



NIFHS News 34 - June 2021

'Such pure delight, all heaven sent,
O June, my June, you bring content.'

Valerie Dohren

Dear Members

We have arrived at the end of what must surely have been the strangest year in the forty years history of NIFHS. Who could have foreseen the challenges that this year has brought? However, the good news is that we have met those challenges and are still going strong. This is in no small part thanks to all those volunteers who have given freely of their time, skills and imagination to keep NIFHS thriving. Of course, the Society is nothing without you, the members. Thank you. The Branches produced programmes that were of the usual high standard and made connections that, otherwise, would have gone unrealised. Many of our Associate Members were welcomed at Branch meetings and it was a joy to put faces to names. Zoom has been our friend. The Branches are working on their programmes for next year and I hope to bring you details of those and other projects in the Summer Newsletter. I am taking a break in July so look out for the next e-Newsletter at the beginning of August.

Meanwhile, this month's edition directs you to some resources you might not be familiar with - more transcribed church records, a DNA project, a very interesting website, and a new book on the horizon. I have also, with her permission, included an email from one of our members, Kathleen Lord. I do appreciate all responses to the Newsletter. Please keep on sending them.

Evelyn
B2513

SAY CHEESE

(thanks to the Lisburn Branch Newsletter)

Some links to help you source old photos and films of NI:-

National Museums NI has an archive of 500,000 photographs dating from the 1850s. Many are now online and include Harland and Wolff and Belfast Telegraph collections.

Visit www.nmni.com/collections/history/photographs.

NI Screen has an extensive collection of vintage footage from TV, cinema and amateur film-makers, covering people, places and ways of life. It includes the UTV (Ulster Television) collection.

Visit digitalfilmarchive.net.

Many of you will have used PRONI records but don't forget they have photos too. Thousands of images from the Allison and the Cooper Collections are available at:-

[flickr.com/photos/proni/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/proni/)

If you wish to reproduce any of the images, remember to check out any copyright restrictions.



HERE'S THE NEW STUFF ...

NEW LOOK-UPS

Trinity Ahoghill Baptism Records (3 Nov 1835-26 Dec 1901)

Following on from the success of transcribing 1st Ahoghill Presbyterian baptism records reported in our previous March 2021 Newsletter, we are now delighted to report that Trinity Ahoghill baptism records (3 Nov 1835-26 Dec 1901) are now complete. As with 1st Ahoghill the PDFs of the documents were created in August 2019 and issued to 40 Allstate volunteers with a Spreadsheet Template, to transcribe and log their volunteering hours to Allstate Northern Ireland.

Similarly, to what happened with Ahoghill, transcriptions started to come in various stages of completion and accuracy. It wasn't until the winter of 2020/21 that all transcriptions were finally completed and validated.

In Spring 2021, I collated all the validated Transcriptions received for Trinity and reviewed each again making the necessary corrections re townland names etc., and in the May 2021, I sent the completed Trinity Master Transcription to NIFHS Projects for final validation and approval.

For those of you who may be interested in some stats see below:

- 2690 Baptism Records are available
- 250+ surnames are represented
- 16 sets of twins recorded from 1835 to 1896
- 58 Baptisms were marked as illegitimate or mother unmarried
- 11 Ministers were involved in the Baptisms (approx. 75% were baptized by Rev F Buick)

Society transcribers have also completed a small batch of 111 marriages from Trinity Ahoghill, when it was still known as the 2nd Presbyterian Church, Ahoghill, covering 2 February 1836 to 31 March 1845 after which Civil Registration commenced.

Records of 282 gravestones in the graveyard are recorded on the website of One Irish Rover:

www.oneirishrover.com/trinity-presbyterian-church-ahoghill/

These new Resources within our Society are now available to members for Look Ups. Apart from all my colleagues in Allstate who have participated, and whom I have thanked via our company's recognition program, I'd also like to thank Sandra Ardis for her help, guidance, and support throughout the process. I'm hoping to have completed the Validation of Toberkeigh Presbyterian Church, Co Antrim, by the end of July so watch this space for the availability of these Baptism records coming to you soon.

