



CONNECT

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



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

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

Ireland and Scotland remain in the grips of major lockdowns with their attendant restrictions. Most of our archives and libraries are again closed and many of us are trying desperately to “work from home”. We hope that we can alleviate a little of the gloom by introducing a good set of interesting and informative articles.

We look forward to safely emerging from this pandemic, to our archives re-opening and to resuming our normal genealogical research activities free of irritating restrictions.

In this quarter’s edition we have an interview with the new Hon Secretary of AGI, Clare Doyle, and an informative article by John Grenham on missing forenames on Irish birth records.

As usual, we hope you find the Issue useful and enjoyable. Again, 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:

Michael Walsh from *Accredited Genealogists Ireland (AGI)*

or

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 Member
Michael Walsh, AGI Council Member

From ASGRA: Janet Bishop, Immediate Past Chairman, ASGRA
Ian F. Marson, Chairman, ASGRA
Lorna Kinnaird, Secretary, ASGRA

AGI Council Office Bearers

President: Joan Sharkey
joan.sharkey@gmail.com

Hon. Secretary: Clare Doyle
info@accreditedgenealogists.ie

Hon. Treasurer: Kit Smyrl
kit@masseyandking.com

ASGRA Council Office Bearers

Chairman: Ian F. Marson,

Immediate Past Chairman: Janet Bishop,
genealogyscotland@gmail.com

Secretary: Lorna Kinnaird,
secretary@asgra.co.uk

Treasurer: Alex Wood
alexander.wood@blueyonder.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 2021 and the deadline for submissions is 11 April 2021.

We hope that you enjoy reading the Newsletter!



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News from Ireland and Scotland

News from Ireland

Errata

The AGI Editor wishes to apologise for inadvertently missing out the final paragraph of Anne-Marie Smith's article on Virtual BTOP 2020 which was published in the last issue of CONNECT (Issue 17: November 2020)

The missing paragraph is reproduced below:

BACK TO OUR PAST – VIRTUAL EVENT 18TH -20TH SEPTEMBER 2020.

The AGI presentations were all excellent and there is no doubt that they provided those who 'tuned in' over the three days with a wealth of information and advice on searching their Irish ancestors, so well done to everyone involved.



However, as we have come to expect with BTOP there were some technical issues on the first day. It was important for AGI to ensure that members of the public who paid to watch the presentations would easily identify our Members, so we included some images of our BTOP stand and other relevant information at the start and end of each of our videos (including voice over). Well, that was the grand plan! Unfortunately they had not been included in the first two AGI videos uploaded on Friday, but were subsequently amended for the remaining four presentations on Saturday and Sunday. Phew!

Hopefully if BTOP Virtual goes ahead again in 2021 the organisers will have 'ironed out' any teething problems and the event will run a lot smoother next time!

AGI hopes to produce more presentations by its Members on video over the coming months, which would be available to view on our website. **WATCH THIS SPACE!!!**

**Anne-Marie Smith, MAGI.
BTOP Sub-committee.**



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A zooming account of AGI's 33rd AGM

For the first time and for reasons all too familiar to us, AGI's 33rd AGM took place virtually via Zoom on 2 December 2020. As we logged-on and settled in our respective on-screen squares, one could only marvel at the technology that had made this possible. Had it not been for the current 'situation' how long would it have taken to progress to this level of sophisticated virtual connection.

Proceedings began with AGI President Joan Sharkey welcoming everyone including Janet Bishop, Chairwoman of our ASGRA. After the usual business of Apologies and proposing and signing Minutes of the previous AGM, Joan continued with a *resumé* of the present status regarding access to many of the principal National repositories used for Irish genealogical research, both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. The President thanked those that contributed to the various sub-committees throughout the year and other members including those on Council who contribute so much of their time and energy in all aspects of running the Association.

Joan reported on her visit to ASGRA's AGM held at the New Register Office in Edinburgh in February 2020. Unfortunately, this marked the end of physical traveling over the following months as events were slowly cancelled or postponed. Joan extended congratulations to long standing AGI member Justin Martin who having retired as a professional genealogist this year, was awarded the status of Emeritus Member in recognition of his long years of dedicated service to AGI and genealogy in Ireland. Besides being a professional genealogist, Justin is also a talented artist and the President wished him many happy years ahead enjoying this aspect of his life.

Joan noted that it was with great sadness that we heard of the news of the death of our colleague Gerry Kennedy from Co. Clare. Gerry was present at our AGM last year and in great form, so it was a shock to hear of his death. He was a member of AGI for 10 years, a founder of the Clare Roots Society and published many articles on genealogy and the local area of Co. Clare.

The President ended her address by looking to the future on a note of optimism regarding recent announcements about COVID-19 vaccines; '*With some luck we will all meet next year in person and socially mix and celebrate*'. Joan hoped that we all and our families stay safe and well in the months ahead and wished everyone present a Happy Christmas and New Year.

There followed a report from the Hon. Secretary Georgina Scally who is finishing up her 3-year term of office. Georgina outlined the many activities in which AGI had been involved in in 2020 despite unusual circumstances and the move from real to virtual platform; Back To Our Past in Belfast held in real time in February, BTOP Dublin held in September on a virtual platform, one of three scheduled Open Days and Report Writing CPD event again held in real time in Belfast in February, while two other similar events scheduled for Dublin (March) and Cork (April) were cancelled.



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Apart from CPD, Georgina noted that AGI had been involved in other activities in 2020 all held on virtual platforms (lectures, live Q&A sessions, National Archives of Ireland GAS panel went virtual in April and continues to provide a worldwide virtual service to anyone with a genealogical query and an internet connection; NAI Culture Night; Image of the Month initiative and not least Connect newsletter edited by Michael Walsh from AGI and Lorna Kinnaird of ASGRA with production facilitated by AGI's John Grenham. By the end of the year, there seemed to have been a lot achieved, despite initial apparent obstacles.

