

- Happy St. Patrick's Day
- New Bill introduced on Civil Registration
- News & Views from the World of Genealogy

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# The Gene Gazette

The Newsletter of  
the Genealogical Society  
of Ireland  
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“Cuimhnigí ar  
Ár Sinnsir  
Remember Our  
Ancestors”

## NEW SOCIAL WELFARE BILL DEALS WITH GRO

*No Increase in Accessibility for the General Public to the Records of the General Register Office*

Whilst introducing the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2002 the Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs, **Mr. Dermot Ahern TD**, said "it is intended to publish a comprehensive civil registration Bill later this year which will provide a framework for new administrative structures for the General Registrar Office; the introduction of new registers of divorce and civil nullity; and changes in the procedures for registering the events - births, stillbirths, adoptions, marriages and deaths". Nearly ten years after the announcement of the relocation of the GRO to Roscommon and the commencement of the "**Roscommon Experiment**" to computerise all the civil registration records in Ireland.

**1.2 Million GRO Searches Annually**  
Mr. Dermot Ahern TD, informed Deputies in Dáil Éireann on Tuesday February 26<sup>th</sup> that there are approximately 104,000 events registered each year - 52,000 births; 500 stillbirths; 16,000 marriages; 31,000 deaths; 500 adoptions; 2,000 re-registrations; and 2,000 amendments. In addition, 400,000 certificates are produced and 1.2 million searches-inquiries are carried out each year. He then outlined the present legislative basis for Irish Civil Registration as follows. The Registration of Births and Deaths Acts, 1863 and 1996, and the Marriages Acts, 1844 and 1863, provide for the manner in which births, deaths and marriages may be registered

and for the maintenance of a permanent record of vital events by An t-Árd Chláraitheoir (Registrar General). These Acts also set out the manner in which the public may access the records and obtain certified copies of individual records.

### **"Roscommon Experiment"**

Turning to the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, Mr. Ahern outlined the scope of this new legislation in respect of the GRO. He said that the Schedule to the Bill provides for the amendment of the registration Acts to facilitate the introduction later this year of the electronic registration of births and deaths which will represent the first phase of the modernisation programme. The Bill also includes provisions to allow for the capture and storing in electronic format of all registration records created since 1845, about 20 million records in all. The electronic capture of historical data is of fundamental importance to the success of the modernisation programme, the Minister maintained. He said that currently, a person can get a certificate only in the district in which the event was registered or from the GRO.

### **Public Accessibility**

However, again reminiscent of the "Roscommon Mantra" we've heard since 1992, the Minister said that when the records are computerised it will be possible to get a certificate at any registrar's office around the country for any event registered in the State. For example, at present if one were born in Donegal and lived in Cork, one would have to write or call to the registrar in Donegal or to the GRO for a birth certificate. When the records are

computerised one will be able to call to the local registrar in Cork for such a certificate. However, no mention is made in the Bill regarding the availability of photocopies of entries or indeed, the possible provision of microfilm copies of the indexes and registers to the National Library, National Archives or regional archives/libraries. Though provision is made in the Bill by amendments to Civil Registration Acts to permit the Registrar General to keep records in a non-legible form (microfiche, microfilm, CD Rom etc.) nothing in the Bill increases the public accessibility to these records. Whether, this Bill will herald a new era where sight of the registers, other than the indexes, may not be generally possible due to new and sensitive information being recorded in the registers is far from clear. Maximum public accessibility to the GRO records could be assured by amendments to this Bill to include free access to the GRO Index Books, photocopies of entries on payment of a fee, microfilm copies of the Indexes and Registers over thirty years old being made available in the National Archives, National Library and other repositories and possibly on CD Rom or on-line.

### **Ten Years On**

This Bill is merely a "house-keeping" measure to give effect to various changes in benefit structures, however, promises of a "comprehensive civil registration Bill" to be introduced later this year ring hollow with most in the genealogical community - the old "**Roscommon Mantra**" once again. Legislation to give effect to the changes proposed in 1992, including to relocation to Roscommon, is still awaited

nearly ten years on. It's time that the whole issue of the services of the General Register Office in Dublin is tackled head-on by the Government. Legislation is only part of the remedy, the greater part is easier and not too costly – wider accessibility to the records through the various repositories and on the Internet. No more sham public consultation exercises – just action please Minister!!.

**DIARY DATES**

**Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> 2002**

Evening Open Meeting. 20.00hrs

**Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education**

**Cumberland St., Dún Laoghaire**

Bus: 7, 7A, 46A, and 75.

