters which were compiled in the 1630s by professional historians from Gaelic learned families from south west Ulster and north Connacht, few appreciate the context of their compilation. These annals trace the history of Ireland from the biblical flood right down to the upheavals of the early 17th century. Indeed, as Cunningham points out that 'there was something about the form and substance of the annals of the Four Masters that, read or unread, allowed them to become accepted as an authentic, reliable and comprehensive record of Gaelic society.' These annals became recognised as an important element of the cultural capital of the community that valued its Gaelic heritage which at the time of their compilation was considered to be in grave danger of extinction through plantations, religious persecution and the military defeats suffered by the Gaelic lordships which permitted the advance of English culture and language. In this new study of the annals, Cunningham explores the scholarly context, both Irish and European, and inspired their compilers and the networks of professional expertise and patronage that gave rise to a new renewed interest in the Irish past and indeed, facilitated such scholarship on an ambitious scale. Many historians have speculated on the motives of its compilers, however, few would disagree that in their treatment and use of the then extant manuscripts, as far as they can be identified from the text of

the annals, they have provided a window on Ireland's own 'lost library of Alexandria'. The compilers of these annals, as described by Aodh de Blácam in 1899, were heirs of the immemorial tradition who 'laboured in the called believe that the Irish nation was dead, and that nothing remained to be salvaged save its memory' and in this they succeeded their task. Before exploring the annals in greater detail, Cunningham provides us with a very important analysis of the modern appreciation and use of the annals. This is an important aspect of the value of the annals to later historians as they preserve data which is not otherwise extant, drawing as it they did on source texts many of which are now lost. Indeed in the formal dedication of their work to their patron, Mícheál Ó Cléirigh, explained the purpose of the history they had just completed 'that nothing is more glorious, more respectable, or more honourable (for many reasons), than to bring to light the knowledge of the antiquity of the ancient authors, and a knowledge of the chieftains and nobles that existed in preceding times, in order that each successive generation might possess knowledge and information as to how their ancestors spent their time and life, how long they were successfully in the Lordship of their countries, in dignity or another, and what sort of death they met.' Having already set themselves the task of preserving the surviving hagiographical heritage of Ireland, prompted in part by the publications of Thomas Dempster claiming early Irish saints as Scots, the Franciscans at Louvain realised that the next step was to prepare a secular history to complement the ecclesiastical work on the lives of the saints. Therefore, Mícheál Ó Cléirigh was sent back to Ireland to conduct research, possibly due to his formal training in Ireland within a hereditary family of histori-

ans. He returned to the Irish Franciscan community in Donegal which, according to Cunningham, was far from an 'intellectual backwater compared to the world of the continental seminaries' and although residing in temporary accommodation it was a vibrant community in the 1620s and 1630s and 'that it contained a library of historical works is evident from extant library lists from Louvain.' The 'Four Masters' – Mícheál Ó Cléirigh, OFM, Cú Choigríche Ó Cléirigh, Fearfeasa Ó Maoil Chonaire and Cú Choigríche Ó Duibhgeannáin were all trained historians in the ancient Gaelic tradition. Throughout the annals it is abundantly clear that the compilers were ever conscious of the enormity of this legacy. The annals compiled by the four Masters were designed to provide a new, accessible and comprehensive account of Irish history for seventeenth-century readers, yet they chose to present their record of the Irish past in a very conventional form, authenticated by tradition. Cunningham brings the reader through this late medieval Irish historical tradition to explore its form and structure of the annals; the methodology employed to create new annals from old and importantly, the actual scribes at work. An understanding of the environment in which the annals were created illuminates the subjects recorded and the political astuteness of these scribes chronicling the nation's past whilst being witnesses to its destruction. The turmoil of the period following the collapse of the Gaelic world with its dispossession and plantations remarkably sustained a scholarly network and patronage. Of particular interest to the genealogist and local historian, Cunningham examines the operation of these relationships where the Gaelic learned families shared their scholarship through 'schools' and in the absence of a university, these schools were the most advanced centres of higher learning in Ireland. This work will possibly become the standard companion for anyone seeking to fully utilise the annals in their research. **MM**

