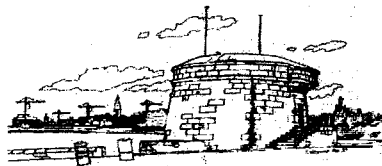


- **New Civil Registration Bill published in July**
- **"Courtesy Recognition" of Gaelic Chiefs ended**
- **Archive Summer Project very successful**

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The Gene Gazette

The Newsletter of
the **Genealogical
Society of Ireland**
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NEW CIVIL REGISTRATION BILL PUBLISHED

Nearly Eleven Years in Preparation – Bill is Published as Oireachtas Rises for Summer Break

What an anti-climax to this long running and sometimes bitter legislative farce, that the new Civil Registration Bill would be published just as our legislators head off for their long summer recess. No fanfare or celebration that would normally be associated with the launch of any project or publication that took nearly eleven years to prepare, just a quiet procedural affair. Minister only invited.

Was it Worth the Wait?

This Bill is certainly no blockbuster with great surprises, innovative thought and imaginative new proposals on Civil Registration in Ireland. Quite the contrary it's a rather dull document, which raises many questions as to why it took nearly eleven years to produce. Whether it was worth the wait and the years of prevarication by successive Ministers for Health & Children will ultimately be determined by the willingness or otherwise of the sponsoring Minister to accept amendments and much needed improvements to this Bill.

"Roscommon Experiment"

For readers who may be unfamiliar with this saga, it all started back on November 4th 1992 when the then Taoiseach Mr. Albert Reynolds, TD, announced that the General Register Office was to be relocated from Dublin City to the town of Roscommon in his own constituency. This was on the eve of a General Election in 1992. Indeed, what started as a piece of hometown electioneering with all the planning that could be fitted on to the back of an envelope soon began to unravel. The next day, November 5th 1992, our present Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, TD, as the then Minister for

Finance assured members of Dáil Éireann that *"arrangements are now in train to ensure the smooth implementation of the project without delay"*. Eleven years on and the required legislation to give legal effect to Mr. Reynold's announcement is just published. Whether this is a legislative record or not, is neither here nor there. However, our legislators must address a serious question concerning the value for public money of all the issues surrounding this eleven year old *"Roscommon Experiment"*. What are the final costs of this project in salaries, consultants, working groups, public consultations, buildings, transferring staff and equipment, computerisation and finally, the preparation of legislation?

Scope of the Legislation

The Bill contains significant alterations to existing legislation concerning the registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths along with new provisions for the registration of Decrees of Divorce, Nullity, Stillbirths and Adoptions, including foreign adoptions. However, central to this legislation is the creation of a National Civil Database for government departments and state agencies. The provision of Personal Public Service Numbers to each child at registration and the use throughout of PPSN's for all persons registered.

A Public Search Facility?

Whilst, the right of the public to undertake searches of certain registration data will continue to be provided, it's unclear whether this will be through a Public Search Facility in Dublin as promised in 1993 or via the internet or both. Groups representing adopted persons will be

disappointed with the restrictions on their rights to view original entries or any traceable information relating to their birth. Others will view the secular nature of the terminology employed in this Bill as clear evidence that Civil Registration should, as a matter of a human and civil right, be extended to other unions in line with some of the other European countries. However, the recent contribution by the Vatican to this international debate may have made this issue a leap too far for an Irish government facing a popularity crisis following what many now view, rightly or wrongly, as the *"General Deception"* of 2002.

Detailed Submission in September

The Society will be making a detailed assessment of this Bill and making its submission during the debate on this legislation when the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) resumes sittings in the autumn. The full text of the Bill is available on the Irish Government Website: <http://www.irlgov.ie>

JOINING THE SOCIETY

Just log on to the Website or write to the Membership Officer, **Annette McDonnell, MGSI**, 4, Kippure Ave., Green Park, Dublin 12, Ireland. You may also contact Annette by E-mail via the Secretary GenSocIreland@iol.ie. The Membership Subscription is €15.00 (US\$18.00) which should be forwarded to Annette or, if you wish, you can pay on-line at www.gensocireland.org using your Credit Card MasterCard. Membership of the Society 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.