The Hon. Treasurer Kit Smyrl presented an account of the association's financial activities which unlike the Country, are in a healthy and balanced state. It was noted that GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) introduced in May 2019 are wreaking havoc with common sense, especially when dealing with banking. Despite this not inconsiderable inconvenience, Kit agreed to continue as Hon. Treasurer for another year.

Chair of the CPD sub-committee Nicola Morris presented an overview of events held in 2020 both in real time in the early part of the year, and later after the more experienced technological wizards amongst us had made the virtual leap to platforms such as Zoom. Humans apparently are programmed to struggle with change, but once adapted, these changes can be beneficial. Zoom falls into this category, initially challenging (for most of us) but once mastered (in its basic form) can bring great benefits and nowhere was this more evident than by being able to attend the excellent CPD events organised throughout the year.

A new twist on the Image of the Month initiative was brought to the virtual table by Tony Hennessy who has been largely responsible for keeping this interesting genealogical side-line going for the last few years. It seems we all enjoy reading these pieces more than we enjoy providing them! From 2021 onwards it is hoped that everyone in the organization (in alphabetical order) will contribute something. The closely monitored cause-effect algorithm between posting of the Image of the Month on the AGI website and the immediate spike in visitor numbers, makes this new arrangement a no-brainer and a win-win for the organization and members alike.



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A screen shot of the AGM of AGI held on Zoom

Paul Gorry spoke briefly on the AGI/ASGRA alliance but as planned face-to face meetings were postponed or cancelled (SAFHS - Scottish Association of Family History Societies Conference in Musselburgh in April; joint two-day CPD event scheduled to take place in Limerick in September), there was little to report. The hope is that AGI will host our Scottish colleagues whenever normality returns, although it is unclear when that might be.

ASGRA Chairwoman Janet Bishop made a short address and noted that thanks to Zoom she was delighted to be able to attend the AGM especially having missed out attending last year's event. Janet spoke of the positive impact of these virtual platforms and once accustomed to using them, they proved of great benefit keeping contact with members via informal chats as well as CPDs and Council meetings. Janet indicated that it seems almost certain that the ASGRA AGM 2021 will be held virtually while it is hoped that the new Chair of SAFHS Ian Leith will host the conference scheduled for this year in April 2021. Janet commended AGI on all the events that took place in 2020 and she looks forward to meeting some of us in person one day.

Michael Walsh AGI's joint editor with ASGRA's Lorna Kinnaird, reported on the continued production of the AGI/ASGRA Newsletter Connect which is now at its 17th issue. Michael thanked all who contributed to the magazine in 2020 as well as extending thanks to Lorna and John Grenham of AGI for production. Michael noted that he is always looking for contributions and anyone with ideas for articles/news items or anything of genealogical interest please contact



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him. He also noted that while he had intended to stand down from his editorial position after 5 years, lacking any willing volunteer to take over he is continuing in the role.

In the normal course of events, election of officers and council members would follow but this year a virtual 'vote' had been deemed by the AGI Council too time consuming and potentially difficult to undertake. For this reason, the President Joan Sharkey explained that at AGI's last Council meeting in November, 6 members had put their names forward as ordinary members of Council for 2021 and all had been proposed and seconded. If there were no objections (there were none) and if no one else wished to come forward (no one came forward) these individuals would be deemed elected.

The following officers were voted in for 2021: President: Joan Sharkey; Vice-President: Nicola Morris; Hon. Secretary: Clare Doyle; Hon. Treasurer: Kit Smyrl. The following were elected as the six ordinary members of Council for 2021: Georgina Scally; Anne-Marie Smith; Michael Walsh; Steven Smyrl; Sandy O'Byrne; Paul Gorry.

And finally, the best part of the meeting. Joan Sharkey invited Paul Gorry to speak about a special announcement. Paul announced the award of Fellow to long standing AGI member Máire Mac Conghail. After a *resumé* of Maire's long involvement and many achievements in Irish genealogy and other Irish cultural institutions, Steven Smyrl took up the mantel and announced a second award of Fellowship to long standing AGI member Helen Kelly. Steven likewise presented a *resumé* of Helen's achievements and involvement with Irish genealogy. Both newly elected Fellows were taken by surprise (as had been the intention!) and both spoke briefly.

The 33rd AGI AGM was called to a close by AGI President Joan Sharkey who noted her delight to end on such a high note. Joan wished everyone well, thanked Janet Bishop for attending and looked forward to meeting everyone at the first CPD event in Jan. 2021.

In past years, the assembled would have taken up residence for the afternoon in a nearby hostelry, and as the evening drew on possibly moving to another nearby hostelry. It is hard to imagine that in the space of just one year such things dreams are made of...