Garda Memorial Garden Opened

A memorial garden honoring the 83 members of An Garda Síochána who lost their lives in the line of duty line of duty, since the establishment of the force in 1922, was opened in Dublin Castle, at which Taoiseach Brian Cowen, Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern and Garda Commissioner Fachtina Murphy presented medals to representatives of the families of those whose names are inscribed on stone on a roll of honour. Mr. Cowen said that very day and night and in all weather conditions throughout the year, men and women of the force donned their distinctive blue uniform and stepped forward to do their duty. Members of the force had to deal with traumatic events, the likes of which most people will never experience or encounter in their own lives and they do this with great em-

pathy, understanding and tact. He reminded all those present that members of the force have to confront those who willfully commit crimes of great violence, terror and abuse, and do this with great courage. He went on to say that members respond to calls from the public to defend their homes, police our streets and confront those who wish to us harm, adding that we owe them our unending thanks. Mr. Cowen said that the courage and dedication of Gardaí had too often seen members of the force lay down their lives in the service of their fellow men and women. He concluded by stating that the grief of husbands, wives, children, parents, brothers and sisters, was a testament to their love for the one that had lost and that the garden and the roll of honour stands as a small reminder that the

whole community gives thanks to all those members of An Garda Síochána who gave their lives serving the citizens of this country. Garda Commissioner Fachtina Murphy said that he was especially proud that members of the force continue to perform their duties unarmed, something that had been fundamental to policing in Ireland since the force's establishment in 1922. He said that at 83 different moments over the past 88 years time had stood still for the entire Garda family as reports came in that there had been an incident in which a colleague had been lost and over the it was important that that particular moment upon the e was taken to recognize the particular pain that those moments visit upon the loved ones of those who pay the ultimate sacrifice **James Scannell**

Irish Government to Commemorate the Somme in 2016

Addressing a conference *'A Decade of Centenaries: Commemorating Shared History'* on Thursday May 20th, organised by the Institute for British-Irish Studies in the John Hume Institute in University College, Dublin, An Taoiseach Mr. Brian Cowen TD, said that the Irish Government will commemorate the centenary of the Battle of the Somme in 2016 and that unionist leaders should consider a ceremony for the 1916 Rising. Mr. Cowen said that in 2016 the centenary of the Battle of the Somme will be commemorated in Dublin, as in Belfast, to honour the heroism of those who fought and died there, Protestant and Catholic, side by side.

He that he expected too that the events of Easter 1916 will be commemorated with respect and dignity and he respectfully submitted that this was a challenge that must be considered by the leaders of unionism. Mr. Cowen went on to condemn those dissidents on both sides who will seek to hijack history, to fight again the old battles, to re-establish hostilities and to perpetuate division, and that some will look to use the memory of the dead to bring suffering to the living. An Taoiseach noted that the centenaries of the Ulster Covenant, the War of Independence (Anglo-Irish War), the Government of Ireland Act, and the Anglo-Irish Treaty would

be would take place during the coming decade. The Northern Ireland Minister for Culture, Mr. Nelson McCausland, MLA, said that commemorations can help or hinder a shared future and that everyone must seek to ensure that they will help rather than hinder. He said the he hoped that both north and south, as these events occur during this decade of centenaries, they will be done in such a way that is sensitive and interrogative, pointing that everyone - governments, media, education, academia, and people right across the board will need to step up to the mark. **James Scannell**

Editor: See. Vol. 1 No. 7 ; Vol. 3 No. 10

James Scannell Reports...

O'CONNELL COMMEMORATION

On Sunday May 9th the Daniel O'Connell Inaugural Commemoration was held in Glasnevin Cemetery marking the 163rd anniversary of his death in Genoa, Italy in May 1847. Although O'Connell, who was born in 1775, is best remembered for his part in Catholic Emancipation and his struggle for the repeal of the act of Union, he also made other significant contributions to other human rights issues including the fight against slavery. The commemoration took place at the entrance to the O'Connell Mausoleum in the cemetery which is topped by the round tower, the cemetery's best known landmark. Both the mausoleum and the round tower were refurbished recently by the Office of Public Works in association with the Glasnevin Trust as part of the overall refurbishment of the cemetery. Cllr. Emer Costello, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr. Bobby O'Connell, Mayor of Kerry, laid wreaths at the entrance of the mausoleum as did Pat Carey, T.D., Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, on behalf of the Government. John Green, chairperson of the Glasnevin Trust, spoke about the high esteem O'Connell was in by his contemporaries and said that when O'Connell died, the tributes paid to him were extraordinary. Karl

