



# CONNECT

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



Issue No. 8:

May 2018

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

Welcome to our eighth Newsletter. Our thanks go out to those who commented, made suggestions to improve the publication and to those who contributed or helped in any way with this Issue.

We would like to thank Stuart Coles for stepping in and helping to put together our last Issue and we would like to wish him well in his new venture.

A warm welcome is extended to Ian Marson who is the current Secretary of ASGRA (*The Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives*) and who at short notice has come on board to put together the Scottish input for this Issue. We wish Ian every success and the Irish team looks forward to working with him.

In this quarter's edition our special archive spotlight falls on the *Registry of Deeds* in Dublin. We also present another interesting set of interviews from both our organisations and an article on the *International Society of Family History Writers* and the *Editors and the Genealogical Speakers Guild*.

We hope you find it useful, enjoyable and, 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.

*This Newsletter has been put together by Michael Walsh MAGI from AGI and Ian Marson from ASGRA. The production responsibilities for the Newsletter have been cheerfully assumed by John Grenham MAGI.*



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### AGI Council Office Bearers

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Any content for inclusion in **CONNECT** will be most gratefully received and can be sent to  
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or to Ian Marson (ASGRA) at [secretary@asgra.co.uk](mailto:secretary@asgra.co.uk)

Our next edition will go out in August 2018 and the deadline for submissions is 31 July.

We hope that you enjoy reading the Newsletter!



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## News from Scotland and Ireland...

### News from Ireland

#### New Member

Accredited Genealogists Ireland is pleased to introduce our newest Member, Kit Smryl MAGI, who has worked in genealogy since the mid-1990s, when he joined the Irish probate research firm Massey & King.

Two years ago Kit Smryl was accepted into the AGI Affiliate programme, designed for genealogists working towards obtaining accreditation from AGI's independent Board of Assessors. He is the sixth Affiliate to progress to membership since the Affiliate category was introduced just over five years ago. Kit has been part of the AGI 'family' for the past two years and the Association is delighted to welcome him as its latest Member.

#### Back To Our Past Belfast – 16<sup>TH</sup> and 17<sup>TH</sup> February 2018

For the first time ever, **Back To Our Past** was held in the Titanic Centre, Belfast. AGI took part in the two day event, sharing a stand with our colleagues from ASGRA.

On this occasion the event was not held in conjunction with the Over 55s Show, so there was less 'footfall' over the two days than at the RDS in Dublin. However, AGI was very busy helping members of the public who were looking for their ancestors, and as usual we provided 20 minute free consultations over the two days, which proved very popular. The venue was beautiful, situated on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor in the same building as the 'Titanic Experience', with stunning views of Belfast. It also housed a replica of the iconic 'staircase' from the original Titanic.



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*Máire Mac Conghail President of AGI (left)  
and Janet Bishop Chairman of ASGRA*

The lectures were well attended on both days, and overall the event was well organised, and the staff there were most helpful. However, it would have been useful if there had been more signs on the ground floor directing the public to the event. There were several exhibitors there, some of whom also attend BTOP in the RDS in October, so it was nice to meet up with our genealogy friends. AGI members also ‘manned’ the National Archives of Ireland stand over the two days.

AGI hosted an ‘informal’ drinks reception on the Friday evening in the Premier Inn after BTOP including our Scottish colleagues, AGI members and friends from other Stands who were attending the event.



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*AGI and ASGRA colleagues in Belfast*

As always, the AGI stand was decorated with our now 'popular' blue and white balloons, as well as our many genealogy/member posters and AGI flyers. Of course, there were sweets, cakes and Vintage table. AGI members also engaged with people who were interested in either becoming professional genealogists or joining AGI. Overall it was a very interesting and successful two day event for AGI.



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*The AGI team in Belfast*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely all of those who volunteered to help out at BTOP Belfast – the sub-committee Joan Sharkey and Nicola Morris, along with Máire Mac Conghail, Paul Gorry, Steven Smyrl, Helen Kelly, Aiden Feerick, Michael Walsh, Rosaleen Underwood, Ann Marie Coghlan, Rob Davison, Beverly Brown, Vincent Brogan, and Brian Mitchell. A BIG thank you to you all!

One wonders - will this 'maiden' voyage of Back To Our Past in Belfast be the first of many Genealogy events to be hosted there in the future, or will it sink without a trace! God Bless all who sail in her!

