

Irish Roots

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A few words from the editor

Welcome to our Winter issue of Irish Roots. Where on earth did that year disappear to?



As the 1916 commemorations get ready to rumble we mark this centenary year with a new series by Sean Murphy who presents family histories of leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, page 6. We introduce another fascinating series featuring sacred sites of Ireland and we begin with a visit to the Hill of Uisneach in County Westmeath, a place of great significance in the history and folklore of Ireland, page 8.

Patrick Roycroft fuses genealogy and geology on page 16 and Judith Eccles Wight helps to keep you on track with researching your railroad ancestors in the US, page 22. We remember the Cullen brothers who journeyed from the small townland of Ballynastockan in Co. Wicklow to Minneapolis, US, bringing with them their remarkable stone cutting skills, their legacy lives on in beautiful sculptures to this day and for generations to come, page 24. Staying in Co. Wicklow we share the story of how the lost WW1 medals of a young soldier were finally reunited with his granddaughter many years later, page 30.

Our regular features include, 'And another Thing' with Steven Smyrl on the saga of the release of the Irish 1926 census, page 5. James Ryan helps us to trace our Roscommon ancestors, page 10 and Claire Santry keeps us posted with all the latest in Irish genealogy, page 18.

We hope you find plenty of enjoyable reading from our mixed bag of article goodies in this issue and don't forget if you want to share the genealogical goodwill a gift subscription always makes a useful and innovative present. Irish Roots magazine gift vouchers can be purchased from our website at www.irishrootsmagazine.com.

Wishing you all a delightful festive season and I hope that your Christmas is filled with the gifts of many answers to your family history research questions at this joyful time of year.

Maureen



Sculpture depicting Eriu, the sovereignty Goddess of Ireland who gave her name to the land. See Sacred Sites of Ireland, pages 8 and 9. Photo by Julie Phibbs.

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NEWS

The National Archives Of Ireland Joins The Digital Preservation Coalition

The National Archives joined the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) on 22nd September last. The DPC is an advocate and catalyst for digital preservation, enabling its members to deliver resilient long-term access to content and services, and helping them derive enduring value from digital collections.

The core mission of the National Archives is to collect, manage, and preserve the public record of Ireland and ensure its long term availability as a research resource and to underpin citizens' rights. The long term availability of the public record demonstrates transparency and accountability in the democratic process.

John McDonough, the Director of the National Archives noted that 'Joining the DPC will enable the National Archives to address matters such as the capture, curation and preservation of the public record which is increasingly generated in electronic format. The National Archives will be able to leverage experience, technical knowledge and policy development from amongst the members of the DPC. Membership of the DPC will ensure the National Archives is better placed to meet the significant challenges it faces in this area.'

In joining the DPC, the National Archives along with its sister institution the National Library, in addition to Trinity College Dublin, the Royal Irish Academy, and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland will build towards a critical mass of institutions in Ireland concerned with the growing proliferation of cultural and administrative material in digital or electronic form and the need to take steps towards its ongoing preservation and access as key components of the State's cultural, social and administrative history.

Minister Of State Deenihan Announces €6.73 Million In Emigrant Support Funding For Irish Community In Britain

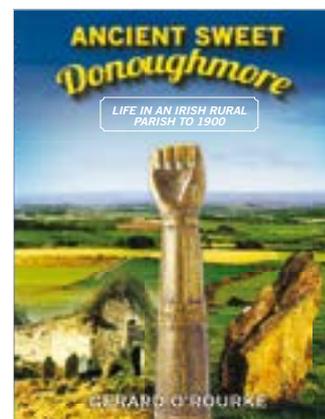
The Minister of State for the Diaspora, Mr Jimmy Deenihan T.D., has announced details of €6.73 million in funding for the Irish community in Britain. Grants have been made to 110 organisations in support of a range of projects for which applications have been received through the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) operated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Ancient Sweet Donoughmore: Life in an Irish Rural Parish to 1900

Ancient Sweet Donoughmore: Life in an Irish Rural Parish to 1900 by author Gerard O'Rourke chronicles the birth of an Irish rural district in mid Cork to the beginning of the twentieth century. Along this journey the archaeology and early Christian and medieval periods are explored; leading to a study of the religious and agrarian aspects, the Great Famine and development of education culminating in an examination of the economy and the land question. Through a long period of settlement a story of cultural identity and fortitude is unfolded relating to the people who inherited that landscape.