Warren, representing the O'Connell Schools in Dublin, said that O'Connell's dedication and commitment to parliamentary democracy made him one of the leading figures in the struggle for human rights and democracy in human in Europe. Prayers were recited by Msgr. Dermot Clarke, who attended on behalf of Archbishop Diarmuid Martin. The ceremony concluded with the observation of a minute's silence after which Dublin Fire Brigade piper Paul McNally played 'She moves through the fair.'

LUNCHTIME LECTURE

On Tuesday June 15th, at 13.05hrs. Dr. Seán Duffy will present a 40-minute lecture 'Beraid, The Pre-Viking Abbot of Dubh-Linn [Dublin] (died c.650 AD)' in the Wood Quay Venue located in City Hall as part of a monthly series of lectures 'Tales of Medieval Dublin' organised by the Friends of Mediaeval Dublin - admission free - no pre-booking required.

BETHANY KIDS REMEMBERED

On Wednesday May 26th Dublin's Mount Jerome Cemetery was the setting for a unique ceremony in which flowers, memorial cards and teddy bears were laid on the graves of 40 un-

marked graves of children who died in the Bethany Home based in Blackhall Place in Dublin from 1921 to 1934 and Orwell Road from 1934 until closure in 1972. The children had been buried in the cemetery between 1935 and 1936 when the Home was required by law to register child deaths. The graves were discovered by Niall Meehan of Griffith College who traced them to Mount Jerome Cemetery. Arising from the ceremony a group called the Bethany House Survivors Group has been formed to advocate its inclusion in the government's redress scheme.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

The Education Department at the National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts and History at Collins Barracks has launched a monthly initiative to offer an opportunity for researchers, students and anyone with an interest to get behind the scenes at Collins Barracks to see the Museum's archive and library. It is also an opportunity to meet the Museum Librarian and Archivist, to explore another element of the Museum's collection and to investigate how the National Museum's Archive and Library Collections may enrich your own research. The event is free of charge, open to all and starts at the Museum reception. Booking is essential. To reserve a place on the open session please contact the National Museum Bookings Office at bookings@museum.ie or Tel: (01) 6486453.

GSI Lecture Programme

MAY LECTURE

On Tuesday May 11th 2010, the Society heard a very interesting talk by professional genealogist **Mary Beglan, MAPGI**, on the subject of 'On-Line Sources of Irish Genealogy'. This lecture was delivered to a full house with circa seventy five members and friends in attendance. Whilst, many would have thought that most genealogists with access to the Internet would have already found and used the on-line sources for Irish genealogy, Mary's lecture brought a much needed coherence and interconnectivity to these sources. Mary described each of the main websites in terms of resources, functionality and accessibility providing tips on usage and linking each as your research progresses. Be-

sides dealing with the many Irish websites providing genealogical information, Mary introduced the meeting to British, Australasian and North American websites. These websites included information on emigration, military service, census records and, of course, the LDS records. Displaying each of the websites on a screen and accessing the information directly allowed the audience to follow Mary's very clear instructions on the best way to avail of the resources provided by these websites. A detailed handout was made available at the meeting and forwarded to members later by e-mail. Mary is to be complemented on the clarity of her delivery and indeed, on the comprehensive nature of the information provided. A very lively Q&A followed this wonderful lecture.

GSI LECTURE PROGRAMME

Tues. June 8th 'The Dictionary of Irish Biography' by James McGuire; **Tues. July 13th** 'Three Centuries of Irish Banking Crises' by Tom Conlon, MGS; **Tues. August 10th** 'The Lawrence Photographic Collection in the National Library of Ireland' by Brian Siggins; **Tues. September 14th** 'Irish Newspaper Archives as a Resource for the Genealogist' by Philip Martin; **Tues. October 12th** 'The Medlar's Gotcha - the story of a Dublin family' by Pól Ó Duibhir; **Tues. November 9th** 'Irish Convict Transportation - Damnation or Salvation?' by Seán Solan; **Tues. December 14th** '1916 to 1921 Casualties' by Dáithí Ó Corráin. Members are reminded that if you have any comments or suggestions on the Society's lecture programme please contact the Director of the GSI Lecture Programme, **Séamus Moriarty, MGS** by e-mail on Gazette@familyhistory.ie