**Anne-Marie Smith MAGI**  
**On Behalf of AGI BTOP Sub-Committee.**



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## An Introduction to Scottish Family History records

In February the main CPD event in Ireland concentrated on Scottish Family History records. This is important to Irish genealogists as many families in Ireland have a Scottish heritage and many Irish families emigrated to Scotland. We were fortunate to have **Valerie Wilson** to enlighten us,

Valerie holds a Master of Science degree in Scottish Studies from the University of Edinburgh and is a member of the Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (ASGRA). She has been undertaking professional genealogical research for over 20 years and also helps out on a voluntary basis with Edinburgh City Archives.

AGI members were treated to a thorough and detailed exposition of Scottish records available for researchers delivered in a warm authoritative style which held our attention throughout and which proved to be highly informative and extremely interesting.

Valerie began by outlining the main types or groups of records available to us. These are church records, civil birth, marriage and death registers and census returns.

### Church records

The history of church records in Scotland goes back to 1560 when the Established Church of Scotland was formed after the Reformation. Scotland was divided into 901 parishes and each was responsible for collecting and maintaining its own registers on baptisms, on marriages and marriage banns and on burials. These are known as the Old Parochial Registers (OPR).

The oldest OPR dates back to 1553 for Errol in Perthshire, but in general, parish registers were not well maintained, especially in urban areas, and many have not survived. However they remain a principal source of genealogical information before 1855 when civil registration was introduced. Church records hold much more detail than Irish records.

Baptismal register entries are concise, stating child's name, parents, father's occupation, date of birth as well as date of baptism and celebrant. The better baptismal records also record Witnesses and their parishes. Good marriage records are valuable sources for genealogist typically holding names of bride and groom, their full addresses and occupations, fathers' names and occupations as well as Witnesses and their occupations.





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## Sources in Scotland

A comprehensive survey of archives which visitors to Scotland can use was presented. These included the *ScotlandsPeople Centre* in Edinburgh which has branches across the country and the *National Records Office of Scotland (NRS)* in Edinburgh which houses government records, important legal documents and church records.

This was a comprehensive and entertaining survey of Scottish Family History resources. The lecture and accompanying notes were much appreciated by the attendees and we are very grateful to Valerie for her time, her expertise and the warmth of her delivery.

Michael Walsh MAGI



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## **News from Scotland**

### **New Members**

We are pleased to welcome Kate Keter and Alex Wood as new full members of ASGRA.

### **Social Media**

We now have a twitter account @ASGRAGenealogy, if you use twitter then please follow us there.

### **SAFHS**

ASGRA attended the 2018 SAFH conference at Rothes Halls, Glenrothes on the 21 April last, we had our advice stand and our members were able to give advice on queries relating research in Scotland, England and Wales, as well as referring enquirers on Irish genealogy to our colleagues in AGI.

### **Joint CPD Event in Glasgow**

Planning is well underway for our joint CPD event to be held in Glasgow on the 1-2 October 2018. Our colleagues in AGI are invited to join us then. We hope to have a welcome reception on the Sunday evening 30 September and then on the Monday (1<sup>st</sup>) and Tuesday (2<sup>nd</sup>) we will have a programme of visits and lectures. Further details will follow but please put the date in your diaries now.

### **Changes on Council**

Following an EGM on the 20 April, Janet Bishop took up the position of Chairman following the resignation of Stuart Coles to whom we send best wishes and success in his new ventures.



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## Dates for your Diary

### Upcoming events in Ireland

The *Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme* for 2018 has been finalised by Helen Kelly MAGI and her team. Undertaking CPD is a mandatory requirement for professional genealogists in Ireland which allows them to maintain their accreditation. Attendance is monitored by AGI.

#### CPD Programme 2018

##### **22 May 2018: CPD event at Guinness in Dublin**

A talk will be given on the family history records held in the *Guinness Archive* along with a brief presentation about the history of the Guinness Company.

More details will be available nearer the event.

##### **14 August 2018: CPD event at Clare County Library, Ennis**

A talk will be given on the holdings at the Clare County Library in Ennis and their extensive website.

More details will be available nearer the event.

##### **1-2 October 2018: CPD event in Glasgow**

More details are available in the Scottish listing above.

##### **6 November 2018: CPD event at Dublin City Library, Pearse Street**

More details will be available nearer the event.



