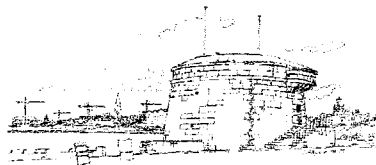


- Heritage Survey Encouraging
- Official Opening of An Daonchartlann
- Launch of New Website for the Society

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The Gene Gazette

The Newsletter of
the Genealogical
Society of Ireland
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HERITAGE SURVEY VERY ENCOURAGING

Public Attitude to Heritage contrasts sharply with Government's Ambivalence

Once again, genealogists and social historians can take heart in the results of a survey of public attitudes towards our heritage in Ireland as new research carried out by Lansdowne Market Research for the Heritage Council shows dramatic increases in the importance people place in the protection of our heritage.

"Launch During Heritage Week"

As Heritage Week each year brings home the general public accessibility of our heritage in Ireland, it was very fitting to have this study launched during Heritage Week. The survey was "benchmarked" against a Heritage Council/Lansdowne study carried out in 1999. This latest survey was carried out during the summer with a nationally representative sample of adults.

"Overwhelming Majority Support Protection of Heritage"

The study found that nine in ten members of the public agree that it is important to protect our heritage and the percentage agreeing that it is 'very' important has increased from 46% in 1999 to 55% in 2004. Those resident in Dublin are most likely to make this claim with 71% agreeing it is 'very' important (vs. just 41% in 1999). There is a 46% increase in those who strongly agree that heritage protection is everyone's responsibility up from 28% in 1999 to 41% in 2004.

"Heritage for Everyone"

According to the Heritage Council's own Press Release of September 3rd 2004, another significant finding is the increase in the lower income groups nationwide who think protecting heritage is very

important which is up by almost 25% - from 41% in 1999 to 50% in 2004. This is a significant finding as "heritage" and "heritage protection" is often seen as the preserve of an educated elite and not something that the ordinary citizen would consider important.

"Government Action Required"

There was a 62% increase in the numbers that strongly agreed that the Government should offer incentives to people to encourage heritage protection. There was a 79% increase in those that strongly agreed that people should be penalised for not preserving heritage. The Heritage Act, 1995 includes "genealogical material" as an integral part of our heritage - a point included in this legislation at the behest of this Society. However, the Government's approach to genealogy and heraldry has been ambivalent to say the least. Indeed, the legislative position of this aspect of our heritage has been thrown into disarray following the undermining of Section 13 of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 by the Attorney General's opinion on the State's right to grant arms. The Minister's intention in this regard is, as yet unknown.

"Starrett Welcomes Survey Results"

"The results of this survey are very encouraging", said Michael Starrett, Chief Executive Officer of the Heritage Council. "It shows a marked increase of awareness and appreciation of heritage in Ireland. The study shows that attitudes are changing and people are placing a much higher priority on heritage. The survey shows that the strategy of putting resources into the management of heritage at a local level is working. People are

taking responsibility and pride in their own heritage and attitudes are changing." Other results in the survey include:

Keeping our own identity, traditions and culture and passing them on to the next generation was the main reason given for protecting heritage

There is an increase from 26% to 42% in the numbers of people who strongly agree that the Government should offer incentives to people to encourage heritage protection

53% of those questioned agree that taxpayer's money should be used to fund heritage protection up from 41% in 1999

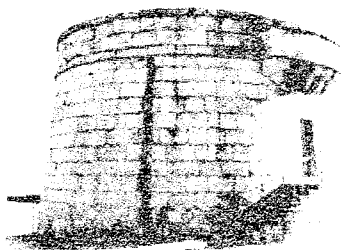
When questioned about the public bodies responsible for heritage 33% thought it was the Dept. of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; 18% the Heritage Council - up from 4% in the last study and 17% felt that their local authority or county council was responsible for heritage - up from 7% in the last survey.

17% of the population is actively involved in heritage at a local level. Up by over 100% from 7% in the 1999 survey & equally spread between different age and demographic groups.

Castles, manors and history are top of mind when people are asked about their understanding of heritage. However, there is a significant increase in the numbers seeing the environment and nature as parts of our heritage - scenic views, wildlife habitats, coast lines, wildlife, canals and waterways etc.

The survey was carried out from 3rd to 22nd July, and the methodology employed was face-to-face omnibus and the sample size was 1200 people.

FROM HUMBLE KITCHEN TO A TOWER OF STRENGTH



"The Long Road to Our New Home"

An excerpt from the Commemorative Booklet, edited by Margaret Conroy, published to mark the official opening of the Archive at the Martello Tower.

