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Digitised Catholic Parish Registers Transforming Irish Genealogy.
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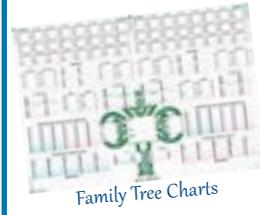
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A few words from the editor

Welcome to our autumn issue for 2015. My beloved younger brother Denny sadly passed away after a long illness in Derbyshire, England recently. Despite having lived in the UK for almost fifty years his final wish was to return home for burial with our parents, brother Thade and to rest with his many ancestors in the picturesque country village of Cullen, Co Cork, his native home. How sad to think that it may have been the the final wish and sentiment of so many down through the ages who through emigration or for whatever reason spent their lives abroad and never got to return home.



While visiting Denny during his illness, I paid a visit to the nearby National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire. The Arboretum is remarkably impressive, dedicated to honour the thousands of men and women who sacrificed their lives in service during the Great War and others. There are thousands of names inscribed on various plaques, walls and memorials throughout the Arboretum and it is emotional to see the many Irish surnames of those who died so very far away from home.

The National Library launched the digitised images of the microfilmed Catholic parish registers in July. This freely available database will be of great assistance to genealogists and family history researchers alike, ever seeking to know more about the distant lives of their Irish ancestors. You can read about this excellent new facility in our news section on page 4 and on pages 16 – 17.

As my dear brother Denny was being laid to rest in his Co. Cork village which he loved so much, I was reminded of the following verse and fitting tribute.

'The Exiles Return' by John Locke (1847-1889)

Now fuller and truer the shoreline shows
 Was ever a scene so splendid?
 I feel the breath of the Munster breeze,
 Thank God that my exile's ended!
 Old scenes, old songs, old friends again,
 The vale and the cot I was born in
 O, Ireland, up from my heart of hearts
 I give you the top o' the mornin!

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Maureen



Trace Your Donegal Ancestors, pages 10 & 11
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NEWS

National Library of Ireland Launches Parish Records Website

The National Library of Ireland (NLI) has said that the digitisation of its holding of parish records should transform and greatly enhance genealogy services in Ireland. The NLI officially launched a new web-repository of parish records, dating from the 1740s to the 1880s, on the 8th of July last.

Speaking at the launch of the new site, the Acting Director of the National Library, Catherine Fahy said: "The Library's holding of parish records are considered to be the single most important source of information on Irish family history prior to the 1901 Census. Up to now, they have only been accessible on microfilm and, as such, those interested in accessing the records had to visit the National Library. This new web resource provides unlimited access to all members of the public to records covering 1,086 parishes from throughout the island of Ireland.

"This access to the parish records will be transformative for genealogy services, in particular as they will allow those based overseas to consult the records without any barriers. Effectively, the digitisation of the records is an investment in community, heritage and in our diaspora-engagement," said Ms Fahy.

The parish registers website will contain more than 370,000 high-quality, digital images of microfilm reels.

The National Library microfilmed the parish records in the 1950s and 1960s. Some additional filming of registers from a small number of Dublin parishes took place during the late 1990s.

As a result of this work, the NLI holds microfilm copies of more than 3,550 registers from the vast majority of Catholic parishes in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The start date of the registers varies from the 1740/50s in some city parishes in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Waterford and Limerick, to the 1780/90s in counties such as Kildare, Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny. Registers for parishes along the western seaboard generally do not begin until the 1850/1860s.

Catherine Fahy said: "Apart from this being the Library's most significant genealogy project, this project is our most ambitious digitisation programme to date. The website builds on and extends the NLI's existing digital library infrastructure, leveraging many open-source technologies. It has been designed to be fully responsive, working across mobile, tablet and desktop devices." "In using the website for family

or community searches, we would recommend that members of the public consult with their local family history resource to help them refine their search. The website does not contain any transcripts or indexes, so for a search to be successful, some known facts about a person's life will be necessary. Effectively, those who access the new online resource will be able to cross-reference the information they uncover, and identify wider links and connections to their ancestral community by also liaising with local genealogical services or family history resources."

Speaking at the launch, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys said: "This new digital resource will help people at home and abroad who are interested in tracing their ancestry. The website provides access to church records dating back to

270 years and includes details like the dates of baptisms and marriages, and the names of the key people involved. The records feature the baptisms of some very well-known historical figures, such as the 1916 Leaders Padraig Pearse and Thomas MacDonagh.