GSI Website: www.gensocireland.org

COURTESY RECOGNITION OF GAELIC CHIEFS ABOLISHED

After years of uncertainty and much acrimonious debate, the Irish government finally decided on Wednesday 24th July 2003 to end the sixty year old practice of providing "courtesy recognition" to the senior male descendants of the last inaugurated Gaelic Chiefs. Instituted by Chief Herald, Edward MacLysaght, back in the 1940s to give some formal recognition to the survival of some of the ancient chiefly families of Ireland. Amongst these families are some of the oldest in Europe with lines traceable back to dawn of the Christian era and before.

Mac Carthy Mór Hoax

The end of this constitutionally questionable practice of a Republic providing "courtesy recognition" to hereditary Gaelic Chieftains was well in sight when the present Chief Herald, Brendan O'Donoghue, withdrew recognition from Belfast born Terence McCarthy in 1998. Mr. McCarthy's genealogy upon which he claimed to be "*The MacCarthy Mór, Prince of Desmond*" was found to be "without genealogical integrity". During his "reign" Mr. McCarthy dispensed titles of nobility, created an Order of Chivalry and amassed an impressive array of decorations from various royal houses in Europe.

Separating the Wheat from the Chaff

Fancifully absurd as all this may sound, McCarthy's fictional principality did a great deal of damage to the reputation and prestige of Irish heraldry and Gaelic genealogy. Experienced genealogists were left to separate the wheat from the chaff as more of the later "recognised" Chiefs had their claims examined by the Office of the Chief Herald and, most notably, by professional genealogist and lecturer, Mr. Seán Murphy, MA who has published extensively on the subject.

"Out with the Baby & the Bath Water"

The published findings made for grim reading and the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, Mr. John O'Donoghue, TD must be congratulated for attempting to bring a finality to this scandal by announcing the withdrawal of "courtesy recognition". However, by withdrawing "courtesy recognition" to all the Chiefs irrespective of their authenticity is like throwing out the baby with the bath water. This Society has always maintained that a

legislative basis was required anyway for this State to afford the Gaelic Chiefs any official or "courtesy" recognition in the Republic. It seems now that the Attorney General agrees with that view and therefore, the Minister withdrew recognition. But why should this have been the case as less "untidy" options were available to the Minister.

Irish Genealogy & Heraldry Bill

The Minister could have used this opportunity to bring forward legislation to regulate a number of matters appertaining to the provision of Irish genealogical, heraldic and vexillological services. The scope of the "*Irish Genealogy & Heraldry Bill*" as advocated by this Society would have permitted formal recognition of Gaelic Chiefs by the State following the examination of the particulars of all the claimants by suitably qualified personnel. This would have automatically removed questionable or unsustainable claims, whilst, continuing to recognise the like of O Conor Don, The O'Brien and others whose authenticity is not in doubt.

Genealogy & Heraldry Committee

Another option available to the Minister and the Chief Herald would have been to refer this matter to the "Genealogy & Heraldry Committee" to be established in the New Year in accordance with his implementation of the "*National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997*". The Minister could have suspended "courtesy recognition" in order to permit a full examination by this Committee of all the circumstances surrounding the issue of questionable claims and "bogus" Chiefs. The Committee could then submit recommendations to the Minister on any future recognition of the Gaelic Chiefs and Chieftains.

A Question of Natural Justice?

News of the government's decision first broke in "*The Sunday Times*" of July 27th 2003 in a piece by John Burns under a headline "*Irish chieftains lose their crowns*" with a group photograph of the Chiefs at Áras an Uachtaráin (Irish Presidential Residence) in Dublin. Hopefully, some modicum of protocol and natural justice was observed by the Minister in that each of the claimants would have been informed personally before the newspaper carried a story linking their de-recognition to The McCarthy Mór scandal. If not, are we yet to witness another long and drawn out chapter in this sorry affair?