Regards

Imelda
B0384

(To use the Lookup service visit - www.nifhs.org/resources/look-up-service/)



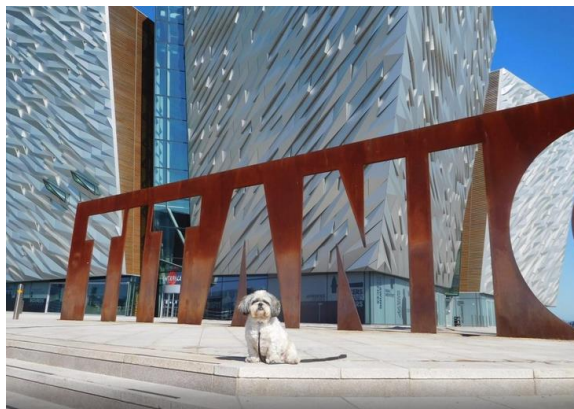
NEW WEBSITE

www.belfastentries.com

What is BelfastEntries.com?

BelfastEntries.com is a hobby website designed to provide information on the historical people, places, products and stories of interest from Belfast and its surrounding counties.

The impetus for the website came from the Covid Lockdown in Autumn/Winter 20/21. Working from home with outside entertainment venues closed, we began to look into something to occupy our time. In years past we had taken American cousins on trips around N. Ireland, and they always said that we should share our interest in local stories and history more widely. We had considered building a simple website, but work pressures and everyday life always got in the way. The Covid lockdown effectively removed the distractions and provided the opportunity to build a website in the evenings and weekends.



As the lockdown ended the opportunity of holidays abroad this year for most people, we thought that it might be useful to cover the hidden or forgotten stories of our own country. We may not get abroad but there is plenty to see around us if we know where to look. As a result, we started to look more into local history, places to visit and into the often-forgotten people whose stories deserve a wider audience. The aim was to ignore the most obvious subjects and instead celebrate the overlooked or forgotten people & places; stories that deserve to be heard.

Tourists often list Belfast and the surrounding counties as a favourite place to visit. Reasons vary but in a relatively small geographic area visitors see a fascinating history, impressive buildings & monuments, beautiful and varied scenery, talented people in entertainment, arts & crafts and a population frequently celebrated for its sense of humour, banter and kindness to strangers. Maybe we need to take a closer look at our own surroundings and lives through fresh eyes?

Why BelfastEntries.com?

The "*Belfast Entries*" website name reflects, simply, our location and our intention to add a series of posts, or entries, that reflect our own interests. Importantly, it is also an easy-to-remember name that Google already recognises. Our *BelfastEntries* posts are deliberately quirky and varied - covering forgotten heroes, places of interest, local day trips and walks with photos (with guest appearances from our dog, Scotty) and some tips on researching your family tree. The website is not centred on Belfast as we want to cover stories from surrounding counties though the Covid restrictions did present problems in the lockdown months in terms of getting further afield.

We are not historians, and the intention is not to produce a dry history. Posts are a "coffee-break" read that will hopefully be of interest, fun or useful to local people and visitors alike. We aim to unite readers in finding out more about our shared history. Although the website will occasionally cover historical figures and events, it is not a website about 'the Troubles'. Other sites are dedicated to recent history. We will leave it there.



How is BelfastEntries doing?

We added the first few posts in December with a grand total of 0 visitors for the month. January 2021 saw 65 visitors to the website but growth has been continuous ever since with 4,000 visitors in May 2021 largely influenced through Facebook likes and shares. We have a BelfastEntries page on Facebook to share links to new posts - feel free to follow.

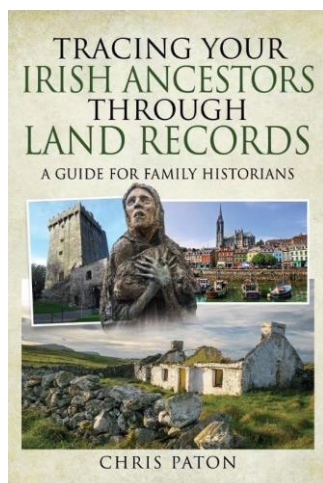
20,000 visitors have now visited the website with nearly 40% of these visitors outside of the UK and Ireland. Tales from 'home' are obviously popular with American's making up a quarter of all visitors and Canada, Australia and New Zealand well represented. Importantly, the number of visitors is growing each month, providing encouragement to research more topics and add more stories for those taking time to visit the website. Feel free to visit www.belfastentries.com and let us know what you think.

