



CONNECT

*The newsletter of AGI and ASGRA,
the accrediting bodies for Irish and Scottish Genealogists*



Issue No. 15:

February 2020

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CONNECT

*The Newsletter of AGI and ASGRA,
the accrediting bodies for Irish and Scottish professional genealogists*

Welcome to our fifteenth Newsletter. Our sincere thanks are extended to those who have contributed, commented or made suggestions to improve the publication during this period, as well as to those who have helped in any way with this Issue.

In this quarter's edition we present another interesting set of articles from both Scotland and Ireland. Both organisations report on their AGMs and also have set out their programmes for the New Year. We also continue our series describing lesser known archives and facilities in Scotland and Ireland. In this Issue we delve into a very useful online resource from Ireland which offers great potential for genealogists and local historians.

We continue with our series of interviews with an usual twist when the AGI Editor interviews himself!!!.

As usual, we hope you find the Issue useful and enjoyable. As before, we would welcome your comments and suggestions.

If you would like to contribute please get in touch with one of the *CONNECT* editors.

The Editors of *CONNECT* are:

Michael Walsh from *Accredited Genealogists Ireland (AGI)*

and

Lorna Kinnaird from the *Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (ASGRA)*.

The production responsibilities have been cheerfully assumed by John Grenham MAGI.



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Alliance Sub-Group Team members:

From AGI: Paul Gorry, AGI Council Member
Robert Davison, AGI Council Member
Michael Walsh, AGI Council Member

From ASGRA: Janet Bishop, Chairman ASGRA
Ian Marson, Secretary ASGRA
Lorna Kinnaird, ASGRA Council Member

AGI Council Office Bearers

President: Joan Sharkey
joan.sharkey@gmail.com

Hon. Secretary: Georgina Scally
info@accreditedgenealogists.ie

Hon. Treasurer: Kit Smyrl
kit@masseyandking.com

ASGRA Council Office Bearers

Chairman: Janet M Bishop
genealogyscotland@gmail.com

Secretary: Ian F. Marson
secretary@asgra.co.uk

Treasurer: John McGee
whechmcgee@hotmail.co.uk

Contributions welcome

Any content for inclusion in **CONNECT** will be most gratefully received and can be sent to either:

Michael Walsh (AGI) at michael9walsh@gmail.com

Lorna Kinnaird (ASGRA) at dunedingenie@virginmedia.com

Our next edition is scheduled to go out in May 2020 and the deadline for submissions is 30 April 2020.

We hope that you enjoy reading the Newsletter!



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News from Scotland and Ireland...

News from Scotland

AGM of the Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives: Friday 7th Feb 2020

We were pleased to welcome the AGI President Joan Sharkey to our recent Annual General Meeting in Edinburgh which was held at the National Records of Scotland.

The AGM was attended by 16 members, our Patron, Lord Lyon was also in attendance and gave an encouraging address in which he stressed the importance our role as an accrediting body in the world of professional genealogy and that our reputation as a professional organisation setting standards is known and recognised not only in Scotland but overseas. The Lord Lyon also thanked ASGRA Council for the good offices performed in keeping the association running smoothly, encouraging members to get involved and ensure that ASGRA maintains its leading role as the accrediting body in Scotland for years to come.

There were no changes in Council this year, our Chairman, Janet Bishop will serve a further 12 months as will Ian Marson as Secretary. John McGee will continue as Treasurer and Council members are Lorna Kinnaird, Val Wilson and Alex Wood.



AGI President: Joan Sharkey & ASGRA Chairman: Janet Bishop



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This Year

Going forward for 2020 ASGRA intends to organise a further professional day event building on the successful day we had in September of 2019, our aim being to encourage practising genealogists to seek membership of the association.

ASGRA is this year jointly hosting the SAFHS 31st Annual conference in partnership with Borders FHS, Lothian FHS and the Scottish Genealogical Society. In addition to our own stand we will also be operating the Ask the Experts desk and are pleased that AGI will be joining us to help visitors with questions on Irish research. The event will take place in 18 April 2020 at The Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh between 9am and 4.30pm.

If you want to keep up to date with ASGRA developments and events please follow us on Twitter @asragenealogy and on Facebook or visit our website at www.asgra.co.uk.