"Making this kind of material available online should help to boost genealogy tourism, and will complement the work of local historical centres in communities around the country. As we approach the centenary of the 1916 Rising next year, I am keen to make as much historical material as possible available online, so we can encourage people around the world to reconnect with their Irish roots."

Online access to the new website is free of charge.

For more information visit the website at <http://registers.nli.ie/>.



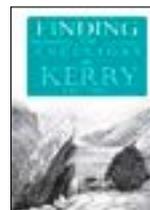
Members of Accredited Genealogists Ireland and the Irish Genealogical Research Society photographed at the National Library of Ireland's launch of the Roman Catholic parish registers database, 8th July 2015. Left to right: Ann Marie Coghlan, Claire Bradley, Catherine Delaney, Máire Mac Conghail, Steven Smyrl, Nicola Morris, Joanna Fennell and Edward Rowland.

Flyleaf Press Publishes "Finding Your Ancestors in Kerry"

Flyleaf Press has published a 'Guide to Finding your Ancestors in Kerry' by Kay Caball.

'Finding your Ancestors in Kerry' is a comprehensive guide to all of the records available for tracing families in the county and is filled with information on what the records contain, and how and where they can be accessed. It is well illustrated with maps and with examples of the types of records to be found; and with other relevant background material.

Flyleaf Press have also published guides for Kildare, Limerick, Sligo, Galway, Dublin, Clare, Westmeath, Cork, Limerick, Roscommon, Mayo and Donegal. Finding your ancestors in Kerry retails for €13.00. For further details visit www.flyleaf.ie.



National Photographic Archive Launch World War I Portrait Exhibition

The National Library of Ireland (NLI)'s National Photographic Archive have launched 'Portraits of the Invisible', an exhibition of portrait photographs of Irish men and women involved in World War I.

The exhibition at the National Photographic Archive, Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, Dublin 2 held in partnership with the British Embassy, features a selection of images of soldiers and medics, nurses and stretcher bearers, drivers and cyclists, sailors and pilots, accompanied by the stories their families have treasured for generations.

'Portraits of the Invisible' is free to visit, and is open seven days a week: Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm and 12 noon to 5pm on Sundays. The exhibition runs in the NPA until January 2016.

For more information visit: www.nli.ie.



...and another thing...

Steven Smyrl takes a window shopping trip down memory lane with a newspaper or two in hand.

On 12th June we Irish were stunned to hear that one of Dublin's oldest department stores had overnight closed and been placed into liquidation. Clery's was a legend, not only for its wide range of goods, but also for its iconic clock, under which generations of Dublin folk arranged to meet with friends and family or used as a rendez-vous from which many a romance blossomed. The current premises date only from 1922, when they were rebuilt after being completely destroyed in the Easter Rising of 1916. The business itself though dates back to 1853, when it was first opened on the same site by Mc Swiney, Delany and Co under the name of the "New or Palatial Mart" on what was then known as Sackville Street, now O'Connell Street. It didn't become Clery's until 1883, when the business was bought out by Michael J. Clery.

The closure of Clery's, however, is nothing new in the history of Dublin department stores; many have come and gone over the years. For example, from the 1970s until relatively recent times South Great George's Street, once a very popular shopping street, went into a slow decline, and accelerated after the closure of Pims department store. In my memory, in the past twenty years Dublin has seen the closure of Switzers and Roches.

Of course, a good shopping area is defined not only by the larger establishments, but also by the numerous smaller, more specialised, businesses in the surrounding streets and laneways. The badly-planned and ill-thought-out modernisation of town centres in the 1960s and 1970s quickly stripped historic towns and cities of the design and appearance given them in times gone by. Dublin was lucky: while it lost most of its Victorian shopfronts, unlike some English cities few of its streets were swept away to facilitate vast (and ugly!) shopping centres. However, even in Ireland, these days the look and feel of the Victorian shopping experience can only be sampled through visits to museums which house reconstructed streets, complete with fully-fitted-out shops, staffed with shop girls in leg-a-mutton frocks operating oversized tills totting up in pounds, shillings and pence!

Nonetheless, trips down memory lane can be more every-day in their nature, involving the perusal of old newspapers and trade and street directories. Doing this used to necessitate a visit to a reference library or archive, but now, thanks to the Internet, you can do this without even stepping outside your own home.

