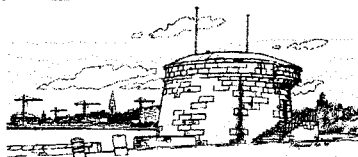


- **happy St. PATRICK'S DAY**
- **Civil Registration Bill passed**
- **News, Book Reviews & Queries**

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The Gene Gazette

The Newsletter of
the **Genealogical
Society of Ireland**
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March 2004



A NEW ERA FOR CIVIL REGISTRATION

Genealogists Achieve Significant Alterations to the Death Certificate Data

Genealogists and family historians will be very pleased with the significant changes achieved by a joint campaign to the new Civil Registration legislation passed recently by the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament).

"A Joint Campaign"

This Society in conjunction with the Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland (APGI) and the Council of Irish Genealogical Organisations (CIGO) campaigned for a number of amendments to the Civil Registration Bill, 2003. This campaign was, in many respects, the culmination of nearly eleven years of hard work and protest originally sparked off by the announcement in November 1992 of the government's intention to move the General Register Office out of Dublin City to Roscommon Town.

"Bad Service & Bitter Division"

The intervening years witnessed a deterioration of the services provided by the General Register Office in Dublin and, in many ways, a corresponding worsening of relations between the GRO and its regular users. It also caused considerable and sometimes bitter division within the Irish genealogical community with sharp differences on the possible remedies to the appalling and declining levels of service for researchers provided by the GRO in Dublin. Indeed, it could be said, that due to the frequent splits amongst those campaigning for better services at the GRO, little or no incentive existed for the provision of any improvement in the services in the Public Search Room at Lombard Street East. With the "goal-posts" being changed several times since the 1992 decision to relocate to Roscommon, most campaigners were

beginning to doubt whether there would ever be the promised computerisation and a welcome end to this long running saga at the General Register Office in Dublin.

Civil Registration Bill, 2003

The legislation to give effect to the 1992 decision was nearly eleven years in preparation and when it finally came before the Houses of the Oireachtas, it offered little change for genealogists and users of the General Register Office. This was hardly a surprise to those campaigning for years for the introduction of this Bill following the "sham" public consultation process in 2001. Besides a deliberately vague and unsatisfactory commitment to the maintenance of a Public Search Facility and the prospect of internet access to the GRO records in the future, few if any genealogists in Ireland were supportive of this legislation. But all agreed that this piece of legislation was too important a milestone in the development of genealogical services in Ireland for any campaign to be hindered by past differences. The decision to jointly support each organisation's initial proposals and to then combine our endeavours in favour of joint action on the fundamentals proved its undoubted worth on this occasion.

"So What Was Achieved?"

The achievements of the joint campaign may seem trivial to those without an interest in matters genealogical, indeed, it was refreshingly surprising that many Teachtaí Dála (Irish MPs) and Seanadóirí (Senators) fully appreciated the value of the substance of the amendments proffered by this Society and the other organisations. Firstly, we jointly achieved the insertion of the "place of birth" of the

deceased on Death Certificates along side the date or year of birth. The Minister, **Ms. Mary Coughlin, TD**, acceded to the demands by the Opposition for the inclusion of this information specifically to assist genealogists, she said. As the passage of this Bill progressed, however, there was no further movement by the Minister on other points raised by the genealogical organisations, until the final day in Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate). At the report stage of the Bill, the Minister agreed to the inclusion of the "forename and surname of the father of the deceased" and the "forename, surname and former surname of the mother of the deceased" to be entered on Irish Death Certificates, again according to the Minister, to assist genealogical research. A large part of the credit for achieving this latter amendment goes to **Mr. Steven Feary-Smyrl** of the Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland (APGI).

"No Statutory Users' Committee"

However, our joint campaign failed to deliver in a number of significant and important areas. We failed to get a Users' Advisory Committee established on a statutory basis. Instead the Minister offers a non-statutory panel to discuss aspects of the delivery of service to genealogists. Vigilance is now required to ensure that this "panel" is established as promised by the Minister and that it does not descend into a meaningless talking-shop process with no real function. This amendment, above all others, would have instilled a level trust amongst genealogists in the computerisation and relocation plans.

