



CLANN

December 2008

Newsletter of the Irish Family History Foundation

WELCOME

Welcome to the current issue of CLANN the newsletter of the IRISH FAMILY HISTORY FOUNDATION. 2007 and 2008 have been fruitful years for the Foundation. Many events have taken place, all making a positive contribution to the promotion of Irish Genealogy at home and overseas.

The newsletter gives a full report of our activities for the year. The Board of Directors and Centre members are to be congratulated on their input and dedication towards making Irish genealogical records more readily available to those wishing to trace their Irish ancestors.

THE IFHF ONLINE RESEARCH SYSTEM

The launch of the first phase of the Irish Family History Foundation's Online Research Service took place at the Navan Centre, Armagh, on Friday, November 30th, 2007. The system was officially launched by the Church leaders of the four main denominations in Ireland whose records form the core of the genealogical database; Cardinal Sean Brady, the Most Rev. Alan Harper, Archbishop of Armagh & Primate of All Ireland, the Most Rev. John Finlay, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the Most Rev. Roy Cooper, President of the Methodist Church. The ancient cathedral city of Armagh was a fitting venue for the launch as it is the historical capital of Ulster, the city of Saint Patrick, the burial place of Brian Boru, and the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland. The event was attended by Mayor Rolleston of Armagh, Ms. Susan Elliott, US Consul General, Mr. Conor Murphy, MLA, Mr. Barry McElduff, MLA, representatives of Armagh City Council and the county genealogy centres all over Ireland. The Irish Family History Foundation with its cross-border network of local centres is the largest provider of professional family history research services in Ireland. The IFHF operates on an all-island basis with each county Genealogy centre having a local computer database comprising various church records of baptisms, marriages & deaths; civil records of births, deaths & marriages; Griffith's Valuation; Tithe Applotment Books; the 1901 & 1911 census records and gravestone inscriptions. The bulk of the computerization of genealogical material has been completed and to further bring together many millions of records as a searchable database online is a remarkable proposition. It is now



The Church leaders with Mayor Rolleston, Susan Elliott, US Consul, Barry McElduff, MLA, Conor Murphy, MLA, Feargal O'Donnell, Armagh Ancestry, and members of Armagh City Council.

possible to offer the ability to anyone with an internet connection, anywhere in the world, to access and search for information on their ancestors across all the main Irish genealogical sources and to retire the original sources from general use. Vast amounts of time, effort and money have been put into developing this resource. All of the centres operate on a strictly not for profit basis with revenues going towards the continual improvement of the service, and without these revenues the further computerization of the remaining sources will not happen.

The launch of the second phase of the Irish Family History Foundation's Online Research Service took place on the Jeanie Johnston which was docked in Dublin on 12th March 2008. This launch was performed by the late Minister Seamus Brennan, Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness. It was a very appropriate venue as the Jeanie Johnston is a ship which symbolizes the many millions of Irish people and their journeys to find a better life. Now their descendants in the U.S.A., United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and all points



Members of Galway West Centre with Senator Labhras O'Murchú, Minister Seamus Brennan and Minister Martin McGuinness on the Jeanie Johnston

'WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?'

Many people with Irish ancestors were given the chance to try out the service when our Online Research System was presented to the public for the first time. This was when Foundation members took part in the 'Who Do You Think You Are Live Show' - at the Olympia, London from 2-4th May 2008. The stand of the IRISH FAMILY HISTORY FOUNDATION had a constant stream of visitors for the three days. Laptops at the ready and connection to the internet meant that the results of the searches could be beamed on to a big screen; consequently the crowds were queuing up to find that elusive Irish ancestor. Queries came from those who had much work done on their ancestors and just wanted help filling in gaps, and those who had no idea where to start. All were advised on how best to solve their particular query. Some of their pronunciations of Irish placenames sounded nothing like our version, which led to a little confusion but was easily sorted out. The stand was manned by Mary Sullivan and Concepta McGovern from the Cavan Centre, Karel Kiely from the Kildare Centre and Secretary of the IFHF, Ger Delaney from Mayo South, Bernadette Marks from Fingal and last but not least Feargal O'Donnell from Armagh.

The group were tired but happy at the end of each day and delighted at the response from the visitors. On Sunday afternoon in a designated area of the vast arena there was a large attendance when Feargal O'Donnell gave a talk entitled 'Four Courts of Ireland 1922 - What Really Blew Up'. This gave a comprehensive run down on what is still extant and available to those doing Irish Genealogy. Handouts of our new online service were distributed to all the other stands. All in all it was agreed that our first visit to the London show was a worthwhile venture.