Donoughmore is an old and historic district acknowledged in 1913 as being the richest storehouse of pre historic monuments in Munster. Its analogous link with St Patrick saw an early Christian church built and the patron saint Lachtin is synonymous with a reliquary that is accepted as being one of the finest examples of 12th century metalwork in Ireland. Its status is reflected by the location of the reliquary in the Treasury room of the National Museum in Dublin alongside such treasures as the Ardagh Chalice and Tara Brooch.

Further details at www.donoughmore.com or tel: 021/7337368. The book is available through local shops, in neighbouring parishes, Liam Ruiséal, Easons and Waterstones in Cork and from the website.



A special event was held at the Irish Embassy in London for the organisations who are recipients of the ESP funding this year. The Minister of State, Deenihan thanked the Irish community organisations in Britain for their contributions to the formulation of Ireland's new Diaspora Policy and for their participation in the first ever Global Irish Civic Forum held in Dublin last June.

The Minister also paid tribute to the volunteers who are at the heart of Irish community organisations across Britain: "Without exception, I'm told by every organisation I meet that volunteers are the backbone of the work they do. Whether it's organising a tea-dance, visiting people in their homes or creating new databases and social media strategies, thousands of volunteers across Britain put an extraordinary amount of time and dedication into supporting their fellow Irish. "This is a true reflection of the Irish meitheal tradition where a community comes together to help one another."

Landmark International Heaney Exhibition Announced For New Cultural And Heritage Centre, Opening In 2017

A major international exhibition celebrating the life and work of Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney is planned for display at the new Cultural and Heritage Centre within Bank of Ireland's College Green complex in 2017.

The exhibition curated by the National Library of Ireland will draw on the writer's extensive literary archive, which was donated to the NLI in 2011, and on archives held by Emory University. It will feature Heaney's original manuscripts as well as letters, unpublished works, diary entries, photographs, broadsides and multi-media recordings.

IGRS And Cork Genealogical Society To Host 2016 Family History Conference

A Family History Conference 'Finding Your Ancestors' is to be hosted in a joint collaboration by the Irish Genealogical Research Society and the Cork Genealogical Society and will take place in the Clayton Hotel, Silversprings, Cork on March 19th, 2016 next.

The one day conference will include lectures, workshops and consultations with professional genealogists. Guest speakers will include:- Tony McCarthy, lecturer in Genealogy UCC and former editor of Irish Roots magazine, Ann Marie Coghlan, APG member and Roz McCutcheon, Vice President IGRS.

The conference is among one of the events to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the foundation of the Irish Genealogical Research Society in 1936. For further updates and information about the conference visit: www.corkgenealogicalsociety.com www.irishancestors.ie

Certificate Of Irish Heritage Scheme To Be Discontinued

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has announced that the Certificate of Irish Heritage scheme is to be discontinued. The uptake of the Certificate of Irish Heritage has been considerably less than anticipated. No further Certificates will be available for purchase.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is conducting further analysis on how members of the Irish Diaspora seek to assert their Irish identity. This analysis will inform any future decisions on initiatives in this area.



...and another thing...

Steven Smyrl switches channels between fact and fiction when it comes to making sense of the 1926 census saga

On a cold, blustery October Sunday evening in Dublin I was toasty warm, with my feet up, in our snug living room at the back of the house, watching the hugely popular fictional television series 'Downton Abbey'. The waspish Lady Mary is now managing the estate. Her sister, Edith, having - so far at any rate - successfully hidden the truth of her being the mother of her "ward" Marigold, is now busy flitting back and forth to London, editing the magazine left to her by her late fiancé, Michael Gregson. The Earl is fighting his conscience, wondering how to save his estate without ruining his tenants' prospects, and his American wife, Cora, is beginning to feel the effects of the post-war shortage of domestic staff.