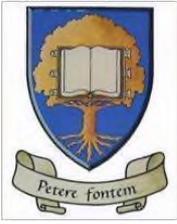
Keeping Standards

ASGRA has an External Assessment Moderator who oversees our rigorous assessment process thus ensuring a consistent approach in the way that our assessors operate when vetting applications for membership,

Our independent Moderator is Geoffrey Hare, BA, PhD, Officier des Palmes Académiques who's expertise at University level teaching and assessment undergraduate and postgraduate level makes him well placed for the task.

Geoff has previously lectured in French Studies at Leeds Polytechnic, Aberdeen University, Bradford University, and Newcastle University where he became Senior Lecturer and then Head of School of Modern languages. He was an external examiner at Manchester Polytechnic, Newcastle Polytechnic, Loughborough University, Heriot Watt University, British Institute in Paris, Trinity College Dublin. He was a trained specialist assessor for the national Teaching Quality Assessment exercise in 1990s. After 7 years as Chair of the Newcastle Alliance Française, he was elected Vice-President of the British Alliance Française Federation, and became a Director of the Alliance Française Trust (GB).

We also have Systems & Procedures Advisor whose role as an observer on our constitution, policies and protocols ensures that we are fair, thorough and in compliance with directives, legal requirements and fairness in the operation of our association. This role is fulfilled by Catherine Hare, BA, Cert Ed, Diplôme Supérieur du Français des Affaires, previously practising in information and records management; course design, training, and assessment at university level and at National Vocational Qualifications level. Catherine worked as Assistant Librarian in Aberdeen University Library and in the Medical Library of Leeds University; as Information



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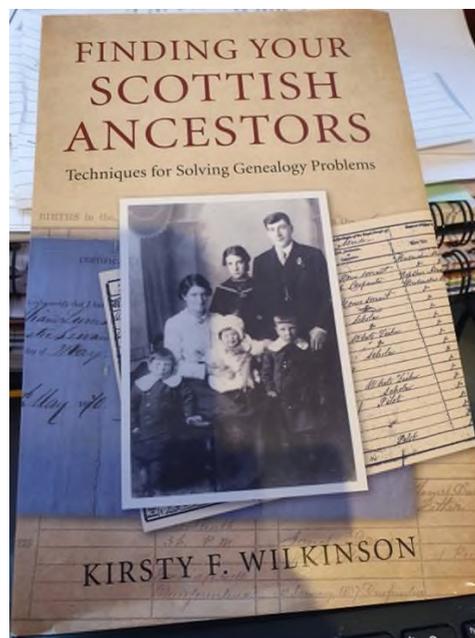
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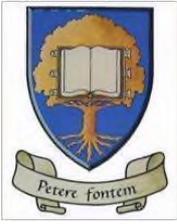
Scientist/Head of Research and Intelligence Unit, CERES (Economic Consultancy specializing in European Affairs), Wylam; as Senior Lecturer, University of Northumbria at Newcastle; as Manager of the UK Office of Community of Science, an American-based Company; in three contracts in Archives and Records Management Section of the United Nations (New York), including as Head of Records and Information Systems Unit. In Northumbria University, with Professor J McLeod, set up and directed the distance learning the MSc in Information and Records Management; she supervised PhDs at Northumbria University; and helped develop NVQs in Records Management and acted as an internal NVQ verifier. Was an external examiner at University College Aberystwyth for the Masters in Archives and Records Management, and for PhDs, plus for a PhD in Lyon University (France). Was Chair of the Records Management Society of GB, the national professional body. Has published various scholarly articles in her professional area and, with J McLeod, two books, *Developing a Records Management Programme* (London: Aslib Know How Guide, 1997 (also published as *Guide pratique. Mettre en place le records management dans son organisation* (Paris: SERDA, 2003), and *How to Manage Records in the E-Environment*, (Aslib Know How Guide), 2006.

Geoff and Catherine play an important role in the operation of the association and we do thank them for their time and dedication in helping us keep up the high standards and professionalism that we aim for.

And finally some breaking news from Scotland...

Our member **Kirsty Wilkinson** has recently published her first book '*Finding Your Scottish Ancestors: Techniques for Solving Genealogy Problems*' and it is available direct from the publisher The Crowood Press as well as through Amazon and other online booksellers.