1. Karel Kiely working on research and Bernadette Marks greeting visitors in London 2. Navan Fort, Armagh - Catherine Wright (Wicklow), Sinéad McGuinness (Galway West), Teresa Finnerty (Westmeath). 3. AGM Nov 2007 - Chair: Senator Labhras O'Murchú, Sec: Karel Kiely 4. Feargal O'Donnell in London



Nora O'Meara and Senator Labhras O'Murchú, Minister Martin McGuinness with Comhaltas Musicians onboard the Jeanie Johnston

in between wish to trace their Irish roots in Ireland which is now possible through our Online Genealogical Research Service. There are now **15 million** Church (all denominations) baptisms and marriages, civil births, deaths and marriages, Census records and Gravestone Inscriptions searchable at www.rootsireland.ie.



Recently the Irish Family History Foundation added the Griffiths/Primary Valuation Index for all of Ireland to their website which is free to search. There are now 21 counties offering an online search facility. The feedback from our clients is very positive with customers delighted with the opportunity to peruse and purchase. Clients are offered professional genealogical research services by the local county genealogy centres. Each county has its own individual site but also participates in the all Ireland Central Database. This database offers wonderful opportunities for promoting the island of Ireland. The database is a national treasure and an invaluable resource for Ireland in the provision of genealogical data to all those of Irish decent.



AGM 26/11/07 - Group who received certificates as approved members of IFHF.



Dr. Michael Egan, Concepta McGovern, Minister Eamon O'Cuív, Mary Sullivan and Feargal O'Donnell

MILWAUKEE

Feargal O'Donnell, Dr Michael Egan, Concepta McGovern and Mary Sullivan represented the Irish Family History Foundation at the Irish Festival in Milwaukee during August. The festival, now in its twenty-eighth year is the largest Irish cultural event in North America with the stunning Lake Michigan shoreline as its backdrop. The festival celebrates and promotes Irish history and culture through music, dance, cultural exhibits and events, drama, and sport. Irish Fest's full time office provides a year round facility dedicated to Irish-related activities, including concerts, workshops, Irish music lessons and rehearsals and Irish language lessons. Each year the festival presents new themes, new performers and new cultural events. This year's theme was Galway so the tribesmen and women were out in force. The genealogy tent was located in the Cultural Village which also housed the Hedge School where Feargal O'Donnell and Mary Sullivan gave a number of lectures on various aspects of Irish genealogy. There was huge interest in the IFHF's Online Research System and the IFHF representatives answered thousands of queries and uncovered details on some elusive ancestors for visitors to the IFHF stand.

FEDERATION OF GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES CONGRESS – PHILADELPHIA, P.A.

The 2008 Federation of Genealogical Societies Congress was held in Philadelphia from the 3rd to 6th September 2008. The Irish Family History Foundation was represented at this Congress by Nora O'Meara (North Tipperary Genealogy Centre), Feargal O'Donnell (Armagh Genealogy Centre) and Mary Flood (Kilkenny Genealogy Centre). Their main aim was to promote the 'On-Line Research Service' but also to promote the genealogical services offered by county member centres throughout Ireland. Congress delegates came from all over the U.S.A. and had many interests one of which was Irish genealogy.

Therefore visitors to the rootsireland.ie stand brought their many queries relating to all counties of Ireland and to the varied aspects of Irish ancestry.

Enquires dealt with included those relating to the following counties

Armagh, Antrim, Cavan, Carlow, Cork, Derry, Dublin, Donegal, Fermanagh, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Meath, Mayo, Offaly, Tipperary North, Tyrone and Wicklow.

Many compliments were offered from very happy clients both in relation to the 'On-Line Research Service' and to the regular research service provided by our centres. Satisfied clients also spoke of their specific successes with the online service from counties including Cork North, Galway, Kildare, Kilkenny and North Tipperary. There was very positive feedback on the value of our 'On-Line Service' from customers who used the system, from members of history societies and from various archivists and librarians too. However, many wondered when counties such as Kerry, Clare and Monaghan will be online. Delegates made contact with several exhibitors. Feargal did two interviews – one for a genealogy website and one for a local radio station. Nora and Mary made contact with some U.S. Genealogy Magazines e.g. *Family Tree Magazine, U.S.A.* and the *Journal of the Sons of the American Revolution* who have both made a commitment to publish an article on 'Irish Genealogy' in one of their 2009 issues. The latter organisation was represented by one Joe Dooley whose ancestors hail from Co. Offaly but who has relatives in Co. Laois known to Mary Flood, and others near the border of North Tipperary known to Nora O'Meara.