The Society was founded in October 1990 by four neighbours in the Rochestown area of Dún Laoghaire, Frieda Carroll, Jean Reddin, Joan Merrigan and Michael Merrigan to promote the study of genealogy and to collect and preserve genealogical material. It was also agreed back in 1990 that one of our main objectives was to establish a repository for genealogical material in Dún Laoghaire. Indeed, from the outset, this Society differed significantly from other family history organisations in Ireland in that, its aims and objectives were far reaching and ambitious and some would say, more akin to overseas genealogical organisations. Plans for the establishment of the Society were formulated sitting in Frieda Carroll's kitchen at 14, Rochestown Park, Dún Laoghaire during September and October 1990. However, it soon became apparent that without a suitable model in Ireland upon which to build this new genealogical organisation, each of the four founding members studied details on organisations in Great Britain and especially, the Society of Genealogists' in London which was founded in 1911. Information received from the UK based Federation of Family History Societies provided a useful template for the establishment of a society here in Ireland, however, the Founders were adamant that the new society must be distinctively Irish in character and they decided on a framework and a constitution for the new organisation with that ethos in mind.

Though, determined from day one to establish a "*Dún Laoghaire Genealogical Society*" the Founder's were unsure of the level of interest in family history in the locality. Therefore, with that ultimate goal in mind, they decided on October 25th 1990 to start small with the establishment of the "*Rochestowne Family History Society*" attracting more neighbours and friends to informal meetings in the home of our first Cathaoirleach and current Archivist, Mrs. Frieda Carroll. With the constitution for the new organisation agreed on November 8th

1990, the first steps were boldly taken by the Founders in the establishment of the "*Dún Laoghaire Genealogical Society*" – the forerunner of the present Genealogical Society of Ireland.

With interest in family history growing amongst the neighbours and friends of the Founders, the first Executive Committee of the young society decided to host an open meeting to open up the organisation to the general public. The meeting was held in the Hotel Victor (now The Rochestown Lodge Hotel) in Dún Laoghaire on Tuesday April 9th 1991 with twenty three persons in attendance, seven of whom are still members today – over thirteen years later. Greatly encouraged by the success of this first open meeting the Executive Committee decided to utilise the name agreed in November 1990 and the "*Dún Laoghaire Genealogical Society*" proudly took its place in the world of genealogy.

At the Executive Committee meeting of June 7th 1991, Michael Merrigan delivered a report on the necessity of establishing "an independent genealogical library and repository in Dún Laoghaire" and six publicly owned buildings were considered by the Executive Committee as possibilities. The campaign for a permanent home for the Society's Archive had begun in earnest.

The Society's first Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday October 8th 1991 in the Hotel Victor, Rochestown Avenue, Dún Laoghaire with our new President of the Society, Denis O Connor Don in attendance.

Along with holding monthly meetings of the Executive Committee, the Society also organised monthly Open Meetings each month since April 1991 and indeed, increased this to two Open Meetings each month with the hosting of Morning Open Meetings in The Port View Hotel in Dún Laoghaire from October 1992. In the last thirteen years since April 1991 over 9,000 people have attended the Society's two monthly open meetings, where lectures, workshops and exhibitions are organised to promote an awareness and appreciation of genealogy as an open access educational leisure activity available to all in the community irrespective of their socio-economic position or previous education.

Again from the earliest months of the Society, members were encouraged to participate in group projects, both indoor and outdoor, to widen their knowledge of the subject and through publication of the results of these projects provide further research data for genealogists and social historians throughout the world. The first such group projects was the transcription and indexation for publication of the 1901 and 1911 Census of Ireland for Kingstown (now Dún Laoghaire) and surrounding areas.

The first issue of the Society Quarterly Journal was published on January 13th 1992 and was presented to the members at the Open Meeting held that evening. The Society's on-going Journal Exchange Programme (J.E.P.) was commenced the following month with copies of our first journal despatched to similar organisations overseas in exchange for copies of their journals for the Society's Archive. This programme has enabled the Society to amass a fine collection of genealogical and heraldic journals from all corners of the globe.