DIARY DATES

Tuesday August 12th 2003

Evening Open Meeting, 20.00hrs
Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education,
Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire
Bus: 7, 7A, 46A, and 75.
DART Monkstown/Salthill Station.
Topic: "*An Daonchartlann*"

Tuesday September 9th 2003

Venue as above
Speaker: Canon John Crawford
Topic: "*Tracing Your Family History in
Church of Ireland Records*"

Weds. Aug. 27th & Sep. 24th 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*

MARTELLO TOWER APPEAL

Phase 2 of the project aims to fully equip the "*Family History Tower*" with the latest technology etc. Please give generously. Each sponsor will be named in the *Commemorative Book* to be published for the official ceremonial opening of "*An Daonchartlann*" in 2004 – the two hundredth anniversary of the building of the Tower. Patrons may have either their own name or that of a loved-one entered in this *Commemorative Book* and on a scroll that will be permanent memorial in the Tower. For just €100.00 (US\$120.00) per name, this is a special and worthy manner in which to remember an ancestor, to honour a friend or loved-one or to memorialise your family ties with Ireland. Donations should be sent to the Hon. Secretary at the address below with details of the name or names to be entered on the scroll and published in the commemorative book to mark the official opening of "*An Daonchartlann*".

GRAPHIC FAMILY TREE SERVICE

**HAVE YOUR FAMILY TREE
PRODUCED AS A SUPERB
VISUAL DOCUMENT**

Artist based in Dún Laoghaire will work with you to produce a beautiful graphic presentation of your Family Tree in full colour or black & white. All you have to do is complete a standard family tree chart or Birth Brief and send all relevant photographs, clearly identifying the individuals as per the chart. Each person will be framed, and the complete document printed on a textured background. You decide the level of information to be included on the document - we will work in close consultation with you at all stages of the project. Costs are based on the number of individual images involved. CONTACT **Frankie Lee** on 087.782 0932 or E-mail: frankiezee@eircom.net for more information and quotations.

ARCHIVE SUMMER PROJECT

The Society's Archive will be nearly completely computerised at the end of the month following the marathon effort by many volunteers over the past few weeks. With sometimes six computers on the go at once thousands of items have been successfully catalogued and sorted by category. Under the watchful eye of **Aidan Synnott**, each item has been given an individual number before being entered on to the database in accordance with category and shelving requirements. This project is vitally important to the Society, as its Archive must be properly catalogued electronically before being transferred to the Martello Tower at Seapoint. The Principal and staff of the Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education have very kindly provided the Society with the use of the college's computer laboratory for this project. Our Archivist, **Frieda Carroll** and Board Member, **Margaret Conroy**, believe that the only items remaining to be computerised in the Martello Tower will be the manuscripts and the microform collection. The Board extends its sincere gratitude to all the Members and friends of the Society who participated in this important project, for without their commitment and many hours of work, this project would have been impossible. If you would like to give a hand to complete the project please contact Frieda on Tel: **235 2150** or Margaret by e-mail: mmeconroy@eircom.net The project runs from 10.30hrs to 16.30hrs each day Monday to Friday. Parking is available at the college.

GSJ QUARTERLY JOURNAL*Vol. 4 No. 2. Summer 2003.*

Articles in this 68 page issue include: **Julia Merriman** by Seán MacBrádaigh, **Records and History of the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra, Dublin** by G.H. O'Reilly, **A Piece of Daniel O'Connell's Family Tree** by Ignatius Fennessy, O.F.M., **Quirky Entries from 'Walker's Hibernian Magazine'** by Gaye Ashford, **David Nagle - Whiteboy & Emigrant** by Gaye Ashford, **High Sheriffs of County of Down 1714 - 1857** by Brendan Hall, **John McGrath of Cashel - the Story of a Convict** by John McGrath, **Fire in Patrick Street, Dublin - Addendum** by James Scannell, **High Sheriffs County Armagh 1714 - 1857** by Brendan Hall, **The Death of District Inspector Michael Hunt RIC**, by Pat Callery, **The Genealogy of MacGovern** by Seán MacBrádaigh, **The Ballykinlar Book** by Patricia Carr Biczynski

COPIES AVAILABLE via the Society's Website or by mail from the Hon. Secretary. Price €5.00 (members €4.50) with postage IRL & UK €1.50 and others €3.00. (*EURO PRICE*) **ARTICLES** for future issues of the Society's quarterly journal are always welcome. Please forward items for publication to **Brendan Hall, MGSJ** at E-mail: jbhall@indigo.ie or to the Hon. Secretary at the address below.