"Walk-in Public Search Facility"

Securing a commitment in the legislation to have a "walk-in" public search facility

GSI Website:- www.gensocireland.org

maintained in the City of Dublin proved unsuccessful. The organisations were very concerned that the "public search facility" identified in the Bill may end up solely in cyberspace. This will deny many their rightful access to the records of the General Register Office. However, few if any Irish genealogists oppose the introduction of a comprehensive and affordable internet search facility for GRO records. The Minister's mentioning of a possible relocation of the "walk-in" public search facility to "more suitable" premises may signal problems down the line for accessibility.

"National Archives & National Library"
Another important unsuccessful area, very much to the hearts of our membership, was the proposal to transfer the older register books held by the Registrar General to the National Archives of Ireland. Or failing that, to have microfilm copies of the registers over seventy years old transferred from the General Register Office to both the National Archives and the National Library. The Minister refused to accept this amendment however the door does not appear to have been totally closed on this very important proposal.

"Dual Language Registration"

With a barrage of sometimes muddled excuses, the Minister refused to permit the optional dual language registration using both Irish and English languages. This amendment if it had been accepted by the Minister would simply have provided legal recognition to the wide spread usage in Ireland of both an Irish and an "English" rendering of our native Irish Gaelic surnames. This refusal by the Minister to accept this amendment was surprising and regrettable especially as the registration system is being totally computerised.

"A New Era for Irish Civil Registration"

With the passing of the new Civil Registration Bill, Ireland will have a fully computerised civil registration system headquartered in the Roscommon Town. The system promises to provide for ease of registration of life events throughout the country. Indeed, with the rolling out of the computerised public search facility initially in Dublin and then, according to the Minister, on-line providing access to the GRO records for researchers at home and overseas, this will bring Ireland into line with our neighbours in Scotland and England where such records have been available on-line for some years now.

"Internet Access"

The new system has the overall potential of being advantageous to the requirements of Irish genealogical research. However, we must ensure that the general public accessibility via the internet is not hindered by cost. On-line access to Irish birth, marriage and death records will hopefully provide that much needed boost to Irish roots tourism which was so severely damaged by the downturn in the aftermath of 9/11. This important development could be the much needed catalyst in another area of Irish genealogy. It may finally drag the government sponsored Irish Genealogical

Project (IGP) into the 21st century to provide an on-line access to the records in each of its Heritage Centres. A positive decision in this respect could undo the terrible damage inflicted on the reputation of Irish genealogy by the unrealistic and excessive charging and poor quality work by some of the Heritage Centres.

"A Lesson in Cooperation"

The moderately successful campaign mounted by the various organisations in respect of the Civil Registration Bill is certainly a lesson for the Irish genealogical community as a whole. Indeed, it could and should be the basis for future joint actions on the possible release of the pre-Second World War Irish census records, the introduction of a proper legislative framework for the granting of Arms by the State and the overall planning and delivery of quality services to genealogists. In this respect, the Genealogical Society of Ireland, though *not* a member of the Council of Irish Genealogical Organisations, will gladly play its part in any future joint actions in the interest of Irish genealogy. Finally, this Society would like to thank **Mr. Steven ffearry-Smyrl** of APGI for all his hard work and cooperation during the recent campaign on the Civil Registration Bill, undoubtedly, without which significant successes may not have been achieved.

DIARY DATES

Tuesday March 9th 2004

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.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Speaker: **Rev. D. Levistone-Cooney**
Topic: *"The Irish Palatines & Methodist Church Records"*

Tuesday April 13th 2004

Venue as above
Members' Night
Speaker: **Mr. Brian McAvoy**
Topic: *"DNA & Genealogical Research"*

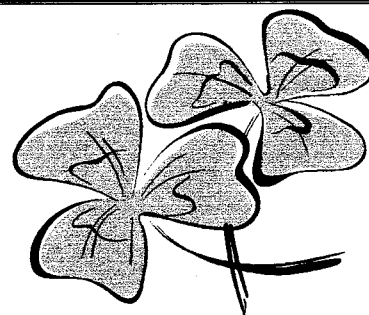
Weds. March 24th & April 28th

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*

USD & UKP CURRENCY RATES

The exchange rate for persons paying by check or cash in US dollars €1.00 = US\$1.25 and similarly for those wish to pay in British pounds €1.00 = 0.70p. These exchange rates apply to all purchases of Society publications and membership subscriptions transacted by check / cheque payments in the currencies concerned. Alternatively why not pay by Credit Card – MasterCard or VISA via the Website – it's easy, makes good sense and saves you money.



HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY
To all our Members & friends
from the Cathaoirleach & the
Members of the Board

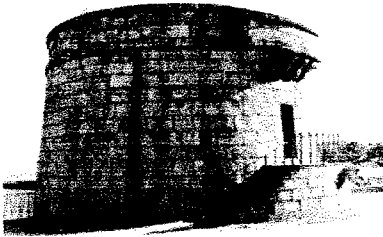
DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Society to be presented at the Annual General Meeting this month will show a remarkable consistency in the numbers attending the 23 Open Meetings held each year. This Society holds meetings right throughout the year without a break and the attendance for the last three years averaged 45-50 each month according to the report. This is exceptionally good news as there has been a major fall-off in attendance at meetings of voluntary organisations throughout the country in recent years. Political parties, clubs and residents' associations all report a sharp decline in the numbers attending monthly meetings. It is clear that the so called Celtic Tiger economy has severely damaged volunteerism in Ireland. The membership numbers calculated at the end of December in each year also will show a slight increase on the 2002 figures. The levels of other activities have likewise remained constant during the period January thru December 2003. The Board held twelve ordinary and one special meeting in 2003 and the Society completed two major projects in that period too. Firstly, as reported the major restoration works at the Martello Tower were completed and secondly, the Archive Summer Project completed the computerisation of the archival resources of the Society with the exception of the manuscript collection. The level of participation in the Archive Summer Project and the Cemetery Project during 2003 ensured the early completion of both. The report was presented to the Board by the Hon. Secretary at the March meeting and following deliberations it was adopted as the Report of the Board of Directors 2003. A fuller account of the report will be published, as usual, in the Society's Quarterly Journal.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

Irish based Members living in either the Republic or Northern Ireland are reminded that their Annual Membership Fee fell due on January 1st 2004. The Annual Membership Fee for Irish based Members (ROI & NI) is just €20.00. For overseas Members the Fee due on the anniversary date of joining is now €25.00

AN DAONCHARTLANN

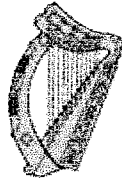


The Board of the Society is very grateful to Mr. Tony MacCarthy, Editor of "Irish Roots" magazine for the excellent coverage of the Daonchartlann project in the Spring 2004 issue of the magazine. Beside a very glowing editorial tribute, the magazine carried a photograph of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Mr. Martin Cullen, TD on his visit to the Tower. Copies of the magazine can be ordered directly on www.irishrootsmagazine.com. As reported last month, Wednesday September 15th 2004 is a date your diary as it has been chosen for the official opening of An Daonchartlann. Our Leas-Chathaoirleach (Vice-Chair) Séamus Moriarty, MGSI, will head a sub-committee to plan this very special event in the history of the Society, including the commissioning of a commemorative medal, producing the commemorative booklet and the compilation of the guest list. Details of their plans will be published as soon as they are to hand. Work is continuing on the interior of the building including a careful compilation of a "snag list" of the various and inevitable little things to be done or in some cases, re-done. Just as in any new building, this restoration project has produced some unforeseen minor difficulties, however, Liam Mac Alasdair, FGSI, has meticulously attended to each in turn. Barry O'Connor, FGSI, has designed the shelving for the Archive area on the ground floor to maximise the shelving capacity. Work will soon commence on this area as the Board is anxious to have our archival resources available to our members as soon as possible, in the meantime, unfortunately it remains closed to research in storage at Rochestown Park. The sub-committee overseeing the restoration and refurbishment of the building will periodically over the coming months announce appeals for various items or volunteers to assist the project. These items may include equipment, furniture or, as in the case of their first appeal, two storage heaters. Ideally, Liam Mac Alasdair would welcome a donation of two storage heaters or indeed, the offer of sponsorship to purchase and install them in the Tower. If you would like to assist with the acquisition of these heaters please contact lime on E-mail: lmac@dna.ie or contact the Hon. Secretary at Tel: (+353.1.284 2711). Indeed, this appeal coincides with our regular invitation to all of our Members and friends of the Society to help with this refurbishment stage of the project. One way of helping is to become a sponsor. Each sponsor

