



NIFHS News 43 - May 2022

'THE MONTH OF MAY IS THE PLEASANT TIME'

Lady Gregory

Dear Members

Thank you to those who responded to April's Members' Interests Supplement. This month the Supplement is much shorter as we are now on track to issue it monthly.

May is the month for Branch AGMs and elections. Our thanks to those Members who have decided to take a more active role in their Branch by becoming committee members or officers. Thanks also to those who are continuing in post. NIFHS relies on volunteers to continue its work. If you haven't already done so, why not give a thought to how you might become more active in the Society? A particular call out to our Associate members. Living overseas is no barrier to volunteering as only a very few posts need attendance in person.

This month we have an update about the work being carried out on the new NIFHS website project, some useful NIFHS contact emails, an earlybird offer, **NOT** a book review, a 'Snippet', and some finally....

Enjoy the read

Evelyn
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SOME USEFUL NIFHS EMAIL ADDRESSES

Classes/Courses - Education@nifhs.org
Editor of North Irish Roots - Nroots@nifhs.org
Editor of e-Newsletter - Newsletter@nifhs.org
General Enquiries - Nquire@nifhs.org
Look-up Service - Lookup@nifhs.org
Members' Interests - Memint@nifhs.org
Membership Status Enquiries - Membership@nifhs.org
NIFHS Shop - Shop@nifhs.org
Special Interest Groups - Education@nifhs.org
Transcribing Projects - Projects@nifhs.org
Volunteer Co-ordinator - Volunteer@nifhs.org

DNA

To order a DNA test kit - DNA@nifhs.org
Ballycarry DNA Project - Ballycarry@nifhs.org
Islandmagee DNA Project - Islandmagee@nifhs.org

All other information about the Society is available on the website - www.nifhs.org



UPDATE FROM THE WEB3 SUB-COMMITTEE

The Society Council has set up a sub-committee to define the requirements for a new Society website. Oh, well! That's easy-peasy! Really?

Those of us on the Sub-Committee (we call ourselves WEB3) wish it were easy! We all have relevant experience gained through our working lives, so we are aware of pitfalls and slippery slopes. Let us review why it might not be so easy as it would seem at first sight.

We started off with a consultation process of "stakeholders" - Branch representatives, Society officers, Volunteers and (in a limited way) Society members. That gave us lots to think about. Lists of "wants" and desires, ranging from "feel good factors" to specifics on how we should arrange presentation of and access to information. Prioritising all this has been a challenge, not easily firmed up with several hours of meetings every few weeks! We plan to do a more extensive survey of Society members. This will help us resolve the "running order" on the website.

Early on, we got free advice from a website consultant. This was through the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We learned one quite simple thing through this advice. Taking the analogy of buying a waterproof boot, we should not be specifying that it is of rubber. We should specify that it be waterproof. Thus, "What is needed" is superior to "How we get it." That has guided us throughout. Not always easy to follow this advice, but it has been our guiding principle.

Of course, we have looked at other websites belonging to Family History Societies like our own. None are exactly like us. However, there are similarities. Those with branches were of particular interest. The normal "model" is for a centre for co-ordination, working together on good governance and sharing of skills, research and knowledge. We have noted the trend towards simpler website presentations and compared with our own wordy site, but ours has plenty to see. Some say we present so much that site visitors are not provided with sufficient incentive to join the Society! We are resolved to have a stronger "Member's Area," as is common.

A key feature of the website will be the section related to joining the Society. This has presented interesting challenges. We all know that our Branches are the core and beating heart of the Society. So how does the site visitor manage the question of which branch to join? Do I have to join a branch? Is there one near Killeter? Or Clough? Is that Clough in County Down or Clough in County Antrim? The nearest Branch to The Drones is...?.....Already, dear reader, your eyes are glazing over?.....Think of the website visitor!

We need to take a simple approach to all this, in keeping with good practice. The existing arrangements have evolved over years and the administrative machinery supporting them goes on unseen with effort and difficulty. We need to minimise cost yet continue to recognise the significant role of branches in the Society. This continues to provide challenges to WEB3. Membership arrangements will be at the core of the new website. The aim is to follow on the choice of joining the Society with a choice of joining one of the branches, or none.

Watch this space!

Michael H Parkinson
Convener
WEB3 Group



THIS WILL BE OF INTEREST IF YOU ATTENDED LAST YEAR



FHF REALLY USEFUL

Family History Show

11th-12th November 2022

HELLO, EARLY BIRD!

If you've attended before, you'll already know what to expect from our amazingly successful online REALLY USEFUL Family History Show.