Georgina Scally MAGI

Outgoing AGI Honorary Secretary 2018 - 2020



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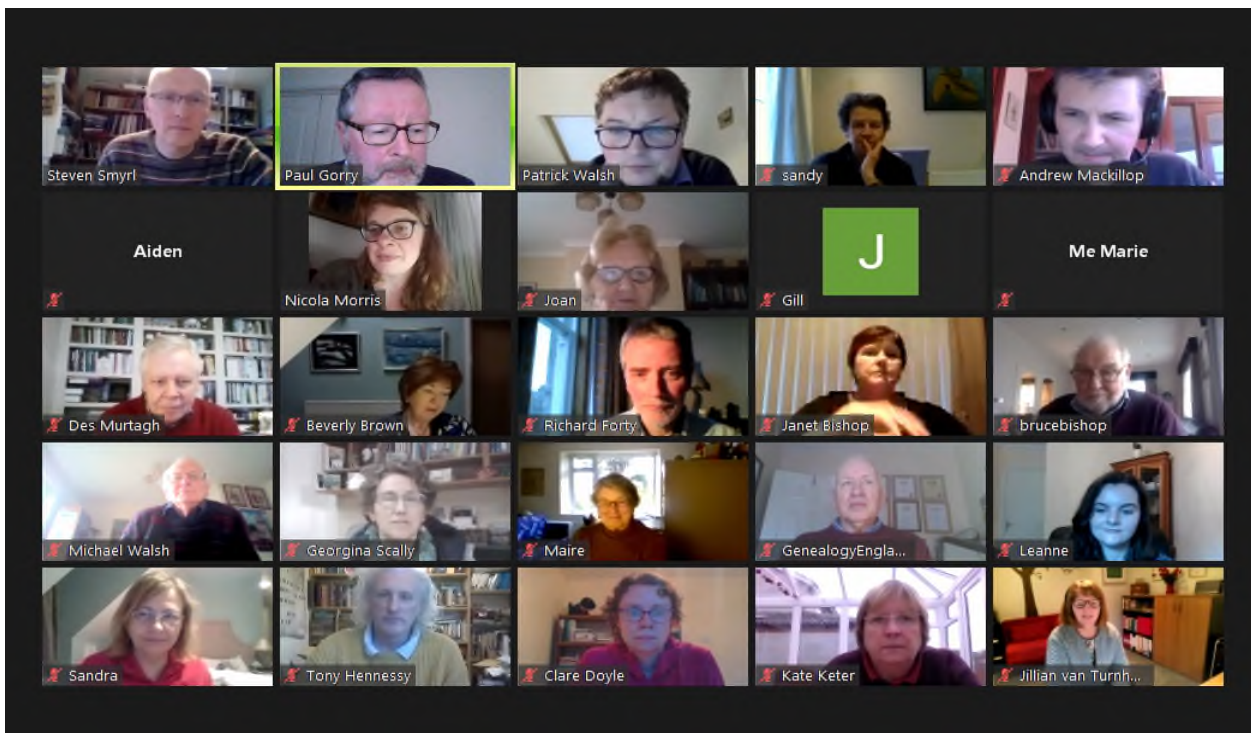
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AGI CPD Event 19 January 2021 Scottish and Irish Land records

AGI held its first CPD event of the new year on Tuesday 19 January 2021. This was an interesting and informative talk on Scottish and Irish land records given by Dr. Andrew MacKillop from the University of Glasgow and Dr. Patrick Walsh of Trinity College Dublin. The speakers explained that the aim of the project was to make Scottish and Irish land records more accessible to the general public through digital processing. This involved the use of digital tools to “translate” document images into digitised formats making them more usable and more searchable.

The initial challenge was to teach computers to read, understand and translate legalistic documents that went back to the 17th century by modifying available language processing software.



Screenshot during the AGI CPD event on 19 January 2021



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In Ireland the documents for translation were usually about securing title to land which was the source of political power and wealth. The Scottish input was largely the “sasines” which were documents relating to transfers of land and the legal registration of these transfers. The Registration Act of 1617 established a Register of Sasines in every area of Scotland.

The value to genealogists of digitisation was summarised:

- these documents provide a rich paper trail which includes witnesses, guarantors, registrars, lenders, borrowers, wives, widows and other family members
- these documents were rich in locations and place names
- software could be a great help to remove ambiguities by distinguishing between common surnames and place names e.g. between the surname “Hamilton” and the place Hamilton which is located in South Lanarkshire

The speakers appealed to genealogists for help by applying their experience of using the Registry of Deeds in Ireland and Sasines in Scotland to offer some guidance on how to approach the indexing and accessing of this digitised material.

Michael Walsh MAGI



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News from Scotland

ASGRA AGM

This issue of Connect follows our recent AGM which was held by Zoom on the 5 February. In addition to the large turnout of members we were pleased to welcome our Patron, Dr. J. Morrow - Lord Lyon King of Arms, our Systems & Procedures Advisor, Catherine Hare, our External Assessment Moderator, Geoff Hare and Paul Gorry AGI who was representing our colleagues in Ireland.

ASGRA had a change of Office Bearers going forward into 2021:

Chairman:	Ian Marson
Immediate Past Chairman:	Janet Bishop
Hon Secretary:	Lorna Kinnaird
Hon Treasurer:	Alex Wood
Council Member:	Kate Keter
Council Member:	Shirley Obrzud

The AGM included nominations for Council positions and there were a number of changes. I am honoured to have been chosen as Chairman of ASGRA and my thanks go to outgoing Chairman Janet Bishop who now assumes the role of Immediate Past Chairman. Janet has done sterling work over an 11 year period and her leadership has brought ASGRA to the forefront of standards in professional genealogy. membership of our association is indeed a recognition that not only shows an extensive knowledge of research methodology but also the ability to deliver a quality service for Clients.

Thanks also go to John McGee for his long service as Honorary Treasurer. John will continue to serve as an Ordinary Council Member. Alex Wood has stepped up to the position as John's successor. Lorna Kinnaird has taken the role as Honorary Secretary and her skills will be welcome in the administration of the association going forward. Val Wilson has completed her term on Council and I thank her for her hard work over the many years she has served. Val will continue to be one of our Assessors. We welcome Kate Keter and Shirley Obrzud as ordinary Council members.



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Screen shots of the AGM of ASGRA held on Zoom



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An Odd Year!

It has been an odd year. The start of the pandemic saw archives and libraries close in most cases with less than 24 hours notice. This took away our ability to undertake research in many records and subsequently left Client projects unfinished with little prospect of completing them in the short term. The situation remains virtually unchanged and although we have online resources available there are limitations that prevent access to a wealth of historical content. The future is still uncertain and although we know that an easing of restrictions will eventually enable reopening of repositories it could be some time before full access to buildings and records is resumed.