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News from Ireland

AGM of Accredited Genealogists Ireland: 3 December 2019

Tuesday December 3rd saw AGI herald in its 32nd AGM. The event was held in the comfort of the Helen Roe Theatre in no. 63 Merrion Square, home to the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. In recent years, in consideration of our joint alliance with ASGRA, it has become the norm for one of each other's officers to attend the others AGM and it was unfortunate this year that Janet Bishop was unable to travel to Ireland at the last minute due to ill health – we wish Janet all the best. Notwithstanding this, twenty-six AGI members and affiliates were present including AGI Fellow Pamela Bradley and AGI Emeritus Patricia Moorhead.

After the usual business of apologies and proposing the Minutes from the previous meeting, AGI President Joan Sharkey gave a fine address where she spoke of the work in which AGI had been involved in throughout 2019. The Hon. Secretary's report followed providing a somewhat more in-depth resume of the many activities in which AGI had participated in throughout the year. Both presentations brought to the fore the fact that for quite a small organisation, AGI remains a dominant player in the world of genealogy in Ireland. This is achieved as a result of the enduring policy of volunteering in the organisation without which almost none of the activities noted could take place. However, the need for more members to come forward and help at these events was noted; as the old saying goes...*many hands make light work*... is certainly true when it comes to sharing the genealogical workload of the association.

There followed a few interesting presentations, the first by Anne-Marie Smith and Steven Smyrl who spoke about the AGI Affiliate programme and some potential changes that are presently being considered to the programme. Sixteen people have so far availed of the programme since its inception in 2012 and it is generally acknowledged as a positive experience for those who have participated in it. Discussion was open to the floor and members were also encouraged to send their thoughts on the potential changes to Steven in the New Year.

Continuing Professional Development was the topic next up and Nicola Morris provided a summary of the events held in 2019 and an outline of those to come in 2020. AGI is fortunate to have some dynamic people involved in organising these events as was evident in the high quality of the CPD programme in 2019 and all events without exception were extremely informative, enjoyable and well received by those lucky enough to have partaken in them. Given the fact that so much now can be done in the luxury (or otherwise!) of our own homes, CPD events are fast becoming the framework on which the social network of the organization hangs, with many



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events followed by drinks or a meal in a nearby hostelry – always a good opportunity to catch up with colleagues not seen for some time. Sandra Doble continued the task in 2019 of compiling the mandatory quarterly CPD returns into meaningful statistics and she presented a short analysis of the years' takings. Some members are not overly keen in forwarding completed CPD returns and Sandra made a plea for a better performance in 2020.



AGI members who attended the 2019 AGM

It is now four years since AGI changed its name from the Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland (APGI) to Accredited Genealogists Ireland (AGI) and Paul Gorry reiterated the requirement of all members to correctly annotate themselves on their promotional material (website, Facebook, Twitter etc.) including on their own profiles on the AGI website. In advance of the AGM, Paul had carried out some quick spot checks on members' promotional material and had found quite a large proportion wanting. He urged everyone to check their websites and profiles on the AGI website and make any necessary correction asap.

Michael Walsh brought up the rear with a short presentation on the AGI/ASGRA alliance and in particular the success of the joint AGI/ASGRA eNewsletter CONNECT. CONNECT has proved a useful vehicle for personnel in both organizations to get to know one another even though many of us have never met. After four years (and fourteen editions) Michael announced that he will be standing down as the AGI editor at the end of 2020 – anyone interested in filling his shoes from 2021 onwards should contact the AGI Hon. Secretary in the New Year.

The President (Joan Sharkey), Vice-President (Nicola Morris), Hon. Secretary (Georgina Scally) and six ordinary council members (Anne Marie Smith, Paul Gorry, Sandy O'Byrne, Michael



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Walsh, Steven Smyrl, Rob Davison) were all returned for 2020. The Hon. Treasurer Anne Rodda was thanked for her contribution in 2019 and a new Hon. Treasurer (Kit Smyrl) for 2020 was proposed and accepted.

The meeting finished off with a presentation of certificates of AGI membership by AGI President Joan Sharkey. The certificates which had been designed and brought to fruition by Anne Marie Smith were a great success and warmly received by all. After the proceedings had concluded, almost everyone adjourned to a nearby hostelry for drinks and a Christmas meal – many thanks to Sandy O’Byrne for organization this – a fitting end to a positive, interesting and forward-looking AGM.

Georgina Scally MAGI

AGI Hon. Secretary.