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## GENEALOGICAL SPEAKERS GUILD

### Want To Expand Your Horizons?

by Paul Gorry, MAGI



You may not have heard about two long-established organisations that can help you professionally. You may not have heard of them because they're based in the USA and most of their activity is confined to America. Nevertheless, I feel they're worth your consideration.

I'm talking about the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors [ISFHWE] and the Genealogical Speakers Guild [GSG]. They're not exclusively for professional genealogists and they're not organisations that compete with or undermine accrediting bodies. Their aim is to provide support for writers or lecturers within the field. Yes, their focus is primarily on the USA, but they can become more relevant to our geographical area if more people here join them. I feel they could be beneficial to ASGRA / AGI Members and

Probationers / Affiliates if enough of our people joined them.

ISFHWE began life as the Council of Genealogy Columnists in 1987, at a meeting held during the National Genealogical Society [NGS] annual conference. It changed its name to the present mouthful in 2000 'to more accurately reflect the expanded role of the members'. What I take



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from this is that it aspires to be international and it encourages anyone involved in writing or editing genealogical material to join. Towards the end of 2014 I accepted the challenge and signed up for an annual subscription of US\$20 (though it was raised to \$30 recently). Membership runs for twelve months from the date you join.

What benefit has it been to me? Well, I feel that for a modest subscription I get some insight into the mind-set of genealogical writers in the USA. Also, in the 'Member Directory' on the ISFHWE website [ <http://www.isfhwe.org/> ] I have my own page, where I can promote myself to other members and the general public, and indicate if I accept 'Client Writing Assignments' (I don't). Another section of the website, 'Our Works', provides an opportunity for members to describe and promote books, articles, magazines, newsletters, newspaper columns or web publications they have written or edited.

There is a closed Facebook group for members, which I have to admit is not overly active. The organisation maintains booths at the annual NGS and Federation of Genealogical Societies [FGS] conferences, where members can have samples of their books displayed. There is a quarterly newsletter for members called *Columns*, which provides the greatest insight into the organisation and what individual members may be doing.

ISFHWE's most significant activity is the running of its Excellence-in-Writing competition, every year since 1989. Not confined to members, it provides the option for writers to test their skills under six categories: columns; articles; genealogy newsletter; unpublished authors; unpublished material by published authors; and poetry / song. The winning entries are printed in *Columns* and the standard is high. Many well-known names appear among the past winners. Even being placed second or third, or receiving 'honorable mention' is something to crow about.

Undoubtedly, I derive benefit from being a member but I still feel I'm on the outside looking into an American organisation for American genealogical writers. Something nearer to home would be more beneficial, but there is no point in replicating what's already there. ISFHWE provides a framework in which genealogical writers and editors throughout the world can network and gain support. All it needs is for more people outside America to get involved.

The 'Member Directory' currently has only five members resident beyond the borders of the USA – two in The Netherlands and one each in Canada, Ireland and New Zealand. I would feel less



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lonely if some of my ASGRA / AGI writing colleagues were to join, forming a core group from our geographical area. That could be expanded on by attracting other writers or editors, amateur or professional, and building up a support network in this part of the world.

Growing an ISFHWE membership here doesn't undermine ASGRA or AGI. Neither organisation has the extra resources to concentrate more closely on that aspect of members' activity. ISFHWE makes no pretence of being anything more than a resource for those of us who write or edit.

I did mention that there were two organisations I wanted to bring to your attention and that the second one was the Genealogical Speakers Guild [GSG]. I have less to say about this one because I'm not a member of it. This is no reflection on that association, but on my aspirations in the field of lecturing. The Genealogical Speakers Guild was formed in 1991, at a meeting held during the Federation of Genealogical Societies conference. The 25 founders of the Guild were well-known speakers who felt strongly that lecturers were contributing to the growth of large, successful conferences while being expected to cover most of their own traveling expenses and accommodation.

GSG's website [ <http://www.genealogicalspeakersguild.org/> ] has a 'Directory of Members' in which each member has a page where they promote themselves to societies or anyone wishing to engage a speaker. The 'Members' Calendar' provides the opportunity to advertise the dates, locations and hosts of upcoming speaking engagements, while the 'Genealogy Events' page gives details of major conferences (in the USA and Canada). In the members-only 'Members' Corner', calls for submission of presentation proposals are provided. There is a quarterly newsletter called *Speak!*, which may be viewed by the public on the website. There is a Facebook page [ <https://www.facebook.com/genspeak/> ] as well as a closed Facebook group and a closed email list for members. Another advantage for members is that they may have their brochures displayed at the GSG booth at both the NGS and FGS conferences.