P&P Belfast

NEW BOOK

Tracing your Irish Ancestors Through Land Records

By Chris Paton



The history of Ireland is one that was long dominated by the question of land ownership, with complex and often distressing tales over the centuries of dispossession and colonisation, religious tensions, absentee landlordism, subsistence farming, and considerably more to sadden the heart. Yet with the destruction of much of Ireland's historic record during the Irish Civil War, and with the discriminatory Penal Laws in place in earlier times, it is often within land records that we can find evidence of our ancestors' existence, in some cases the only evidence, where the relevant vital records for an area may never have been kept or may not have survived.

In *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors Through Land Records*, genealogist and best-selling author Chris Paton explores how the surviving records can help with our ancestral research, but also tell the stories of the communities from within which our ancestors emerged. He explores the often-controversial history of ownership of land across the island, the rights granted to those who held estates and the plights of the dispossessed, and identifies the various surviving records which can help to tease out the stories of many of Ireland's forgotten generations.

Along the way Chris Paton identifies the various ways to access the records, whether in Ireland's many archives, local and national, and increasingly through a variety of online platforms. Among the records discussed are leases and wills from Chris's Montgomery family on Islandmagee and from the Montgomeries in Larne, from whom they are supposed to descend.

The book is due to be published at the end of September by Pen and Sword, with an e-edition to follow. Further details at

www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/Tracing-Your-Irish-Ancestors-Through-Land-Records-Paperback/p/19283



NEW PROJECT

Islandmagee - the Society's new DNA project.

Following the success of the ongoing Ballycarry DNA project, a new project has been set up to cover the 25 townlands of Islandmagee.

The aim of both projects is to map the family histories of each specific area, using DNA to make connections between the people who lived there and often enabling us to go further back in time than traditional genealogical research methods might allow.

The projects will allow individuals around the world to identify that they have ancestors from Islandmagee and Ballycarry with benefits for tourism, increasing community cohesiveness, and benefiting generations to come as information is identified and made available for further research.

With 82 current members of the Ballycarry project, we have been able to explore how inter-connected the families became over time. Whilst the project is targeted at this specific location, it was inevitable that we would find connections across neighbouring areas and, indeed, much further afield.

One of the areas where we could see definite connections was with Islandmagee and it made sense to target this area for our next project. Not only will this enhance the Ballycarry project by building on the family trees we already have, but Islandmagee is in itself quite a unique area in terms of its social history. It was one of the first areas of Ireland to be inhabited and there is plenty of local archaeological evidence of early history, not least the find of dinosaur bones over 2 million years old. Close proximity to Scotland has influenced the strong Presbyterian heritage, reflected in the population demographic of those living on the island. It was the site of a massacre in 1641, witchcraft trials in the early 1700s and many smugglers made full use of the coastal caves to hide gin and tobacco in the early 1800s. Whilst farming has always been an important industry in the area, seafaring has been a way of life for many families and this has influenced many aspects of family life.

The DNA aspect of the Islandmagee project is managed at [FamilyTreeDNA](#), where people who have uploaded their DNA to this site can join the project. Membership is restricted to those with proven ancestry in Islandmagee. We have been able to add people to this project from the Ballycarry project where a proven link to Islandmagee was found.

To ensure the information we have gathered is available to a much wider audience, we are collating it onto a corresponding project on [WikiTree](#). This is a single-tree site, free to use, that aims to have only one profile per person, so, by entering our members onto this site, we can connect to anyone whose matching profile already exists. And anyone who connects to one of "our" profiles can access the social and family history of their ancestors.