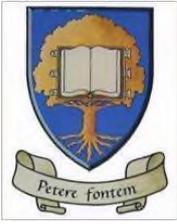
CPD event: “Breaking down Irish brick walls using American records” – 17 January 2020

On Friday 17th January 2020 the first AGI Continuing Professional Development event of the year took place. In association with the *National Library of Ireland*, who kindly provided a venue for the lecture, Kevin Cassidy, an American genealogist, gave a lecture on breaking down Irish brick walls using American records.

This well attended event, which was also open to the public, was an insightful introduction to American sources that might assist Irish researchers. Many Irish families emigrated to the United States in the 19th century and Kevin set out sources in which those emigrant ancestors might be found and the sources that might provide clues for tracing earlier generations of the family in Ireland. He identified vital records, such as marriage and death certificates, obituaries, naturalisation records, probate, homestead as well as census records that might record parents’ names, place of birth or other information that might tell us more about the origins of a family in Ireland. Interspersed with examples that relate to his own family history research, this was an entertaining and very informative lecture, which certainly identified new or lesser known sources for research in America.

Nicola Morris MAGI

Chair AGI CPD Committee



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My visit to the AGM of ASGRA - Edinburgh – 7 February 2020.

A personal view by AGI President Joan Sharkey

I represented AGI at the AGM of ASGRA which was held on 7 February 2020 in New Register House, Edinburgh. The AGM took place in the Dome Seminar Room which is a very impressive area. It is a circular room with five tiers of ironwork shelving and galleries right up to the large Dome with rooms leading off for staff access. The gallery shelves hold all the civil registers of births, marriages and deaths for Scotland starting in 1855.

I was welcomed by Janet Bishop, Chairperson as well as by other members. The AGM took the usual format and in her address, Janet Bishop said that members of Council has served many years and made a plea for new members to step forward to help run the association. She stated she will only serve one more year.



The report of the ASGRA/AGI alliance was given by Lorna Kinnaird for ASGRA and myself on behalf of AGI. I first stated that I was in awe of the beautiful building in which the AGM was held and it was in stark contrast to the present Research Room of the GRO in Dublin which is now housed in an old dole office. I added that inside this office was bright and staff helpful but the entrance was awful - this brought a few smiles from some ASGRA members present who obviously have visited the GRO Research Room in Werburgh Street in Dublin.

I informed the meeting that AGI was holding three Open Days in the coming months:- on 13 February in Belfast, Dublin on the 24 March and Cork on 22 April to recruit new affiliates and/or members. I mentioned that the joint ASGRA/AGI CPD event would be held in September in Limerick City which is served by nearby Shannon Airport. The exact date has yet to be confirmed.

The patron of ASGRA, Dr. Joseph Morrow, Lord Lyon King of Arms attended the meeting and addressed the AGM at the end. He praised the work of the professional genealogists and also urged the new generation of members to support the work of the Council in the future. He also entertained the meeting with a short amusing story about Mormons in Scotland many years ago and the local reaction to them.



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When the AGM finished Lord Lyon came over to personally welcome me and we had a brief chat. Then Bruce Bishop suggested giving me a short tour of the New Register House which I gladly accepted. He pointed out where the Lord Lyon had his office upstairs and said he is responsible for regulating heraldry and the granting of arms in Scotland. He brought me into the Research Room where you book a table with a computer for £15 and you have access to the website of Scotlands People all day, very similar to what I saw in 2018 at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow.

Then Bruce took me outside into a courtyard which has been converted into a small garden, called the Archivists' Garden to get into the adjacent General Register House which holds all the national archives of Scotland. Apparently this building was built first and the New Register House was built later to hold all the civil records. Unfortunately the very large Dome in this building was closed at present for renovations and Bruce could not show it to me. He brought me into the large Historical Research Room, then another research room for professionals. Coming back through the Archivists' Garden, Bruce pointed out another building nearby, called the Sasine Office which holds all the land records for Scotland. I said to Bruce that Scotland is very fortunate to have so many of their main archives all centralised in these beautiful buildings in Edinburgh. The day finished with refreshments served in the café. I wish to thank mostly sincerely, Janet and Bruce Bishop, Ian Marsden and Lorna Kinnaird for their welcome and hospitality which was greatly appreciated.