may have either their own name or that of a loved-one entered in the *Commemorative Book* and on a scroll that will be permanent memorial in the Tower. For just €100.00 (US\$125.00) 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. Another way of helping is to send what you can as donations no matter how modest are all very welcome. 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" on Wednesday September 15th 2004.

MARCH GENIE UPDATES

CYMRU & EIRE The Society was represented at the INTERREG (European Union Inter-Regional) conference held in Bangor, North Wales on February 12th 2004. Our Cathaoirleach and Hon. Secretary met with many prospective partners in heritage projects from the Welsh counties of Gwynedd and Ynys Mon (Isle of Anglesey). Later we had a meeting with Menter Mon in Llangefni, the county administrative centre on Ynys Mon. This meeting proved to be very positive as it explored and discovered areas of great potential for this Society and heritage organisations on Ynys Mon. This Society is committed to the expansion of our overseas contacts and it would encourage other non-governmental heritage organisations in Ireland to explore the potential of such international contacts under the auspices of the European Union's inter-regional initiatives.



NATIONAL MUSEUM of IRELAND

The Director of the National Museum of Ireland, Dr. Pat Wallace, has launched an appeal to lovers of Irish history and heritage the world over to donate on permanent loan items for an important new exhibit at Collins Barracks in Dublin. The permanent exhibit will be called "The Irish at War" and cover all aspects of Irish military history from the earliest period up to our participation in United Nations missions throughout the world. The director is seeking memorabilia, uniforms, kit, publications, posters, diaries and photographs. Whether, it be the 1798 citizens at arms, 1916-21 revolutionaries, British or other forces, the wild geese etc. all material would be greatly appreciated and indeed, well persevered by the Museum. This is a unique and important opportunity for such items to be collected and displayed in one permanent exhibition in Ireland. Members and readers are urged to consider this appeal and to contact the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Benburb

Street, Dublin 7, Ireland. Tel: +353 1 6777444
E-mail: marketing@museum.ie
History Ireland - Spring 2004, published by Wordwell Ltd. James Scannell reports that the Spring 2004 issue of 'History Ireland' magazine is packed with interesting articles and introducing new features such as the Platform Section in which David Edwards of UCC reflects on the Carrickmines debacle in Carrickmines Castle and the heritage war, while in the News and Shorts section, Philip Lecane recalls 'The Sinking of RMS Leinster - The International Significance', while in 'From Sligo to Wales - The Flight of Sir Charles Phibbs, Eimion Thomas recalls the fate of one of the many families who left Ireland in the wake of the 1922 Anglo-Irish Treaty while Sarah Geraghty discusses 'The Irish Historic Town Atlas Insert' which comes separately with this issue of History Ireland devoted to Dublin to 1610 - Irish Historic Towns Atlas No 11. In the articles section of this magazine James Lyttleton explores the dichotomy between the theory and practice of plantation by examining the surviving buildings of 17th century west Offaly in '17th Century Offaly - Accommodating the new realities; Padraig Lenihan assesses William of Orange's performance at the Battle of the Boyne in 'King Billy - a military assessment' while Ewan Morris recounts the heated debate provoked by the introduction of Percy Metcalfe's coinage designs in 1928 in 'Devilish Devices or Farnyard Friends? The Free State coinage debate'. Daire Keogh recalls 'Fr. Flanagan's Visit to Ireland: 1946' while in the Sources section Catriona Crowe outlines a National Archives initiative aimed at introducing a sample of its records to a wider audience in 'Counties in Time - Documents and commentaries from the National Archives of Ireland. In the Interview spot is James Maguire Managing Editor of the Dictionary of Irish Biography, the first attempt under the auspices of the Royal Irish Academy to produce a comprehensive record of the careers and lives of significant people, not forgetting the reviews Section and the Bookworm pages which looks at the many books on Irish History published in 2003. It's another super issue of History Ireland and excellent value for €5.00.
FAMILY HISTORY SHOW The annual family history fair organised by the Society of Genealogists' in London will be held at the Royal Horticultural Society, New Hall & Conference Centre, Greycoat Street, Westminster, London, on May 1st & 2nd 2004. A full programme of the events and exhibits is available from the Society of Genealogists, 14, Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London, EC1M 7BA, England or by E-mail: events@sog.org.uk or on the website www.sog.org.uk. Tickets cost £6.00 per day or £4.00 per day if purchased before April 23rd. This annual fair is now the premier showcase for genealogy in Great Britain and attracts thousands of visitors each year to the lectures, talks and, of course, the exhibits themselves.

