



CONNECT

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



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November 2019

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

Welcome to our fourteenth 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 our last Issue we invited holiday makers who still need to get their genealogical fix and insist on visiting local archives to write about their experiences. In August we had an interesting contribution about Newfoundland. We are now anxious to encourage others with similar experiences to come forward and write a few lines and send in an article for publication in the New Year.. This would be greatly appreciated!!!

Again, in this quarter's edition we present another interesting set of articles from both our organisations including a fascinating contribution about a remarkable collection of military memorabilia in Northern Ireland.

We also commence an important series on the history of AGI.

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

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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 February 2020 and the deadline for submissions is 31 January 2020.

We hope that you enjoy reading the Newsletter!



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News from Ireland

Grangegorman military cemetery

On Thursday 19 September AGI undertook a CPD visit to the Grangegorman military cemetery. This was an absorbing and informative day led by Brian Donnelly from the *National Archives of Ireland*. He guided members around the British military cemetery and gave a talk about the medical and institutional records that are archived.

National Archives of Ireland

The 2019 series of lectures on Irish genealogy has concluded for the year at the *National Archives of Ireland* in Bishop Street in Dublin.

The final 2 lectures delivered:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 24 September: | Clare Doyle MAGI on “The Genealogy of an Irish Workhouse” |
| 12 November: | Michael Walsh on “ <i>The Griffiths Valuation</i> and its place in Irish genealogy” |

Both were well supported and stimulated lively discussions.

Back to our Past

The annual “Back to our Past” exhibition was held on Friday October 18 and Saturday October 19 at the RDS in Ballsbridge, Dublin

This is the biggest event in the Irish Genealogy calendar held annually at the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) in Ballsbridge, Dublin and forms part of a huge exhibition for the over 50s.

Opportunities were provided for members of the public to book a private consultation with a professional genealogist from AGI to discuss their research.



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The loss of the Public Record Office in 1922

AGI held a very successful and interesting CPD event on Tuesday 5 November in the Dublin City Library, Pearse Street.

The theme of the afternoon was to assess the loss of documents housed in the Public Record Office of Ireland (PRO) during the Civil War in 1922. During an attack on the complex, which was situated behind the iconic Four Courts building on the Quays in Dublin, fire engulfed the Public Record Office causing 100,000 square feet of shelving containing 5,500 series of records assembled over 7 centuries to be destroyed in an afternoon.

The first speaker was **Zoe Reid** who has worked at the National Archives for 17 years and is a leading Conservator. She described how in the immediate aftermath of the fire a huge effort was undertaken to try and save the burnt and charred remains of the archive.

She spoke about her role in leading a team in the last few years in an attempt to salvage and preserve as much of what had been left as possible. The bundled and parcelled remains were opened up and assessed and the historical significance of the documents determined as far as possible. The remains were largely parchment and paper and while the latter was charred and crisp, the parchment was able to be graded by severity into 5 broad categories. In all 378 items were recovered and assessed.

The losses were, of course, devastating with records from Richard III, Henry VIII and Edward 1 among the oldest and most precious documents lost. But there were great successes. 28 items were categorised in the highest grading. These were 75% legible and documents could be opened and read. Zoe described the amazing techniques and treatments applied to restoring these badly damaged documents and described her successes with the 1798 Yeomanry Returns and the 1818 Dublin Port Receipts. It is hoped that further funding will soon be available to enable further progress in this important task of restoration.

This was followed by an informative talk given by **Sean J. Murphy** who is a historian, lecturer and genealogist based in Co Wicklow. The thrust of his talk was on quantifying what was actually lost in the fire at the *Public Record Office* during the civil war in 1922 and on dispelling stories that Ireland had “lost everything”.

In order to properly document the loss of Irish records in the 1922 fire, we first need to know what was in the archive at the time. Sean identified what was in the PRO by referring to the standard reference which is the Guide produced by Herbert Wood entitled “A Guide to the Records deposited in the Public Record Office of Ireland” which had been published in 1919 in Dublin by HMSO and was popularly known as “*Wood’s Guide*”.

Herbert Wood was born in London in 1860 to an Irish-born father William Wood. He graduated from Oxford in 1883 and joined the PRO in Dublin in 1884. He was appointed Assistant Keeper in 1912 and Assistant Deputy Keeper in 1914. He finally became Deputy Keeper in 1921.