DART Monkstown/Salthill Station.

Annual General Meeting (resumed)

Speaker: David Sheehy

Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin Archives

**Tuesday April 9<sup>th</sup> 2002**

Venue as above

Genealogical Resources at the National

Library of Ireland

**Weds. Mar. 27<sup>th</sup> & April 24<sup>th</sup> 2002**

Morning Open Meeting 10.30hrs

**The Port View Hotel, Marine Road, Dún Laoghaire**

Discussion Group on Family History

**WELSH MP &**

**COUNCILLORS VISIT**

**IRELAND**

Mr. Albert Owen a Labour Party MP in the British Parliament and Mr. Arwel Roberts, Mayor of Holyhead, headed a delegation from Holyhead visiting Newry, Co. Down on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March to view the interface between Sterling and the Euro in the border town of Newry. Accompanied by a delegation from Dún Laoghaire, the party met business and political leaders in Newry, Warrenpoint and the fishing town of Kilkeel. The visit was suggested by this Society, a member of the Holyhead Dún Laoghaire Link Organisation, as precursor to the possible adoption of a dual currency system in the port of Holyhead to facilitate visitors from Ireland and other EU countries. The Society's official representative in Northern Ireland and Vice President, Mr. James Davidson, FGSI along with the Chairman of Newry & Mourne District Council, Cllr. Davy Hyland, local MP Mr. Séamus Mallon and Cllr. John Fee, MLA met the delegation at Newry Town Hall before embarking on a tour of the south Down and south Armagh area. The north's Minister for Finance Dr. Seán

Farren, MLA hosted a dinner for the visitors in Tí Chualainn in Mullaghbawn in south Armagh. The following day the visitors, again accompanied by the GSI Vice President, went to Stormont to meet members of the Northern Ireland Assembly before returning south to visit Dáil Éireann in Dublin. At the Dáil the visitors met Ms. Mary Hanafin, Minister for Children and other members before attending a meeting with members of the Irish Labour Party, Mr. Eamon Gilmore, TD, Mr. Emmet Stagg, TD and Party President, Mr. Pronsias de Rossa, TD, MEP. The visitors ended their trip with a relaxing drink in the Dáil bar before heading off for the ship to Holyhead. The Society is very grateful to Cllr. John Fee, MLA for facilitating the visit and making the various arrangements in Northern Ireland.

**MARCH GENIE REVIEWS**

**Cork Genealogical Society – Journal No. 2 2002** – the second issue of this journal is a treasure trove for all with Cork ancestry. Articles include extensive listings – always a hit with genealogists. Most of these listings cover the period prior to the Great Famine and in the absence of any census material for this period these lists become invaluable resources for the genealogist. Each list is accompanied by an explanatory note giving the sources and reasons for the compilation of the listing e.g. "Burgesses of the City of Cork; Repeal Petition 1843" was part of Daniel O'Connell's campaign for the repeal of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland. According to the author, Jean Prendergast, these lists can be compared with Jackson's "County & City of Cork Post Office and General Directory for 1842/3. There are some amusing footnotes taken from the Cork Examiner newspaper like "Artificial Teeth – Mr. Barry, Surgeon Dentist, begs to announce his return from London, 3 Camden Place, May 15<sup>th</sup> 1843". In another article by Anita Sheahan Coraluzzi – "Cork Insolvent Debtors 1843" again with a listing extracted from the Cork Examiner, we get a fascinating insight into the business world of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the same article is a wonderful account of Edward O'Shaughnessey's feigned passion for the daughter of Michael Hallinan who was "a girl of prepossessing attractions and manners superior to her grade". Another entry concerned a