Membership of the Genealogical Society

In the annual review of the Membership Packages the Board agreed, under **Res: 09/11/718** to maintain the Annual Subscription for 2010 for Irish and Overseas Members at the level agreed in 2007 of €40.00 to include the following: Member voting rights; optional second household member with voting rights; Membership Card (s); right to use GSI post-nominal; copy of the Annual Journal; monthly newsletter; use of the Society's Archive; monthly meetings/lectures; special prices of up to 50% off selected Society publications; right to register your own assumed Arms or emblems with the Society free of charge; right to have your Club,

School or Institutions assumed Arms or emblems registered with the Society free of charge to a maximum of ten registrations; occasional group projects; Members' internet forum; genealogical, heraldic and vexillological advice; and the facility to publish your research in the GSI Journal. This Membership Package shall be applied as and from Jan. 1st 2010 and be subject to annual review, however, existing Membership Packages shall be honoured until their annual renewal date. Also under **Res: 08/11/636** persons under twenty-five years can still 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. Tom Conlon, MGS**, 24, Carrickbrennan Lawn, Monkstown, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

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*The Society is a Nominating Body for Seanad Éireann***Board of Directors 2010-2011**

Pádraic Ingoldsby (Cathaoirleach : Chairperson); **Gerry Hayden** (Leas-Chathaoirleach : Vice Chair); **Michael Merrigan** (General Secretary : Company Secretary); **Tom Conlon** (Finance); **Sharon Bofin** (Memberships & Publications); **Séamus O'Reilly** (Archive); **Barry O'Connor** (Cemetery Projects); **Séamus Moriarty** (Lecture Programme); **Fiona Tipple** (Education & Social Inclusion) **Bartosz Kozłowski** (Poland) (Internet Services); **John Hamrock** (National Projects) and **Pat Feenan** (Sales & Marketing).

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

Tuesday June 8th & July 13th 2010

Evening Open Meeting

Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education

Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire

20.00hrs—22.00hrs

Wednesday June 23rd & July 28th 2010

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)

THE MOST TRAGIC TITANIC STORY

When I was a young lad living in Athlone, we bought shoes from Parsons shoe-shop and medicines from Flemings pharmacy. We all knew that purchases from these shops had been instrumental in the identification of the body of Margaret Rice (nee Norton), who died with her young family of five children in the Titanic disaster of 1912. Little did I know at the time that I would marry into a branch of the aforesaid Norton family. Margaret Rice was born at Coosan, a rural lakeside townland, a couple of miles north-east of Athlone and was baptised at St Mary's Church on 6th October 1872, and emigrated in her teens to Canada where she met William Rice. They returned to Ireland and married in 1891. Their first child died in an accident. They returned to Canada, and then New York, where William was killed by a shunting train at his workplace. After receiving compensation, Margaret returned to Athlone to set up a business. At the time of the 1911 census Margaret and her five children shared a house at No 9 Castle St., Athlone with the Finnerty family. Her business failed, and she booked her passage on Titanic in Athlone. Her ticket number was 382652 and cost £29. She would likely have known the 4 other Athlone natives who also travelled. Three of those survived, but Margaret and all her family of five children died. Margaret's body was the only one of the family who was positively identified, mainly from a pillbox prescribed at Flemings pharmacy. A baby's body was recovered which may be baby Eugene, or may be a child of another family who were on board. Margaret was the daughter of James Norton and Mary Norton (née Carty). The Nortons had connections with the boatbuilding and fishing business and we believe that her Grandfather Michael Norton was drowned off Black Island in Lough Ree. He, in turn was the son of Patrick Naghten (note change of name) and Mary Naghten (nee Curley) whose tombstone is in the Abbey graveyard in Athlone.