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Wood's Guide became the seminal reference and provided a definitive list of the contents that were deposited at PRO at the time of the fire in 1922. From a genealogical perspective, the most serious losses were the Ecclesiastical and Testamentary collections which included Wills, Marriage Licences and many Church of Ireland parish registers. Among the greatest losses were the census returns of 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851. Strangely, these were filed under the *Miscellaneous* Category much to the amusement and wrath of the assembled genealogists!

Despite this catastrophe, many of the items deposited had already been published or had had copies made, so they were not in fact "lost". Sean provided a list of these surviving copies, documents for which abstracts had been compiled and the many documents that had already been published. This included a number of important genealogical sources including early 19th century Record Commissioners transcriptions, calendars of Justiciary Rolls and Statute Rolls, 18th century Lodge Manuscripts, Dublin Consistorial Grant Books, Huguenot Registers and Hearth Money Rolls. In addition, many Irish records including Irish State Papers, were held in the UK National Archives in London.

To end on a positive note, Sean listed important historical records that were not held in the PRO at all and have therefore also survived. These form an impressive list which covers Registry of Deeds, State papers from the 1790s which were held at Dublin Castle which was the seat of British rule, Prison Registers from 1790s, Ordnance Survey maps from 1824, Tithes Applotment Books from 1820s which cover taxation in support of the Established Church, Valuation Office records from 1826 which pre-dates the Griffith's Primary Valuation and Irish Land Commission papers as well as records of civil births, marriages and deaths from 1864 and non-Catholic marriages from 1845 which were held at the *General Register Office*. In addition, among the archives which had not yet been deposited in the PRO were, of course, those key genealogical records, the Irish Census returns of 1901 and 1911.

It was an absorbing series of presentations which not only clarified the extent of the losses from this tragedy of nearly 100 years ago, but also provided hope and encouragement that more can be recovered through the careful work of restoration. In addition, it identified important documents that were unaffected and remain available.

Michael Walsh MAGI



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News from Scotland

Professional Day

Our professional day on the 6 September was a successful event, we had 20 delegates on the day, this was the maximum number we could accommodate otherwise we could have exceeded those numbers given the interest shown in the event.

The day started with Janet Bishop giving a brief history of ASGRA followed by our keynote speaker Paul Gorry on the importance of accreditation. John McGee presented a light-hearted talk on a typical day in the life of a professional genealogist. One of our assessors Kirsteen Mulhern outlined the requirements of membership and the application progress. The day rounded off with a question and answer session. Feedback forms submitted after the event were all very positive. We are hoping to run a similar event in 2020.



Paul Gorry, AGI



Delegates



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Original Travel Partnership

We are pleased to announce that ASGRA has partnered with travel company Original Travel UK who offer bespoke tours for mainly North American and Canadian tourists. This partnership will enable ASGRA members to research the Scottish ancestry of Original Travel's customers who want to embark on a tailored ancestral tour of places in Scotland where their forebears lived and worked. We look forward to developments in this venture over the coming year.

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on the 7 February 2020 at New Register House, Edinburgh.

Introducing

ASGRA

Kate Keter, runs Family Tree Tales

Website Address: www.familytreetales.co.uk

Kate can be contacted at kate@kmgenealogy.co.uk. Living in Linlithgow she works part-time (in theory 2 to 3 days a week) on genealogy which includes tutoring when there are classes running. However, she often finds that her week extends to 5 or 6 days. Most of her work is in Scottish research, although she says "you never know where you might end up when families start to move around". Kate is also a tutor on the Strathclyde University's 8-week, on site genealogy courses, and she is currently teaching the Introduction and Using Technology classes there. Kate got interested in genealogy in 1988 (at a time when nothing was digitised) trying to discover the origins of the KETER surname. Her research ended up not being nearly as glamorous or exotic as her late mother-in-law though! All her client research has been interesting and she finds the stories of the women in a family just as interesting and enlightening as those of the men.

"I find the stories of the women in a family can be just as interesting – and enlightening – as those of the men, so I'll admit to finding it frustrating when a client says he (for it is usually a "he") is not interested in the female members of the family; only wants to know the origins of his family name. Even to the point of ignoring it when I tell him that the records suggest that the family name (and the associated tartan he proudly wears) were "made up" to cover an illegitimate birth."



