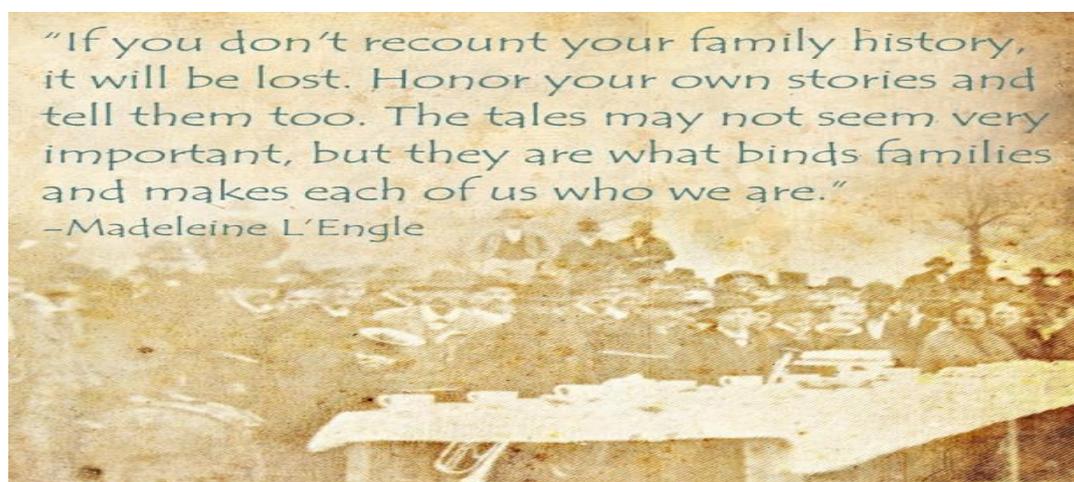




**Journal of
Coffs Harbour District Family History Society Inc.**



CONTENTS			
*Society Information	Inside Front Cover	*The Lost Century of Data	Page 5
*President's Report *The Dear Old Town	Page 1	*Workshops * In Quarantine *Share Your Story	Page 6
*Monitor Report *Do it now *Special Interest Groups	Page 2	*Mothers' Day *I am a Veteran *Exchange Journals	Pages 7 Page 8
*Scanning Service *DNA Group *Helping Hand	Page 3	*Civil Registration Timeline *Domestic Violence *The Lost Children of Tuam contd.	Page 9 Page 10 Pages 11 -15
*Membership Renewals *New Members	Page 4	*Members Entitlements *Items for Sale *Membership Renewal Form *Seminar Registration Form	Back Cover



Journal Published Quarterly by

COFFS HARBOUR DISTRICT
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.

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Annual Membership Fees: Single \$45.00
Joint (2 persons at same address)..... \$65.00

RESEARCH:

Library Hours: Tuesday to Thursday 10.00am – 4.00pm (closed at 1.00pm on 2nd Tuesday of month)
Saturday: 10.00am – 4.00pm (except 4th Saturday of the month)

Library Fees: Members - free on production of current membership card
Visitors - \$14.00 per day or \$7.00 per half day or part thereof
Duty Monitors are available for advice and assistance

Library Rules: * Current membership cards are to be worn in the rooms.
* Attendance Book to be signed on arrival and departure.
* Bags to be left in area indicated by Monitor.
* Pencils only to be used in Library.
* Photocopies available through duty Monitor and will be charged according to price schedule.
* One microfiche only (do not remove plastic sleeve) to be removed from drawer.

Correspondence Inquiries: Research will be undertaken for an initial fee of \$30.00.
For more information, email coffsgenie@gmail.com

Workshops: are held on 4th Saturday of each month or as otherwise advertised.

RECIPROCAL RIGHTS – Reciprocal rights are offered to members of all family history societies who visit our rooms to do research. Proof of current membership is required.

The Society does not hold itself responsible for statements made or opinions expressed by authors of the articles published in "Genie-Allergy". All care is taken to be accurate, however the Editor reserves the right to publish abridged articles/special features due to space constraints.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is the second edition of "Genie Allergy" for the decade 2020 which commenced with the bushfires and drought but hope when rain came to some parts of the country. I am sure none of us would have visualised that the World would be experiencing the Covid-19 Pandemic with its suffering, death and hardship. I do hope you are all coping well in your isolation.