If you, or anyone you know, has an ancestor who was born or died in Islandmagee, we would love to hear from you. We are also interested in collecting any relevant family memorabilia that would bring to life the names and dates on our trees. If you have old photos, a family bible, letters, a copy of an old will or just a good tale to tell do let us know.

The Society has a limited number of DNA tests that can be made available to anyone who has not tested elsewhere and has a definite proven connection to Islandmagee. If this sounds like you, do get in touch!



Email IslandmageeDNA@nifhs.org with your details and let's see if we can connect.

Follow our [Facebook](#) page for more information about these projects and other DNA topics.

KATHLEEN'S COMMENTS

What an interesting read. It's amazing how small coincidences can lead to such wonderful discoveries.

I am interested in the discovery of the early marriages at 1st Ballymena Presbyterian Church. A number of my stepbrother's family hailed from Ballymacvea area and some were married in Connor Pres Church and some in Ballymena West Presbyterian Church. Family surnames are Laird, Davi(d)son, McWha and Welsh - variously spelled as Welche, Walsh, Walshe etc.

Another point of interest in the newsletter is the book about Lurgan in the Great War as the townland of Maralin is mentioned. My White ancestors were farmers in Co Antrim, mostly from the Ballymoney area. In the White family bible, a son called Solomon White is recorded as being born on 3rd April 1841 at Artigoran. There is no suggestion in the bible that he died but I have found no definitive trace of him in marriage or death records at GRONI nor Irish Genealogy, nor any sign of him on passenger lists.

In the NI censuses the only Solomon White of about the right age is one recorded as a farmhand residing at Ballyleany with the Dawie(Dowie) family.

Ballyleany, Co Down in the 1901 census as a farm servant aged 60, and in 1911:

Residents of a house 13 in Ballyleny (Ballyleny, Down)

Dawie Robers 74 Male Head of Family Church of Ireland County Down Farmer Read and write - Married - - -

Dawie Ellen 70 Female Wife Church of Ireland County Down - Read and write - Married - 27 - -

White Soloman 75 Male Servant Church of Ireland County Down Farm Servant Cannot read or write - Single - -

There is also a death of a Solomon White registered in Lurgan:

D/1914/172/1021/40/74 Solomon White 7th October 1914 75 Male

saying he comes from Marilin - maybe Magheralin or Maralin near Lurgan.

I realise all these people are far too old to be involved in the Great War, but I do wish I could find out whether Solomon is one of my ancestors. In the census it says he is born in Co Down, which, if true, rules him out from my family. I haven't been able to find any details about a White family in the Maralin area who might have had a son called Solomon. I wonder if any Whites are mentioned in the Lurgan book?



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Regarding your earlier request for 2020 memories, I should have responded before.

Apart from the inability to see family and friends other than on Zoom (how I wish I'd taken out shares in Zoom!) and the cancellation of all the many activities my husband and I used to enjoy in retirement, two activities stand out for me during the past year.

Firstly, our local (Hertfordshire) library service allowed online access to Ancestry from home - what a godsend to allow me to spend many hours furthering research into my husband's Lancashire and Yorkshire roots.

Secondly, as soon as we were allowed, we teamed up with a 'bubble' friend - a lady on her own who has a huge interest in wildlife and a particularly good knowledge of birds and butterflies. This led to many walks together in our beautiful countryside - mostly in our local Lee Valley Park area but recently including some trips further afield as RSPB reserves have opened up. Now we know of many new places for walks, and we have learned so much more about the natural world from our friend. Amazing. Throughout our walks I have documented the birds and butterflies by camcorder and then shared some of the edited videos online on a Youtube channel giving pleasure to many more people who, for whatever reason, can't get out and about themselves. What a rewarding year it has been!

The downside of being out and about so much is, of course, that the cupboards are still not tidied and the de-cluttering I thought I might achieve has yet to be started!!

Best wishes to you all,

Kathleen

AND FINALLY ...

Best wishes for a great summer from all at the Newsletter - Joyce, Colin and me. Keep researching and letting us know how you are getting on. Also, please let us know if you think the monthly Newsletter experiment has worked, or not!!

A big thank you to those of you who have already contributed during this past 10 months.

Our contact details remain the same - Newsletter@nifhs.org



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