



## NIFHS News 47 - October 2022



**'OCTOBER IS THE TREASURER OF THE YEAR,  
AND ALL THE MONTHS PAY BOUNTY TO HER STORE;'**

Laurence Dunbar

Dear Members

What a month for visiting! The Research Library is now open again on Tuesdays between 2.00pm. and 8.00pm., no booking required, just drop in. Already the re-opening has proved popular. I was really pleased to meet Tim, a member from New Jersey, who called in last Tuesday. I was even more pleased when he recognised my name from the e-Newsletter. Later this week we hope to welcome a group from Canada and the US. There'll be more about that next month.

This month first and your help is required. There's a request from a member who would like a photograph and another request from an author researching a new book. There is some Branch news, a member's experience of her own research, a book review, some new items in the shop and a couple of events to book for.

Above all, as this is the month of Hallowe'en, keep a look out for those ghoulies and ghosties, long leggedy beasties and things that go bump in the night.

Enjoy the read!

Evelyn  
B2513

[Newsletter@nifhs.org](mailto:Newsletter@nifhs.org)



### **A PARTICULAR QUERY**

Wanted - a photograph of the gravestone in Ardglass Parish Churchyard, inscribed beginning,

"Here lyeth ye Body of Robert Grace Dep'd June ye 9 1718 Aged 74 years of Ballyhosset ... Isabella ... James ...etc ... Jane Grace ... 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1796 aged 86 years."

Many thanks,

Alfred Gracey Member #A2133

If anyone can help Alfred out with this, please send the photo to me and I'll forward it -

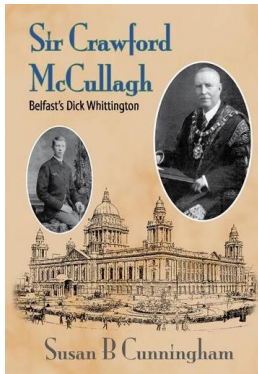
[Newsletter@nifhs.org](mailto:Newsletter@nifhs.org)



## NIFHS News 47 - October 2022

### WHITEABBEY BLEACH WORKS

Can you help?



Susie Cunningham has already successfully published, in 2016, a biography of her great grandfather, Sir Crawford McCullagh, 'Belfast's Dick Whittington'. She is now working on her second book, this time about her grandmother Daisy Henderson, and her relatives who owned Whiteabbey Bleach Works.

Best explained by Susie herself, -

"The Henderson family came from Scotland in 1789 and built a flax and spinning mill at Ballywhone in Carnmoney.

In the late 1800s my great, great grandfather Andrew Henderson became manager of Muckamore Bleach Works, then bought out the shareholders, and bought Whiteabbey Bleach Works.

I'm very interested in trying to find out about life in Whiteabbey during the 1920s, 30s and 40s when my family and my grandfather, Victor Henderson, were involved in the business.

Although I want to tell their story, I want to tell the stories of the folk who lived and worked in the mills at this time. Whitehouse, Whiteabbey, Carnmoney, Monkstown and Jordanstown were thriving with mills and bleach greens.

I want to tell the human story and provide a social history. If you have any stories or information about the mills and life in the borough, at this time, please get in touch. I'd love to hear from you.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their stories with me to date."

If you have any details for Susie, email

[susiebcunningham@hotmail.com](mailto:susiebcunningham@hotmail.com)



### SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO

11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**FHF Really Useful Family History Show**

All the details and how to book at -

[www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/full-ticket-for-november-2022-show](http://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/full-ticket-for-november-2022-show)

2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**RootsTech**

More information and registration -

[www.rootstech.org](http://www.rootstech.org)



## NIFHS News 47 - October 2022

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY, KILLYLEAGH

Killyleagh & District Family History Society - a Branch of the North of Ireland Family History Society, was established on the evening of Monday 4th October 1982. The third Branch since the Society began in Bangor in 1979/80.



Killyleagh has remained strong and active all through the years, having been founded by Mr John McGiffert, well known in the district, and a number of others, after he had held a meeting to establish if there was an interest locally in the research of family and local history. On that first evening, thirty-six people attended, and heard from John McGiffert that Family History research had become increasingly popular over the years, that in the 1960s there had only been three or four family history societies, while in 1981 there were at least forty-nine. He went on to say it was impossible to divide Family History from Local History, as one couldn't exist without the other. John then introduced guest speaker Mrs Hazel Ervine, from the General Registrar's Office, who listed the record sources available for local and family history research at that time.