MARCH BOOK REVIEWS

"Dublin City & County Book of Honour – The Great War 1914-1918" published by the National Book of Honour Committee consisting of former Irish Ministers of Education, a former Taoiseach, a former Ceann Comhairle (Speaker) and a former President of Ireland. This august group has brought to fore a much forgotten military sacrifice of the thousands of Irishmen who lost their lives in the First World War. The old adage that history is written by the victors also applied to Ireland as the new State emerged from the War of Independence in 1921 to glory in the deeds of the heroes of the Easter Rising and the recent Anglo-Irish War. Those Irishmen who served and died in a British Army uniform were conveniently and officially forgotten by the new State which turned its energies to moulding a new Irish society based on native traditions and heroes. The fact that many of those who fought with the Irish Republican Army during the War of Independence 1919-21 were ex-British Army soldiers was conveniently overlooked as was the bloody sacrifice of their former colleagues in arms on the killing fields of Flanders. This book catalogues those Irishmen who died in the war and who were born or lived in the City or County of Dublin. The data was collated from the Memorial Roll published during the early 1920s in London and from relatives and the service organisations. Each of the entries is listed alphabetically and contain the rank, number, place of enlistment, regiment, place of birth and sometimes details of parents, date and age at death, where killed and place of burial. This volume is a work in progress as not all the names of the fallen from the City and County of Dublin are recorded in its pages, one for example, Gunner Michael Merrigan, Reg. No. 5303 of the Royal Garrison Artillery who died of wounds in France on May 1st 1917 of Kingstown (now Dún Laoghaire) has been omitted. Hopefully, with the assistance of many readers the compilers of this work will be in a position to publish a second volume. Copies of this work may be obtained from the **Book of Honour Committee, 31, Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1, Ireland.** Price €25.00 However, unfortunately there is no ISBN recorded in this volume. (MM)

"The Complete Book of Heraldry" by **Stephen Slater** is a fascinating volume for the heraldry enthusiast and the curious genealogist. Like others, when I hear the "complete book" of anything I am immediately very suspicious and sceptical about such grandiose claims. However, that aside, this book is very informative and beautifully illustrated with colour plates throughout. This is especially important for a topic like heraldry as not all readers would fully appreciate the artistic beauty of the coats-of-arms depicted without colour. The development of heraldry from its earliest forms through to the present day is explained clearly and methodically by the