AUGUST GENIE UPDATES

RMS LEINSTER Chairman of the "*Friends of the Leinster*" committee and longstanding GSI member, **Mr. Philip Lecane**, invites all members to participate in the commemoration of the sinking of the RMS Leinster in October 1918. An interdenominational service will be held at St. Michael's Church in Dún Laoghaire on Friday 10th October 2003 at 12.02hrs. At 13.00hrs a procession will take place to the site of the recovered anchor on the seafront in Dún Laoghaire. Another inter-church service will be held on Sunday 12th October at 14.00hrs at St. Cybi's Church in Holyhead, North Wales. There will be another commemorative procession in Holyhead, the hometown of many of the crew lost on this mail boat just a month before the end of WWI. All welcome.

ONE NAME STUDIES The Guild of One-Name Studies will host "The Epsom Internet Seminar" at Rosebery School, White Horse Drive, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 7NQ, England on October 25th 2003 at 10.00hrs. The seminar is designed to both introduce One-Namers to the sources available on the Internet and to deal with practical issues such as webpage design, search engines and access to Websites. It's an opportunity for "hands-on" use of the "Net". Bookings by October 11th 2003 to **Janet Heskins**, 117A, King Charles' Road, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 8PQ, England. The cost is UK£10.00 per person.

NEW YORK STATE The **New York Genealogical & Biographical Society** will jointly host a conference in Buffalo in upstate New York on Friday & Saturday 26th & 27th September 2003 with the **Western New York Genealogical Society**. The GSI has a fine collection of the Journals of the NYG&BS in its Archive to assist those with New York connections. The theme will be "*Find Your Family in New York*". Additional information at E-mail: education@nygbs.org or Website: www.nygbs.org/ed/programs.html

HERITAGE WEEK **Tim Carey**, Heritage Officer of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council has invited the Society to participate in an exhibition to mark Heritage Week 2003. The exhibition will be held in the County Hall, Dún Laoghaire between September 8th and 11th 2003.

HISTORY FROM HEADSTONES The Ulster Historical Foundation will host a conference from September 29th to October 4th 2003 in Belfast. The theme of this conference will be "History from Headstones". It will held in a number of very fine venues, including the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, the Presbyterian Historical Society, the Linen Hall Library, Belfast Central Library and visits south of the border to the National Archives, National Library and the Registry of Deeds. Further information: **Kathryn McKelvey**, Administration Officer, U.H.F., 12, College Square East, Belfast, BT1 6DD, Northern Ireland. E-mail: enquiry@uhf.org.uk or Website www.ancestryireland.com

FRAUDULENT REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS & DEATHS

"One of the most fascinating, and best received talks at the Guild's Conference and AGM was given by **Peter Park** on "*Fraudulent Registration of Births and Deaths in the 1840s*" according to **Roy Stockdill**, Editor of the Journal of the **Guild of One-Name Studies**. Peter Park brings to light a little known fact that may mean that fictitious people may be in your records. He has taken a case study of four registers of the period from areas as far apart as Liverpool, South Shields, County Durham and St. Marylebone in the London to highlight the issue. The nub of the matter rests with the framing of the original registration legislation in England & Wales that placed the onus on the registrar to collect births and deaths and to register them. He could be fined for his failure to do so and, indeed, until 1875 parents could only be prosecuted for refusing to give details to the register if requested by him. Ludicrous as this situation may seem to us today, Peter Park, in this excellent study has detailed the cases against several registrars who were jailed for their part in fraudulent registrations. He examined the Registrar General's Annual Report for 1850 for the districts concerned and noticed, for example, that South Shields had a death rate of 25% above the national average in 1843. With no local epidemic reported, the discrepancy became obvious. Peter Park deals with the issue of fraudulent registration of births in a similarly detailed manner. He found, for example, that the figures for All Souls, St. Marylebone in London indicated a similar scale of over-registration as that for South Shields, almost 300 deaths (30%) and nearly 570 births (38%). Alarming, Peter Park points out that a fraudulent entry for August 7th 1848 - the birth of Ellen Bibby in Liverpool was issued with a certificate in 1996. Thus, proving that many fictitious people may be in your records!!

