

- Discussion Document on the GRO
- Chiefs Inquiry Delayed for Legal Reasons
- News from the World of Genealogy

ISSN 1393-3183

E-mail: GenSocIreland@iol.ie

The Gene Gazette

The Newsletter of
the Genealogical Society
of Ireland
Volume 6 • Issue 5
May 2001

Comhag AR
Ar Sinnsear
Remember
Our
Ancestors

THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SERVICE *Bringing Civil Registration into the 21st Century*

The launch of a wide consultation process on the future of Civil Registration in Ireland by the Ministers Mr. Dermot Ahern, T.D. and Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D. is a welcome step towards the closure of this ten year saga on the GRO. Many readers will remember that bleak November day in 1992 when former Taoiseach, Mr. Albert Reynolds, T.D. announced the relocation of the General Register Office from the heart of Dublin City to Roscommon Town. Genealogists at home and abroad were furious at what was described as a ludicrous politically motivated dismemberment of inter-related archival institutions in Dublin. A campaign was launched uniting briefly all genealogists in Ireland to stop this decentralisation of the GRO. Between Parliamentary Questions, letters to newspapers and to an array of politicians, ministers and others, common sense prevailed, however, at a cost. A research facility for genealogists was to remain in the capital with a computerisation project to be located in Roscommon Town.

The "Roscommon Experiment"

Despite advice received from abroad and presented to the Department by the GRO Users' Group, plans were laid for the computerisation of the GRO records by an imaging process. Pronouncements by successive Ministers for Health as to the many wonderful possibilities afforded by this process to assist both government departments and researchers soon became known as the "Roscommon Mantra" and the whole exercise was derided as a mere

"experiment". At what stage the sea-change occurred dropping the original computerisation plan and adopting the more realistic and achievable goal of producing a computerised index to images of the actual registers must be a matter of concern to the Public Accounts Committee. Seven years and how many millions on this "Roscommon Experiment" – was this value for money or simply, playing political football with the General Register Office?

A well produced booklet.

This 58 page booklet produced by the Dept. of Health & Children and the Dept. Social, Community & Family Affairs amounts to a comprehensive examination of the many different aspects of the requirements for and uses of, Civil Registration in Ireland. It's an easily read and indeed, a well produced booklet outlining the steps envisaged to establish "The Civil Registration Service" – the proposed new name for the organisation. The booklet brings the reader through a range of possible benefits from easier registration, local access, avoiding multiple requirements for certificates, quicker on-line service, better certification and the "development of genealogical research platform". The latter, of course, is neither defined nor expanded upon in the booklet. Indeed, quicker access to on-line information will only be possible when "the necessary technological infrastructure becomes established" and furthermore, access to all events registered since 1845 will be available when the project "is completed within the next few years".

Closure of access to certain data.

At the moment access to the records of the Irish civil registration system is only restricted in cases of sensitive issues like adoption. All other records are open for public consultation, however, there is a creeping acceptance by the authors of this booklet that such should change. A distinction between personal information, public record and historic records is being put forward for the first time. With the introduction of technology and the capture of all paper records on a database, the booklet maintains, it "provides an opportunity to introduce greater safeguards and controls" for accessibility to the records of Births, Marriages and Deaths. Whilst, understanding certain safeguards should be present to avoid the fraudulent use of certified information, this should centre on the certification process and not the accessibility to the records themselves.

Different levels of access.

A major shift from vital records being public records to that of personal records held by a public body is envisaged. For example, the cause of death entered on the register, according to this booklet, may be considered sensitive and disclosure would require an "authenticated" purpose of any applicant for access to such records. A new definition of "historic record" would be applied to those records over 50, 75 or a 100 years old, though, consideration is afforded to "different levels of access" applying to current and historical records. It's hard to believe that the authors of this booklet could consider that public access to the records of the GRO to date has had

any impact on an individual's right to privacy – it hasn't been an issue since Civil Registration began. Indeed, it is clear that the questions posed on page 37 are framed in a manner to produce certain replies, all of which, have a negative impact on public accessibility to the GRO records. Interestingly, no mention is made of any possibility of transferring the responsibility for historic records to the appropriate State Authority – the National Archives and thus offering access free-of-charge to these records.

