



On a hot summer's day, one Saturday in July, I oversaw the transfer of the holdings of the Dublin Archive of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland (MHSI) to the Society's main archive repository in Belfast. The MHSI was founded in 1926 under the original name of the Wesley Historical Society in Ireland, a name commemorating the founders of Methodism, brothers John and Charles Wesley. The current name was adopted in 2011.

As a membership organisation, the MHSI comprises of an ever-growing number of subscribers. It is an entirely voluntary organisation, which is funded only through the annual subscriptions of its members and through donations from local churches across Ireland. Like any such organisation, there is always more work to be done than there are funds to support what is required. In addition to invitations to events and lectures, members receive a copy of the Society's annual journal *The Bulletin of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland*, an exceptionally scholarly contribution to the history of Methodism in Ireland. Generally running to approximately 150 to 200 pages, the journal includes articles on individuals, families, churches, places, topics and issues.

The Society's website - <http://methodisthistoryireland.org> - was relaunched just a few years ago and now includes much of interest for the genealogist and family historian. One database notes the names and years of service of Methodist ministers (also known as preachers in earlier years) who served in any of the various Methodist denominations in Ireland. For each minister, a typical entry usually notes their approximate years of birth and death and the years in which they began and ceased appearing in the various sets of Minutes of Conference, which are the record of the annual meeting of each Methodist body. The entries lead to much fuller details noted about each minister, compiled by the Society's archivist, Rev. Robin Roddie, and which can be obtained by contacting him by email at: archivist@methodisthistoryireland.org.

Another database includes links to brief histories of 126 Methodist churches across Ireland which were originally published in the *Methodist Newsletter* during the years 1998-2009. Yet another exceptionally useful database comprises of many hundreds of references to Methodist preaching houses, chapels and churches noted in manuscript and published sources. Both of these databases can be very helpful in identifying when Methodism came to the villages, towns and cities of Ireland.

Other online resources include several hundred obituaries from the *Methodist Newsletter* published in the years 1971-2013; and

the same for the magazine of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists, 1823 to 1878. In hardcopy form at the Society's archive are card indexes to two Irish Methodist periodicals, *The Irish Evangelist* (1859-1883, monthly) and the *Irish Christian Advocate* (1883-1971, weekly), both of which contain biographical references, and particularly obituaries.

Returning to online resources, perhaps the most helpful to genealogists is the catalogue of the Society's archives. Here can be found covering dates for such things as baptismal and marriage registers, leaders board and circuit minutes books, membership rolls, accounts, Sunday school roll books, circuit schedule books and society class lists etc. The earliest material dates from the 1740s and the archives' holdings stretch into the late 20th century.

And this neatly brings me back to the recent transfer to Belfast of similar material for the circuits and societies stored up to now at the archive room at Sandymount in Dublin. For the past 25 or so years I have had the privilege of curating these records, which are predominantly from churches in counties Louth, Meath, Dublin, Wicklow, Carlow and Wexford, and which date back to the 1820s. If you have Methodist ancestors, you might like to know that the records for the greater Dublin area are all listed in my book *Dictionary of Dublin Dissent – Dublin's Protestant Dissenting Meetinghouses 1660-1920* (Dublin, 2009).

When I began the work, what the archives comprised – and even what had survived – was generally unknown. I found material in churches, houses, business premises, bank vaults, garages, outhouses, derelict churches and solicitors' offices. While much of it was well cared for, a significant amount was suffering from neglect: with impaired binding, torn, missing and confused pagination, and water damage etc. Slowly, it was surveyed *in situ*, listed and then transferred to the Dublin archive, boxed and catalogued. Most importantly, though, it had been secured for future generations.

In more recent times the committee of the MHSI (on which I serve) made the decision to centralise material from around Ireland in its main archive in Belfast; designed to a high spec, it is air conditioned and temperature controlled. It gave me great pleasure on that hot summer's day back in July to see the fruits of my labour disappear in two car loads to be united with their sister records from throughout Ireland, and thus begin the next chapter in telling their story of Irish Methodism.

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The Enhanced British Parliamentary Papers on Ireland (EPPI) are truly a bountiful resource for local history and genealogy research in Ireland. However, while they constitute perhaps the richest source of nineteenth century Ireland, awareness of this primary source remains quite low.

What Are The EPPI?

The EPPI is a database of 15,000 British government publications including bills, reports, commissions of enquiry, and detailed statistical census data. While not intended as a genealogical tool, these records provide a wealth of information and range in volume from single pages to very large reports with appendices.

The term 'Parliamentary Reports' may explain some of the under-use of the EPPI as a source, however they actually encompass a broad range of administrative papers relating to Ireland from 1801 to 1922. At the heart of the records are the endless reports

on economic, educational, and cultural institutions which can prove invaluable for remote (on-line) research.

Types of Records

To highlight all the records would be impossible. For those unfamiliar with the depth of information available, pictured below is an abridged section from part of just one report, namely the Co. Mayo section of the 1836 'Royal Commission for inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland'. This particular report lists the cases taken by property owners against tenants, primarily for non-payment of rent.

The section covers the first 10 of 75 cases for 1827, with a further 750 cases listed in Co Mayo alone in the 6 years to 1833. Perhaps the best known plaintiff is the first listed, Sir Neale O'Donnell of Newport House, who had taken cases against various defendants. The first case was dismissed, however O'Donnell was granted possession in the next three for rent due.

'Overholding' i.e. where tenants continued to occupy a holding after the expiry of the lease was another cause of cases being taken. In most instances, it lists both the rent owed and the townland so it can be invaluable when compared to the Tithe Applotment Books.