On Tuesday 17 March the Society Executive made the decision to close our Research Rooms from 4.00 pm that afternoon. Secretary Maureen Joyce informed members of our decision. Annette Morrow, Workshop and Seminar Co-Ordinator, contacted our speakers for March Workshop and May Seminar to confirm cancellations of these events. However, as it was St Patrick's Day we made sure we celebrated this special day with Irish decorations, green lollies and green apples and celery as well as a sponge cake.

Jane Gow, our Treasurer, is recovering from major heart surgery at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney followed by rehabilitation at Baringa Hospital. She is now at home and has done remarkably well informing us she is getting better each day. Sadly our Assistant Treasurer Lyn Brotherton's mother died in Grafton and was buried at Coonabaraban in this very difficult time of restrictions. The Society sends sympathy and condolences to Lyn and family.

Thanks so much to Sharon Brennan for the most interesting 22 February Workshop on "Blogging and Genealogy" which was so interesting for all who attended. Thank you to the many members who were present at the Special General Meeting the same day when the proposed change to the Constitution "that all Membership Renewals will be due on 1 July each year" was passed unanimously. A pro-rata fee has also been worked out for those who paid on the date of their joining. However, at this time no one has received their reminders for past few months, which means that no money is coming in to meet our financial commitments. Our monthly rent for Rooms and other bills still need to be paid but we have applied to Council for rent relief. We will manage for a couple of months and will keep you all informed.

I am sure most of you would have the cleanest cupboards around and even found treasures! I have lived in my home here in Coffs for 40 years and have found so many items of interest and some that should have been thrown out years ago including a tax return for 1963! Among items I found a hand-written letter and poem from Dame Mary Gilmore (1865 -1962) to my mother, who was a teacher at South Wagga School. My mother's class had written to her in 1956 as Mary had attended Wagga Gurwood St. School as a Pupil Teacher in 1880s. In 1937 Mary was created a Dame of the British Empire – the first woman to receive the honour for Literature.

THE DEAR OLD TOWN

***When I first saw the dear old town, Emus went walking up and down,
Or in a doorway poked a head, Asking in hope, a crust of bread.
Wagga was bush in those far days; What now are streets were trodden ways:
Between the trees and through the grass, Where kangaroos would sometimes pass-
Houses were slab and roofs were bark, No windows, then, a child might mark,
But just a shutter thing with hide, Which sun or wind, or rain defied.....***

Thinking of you all and looking forward to seeing you back in our Rooms.

Rosie Doherty #396



The tree of life for some has cast its shade – we must make sure their memories never fade.

MONITOR REPORT

I wish all our Monitors stay well and safely isolated during this time of coronavirus. There are many web sites available for both our Monitors and our Members to use during this time. Today I received an email from records.nsw.gov.au detailing updates they now have on their site.

We now have two monitors for the 2nd Saturday afternoon of each, Stephen Goundry and Ken Mason. At the March Committee meeting a motion was passed that “when the Monday is gazetted as a Public Holiday, the Saturday of that weekend means the society rooms will be closed.” The Queens Birthday Weekend and the 8 Hour Day Holiday in October the rooms will be closed all day on the Saturday.

Maggie Heffernan

Maggie Heffernan, Monitor Co-ordinator #1622

DO IT NOW

*If with pleasure you are viewing, any work a man is doing
If you like him or love him, tell him now
Don't withhold your approbation, till the Parson makes oration
And he lies with snowy lillies on his brow
For no matter how you shout it, he won't really care about it
He won't know how many teardrops you have shed
If you think some praise is due to him, now is the time to slip it to him
For he cannot read his tombstone when he is dead
More than fame and more than money, is the comment kind and sunny
And the hearty warm approval of a friend, for it gives to life a saviour and
It makes you stronger, braver and it gives you heart and spirit to the end
If he earns your praise, bestow it, if you like him let him know it
Let the words of true encouragement be said, do not wait till life is over
And he's underneath the clover, for he cannot read his tombstone when he's dead.*

Berton Braley

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A MEMBER'S INTEREST GROUP?