On the last day Nora and Mary delivered brochures to each of the exhibiting stands to help promote our Online Research Service.

The Irish Family History Foundation (rootsireland.ie) were the only exhibitors who

- Undertook individual searches using our database.
- Provided advice about our 'Online Research Service' and our local genealogy Centres.
- Offered information re materials and websites suitable for beginners seeking their Irish ancestors.

Our stand looked very professional with a banner identifying rootsireland.ie which was commented upon very



Nora O'Meara and Mary Flood in Philadelphia

ROTHE HOUSE & GARDEN

The Kilkenny member centre of the IFHF is located in the magnificent Rothe House on Parliament Street, Kilkenny. This late 16th century Irish merchant's house is owned by Kilkenny Archaeological Society (KAS), and is home to their Museum, Library and Genealogical Service. In 2002, a management company was formed – Rothe House Trust Limited – to manage the House on behalf of the KAS and to implement the Conservation Plan commissioned through the Heritage Council of Ireland.

The first proposal of the Conservation Plan has been completed this year. On 11th April 2008, President Mary McAleese formally opened the Rothe Family Garden. This is a fascinating reconstruction of an early 17th century urban garden, and is unique in Ireland. Following an exhaustive archaeological dig, and much research, the garden was designed to reflect as accurately as possible what it might have looked like in the early 1600s when John Rothe and his wife Rose Archer lived in the House.

The planting scheme is authentic – only plants which would have been in existence at the time have been used. Bulbs dating back to the 1580s and 1620s have been planted this September, and will grace the garden with beauty in the Spring of 2009. An orchard with almost 50 fruit trees has been underplanted with an Irish wildflower meadow, and a vegetable garden which includes Gortahork cabbage. Ragged Jack Kale and Tipperary Turnips will be on show again next year.

The project was made possible with funding from Failte Ireland, under the NDP 2000-2006, Kilkenny Borough Council and Kilkenny Civic Trust.

The Rothe Family Garden is open to the public from 10.30 – 4.30 Monday to Friday, and at restricted hours at the weekend.

Roisin McQuillan, 21.10.08



A local reporter interviewing Feargal O'Donnell in Philadelphia

favourably by visitors. Feargal, Mary and Nora wore green shirts with the rootireland.ie logo, and surprisingly, there were several offers to purchase these from us. We might consider selling merchandise in the future. Our rootsireland.ie brochure dominated with a large map of Ireland and supplementary local brochures as well as the Irish flag. We offered green & white mints but must aim for pens and giveaways like other exhibitors. Our stand was beside that of New England Historical and Genealogical Society (NEHGS) who were very helpful neighbours and was close to the Irish Ancestral Research Association (TIARA). Mary Ellen from TIARA took what brochures remained to the South Boston weekend conference which we were not attending.

The resounding message was that there is a need to get the maximum amount of information online as this is what clients require; the choice to peruse and purchase as they please. Therefore, it is imperative, even for counties already online, that they review and attempt to add to their current records. And, more importantly that all of us work towards a greater spread by the addition of records from 'new' counties as soon as possible. This will culminate in our rootsireland.ie website being recognised as the 'One Stop Shop' for Irish records.

rootsireland.ie delegates were invited to participate in several conferences next year.

This promotion was certainly worth the effort and cost of participation. Had the Irish Family History Foundation not been present there would have been nobody to consult about Irish Ancestry on a personal level. The three participants certainly found that there is so much goodwill out there for the Irish Family History Foundation Centres and the research Services offered by us.

Many thanks to those who presented copy thus making this newsletter possible. Particularly Nora, Tipperary North, Mary, Cavan, Mary and Roisin in Kilkenny and our dedicated secretary Karel Kiely, Kildare. Don't forget we would love to hear from all our centres should they have anything interesting to include in future newsletters. Have you traced the roots of anybody famous? If so, please let us know. We in the Fingal Centre are happy to have been able to contribute to the production of the newsletter once again.

Bernadette and Geraldine- Fingal Genealogy (North Dublin)