Downstairs? It's a little different. The housekeeper, "Mrs" Hughes is finally marrying the butler, Carson, who in turn is more concerned about staffing the house. Daisy, the undercook, is studying to better herself, all paid for by Mrs Patmore, the cook. The under butler, Thomas, is somewhat indiscreetly mooning over the second footman...and why am I telling you all of this? Because it all takes place in 1926!

As a slice of life, Downton Abbey records events both above and below stairs, laying bare the life and loves, the excess and the hardship, the success and the failure of all it touches.

After the foundation of the State, the new Irish government decided to undertake a census, a snapshot of facts about the population. This was to be the first since 1911, because the census of 1921 had to be abandoned at the last moment due to the war of independence. While admittedly this record of life in Ireland in 1926 won't quite provide the same glorious spectacle of colour, drama and intrigue as that depicted in Downton Abbey nevertheless all human life will be found recorded. The usual patchwork of complicated human existence will also include the new post-partition economic, cultural and political elites; the old order, already in decline, slipping away; and the omission of those who had for one reason or another migrated: no prospects, no future, or just the wrong politics.

2016 marks the centenary of the Easter Rising of 1916 and when the current Fine Gael and Labour coalition government took office in 2011 it included a commitment in the Programme for Government to amend the *Statistics Act 1993* to allow for the disclosure of data from the 1926 census in 2016. This was the result of years of long-drawn-out and often intensive lobbying by the Council of Irish Genealogical Organisations, among others.

The then new Heritage Minister, Jimmy Deenihan TD, began to make public pronouncements on the issue and the cabinet drew up the legally required "cabinet memo" to give effect to its decision. But this all came to a shuddering halt once it

'2016 marks the centenary of the Easter Rising of 1916 and when the current Fine Gael and Labour coalition government took office in 2011 it included a commitment in the Programme for Government to amend the *Statistics Act 1993* to allow for the disclosure of data from the 1926 census in 2016'.

became clear that the Central Statistics Office (CSO) would not support the initiative, citing concerns for privacy. The original *Statistics Act 1926* never provided any promise of everlasting privacy, and neither did it provide for a minimum 100 years closure. The 100 year closure "rule" on census records compiled under the provisions of 1926 Act was introduced retrospectively as part of 1993 legislation to appease the CSO, which argued that without such a rule the population at large would resist complying with future census canvassing. This appears to be a mischievous ploy however as census data compiled after the passing of the 1993 legislation is protected in any case by a legally irrevocable guarantee that it will remain secret for 100 years.

CIGO was also one of the vital cogs involved in the lobbying for public access to the data locked away in the UK's wartime National Register, compiled in 1939, which is now available to access online at www.findmypast.ie. The result of that work has been that the UK National Archives has collaborated with FindMyPast to allow direct public access to this "census" - compiled exactly 76 years ago - on a redacted basis. Data in the National Register about people born less than 100 years ago will be redacted.

The reason I am telling you this is because of a meeting held in October 2010 between senior CSO management and representatives from CIGO. At that meeting, the CSO conceded informally that redaction would resolve concerns regarding public access to data in the 1926 census relating to folk aged less than 100 years.

Clearly, while I expect the CSO may continue to resist the idea, redaction is the answer. It resolves matters easily and requires little thinking through. Returning to Downton Abbey, Violet, the Dowager Countess of Grantham, has an opinion on most issues, and on excessive thinking she considers it "rather overrated". I would tend to agree!

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

www.irishancestors.ie

1916

Family Histories of 1916 Leaders: Patrick and Willie Pearse, James Connolly and Tom Clarke

This is the first in a series of articles in which Sean Murphy details the family histories of leaders of the 1916 Rising

Patrick Henry Pearse was born on 10 November 1879 at 27 Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street), Dublin. Patrick's parents were James Pearse, who was English born and a monumental sculptor, and Margaret Brady. Patrick's siblings were a brother William (Willie) and sisters Margaret and Mary Brigid.