On Monday 3 October 2022 on the anniversary occasion, in Killyleagh Masonic Hall, among those present, were several founder members, and together we remembered those past members, who were no longer with us, with gratitude for their efforts through the years to keep Killyleagh one of the top Branches of the Society, including at least one past President and one past Chair.

Branch Secretary, Ken Tait, showed a series of slides depicting the Branch through the years and gave a short narrative outlining the changes and innovations that have taken place in Family History Research, making it even more popular now, particularly with the advent in the 1980s of The Internet (1983) and web - based genealogy organisations such as Ancestry, Find my Past, Family Search and many others. Then in 1985 DNA genealogical research was made available to the public, heralding an explosion in interest which continues now.

Ken continued, that the Branch has over the years engaged in many projects, including those listed below;

- 1982 - The McGiffert Papers, a collection of church record transcriptions accumulated over 20 years by John McGiffert and now held on the Branch's behalf in Killyleagh Library for access by the public.
- 1985 & 1986 - The Dufferin Chronicles, two journals produced by Branch members giving accounts and local history stories of interest (now out of print, but re-print under consideration)
- 2009 - The McIlrath Letters - Collected correspondence between a Balloo family and their immigrant sons, who left for New Zealand between 1860-1915, preserved and made available by Mary McIlrath.
- 2011-12 - Branch support for Killyleagh Library, when under threat of closure.
- 2013 - Publication of Killyleagh Heritage Trail, still available in many local outlets and guiding a walk around the historical town. (Produced as part of the Branch's thirtieth anniversary, with collaboration from many friends locally)
- 2022 - In collaboration with Killyleagh Community Association and others, launch of the Digital Killyleagh Heritage Trail. Digital signs are located around the town bearing "QR" codes, which direct the visitor to a dedicated website, using their smart phone, and where information is displayed about that point of interest along the trail.

Ken and Branch Chair, Nigel Carse, went on to tell the folk on the night of plans for the anniversary year, up until October 2023, during which it is intended to hold a series of events and initiate projects such as transcribing and publishing Family History related material as well as our usual meetings, and visits to places



## NIFHS News 47 - October 2022

of interest for the members and guests, as the Branch continues to innovate, and promote the interest in local and family history research. The Branch continues to collaborate with other bodies and groups locally, such as Lecale & Downe Historical Society, Downe U3A, The Sir Hans Sloan Centre, Auld Bangor Historical and Cultural Society, and The Sloanies, (Students of Local history, Origins, And Native Endangered Species) with the common purpose of encouraging more people to notice and discover the fascination of their past in their surroundings, and share it with us all.

To bring the evening to a conclusion, Nigel and the committee hosted a casual light supper, culminating in the cutting of a magnificent celebration cake, made by David Coyle - "The Baldy Baker" ([brainsandbuns@gmail.com](mailto:brainsandbuns@gmail.com)) from just outside the town.

There is a constant flow of overseas visitors to the area making enquiries about their ancestors from this area, often brought here by tales from their older living relatives, and by on-line research, and we can help those visitors by helping locally with research, or by taking them to the seat of their family and their home place. It's a great feeling to help folk make that connection on the ground, and everyone living here can be part of that by linking up with the Society.



The celebration cake, before it disappeared on Monday evening!

Celebration Dinner at Denvir's Hotel, Downpatrick, some of the members.



Ken Tait,  
Secretary, Killyleagh & District Family History Society  
[killyleagh@nifhs.org](mailto:killyleagh@nifhs.org)



## ONE MEMBER'S EXPERIENCE

### Tracing My Irish Ancestors

**Suzanne (Sue) Smurthwaite (Née Morris) #B3207**  
**smurthwaite.g.s@xtra.co.nz**

What a privilege to be able to say a few words about my journey in finding my Irish family and in particular my Irish Grandmother. Finding her has opened a sense of self and family I didn't know existed. Mum told me that if I had been born on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March I was to be known as Patricia for St Patrick's day, but I was born on the 16<sup>th</sup>, so I was Suzanne Morris. To be honest I couldn't quite understand this rather peculiar arrangement. We celebrated St Patrick's day everywhere over NZ and it was always mentioned but no connection made, but my Mum and Granny (she was Scottish) would sing every Irish/Scottish and English song they had brought with them.

I was born in Thames, which is in the Waikato /North Island of New Zealand. My Mum and Dad and three brothers, and then it was me who finished our family nest.