If you are interested in the formation of a Group relating to another area of research (other than DNA), the Committee will be pleased to hear from you - email coffsgenie@gmail.com. Possible Groups could be of a country (e.g. Irish), a particular family history software program (e.g. Legacy or Brother's Keeper), Convicts, FamilySearch, etc. When the Society forms an Interest Group, a convenor or joint convenors will be appointed to the Group and each Group formed by popular demand would be for members only, meeting on a regular basis, time and place (possibly once a month), with the aim to help participants in that specific area of interest.

- If you are interested in an Irish Research Group, please contact Maggie on mheff.1940@gmail.com or Rosie on rdoherty1@bigpond.com
- If you are interested in a My Brother's Keeper please contact Jim on walledcity@live.com.au
- If you are interested in getting involved in the Cemetery Transcription Project please contact Maureen on mkphome@bigpond.com

Please contact Rosie or Maureen if there is any other area that may be of interest

SCANNING SERVICE FOR MEMBERS

The Society is offering this service to members who would like their old photos, slides or negatives digitised. **Stan Gordon** has offered to assist members by doing the scanning. He would prefer that members go to his home at Toormina and take their photos, negatives and slides as well as a USB drive so the scanned images can be saved to the USB. The cost of this service is 50 cents per image which will be added to our Society's funds. If you would like to take up Stan's offer, please phone him on **02 6658 7955** or email him at stngordon@gmail.com to arrange a suitable time. If you have large documents, such as foolscap BDM certificates or newspaper pages up to A3 size, etc., you are able to scan them using the A3 Book Edge Scanner we have in our room. This Scanner is now installed on the WIN7 computer and the scanner unit is on a trolley under the bench ready to wheel out and use. The scanned images will be saved to the computer and then can be copied to your USB drive or you will be able to print them. As our Society's printer is an A4 one, the scanned images are reduced in size to fit but if you would like to have them printed as A3, you will be able to do this at a print Shop. Please ask the monitors on duty for assistance.



DNA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

from Diane Smith - DNA Special Interest Group Convenor

With DNA or Genetic Genealogy fast becoming the latest addition to helping with Family History research, our Society commenced a DNA support group in February 2019. We have had 20 plus members attending each month where they have learnt to understand and interpret their DNA results in a more comprehensive way. We have also heard many success stories from people connecting with previously unknown cousins who have helped them not only with their research but also sharing photos and family stories. Any Society member who has had their DNA tested or if you are interested in learning more about DNA, you are welcome to attend. There is a small charge of \$3 per person to cover costs of room hire and morning tea. Please bring your laptop, iPad or tablet so that you can access your results during the session. Our group provides a friendly and informal forum for learning about your DNA results. We meet at the Curran Centre in Gordon St Coffs Harbour from 10am–12 noon on the first Monday of each month. If you would like to know more, please contact Diane Smith Member (#1815) on dilin.smith@gmail.com or Maggie Heffernan Member (#1622) on mheff.1940@gmail.com

Unfortunately, until Government restrictions are lifted, our DNA get togethers have been cancelled.



Do you need help with your research? Do you need guidance on where to look other than the Internet? Please ask one of our monitors when next you are in the rooms. All are very familiar with the contents of what we have in the rooms and are only too willing to share it with you.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS, CONTACT DETAILS ETC.

Memberships will be due for renewal on 1st July 2020.