CPD Events:

We have been able to take advantage of the Zoom meeting platform and have just introduced a series of CPD events for members and our friends in AGI. Our plan is also to have some form of event in the near future for those who are interested in taking up Genealogy as a profession and finding out about membership of ASGRA. It is very likely that this will be an online event.

The next CPD event will be on the 25th March 2021 via Zoom and presented by Bruce Bishop (ASGRA Member) entitled "*Where on earth are they? An exploration of the less-common Scottish Church records before Statutory Registration in 1855*"

ASGRA's BIG 40th BIRTHDAY!

ASGRA is 40 years old this year so we will be celebrating this anniversary with an event later in the year and we very much hope that this could be achieved with an actual physical meeting. Further details will be announced in the near future.



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PUBLICATIONS – from a researcher’s perspective

Lorna has asked me to describe the two books I have written, both of which have given me much pleasure in the research.

Coalmasters and their Connections

This book was based on a commission that I worked on for a client several years ago. Starting as a general genealogical search, it soon “morphed” into a more detailed analysis into several family portraits which the client owned, family silver and other items of which brief details were given. The client wanted to know more about these items, who had owned them, what their story was and how these people were connected to the main line of ancestry. As you can imagine, being a family of the wealthier classes, it opened various avenues for me to research - wills, inventories, deeds (including a Deed of Entail), Sasine Abridgements etc. There were various connections to prominent people, including one of the “Glasgow Boys”, there was (isn’t there always?) an illegitimate child (who inherited a farm in Nova Scotia), a sugar broker becoming bankrupt due to “unjustifiable conduct and over speculation” As can be imagined, some of the investigation was conducted “on foot”. I visited graveyards, churches, local history libraries in various areas and even the house that one of the most prominent ancestors had lived in. In fact, whilst walking around the grounds, I was asked to come inside, for the house had been used in a charitable capacity for some time and I was permitted to have a look round and take photographs. It was a fascinating exercise. I decided that, based on what I had found, this would make an interesting book, so, after permission was granted by my client, I went ahead. Meanwhile, the client had given me email addresses for some family members both here and abroad, as I had asked if there were any photographs I could use. This really opened the field, and I started corresponding with some of them, gleaning more information as well as obtaining photographs. I was most excited, however, when I made contact with descendants of the “black sheep” of the family who had suddenly left his home in Lanarkshire after having several restrictions placed on him regarding his father’s will, as he had “not been entrusted with the management of money matters.” Even when his brothers died later, bequests to him came with certain restraints. Unfortunately, despite much searching into local newspapers, I found nothing concrete regarding any misdemeanours and came to the conclusion that he may just have acted recklessly, being the youngest member of a fairly wealthy family. He had subsequently gone to one of the farthest points of Scotland – North Yell, Shetland Isles– where he married a local girl, and tried his hand at farming for 3 or 4 years. Following this, he had sailed to Nova Scotia with his wife and children around 1864 and discourteously disappeared from my Scottish research possibilities! I had really wanted to find out more about this particular character, who had piqued my interest, so seeing photographs of him and his family, and finding out how he had made a great life for himself and his family, started a lucrative business and became a prominent member of society over there, was an extremely rewarding finale to my research.

West Lothian The Dark Side

I loved carrying out the research for this book, which is based on true stories about crime in West Lothian over a century, from 1769 to 1869. It really started because I had been carrying out client commissions involving crime, which had opened my eyes into the available records at the



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National Records of Scotland. I investigated mainly High Court cases, as there are generally so many witness statements to back up the indictments. These are particularly useful in genealogy, of course, since other family members are often mentioned, with their descriptions and locations where they lived. I tried to compile stories with different levels of crime, from the lesser ones such as poaching, theft, fraud, furious driving along the king's highway etc to escape from prison, embezzlement, riot, assault and robbery, and murder. Trying to summarise pages of information in these documents was a time-consuming task, but what amazed me was the amount of data about the places where the crimes took place, sometimes including hand drawn maps. That in itself was an education for me, as I visited a lot of the locations – some of which had changed names or had been written in colloquial form. Even occupations were often described fully. For instance, in a story from 1835 a John Cossar is described as being a 35 year old groom in the service of Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth, Baronet and John had lived with his master at Garscube, East Kirkpatrick, although his wife and family lived at 20 Downie Place Edinburgh etc. In one from 1831, one of those indicted was described as being age 38, five feet four tall, stoutly built, grey eyes, dark brown hair, round face with a pock-pitted, fresh complexion and had the scar of a burn on his right hand. If that was your ancestor, you could certainly picture him!

There were many doctors' reports included – some very gruesome. In one story when the nose had been bitten off by the assailant, the witness statements left nothing to the imagination, and when the missing part had been found and was bandaged onto the remaining part, the mind boggled as to the result of that "operation"! The famous James Young Simpson had written one of the reports, when he was a very young man. Seeing his signature was amazing.

Many of the crimes committed were due to poverty or imbibing too much alcohol and one was left thinking that nothing much had changed over the years in many ways. The main difference, however, were the punishments imposed on the criminals. Punishments such as being outlawed and put to the horn were interesting. There was considerable transportation involved, obviously, and when one of the individuals committed a crime after returning from transportation before the allotted time, the law stipulated that he could have suffered death as a felon. However, "fortunately" he was then transported for another 14 years when found guilty.

All in all, I found this to be a very educational process and hope that I can find the time and energy to write another similar book in the future.

Margaret Hubble
ASGRA Member



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SAFHS Conference:

Date for your Diary! Saturday 17th April 2021.