Many Irish families and indeed families from all over the UK had made their journey to NZ to try their luck in the gold fields and mines or to escape difficult conditions. The green of NZ was a comfort to the Irish and the hills and valleys were a bit of home. I have been browsing many, many FB pages of Ireland and the Tourist pictures, and there is certainly a big similarity between Ireland and NZ. There are also many people from Ireland living here and an Irish accent is frequent on NZ radio.

I knew my Mum's folks well, my Granny and my Poppa and an uncle and aunt and some cousins. As a result, I just soaked up information over time about their Scottish or English Heritage. I was an English child and thought everyone else was too. We had a hot Christmas dinner in the middle of summer, wore sandals and shoes even in the summertime (in NZ its bare feet) and good shoes were only for church or "going out." Kiwi as??

I didn't know it then but apart from indigenous Māori, most Pakeha were from the UK, Ireland, or Scotland. So, our town was alive with traditional dancing, singing and culture of the Irish and Scottish in particular. My world captured the music, dance, and traditions from all three and I was strangely at home, drawn to the songs of all the cultures.

By the time I was out in the big adult world my very older cousins had done basic Family Trees for our Scottish and English ancestry, but it was only after my mum died at 95 that I found out my dad's family were from Ireland. I found a wedding certificate and found that my paternal grandmother, **Jessie Walker Thompson** was born in **Ballymena** and, once in NZ, she married my grandfather and had 4 children, one of whom was my dad.

That sent me into a full-on charge onto the **MyHeritage** site which also gave me limited access to **Wiki Tree**, **Family Search** and **Ancestry**. I looked for Facebook Pages in **Ballymena**. Then I found **NIFHS**, **Emerald** and any other site I could lay my hands on, (or afford) which would help me round off the **Whakapapa/** genealogy of my family. The list of pages I now frequent is too long to mention here. One leads to another.



## NIFHS News 47 - October 2022

I had never known, and I had never been told anything about my dad's Irish Heritage and, as he had died many years before, I had never had a chance to learn from him a new link in the very rich tapestry I was beginning to weave.

I now was officially mainly grown with thistles, shamrocks, and roses in my background. The sea surrounds us, and our lands are green. Sound familiar?

At last Jessie, my grandmother, popped up in the various NZ sites and I found her - **Jessie Walker Thompson, born in Ballymena**. It overwhelmed me by just how many **Thompsons** there were in **Ballymena** and **County Antrim**. And try looking for a Joseph Thompson. Would I even be able to find the right ones?

And then I found the **Agnews** and the **Raphaels**, and then **O'Malley** became a part of me. Raphael began appearing as a second name and a surname and Agnew as both a maiden name and middle name. So, I am the sum of these parts, and it is my next step to unravel the multitude of facts.

My dad was born in NZ to an Irish Mum and a Kiwi Dad, Mum in Aspatria, in Cumbria to a Scottish Mum and an English Dad. I was a bit of them all but being a wee bit Irish was a thrill. I truly have grown up to be a sum of the parts.

Yesterday our newspaper featured an article depicting a group of Irish tourists, visiting the little school at Katikati in the Bay of Plenty where David Gallaher, first captain of the All Blacks and originally from Ramelton, Co Donegal, went to school as a little boy. We do indeed have many connections.

[www.nzherald.co.nz/bay-of-plenty-times/news/katikati-irish-link-furthered-with-visit/3FKY66OXG5LBTHSNJOUVHAU7PM/#](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/bay-of-plenty-times/news/katikati-irish-link-furthered-with-visit/3FKY66OXG5LBTHSNJOUVHAU7PM/#)

**Whakapapa** (Māori pronunciation: [fakapapa], or *genealogy*, is a fundamental principle in *Māori culture*. A person reciting their whakapapa proclaims their *Māori identity*, places oneself in a wider context, and links oneself to land and tribal groupings and the *mana* of those.<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> [mana - Te Aka Māori Dictionary](#)

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/3424>

(noun) prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma - **mana** is a supernatural force in a person, place, or object. **Mana** goes hand in hand with tapu, one affecting the other. The more prestigious the event, person, or object, the more it is surrounded by tapu and **mana**. **Mana** is the enduring, indestructible power of the atua and is inherited at birth, the more senior the descent, the greater the **mana**.

- [Mana Whenua](#) · [Mana Whakaiao](#) · [Tuku Mana Whakahaere](#) · [Mana Whakatipu](#) · [Mana Tūpuna](#)

Experts in *whakapapa* can trace and recite a lineage not only through the many generations in a linear sense, but also between such generations in a lateral sense.