Wider or just simply, more consultation?

Since the inception of this whole process nearly ten years ago, a fact ignored by the booklet, the comments and recommendations on the state of the civil registration service and what measures were considered necessary improvements must run into volumes. Genealogists alone must have provided the bulk of such information either to the Registrar General, various Ministers and to the Heritage Council in its examination of the state of genealogical services in Ireland. Government departments, on the other hand, were all required to examine their delivery of service and especially, since 1997 with the Government's "Quality Customer Service Initiative" to bring forward measures to improve services to the public. Indeed, it must be remembered that computerisation of the GRO records at Roscommon was, from the outset, to benefit the day-to-day needs of government departments, including the improved registration and certification service. Surely sufficient information was already available to enable a more focused consultative process to have been established at this stage.

No timeframe for implementation?

With no timeframe provided for the eventual establishment of this new Civil Registration Service, readers are asked to consider some forty-five questions covering eleven central aspects of the service to enable a final report to be produced. Indeed, as legislation was always required to implement the various changes to Civil Registration, including the move to Roscommon – why wasn't draft legislation brought forward at this stage? Such a measure would have afforded comment on an aspect of the new service which, was wholly omitted from the booklet, the costs of the services to the public. Given that further consultation will ensue on the publication of draft

legislation, it is hardly possible, that a Civil Registration Service Bill will be enacted this side of the General Election. Will legislation to give effect to Mr. Reynold's 1992 announcement be enacted before its 10th anniversary in November 2002 – only time will tell!!!

DIARY DATES

EVENING MEETINGS

Monday 14th May 2001

Evening Open Meeting

Dún Laoghaire Club, Eblana Avenue,
Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
20.00 hrs – 22.00hrs

Bus: 7, 7A, 8, 46A, 75, & 111.

DART Dún Laoghaire Station.

Speaker: Máiréad Dunleavy

Topic: "Clothing Through The Ages"

Monday 11th June 2001

Evening Open Meeting.

Venue & Time: *as above*

Speaker: Siobhán O'Rafferty

Topic: "Accessing Records in the RIA"

MORNING MEETINGS

Wednesday May 23rd & June 27th 2001

Morning Open Meeting 10.30hrs

The Port View Hotel, Marine Road,
Dún Laoghaire.

Discussion Group on Family History

YOUR MAY GENIE UPDATES...

FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCE

The Ulster Historical Foundation, Balmoral Buildings, 12, College Sq. East, Belfast BT1 6DD is hosting a conference on "Plantation & Colonial Migration" in Belfast from 24th to 29th September 2001. Our NI Rep. James Davidson reports that over 15 excellent speakers have been booked to attend covering a very wide range of topics. Booking is necessary either by mail or via the Website www.ancestryireland.com Overseas visitors – why not make September a feast of family history in Dublin for the Congress and afterwards in Belfast for this conference?

CEMETERY PROJECT Barry O'Connor invites members to register as volunteers for this summer's cemetery project transcribing the memorial inscriptions in Dean's Grange Cemetery and possibly, smaller cemeteries in the south County Dublin Area. Please contact Barry on e-mail btoc@esatclear.ie or the Hon. Secretary (address below). Work has just commenced on the preparation of Vol. 5 of Dean's Grange and Vol. 2 of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is coming along well according to Barry O'Connor – Cemetery Project Officer.

MARTELLO TOWER Liam Mac Alasdair, Chair of the Daonchartlann Project Committee has advised, that the Society's Architect, Mr. Seán Gaynor Dip Arch.,

MRIAI, has lodged an Application for Planning Permission to the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in order that the Society may refurbish the Tower to house the GSI Archive. Works should commence on receipt of Planning Permission.

CORK GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Congratulations to all in the Cork Genealogical Society on the first issue of their Annual Journal published recently. It's always great to see another quality genealogical publication from Ireland. On behalf of all in the GSI we wish this Journal every success. For further info. contact Jean Prendergast Hon. Secretary, Cork Genealogical Society 12, Courtlands, Silversprings, Cork, Ireland. Checkout the Cork Genealogical Society Website: <http://homepage.eircom.net/~aacoleman/index.html>

"MUNGOVAN BADGE" Overseas Members should have received their new Membership Cards with the February issue of The Genie Gazette as the original cards had our Society's new badge in an off centre position by mistake. The front of the new card has the Society's heraldic badge granted by the Chief Herald of Ireland in the centre. This "Mungovan Badge" will appear on the GSI publications etc. following receipt of the Letters Patent from the Chief Herald later this month. This will be the formal document granting the Coat-of-Arms and the Heraldic Badge to the Society.