Currently there are only three GSG members listed with addresses in the British Isles. What I've already said about the benefit of growing ISFHWE membership in our region also applies to the Guild. These bodies very much go hand-in-hand. Both hold their annual meetings at the NGS conference, their booths at the two big US conferences provide a meeting place for members, and there seems to be a level of mutual support between the two organisations. This is understandable



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as a significant number of people are members of both, though it would seem that the Guild is the bigger organisation.

So, anyone wish to take the plunge as a writer or a lecturer, or both?

Paul Gorry MAGI



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## Getting to know each other...

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

### Introducing Sandra DOBLE from AGI



In this May edition of **CONNECT** we are saying “Hello” to **Sandra DOBLE** who is currently Treasurer of AGI and a member of the CPD Committee.

Sandra’s early career was spent in accountancy, but eight years ago, Sandra left accountancy and pursued her true passion – genealogy.

She set up *Irish Family Footsteps* in 2012 to offer a genealogy research service to anybody wishing to trace their Irish roots.

Ref.	Questions
Q1	Name: Sandra Doble
Q2	Email:



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	<a href="mailto:info@irishfamilyfootsteps.ie">info@irishfamilyfootsteps.ie</a>
<b>Q3</b>	<b>Occupation:</b>  Genealogist
<b>Q4</b>	<b>Location:</b>  Celbridge, Co. Kildare
<b>Q5</b>	<b>Areas of research and specialisms:</b>  My principal research interest is Church of Ireland families as there often seem to be a greater selection of sources available and I love working in the Representative Church Body (RCB) library.  I am also interested in Kildare and Wicklow families in general.
<b>Q6</b>	<b>What brought you into genealogy?</b>  When the 1911 census was first published, I looked up my Doble family ancestors in Dublin with a casual interest and read that my great-grandfather was born in England. Although, in the recesses of my mind, I had already known this, seeing in on that return set in motion a burning desire to find out exactly where he came from. I spent many months researching English records and then thought it would be fun to look at my Irish ancestors too. I got quite a shock to discover how much less in the way of records were available!  I took a diploma in genealogy which was run in conjunction with Accredited Genealogists Ireland (then APGI), more out of interest than a professional plan, and did my project on my sister's in-laws rather than my own family and realised this was what I loved doing - whether my own family or not. It was then I began to think about the possibility of taking up genealogy professionally.
<b>Q7</b>	<b>What has been your favourite piece of research or most interesting</b>



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	<p><b>assignment?</b></p> <p>I'm working on an interesting project right now, actually. My client provided me with family documents; half of which matched to the life of one clergyman noted in Canon J.B. Leslie's biographies of Clergy and half of which match "another" clergyman of the same name. The more I delve in, the more I believe there was an error in the published work and it is a very interesting case to unravel and involves school records, newspaper reports and some other most interesting sources.</p> <p>I also love working on the Genealogy Advisory Service in the National Archives. It's great to meet people face to face and have the opportunity there and then to assist them with their research.</p>
<b>Q8</b>	<p><b>What is your favourite Archive and Why?</b></p> <p>I love working in the Representative Church Body (RCB) Library in Churchtown in Dublin. It's the library of the Church of Ireland and in addition to having most surviving COI baptism, marriage and burial registers, it has a wealth of other interesting material.</p> <p>Its staff are very knowledgeable and very willing to share that knowledge too. But best of all, you can research from the original registers and books which give you a feel for the parish and its records that no microfilm reel can possibly equal. It's a privilege to be allowed work with these records.</p>
<b>Q9</b>	<p><b>How is your own family tree?</b></p> <p>I put in a vast amount of work into my own family tree over a space of two years but once I started taking professional commissions, I never quite seem to have time to go back to it and bring new knowledge to it or finish all the reports I would like to do.</p> <p>Unsurprisingly, the English lines of my family can be traced far farther back in time than the Irish ones.</p>
<b>Q10</b>	<p><b>What tips can you offer a beginner?</b></p>



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	<p>Talk to all the older relatives you can, and glean as much information from them as you can. But most importantly, ask them HOW they know what they know.</p> <p>Record the source of all your information and keep an open mind about spellings of names and places and ages given on documents.</p> <p>Know what townland and civil parish your ancestor was from and know what each means!</p>
<b>Q11</b>	<p><b>How do you relax or what other interests do you have?</b></p> <p>I love music and have a great month of in front of me with lots of concerts to go to – Mercury Rev; Johnny Marr; Beck and the Rolling Stones!</p> <p>I like reading too!</p>



