



NZSG IRISH INTEREST GROUP AGM 26 MAY 2024  
CONVENOR'S REPORT

The Irish Interest Group 2023 - 2024 year commenced on 28 May 2023 when at the conclusion of the AGM your current Committee were re-elected for the following year.

Following the AGM our members were taken on a one hour trip throughout Ireland. Presented by Darragh Walshe, N.Z. Representative of Tourism Ireland, we were introduced to friendly Irish locals, visiting areas with lots of charm, and a diverse range of experiences, showing any time is a good time *To Fill Your Heart* with Ireland. [Our website contains a link to Information from Tourism Ireland [www.ireland.com](http://www.ireland.com)]

As part of our conference fundraising, on 23 July we screened the film *The Field*, a compelling story of an Irishman's determined battle to resist change and defend his heritage. As with previous films we had shown this event was well supported.

The subject of our meeting held 20 August covered the term Scots-Irish which refers to people whose ancestors, often Presbyterian, originated in Scotland and settled in Ireland in the nine northern counties of the Province of Ulster: Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan.

As part of this meeting Dorothy and John Dowgray presented a power point titled: *Finding Your Scots-Irish Ancestors in Laggan: Ulster Roots in Donegal, Tyrone and Derry*.

We displayed a section from our Irish holdings included records on migration to Atlantic Canada, the Ulster-Scots immigrating to Nova Scotia.

One of Sean Brosnahan's podcasts, from a series on Irish migrants available on his website was shown, *The Greening of the South*.

Our November meeting was a full day slot and generally is an open forum for our members to display their stories. A suggested theme for this meeting was Female Ancestors.

Personal family presentations shown throughout the day were contributed by: Earl O'Callaghan, Steve Bouzaid, Eric Walton, Barbara Bolt, and we were spoilt with two individual presentations from Dorothy Dowgray.

For over two years our group fundraised to hold an Irish genealogy conference in Auckland following an inquiry we received early 2021 from the Ulster Historical Foundation (UHF), Belfast. After an initial meeting of the committee and ongoing inquiries with UHF, certain costs would be required to bring two UHF genealogists to Auckland.

We conducted a survey with our membership where a section asked members if they would support a UHF genealogy conference. The survey was extremely positive for a conference to be held so planning began in earnest. There had not been an Irish genealogy conference in Auckland since June 2017 so our members got right behind supporting a 2024 event.

Fundraising during 2022 and 2023 through our film screenings, raffles, donations, book sales and special donations directly for the conference, enabled the Irish Interest Group to hold a two-day Irish conference in Auckland during our February meeting time slot.

We thank members who generously contributed to the fundraising.

In May 2023 member Eric Walton assisted our Group to lodge a funding application with The Lion Foundation. A Grant was received and this amount (shown in our Financial Report) contributed towards the conference proceeding. This funding also contributed for two N.Z. Irish historians to present at the conference.

We thank Butlers Chocolates New Zealand for their sponsorship at the Irish Conference, and at our film meetings.

We continue to maintain a strong membership with our quarterly e-Newsletters and regular e-News Bulletins being e-mailed to our members around New Zealand throughout the North and South Islands, and to members in Australia, Ireland and Canada.

A thank you goes to our Treasurer Kathryn O'Neil who compiled our Financial Reports, and Ron Jackson our Auditor, who reviewed and signed them off.

We thank members for regularly attending our meetings your ongoing support is appreciated, and we acknowledge Anne Brady who at various times has stepped up to assist at meetings.

A special thank you must also go to Robyn Williams, ex NZSG Executive Board member, who generously contributes her time and expertise to the Irish Interest Group, and is always on hand to assist when asked.

I extend a special thank you to our Committee for their continued support, without it our Group would not function in the manner it does.

GERALDENE O'REILLY  
CONVENOR  
NZSG IRISH INTEREST GROUP  
26/05/2024