Joan Sharkey MAGI

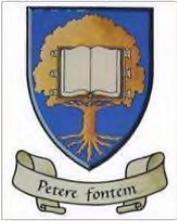
President AGI

Back to Our Past – Belfast

14th and 15th February 2020.



Accredited Genealogists Ireland had a stand at the Back to Our Past Event in the ICC, Waterfront, Belfast, for two days on 14th and 15th February. As usual, our stand was well decorated with our display of balloons, cakes, sweets, second-hand bookstall, etc. We also offered 20 minute FREE consultations to the public to assist them with their family history



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research, which are always very popular and in high demand.

Unfortunately, this year we had less volunteers than usual – 7 Members and 1 Affiliate (Ann Marie Coghlan) to assist on the AGI stand, as well providing one of our members on the National Archives of Ireland stand. However, we managed despite Storm Denis approaching with gusto on Saturday!

Footfall was less this year and overall the event was not as busy as previous years, perhaps due to the storm, or the fact that there were only about 7 Genealogy stands present at the event, (which is held in tandem with the Over 50s Show). There were two Genealogy stands outside the main event Hall close to the tea/coffee area, which may have contributed to the lower footfall where we were situated!

On behalf of the BTOP sub-committee, a **BIG** thank you to everyone who volunteered over the two days of the event – Joan Sharkey, Steven Smyrl, Paul Gorry, Rob Davison, Rosaleen Underwood, Ann Marie Coghlan and Vincent Brogan. AGI would not be able to attend these events without the support and contribution of its Members and Affiliates.



Consultation in progress

Anne-Marie Smith MAGI

Chairperson, BTOP sub-committee.



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A new initiative...

In the August 2019 Issue we announced a new initiative. If you visited a local archive when you were away on holiday or attended a recent conference or exhibition, then perhaps you would like to share your experiences. Many international archives have rich and interesting archives with strong connections to Ireland and to Scotland.

So far we have had 2 absorbing and informative contributions from Georgina Scally of AGI describing an archive she discovered while on a recent holiday in Newfoundland and from Lorna Kinnaird of ASGRA who described her visit to the first international *Rootstech* Conference in England.

We hope to continue this series of articles in our next Issue in May, but here is where you can help.

If you visited a recent exhibition or had a holiday during which you visited an interesting archive, then please consider writing a few lines and sending in an article for publication. We have a relaxed timeline which runs up the end of April. Any contributions would be greatly appreciated!!!

Finally, if you have something that may be of interest to our readers, then please get in touch with one of our Editors.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Michael Walsh (AGI) at michael9walsh@gmail.com

Lorna Kinnaird (ASGRA) at dunedingenie@virginmedia.com



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Dates for your Diary...

In Scotland...

SAFHS Conference: 31st Annual SAFHS Conference 2020

It's a Sair Fecht!

(Hosts: ASGRA; Borders FHS; Lothians FHS; SGS)

*Saturday 18 April 2020
The Brunton, Ladywell Way, Musselburgh, EH21 6AA
9 am – 4.30 pm*

Conference: £ 35 per Delegate: 4 Speakers (must be pre-booked); Morning Coffee; Lunch; Afternoon Tea; Free entry to Family History Fair.

Family History Fair: £2 entry at door: Around 50 stands, with all your favourite local and family history societies and charities; Ask the Experts.

Booking Forms: Available via the SAFHS Website: www.safhs.org.uk

Enquiries: to SAFHS 2020 Co-ordinator: Janet Bishop
www.safhsconf2020.simplesite.com



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In Ireland...

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The *Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme* for 2020 has been put together by Nicola Morris MAGI and her capable team. Undertaking CPD is a mandatory requirement for professional genealogists in Ireland which allows them to maintain their accreditation. Attendance is monitored by AGI.

Several CPD days have been arranged for 2020, including 3 Open Days to be held across the country to encourage people to find out more about AGI. Some of these CPD Days have been firmed up while others are only in the planning phase.

CPD events which are scheduled

AGI Open Day event Dublin – Tuesday 24 March 2020

An AGI Open Day will be held in the Dublin City Library and Archive at 144, Pearse Street.

This will include a Report Writing workshop for members and affiliates.

