

- Civil Registration Legislation
- Heritage Officer appointed
- Martello Tower – work starts

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2003 – AN EVENTFUL YEAR FOR GENEALOGISTS?

Is Legislation on Two Fronts a Possibility – Civil Registration and Genealogy & Heraldry?

Whilst, wishing all our Members and readers a very happy, healthy, peaceful and prosperous 2003, the Board of the Society views the coming year as a most eventful one for genealogy in Ireland. Work is due to commence very shortly on the Republic's first genealogical archive operated by a non-governmental body at the Martello Tower at Seapoint, Co. Dublin. The Society has been planning and raising funds for this project for a number of years. However, despite many setbacks, the tenacity and dedication of the Project Team under the Chairmanship of Liam Mac Alasdair, FGSI, has won through to the commencement of the work to restore and refurbish this early 19th tower as a permanent base for our Archive.

Civil Registration Bill, 2003

On the wider genealogical front, the Society awaits the publication of the new Civil Registration Bill in the next few months. This long overdue piece of legislation will provide new systems for the registration of births, deaths, marriages, civil annulments and divorces in the Republic and also, provide for new facilities for public access to the records of the General Register Office. Initial reports suggest that the genealogical community in Ireland will have much to be concerned about this legislation, as

fundamental changes to the present system are likely to be included in the Bill.

Lessons learned or not

Given the scope of this new Civil Registration Bill, genealogists in Ireland and their supporters amongst the Irish Diaspora must be mindful of past failures to mount a coherent and united campaign on matters concerning the General Register Office in Dublin. Few would deny that if proposals to provide microfilm copies of the registers and indexes to the National Library, National Archives and regional centres throughout Ireland were adopted and implemented by the Irish government in the mid 1990's, this new legislation would have only a peripheral interest for most genealogists. Lessons learned from previous campaigns must be brought to bear on any new initiatives by the genealogical community to secure the maximum public accessibility to the GRO records under the new Civil Registration Bill.

Genealogy & Heraldry Bill

A more positive note for the coming year is the growing support amongst Teachtaí Dála (Irish MPs) and Senators for the introduction by the Irish Government of an *Irish Genealogy & Heraldry Bill*. Just before Christmas, Senator Paschal Mooney who has shown a deep interest in the subject over the years, declared his support for the introduction of an Irish Genealogy & Heraldry Bill and has made representations to the Minister of Arts, Sport & Tourism, Mr. John O'Donoghue, TD on the matter. This Society worked closely with Senator Mooney on the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997,

where many important amendments proposed by the Society were accepted by the then Minister, Mr. Michael D. Higgins, TD. Indeed, Mr. Michael D. Higgins, TD likewise supports the introduction of this new legislation as an important step for this aspect of our nation's heritage.

End to the "Bogus Chiefs"?

The "bogus chiefs" inquiry is now not likely ever to get the go-ahead from the Minister of Arts, Sport & Tourism because matters have reportedly reached a legal stalemate. However, the opportunities afforded by the introduction of an Irish Genealogy & Heraldry Bill are becoming an attractive route out of this embarrassing mess. The requirement in the proposed new legislation for any person claiming to be a direct and senior male descendant of the last inaugurated Gaelic Chief to apply for "courtesy recognition" under the Act would provide for the re-examination of all claims in accordance with strict guidelines by suitably qualified persons. On the enactment of the legislation all existing persons in receipt of "courtesy recognition" as Gaelic Chiefs should have to re-apply for any continuance of this recognition. Such applications should have to be lodged within a set period of time and be submitted with all supporting documentation for re-examination, otherwise such "courtesy recognition" previously enjoyed would be simply withdrawn by the Chief Herald of Ireland. An end to this long running saga would restore dignity to the "courtesy recognition" of Gaelic Chieftains as envisaged by Ireland's first Chief Herald

of Ireland Dr. Edward McLysaght. This would be very fitting in 2003 as we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland.

A busy year ahead!