James Pearse's marriage to Margaret Brady was his second and although from a Unitarian background, he converted to Catholicism, but without being a particularly religious man. Margaret Brady was born in 1857 in Dublin, her parents being Patrick Brady, a coal merchant, and Brigid Savage.

Patrick was educated by the Christian Brothers in Westland Row, then secured a degree in Irish, English and French from University College Dublin and also qualified as a barrister. Pearse's maternal aunt Margaret is credited with having influenced his love of Irish history and culture and he joined the Gaelic League at the young age of 16. Pearse had a particular interest in education and founded a school, St Enda's, which while initially successful, was in financial difficulties at the time of his death.

Pearse's younger brother, Willie, with whom he was to have a special bond, was born on 15 November 1881 at Great Brunswick Street. Patrick and Willie, an artist of limited talent, tried to maintain their father's sculpting business after his death in 1900, but it failed in 1910.

While Patrick was close to his older sister Margaret, born 1878, his younger sister Mary Brigid, born 1888, differed with him politically. Pearse never married and was devoted to his family, in particular his mother Margaret.

Although initially a political moderate, Pearse gravitated towards advanced republicanism and having joined the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and then the conspiratorial Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), he proceeded on the path to revolution. Pearse commanded the revolutionary forces which unsuccessfully endeavoured to establish an Irish republic through the 1916 Easter Rising, so it was inevitable that he would be at the head of the list of those to be executed.

Pearse was executed on 3 May 1916 in the Stonebreakers' Yard in Kilmainham Gaol and then buried at Arbour Hill, as were the other executed leaders of the Rising in Dublin. Pearse's brother Willie held no leadership position in the Rising, but undoubtedly because of his closeness to his brother he too was executed on 4 May 1916. Characteristically, one of Pearse's last compositions before his death was a poem to his mother, in which he wrote, 'My gift to you hath been the gift of sorrow'.

James Connolly was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 5 June 1868, and not in Co Monaghan as was formerly believed and as he himself sometimes claimed (for example, in the 1911 Census). His parents were John Connolly, a labourer,

and Mary McGinn, a domestic servant, both being probably from Co Monaghan. James had two brothers, John who joined the British Army, and Thomas, who appears to have emigrated.

James himself also joined the British Army in 1882 and served for about seven years, doing duty in Ireland before apparently deserting and returning to Scotland. Connolly met his future wife Lillie Reynolds in Dublin and they married in Scotland in 1890. Lillie was born in Co Wicklow in 1867, her parents being John Reynolds and Margaret Newman. Lillie was Protestant, but had to agree to her children being brought up as Catholics, reflecting the fact that while her husband James may have been privately a non-believer, he conformed outwardly to the dictates of his church. James and Lillie had seven children, including Nora, Roderic (Roddy), who would have a career as a prominent trade unionist and politician, and a daughter Mona who died tragically in a fire in 1904.

Now a committed trade union organiser and socialist, Connolly worked first in Dublin before living in the United States between 1903-10. Returning to Ireland, Connolly established the Irish Citizen Army in 1913 and soon found common cause with the nationalist Irish Volunteers, who believed that an armed revolution was necessary to free Ireland from British rule.

Despite the fact that his forces were fewer in number than the Volunteers,

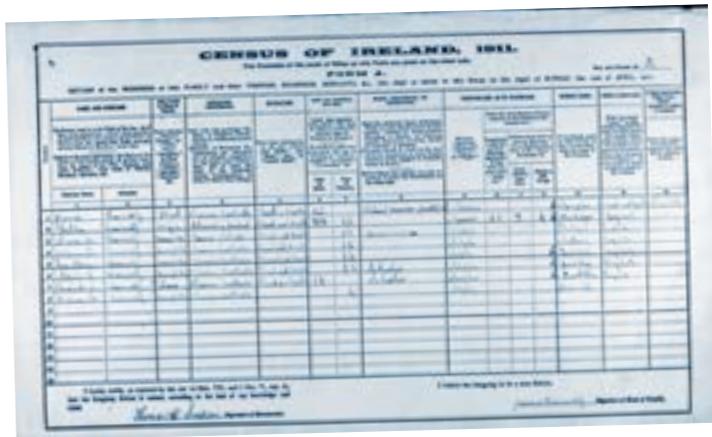
Connolly played a key role during the Easter Rebellion in 1916. He directed military operations in the General Post Office, receiving a serious ankle wound. Detained after the surrender, Connolly was court martialled and shot in Kilmainham Gaol on 12 May 1916.