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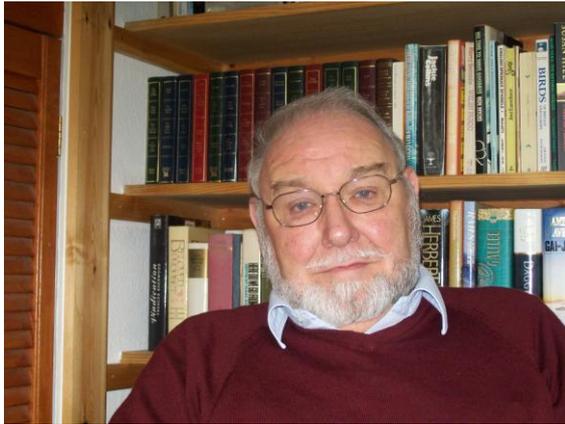


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## Introducing Bruce BISHOP of ASGRA



In this edition we introduce Bruce B. Bishop FSA Scot, who is a researcher at the ScotlandsPeople Centre, and the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Ref.	Questions
Q1	<b>Name:</b> Bruce B Bishop
Q2	<b>Email:</b> jmnbb.bishop@gmail.com
Q3	<b>Occupation:</b> Genealogist and researcher in archives
Q4	<b>Location:</b> Fife, Scotland
Q5	<b>Areas of research and specialisms:</b> All areas of genealogy and local history, but with specialisations in reading and



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	<p>transcribing early documents, in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century genealogical research, in early Scots-Irish migration to North America and to the Baltic States, and also in specific studies of individual parishes, properties and businesses.</p>
<b>Q6</b>	<p><b>What brought you into genealogy?</b></p> <p>An interest in history in general, and local history in particular, including many published books and booklets on local history. This led to an interest in the genealogies of local families, and from there into the wider field of genealogy</p>
<b>Q7</b>	<p><b>What has been your favourite piece of research or most interesting assignment?</b></p> <p>A recent study of the whisky distillery at Glen Rothes, Morayshire. This involved not just a study of the history of the local area, and into the history and the records of this individual distillery, but also a study of the families involved; the distillers, brewers, coopers, carters and the Excise Men. I am now almost an expert on the processes of distilling whisky!</p>
<b>Q8</b>	<p><b>What is your favourite Archive and Why?</b></p> <p>National Records of Scotland, because of the wide range of documentation which can be found there for both local history studies and genealogical research. Also because of the very helpful staff there, and the wide knowledge of the archivists, and also the ease of acquiring copies of items held in the NRS collections.</p>
<b>Q9</b>	<p><b>How is your own family tree?</b></p> <p>Wilting! Going back to the Welsh-English marches in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, I am ashamed to admit that it has not been worked on for several years now, but hopefully I can pick it up again at some point in the future.</p>
<b>Q10</b>	<p><b>What tips can you offer a beginner?</b></p> <p>For genealogy – be specific about the family line you are researching, don't get</p>



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	<p>side-tracked, and don't try to go too 'wide' with your research, that can come once you have established a solid direct-line ancestry. Be careful with information taken from websites. Use it as a guide, but be sure to verify the information by finding accurate primary sources. If an event cannot be given a source reference, it may not be correct. For local history – again be specific about the area and period you are studying, and focus on that. Use chronologies to make sure that you don't lose information, and they do help with logical thinking.</p>
<b>Q11</b>	<p><b>How do you relax or what other interests do you have?</b></p> <p>Relaxation when I get in from work is sometimes just falling asleep in front of the television, but pottering about in the garden is a nice breath of fresh air after being indoors all day.</p>
<b>Q12</b>	<p><b>Any other comments or information to add?</b></p> <p>None</p>



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## Focus on....

In each Issue we will focus on a Scottish or an Irish archive.

The purpose of these guides is to give some “top tips” for practical use of the archives based on the experience of users. So you will hopefully find out some different details to those advertised on the archive’s website!!

We hope that this will help new users feel more comfortable using these archives for the first time. The authors of these articles are also happy to hear from new users of these archives if they have any further questions about them.

## Moray Archives

The Moray Archives are situated upstairs in Elgin Library, in Cooper Park in Elgin. At the time of writing they are open Monday – Friday 10 am to 8 pm, and Saturdays 10 am to 4 pm. It is advisable to telephone or email in advance, especially if there are any specific requirements or if items have to be ordered in.