**Great talks, fantastic workshops and lots more besides.
PLUS extra improvements & innovations for 2022.**

Needless to say, we'll be revealing more about the show as the date gets closer.

But to catch the very
BEST TICKETING DEAL
the time to act is **NOW**

From dawn on 11th May until the 23:59 BST on Tuesday 31st May
we're offering returning customers an extra-special

EARLY BIRD £8 TICKET

using checkout code

AGAIN22

So, if you're planning to attend the FHF REALLY USEFUL Family History Show in 2022
(and why wouldn't you be?)

Then **BUY NOW** because from 1st June you'll then have to pay the same Early Bird price
as everyone else.

www.fhf-reallyuseful.com



DID YOUR FOLK EMIGRATE TO AMERICA VIA NEW YORK?



From 1830 until April 1890, new arrivals first stepped ashore at Castle Garden in lower Manhattan. By 1890, the arriving throngs were overcrowding the centre and immigrants were processed at an old barge office in Manhattan until the opening of the Ellis Island Immigration Centre on January 1, 1892. Then a huge fire at Ellis Island occurred during the night of June 14, 1897. Immigration processing was moved back to the old

barge office in Manhattan while Ellis Island was being rebuilt. In December of 1900, the new Main Building on Ellis Island was opened. While the Ellis Island fire of 1897 did destroy some of the records of Castle Garden, the ships' manifests records of those years survived.

The Battery Conservancy has created an online database of information about 10 million immigrants for the years 1830 through 1892, the years before Ellis Island opened. All these records are extracted from the original ship manifests.

www.castlegarden.org/searcher.php & heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger

Thanks to Mike McKeag and his Belfast Branch 'Snippets' for the above.

AND FINALLY...

- The 19th series of 'Who Do You Think You Are?' begins on BBC 1 on Thursday 26th May. Find a list of the celebrities taking part at - www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007t575/episodes/guide
- Armagh Heritage Department, LibrariesNI has reopened in the new location of Armagh Regional Administration Centre. A small collection of Heritage material is now also available on the first floor of Lurgan Branch Library. Find directions, contact details and opening times etc. at - www.librariesni.org.uk/libraries/county-armagh/cultural-heritage-service-library-armagh/
- Looking forward to June and the launch of [Beyond 2022: Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland](#). A very informative article by Rory Carroll was published in The Observer, Ireland, on 22nd May. Have a read at - www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/22/irish-public-record-office-civil-war-bombardment-archives-reborn
- The Digest of Statistics for the PRONI 2020/21 has just been published. View it at - www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/digest-statistics-public-record-office-202021
It might not be your choice of bedtime reading but it lists the numbers of additions to each collection, including PRONI Image Gallery. If you haven't used this facility already, why not have a look at - www.flickr.com/photos/proni



AND FINALLY, FINALLY....

THIS IS NOT A BOOK REVIEW

I spend my life surrounded by books. I work with them, have shelves of them at home, always one in a handbag and at least two in my car.



However, familiarity definitely does not breed contempt and every so often there is something about a particular book that grabs my attention more than the norm. This is one -

The Historian as Detective: Uncovering Irish Past
Essays in honour of Raymond Gillespie
edited by Terence Dooley et al., Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2021

In this instance it was the title that caught my attention. (The content of the book is fascinating, too.) Back to the title - of course, we are all detectives uncovering the stories behind the names and dates of our ancestors whilst carrying out our research, but this title started me wondering how many of you have uncovered curious bits of information. I don't mean information necessarily about family members directly, but some little matter of interest that sheds a different light on received wisdom. If I may, I'll give you an example.

I grew up knowing that one of my great grandfathers had died during the *Great War*. I also knew that he has no known grave and that his name is engraved in the Thiepval Memorial, which commemorates the missing of the Somme. As my research progressed, I realised that my great grandfather hadn't died in any of the Somme offensives but had been killed during the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917. The missing from that battle are commemorated on the Louveral Monument. I contacted the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to ask why. Some months later they replied that they had identified 51 names on the Thiepval Memorial who should be somewhere else. A quirky little bit of information that came to light because of my research.

It took five months to receive the reply from CWGC, and I really do hope the delay wasn't because some poor member of staff was given the task of checking each one of the over 72,000 names on the Memorial. I should say here that there are no plans to move any of the 51 names and no-one, including me, wants that to happen.

Now, over to you. Have you uncovered unexpected answers to any mysteries? If you have, please let the rest of us know. Send the details, as always, to -

Newsletter@nifhs.org

Evelyn

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