Following the cancellation of the SAFHS conference "It's a Sair Fecht" last year we are pleased that SAFHS are now to run the event virtually on 17 April 2021. The theme is the same and the joint hosts are ASGRA, Border FHS, Lothian FHS and the Scottish Genealogical Society. Our member Alex Wood will be delivering a talk on behalf of ASGRA "The Radical Rising of 1820" which was researched and put together jointly by John McGee, Val Wilson, Alex Wood and Lorna Kinnaird. ASGRA will also be hosting the "Ask the Experts" part of the virtual event - questions will be invited in advance and answers given live on the day.

**The Scottish Association
of Family History Societies**

Free event
Six presentations
Genealogy Q&A

safhs.org.uk
Scottish Charity Number SC029006

**SAFHS Virtual
Conference
17 April 2021**

"It's a Sair Fecht!"

PROGRAMME

09.00 am – Welcome

Ian Leith, Chair of SAFHS

09.10 am - Dr Joseph J Morrow, Lord Lyon King of Arms, Patron

09.30 am – The Radical Rising of 1820

The last armed rising on British soil happened during one week in April 1820. Those involved were intent on severing the Union and establishing a radical Scottish republic. It ended in



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executions, imprisonments, transportations and 85 trials for high treason.

The talk is presented by Alex Wood (ASGRA Council) and sponsored by ASGRA

10.30 am – ASK ASGRA

Members of ASGRA answer pre submitted enquiries

Questions to be submitted in advance to secretary@asgra.co.uk

11.30 - Ae Fond Kiss, and then we sever!"

Finding Records of Marital Disharmony

The talk will be presented by Kirsty Wilkinson a professional genealogist, based in Edinburgh. She holds an MSc in Genealogical, Palaeographical and Heraldic Studies from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, and is an accredited member of the Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (ASGRA)

12.30 pm– Mining in Lanarkshire and Midlothian

The talk will be presented by James Waugh and will cover various aspects of coal mining history

This talk will be sponsored by Lothians Family History Society

1.30 pm – Asylum Records for Genealogy

The talk will be presented by Louise Williams, Archivist, Lothian Health Services and will look at the circumstances of entering an asylum and the treatments while there.

This talk is sponsored by The Scottish Genealogical Society

2.30 pm – The Men and (eventually) the Women of the Police of the Scottish Borders

The talk will be presented by David Smale who served with the Royal Marines and Lothian and Borders Police. David has a Phd in Policing History from University of Edinburgh.

This talk is sponsored by Borders Family History Society

3.30 pm – Understanding Kirk Session Records

4.30 pm – The 2022 Annual SAFSH Conference

A preview by Tay Valley Family History Society

4.45 pm – Closing Remarks

Ian Leith, Chair of SAFHS

To book, please register using the SAFHS Webpage at <https://www.safhs.org.uk> and click on the link to register your place with Zoom.



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How has lockdown treated you?

There has been nothing like it!!!! All major archives closed, meetings cancelled, and genealogists forced to stay at home self-isolating with nothing on the telly and only an occasional zoom meeting to break the monotony!!! Then a period of re-awakening and an summer period when life started to get back to “normal” before the instances of the Covid-19 virus started to rise dramatically and both Ireland and Scotland were forced into much stricter measures and our archives closed again.

What impact did these lockdown restrictions have on you and on your life? Perhaps you took up a new interest or activity that could be safely practiced at home or started reading all those books about genealogy that you always promised you would read but never did or perhaps you used the time to reflect on where your life was going and on what changes were needed to your lifestyle and so on.....

If you would like to share your experiences about how lockdown provided opportunities as well bringing disruption, about how you reacted to these new and formidable challenges or about how you survived during this amazing period of history, then we would love to hear from you!!!

We would welcome any interesting articles by genealogists and researchers on how the lockdown treated them, on what they learnt, how they changed and how they adapted their lives - serious or humorous!

Please get in touch with:

Michael Walsh (AGI) at michael9walsh@gmail.com

or

Lorna Kinnaird (ASGRA) at dunedingenie@virginmedia.com

As part of this series we are pleased to present our first article from **Rosaleen Underwood** who is a former Council member of AGI and is on the committee of the Irish Genealogical Research Society (IGRS) – Ireland Branch. She a frequent lecturer and is one of a team of consultants servicing the Genealogy Advisory Service which operates in the *National Archives of Ireland* in Dublin.



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MEMORIES OF LOCKDOWN

Lockdown 1—Cold water, cold showers

The hot water stopped working in early March and we weren't able to get anyone in to fix it until July. At least the radiators kept working. We ended up having to get a new boiler which led to getting a new tank in the hot press, went away for a few days and came back to a flooded bathroom. It never rains but it pours.

Lockdown 2—The Bridge

All 38 episodes plus other Scandi thrillers every Saturday night on BBC4 from the end of August till the beginning of December. Absolutely brilliant and they really helped to keep us going but why, oh why don't they ever switch on the so-and-so lights !

Lockdown 3—Hibernation

I usually feel like going into hibernation this time of year but never as much as this year. I just want to sleep all day, dragging myself around and out for a walk. The dark days don't help.

And in between—the garden ! From family picnics in the summer to freezing Christmas garden visits (it's a wonder we didn't all get pneumonia) as well as short spells of gardening and being able to sit outside to read the paper or whatever background reading I may have had for work.

I'm lucky. I live in a warm comfortable bubble—long may that last. Many people do not and I don't know how I would manage if I didn't. While I was sick, I started remembering all the places I had been to and all the things we had done—great memories! Never as much as I would like and I may never get the chance to go back to many, or even any of them but I'm so glad that I did all those things while I had the chance.

Coming from what I can only describe as a positively negative background—"you don't / can't / couldn't / shouldn't / wouldn't be able to"—I've always found it necessary to be determinedly positive. It takes work, sometimes a lot of work and I have to keep reminding myself how lucky I am. I probably had the dreaded covid back in March—I thought it was just a worse dose of bronchitis than usual but it knocked me out for three months and the extreme and persistent exhaustion since is all part of it. But, compared to others, I got off lightly. I can still enjoy life, get out for a walk even if my routine 20 minute walk now takes 30 and exhausts me—I have to keep telling myself that the more I do, the more I can do, and if I don't do it now I won't be able



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to do it in the summer when I want to. And *maybe* I still have some bit of immunity for another while from further infection.