Journal of One-Name Studies, Vol. 8 No. 3. July-September 2003. ISSN 0262-4842 UK£2.00 see www.one-name.org Other articles in this issue include: "Using the on-line electoral roll 192.com for your one-name study" by **Steve Tanner**; "*Properly conducted one-name studies are a great boon for genealogists*" by **Barney Tyrwhitt-Drake**; "*PRO moves the goalposts on 1901 census but extractor program still finds families*" by **John Hanson** and "*Access to Archives - A2A is A1 for one-name study*" by **Geoff Riggs**.

US DOLLAR RATE

The Board of the Society has adopted a new exchange rate for persons paying by check or cash in US dollars **€1.00 = US\$1.20**. This will be applied to all purchases and membership subscriptions. This is necessary to cover the conversion rate and bank charges. Alternatively why not pay by Credit Card - MasterCard or VISA via the Website?

HERALDIC BANNER & NEW LIVERY FLAG

Early last month, due to the kind generosity of one of our American Members, **Mrs. Barbara Mungovan-Koch**, the Society was able to take delivery of its Heraldic Banner for display at the Martello Tower. Later in the month, again thanks to Barbara, we took delivery of the Society's **LIVERY FLAG** featuring the two main colours of our Arms, gold over St. Patrick's blue surmounted in the centre with the "*Mungovan Badge*" – the Society's heraldic badge.

Our Heraldic Badge

This badge is described in heraldic terms as "*on a hurt fimbriated a hungerford knot the ends acorned or*" meaning, "on a blue disc with a gold rim, a golden rope knot shaped as a trefoil with golden acorns at each end". This is the badge that appears on each Membership Card

Designed by the Chief Herald's Office

The design of the Heraldic Badge and the Society's Arms is by **Mr. Mícheál Ó Comáin** the Consulting Herald at the Office of the Chief Herald. The **LIVERY FLAG** featuring our Heraldic Badge measures 4 feet x 8 feet and was crafted in the bespoke traditional stitched cloth manner by **Timothy O'Regan** of Pearse Street in Dublin City. Most of the more notable academic and official bodies in Ireland and the UK prefer this method of flag and banner construction, according to the Flag Maker, Mr. Timothy O'Regan whose family have been in the business for generations. The Society's new and very impressive Heraldic Banner and Livery Flag will occupy special places during the official opening of the "*Family History Tower*" next year. They will also provide exquisitely crafted backdrops for exhibitions organised by the Society.

"At the Martello Tower"

The **LIVERY FLAG** will fly over the Tower, whilst, the **HERALDIC BANNER** will be reserved for special occasions. At a date yet to be decided by the Board, a fitting ceremony to mark the occasion of the first raising of the Heraldic Banner and our Livery Flag over the Martello Tower will be arranged.

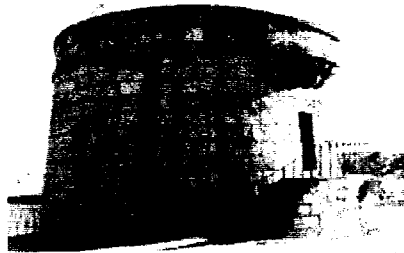
"GSI Livery Flag for Members"

In the meantime, Members have expressed interest in obtaining their own copy of the Society's Livery Flag to fly at their homes or businesses. Arrangements have been made with the flag maker to supply GSI Livery Flags (3ft x 5ft) at just €90.00 each including delivery to the Member's home address. This Livery Flag would make a handsome statement at your next family gathering.