With the introduction *Civil Registration Bill* due shortly and hopefully, progress on the issue of a future *Irish Genealogy & Heraldry Bill*, the year ahead is set to be a busy one for the Irish genealogical community. Time has come for the State to recognise the importance of genealogy and heraldry in terms of our national heritage and to provide a legislative basis for the development, co-ordination, promotion and protection of this valuable resource for, amongst other things, tourism revenue. Mr. John O'Donoghue, TD, as the Minister responsible for the National Archives and the National Library, including the Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland, is ideally placed to deliver a comprehensive legislative package as he also has the responsibility for tourism. A commitment by the Minister to introduce an *Irish Genealogy & Heraldry Bill* this year would represent the most important milestone in the development and provision of genealogical and heraldic services in Ireland. *Minister we await your decision.*

ONE-NAME STUDIES

The Guild of One-Name Studies will hold its Annual General Meeting and conference in Liverpool, England, between the 25th and 27th April 2003. The theme of the conference will be Civil Registration in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Liverpool University is the fine venue chosen for this important conference as civil registration is a central resource for genealogists around the world. Proposed new developments in the legislation governing civil registration on both the United Kingdom and Ireland could leave the One-Namers out in the cold as access to information will be restricted. Irish One-Namers should avail of the opportunity afforded by the proximity of Liverpool to attend this conference. In the current issue of the Journal of the Guild of One-Name Studies the "Pinpointing Surname Origins with the Median Area Theory" is explored in depth by John Titterton using such readily available sources such as the Telephone Book etc. Other articles of note are "One-Name Sources in the Archives of York Minister" by Louise Hampson. Also, in

this issue the great possibilities afforded by DNA Testing for genealogists are teased out in an article by Chris Gray that explains the issue plainly. Fuller details available on the Guild's Website: www.one-name.org or by writing to the Guild of One Name Studies, Box G, 14, Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London, EC1M 7BA, England.

CIVIC MUSEUM

It's always a delight to deliver good news about the town of Dún Laoghaire where the Society is based, especially, as we begin 2003 the year of the 1550th anniversary of the foundation of the "dún" or fortress by High King Laoghaire. Whilst, this anniversary may go unmarked by the County Council, the long running campaign by the Dún Laoghaire Borough Historical Society for the establishment of a Civic Museum in Dún Laoghaire received a great boost in the County Hall last month. At the meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee for Culture, Community Development and Amenities held in the Council Chamber on Wednesday 4th December, 2002 Mr. Séamus O'Connor of the Dún Laoghaire Borough Historical Society spoke about the need for a Civic Museum in Dún Laoghaire. He talked about the history of Dún Laoghaire and said that Dún Laoghaire Historical Society has lots of artefacts, but nowhere to display them. In the discussion that followed Mr. O'Connor's remarks there was general agreement about the need for a Museum. Michael Merrigan tabled a proposal seeking the establishment of museum in Dún Laoghaire. Seconded by Councillor Louise Cosgrave, the following motion was passed unanimously after amendment suggested by Councillor Trevor Matthews that the museum should be called Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Museum. "That this SPC accepts and supports the need for the establishment of a Civic Museum for Dún Laoghaire *Rathdown* as part of the heritage, cultural and educational assets of the County to provide for the promotion of an awareness, appreciation and knowledge of the history of the locality and county, the development of civic governance in the *County*, the political, social and infrastructure developments of successive local authorities, the industrial, transport, manufacturing and retail history associated with the *County*, the ecclesiastic and educational history and,

especially, to provide a show case for the lives and contributions made to various aspects of our history by locally born or based individuals." The motion will now go to a full meeting of the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council for consideration and hopefully, an initial feasibility study by officials. Following the passing of the above motion, Michael Merrigan presented Mr. O'Connor, on behalf of the Dún Laoghaire Borough Historical Society, with a 19th century silver handled parasol engraved with initials and an address in Kingstown (now Dún Laoghaire) as a gift for their collection from Mrs. Angela Doyle of Shankill, Co. Dublin. Also at this meeting, the sympathy of the members of the SPC was expressed on the recent death of Mr. Robbie Brennan, Curator of the Maritime Museum and a friend of many Councillors and Sector Representatives present at this meeting.

DIARY DATES

Tuesday January 14th 2003

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.