And I can still work, so many people can't and have lost jobs they may never get back. Yes, it's a nuisance not being able to access the repositories and there are lots of records I would love to be able to use but, fortunately, I had completed all that kind of research before they all shut down. Ten years ago it would have been an absolute disaster for all of us but there is so much online now that it is possible to do so much from home. Meantime, let's just hope that more and more records will soon be available online. Fingers crossed.

What am I going to miss about lockdown ? Most people will just want to forget it but there are a few plusses !

Zoom meetings. A lot of people are fed up of them but in moderation they can be great. I'm part of a group in the Irish Genealogical Research Society (IGRS) who have a weekly Coffee Break that started at 40 minutes but now can stretch to 2 hours sometimes. We take it in turns to give a talk about some aspect of our family history or research. It's very entertaining and we're all now friends rather than just acquaintances. Of course it's not as good as actually meeting up with our friends but it certainly helps cheer things up. And we can all benefit from more talks and conferences going online that we wouldn't normally be able to attend because of the distance.

And I'm going to miss Social Distancing on the buses and being able to spread all my shopping around me instead of piling it all on my lap or between my feet. I will also miss the Lockdown timetable. Halfway up the Dublin mountains, we're a long way from other bus routes and don't drive. Dublin Bus, in its almighty wisdom, reduced our services (as it thought) and put us on a weekend timetable all week. But two years ago they reduced the service from once an hour to once every hour and a quarter except at weekends. So we now have a better service as well as a new service from TFI which started 18 months ago and goes once every hour and a half Monday to Friday. So it's an ill wind on the buses even though it usually ends up with two buses within a few minutes of each other before another long gap.

Yes, there are days when it all gets me down too, when I'm fed up of people being afraid to look at you because they're so afraid of getting anything, and the unfortunates who are so desperate for someone to talk to that you can't get away from them, and I would give anything to be able to get my hair done. I'll soon have to start wearing a hat to the zoom meetings to hide the Phyllis Diller look. Will we ever get back to normality, even some kind of normality ? I make plans for a day out here, a week there, and all the things I am going to do and see, as well as all the friends I'm



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going to catch up with, and the family, of course. I may never get round to the half of it but it helps to keep me going.

I keep telling myself that we have passed the shortest day, the days are getting longer and brighter (even if that's only wishful thinking), and every day there are new surprises in the garden. Buds that were microscopic, then minute, are suddenly clearly visible and no longer a figment of my imagination. Things I thought were dead are coming back to life. There will be plenty that won't come back to life but I will replace them when I can. It's just a pity that people can't be as easily restored as a garden.

The genealogical highlight of my year—finally (after about 20 years) finding a record of my great-grandmother's birth in London that confirms her place in her family in Limerick,

And I really appreciate the hot water now.

Rosaleen Underwood MAGI





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Dates for your Diary...

In Ireland...

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme for 2021 is currently being 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.

Nicola and her team plan a series of remote events for the spring and summer using modern technology. The aim is to provide a series of online lectures on how to access prominent Irish archives and use their resources.

Details will be provided as soon as they are available.

In Scotland...

The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme for 2021 is well underway with the third of our events taking place on the 25th March 2021 via Zoom and presented by Bruce Bishop (ASGRA Member) entitled “*Where on earth are they? An exploration of the less-common Scottish Church records before Statutory Registration in 1855*”.



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Getting to know each other... Clare Doyle from AGI

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

In this edition of CONNECT we are saying “hello” to newly elected Hon Secretary of AGI, Clare Doyle MAGI.

Unusually for an AGI Hon Secretary, Clare lives out in the west of Ireland near Tuam in Co. Galway from where she runs her own genealogical, research and lecturing business.

Name: Clare Doyle

Location: Kilbannon, Tuam, Co. Galway

Website: www.wildatlanticfamilyresearch.com





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Ref.	Questions
Q1	Name: Clare Doyle
Q2	Email: wildatlanticfamilyresearch@gmail.com
Q3	Occupation: Genealogist, Archivist & Records Manager
Q4	Location: Tuam, Co. Galway in the west of Ireland
Q5	Areas of research and specialisms: Family history in the west of Ireland in particular (and Monaghan where I was born and lived for some time). I am also interested in local history, especially the Poor Law, the Famine, folklore, and the records of the national school education system in Ireland.
Q6	What brought you into genealogy? As children we moved around a lot due to my father's job, so I was always fascinated (and jealous) that some people lived in the same place all their lives. Knowing our family's history was a way of rooting ourselves, even when we moved to a new place.
Q7	What has been your favourite piece of research or most interesting assignment?



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	<p>I recently did some research for someone whose grandfather, like mine, worked on the Great Northern Railway in Clones, Co. Monaghan.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the man in question died young, quite tragically. It was fascinating, though, piecing together his story through records, photos and the local newspaper, The Northern Standard, kept in the branch library in Clones (thank you to the Clones Librarian for replying to my query during COVID!).</p> <p>Extracts from the paper included a lovely tale about the family's pet dog as well as aspects of the deceased's inquest, and compensation due to his wife and young family. Local people know their place best and I managed to find someone who knew exactly where the man was buried, the headstone giving his wife and children's subsequent dates of death too.</p>
Q8	<p>What is your favourite Archive and Why?</p> <p>I like looking at the Education (ED/) series in the National Archives though it can be hard going, especially if you have a bad back – some of the registers are very large and heavy. I love the original registers; they have a comforting smell of authenticity! For the ED2 series in particular you can read all sorts about the teachers of a parish, particularly at inspection time which must have been very stressful for all teachers in those small schools – 'want of energy and vigour', a common complaint, is my favourite remark.</p> <p>I also love the National Library of Ireland Flickr Commons page, my favourite image is dog-related (Pug on a Chair) from the Poole Collection 1900 POOLEIMP566</p>
Q9	<p>How is your own family tree?</p> <p>A bit like the cobbler's children, his own are left for a long time without proper shoes, so goes my own family tree. I have a 'working' print-out with lots of scribbles and cross-outs that I return to from time to time. With the help of a family headstone its earliest date is in the 1790s – sad to see the cause of death of so many are simple illnesses today, like bronchitis.</p>
Q10	<p>What tips can you offer a beginner?</p>