This was decided upon at the last Committee meeting and will lessen the workload for Bev Salter, the Membership Secretary and for Sharon, the Newsletter Editor. Renewal forms will be sent out with this (June) Newsletter and from now on you will be issued with a **membership badge** replacing the current membership cards. Badges will display your name and membership number and if required prior to the renewal of your membership, they will be available for \$6.50 with a pin or \$7.50 with a magnet. If you are interested, please let Stan Gordon know. When renewing your Membership:

1. A completed membership form **MUST** be completed for all payments made. Be sure to complete Section 2 with your Membership type, how you would like to receive your quarterly journal, sign the form and show the method of payment. Note: The completed form is used to ensure our records are kept up to date and therefore it is vital we receive a form to cover all membership payments.
2. Membership will now be \$45 a single and \$65 a double.
3. Payment methods:
 - (a) Cash is payable only in person at our Research Room.
 - (b) Cheque is payable in person at our Research Room or by mail to
PO Box 2057, Coffs Harbour 2450.
 - (c) EFT/Direct Deposit: BSB, Account No., etc. as details on our membership form and you must quote your member number and/or name at the time of payment.
 - (i) Online through your financial institution; OR
 - (ii) In Person at a BCU branch (Bananacoast Credit Union).

Following payment by EFT/Direct Deposit, **IT IS ESSENTIAL** that a copy of the completed membership form be **emailed, mailed or delivered to our Research Room.**

Renewed membership badges will be placed in the Badge Box on the Admin Desk in our Research Room for your collection if you haven't included a stamped addressed envelope with your renewal.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



A warm welcome to the following new members. We hope you will make yourselves at home and find us to be a friendly and helpful group. Don't be afraid to ask the Monitors on duty for help – they will do their best to steer you in the right direction with your research.

Robert Burness	# 1977	Robyn Rixon	#1978
Helen Taylor	#1979	Linda Freeman	#1980

Congratulations to Maggie Heffernan on the achievement of her OBE on Fri 24 April.

“THE LOST CENTURY OF DATA”

We know incredible things about former civilisations thousands of years after they fell thanks – in part – to the tangible records they left behind them. However today few keep physical records, write letters or print photos.

If, in 2500, a hypothetical Museum of Earth History wants to curate an exhibit on life in 2020, they’d have nothing to put on display because of the amount of information now only captured in digital form. It is clear we now stand to lose an awful lot of our history and so the term “The Lost Century” has been coined for it.

This issue of digital archiving is not new. Anyone who has ever saved a file to floppy disk, or filmed a home movie on VHS is keenly aware of and probably annoyed by, the archival challenges of technological change. Already, only 25 years after their mainstream heyday, it’s really hard for the average person to find the software to read a floppy disk or an old-school VCR on which to watch a tape. This problem could go well beyond ‘ye old’ floppy disks. It becomes far more difficult to access digital information when the file formats, or the device they are stored on becomes obsolete. Sure, professional archivists have been able to pull data from decades-old computers and century-old wax cylinders but the real scary risk of loss may be when our data isn’t technically saved to any one discrete, physical thing, but is instead held in “the Cloud” or by a private company. Companies shut down; disgruntled ex-employees have wiped years of personal journals on blogging platforms by wiping data bases; emails which have replaced letter-writing are deleted once read. In-boxes may contain stuff important to you including photo attachments. Whatever it is, it only lives on your email providers’ servers and they can do with those, what they wish. Who knows what will become of them in 10 years or 20 years. Many parents now only share their children’s photos on Facebook and they probably only live online. Few scrap-book their memories or store photo prints in albums anymore. Hackers and secret bugs in codes have already caused the loss of personal and business information supposedly safely stored on sites such as Facebook.

It has been said that ‘we are nonchalantly throwing all our data into what could become an information black hole and that we digitise things because we think we will preserve them, but what we don’t understand is ...those digital versions may not be any better and may even be worse than the artefacts that we digitised.’

Of course there are large organisations which are continually working on ways of preserving our information for prosperity even if old sites are shut down, but while that may help humanity’s legacy, it doesn’t do much for the average internet user who just wants to nostalgia-scroll through old photos in a few years. Also for those who believe that their memories are safely stored on CDs and USBs the warning is you must update these storage devices annually because they too fail frequently and/or will not be able to be read in a year or so because of the continually evolving technology. For those people and Family History Researchers, the advice is: ***PRINT OUT ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING IMPORTANT TO YOU.***

(Article taken from “Newcastle Herald” 23rd Feb. 2015 by Caitlin Dewey from the “Washington Post”)

Rosie Doherty # 396

WORKSHOPS

Unfortunately, due to the Government restrictions on socialising we have had to cancel all workshops until further notice and when the lock-down is over. However we are anticipating the October Seminar will go ahead and have included a registration form with this newsletter.