consignment of twenty "Roman cement casks" for the shipment of wine to Barbados, whilst, the other more nasty side of the above O'Shaughnessey is reported that in 1837 "he committed a rape on the daughter of his detaining creditor" and stands accused of bigamy. Rentals and leases on the estate of the Earl of Bandon held in the Cork Archives Institute are covered in detail in "Extracts from the Doherty Papers" and though, these extracts are for the years between 1826 and 1844, they provide in some cases information from the previous century. Irish emigration to Brazil is covered by Anthony McCan, of which, he quite rightly says little is known. Corkman, Col. William Cotter of Mallow was in the service of the Emperor Pedro I of Brazil and apparently was recruiting Irishmen for service in the Imperial Army fighting a civil war in Brazil between 1825 and 1828. The account of "three persons charged with being resurrectionists" taken from the Cork Examiner of 1843 concerning the removal body of Patrick Lane of the parish of Aghabolougue from the local graveyard makes for interesting reading. With a fine biography by Brendan Sisk of Edmond O'Loughlin, a fenian from the parish of Aghada and many more listings concerning the City and County of Cork, this 102 page journal is a must for all with connections in this part of Ireland. The editors are to be congratulated on this fine publication, unfortunately no price is given nor has an ISSN been applied, however, further details may be obtained from Jean Prendergast, Hon. Secretary, Cork Genealogical Society, 12, Courtlands, Silverspings, Cork, Ireland. E-mail: [corkgensoc@eircom.net](mailto:corkgensoc@eircom.net)

**YOUR MARCH GENIE UPDATES**

**MARCH 2000 & 2001** Looking back over the stories carried in the March 2000 and 2001 editions of this newsletter it makes it clear to all of the need for co-ordination in relation to the development of genealogical services and the formulation of policy regarding the provision of services to genealogists in Ireland. In March 2001 the "bogus chiefs" were again in the news with the Minister, Ms. Síle de Valera TD going back on her plan to set up an "Expert Group" to investigate the whole affair stating that legal advice was being sought on how to proceed. In the same month a year earlier

the costs of the "*Roscommon Experiment*" were under scrutiny in Dáil Éireann with a call for a "Value for Money Report" to be undertaken on the operation of the General Register Office's outpost in Roscommon Town. In March 2000 genealogists and others from around the world bombarded the office of the Minister for Health & Children with protest e-mails over the conditions and services in the General Register Office in Dublin. This Society advised its members to abstain from this type of protest as it was considered counterproductive. Finally, in March 2000 the long awaited and ultimately doomed report by the Heritage Council was published. "*The Provision of Genealogical Services in Ireland*" (ISSN 1393-6808) priced at €12.70 it was not the report commissioned by the Minister and Ms. de Valera TD, to her credit, said that she did not support its "pay-for-view" proposal and the report was duly dumped. Thereby, a valuable opportunity that had its origins in this Society's submissions on the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 to set genealogical services in Ireland in order was squandered when the Heritage Council lost the plot and produced this "Pay-for-View" report.

**SPRING JOURNAL** The Spring 2002 issue of the Society's Quarterly Journal (Vol. 3 No. 1) is now available price €5.00 (Member €4.50). Once again, the contents reflect a continued high standard of research by Members and friends of the Society. The articles include:- **Early Research into the Elmes Family** by Margaret Elmes; **Kenilworth Square, Rathgar, Dublin: Family Scraps** by Patricia Moorhead; **The Bridgmans of County Clare** by Shirley G. Straney; **Names from the Dublin Corporation Reports of 1908** by M. O'Reilly; **A Family of Little Importance** by Eamonn Dowling; **Patrick McMahon of Torrodile, Co. Limerick** by G.H. O'Reilly; **Vere Foster and the 'City of Mobile** by Brendan Hall; **Patrick Hanratty, Convict** by June Reeks; **Loughlinstown Workhouse in the 1840's** by Liam Clare; **My Cavan Connections [poem]** by Seán Mac Brádaigh, B.A.; **Murder Case in Wexford in 1824** by G.H. O'Reilly; **The British National Inventory of War Memorials** by James Scannell; **An Ulster Migration to Arklow 1597** by Seán Mac Brádaigh, B.A.; **Limerick Assizes, March 1815**. Copies of the journal are

available via the Society's Website and from the Genealogical Bookshop, 3, Nassau Street, Dublin 2.

**REGISTRY OF DEEDS** The Society's success in getting a waiver of the fees at the Valuation Office in Dublin for senior citizens, students and recipients of social welfare undertaking bona fide genealogical research has unfortunately not been matched by the Registry of Deeds in Dublin. The fees at the Registry are set by statutory instrument and therefore, the setting of fees is not an issue, over which, the Registry of Deeds has complete control. The Society will be taking up the matter with the Minister concerned.

**MEMBERSHIP FEES** For Overseas Members familiar with the US\$, at the time of writing, the current exchange rate of the Euro to the US\$ is circa .87 US cents, which, should make understanding the value of the Euro quite easy.. In accordance with Board Res. 01/09/86 from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002 the annual Membership Fee for both Irish based and Overseas Members is €15.00 payable via the Website or directly to the Membership Officer who will issue a laminated Membership Card as receipt of payment.