The Archives and Local Studies area of the library contain the usual mix of publications and microfilm records.

The wide collection of published works covers the ‘modern’ area now known as Moray, but which in fact includes a large proportion of the former county of Banff and a few parts of Nairnshire.

There are the usual histories, Statistical Accounts and Fasti, together with books on local trades and professions. The Whisky and Fishing industries, the mainstays of life in this part of Scotland, are particularly well-documented. There are numerous books on the individual parishes, including Bruce Bishop’s ‘Lands and People of Moray’ and ‘Banffshire, The People and the Lands’, which give a history of each parish and its population prior to the start of Statutory Registration.



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There are also books of Monumental Inscriptions for almost every parish in Moray and western Banffshire. These have all been up-dated over the past 20 years by the Moray Burial Ground Research Group and include information on tombstones which are now buried beneath the grass surface. Also held are the earlier records made by the Manpower Services Commission in the 1970's, which may include information on tombstones which have now disappeared for various reasons.

The microfilm collection, in addition to the usual Old Parish Register and Census films, also contains copies of the several local Newspapers such as the Northern Scot, Press and Journal, Banffshire Journal, Moray and Nairn News and many other more short-lived publications. Some of these go back into the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Also on film are some of the surviving Lair Records for Moray and Banffshire cemeteries.

The archives hold a wide range of plans prepared by local architects. Elgin companies such as Wittets and Doigs were prominent in the design of structures for the numerous distilleries in Moray, Banff and Nairn, and the design and evolution of these distilleries is very well-documented. These, together with other maps and plans, are held off-site, and usually one week's notice is desirable to access these as many are held in Forres, not in Elgin.

The jewel in the crown of Moray Archives, however, is its on-line 'Libindx' resource. Although this has not been updated in recent years, it is still a very useful and functional source. **Libindx** is the Local Heritage Service's index to sources of information about people, places and subjects relating to Moray, western Banffshire and parts of Nainshire. All indexed references to specific individuals, properties and subjects are included under their own unique reference number. Sources indexed include local government archives from the 13th century to 1975, local newspapers, gravestone inscriptions, non-established church records to 1855, architectural plans, books, family histories etc.

The 'people' index contains over 200,000 names and acts as an aid for genealogists tracing their roots in Moray and western Banffshire, as well as researchers into well-known Moravians such as Ramsay MacDonald or the Wolf of Badenoch.



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The ‘places index, as well as listing the plans from major architectural collections including the distillery plans of Charles Chree Doig, provides details of photographs and sources of histories of the many historic buildings in Moray such as Elgin Cathedral and Sueno's Stone.

The many diverse ‘subjects’ indexed include sport, education, archaeology and highway robbery. Many of the items listed are taken from the local newspapers which date back to 1747.

**Bruce B Bishop FSA Scot, ASGRA**

## The Registry of Deeds in Dublin



The act ‘to prevent the further growth of popery,’ (Act 2 Anne, c 6) passed by the Irish Parliament on March 4, 1704 prohibited Catholics from buying land.

Furthermore, as part of the ‘penal code,’ the statute of 24 October 1707 (Act 6 Anne, c 2) “for securing purchases, preventing forgeries and fraudulent gifts and conveyances of land, tenements



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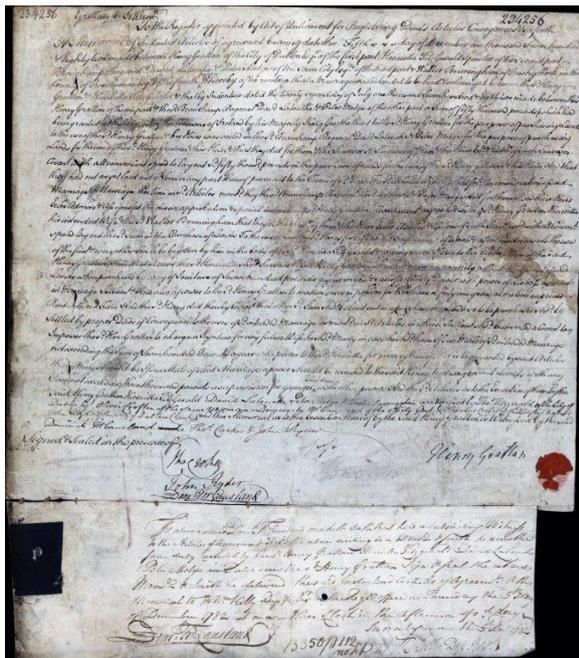
and hereditaments which have been frequently practised in this kingdom, especially by papists, to the great prejudice of the protestant interest thereof,” created the Registry of Deeds.