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Kate does not have a favourite archive as such – after all, it is very often the case that an archive is only as good as the information you find on the subject you are researching on that particular day – through no fault of the archive or the archivist. Kate visits several local archives including Ayrshire, Perth & Stirling most recently. She says the Bank of Scotland Archives in Edinburgh proved to be very fruitful for one client's ancestors, and the Argyll Papers in Inveraray was very interesting too – looking for information about her own ancestors for a change.

Her own family tree is a work in progress (aren't they all?). Every so often she tries to do a little bit more. She recently took the opportunity to visit the place where her 3xGreat-Grandparents lived and her 2xGreat-Grandfather was born – and that was very special. However, she says she still cannot find her Irish Great-Grannie's family. Kate informs me that she does have a very private tree on Ancestry for which she has accepted all the 'hints' – and now knows that she is a descendent of Robert the Bruce! She hopes one day that she can prove it.

Her tips to offer a Probationer (but applies to everyone) is to write EVERYTHING down – what you found or did not find, where and when you found it and for whom (i.e., was it for a client, for yourself, or was it the 'rabbit-hole' that you ran down, just to see where it led, that might come in useful sometime. For Kate the benefits of Accreditation gives potential clients the reassurance that she can do the job required, that there is a published Code of Practice that she adheres to. She also says that being accredited allows her to turn to people in the association for help and guidance.

To relax, Kate and her husband like to travel when they can fit this in around their grandparenting duties. She likes to read and sings in the local church choir and in the last couple of years she has taught herself to crochet which she finds very relaxing. She is a member of the local Rotary Club and has served with Rotary internationally making many friends around the world in the process.



Kate Keter



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Recording the history of how our organisations were formed and have developed is important.

AGI History

In this Issue we begin this new series with an interesting historical article about the events that led to the founding of APCI (the older name for AGI) in 1988.

The author is Paul Gorry who is one of Ireland's leading genealogists. Paul has been a member of the AGI Council for many years and has contributed a number of books on the subject.

Here is his article.

The Birth of AGI

by

Paul Gorry

In the late 1970s, before APCI [now AGI] existed, there were no more than about twenty people in Ireland working in genealogical research. They were based in the Dublin and Belfast areas, where the main record repositories were located. Most of those in Dublin were on the freelance research panel of the Genealogical Office, then based in Dublin Castle. Most in Belfast worked for the Ulster Historical Foundation, then the research agency of PRONI.

I began my career in 1979 as a researcher for the Genealogical Office. At the time none of us in Dublin were aware of the work being carried out in Corofin, Co. Clare, by Ignatius (Naoise) Cleary, a retired teacher. He was indexing the Corofin Roman Catholic parish registers with the idea of setting up a genealogical service for overseas visitors to provide local employment. His work led to the establishment of the Clare Heritage & Genealogy Centre. In 1979 two history-related projects were being funded through government-sponsored agencies fostering youth training. I think it was through the Federation of Local History Societies that groups in different parts of the country became aware of Naoise Cleary's initiative and of the availability of funding. These groups began indexing parish registers and came together as what eventually became the Irish Family History Foundation [IFHF].

Most Irish genealogical sources, including microfilm copies of R.C. parish registers, were held in the record repositories in Dublin and Belfast. The genealogists based in those areas had knowledge and experience of the broad range of sources available there and how to draw results



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from them in combination. Those indexing parish registers throughout the country had little appreciation of genealogical research beyond the one set of records and they generally looked on genealogy in terms of its potential to generate tourism. Coming in contact with these local groups in the early 1980s, I became aware of great suspicion of genealogists based in Dublin. For their part, the researchers in Dublin saw the funding of indexing projects as undermining their livelihoods. The hostility that grew between the two groups was one of a number of factors that contributed to the founding of APGI.

Even before this period of cold war began (it has long since ended) there was vague talk in Dublin about forming some kind of association to represent the interests of genealogical researchers and to provide some type of credential. There were seven or eight Genealogical Office [GO] freelance researchers, who had by 1980 formed a research firm called Hibernian Research [HR]. Outside of HR there were a few others practising independently. I remember the then Chief Herald (responsible for the GO), Donal Begley, saying that he would set up an accrediting body. This didn't happen immediately and any plans he may have had were overtaken by the greater initiative of our northern colleagues.

In Belfast by that time a number of those who had been engaged by the Ulster Historical Foundation had gone to work for an outside agency or had set up their own private practices. Some of them felt that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board [NITB] could help promote their services to a wide audience and I think it may have been the NITB that gave them the idea to form a group that could be marketed abroad.



