

NZSG IRISH INTEREST GROUP AGM 22 MAY 2022
CONVENOR'S REPORT

The Irish Interest Group 2021-2022 year commenced on 23 May 2021 when at the conclusion of the AGM your current Committee were re-elected for the following year.

Following the AGM, our meeting programme focused on born in Ireland, buried in New Zealand with an emphasis on Grafton and Symonds Street along with other Auckland cemeteries, and cemeteries throughout the country. We invited members to bring along their Irish documents or any memorabilia relating to their Irish family burial records.

Sue Dunn described how having located her SAINTY family monument in the Purewa Cemetery, Meadowbank, Auckland it was looking very sorry for itself covered in silt. Having read an article 'To clean or not to clean? – that is the question' The N.Z. Genealogist June 2020 page 124, Sue discussed the method she used to clean her SAINTY family headstone. Sue's article on her cleaning success appeared in The N.Z. Genealogist August 2020 page 172.

[Image 1]

Dorothy Dowgray presented a PowerPoint *Family Cemeteries and their Stories: Where my DNA connects to cemeteries in New Zealand* where she has large numbers of ancestors buried. Dorothy especially focused on Temuka Cemetery in South Canterbury because a recent DNA test had revealed to her many more close and distant relatives buried there, whose origins were County Kerry in Ireland. These people were among the Irish chain migration out of Kerry into Canterbury in the 1860s and 1870s. The slide show finished with a list of useful resources for research.

Miles spoke about Valentine Magan a young man who died of typhus at Miles' great-grandparents' house in Grafton Road in 1872, and was buried in the Catholic section of Grafton Cemetery. Valentine's remains were subsequently unearthed in the 1970s when the motorway went through mainly the Catholic section of the cemetery, but his name is on the memorial beside the motorway. Miles also talked about the Dillon grave in the Anglican section of Grafton Cemetery which is still intact.

[Image 2]

We screened a 4 minute You Tube clip on Auckland media personality, Mel Homer, visiting Co. Fermanagh to locate the gravesite of her 5 x Great Grandfather Patrick MULLANPHY. With the assistance of a hand drawn map provided by Fermanagh Heritage Centre, Mel located Patrick buried in the Killesher parish graveyard with his headstone still intact after 200 years.

[Image 3]

Trish Kelly acted on a phone call received from her sister in the outback of Australia, when told about a N.Z. family reunion her sister had read about, that had family connections to their Great-Great Grandfather, William Day LESLIE. Trish has extensively researched this man but had been unable to find a record as to where he was buried. Not knowing the family who was holding the reunion event, Trish attended and much to her delight learned that her Great-Great Grandfather is buried in Green's Road Cemetery Kaeo. Trish titled her talk *What you think you know, but you don't know, until you do know*.

We received copies of two N.Z. death certificates from member Pat Ryan of Wanganui relating to members of her family; Jeremiah RYAN who was born at Thomas Town, Co. Tipperary c1821, and discharged in N.Z. from the 58th Regiment. Jeremiah died in 1887 and was buried in the Coromandel cemetery. His wife Mary CUMMINS born c1815 in Co. Kildare died 1898 at Coromandel and is buried in the same plot. This burial information lead to locating numerous letters held at Archives N.Z. that contributed to a wider knowledge of Jeremiah and Mary's lives in N.Z. Mary was a woman who stood up to the Military and fought for her rights as a Widow.

[Image 4]

Michael Coyne spoke on Irish Wills as a source for death and burial information, which can lead to other family relationships.

On 13 June we received notification from Wellington author Peter Burke outlining plans to establish a New Zealand Irish History Collective. Full details of this notice were included in our June 2021 newsletter.

The first of our film screening *Every Plot Has A Story* was shown on 20 June when we viewed stories relating to some of the one million people buried in the Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin. Often humorous, always effecting, this film explored life, death and the afterlife, and ended up in a surprising manner. Even in a cemetery you never quite get used to death. We intend to screen more films in the coming months.

[Image 5]

From 14-15 August our Group maintained a stand at the annual Auckland Family History EXPO. As in previous years the Irish stand was continuously busy over the two days. We signed up 12 new members over the weekend.

During 2021 our lives continued to be defined by the COVID global pandemic. When Auckland went into lockdown on 18 August we postponed our meeting for that month, rescheduling it for September, before eventually cancelling it due to the pandemic lockdown still in place.

Members had the opportunity to attend the 25th ISAANZ - Irish Studies Association of Australia & New Zealand Conference *Ireland: History, Memory and Myth* held in Auckland 6-7 December. This conference became an online event another casualty of the Covid restrictions. Usually held in Australia members had the opportunity to view two live streams on a variety of subjects.

[Image 6]

Late October our Group were informed that our application, made February 2021 to the Irish Government's Emigrant Support Programme for a Grant, was successful. This funding allowed for the purchase of books and maps which will enable users of these resources to research material covering a range of subjects. Full details of these purchases are covered in a separate AGM Publications Report to be presented by our Secretary, Maria Coyne.