EURO CHANGEOVER There are only seven months remaining before Ireland sees the introduction of Euro notes and coins on January 1st 2002. 11 other member states of the European Union, excluding the UK, Denmark and Sweden, will do likewise. During the coming months, explanatory leaflets on the Euro will be forwarded to each of our Overseas Members showing the design of the notes and coins, including a breakdown of the timetable for the changeover.

RMS LEINSTER – 1918 This is a repeat of an earlier request for information. On the 10th October 1918 - R.M.S. "Leinster" was sunk by a German Submarine. 501 people died in the greatest ever loss of life in the Irish Sea. Was a relative of yours on board? I am researching, for publication by the Society, the 501 people who died and the 271 people who survived the sinking of the "Leinster". The City of Dublin Steam Packet Company ship was sunk by UB 123 shortly after leaving Dún Laoghaire, (then Kingstown), Co. Dublin. The sinking resulted in the highest ever death rate on an Irish ship. As well as the crew, the ship was carrying Postal Sorters and civilian passengers, but most of those on board were military. I would love to hear from you if you have any information or photos etc. on any of the passengers. All information given will be acknowledged when my research is published by the Society as part of its very successful "Irish Genealogical Sources" series. This is an opportunity for your relative's story to become

known to a wide readership. Please contact: **PHILIP LECANE**, 77, Windsor, Drive, Monkstown, Co. Dublin, Ireland OR, via Hon. Secretary at the e-mail address above. **ELIZABETH SIMPSON AWARD** At the Federation of Family History Societies' half-yearly conference at the University of Leicester last weekend, the **Journal of One-Name Studies** was awarded first place in the Federation's Elizabeth Simpson Award competition for the best genealogical journal of 2000. The winning issue was the October one, containing the first part of the special articles on One-Name Studies in Ireland. This issue was chosen for entry as it clearly showed that the Guild is not just a British based organisation but, attracts members and readers from around the world. The GSI congratulates the Guild Committee, for winning this prestigious award for the first time.

FOURTH CONGRESS The 4th Irish Genealogical Congress will be held between the 17th and 23rd of September 2001 in Trinity College Dublin. Early booking is advisable. The GSI urges all intending to come to Dublin for this conference to still do so as the FMD restrictions are generally confined only to rural districts. Contact the Irish Genealogical Congress, c/o National Archives of Ireland, Bishop Street, Dublin 8, Ireland or via the Website: <http://indigo.ie/~irishgc> for details.

INQUIRY INTO "BOGUS" CHIEFS

During Parliamentary Questions in Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament) on 11th April 2001 **Mr. Eamon Gilmore, T.D. (Dún Laoghaire)** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands, **Ms. Síle de Valera T.D.**, why she had decided not to proceed with her proposed committee of experts to carry out a review of the procedures whereby courtesy recognition of chiefs is granted by the Genealogical Office. In reply, the Minister said "the Deputy will be aware from my reply on 21st Feb. 2001, that I have decided that the establishment of a committee to review procedures in the Genealogical Office ... is not warranted at this time". **Ms. de Valera** continued "the Director of the National Library, in his capacity as Chief Herald, has commenced examination of a number of high profile individual cases where courtesy recognition of chiefs of the name was granted in the past. His preliminary examination has elicited the need for legal advice on certain complex aspects of the cases and this advice is awaited. Detailed consideration of these cases by him, as Chief Herald, cannot be concluded until he has received and considered the legal advice. The work of any review committee would be severely constrained by the absence of both the legal advice now sought and formal consideration by the Chief Herald of these cases. The legal issues need to be fully resolved before the question of a formal policy review can be revisited". **Ms de Valera** then said that