The first newspaper published in Ireland was in the mid-seventeenth century, a government publication called The Dublin Gazette. This was quickly followed by commercial papers, spreading news and scandal and details of commerce. In Ireland, trade directories had come onto the scene by the early-to-mid eighteenth century, though it was another century before they became particularly informative.

'The best sites for newspapers are www.newsarchive.com and www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk. Though both are pay sites, free access can be obtained through many local libraries'.

Shopkeepers and tradesmen nationwide soon realised they could use these new means of communication to compete, by bringing information about their wares to the wider public. Thus the advertisement was born, followed by the PR exercise!

Soon, newspapers were full of notices about new stock, superior goods and welcoming, attractive premises; and trade directories were not far behind in currying favour with the spending masses. So, for example, in Finn's Leinster Journal, 11 August 1773, Barnaby Scott, a Kilkenny clothier, is keen to tell about his quality "low priced cloaths" (sic) for "ready money only". In the Leinster Express, 16 January 1836, Bewley & Evans, Chemists & Apothecaries, take up almost all of a column of the front page to extol the quality and therapeutic effects of their wares, particularly their "poor man's cough drops"! By comparison to the scattergun approach of newspaper advertisements, trade directories can offer the genealogist a much more focused approach to their research as they are generally arranged by street, by trade and then alphabetically. My favourite is Shaw's Dublin Pictorial Guide & Directory of 1850. Yup, it's the pretty pictures that entrance me, for Shaw actually includes streetscapes in his directory, so you can see exactly what the various shops looked like as well as reading the description of what they sold. The view of Sackville Street is just terrific, though nothing is really recognisable any more since the destruction of 1916! Shaw's was reissued in 1988, with a foreword by Kevin B. Nowlan, and I can highly recommend it as an item for any Irish genealogist's bookshelf.

The best sites for newspapers are www.newsarchive.com and www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk. Though both are pay sites, free access can be obtained through many local libraries. Both have a long list of titles, both national and local press. By far the best site for online scans and transcripts of Irish trade and street directories is that run by Shane Wilson: www.swilson.info. It notes links to more than 870 trade directory resources, many of which are free.

Steven Smyrl is President of Accredited Genealogists Ireland – www.accreditedgenealogists.ie – and Chairman of the Irish Genealogical Research Society.

www.irishancestors.ie



In this part of the series I will be using a case study to demonstrate some of the techniques that can be employed to locate the living descendants of your ancestors. The case comes from Angela Nolan who wanted to find out what happened to the children of her grandfather, Michael Nolan's first marriage.

Michael Nolan was born ca. 1870 in Queen's County (Laois) the son of Michael Nolan. He married Mary Ann Toole on 12th January 1890 in Dalkey and the couple had six children; Anne Mary (b. 1891), Michael Thomas (b. 1892), John Joseph (b. 1893), William Patrick (b. 1895), Peter Joseph (b. 1897), Gerard (b. 1901) and Margaret (b. 1904). Mary Ann Nolan (nee Toole) died in 1913 and Michael married his second wife, Bridget on 3rd October 1915 in Glasthule and the couple had a son, Joseph (b. 15th July 1917). Michael, Bridget and Joseph moved to Liverpool ca. 1920 where Michael died on 28th February 1925.

The object of our search was to find out what happened to Anne Mary, Michael

Thomas, John Joseph, William Patrick, Peter Joseph, Gerard and Margaret Nolan. At the time of the 1911 census the seven children born to Michael Nolan were alive and residing in the family home on Sorrento Road in Dalkey. Michael's three eldest sons were already in employment; Thomas was a valet, John was an artisan and William was a Messenger.

The most traditional method of finding out what happened to these individuals after April 1911 would be to start searching for evidence of their deaths or marriages in Dublin. However, the surname Nolan is prevalent in Dublin, with roughly 800 Nolan children born in the city between 1890 and 1900. Searching for evidence of their deaths and marriages proved to

be time consuming and expensive! For example, Gerard Nolan, who was born in 1901, could have married any time after 1916. A search of the civil marriage index from 1916 to 1956 found 10 marriages under the name Gerard Nolan in Dublin City and county, while a search for the marriage of an Anne Nolan between 1911 (when she was 20 years of age) and 1931 found about 50 marriage registrations in Dublin City and county. Neither of these searches accounted for the possibility that they had left Dublin or died unmarried.

Rather than purchase so many civil registration records in our search for this family, I decided to look at a different route to a living descendant of Michael Nolan. If found, one living descendant may lead to information about the other