The Registry of Deeds opened, in a private house, on 25 March 1708 (the Julian calendar - ‘Old Style’ – with the year commencing 25 March - was adhered to in Britain and Ireland until September 1752).

In 1709 an amending act to the 1704 ‘popery act’ created the ‘discoverer’ – a protestant could take possession of the lands of a Catholic, if he could show that the Catholic had evaded the ‘penal’ land laws and could secure possession by registering it with the Registry of Deeds. However, there were a number of these ‘bills of discoveries’ registered by friendly protestants for their neighbouring Catholic landowners so as to secure the lands from hostile ‘discoverers’. It can be difficult to single out the ‘friendly’ from the ‘hostile’ discoverer.

The registration of a memorial was not compulsory. However, it was soon identified that priority could be given to a registered memorial, which in turn would give legal standing and title to the ‘new’ owners, particularly if conflict arose. Lawyers were enthusiastic about the registration system; as were merchants, traders, professional, farming gentry and substantial farmers.

Between 1708 and 1832 over 500,000 memorials – not just affecting land transactions - were registered.



To register a memorial with the Registry of Deeds: a deed was drawn up by the contracting parties, signed and witnessed; a memorial (copy or shortened version) was made by one of the contracting parties, signed and witnessed by two individuals, one of whom would have been a witness to the original deed; that witness swore, before a justice of the peace, that the memorial was a true copy of the original and this sworn memorial was then sent to the Registry of Deeds, where it was registered, given a unique number and copied into a transcript book.



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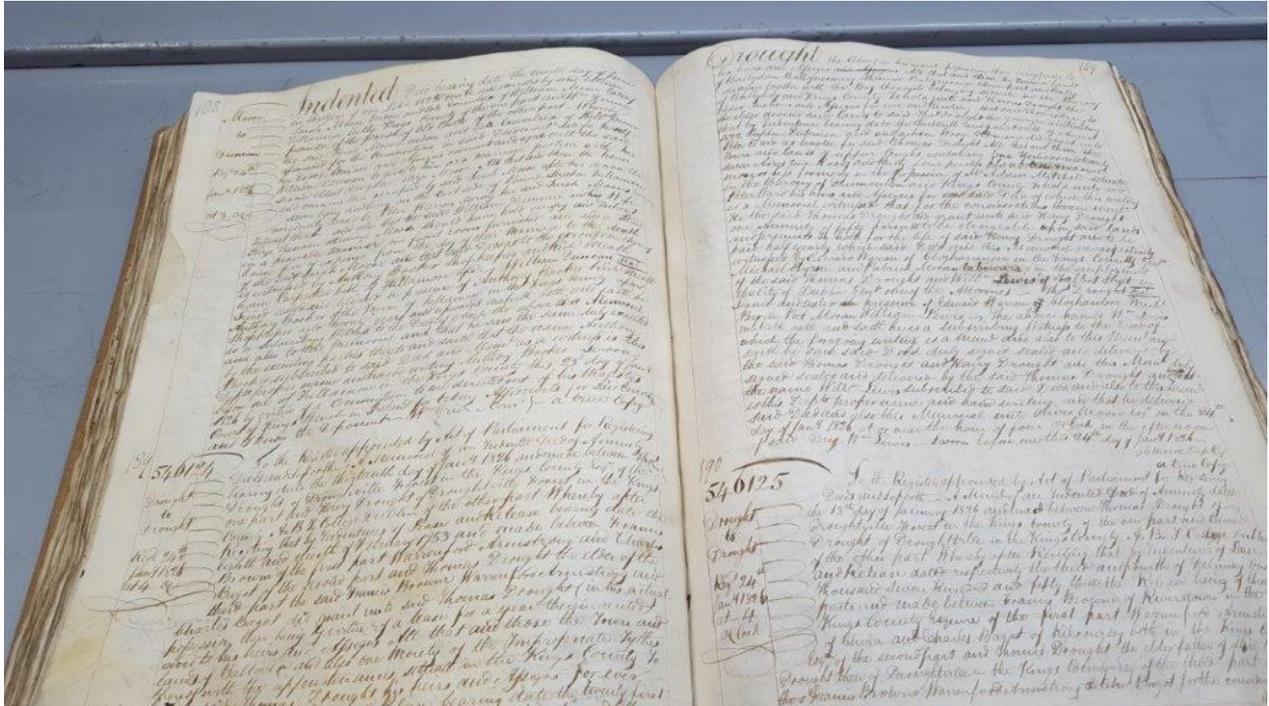
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Until the relaxing of the penal code during the fourth quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the primary purpose of registering a transaction with the *Registry of Deeds* was to ensure that land already transferred into protestant ownership would not revert into Catholic hands.