**NUNS REGISTER** Have you family members who were born in Ireland and became nuns? If so, the Society is compiling a Register of Nuns of Irish origin and would welcome details of your family member. The details sought include, name, religious name, order, parent's names, place of birth, date of birth, entered order, date and place of death etc. and, if possible, a short biography of her life. Contact: **Clare Malone, MGSI, Registrar, GSI Nuns Register, 90, Parnell Road, Dublin 12, Ireland**. To date, Clare has collected and collated many thousands of names of Irish women who entered religious life and spent the rest of their lives outside Ireland in the realms of education, healthcare and the delivery of aid to the less fortunate around the world. Their lives may well be forgotten, except within their Orders and families, however, the wider Irish Diaspora can both assist and benefit from the "Nuns Project" organised by this Society. The collection and eventual publication of the Nuns' Register will greatly assist a wide range of researchers from genealogists, social historians to religious historians. If you feel that you would like to assist Clare – please drop her a line today at the address above or

contact the Editor at the e-mail address above.

**DUBLIN CASTLE XXVth International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences** will take place in Dublin from 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September 2002. The Congress is being organised by the Office of the Chief Herald under the direction of the Chief Herald of Ireland, **Mr. Brendan O'Donoghue**, and with the support of the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, **Ms. Síle de Valera, TD**. The Congress sessions will be held in Dublin Castle and there will be a programme of other events in Dublin and in Kilkenny. The theme of the Congress will be Genealogy and Heraldry: their Place and Practice in Changing Times. This is intended to encompass historical as well as modern practice. Topics might include genealogy and heraldry in the age of information technology, heraldry in republics like Ireland, Italy, France, USA and South Africa etc., women and heraldry – including female transmission of names and Arms and the use of cadency marks, accessibility of heraldic and genealogical records, heraldry and corporate symbols or "logos". If, in addition to attending the Congress, persons wishing to present a paper on the above theme at the Congress may attach a summary of the proposed paper with their application form. All proposals for Congress papers will be reviewed by a Committee to ascertain their relevance to the theme of the Congress etc. prior to their inclusion in the final programme. Application forms may be had from The Congress Secretary, Office of the Chief Herald, 2 Kildare Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. E-mail: [Hergen2002@nli.ie](mailto:Hergen2002@nli.ie)

**MARTELLO TOWER** The Board would like to advise all Members that the Planning Permission received from Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2001 for the restoration and refurbishment, by the Society, of the Martello Tower at Seapoint, Co. Dublin, has been appealed to An Bord Pleanála (The Planning Board). The Society's architect has prepared a detailed and comprehensive submission for An Bord Pleanála in response to this appeal and has lodged it with An Bord Pleanála. A decision will be announced in a matter of months depending on the workload at An Bord Pleanála. The Society is still fund raising and looking at all opportunities for grant aid for the restoration and

refurbishment of the Martello Tower. Work can only commence when the planning appeal is heard and permission granted by An Bord Pleanála.

**DRAW PRIZES** Members holding the following tickets have prizes waiting for them from the draw which **George H. O'Reilly, MGS** ran at the Morning & Evening Meetings before Christmas - numbers 53, 80, 88, 92 and 93. The prizes are with Frieda Carroll in the Society's Archive, 14, Rochestown Park, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin awaiting collection. If not collected by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2002, the items remaining will be returned to George O'Reilly as the Board has decided not to proceed with another draw at this stage.

**NATIONAL LIBRARY CLOSURE** The National Library of Ireland will be closed to the public each Thursday during the period January 17<sup>th</sup> 2002 to March 7<sup>th</sup> 2002, both days inclusive for staff training. The Director and staff apologise for any inconvenience caused to researchers, however, the measure is aimed at improving the service to the public at the National Library.

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES** Copies of the 1901 and 1911 household census returns can be ordered directly from the National Archives of Ireland at a cost of €2.50 per page, inclusive of postage. Readers are reminded that the District Electoral Division number, the Civil Parish (not the RC parish) and the Townland or street details must be furnished along with the family name. Apply to the Reading Room, National Archives of Ireland, Bishop Street, Dublin 8, Ireland. Euro bank drafts are available from most major banks.