she was "somewhat constrained with regard to elaborating the specific nature of the legal issues involved" but finally she made the point clear that "a chief of the name has no legal standing. It is a person recognised by the Chief Herald of Ireland as the senior descendant of the last inaugurated Gaelic lord of that name, granted courtesy recognition. Recognition is therefore no more than the acknowledgement of a genealogical fact which does not carry with it any rights or privileges in law". This clearly is at variance with the views expressed by a former Chief Herald and will be a severe blow to others closely associated with some Chiefs of the Name who claimed some sort of Constitutional protection for their position. **Mr. Brian O'Shea, T.D. (Waterford)** sought clarification from the Minister on the issue "from what the Minister says, it may be quite some time before there is any substantial progress on this issue. Can we take it there will not be any further recognition of bogus titles, or of any titles in the interim, until this issue is dealt with? **Ms de Valera** said that she could not say how long it will take to get the necessary legal advice and that it may take some time. **Mr. O'Shea, T.D.** asked the Minister if there was a full record of the number of bogus titles at the moment and whether there will be a mechanism whereby such titles can be withdrawn? In reply **Ms de Valera** said she could not give the number of such titles and in relation to the matter which is under review by the Chief Herald, as it is a question of law, I do not want to discuss it. It would not be appropriate for me to discuss legal issues in this House. The Minister confirmed that there had been "some high profile cases and they are being considered at the moment and it is not until all due procedures have been completed that we will know the full facts on these issues". The Genealogical Society of Ireland supports the call for a full Inquiry into the matter of "bogus" Chiefs recognised by former Chief Heralds of Ireland

ARTIST IN DUBLIN

Located your ancestral home in Ireland? Why not commission a line drawing or painting for your home, office or as a gift to a member of the family? **Veronica Heywood** is a renowned artist and arts educator based in Dún Laoghaire. **Veronica** undertakes such commissions from genealogists the world over. Studio:- 38, Cross Avenue, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Telephone 2803204 e-mail: localartist@ireland.com

OVERSEAS MEMBERS

GSI Membership Officer, **Annette McDonnell**, advises once again, that following a number of inquiries about overseas membership renewal dates the position is: Overseas members who have joined the society since 1st January 2000 have their membership year calculated on the basis of twelve calendar months from the date they joined e.g. suppose you joined on 14th March 2000, then your membership fees will

fall due on 1st April every year. Overseas members who joined the society before 1st January 2000 will have their membership year calculated from the date of their most recent payment and thereafter membership fees will fall due on that date every year e.g. if your last payment was on 20th August 2000, then your membership fees will fall due on 1st September every year from now on. In future, all overseas members will be notified, in advance, of their renewal dates by letter with the monthly newsletter.

NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY (USA)

The NGS in the United States announced the results of the 2001 Newsletter Competition with "Nuestra Herencia" as the winning newsletter for this year with 286 points. The runners-up received 278, 274, 272 and 270 points respectively. Our own newsletter "The Genie Gazette" received a total of 242 points and was very well placed in each of the judging categories. However, font size and the need for more white space were singled out for criticism. A respectable result first time out.

QUERIES RECIEVED

Francis Pinkman, 5200-53 Avenue NW, Apt. #13, Calgary, Alberta, T3A 2C4, Canada. E-mail: franscript00@yahoo.com Wrote:- Information wanted concerning time and place of the origin in Ireland of the surname **Bluman**, probably in Co. Cavan or Co. Leitrim. Any assistance greatly appreciated.

Daphne Chawke, e-mail: bjchawke@indigo.ie. Wrote: Seeking info. on Co. Cavan - **John Allen** b.1817 and **Mary Plunkett** b.c.1810/20, married c.1836. Their children were **Patrick** b.1837; **Bridget** b.1846; **Matthew** b.1848; **Mary** b.1853; **Rose** **Mary** b.1856; and **Catherine** b.1860. In the USA c.1883 **Catherine** married **Patrick Hannon** who was b.1849 in Ireland, son of **John** and **Mary Hannon**. Would appreciate any information re ancestors/relatives for these families. **Mark Plagman**, 500 W. Main St., Plainfield, IN 46168, USA E-mail: maplagman@aol.com I am supposedly related to the late great "The Liberator" **Daniel O'Connell**. My grandmothers name was **Ada Florence Sherrill Duncan**, who passed away in the United States in 1945. Her husband was **James Edgar Duncan**, who passed away in 1927 in America, both in the state of Iowa. Apparently a **Sherrill** married an **O'Connell** sometime in the 1800's. How can I find this information out? Looking for advice and help.