Speaker: Liam Dodd

Topic: "Royal Dublin Fusiliers – Record & Memorabilia"

Tuesday February 11th 2003

Venue as above
Members' Night – Research Q&A

Weds. Jan. 22nd & Feb. 26th 2003

Morning Open Meeting 10.30hrs
The Port View Hotel
Marine Road, Dún Laoghaire
Discussion Group on Family History

*Contribution of €3.00 at each meeting
Coffee/Tea served at Morning Meetings*

YOUR JANUARY GENIE UPDATES

BACK TO BASICS The Society's lecture programme each year seeks to meet the needs of an increasingly varied levels of competence and knowledge of the genealogy and related subjects. Finding different speakers to meet this growing appetite for more specialised research needs or interests is a difficult task for Board Member, Róisín Lafferty, who is charged with locating suitably qualified individuals in easy reach of the Dublin area. Róisín has been very successful to-date with an impressive

array of speakers and topics over the years. However, with all this "specialisation" many new Members, and some long-standing ones too, are asking for a "return to basics" programme of speakers to be established. These speakers, it is hoped, will be able to provide new information on familiar repositories such as the National Archive, National Library, Registry of Deeds, General Register Office, Valuation Office and others. A fresh look at these repositories can turn up fascinating research options and opportunities to expand one's knowledge and enjoyment of genealogy or heraldry. Details of the speakers obtained by Róisín will be published next month. Róisín welcomes comments and suggestions on the Speaker Programme – E-mail: lafferty@unison.ie

FFHS IN DUBLIN? The FFHS - **Federation of Family History Societies** has been invited to hold a General Meeting in Dublin City, the first to be held outside Great Britain, however they are concerned that not enough voting member organisations would send delegates to make this venture viable. As one of the Federation's Irish based members, the Society would support and welcome this initiative by the Federation and in doing so, we urge our colleagues in the societies in Great Britain to take this opportunity to visit us in Dublin. Federation administrator, **Maggie Loughran**, would welcome the views of member societies on this proposal. E-mail: info@ffhs.org.uk

CEMETERY PROJECTS **Barry O'Connor, FGSI**, the co-ordinator of the cemetery projects is urgently seeking volunteers to input the data collected in Carrickbrennan Cemetery on to computer discs for publication. Contact Barry O'Connor on E-mail: btoc@esatclear.ie or by phone on (01) 285 4386. The next volume in the Memorial Inscriptions of the smaller cemeteries in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown will feature the Friends' Graveyard at Temple Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

ARCHIVE RE-OPENS The Society's Archive closed on Saturday November 16th 2002 to allow for stock taking and for alterations as space has become a serious problem. This problem cannot be remedied in short-term and must await the opening of the Archive at the Martello Tower at Seapoint, Co. Dublin. The Archivist, **Frieda Carroll, FGSI**, has advised that the Archive will re-open on

Saturday 26th January 2003 for fully paid-up Members only.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING The Annual General Meeting of the Genealogical Society of Ireland will be held on Tuesday **March 11th 2003** at 20.00hrs in the Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education, Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland. The AGM will receive the Annual Report, Audited Accounts and elect Members to the Board of the Society.

HERITAGE OFFICER The Society welcomes the appointment of **Mr. Tim Carey** as the first Heritage Officer for the County of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown as it has campaigned for such an appointment since 1996. Indeed, it was this Society that first called for the formulation of a "County Heritage Policy" in each county in Ireland and the appointment by the local authorities of Heritage Officers to oversee the implementation of the policy. Despite the high-profile dispute with local heritage activists over the Carrickmines Castle site, the Society urges the new Heritage Officer to proceed quickly with the establishment of a County Heritage Forum to deal with the future protection and promotion of all aspects of our heritage. The Board and Members wish Tim every success in his new position.

ARCHIVE PURCHASES Always mindful of the need to obtain various publications for the Archive as and when they become available and in order to be in a position to purchase CDs, microform publications or books an Archive Fund was established by the Board. The fund receives donations from members and friends of the Society who value the importance of maintaining the Society's Archive and providing for additions to its collections. Frieda also welcomes donations of books, CDs or microfilm / microfiche records for the Archive. Donations may be forwarded directly to the Archivist, **Mrs. Frieda Carroll, FGSI**, 14, Rochestown Park, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland or to the Hon. Secretary.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Friday 31st January 2003 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the worst passenger ferry disaster of modern times between Ireland and Great Britain when the "*Princess Victoria*" en route from Stranraer in Scotland to Larne in Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, capsized off the coast of County Down. Many people still vividly remember this tragedy, as 128 lives were lost in the sinking of the ferry with just 43

survivors. A subsequent inquiry found that during a fierce storm on Jan. 31st 1953 a wave burst unsecured bulkhead doors in the stern of the vessel. Following this sinking of a passenger ferry new guidelines respecting the Captain's authority on whether it is safe for his vessel to leave port during adverse weather conditions were introduced by the ferry's owners British Rail.