Fenian conspiracy. Clarke went on an attempted bombing mission to England in 1883 but was arrested, tried and imprisoned in harsh conditions, being released in 1898.

Tom Clarke's wife was Kathleen Daly, who was born in 1878



Patrick and Willie Pearse



1911 Census showing the Connolly family courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland.



James and Lillie Connolly

Connolly was the last of the 1916 leaders to be executed and because of his wound, he was shot while placed sitting in a chair, which added to the growing public outrage caused by the executions. Connolly's daughter Nora left a moving account of his final conversation with his wife, where he is recorded as saying, 'Hasn't it been a full life, Lillie . . . And isn't this a good end?'

in Limerick to Edward and Catherine Daly. The Dalys were committed republicans and as a friend of the family Clarke met Kathleen in 1899 and married her in New York in 1901. Tom and Kathleen had three sons, John Daly, Tom and Emmet.



Tom and Kathleen Clarke

Thomas James (Tom) Clarke was born on 11 March 1858 in England at Hurst Castle, Hampshire, the eldest of a family of four children. His father was James Clarke, a native of County Leitrim and a British soldier, and his mother was Mary Palmer from County Tipperary. While James was Protestant, Tom's mother was Catholic and he too was brought up in that religion.

Having returned to Ireland in 1907, Clarke continued his revolutionary activities and drew a younger generation to the IRB cause, most notably Seán Mac Diarmada and Patrick Pearse. Conscious of previous government infiltration of republican groups, Clarke operated in an extremely secret and conspiratorial manner and was probably the main influence on the form that the 1916 Rising took.

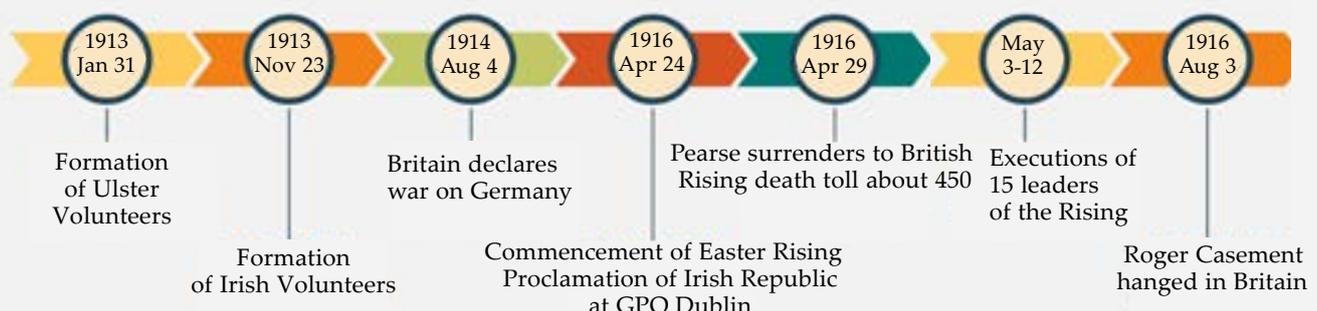
Having been posted to Dungannon, Co Tyrone, James Clarke quit the army in 1868, and it was in that town the family settled. The young Tom Clarke was drawn to nationalist politics and joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood. While being sought by the police, Clarke emigrated to New York in 1880, where he became more deeply involved in

Although the commander of the Irish Volunteers, Eoin MacNeill, had endeavoured to countermand orders for the Rising, Clarke and his IRB colleagues went ahead albeit with reduced forces. Clarke wished to fight on in the General Post Office even when his comrades realised that surrender was unavoidable. No doubt because of his past record,

Clarke was treated with particular harshness by the British when detained and following court martial, he was executed at Kilmainham on 3 May 1916. One small mercy allowed to Clarke before he died was a visit from his wife Kathleen, who herself had been imprisoned and would later suffer a miscarriage.