Plaintiff	Principal Defendant	Property	Barony	Parish	Comment	Decreed of not
Sir N. O'Donnell Bart.	Anthony Rowland, and 4 in co.	Land	Kilmaine	Cong	Rent due £53 8s 1d	Dismissed on hearing
Sir N. O'Donnell Bart.	Thomas Coan, and 4 in co.	Land	Kilmaine	Cong	Rent due £46 2s 7d	Decree possession
Sir N. O'Donnell Bart.	Anthony Duany, and 10 in co.	Land [33a 3r 31p]	Kilmaine	Cong	Rent due £97 10s 1d	Decree possession
Sir N. O'Donnell Bart.	James Walsh, and 30 in co.	Land [33a 1r 10p]	Kilmaine	Cong	Rent due £93 9s 3d	Decree possession
Colonel James Cuff	Edmund McGauron	House & plot	Kilmaine	Ballinrobe	For overholding	Decree possession
R.H. John Lord Kilmaine	James Morris	Houses	Kilmaine	Ballyholly	For overholding	Dismissed on hearing
Thomas West	Owen Cammell	House & holding	Gallen	Templemore	For overholding	Decree possession
Thomas West	Walter Welch and 2 in co.	Houses & holdings	Gallen	Templemore	For overholding	Decree possession
Thomas West	John Conlan	Houses & holdings	Gallen	Templemore	For overholding	Decree possession
James Grealy	Frances Flanagan	Lands	Costello	Annagh		Decree possession

Land Records

Other important and considerable records include those relating to land rental and purchases in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and indeed into the twentieth century. For many parishes there are dozens of listings. Pictured below is the listing of the first ten tenants for Co Tipperary in the 1882 'Return of judicial rents fixed by Sub-Commissioners and Civil Bill Courts, notified to Irish Land Commission'.

Landlord	Tenant	Townland	Holding	Valuation
Sir Thomas Dancer	Hugh Meara	Capinsmere	38a 3r 20p	£42 5s
Denis Pyne	Thomas Kennedy	Ballyhasty	19a 1r 30p	£16 5s
Denis Pyne	David Kennedy	Ballyhasty	3a 1r 30p	£2 10s
Denis Pyne	Hugh Toohar	Ballyhasty	1a 2r 29p	£1 5s
Denis Pyne	Stephen Maher	Ballyhasty	46a 0r 0p	£33 15s
Denis Pyne	Rosanna Healy	Ballyhasty	7a 1r 6p	£5 0s
David Clarke	Denis Meara	Galross	13a 0r 0p	£5 10s
David Clarke	James Guest	Liskenlane	113a 3r 36p	£83 10s
David Clarke	Robert Donald	Boherleigh	134a 1r 30p	£84 10s
David Clarke	Thomas Cleary	Coorevan	41a 0r 0p	£22 10d

In this case the landlord, Denis Pyne, is among those who has the rental levels for his tenants in Ballyhasty townland (Modreeny civil parish near Borrisokane) fixed and notified to the Land Commission. The land holding is given in acres (a), roods (r) and perches (p) as are the names of the Commissioners who adjudicated on the cases and the Poor Law valuation (above in pounds and shillings), the former rent, and the judicial rent.

Use of Records

The proliferation of digitised records on pay sites is certainly not always matched by free records. This is the exception. The records are freely available, no login is required, and they can be searched both through the DIPPAM (Documenting Ireland: parliament, people and migration) website, <http://www.dippam.ac.uk/>, or directly at <http://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi/>

In terms of ongoing project work in

the Irish Workhouse Centre, and other such centres, the EPPI has proved invaluable and Southampton University is to be praised for making these records available for free. The reports are available up to, during, as well as after the famine and are indispensable for historians researching the Great Hunger and poverty in general.

Moreover, for both local historians and genealogists researching aspects of life during the nineteenth century of a particular estate/parish/county for

example, the EPPI is arguably the single most important source of information. Its beauty is the fact that it adds personal / local, first-hand examples to the over-riding national narrative.

One criticism of the site, albeit hardly a unique one, is the weaknesses of the search function in terms of specific names and places and report types. The sheer breadth of the records may be a factor as the project involved the electronic cataloguing and the full text digitisation of more than half a million pages and it seems trite to criticise.

Helpful Hint: When searching the bibliographic records and searchable PDFs that are available through the University of Southampton Library WebCat, it is recommended that you limit your search by typing 'EPPI' into the keywords plus any other search term (s).

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Irish Crafts

Linen and Lace

In The Nineteenth Century

by Marion McGarry

What's known today as a 'cottage industry' is defined as a small business run from someone's home, using the householder's equipment and involving a craft. In rural Ireland in the nineteenth century cottage crafts were used to supplement the home's income from farming. Irish cottage crafts can be categorised into two products made for home use and products made for sale or export. Crafted items made for the home included baskets, knitted goods, rush-work, minor tweed products, and patchwork quilts – these were items that were regarded as chiefly functional. The craft goods produced for sale or export included lace and linen – these were regarded as more precious and Irish lace and linen had a wonderful international reputation. However, the products were seldom enjoyed by their makers. This article will focus on the Irish cottage industries of lacemaking and linen production.

Irish Lace

Handmade Irish lace was a sought-after luxury in Europe and beyond and was a product representative of Ireland throughout the nineteenth century particularly. Many cottage industries in

Ireland were rooted in the philanthropic efforts of certain members of society who wished to help the Irish poor help themselves: the establishment of schools to educate young girls in lacemaking was one example of this. Some landlords and their wives set up schools to teach tenants' children lacemaking. Irish lace

was in high-demand throughout Europe and America as a luxury product. The efforts of wealthy and socially connected women like the Marchioness of Londonderry and Countess of Aberdeen helped such industries enormously. Similarly, Catholic nuns and religious orders (such as Quakers) took over the