**FOURTH OF JULY** Well if the world can take St. Patrick's Day and celebrate with green beer, Ireland can take timeout to mark American Independence Day with a parade in Dún Laoghaire on Dublin's Riviera. The parade was held annually from 1996 when the USS aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy visited the Town, however, since 2000 the main street of Dún Laoghaire was undergoing refurbishment and the parade had to be cancelled until this year. The Society has been given the "American Breakfast" slot in this year's activities. The "American Breakfast" will be a fund raiser for the restoration of the Martello Tower in Seapoint to house the Society's growing Archive. A guest speaker will be invited and a specially designed "American" style

menu will set the atmosphere to what will be a full day of activities centred on the Fourth of July parade through the Town.

### QUERIES RECEIVED

**Peter King**, Ten Obelisk Rise, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 81QT, England. Wrote:- We are currently researching a Sarah Flynn (a minor under 21?) DOB possibly 1841/44, who in 1860 was living at 10, Grattan Court, Dublin 2. She married a William Reynolds (of full age over 21) from Bristol, Somerset in England on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1860 at the Parish Church of St. Peter in Dublin according to the rites and ceremonies of the United Church of England & Ireland. He was stationed at what was then Portobello Barracks, Dublin (now Cathal Brugha Barracks). According to the marriage entry, witnesses to the marriage were a William Hanlon & Elizabeth Malone. Sarah Flynn's father was Edward and a servant/butler probably working in service in the Grattan Court area of Dublin in 1860. Unfortunately, that is all we know about the Flynn side other than that they were most likely Roman Catholics, William Reynolds we presume was non-Catholic hence the reason for the marriage taking place in a non-Catholic church. After the marriage they left Dublin to be stationed at various locations in England before returning to Dublin by 1868 where they had their fourth child, Henry Patrick on January 15<sup>th</sup> of that year. They were then living at No. 4, Union Place, Grand Canal Bank, Dublin, which we think was in close proximity to Portobello Barracks. Henry Patrick was baptised on February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1868 in the RC Church of Our Lady Refuge of Sinners, Rathmines Road, Dublin by Fr. Dennon, PP. The godparents were Patrick Flynn (probably Sarah Flynn's brother) and a Catherine Warren. Perhaps they may have eventually married if they were fiancées. William and Sarah then returned to England in 1869 and after being stationed at Devonport, Devon and at Woolwich, Kent, in 1873 went on to Newcastle upon Tyne where William terminated his military career, probably in the mid 1870s. William Reynolds died on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1880 at the age of 43 according to the Death Certificate. Sarah Reynolds (née Flynn) went on to marry twice more to a Thomas Burgun in 1882 he died in 1890 and then she married a Thomas Lumsden in 1891. Sarah herself died on August 21<sup>st</sup> 1904 at the age of 60 at 41, Pitt Street,

Newcastle upon Tyne. Any information on the above families much appreciated.

**EDITOR:** Please note that only queries accompanied by a mailing address can be published as complaints were received from readers unable to access e-mail addresses that may change from time to time.

### EIGSE LAOGHAIRE

Eigse Laoghaire the Dún Laoghaire Multicultural Arts Group will celebrate UN World Anti-Racism Day in Stillorgan Public Library, Co. Dublin on Thursday March 21<sup>st</sup> 2002 from 15.00hrs to 17.00hrs featuring multicultural music, song and storytelling. The event includes an art exhibition by local refugee and asylum-seekers - our "New Irish" from March 21<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> in the Library. Admission is free.

### DEAN'S GRANGE CEMETERY

Once again Barry O'Connor and his team have produced the goods with the publication this month of Volume 5 of the Memorial Inscriptions of Dean's Grange Cemetery - West Section. This volume completes the older section of this the largest graveyard in south Co. Dublin. This cemetery opened in 1864 and contains both Catholic and non-Catholic burials from that period with current use for those with rights only. This volume is very reasonably priced at just €13.00 and with circa 200 pages of inscriptions and index it's an invaluable tool for the genealogist. This section - the West, contains both non-Catholic and Catholic burials with date ranging from early last century up to the present. It will be available via the Website shortly and in the Genealogical Bookshop, 3, Nassau Street, Dublin; Bookstop in Dún Laoghaire Shopping Centre and in the National Library Bookshop. For details on the earlier volumes please see the Society's Website. Congratulations to Barry O'Connor and his team and to Liam Mac Alasdair for the layout and booklet compilation.

### MEETING DONATIONS

To defray some of the costs associated with the Open Meetings the Board has instituted a meeting contribution of €2.50 for the Evening Meetings in Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education. For the Morning Meetings in The Port View Hotel €2.00 (Coffee / Tea included as usual).