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	<p>Talk to older people in your family, not only about dates and names but about how they felt about the things that happened in their lives. Most people can easily talk about two things, their first day at school and early memories of Christmas and each of these has changed so much as the generations go by. Records are absolutely very important, but emotion and empathy help us see our ancestors as real people with real lives, not just names on a page.</p> <p>Also, write down the names of people in photos, you'll be sorry otherwise!</p>
Q11	<p>How do you relax or what other interests do you have?</p> <p>I do a bit of running and I like to read, fiction mostly, but also lots of local history. I really enjoyed Manchán Magan's, 'Thirty-Two Words for Field: Lost Words of the Irish Landscape'.</p>
Q12	<p>Any other comments or information to add?</p> <p>One great thing about family history is that it never stops, each generation rolls around giving more details for the family tree and there are always new sources that can potentially help in the search.</p>



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Invisible Elephant Traps in Irish Birth Records

by John Grenham MAGI

INDEX to BIRTHS REGISTERED in IRELAND in 1866.

Vol.	Page	Name and Registration District	Vol.	Page	Name
7	411	PELL, John Joseph. Dublin, North	12	584	PERCY, Robert II
18	388	PELLY, Anna Maria. Dublin, South	12	656	PERCY, William. A
20	366	PELLICAN, John. Listowel	10	500	PERRIN, John. I
6	991	PELLY, Catherine. Ballinaloe	19	37	— Mary Anne.
isburn	1	— Catherine Evangelina. Dublin, South	2	745	PERRIS, Patrick.
17	715	— John Joseph. Dublin, South	2	737	PERRINS, Cornelius
11	893	— Mary. Portanna	14	946	— Joseph John
7	572	PENNINGTON, Marian Sydney. Dublin, North	17	527	— Patrick. N
5	140	(female). Dublin, South	7	811	— Robert Hen
11	222	PENROCK, Ellen. Tralee	20	627	— Thomas. C
20	104	— Ellen. Tralee	15	596	(female). I
11	782	— Margaret. Kilkenny	8	693	PERRINSON, Bark
7	937	— Mary. Dingle	13	207	PERRINSON, Brig
7	732	— Mary Eliza. Kilkenny	3	609	PERRILL, Patrick
3	447	— Patrick. Listowel	10	501	PERRIS, Ellen. I
28	452	PENNA, Anna. Enniscorthy	14	725	— Henrietta.
19	400	— Bernard. Carrick-on-Shannon	18	65	— William Al
14	82	— Bridget. Enniscorthy	4	814	(female).
14	476	— Daniel. Guey	9	733	PERROT, Cathari
10	128	— Daniel. Guey	7	876	— Sarah. Cl
6	178	— Elizabeth. Nenagh	7	877	PERROTT, Marg
7	349	— Elizabeth. Carlow	3	651	— Robert. A
15	394	— Ellen. Ballymoyne	13	447	— William C
20	134	— Ellen. Rathdown	6	194	— William T
10	733	— Ellen. Enniscorthy	12	920	PERRY, Agnes.
2	228	— James. Waterford	19	784	— Agnes. I
11	112		9	951	— Angelina. I
			8	507	— Ann. Do

Every researcher my age remembers doing battle with the old printed GRO indexes. If the surname was common, trying to extract the right entry was like knitting with boxing gloves on. The apoplexy produced by wading through the ninety-two John Murphy births listed 1865-1870 in Cork Superintendent Registrar's district alone tended to mask other obstacles, in particular the number of births without a forename, listed in the index as "Murphy, Male" or "Murphy, Female". (One hundred and five in Cork 1865-1870, since you ask).

The primary function of a civil registration system is identity verification, and a birth cert stating "Murphy, Male" won't exactly do that. How could so many be registered without a forename? And why did they seem to be concentrated in urban areas such as Cork? Eventually I was irritated enough to hunt down the Act setting up the registration system and found that there was never an obligation to register a forename. The list of information to be supplied includes the blithe "the name (if any)". So it was perfectly legal to omit the forename. Why? I can only speculate, but it may have had something to do with differing denominational stances on infant baptism, to allow registration before christening. In any case, the same law had already applied to English and Welsh GRO registrations since 1837.

The biggest hole in the birth registration system was therefore a feature, not a bug. But why were there so many in urban areas? The wonderful IrishGenealogy.ie provided the answer by allowing browsing of the full entries. Whatever the original motivation behind the law, the urban maternity ('lying-in') hospitals seized on it. It became a way for them to mass-register entire wards full of newborns without bothering to check the forename. The practice seems to have lasted until around 1910, almost fifty solid years. These are most of the children who appear in the IrishGenealogy birth indexes with first name "Unknown" and in the old printed indexes as "Male" or "Female".