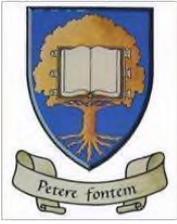
Start: 2.00 pm

AGI Open Day event Cork – Wednesday 22 April 2020

An AGI Open Day will be held at the Cork City and County Archives which are located in the Seamus Murphy Building, 32 Great William O'Brien St, Blackpool, Cork

This will include a Report Writing workshop for members and affiliates.

Start: 2.00 pm



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CPD events which are in planning

Visit to the Railway Records Society in Dublin - planned for May 2020.

It is planned to hold a visit to the *Irish Railway Records Society* archive which is located near Heuston Station in Dublin during May 2020.

More details will be available shortly.

AGI – ASGRA Open Day in Limerick – planned for September 2020

It is planned to hold a joint AGI-ASGRA CPD event in September in the city of Limerick.

More details will be available shortly.

Visit to the Registry of Deeds, Dublin – planned for November 2020

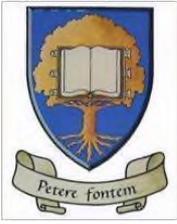
It is planned to hold a CPD event at the *Registry of Deeds* in Henrietta Street, Dublin which includes a guided visit during November 2020.

More details will be available shortly.

2020 AGM of AGI

The 2020 AGM of AGI will be held on Wednesday 2 December 2020. Like last year, this has been pulled forward from a Friday. This is largely because of the difficulty experienced in recent years of booking a suitable venue for our Christmas Lunch in a busy seasonal period.

There will be a Christmas Lunch afterwards at a local hostelry.



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Getting to know each other...

Each Issue we interview members of each organisation so that members can get to know other key players better.

Time for a change!!!

This week, Michael Walsh, the AGI Editor of CONNECT, interviews --- himself!!!

Ref.	Questions
Q1	Name: Michael Walsh
Q2	Email: michael@myirishconnections.com
Q3	Occupation: Professional genealogist and AGI Editor of CONNECT!!!
Q4	Location: I live in Westport, Co. Mayo
Q5	Areas of research and specialisms: I am particularly interested in Irish families who emigrated to the UK, the USA



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	and Australia.
Q6	<p>What brought you into genealogy?</p> <p>Initially, my interest was in discovering more about my own Irish families.</p> <p>This experience led me into the world of Irish genealogy. I got so interested I decided I wanted to use my retirement to learn more and to possibly help others find their Irish roots.</p> <p>The rest, as they say, is history!!</p>
Q7	<p>What has been your favourite piece of research or most interesting assignment?</p> <p>An assignment concerning a young married couple from Co. Tipperary who left separately for New Zealand. The husband was in the British Army and had a job guarding prisoners on convict ships who were being transported to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania). Once there, his unit was ordered to New Zealand to put down a Maori rebellion. He liked the place so much that he left the Army and settled on North Island to be joined later by his wife and 2 daughters.</p> <p>The assignment was interesting because it involved visiting several archives with most of the research being undertaken at the <i>UK National Archives</i> in Kew, London. I have a good friend who lives close by, so this was quite convenient for me!!</p>
Q8	<p>What is your favourite Archive and Why?</p> <p>The Valuation Office in Lower Abbey Street, Dublin. I was astonished to discover that the history of occupation of a piece of land could be traced from the <i>Griffith's Valuation</i> in the mid-19th century right through to modern times. The information available is typically held on handwritten sheets in a series of binders and records the head of the household that occupied each plot as well as the area of each plot and the buildings that were on it. It also noted and</p>



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	<p>dated changes to occupation, to the configuration of each plot and to the buildings.</p> <p>This can be important in helping to trace a family from the 19th century through to the present day by associating changes in occupation with a handover to a new generation. Once identified, these changes can be researched. In addition, every sheet could be copied or photographed. I still feel that this provides an amazing social history record for many families in the country,</p> <p>Free admission, a helpful staff, an expanding digitisation programme that is well advanced and a set of useful historical maps also enhance this remarkable archive.</p>
Q9	<p>How is your own family tree?</p> <p>In poor shape!!!</p> <p>I started in genealogy by trying to trace my own Irish families but since then I have done very little apart from uncovering a family mystery about an extra uncle that I had which my family never spoke about and my first cousins never even knew about!! I feel it is my responsibility to discover what happened to him!!.</p>
Q10	<p>What tips can you offer a beginner?</p> <p>I encountered an old maxim that a historical society in the west used. <i>"Everything is fiction until it is corroborated"</i>.</p> <p>I find that leading genealogical websites often offer a plethora of ancestor hints which many people are far too quick to embrace as valuable leads. In many cases these hints are accepted as "gospel" and eagerly incorporated into family trees, often with disastrous results.</p> <p>So, my advice is to make sure that every connection is verified and every ancestor is corroborated.</p>



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Q11	<p>How do you relax or what other interests do you have?</p> <p>I am a keen sports fan and I also enjoy classical music and the theatre, so I have broad range of interests which helps keep me sane, I think!</p>
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Finally...