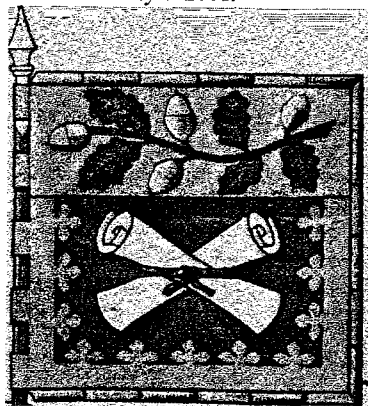
The first Morning Open Meeting was held on Wednesday October 28th 1992 in The Port View Hotel, Dún Laoghaire as agreed at the September meeting of the Executive Committee. The meeting was to be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except December, and Seán Kane was appointed coordinator.

The Society finally following much campaigning to acquire a premises, the Society accepted the offer by Liam Byrne, Assistant Manager, **Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council** of a building in the Council's ownership for use by the Society as a permanent home for its Archive and Research Centre. This offer was endorsed in March 1997 by a subsequent vote by the County Councillors of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in favour of the project. A year later the Society became the first voluntary genealogical organisation in Ireland to be incorporated as a Company under the Irish Companies Acts.

A new era in Irish genealogy beckoned when the Members of Dún Laoghaire Genealogical Society overwhelmingly supported the proposal to change the name of the organisation to "*Genealogical Society of Ireland*" or in the Irish language "*Cumann Geinealaís na hÉireann*" at the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 12th October 1999. Not just a "*New Name*" but a whole new approach to the "World of Genealogy" was envisaged by the Executive. After years of debate about the restrictions imposed on the Society's development by its "local" name and indeed, as it was widely viewed as a "national" organisation, time had come to take the logical next step - change the name of the organisation. It was the only option for the Society as it embraced the whole of the country as our Members already undertook their genealogical research in every county of Ireland providing the Society's growing Archive with data from the entire island of Ireland. Asked whether this would jeopardise a future "unity" in the world of Irish genealogy, Rory Stanley, Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire Genealogical Society, stressed the need for the Society to "abandon its perceived parochial image and to adopt a more realistic name reflecting its actual position in Irish genealogy at home and abroad" he continued "in past the

Society has given exceptional value to its Members and it continues to do so, therefore, this new national organisation will be in a position to offer all the very best in Irish genealogical services - it's a simply matter of choice". In its new form the Society will be in a better position to co-operate with all in the world of Irish genealogy, he said.

An application for a Grant of Arms for the Genealogical Society of Ireland was delivered to the Chief Herald of Ireland and through fund raising the Society obtained its beautifully designed Arms in an Official Ceremony held in the County Hall, Dún Laoghaire on Monday 23rd July 2001. Due to the generosity of our American Member, **Mrs. Barbara Mungovan-Koch**, the Society has been able to commission a Dublin city based flag-maker to provide the Heraldic Banner and the Society's livery flag for display at the Martello Tower. The Chief Herald of Ireland contained the original design in the Letters Patent granting Arms to the Society in 2001.



The design in heraldic terms is "*azure (blue) within a bordure treflee or (gold), two scrolls in saltire argent (silver/white) banded at the centre vert (green), surmounted of a chief (band at top) of the second (gold), thereon a sprig of oak leaved and fructed proper.*" The design is by Mr. Mícheál Ó Comáin the Consulting Herald at the Office of the Chief Herald.

The Society planned to restore and refurbish the Seapoint Tower to house its expanding Archive and to provide a research centre. *An DAONCHARTLANN*, as it will be called, is the first such facility in the Republic. The term "*Daonchartlann*" is a new one, roughly translated as "*peoples' archive*", yet the concept is not, many such facilities exist around the world, especially in New Zealand, Australia and North America. However, the best example of this type of facility is the Library of the Society of Genealogists in London founded in 1911 and which, receives over 25,000 items of genealogical interest each year from all quarters of the world, including Ireland. The facility in Seapoint will contain records from a number of sources and, in particular, it will function as a unique repository for family history research undertaken by genealogists

from Ireland and from the Irish Diaspora. Already, the Society has collected over 8,000 publications, 4,500 manuscripts and an extensive microform collection. New items are received on a weekly basis, these are presently housed in a member's home. The Daonchartlann will permit greater access by researchers to this information and ensure that such records, many compiled by dedicated individuals over a life time of research, to remain in Ireland for future generations to appreciate their genealogical heritage.