William G. Kelly, E-mail: carag6@worldnet.att.net Wrote:- I am researching my family and have reached a point where a little help would be appreciated. At the wedding of **James Kelly** and **Margaret Neary** on the 10th day of January 1871 in St. Joseph's Church, Albany, New York were their parents. All of Ireland per the church registry. The father of the groom's first name is illegible but appears to begin with M. His wife is

James Neary and Mary Ryan. Where in Ireland did they originate. from. Any info. pls.

Jerry Rogers, E-mail: jerryrogers64@yahoo.com Wrote:- I am looking for a William Rogers b. 10 Nov.1821 Ireland. I don't know where. Emigrated to U.S. about 1841. Any info. please

Joyce Kennedy, E-mail: joycekennedy@webtv.net Wrote:- I probably don't have enough information for you to help me, but here goes. I am looking for information on Mary ???, born at Marshaltown in County Wexford in 1823. She married a Kennedy in 1842 and they moved to America in 1855. They arrived in New York City. The 1910 Johnson Co. Wyoming census says that Mary and her husband had 7 children, but only two were alive at that time. Their son, Andrew W. Kennedy was born in NY in 1856 about the same time they arrived in the US. They also had a daughter Katherine who may have been in the US or Ireland along with the remaining unknown 5 children. Mary and her husband were Catholic. Thank you in advance for any direction you may be able to direct me.

Norman Bennett, E-mail: nbennett52@earthlink.net Wrote:- Seeking info. on Patrick Bunbury b. 1804 County Wicklow, Ireland 1861 census of New Brunswick, Northumberland, Canada. Patrick married Mary Gomay (Gorman) 1824. Emigrated to Canada in June of 1831. Patrick and Mary had 9 children that I know of. Thomas Bunbury, b. 1828, possibly Co. Wicklow, Ireland, married Eliza Hackett in New Brunswick, Canada, d. 1915 Chicago, Ill. He was my great great grandfather. Margaret, b. 1830, possibly Co. Wicklow, Ireland. The family moved to Canada in June 1831. Eleanor, b. Aug. 1831, Canada. Helen, b. 1832. Mary, b. 1833, Canada. Maria or Marie, b. 1835, Canada. Sarah, b. 1837 Canada. Patrick Jr. b. 1840, Canada. Elizabeth, b. 1843, Canada. The family of Thomas BUNBURY and Eliza Hackett had 9 children, and moved to Chicago, Illinois. After Chicago I have quite a bit of information, but I would love to know more about the parents and siblings of Patrick Bunbury Sr. and his wife Mary Gomay.

Sheila O'Connell Taipale, E-mail: sheiladay@silverlink.net Wrote:I am a great great great granddaughter of The Liberator (authen-ticated). I have the 3 O'Connell Family Tracts by Basil O'Connell. Where are these documents now, and have they been updated by anyone? Do you know who I could contact re: current generations of descendants?

Jack Willoughby, E-mail: jackw@cwnet.com Wrote:- My great grandfather, Patrick Edward Doyle, was Irish, Catholic, member of the Knights of Columbus, a Mining Engineer and a family man. He lived, worked and died (1909) in Leadville, Colorado, U.S.A. His tombstone (photo attached) shows an "iron" cross, with a skull and crossbones in front of the cross, and the letters "F", "M", "M", and "T" at the ends of the four arms of the cross. I would be most appreciative if someone in your

Society could help me to find the meaning of the letters. Thank you for your consideration.

Gregg Smith, E-mail: Dagaen@aol.com Wrote:- Where can I find information on the Timney Surname? Our Timney family left from Waterford or Kilkenny, Ireland, during the Potato Famine. Re. Timney, Timoney & Timony anyone researching the names?