GUINNESS IS GOOD FOR RAHENY

By Sighle l'Estrange

WOODFIELD PRESS have a list of publications which turn the spotlight on some of the lesser known nooks and crannies of Irish history and one of their latest additions is the fascinating story of one of Dublin's most splendid amenities – St Anne's Park in Raheny. For many of us, the name summons up a magnificence of roses gleaming in the sunshine of a summer's day; for others it is the magnificent trees, the many varieties of plants in the different gardens, the walks, the reminders of the splendours of yesterday's world, the sport fields. Joan Ussher Sharkey, who has a long association with the **Raheny Heritage Society**, has done comprehensive research into her subject and she outlines the slow growth of the north side of Dublin in the 18th century. The St Lawrence family had been there some time after the Anglo-Norman settlement and the Vernons were in Clontarf Castle from the late 1600's. In 1835 two of the Guinness family leased a house in the area and this was the nucleus of that became the 500-acre St Anne's Estate. The development of this magnificent estate by Sir Arthur Edward Guinness, Lord Ardilaun makes a fascinating tale and Ms Sharkey's portrayal of the lives of the people who lived and worked at St Anne's is a most satisfying glimpse into a world, comparatively recent and as remote as a star. While the complexities of acquiring land piece by piece and that of tenancies may not be regarded as general interest, none the less the picture she paints of a moneyed life of dedication, imagination, thought and cultural acquisition in parallel with the dutiful attention to Victorian good works and community improvement hold one's attention. The character of Lady Ardilaun was particularly well drawn and there is a certain sadness to the end of that era. The last part of book outlines the development of St Anne's

recalls the years that the estate passed into the hands of Dublin Corporation and what it became for the fortunate Dubliners of the area. The maps, illustrations, both colour and black/ white, schematic drawings and family trees bring liveliness and clarity to the text. The inclusion of the map of modern St Anne's is the finishing touch. A worthwhile and interestingly constructed book. "St. Anne's - The Story of a Guinness Estate" by Joan Ussher Starkey and published by The Woodfield Press, 17, Jamestown Square, Dublin 8, Ireland. ISBN 0-9534293-4-2 with 117 pages, pbk. Price €18.50 Website: www.woodfield-press.com or E-mail: terri-mcdonnell@ireland.com

NEXT MONTH A review of "Irish Records Index Vol. 1 - Index of Irish Wills 1484-1858" published on CD Rom by Eneclann Ltd, Innovation Centre, O'Reilly Institute, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland. E-mail: info@eneclann.tcd.ie and Website: www.eneclann.ie

MARTELLO TOWER APPEAL

As reported above, work on the restoration of the Martello Tower at Seapoint is to commence this month after a protracted and exhaustive planning appeal process. Now Members and friends of the Society are encouraged to participate in the Martello Tower Project by becoming patrons of the Daonchartlann. Along with the names received in the previous campaign, patrons will have their own names or that of a loved one or ancestor inscribed on a commemorative scroll to be placed in the Tower for donations of €100 (US\$100). The names of each patron will be published in a commemorative booklet to accompany the official opening of the Daonchartlann (Ir. Gaelic "peoples' archive") in 2004 two hundred years after the Tower was originally built to repel a possible attack on Ireland by Napoleon. Donations should be forwarded to the DAONCHARTLANN FUND, c/o Hon. Secretary, address below. Please include details of the name to be entered on the commemorative scroll and published in the commemorative booklet. Mr. Liam Mac Alasdair, FGSI, Project Chairperson, (E-mail: lmac@dna.ie).

MEMBERSHIP NOW DUE

Irish based Members are reminded that their Membership Subscription for 2003 is NOW DUE FOR PAYMENT. The membership year for Irish based Members

runs from January to December in each year, whilst, Overseas Members have their Membership Subscriptions falling due each year on the anniversary of their joining date. Queries regarding membership should be addressed to the Membership Officer, Annette McDonnell, MGSI, 4, Kippure Avenue, Green Park, Dublin 12, Ireland. E-mail: mcdonnellannette@hotmail.com The Membership Subscription is €15.00 which should be forwarded to Annette or if you wish, renew your Membership Sub. on-line at www.gensocireland.org using your Credit Card - MasterCard or VISA.