As the coordinator of workshops and seminars, Annette Morrow is appealing to any one of our members who has any interesting items to talk about and has the confidence to share these in a workshop later in the year or in 2021; or if you have a strong yearning for a particular subject to be presented, please contact her. She looks forward to hearing from many of you.

Annette can be contacted on 0412 074 643, or by email morrowmusic@bigpond.com.

“In Quarantine: A History of Sydney’s Quarantine Station 1828-1984”

I have this book in my possession and it is also in our society rooms. As we are not able to peruse the book in our rooms at the present time, I make the offer to look up the name of a ship for any member. I need the name of the ship and the date of arrival in Sydney. The names of passengers are not in the book unless they died in quarantine and have a headstone. The diseases which caused the ship and/or passengers to be quarantined are described as follows: Cholera, Chicken Pox, Diarrhoea, Fever (unspecified), Java Fever, Measles, Smallpox, Scarletina, Scarlet Fever, Typhoid Fever, Typhus Fever, Variola, Whooping cough, Water Pox. Arrival date is often shown in official records as the date a vessel arrived at a Sydney wharf *after* release from quarantine.ⁱ

I have found that the two brothers of great grandfather William Heffernan, James and Michael who arrived on the vessel “Annie Wilson” on 14 December 1859 were quarantined for 5 days because of measles.ⁱⁱ

by Jean Duncan Foley, published in 1995.

Maggie Heffernan Member No.1622

Share Your Story



Do you have an interesting story or an article to share? Include photos if you have them as they always add interest. You may want to share humble origins, or a grand adventure, wars, marriages, why you became interested in Family History in the first place. If you do, please contact Sharon on shaz@ingersole.com

Mother's Day (Mothering Sunday)



Celebrated across the world, Mothers' Day began in very early days and was an established holiday by the 16th century. In the beginning, everyone was expected to return to their mother Church (their own home town where they had been baptised) to give thanks to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, at least once a year. Over time this became a time to recognise all mothers and so the holiday was proclaimed. Due to its religious significance, those in service in big households were given the day off to go home and attend Church. Not many employers could refuse to allow their young staff the whole day off. It is hard to imagine in this day and age, where we have so many holidays, that domestic staff working in those grand homes, had only the occasional half day off to themselves, let alone a full day. As a result Mothering Sunday became a highlight and happy occasion when they could catch up with family, meet new arrivals and for mothers to have their family together for a day. Held on the 4th Sunday of Lent, prior to Easter, and in Springtime in the UK, (2nd Sunday in May in Australia) it was associated with spring flowers such as violets or primroses and as both of these grew wild in the hedgerows, young girls could pick bunches to take home to their Mums. As working conditions improved, the need for this one-day holiday diminished and by the early 1900s the traditional servant's holiday had disappeared in Britain but continued in the USA with cards printed for the occasion. During WW2 some American soldiers who were billeted with English families could not find cards in England to give to their adopted "mothers". Enterprising British card companies picked up on this and the Mother's Day as we know it today evolved. Adverts for expensive gifts being promoted makes me wonder how many mothers would be more than happy with a simple bunch of flowers – from the heart.



I Am a Veteran

They ask us why we do it, why we still parade,
now that we are getting older and just a little frayed
It's not for the sake of glory, or the medals on our chest,
It's simply that we're comrades who stood the final test
On 6th June that fateful day, a day we will never forget,
many a lad lay down his life and paid the final debt
So when you see a Veteran, give the man your hand,
for medals on his chest were won in foreign lands
And when God asks the question "who are you my man",
He will proudly answer "Sir I am a Veteran".