Ordering Your GSI Livery Flag

Members wishing to acquire GSI Livery Flags should contact the Hon. Secretary at the address below or by E-mail on GenSocIreland@iol.ie MasterCard or VISA welcome or by cheque made payable to the Society. Allow approx. 28 days for delivery

AN DAONCHARTLANN



The end of August will see most of **Phase 1** of the Martello Tower Project nearing completion with the roof re-pointed, windows and doors installed, interior fully painted white and with work commencing on laying the oak floor over the wooden under-floor and installing the electrical wiring etc. The entire project to date has been directed by **Liam Mac Alasdair, FGSI** who, along with the contractor, **Shane Breen**, has attended to each aspect of the works with care to detail, quality and style. The finished product will stand testament to the sheer skill, dedication and resourcefulness of Liam and Shane. Members who have visited the Tower at various stages of the works have been very impressed by the scale of the project and the detailed restoration underway. The space created by the imaginative placement of the spiral staircase and the decision to excavate the lower floor to expose the original granite flagstones is beyond our expectations. The white interior, as per the original design, creates an almost ancient ecclesiastic atmosphere resplendent with its very own barrel-vault ceiling. Members have remarked that the lights throughout this unique gallery like building will reflect the colours of our Heraldic Banner hanging in this space. It is clear that much care was taken in the choice of the materials employed by Shane, that this building lends itself to its intended use in a manner unforeseen by many at the outset of this project. Phase II will soon be underway and, as usual, more funding is always sought to fully equip this Society's Archive or "*An Daonchartlann*". Why not consider making a donation? *See page two for details.*

GSI "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.** The collection and eventual publication of the Nuns' Register will greatly assist genealogists, social historians and religious historians. If you feel that you would like to assist Clare in the collection or sorting of data – please drop her a line today at the address above.

QUERIES PUBLISHED

Queries from Members and friends will be published in "*The Genie Gazette*" provided that a full postal address is provided with each query. Queries with just an E-mail address will **NOT** be published as it has been noted that E-mail addresses are changed frequently and thus, a person reading such a query in a few months time cannot make contact with the person placing the query in this newsletter. **REMEMBER**, this Society does not undertake commercial research assignments whether in the Society's own Archive or in other repositories. **HOWEVER**, by placing a query with an offer of reciprocal research in your part of the world, publication can assist in the location of a Member or other reader willing to undertake research for you. The terms governing such reciprocal research are entirely a matter for the parties concerned and, therefore, the Society is not responsible in anyway for such arrangements. *EDITOR*

GIFT FROM THE NORTH OF IRELAND FHS

At the July Open Meeting **Mr. Randall Gill**, President of the North of Ireland Family History Society made a presentation to our Archivist of a fine publication from their Coleraine Branch. The Coleraine Branch of the NIFHS has abstracted the Births, Deaths and Marriages from "*The Coleraine Chronicle*" from 1844 to 1869. This publication covered east Co. Derry, parts of Co. Tyrone and north Co. Antrim. However, the newspaper also contained many entries on the wider Diaspora in Australia, Canada and the USA etc. With over 3,660 births, 8,890 deaths and 5,900 marriages it is truly an enormous genealogical resource. Arranged alphabetically this fine publication is available for just UK£20.00 (UK£36.00 airmail & UK£27.50 surface) from **Noel Black, 53, Causeway Street, Portrush, Co. Antrim, BT56 8AD, Northern Ireland.** Cheques should be in UK Pounds only and made payable to "North of Ireland Family History Society". The Society thanks Randall and the Coleraine Branch of the NIFHS for this fine and welcome addition to our Archive.

BIOGRAPHIES

The Society is seeking to publish short biographies of Irishmen and Irishwomen who left Ireland to make their lives and careers in foreign lands. These people may or may not be well known in their adopted countries, however, their lives and achievements are possibly unknown in Ireland. Biographies should be previously unpublished and have sufficient references to sources etc. so as to assist future generations in their research. Short biographies should be circa 2000 words for publication in the Society's quarterly Journal. Submissions by E-mail to jbhall@indigo.ie or by mail to: **Brendan Hall, MGSI, 14, Foxrock Mount, Foxrock, Dublin 18, Ireland.**