In the spirit of our bilingual culture and language many of us with Pakeha roots are also able to articulate our Whakapapa in Maori and these are routinely shared when meeting people you have not met before, defining your place and the part your ancestors have played in your shaping of who you are.



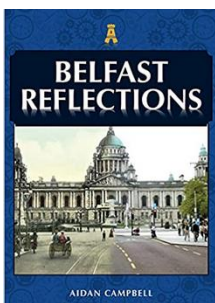
## A BOOK REVIEW

### 'BELFAST REFLECTIONS'

By Aidan Campbell

This book has 180 pictures of Belfast which are modern colour photographs merged with older sepia photographs, taken between the 1890s and 1960s, to give a "then" and "now".

Aidan Campbell is well qualified to compile the information which goes with the photographs for this book. He has had personal knowledge of quite a few areas of Belfast since the 1950s and since 2005 has published 17 local histories of several areas of Belfast. He gives many interesting facts and explanations.



The photographs show many of the public buildings, housing, department stores, churches, and different forms of public transport in several areas of Belfast. Many of these buildings no longer exist because of the 1941 Blitz on Belfast, the "Troubles", starting in 1969, regeneration of sub-standard housing and the construction of new roads.

Belfast is now the capital of Northern Ireland and became a city in 1888. It is a major port and had many large industries ranging from ship building and rope making, to linen and other industries from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The book contains a short history of Belfast and includes a bibliography of books about Belfast.

This book with its fascinating photographs should be of interest to Belfast residents, visitors and local historians and should bring back memories to older inhabitants. It is the type of book which may be studied repeatedly to see the changes between the "old" and the "new".

*This book is now available to consult in the NIFHS Research Centre, IR875/018. It was published by Amberley in April 2022 and costs £15.99 to buy from bookstores. It would make a good companion to the recently published NIFHS Guidebook "The City of Belfast.", which is available from the NIFHS online shop.*

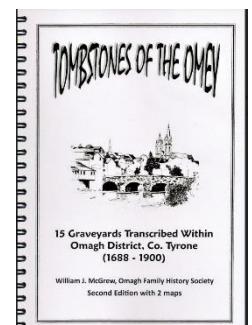
## A BOOK REVISED

### 'TOMBSTONES OF THE OMEY' (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

By William McGrew

'Tombstones of the Omev' by William McGrew has been revised by members of Tyrone Family History Society.

The book comprises transcriptions of tombstones from a number of graveyards in Omagh and surrounding districts dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This new edition has additional information for Dunmullan and Old Drumragh graveyards including maps of where the graves are located within these graveyards.



The book is a treasure trove of information as it has transcriptions of gravestones taken about 30 years ago. Many of the gravestone inscriptions are now much harder to find and/or read. 'Tombstones of the Omev' is available to purchase from NIFHS online shop.

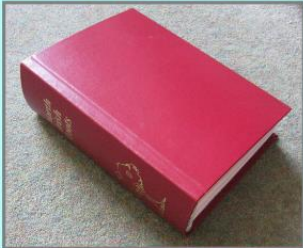


**NIFHS News 47 - October 2022**

NORTH OF IRELAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

***BACK IN STOCK AGAIN***

**BINDERS FOR NORTH IRISH ROOTS**



**PRICE £8**  
Look out for details  
on how to purchase  
from our website  
[www.nifhs.org](http://www.nifhs.org)

These A5 binders hold 12 copies of the North Irish Roots Journal and match exactly the previous North Irish Roots binders.

[www.nifhs.org](http://www.nifhs.org) Registered Charity NIC106071

**ALSO, BACK IN STOCK**

**The McIlwrath Letters** - This is a fascinating look at the lives of emigrants. The book is a family history written in letters from New Zealand to Ireland from 1860 until 1915. It was published by the Killyleagh Branch of the NIFHS in 2009.

**Tombstones of the Omey, The McIlwrath Letters, The City of Belfast, the binders for North Irish Roots** and much, much, more are available to purchase through the NIFHS shop. Find all the details at -

[www.nifhs.org/shop/](http://www.nifhs.org/shop/)

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this Newsletter at the time of its publication. Links to third party websites are included in good faith. The NIFHS is not responsible for the content associated with those links. Over the passage of time the content on websites, including NIFHS.org, may be moved or removed. This may result in "page not found" error messages or content that does not appear to be relevant to the link source context.