Spotlight on...

In 2019 we introduced a new series of articles drawing the attention of our readers to important regional or less familiar sources for genealogists. We hope that this initiative will help readers in Ireland and Scotland to become more familiar with the various archives and resources that each country offers.



In this article Clare DOYLE MAGI explores a useful online resource.

The Irish Community Archive Network iCAN - supporting and promoting local Irish history and culture

For genealogists and local historians, this online resource provides a wealth of information about famine times, local race days and festivals, as well as archaeology, folklore and local events. Much of this information is not available elsewhere and refers to local





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families, grounding them in their townland and parish over generations. For genealogists, not familiar with the geography of a place, the history and map of each townland and parish is invaluable. Within the stories of emigration, famine, fairs and farming, economic boom and bust are the tales of everyday life in Ireland. What the records provide in facts, these sources supplement with colour and emotion, telling stories like those of the hardworking and dynamic women below.



Nora McGarry (nee Diskin) (1919 – 2013) was one of seven children born to Pat and Mary Martyn at Dillonbrook, Milltown, Co. Galway. Her early education was in Milltown National School where her father was principal. She attended St Louis Convent Kiltimagh where she did her Leaving Cert and from there went on to do a degree in medicine in University College Galway, now the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Her first employment was in Sheffield, England. In 1945 Nora married Jack McGarry, a County Council engineer and in 1949 she returned to Ireland and began practising as a GP in Ballindine, Co. Mayo before moving to live and work in Milltown, Co. Galway. Norah and Jack had 8 children though sadly, Jack died in 1960, leaving Norah to bring up her children as well as run a busy medical practice. She has renowned for her patience and kindness, helped to deliver many babies and provided mothers with much needed advice and care.



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Anne Duff born in Ballaghadeereen, Co. Mayo was the daughter of Joseph Duff and Monica Dillon. Anne went on to become President of the Dublin Branch of Women's Land League. Honour Kilbane was born in her grandmother's house in a small village on Achill Island, Co. Mayo called 'The Valley', on the 14th August 1893. She was the second daughter of Peter and Celia Kilbane. At age 11 she immigrated to Scotland to work in the potato fields, working as a tatty hoker. She was accompanied by her older sister Mary.

Nora, Anne and Honor and others like them are commemorated in their home parishes and their stories are available on the 17 Community archives websites, and via the umbrella of www.ouririshheritage.org. These websites reflect a flourishing and rapidly developing partnership between the National Museum of Ireland County Life, Galway County Council Heritage Office, local heritage groups and others.



Skehana Heritage Group

Together, these partners work to collect, preserve and make available local heritage information that might otherwise be lost or never make it into the public domain. Interested heritage societies and local groups have their own individual presence on the iCAN website, hosting local stories, oral histories, photographs and other information that represent the history of their own areas.

Members of the public, researchers, family historians, and others interested in local history, can explore and contribute their own information so that over time a unique archive is created and shared. As it is also possible to contact individual heritage groups, a collaborative relationship can spring up, and the diaspora can become part of the creation and preservation of the archive of their



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own people and place. These diaspora contacts can help fill in the gaps, providing information about 'lost' or little-known people, reconnecting them back to their homeplace. Local communities benefit too, as the descendants of their parishes, long gone through emigration, return to visit and learn more about their family's place of origin.

The 17 members of the iCAN network are based in Co. Galway and Mayo with 11 new archives in development in counties Clare and Wicklow. Each website is arranged in the same way so that local groups can come together for training and evaluate progress in regular meetings throughout the year. Information is collected about people, places, and other topics and so each group offers a useful and interesting source of family and local information.

You can visit the iCAN website at <https://www.ouririshheritage.org/> and explore the network and resources. If you have information that you would like to add to the archive, you can visit the contribute page.

Clare Doyle MAGI

End of Newsletter