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Superintendent Registrar's District North Dublin Union Registrar's District North City

18 64 Births Registered in the District of North City in the Union of North Dublin in the County of City of Dublin

No.	Date and Place of Birth.	Name (if any).	Sex.	Name and Surname and Dwelling Place of Father.	Name and Surname and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.	Additional Name, if added after Registration of Birth, and Date.
11	26th Nov 1864 Lying in Hospital Britain Street		Male	John Muir Dutton Linen Hall Barracks	Mary Anne Tomlin formerly Meadow	Soldier	John Cronyn Present at birth Lying in Hospital Britain Street	Twenty sixth of November 1864	Alfred Cryan Deputy Registrar	
12	26th Nov 1864 Lying in Hospital Britain Street		Female	Boyan Halden 25 Church Street	Anne Halden formerly Coyle	Labourer	John Cronyn Present at birth Lying in Hospital Britain Street	Twenty sixth of November 1864	Alfred Cryan Deputy Registrar	
13	26th Nov 1864 Lying in Hospital Britain Street		Male	Maurice Flynn 20 Townsend Street	Eliza Flynn formerly Potts	Labourer	John Cronyn Present at birth Lying in Hospital Britain Street	Twenty sixth of November 1864	Alfred Cryan Deputy Registrar	
14	26th Nov 1864 Lying in Hospital Britain Street		Female	Peter Lynch 6 Poolbeg Street	Margaret Lynch formerly Pugh	Turner	John Cronyn Present at birth Lying in Hospital	Twenty sixth of November 1864	Alfred Cryan Deputy Registrar	

Just some of the Rotunda registrations from November 26 1864

How many are there? Search the IrishGenealogy birth indexes and you'll find no fewer than 193,493 births 1864-1919 with forename "Unknown". There are significant numbers in every registration district, but the two largest urban areas stand out, with 21,000 no-namers in Belfast and more than 76,000 in Dublin. All the Dublin hospitals used the loophole, but by far the biggest culprit was the "Britain St Lying-In Hospital", better known as "the Rotunda", today the busiest maternity hospital in the world. It was busy back then as well, servicing the teeming slums of Dublin's north city.

Hospitals elsewhere in Ireland also used the loophole, as did midwives, block-registering no-name births at which they were present. And in Protestant-majority areas in the North-East – Armagh, Cookstown, Coleraine, Ballymena, Irvinestown, Dungannon – many more parents than elsewhere registered their children without a first name, perhaps because of a lack of urgency about baptism. (Though calling your child "The Babby" until it's old enough to be christened seems a bit inhumane.)



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Superintendent Registrar's District		Registrar's District									
BIRTHS Registered in the District of		in the Union of									
in the County of											
No. (1.)	Date and Place of Birth (2.)	Name (if any) (3.)	Sex (4.)	Name and Surname and Dwelling-places of Father (5.)	Name and Surname and Maiden Surname of Mother (6.)	Rank or Profession of Father (7.)	Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Informant (8.)	When Registered (9.)	Signature of Registrar (10.)	Signature Name of Asst. Registrar (11.)	
109	1890 19th November Lying in Hospital	Mary Ann	F	Patrick Craig 12 Campbell's Row	Agnes Craig formerly McMurray	Labourer	M. H. Ormerod Occupier Lying in Hospital	20th November 1890	John Johnston Asst. Registrar		
110	1890 19th November Lying in Hospital	—	M.	Frank McAnally 45 Ardilea St.	Sarah McAnally formerly Gracey	Shoemaker	M. H. Ormerod Occupier Lying in Hospital	20th November 1890	John Johnston Asst. Registrar		
111	1890 19th November Lying in Hospital	—	F	Hugh Sheils 18 Bow St.	Mary Sheils formerly Murray	Slater	M. H. Ormerod Occupier Lying in Hospital	20th November 1890	John Johnston Asst. Registrar		
112	1890 19th November Lying in Hospital	—	F	James Kyle 1 Edward St.	Maggie Kyle formerly Dunn	Labourer	M. H. Ormerod Occupier Lying in Hospital	20th November 1890	John Johnston Asst. Registrar		

BINDING EDGE—(This Margin not to be written on.)

Donegall St Lying-In Hospital Belfast, 1890



The Rotunda in the 1890s



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As already mentioned, the same hole in the system existed in England and Wales, though its use doesn't seem to have been as widespread. After a spike in the 1840s, the average rate for no forenames settled down to around 0.6% of all births. In Ireland, by contrast, the rate ran three times as high between 1864 and 1884 and even by the early twentieth century was still more than double the rate in England and Wales. The reason is probably the relative poverty of the Irish public health system. All shortcuts gladly accepted.

One other interesting figure is that female no-forename registrations are consistently at least a fifth fewer than males. For whatever reason, that difference holds good across both jurisdictions. Were baby girls valued more? It seems unlikely.

And what about Scotland? Its civil registration system is already the envy of everyone else on these islands, and their treatment of forenames was predictably simple and straightforward. The 1854 Act setting up the system specified as the first set of particulars to be entered in the birth register "The surname and Christian names of the child". If a forename hadn't been chosen at registration, the parents had six months to add one. Yet again the Scots were sensibly out of step with the neighbours.

These missing forenames are not the only invisible elephant traps awaiting unwary researchers in Irish civil birth records; avoiding the fines for late registration resulted in many miraculous Irish children baptised weeks or even months before they were officially born. But thanks to IrishGenealogy, the "Unknowns" can now at least be researched, though combing through those 105 John Murphys one by one might just bring back the apoplexy.

John Grenham MAGI

John Grenham MAGI is the doyen of Irish Genealogy. He has written the authoritative reference book for Irish genealogists "*Tracing your Irish Ancestors*" which was first published in 1992 and is now in its 5th Edition. He has worked at the *Genealogical Office* in Dublin and for many years he wrote a regular column in the "*Irish Times*". He is much sought after as a speaker, TV expert and genealogical authority. The AGI website is carefully managed by John who also manages his own genealogical website *Irish Ancestors* which can be visited at <https://www.johngrenham.com>



End of Newsletter