On a research trip to PRONI in the mid-1980s I was invited to a coffee break by three of the Belfast genealogists and told me about the group they had set up or were setting up, and they suggested that we in Dublin should form a similar one. Word filtered down to Dublin by various routes and a meeting was called. Going back to what had happened in Belfast, two meetings of researchers were held in David McElroy's house in Saintfield Road. Two of those present were members of AGRA and it was decided that they would be automatically members of the new association. They assessed the work of a third and the three were to assess the others. There was discussion about forming a bond with researchers in Dublin but some people suggested that the association should form links with Scotland instead. Some objected to being assessed by their peers. The result was that a few individuals decided not to join the new organisation

David McElroy



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and subsequently formed a non-accrediting body called Association of Ulster Genealogists and Record Agents [AUGRA].

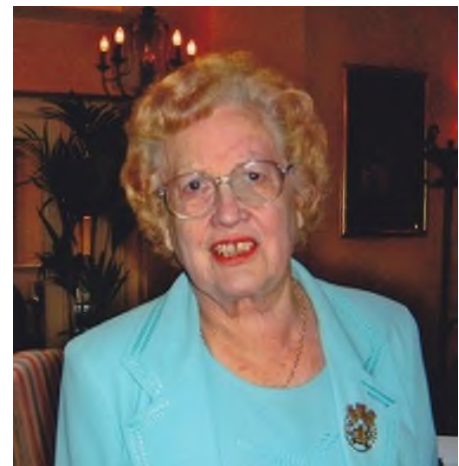
Back in Saintfield Road the remaining people formed the Association of Professional Genealogists *of* (soon changed to *in*) Ireland [APGI]. The founding date was that of the second meeting, 13 May 1986. And so a meeting of Dublin-based researchers took place later that summer in the temporary premises occupied by the GO, in Adelaide Road. It must be said that by then there was one 'Dublin-based' person who actually lived in Co. Cork. John McCabe of APGI attended the meeting and explained about the new Belfast organisation. General agreement was reached about forming a Dublin 'section' but one very significant decision was made at that meeting. The gathering agreed that membership assessment should be made by an independent panel.



John McCabe

A Dublin steering committee was selected and eventually an independent Board of Assessors was appointed. The four members of the initial board were Gerard Slevin (retired Chief Herald; the chairman), Beryl Phair (née Eustace), Donal Begley (Chief Herald) and Aileen Ireland (archivist at the PRO). Beryl Phair had worked as a genealogist from the late 1920s to the 1950s. She was a researcher for Ulster's Office before it became the GO in 1943 and continued her association with it under the new administration.

Meetings took place between the assessors, the Dublin steering committee (chaired by Eilish Ellis) and a representative of the 'Ulster Section'. In February 1987 the Dublin committee visited Belfast and it was agreed that the Ulster members would submit reports to be vetted by the chairman of the assessors. On 16 October 1987 the Dublin Section held its first general meeting, attended by the first seven members passed by the assessors. The two sections operated under separate committees until the first annual general meeting of the overall organisation in December 1988. At this point it was proposed by the Ulster Section's Hon. Secretary, Hazel Ervine, that, henceforth, APGI should operate as one organisation under a single council. At that meeting Eilish Ellis was elected APGI's first President. Thus AGI was born.



Eilish Ellis

Paul Gorry MAGI



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A new initiative...

In the last Issue we announced a new initiative. If you visit a local archive or attend a conference or exhibition when you are away on holiday, perhaps you would like to share your experiences. Many international archives have rich and interesting archives with strong connections to Ireland and to Scotland.

In this Issue we have our second contribution. This is from Lorna Kinnaird, ASGRA Council Member.

Here is her article:



ROOTSTECH (London) 24th – 26th Oct 2019 - ExCel, London

I attended this event as a Delegate, not as a representative of ASGRA. This was the first international Rootstech Conference in the UK and it was a big success. Keynote speakers were Dan Snow, Kadeena Cox, Steve Rockwood and Donny Osmond.

The three day conference looked to have been well attended from UK residents up and down the country as well as many Americans, Australians, French, German and Irish, although clearly on a much smaller scale than previous Who Do You Think You Are? events – it nonetheless still packed a punch. Each day was split between a full schedule of talks in rooms 1 to 20 upstairs; whilst talks by the exhibitors FINDMYPAST; ANCESTRY and FAMILYSEARCH took place around their tables. The flexibility of not having to pre-book tickets to listen to talks was a great bonus as it meant that you could easily change your preference at short notice. This was something that you couldn't do at previous Conferences in London and Birmingham. There was plenty opportunities to network and the ASGRA Leaflets went like hotcakes on the AGRA stand.