Sean Murphy is a genealogist, author and lecturer and teaches Adult Education classes in genealogy in University College Dublin, as well as a new course starting in January 2016 on the subject of the family histories of the leaders of the 1916 Rising. A chronology of the Rising and a bibliography of relevant books and articles may be found at <http://goo.gl/5eo788>.

Timeline of 1916 Rising Events





The Hill of Uisneach, County Westmeath is a place of great significance in the history and folklore of Ireland. A royal assembly site in early medieval times, Uisneach was considered to be the sacred and geographical centre of ancient Ireland. The place where the provinces of the country met.

*U*isneach was associated with a fire cult in pre-Christian times and was also connected with many of the deities of the pre-Celtic and Celtic Irish peoples. The Hill remained a place of importance in the political and religious history of the Midlands of Ireland until at least the fifteenth century and was revered by the Irish cultural nationalists of the early 20th century who sought to draw on the mythical power of Uisneach in their campaign to win Irish political independence and to save the Irish language. The Oxford Dictionary of Celtic Mythology describes Uisneach as "a place that has played a significant role in the Irish imagination."

Uisneach in Mythology

In Irish mythology and folklore, Uisneach was the navel or omphalos of Ireland. The equivalent of Delphi in Greek mythology. The navel was associated with birth and life and was linked to the universal ideal of a sacred centre from which everything radiated and where everything was connected. Uisneach was Ireland's sacred centre.

A 30 tonne, six metre high boulder on the hill was seen as the point at which the five provinces of Ancient Ireland, Leinster, Munster, Connaght, Ulster and Mide met. This boulder was known as Ail na Mireann (or the Catstone) "Stone of Divisions". The division of Ireland into five provinces was said to have first happened when a people called the Fir Bolg came to Ireland from Greece and divided Ireland into five "portions" at Uisneach. Underneath Ail na Mireann is where Eriu, the sovereignty Goddess of Ireland who gave her name to the land is said to dwell. Irish mythology states that it was at Uisneach that Eriu handed the sovereignty of Ireland to the Sons of Mil, ancestors of the Gaelic Irish, on condition that the country be named after her. The ancient Irish texts state that it was the custom for kings to "marry" Eriu in a ceremony on Uisneach as part of their inauguration ceremony.

Eriu is just one of a number of deities associated with Uisneach. Another very important figure is Lugh. He was a pan-European solar god worshipped by the Celts and associated with the harvest and with the sun. Irish legends tell of Lugh visiting Uisneach and it was on Uisneach that he was killed by three other gods.

His burial place is on the hill at a cairn known as "Carn Ludach." Near the cairn on the summit of the hill is a lake known as Lough Lugh. Uisneach is also linked with the Father God of the Irish Celts-the Dagda, who is said to have stabled his solar horses there. The Celtic goddess of fertility, poetry and fire, Brigid also appears to have been worshipped at Uisneach. There is a holy well dedicated to her Christianised persona Saint Brigid, close to the hill.

Uisneach was the site of one of the five sacred trees of Ancient Ireland. This tree - Craobh Uisneach is said to have fallen soon after the arrival of Christianity in Ireland. The twelve rivers of Ireland were said to have burst forth from Uisneach. Famous figures in Irish mythology such as the warrior Fionn macCumhaill visited the hill and Uisneach is mentioned in many of the Irish mythological tales. The hill was said to have been the site of great feasts and fairs attended by all the rulers and druids at which laws were promulgated. At the May Festival of Bealtane, great fires were lit on the hill of Uisneach which were the signal for lighting fires on other hills across Ireland. All the kings of Ireland were said to attend the "Great Assembly"