David Battigan, 15 Kempton Court, Navan Road, Dublin 7. E-mail: battigad@yahoo.co.uk Wrote:- My surname Battigan is relatively unique as no family member or genealogist/genealogy database has been able to accurately trace its origins or any information concerning its development. There are very few Battigan's residing in Ireland and an extremely limited number of people with the surname reside outside of Ireland to the best of our knowledge. Some are present in the UK, a couple of references to the name in the USA with one reference to the family name in Canada. Reportedly the name is popular in the Philippines, but we have not been able to confirm/deny this report. Would anybody have any information concerning our surname or perhaps any suggestions regarding the best possible method to initiate a trace. Other genealogy traces have been as unsuccessful as have my own limited searches. Any comments, info. or suggestions welcome. Many thanks.

Stanley J Gauchet, E-mail: rockery@gateway.net Wrote:- I am researching my family history and have found news clippings concerning Oliver St. John Gogarty. One of my relatives, P. F. Gogarty had a brother by the name of Dr. James Gogarty and a note says that James Gogarty may be the grandfather of Oliver St. John Gogarty. P. F. Gogarty was born in Kingscourt, County Cavan, Ireland. Any assistance with this it would be greatly appreciated.

Don McGavern (dmcgaver@ucalgary.ca) Wrote:- Who would I contact in the village of Clones in regards to the final resting place for a John and Jane McGavern? The time period is probably 1863 or 1864+.

Margaret McCarthy, E-mail: Margaret173@aol.com Wrote: Regarding the Clarendon Photo Studio in Kingstown and wondered if anyone had heard of it. I have an old unidentified photo taken by: "???. Clarendon, Artist, 94 Lr. Georges St. Kingstown" Here is what I have regarding my g-grandmother, from whom I believe this picture came: Eleanor McCarthy born either May 18, 1874 or May 19, 1873 (various dates given in death certificate and obituary) in Waterford. Her parents were: John McCarthy and Margaret Conroy according to data on her marriage record, but on her death certificate her parents were shown as: Patrick McCarthy and Margaret Connolly. I'm assuming that she gave the correct names at the time of her marriage. She emigrated at age 17, thus 1890 or 1891. Her uncle was a Dr. Crook, a Queen's Council, in England. The photo from Clarendon's Studio had the number, 7307, on it, so if any records from that studio still exist,

the number would identify it. I'm curious as to whether this business lasted a number of years and passed from hand to hand or father to son and whether there is an historical society which might have kept their records? Long shot, but I'd love to identify the two young children pictured. Any information please.

Rosalie Thompson (nee Mullins), 6, Speedwell Way, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 5WA, England.. Seeks info.. on the surnames Mullins, Gallivan or Fleming in Ireland. E-mail: rosalie.thompson@talkgas.net

NEW PUBLICATION

It would be great if each county in Ireland was covered by this type of publication for Co. Louth. I especially like the way the author deals with the married names of women. Brendan Hall put a great deal of work into this publication. If you've Co. Louth links it's a must!! "Irish Genealogical Sources No.23 - Name Index to Tombstone Inscriptions of County Louth, Ireland - Vol. 1" (ISBN 1 898471 81 9) and "Irish Genealogical Sources No.24- Name Index to Tombstone Inscriptions of County Louth, Ireland - Vol. 2" (ISBN 1 898471 86 X). Compiled by Brendan Hall. Price IRP14.00 : EUR17.78 - postage IRL & UK IRP1.00 -Others IRP3.00 (surface) and IRP6.00 (airmail). (UK, USD, CAN, AUS & EUR equivalent cheques/checks accepted - remember to add p+p) This Index, printed in two volumes (sold as a 2 vol. set), is intended as a genealogical aid to those seeking ancestors in County Louth or those involved in one-name studies. It contains almost 30,000 records and is, as the title implies, a name index to the Tombstone Inscriptions that are available in print, from various sources, for cemeteries in County Louth. Each record contains the name, burial ground and publication in which the inscription may be found. Also included is a cross-reference index of some 1,200 names of married women and, to facilitate the researcher in identifying surname variations, an alphabetical index of all 2,600 surnames found in the inscriptions.

CIVIL REGISTRATION SERVICE

Copies of the document "Bringing Civil Registration the 21st Century" are available on the Website www.groireland.ie or from Gráinne Curran, GRO, Joyce House, Lombard Street East, Dublin 2. Observations or comments on the document must be received by the 31st May 2001. Everyone with an interest in Irish genealogy should take time out to read this booklet on Civil Registration.