Anonymous

EXCHANGE JOURNALS

As exchange journals are no longer being printed, they will now be available for viewing by members from the Admin desktop at our rooms. Monitors can access these and you can download them to a USB. If anybody would like particular journals emailed to them, please contact Lyn via email at lynette.brotherton@gmail.com

ARTICLES OF INTEREST FROM EXCHANGE JOURNALS

Australian

New South Wales

Armidale Family History Group Inc – Dust of Ages – No. 168 February 2020

Armidale Photographers (1859 – 1950)

Ken Jones – Early Life in Hillgrove

Pages 6-7

Page 8

Bathurst Family History Group - Carillon Chimes No201 – February 2020

Kate Rounsefell and the Narrow Escape

Joseph Forrester, Convict Silversmith

Pages 17-18

Pages 28-31

Central Coast Family History Society – E-Muster - No 25 – December 2019

What is a TARTAN

Mother Cecile

Pages 18-21

Pages 33-36

Cowra Family History Group Inc – Eagle Eye – Vol 37 No.2 December 2019

Peter John Walter Drumgold Slattery (1911 - 1980)

John Ingram (1802 – 1882)

Did you know – Searching Surgeons Logs on Ancestry

John Mewburn (1810 – 1891)

Pages 15-19

Pages 21-23

Page 23

Pages 24-25

Queensland

Gold Coast Family History Society Inc – Rootes – Issue 135 March 2020

Parish Record keeping in England

Pages 8-10

Ipswich Genealogical Society Inc – Bremer Echoes – Vol 38 No. 1 February 2020

Let There Be Light

Early Ipswich Education

Memories of Early Ipswich by Mr Charles Fleischmann

Pages 8-9

Pages 10-11

Pages 16-20

Mount Gambier History Group – Yesterday, Today , Tomorrow – Summer 2019- 2020

Julian Tenison Woods

Jeff's Cave

The beginning of Macs Hotel

Page 5

Page 6

Page 7

Queensland Family History Society Inc – Qld Family Historian – Vol 41 No. 1- February 2020

The Family Photo

Pages 4-5

Redcliffe & District Family History Group – The First Settlement City Gazette – November 2019

Dallas "Dal" Ryan (1896 – 1995) 11th Light Horse Reg WW1

Life of Emily Meredith (1863 – 1921)

Pages 4-6

Pages 7-9

Victoria

Mornington Peninsula Family History Society Inc – Peninsula Past Times No. 157 February 2020

Baby Jumper

Pages 18-19

Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc – Spreading Branches Issue 123 February 2020

An Officer and a Gentleman – Charles George De Beauvoir Tupper (1872-1893)

Pages 6-9

Tasmania

Tasmanian Family History Society – Tasmanian Ancestry – Vol 40 No 4 – March 2020

Tasmanian Timeline 1803 -2010

Pages 196 – 199

England

Family Tree Magazine UK – Vol 35 No 11 – August 2019

Tracing Adopted Relatives

Exploring the Wars of the Roses.

How to Date Your Family Photographs

Pages 22-27

Pages 28-33

Pages 47-54

CIVIL REGISTRATION TIMELINE IN ENGLAND

1538	Thomas Cromwell issues orders for Parish Registers be kept to record every ‘wedding, christening and burying’.
1753	Lord Hardwicke’s Act for ‘the better preventing of clandestine marriages’ meant all marriages must take place within the established Church (except for those of Jews and Quakers).
1834	When the New Poor Law 1834 replaced the Elizabethan statutes that regulated Parish relief, workhouse inmates’ religious rights were protected.
1835	The Government began keeping central records of prisons in England following the passing of the Gaols Act and 1835 Prisons Act.
1836	An Act for registering births, deaths and marriages is finally passed with an accompanying Marriages Act, relaxing Hardwicke’s rules and enabling civil marriages.
1837	Only a few days after Victoria becomes Queen, civil registration begins in England and Wales on 1 st July.
1845	The registration of non-Catholic marriages in Ireland begins.
1855	Civil Registration is introduced in Scotland on 1 st January.
1858	New divorce laws make ending an unhappy marriage a realistic proposition for the first time.
1864	Full introduction of civil registration in Ireland takes place on January 1 st
1874	A Registration Act is passed updating the 1836 Act. Deaths now require a Doctor’s certificate and an unmarried father must attend and sign the register to be named on a birth entry.
1898	The Authorized Persons Act means that non-conformist places of worship can now conduct marriages without a Registrar needing to attend.
1911	The General Register Office indexes now show a maiden name on both entries.
1912	Spouse’s surnames are added to the GRO’s marriage indexes.
1926	The Legitimacy Act allows births to be re-registered if the unwed parents have subsequently married.
1926	Yet another birth and deaths registration Act introduces the registration of still-born children.
1927	Adoption is legally regulated and the GRO created the Adopted Children Register to record the details.
1969	The first major changes to the format of birth and death certificates takes place. The surname of the child is now specified as well as the parents’ place of birth.
2005	Civil Partnerships are introduced.
2014	The Marriage (same sex couples) Act 2013 comes into force, the first marriage in England and Wales is in March, Scotland follows at the end of the year.
2016	The GRO introduces an online index showing maiden names on birth entries and ages at death entries back to 1837. Trials begin of a system to supply PDFs of historic birth and death entries.
2018	Long running proposals to add the mother’s name to marriage registers move forward but are not yet implemented.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – An early case brought before the Courts in 1903 - Under the Married Women’s Act 1895