Classes ranged from DNA, Scottish Research (by tutors of Strathclyde); Irish Research; Jewish Research; French; German; Spanish & Portugal Research. Each talk lasted for 45 minutes and every talk ran to clockwork.

It was quite expensive to attend (in my view) – an entrance fee of £89 for the three days, but all classes; advice and talks were free. Freebies included Rootstech backpacks and money off vouchers for Family Tree Maker 2019 and a free Booths Poor Law Map of London.



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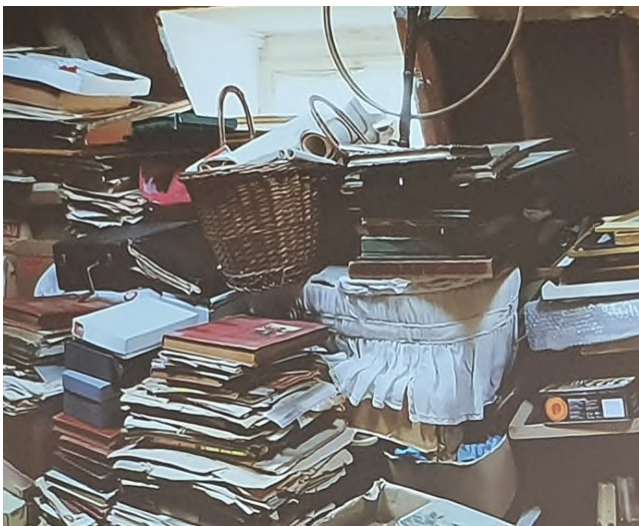
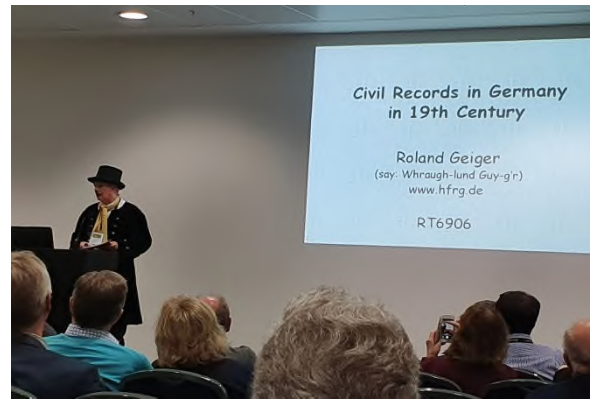
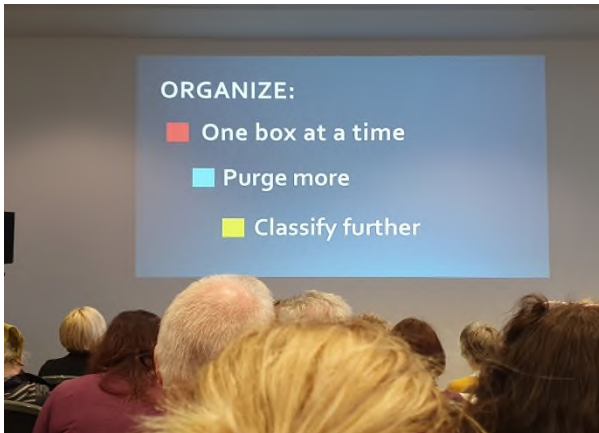
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Talk by Tom & Alison Taylor on Organising and Archiving your collections:

My office is like this (image above left)! Many genealogists offices are probably like this too – but Tom and Alison’s talk provided a good approach to organising and maintaining order. This was broken down into three easy stages aimed at de-cluttering to create some order to our research archive.

There were lots of practice tips and pointers which can all be found on their website.