It is worth remembering that small tenant farmers, or tenants-at-will, with annual renewable leases did not have memorials registered. Progressing through the nineteenth century, Catholics and non-conformists were registering various transactions.

Some of the types of memorials registered:

- Lease and Release: a form of conveyance used up to the early 1840s whereby the grantor/vendor made over to the grantee/purchaser a lease for one year at a nominal rent making him a tenant; on the following day the grantor released his own rights to the property which made the tenant or grantee the full owner of the property.
- Regular leases.



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- Rent charges: one party would grant to another an annual payment or instalment from the rents of particular lands – possibly to repay debts, mortgages or part of family settlements.
- Mortgages: landlord/owner may be short of cash, mortgages the rents from his lands subject to a redemption clause.
- Marriage settlements/articles: can be the most rewarding for the genealogist, family historian and local historian; the grantees were usually the trustees; the bride's dowry and the husband's family annuity, probably sourced from income from lands, placed in trust for his wife, if he, the husband, predeceased her.
- Wills: it is considered that many of the wills registered with the *Registry of Deeds* were registered in case of possible subsequent litigation; by the year 1832 there were over 2,000 wills registered. Abstracts of these wills were published in three volumes by the Irish Manuscripts Commission and are available free online at -  
[http://www.irishmanuscripts.ie/servlet/Controller?action=digitisation\\_backlist](http://www.irishmanuscripts.ie/servlet/Controller?action=digitisation_backlist))

What information can a memorial contain?

- Date of execution and type of transaction; names, addresses and occupations of the contracting parties; the witnesses to the original deed and to the memorial and the date and time of registration. The memorial may recite the contents of an earlier deed relevant to the transaction of the current deed.

To access the memorials there are two series of indexes – Index of Grantors or Names Index and Index of Lands or Lands Index. There is no index of grantees. Each index volume is given a number and finding aids to the indexes are available in the search rooms of the *Registry of Deeds*.

The Index of Grantors lists the surname of the grantor and that of the grantee followed by the reference number of the transcript volume; its page and the unique number of the memorial. Up to 1832 the layout of the index volumes varies – 1708-1785; 1786-1799; 1800-1809 etc., with general alphabetical listings or separate alphabetical listing for each year within the particular



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index volume. From 1833 forward, the index lists the location of the property referred to in the memorial.

Index of Lands: the volumes are arranged by county within which are listed the townlands/placenames (with variant spellings) arranged alphabetically by initial letter; the surnames of the grantor, grantee with volume, page and memorial numbers are set against the particular townland/placename. From 1828 forward, the county index of lands is subdivided by barony. Corporate town volume references are found separately at the end of the relevant county index finding aid.



The first visit to the *Registry of Deeds* can be a daunting one and it is suggested that if possible to have a mentor or seasoned researcher with you for that first visit – it is hard to beat hands-on assistance and analysis in-situ -; it can also take time to interpret the legal language used in the memorials, and to identify what type of memorial it may be; however, with patience and the reading through of several memorials, these difficulties and the clerk's handwriting begin to



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unravel. Research also involves some physical endurance, such as, lifting heavy tomes from shelves, some of which are accessible only by ladder, and of course returning the volumes to their rightful shelf.

Time spent working through memorial transcripts at the *Registry of Deeds* is always rewarding, even if the results of your particular research assignment prove negative.

*Registry of Deeds* indexes and memorial transcripts 1708-1929 are available online free at - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/185720?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

*Registry of Deeds* Indexing Project (work-in-progress) at - <https://irishdeedsindex.net/index.php>

The *Registry of Deeds* is a constituent body of the Property Registration Authority Ireland (PRAI) since 2006.

Máire Mac Conghail MAGI

President of AGI

22 Aibreán 2018

***End of Newsletter***