*Tom Conlon, MGS***MEDAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND**

GSI Members researching ancestors or relatives who served in the Irish, British, Commonwealth, American or other armed forces or in the mercantile marine will find the publications and meetings of the Medal Society of Ireland of interest. Find out more about those medals so cherished by the family and handed down through generations. For further info. visit the website at: www.msou.ie

FOUR COURTS PRESS*Irish History, Genealogy, Local History and much more***www.fourcourtpress.ie***Checkout the Sale Items - 10% Reduction On-Line***GSI ARCHIVE NEWS**

As reported last month, the Society has to vacate the premises at 111, Lower George's Street in accordance with the provisions of the lease on Friday June 11th 2010. The Society is very grateful to the Office of Public Works for permitting the Society to use such a wonderful building with ample space that facilitated the full reorganisation and cataloguing of the Society's Archive. Over the past few months the Board of the Society has sought an alternative base for the Society's Archive in anticipation of the ending of the temporary lease on the OPW building on Lower George's Street and following negotiations with the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company a suitable premises was identified at Dún Laoghaire. The building was recently vacated by a marine leisure company and basically consists of an outer office with a reception area, a large centre room, toilets and a kitchen area. Totally refurbished with new carpets, flooring and service areas, this building was then prepared to receive the Society's archival collections through the installation of circa 90m of shelving in the main room with another 10m in the outer office. Situated directly across from the entrance to the Carlisle Pier and just below the George IV monument, the new premises will be in the centre of what has been described as the 'heritage hub' of Dún Laoghaire which includes the Maritime Museum, RNLI Lifeboat HQ, RMS Leinster Memorial, the Harbour itself and, of course, the proposed new County Library HQ to be built in Moran Park across the road. The Director of Archival Services, Séamus O'Reilly, FGSI, had already organised the boxing of the Society's

archival collections and these were transported to the new premises by Board members in their cars and by Tom Delaney with his trailer. The whole operation was completed within a few days with almost military precision. Séamus O'Reilly, Clare Touhy and Fiona Tipple quickly unpacked nearly one hundred boxes and placed the contents on the shelves erected by Barry O'Connor. Work is now underway to have broadband installed to be accessed in the outer office and the main archive area. Microfilm and microfiche readers have been installed in the main area with ample reading space provided by two desks and, of course, the board table. The Board held its first meeting in the new premises on Thursday June 3rd 2010 and all present expressed sincere gratitude to An Cathaoirleach, Pádraic Ingoldsby, for directing the restoration works and the removal from the OPW premises. The Board also thanked Barry O'Connor for his wonderful carpentry work throughout. Whilst, there are still a few minor issues to be finalised as part of the refurbishment of the building, including the usual 'snags list', it is hoped to open the facility shortly. The new facility will provide the Society with a public office which will enable it to rollout its Outreach Policy and to promote the study of genealogy, heraldry and social history as educational leisure pursuits available to all in the community. Members will be able to access the Society's archival collections as never before as it is hoped to have the facility open as many days as possible during the week with the assistance of volunteers. Members wishing to volunteer for archive duty should contact Séamus O'Reilly on jsoreilly@eircom.net

LUSITANIA 95th ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday May 9th ceremonies were held in Cobh, Co. Cork (formerly Queenstown) to commemorate the 95th anniversary of the sinking of R.M.S. Lusitania which was torpedoed of the Old Head of Kinsale by a German submarine on May 7th 1915 with the loss of 1198 passengers and crew. The ceremony commenced at 2 p.m. at the Old Church graveyard where the remains of 193 who died in the tragedy are buried - 45 of which were never identified and were buried in coffins bearing only a number. Following prayers, the laying of wreaths and the playing of musical honours by St. Colman's Pipe Band, everyone moved to the Town Hall from where a parade led by the Cobh branch of the Organisation of National ex-Servicemen and Women, representatives of the [British] Royal Naval Association, and other historical societies, made their way to the Lusitania Peace Memorial in the town's Casement Square where floral wreaths were laid on the memorial. Later in the evening divers Tim Care and Eoin McGarry presented a lecture on the RMS Lusitania in the Commodore Hotel during which video footage of the underwater wreck was screened. The event was organised by Cobh Tourism. Mrs. Audrey Lawson-Johnson is the last living survivor of the RMS Lusitania - she was 3 months old when the liner was torpedoed and was saved by her nanny who grabbed her from her cot and placed in one of the liner's overcrowded lifeboats and had gone on record as saying that she has never forgotten the bravery of those who helped save her life. She last visited Cork in 2005.

James Scannell