author. The text is very readable and avoids the notion that we all understand heraldic terms and the rather stylised language used to describe arms. Though this book concentrates on the English heraldic tradition it doesn't confine itself to that nation but spreads its study to cover the European continent, Asia, the Americas and southern Africa. There is a very interesting account of the Scottish heraldic tradition which, like Ireland, is a blend of the introduced and native genius creating distinctively unique heraldic achievements. The Welsh treated heraldry in the same manner bringing aspects of the much older Celtic lore to this new art form. The author's presentation of the continental heraldic traditions of France, Spain & Portugal, Italy and the German speaking lands provides a very interesting comparison of style, provenance and historic or religious influence on the heraldry in each country. The perverse nature of Nazi heraldry steeped in Teutonic myth and political symbolism makes for fascinating if not disturbing reading. Russia of the tsarist era and the later communist dictatorship are also included – double headed eagles, hammers and sickles slowly giving way to the heraldry of the Russian Federation. Poland offers a blend of the typically Slavic and Catholic religious symbols. The United States, a place most don't associate with heraldry, is none the less full of heraldic symbolism from the White House down. African countries depicted are heady mixture of tribal symbols, native flora and fauna and the remnants of the European heraldic tradition blending into strikingly beautiful arms. Canada since the establishment of its own heraldic authority is embarking on yet another mixing of traditions between the Native American and Inuit and European symbolism. The author also brings us a glimpse of Japanese heraldry and the heraldry of conflict. In his treatment of a modern Grant of Arms, he provides a photograph of the 2001 grant to the Genealogical Society of Ireland by the Chief Herald of Ireland. However, in his chapter on Ireland and Irish heraldry, the author would have been well advised to have availed of a proof reader with knowledge of Irish history, heraldry and nomenclature. Though all in all, this work is a monumental exercise worthy of praise and indeed, Mr. Slater must be congratulated on the quality and number of illustrations in this 256 page publication. Lorenz Books, London, 2002. ISBN 0-7548-1062-3 H/C €24.65 (MM)

QUERIES RECEIVED

MIKE JONES, 2004, Hiawatha Blvd., Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey 07034, USA E-mail: mikej@mymailstation.com Wrote: My great-grandparents, William and Mary Carey (nee Keoghnan / Keogan) came to the USA in mid 1865 from County Westmeath and possibly Killucan. His father was James and his mother was Catherine Hinch. His wife's father was John Keoghnan and her mother was Mary Doyle. They were supposedly married in

Delvin, Co. Westmeath. Seeking anyone with information or connections with these families. **MARY M. ROTERING**, 914, State St., La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601, USA E-mail: maryr78521@aol.com Wrote: seeking information on Patrick D. Haggerty born October 3rd 1815 in possibly County Westmeath and died December 30th 1901 in Seneca, Wisconsin, USA and his wife Martha or Maria Quinn born c 1814 in Ireland and died September 6th 1876 in Seneca. Patrick came to America about 1829. Children: Mary J. born 1843 in Kingston, Ulster County, NY or PA. Dennis b. 1845; Catherine b. 1847; Martha C. b. 1849; Bridget C. born Feb. 1st 1852 in Kingston and married an Enright in Seneca; James M. born June 6th 1854 in Kingston and married Katherine A. Brady in 1883. I am willing to do some reciprocal research in Wisconsin.

GRAPHIC FAMILY TREE SERVICE

VISUAL ARTIST & GRAPHIC DESIGNER OFFERS THIS SERVICE AT REASONABLE AND AFFORDABLE COST

Artist based in Dún Laoghaire will work with you to produce a beautiful graphic presentation of your Family Tree in full colour, with all your photographs of family members included. 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, with Crests and any text you may require - you decide the level of information to be included. We will work in close consultation with you at all stages of the project. Costs are based on the number and quality of the images involved. Confidentiality and security guaranteed. We also specialise in Photographic Restoration. CONTACT **Frankie Lee** at 087.782 0932 or E-mail: frankielee@eircom.net for more information.

JOINING THE SOCIETY

The Society always welcomes new Members from Ireland and overseas. If you wish to join contact the Membership Officer, **Mrs. Annette McDonnell, MGSI**, 4, Kippure Ave., Green Park, Dublin 12, Ireland. You may also contact Annette by E-mail via the Hon. Secretary GenSocIreland@iol.ie 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 by mail. Overseas Members and those Irish Members living outside Co. Dublin receive the monthly newsletter "*The Genie Gazette*" by mail each month.

GSI LIVERY FLAG

Order a GSI Livery Flag. Measuring (3ft x 5ft) at just €90.00 each including delivery. Made by the Dublin flag makers **Timothy O'Regan**, as a GSI Member, this Livery Flag would be great at your next family gathering. Contact the Hon. Secretary at the address below.