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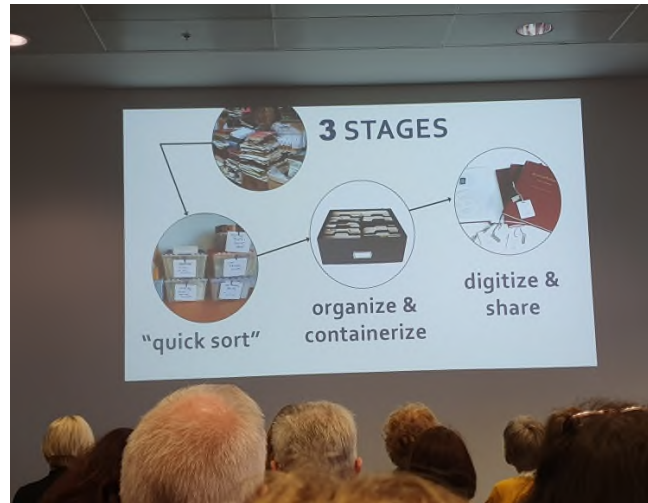
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This was an excellent talk which created a good deal of interest and audience questions. Some good ideas about how to minimise the paperwork and ‘clutter’ we have in our offices, and how to ensure that you only keep what is essential.

Website: <https://www.picturesandstories.com>

In summary, visiting Rootstech was an enjoyable experience and I am glad that I went. I was able to network with many individuals and look to see how others presented their talks. I went to 10 talks over the three days and enjoyed all but one. Presentations were to a high standard, and all had handouts which could be downloaded from the FamilySearch App.

Lorna Kinnaird, ASGRA Member

We hope you enjoyed Lorna’s article on Rootstech, London.

We hope to continue this series but here is where you can help.



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Genealogist on tour!

In the last Issue we announced a new initiative. If you visit a local archive when you are away on holiday, perhaps you would like to share your experiences. Many international archives have rich and interesting archives with strong connections to Ireland and to Scotland.

Many of you go on holiday and as you are interested in genealogy seek out a local resource and make a visit. Irish and Scottish peoples have huge diasporas and many early emigrants left traces in North America, New Zealand, Argentina and many other places around the world. These international resources often have rich and interesting archives which many of our members in AGI and ASGRA would be interested in hearing about.

Consequently, an exciting idea has been put forward by one of our readers. If you have visited an archive or a local resource abroad, then perhaps you would consider sharing your experiences with the readers of *CONNECT*. A brief article describing details of the archive, such as location, access and facilities together with a note on the holdings of interest coupled with a few photographs (in *jpeg* format) would make a great and informative contribution to the Newsletter.

So, 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 Ireland...

2019 AGM of AGI

The AGM of AGI has been pulled forward to a Tuesday. This is largely because of the difficulty experienced in recent years of booking a suitable venue for our Christmas Lunch after the meeting in a busy seasonal period.

The 2019 AGM of AGI will now be held on **Tuesday 3 December** at 10.30 am in the Helen Roe Theatre at 63, Merrion Square, Dublin 2 and will also be attended by Janet Bishop who is the Chairman of ASGRA. There will be a Christmas Lunch afterwards at a local hostelry.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The *Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme* for 2018 has been put together by Anne-Marie Smith MAGI, Nicola Morris MAGI and their 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 or are under consideration for 2020:

1. **Friday 17 January 2020 at 2.30 pm**

Kevin Cassidy, a genealogist from the USA, will give a talk on “*Using US records to crack Irish brickwalls*”. This will be held at the *National Library of Ireland* in Kildare Street, Dublin. More details will be available shortly.

2. **March 2020**

An AGI Open Day event is planned



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More details will be available shortly.

3. **Visit to the Railway Records Society in Dublin.**

More details will be available shortly.

4. **Limerick event**

It is planned to hold a CPD event in the summer in the city of Limerick

More details will be available shortly.

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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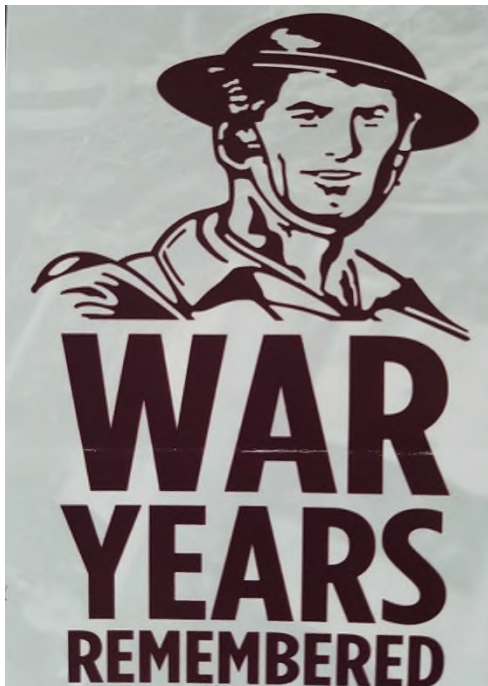
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Focus on ...