[Image 7]

On 28 November we were finally able to host our guest speakers who were originally to speak at our cancelled August meeting. Through the use of a ZOOM meeting organised and conducted by Maria Coyne, David and Susan Verran presented individual papers. David's paper referred to early Auckland settlers, and Susan's paper related to various family connections. We had 34 people present to this online meeting which allowed for members outside Auckland to sign in. We welcomed members from Wellington, Kapiti, Taupo and N.S.W. David and Susan gave permission for their presentations to be recorded and these are available free to view on our webpage www.genealogy.org.nz >Community >Interest Groups >Irish Interest Group

Our first 2022 meeting was held 27 February when we displayed 28 new books and 32 Royal Irish Academy maps purchased with our E.S.P. Grant funding. We received an apology to our invitation to attend this meeting from Faren Foley, Deputy Head at the New Zealand Irish Embassy. We wrote to the Embassy expressing our thanks for receiving the E.S.P. funding.

Three presentations based around a selection of N.Z. resources were presented.

In the Beginning - the story of my journey of genealogical research over 50years: Miles Dillion emphasised the importance of reading history books, biographies and regional histories. He spoke about some of the wonderful people he had met and interviewed over the years. In the early 1970s his grandfather's cousin talked about her uncle whom she had known, Miles' great-grandfather a man born in Ireland 200 years ago! *Family memorabilia and documents are priceless and deserve close examination. Field trips are also invaluable in setting the scene for our ancestors' lives.* Miles touched on a number of useful websites and drew attention to the expertise held by members of the NZSG. He closed his presentation discussing the importance of recording all findings for future generations.

James Reilly - Green Island: Researching James Reilly born c1835 in the townland Cloverhill, parish Anna, Co. Cavan, Ireland, with variations on the spelling of James' surname appearing on numerous documents. In Ireland his surname spelt Reilly, in Scotland Raleigh and in N.Z. Riley.

William Jones: In June 1863 William died unexpectedly at north Ararimu, Auckland having arrived in N.Z. 4 months previously. The use of R.C. Archives Auckland, newspaper reporting prior to and after the inquest, Symonds St. Cemetery records and Coroner's report enabled research to locate William's baptism 31 December 1834 at Parish Pallasgreen & Templebredon, Limerick, Ireland. Records of William's parents Patrick Jones and Bridget Ryan and baptisms of his 10 siblings were also located 1821-1842. William's death certificate stated his age as 25, he was actually 28 years old.

Irish historian Rory Sweetman is writing a history on the 175 years The Loyal Orange Order has been established in New Zealand and spoke to members who had connections to, or whose ancestor was a member of the Loyal Orange Order. Rory rounded the meeting off speaking about his several of his publications.

During the year Geraldene O'Reilly attended two events held at the Irish Embassy in Wellington. The function held 26 May was a literary programme which included a presentation by author Peter Burke based on his book *True To Ireland*. A special part of the evening was the unveiling of the 'Sons of Eire' Commemorative Sculpture. Presented by Peter Burke to the Embassy for permanent display, this sculpture is inscribed with the names of 278 Members of The Eire National Association, Irish men living and working in New Zealand who in 1941 refused to be conscripted into the New Zealand Army and were due to be deported. You need to read this book to find out the full story.

[Image 8]

On 8 July the Irish Ambassador Peter Ryan and Professor Sonja Tiernan, Eamon Cleary Chair of Irish Studies, University of Otago held a special *Luck of the Irish* gathering with speakers Dame Fiona Kidman, Professor Barbara Brookes and Dr. Majella Cullinane. Dame Fiona Kidman spoke about researching in Belfast for background details for her book *This Mortal Boy*, a novel based on Belfast born Albert Black and a tragic event which occurred in Auckland August 1955.

[Image 9]

We congratulate our members who over the past year have had articles published in New Zealand and Irish genealogy magazines.

The Editor of the FREE digital magazine *Irish Lives Remembered* informed us they would be happy to take contributions from our members. This e-magazine gave terrific coverage of Peter Burke's book *True To Ireland* and to Rory Sweetman's book *Defending Trinity College Dublin, Easter 1916 Anzacs and the Rising*. These books are held in the NZSG library.

In December we said goodbye to Patrick Roycroft, Editor of *Irish Lives Remembered* (ILR) for several years. Each ILR issue included *Patrick's Page* which covered the results of research Patrick conducted for people who had raised questions on their Irish ancestry. More often the research was for overseas visitors to the Irish Family History Centre in the CHQ Building, Dublin. Patrick's articles included illustrations and images on the results of his investigative research. Patrick has moved on to Head the Geology department at the National Museum of Ireland.

[Image 10]

The Irish Family History Society and the North of Ireland Family History Society are always looking for articles from our members. These journals will be covered in our Publications Report.

We continue to have a strong membership with our quarterly Newsletters and regular News Bulletins being e-mailed to our members around New Zealand from Northland to Invercargill and to our members in Australia, Ireland and Canada.

We thank our Treasurer Kathryn O'Neil who compiled our financial reports for Ron Jackson of Auckland to review. Ron produced the final Financial Reports which will be tabled today. His work is much appreciated.

I would like to thank members for regularly attending our meetings with an additional mention of thanks going to member Anne Brady who at various times has stepped up and assisted at meetings.

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.

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

Thank you

GERALDENE O'REILLY
CONVENOR
NZSG IRISH INTEREST GROUP
22/05/2022

[Images that accompanied this presentations follow here]