The tower at Seapoint, dating from 1804, officially called *Martello Tower No. 14*, is entered by a recently added outside stone stairway to the first floor with a ground floor accessed by a stone stairwell in the very thick walls. Originally, troops entered by way of iron, timber or rope ladders - such mode of ingress was intended to improve the defensive quality of these towers. Access to each floor is by a stone-cut spiral staircase in the interior of its thick walls. It is the Society will utilise the space as follows:- Entrance by way of the first floor to the main reading room/research centre containing microfilm/microfiche readers, computers (Internet) and research stations, with a service counter, behind which, will be microform library and a new service staircase to the ground floor. The ground floor area would contain archive shelving in rows with a lower work space for restorative work on our manuscripts, bookbinding etc. This area would contain the administrative functions of receiving and cataloguing of the various collections.

These towers were originally built by the British Military to repel a possible attack on Ireland's east coast by Napoleon Bonaparte. They normally have walls of locally quarried stone, in this case Dalkey granite, about 2.4 metres thick, 9.1 metres high and 10.9 metres in diameter outside with a doorway approximately 3.0 metres from the ground. The roof has a centre pivot for traversing cannon carriage, often a 24 pounder, which was capable of moving 360 degrees, (definitely no Maginot Line here as clearly, the builders did not quite trust the natives following the Great Rebellion of 1798 and Robert Emmet's Rising of 1803 !!). Martello Towers got their name from a similar structure on the island of Corsica following a naval engagement at Mortella Point in 1794. The structure stood out against the continuous pounding by British warships HMS Juno and HMS Fortitude. The word 'Mortella' means 'myrtle' - a shrub which was common to the area in Corsica. The British were so impressed with this tower that they made detailed plans of it for the Admiralty in London before destroying it. A number (approx. 28) of them were built around Dublin Bay to protect what was then the second city of the British Empire. Others were built in Counties Cork, Waterford, Wexford, Donegal, Derry, Galway, Clare and Limerick. As the

east coast invasion by the French never materialised, the towers either went into disrepair or were acquired for various purposes. The one at Sandycove houses the **James Joyce Museum**, while others have been converted into homes and the one at Sandymount has been converted to serve as a restaurant.

Nearly seven years of planning, fund raising and following the complete restoration, this is a milestone in the fourteen year history of this Society and it represents another first for Irish genealogy as this is the only family history society in the Republic to have its own premises. The members of the Board and the members of successive Executive Committees since October 1990 worked very hard to achieve this particular aim of the organisation to have a permanent home for the Society's Archive. However, on the road to achieve this success many long hours of anguish and disappointment were to be endured before the allocation by the County Council of the Martello Tower to the Society in 1997 and then when planning permission was sought for the restoration. Objections and challenges to the granting of planning permission threatened to derail the whole process. A successful defence of our plans was very skilfully and decisively executed at **An Bord Pleanála** (The Planning Board). The case against the Society's plans was completely destroyed and work could commence with earnest in February 2003 with the engagement of **Shane Breen**, Contractor.

The Martello Tower at Seapoint was left unoccupied since 1988 when it was seasonally used as a shop and in this period the wooden floors and staircase deteriorated badly. Though, certainly not the original flooring of this two hundred year old building, a question was raised about a large centre wooden beam. After much debate on how to incorporate this beam into the restoration works, our Archaeologist, **Christian Corlett** and the County Council's Conservation Officer, **Majella Walsh** agreed that this beam was not the original beam. Excavations on the ground floor discovered evidence of three separate rooms and the walls of which, and not this later wooden beam, supported the floor above. The beam was removed and work proceeded at a pace taking care to execute each task in accordance with best practice in conservation and restoration. The Society's Project Director, **Liam Mac Alasdair**, **FGSI** meticulously planned the restoration of the Martello Tower with the assistance of **Barry O'Connor**, **FGSI** who designed and constructed the workbenches, shelving and service areas. The works now complete this building is a real treasure to behold and it's certainly the gem of the world of Irish genealogy.

In July 2004 the Board of Directors of the Genealogical Society of Ireland held its first meeting at our new headquarters and the main

item on the agenda was the countdown to the official opening of An Daonchartlann on Wednesday September 15th 2004. The ceremony will be performed by the first citizen of the County of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, Cllr. **Niamh Bhreathnach** – Cathaoirleach of the County Council. The official opening will take place at 14.30hrs with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque. Guests will be invited to view the building after the ceremonies. Later in the afternoon, the Cathaoirleach of the County Council will host a special reception at the County Hall for invited guests, county councillors and officials as part of the County Council's celebrations marking the occasion. This will be an important occasion not only for the Society and the owners of the Martello Tower the County Council, but for Irish genealogy in general. Unlike many national societies in Great Britain, the USA and Australia, where having a society premises is almost the norm, here in the Republic until now no voluntary genealogical organisation had its own premises.