QUERIES RECEIVED

BERNADETTE BOSS, 90, Ruthven Street, Bondi Junction, New South Wales, 2022, Australia. E-mail: bernadetteboss@hotmail.com Wrote: I am searching for the lineage of my grandfather Richard James born in 1905 in Ballymoney, Gorey, Co. Wexford. Although, his surname is James, family history has it that his mother remarried and took the name James. I understand that there may be significant records in the local Protestant church. Can anyone help me with my research or maybe, has information on this family in Co. Wexford. Any assistance appreciated.

DENIS MCGRANE, 270, Castlereagh Road, Agnes Banks, New South Wales, Australia, 2753. E-mail: MCGRANED1@aol.com Wrote:- My G/F, James Andrew McGrane, b. c.1859, Dublin. joined British Army prior to 1885 - m. my G/M Ellen O'Keeffe, b. c.1860 in Fermoy, Cork in 1885, where he was presumably posted (I am led to believe Fermoy was then a barracks town). They then went to India (I think Calcutta, where one of my uncles was born in 1888). My grandparents came to Australia in c.1890. My G/F was killed in an accident in 1902 when my father was 4 (b.1897). My G/M died from cancer in 1913 when my father was 16. My father knew little of his family's history. There were no papers or records kept of the family, however, I did find the record of my grandparent's marriage in 1885 in Castleyons, Fermoy, Co. Cork, at the registry office in Dublin in 1989. My G/F's father, who was recorded as deceased was shown on the marriage record as William McGrane, occupation stonemason. I presume my G/F may have joined the army as an older sibling probably inherited any family property. As occupations tend to be carried on in families, his other descendants, if they remained in Dublin probably have occupations connected with the building industry. My G/M's father was shown on the M/C as Maurice O'Keeffe, farm labourer. He was still alive in 1885 at the time of my grandparent's marriage. In Fermoy in 1989, I was unable to trace any details of her family. As there were 18 parishes in Cork and as my G/M's father

was a farm labourer it was quite possible that he moved around a bit. I have turned up an Ellen O'Keeffe (same spelling) born 1860 in Co. Leitrim. Unable to obtain more details on the Internet so it needs a personal search by me when I get to Ireland in March 2003. Any info. much appreciated.

GEORGE C. FITZGERALD, 27, Larkins Close, Baldock, Herts. SG7 5DG, England. Wrote:- Seeking details on the family of William Fitzgerald and Lizzie Hickey of Ignatius Avenue in Dublin. This is the address on the Birth Certificate of their daughter Brigit Fitzgerald, born 2nd February 1912. Were there other children to this marriage and if so, I would like to obtain contact with them or their families in Dublin City or county. Any information much appreciated.

MICHAEL MERRIGAN, 11, Desmond Avenue, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland. E-mail: GenSocIreland@iol.ie Wrote:- Seeking information on Joseph MacMahon (b. 1902, Limerick, d. 1958, Manchester, ENG), son of John McMahan (b. 1841, Clare, d. 1915, Limerick City) and Ellen Mooney of Ogonnelloe, Co. Clare and grandson of Myles MacMahon & Bridget Healy of Co. Clare. Joseph McMahan, left Ireland in 1938 to go to his brother and sister in Manchester - Michael MacMahon & Madge MacMahon of 43, Meadow Street, Moss Side, Manchester. Michael McMahan was born in Limerick City in 1895 and left there later to work as a compositor in the printing trade in Manchester where he and his wife, May (?) had a large family. Michael's siblings are as follows:- John, Mary Ann (a nun in Australia), Henry, Patrick, Francis (Frank), Margaret (Madge), Joseph (my grandfather) and Cornelius (Conn). It is possible that two other brothers - Henry and Patrick went to Manchester too. It is believed that Conn went to Australia. Looking for connections to the McMahan's of Meadow Street, Moss Side, Manchester and possibly, to make contact with family members. Any information much appreciated.

JOINING THE GSI

Wishing to join the Genealogical Society of Ireland? Just log on to the Website or write to Annette McDonnell MGSI, Membership Officer, Genealogical Society of Ireland, 4, Kippure Avenue, Green Park, Dublin 12, Ireland enclosing the Membership Subscription of €15.00 or US\$15.00. Membership is open to all with an interest in genealogy or heraldry. A laminated Membership Card featuring the Society's heraldic badge "the Mungovan Badge" will be forwarded to you in due course. Welcome to the Genealogical Society of Ireland.

MEMBERSHIP SUBS FOR ALL IRISH BASED MEMBERS NOW DUE