Recently *CONNECT* has introduced a new series of articles drawing the attention of our readers to important regional sources for genealogists.

We hope that this initiative will help readers in Ireland and Scotland to become more familiar with the various archives that each country offers.

This week we have a remarkable article about a little known military collection situated in Northern Ireland.



War Years Remembered

In September this year I visited 'War Years Remembered' (WYR) situated in a nondescript Unit on an Industrial Estate in Ballyclare, Co. Antrim. Despite me having an interest in military matters, this place had not come to my notice previously. I was certainly not prepared for the scale and variety of the exhibits and the way in which they were displayed.

This series of articles in *Connect* is highlighting Archives that have come to the attention of AGI/ASGRA members and it would be disingenuous to call WYR an Archive as it is more like a museum of military and social history, with its collection spanning over 100 years. The brains and main driving force behind the project is David MacCallion who started the collection in 1994. It stemmed from an interest in military matters and memorabilia, fostered in childhood family tales and an eagerness to possess items that in some cases were destined for the scrap-heap! He is showcasing Ireland's shared Military

and Social history from Home Rule to Home Front and in Ireland's contribution during the Great War and the Second World War.



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I was lucky enough to have a personal guided tour from David and I have to say that 2 hours was not enough time to take in everything, but it was time that passed all too quickly. Over the years, WYR has grown from a 'not for profit' organisation to a registered charity. David's final goal is to find a permanent home for the collection and achieve registered museum status. Its Trustees, Directors, Members and Volunteers are working together to raise awareness of our shared history and Volunteers are involved in a variety of activities including fund raising, restoration, conservation, research and outreach in the community.

Whilst the accompanying pictures will show a plethora of military equipment, uniforms, weapons, medals, etc. there is another aspect to the collection that, when developed fully, will be of great value to researchers, genealogists and no doubt, scholars. David has encouraged the public to donate medals, personal items, stories, ephemera and photographs. He believes that the collection includes many unique items which cannot be found in any other museum and this would include an archive of family stories of experiences relating to the ethos of the museum. I was so taken with David's enthusiasm and commitment that I am contemplating donating my late Father's modest collection of military documentation which he accumulated during service in the Royal Artillery throughout the whole of World War 2. Indeed, he served with

the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) when war broke out, was evacuated to England and served in an anti-aircraft battery in the London and Coventry 'Blitz' and then went on to India and Burma, becoming one of the 'Forgotten Army'. His service didn't even end with VJ (Victory over Japan) Day, as he was hospitalised when his comrades were shipped back to Belfast for demobilisation! So he missed the Victory Parade through Belfast.



These are the sort of tales that WYR is looking to collect and as those who served in the Second World War come into their nineties and are dying off, it is imperative to preserve their stories. Those who served in the First World War have now passed on but they have left a great legacy which can be appreciated by historians and 'joe public'. I should point out that this is not a 'stuffy' collection by any means and David and his team have gone to great pains to incorporate (where appropriate) parts of the collection into tableau; making great use of mannequins and contemporary ephemera. These include a WW1 Trench System, a 1940's Blitz House, American G.I.'s in Ulster and many more.



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I hope that I have given sufficient flavour of this collection to encourage you, my colleagues, to make the journey to Co. Antrim and to Unit 16, Dennison Industrial Estate, Ballyclare BT39 9EB. The usual opening times are Mon – Sat 10.00am to 4.00pm. and there is no admission fee, but a suggested minimum donation of £5 – and well worth it!

To have a look at all the activities WYR are involved in, you should visit their website at www.waryearsremembered.co.uk and for our Ireland readers who may have items they would wish to donate, you can contact WYR by email at admin@waryearsremembered.co.uk or telephone 028 9335 4125.

Some images from the WYR website and their information leaflet accompany this article and no copyright infringement is intended.

Robert C Davison MAGI

Co. Down



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Finally...

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

In addition, a further initiative was introduced encouraging members who visit foreign archives while on holiday to write about their experiences. We hope that this will not only prove to be interesting, but will also widen the knowledge of members about what is available in other parts of the world especially those with strong connections to Ireland and Scotland.

We wish all AGI and ASGRA members and their families a happy and successful 2020

End of Newsletter