The Society's archival collections have been in secure storage since their removal from the home of our Archivist in June. The task during August 2004 was to receive these collections at the Martello Tower. Volunteers, over many hours, sorted, catalogued and shelved the collections in the new archival storage area constructed by **Barry O'Connor, FGSI**

The Official Opening of this new facility will be the culmination of fourteen years work by all the volunteers, members and friends of the Genealogical Society of Ireland and it is a milestone in the development of Irish genealogy. "An Daonchartlann" is a testimony of dedication and commitment to Irish genealogy very evidently shared by all in the Society from the earliest days in Frieda's kitchen right down the years to the opening of our very own Archive – An Daonchartlann at the Martello Tower, Seapoint, Co. Dublin on Wednesday 15th September 2004.

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. Due to the extended coverage of the Official Opening the queries received will be published next month.

DIARY DATES

Tuesday September 14th 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.

Topic: "Irish Architectural Archive as a genealogical resource"

Tuesday October 12th 2004
Venue as above
Topic: "The Putland family of Bray 1650 to 1920"
Speaker: **Liam Clare, MGSI**

Wednesday 15th September 2004
Martello Tower, Seapoint, Co. Dublin
Official Opening of
An Daonchartlann at 14.30hrs

Weds. Sept. 22nd & October 27th 2004
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

QUARTERLY JOURNAL

Vol. 5 No. 2 – Summer 2004

The Summer 2004 issue of the Society's quarterly journal is now available price €5.00 (Member €4.50). The cover features a photograph of the elaborately beautiful memorial over the grave of the famous Irish playwright and wit Oscar Wilde who was buried in Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, France. James Robinson gives us a rare insight into an otherwise unknown friend and benefactor of Mr. Wilde's – Helen Carew. This wonderful piece was researched and written to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the birth of Oscar Wilde this year. Other articles in this issue include: "A Letter from Arthur Vicars" by Fr. Ignatius Fennessy; "Post Office Staff on the RMS Leinster" by Philip Lecane; "An Litir, An Comhairle agus An Leabhair" by Seán Mac Brádaigh; "Cakes Went to Charity" by Margaret Conroy; "A Doctor on the Leinster" by Fr. Ignatius Fennessy; "Byrne Memorials in the Cemetery of the Holy Cross, Arklow" by Seán Mac Brádaigh; "Enniskillen Advertisements 1897" by Gaye Asford; "The Sligo Petioners 1826" by Gaye Ashford; "Parents of Chamber Music" by David Hope, Diana Hope & David Morris; "News from the Past" by James Scannell; "Shirley Estate Loan Book 1827 to 1845" by Róisín Lafferty & Catherine McVeigh; "Oscar Wilde's Friend & Benefactor Helen Carew

(c1854-1928)" by James Robinson and "Ordinations 1940" by James Scannell. The Editor of the Quarterly Journal is always looking for new articles to publish. Why not drop Margaret a line on e-mail: mmeconroy@eircom.net or write to The Journal Editor, Genealogical Society of Ireland, 3, Kill Abbey, Kill O' The Grange, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

www.familyhistory.ie

The Society acquired and registered the above domain name for its new Website. Though, the Society has appeared on the web for a number of years now this facility was provided by www.dun-laoghaire.com as web pages devoted to the Society. This web service adequately provided access to the Society's Monthly Newsletter and offered our publications for sale on a secure server. However, because the website could not be regularly maintained by the Society and that such an onerous task could not have been provided by the Webmaster, it was necessary to build our own dedicated website. Iris has been working on the website and it is hoped to upload the full story of the development of An Daonchartlann at the Martello Tower accompanied by copies photographs of restoration and refurbishment of this historic building. The website was designed by **Iris O'Connor, MGSI** and developed in conjunction with **Scéim Phobal LBJ Community Project, Loughlinstown**. The launch of the Society's new website will be a feature of the ceremonies surrounding the Official Opening of the Society's new headquarters on September 15th 2004.

JOINING THE SOCIETY

The Society welcomes new Members from Ireland and overseas - just log on to the Society's Website or write to 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. The Annual Membership Fee for Irish based Members living in either the Republic or Northern Ireland is just €20.00 and it falls due on January 1st each year. The Annual Membership Fee for Overseas Members is €25.00 and falls due on the anniversary date of joining. Membership renewals may be made via the Website by Credit Card (VISA or MasterCard) or by Cheque / Check.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The October issue of this newsletter will be published one week later than scheduled on Monday 18th October 2004 due to holidays.