This is from an article written by Sue HEARN who moved to Cornwall in 1959. It had been a long journey for Sue and is still ongoing; “there were lots of contradictions but after years of searching records, accessing certificates and looking at other information it would seem that Frances was running from something or someone”. I have edited it for obvious reasons.

Generations of her family came from Oxfordshire and the family name was **WALDEN**. Times were hard back then with only a limited number of hours of work available so many of the family emigrated to America and Canada. Her Grandfather **Henry** was one of them and found wealth in gold and oil which enabled him to buy great parcels of land, build as a contractor and send his son to a private school. However things were not good in his marriage to Mary (they had 5 daughters and 2 sons); Grandpa moved back and forth between Canada and the UK and needless to say he met another woman, Florence (with whom he had a son), which meant he had to keep two homes going – one in England and one in Vancouver. He had planned to travel on the ill-fated “Titanic” but because of the premonition his English rose had, he decided against it. Hence Sue’s father **James** was born in England which she found very humbling for had Grandpa been on the “Titanic”, she wouldn’t be here either. Grandpa’s Canadian son, **Henry**, served in WW1 and was discharged back to Vancouver in 1919. Just before going to France in 1916 and at only 18, he met and married his 17 year old bride **Frances** in Woodstock, Oxfordshire.

Frances was from a Woodstock farming family by the name of **FOWLER**. Her parents married in Woodstock in 1900, Frances was born in 1901, and by April 1903, her mother, **Selina**, before the Town Hall in Woodstock, using the Married Woman’s Act 1895 and by warrant of arrest, brought her husband **George** before a hearing on accusations of assault and beating causing her to have two stillborn children. The official charge was persistent cruelty to his wife and by such cruelty causing her to leave and live separately from him. Witnesses were able to confirm that he had struck his wife on numerous occasions, but his defence was that she was stealing money. However, he pleaded guilty and was imprisoned for 6 weeks with an obligation to hard labour and on release was bound over to keep the peace for 6 months on a self-bond of £50.

On his release from prison, **George** returned to live with his father but later in 1903 at Woodstock, Petty Sessions, a Maintenance Officer charged him with persistent cruelty to his wife by whom an application was made for a maintenance order under the Married Woman’s Act 1895 – a lengthy hearing followed. He told the session that as he worked for his Uncle, the monies received and entered in the Farm books, were his Uncle’s and as he wasn’t in partnership with his Uncle, did not share in the profits. He paid the bills, staff and his own expenses including providing for his wife and child. He claimed that after coming out of prison, he had sold all his personal goods and therefore had very little left. The Magistrate made an order for 10 shillings a week to his estranged wife **Selina** and the costs of the court and a further pronouncement that the mother was to have charge of the child. Finally, after the divorce, he was ordered to pay the Solicitor’s fee for his ex-wife which came to £23/2/6.

It is not known whether **Selina** remarried although in the 1911 Census she is listed as married, servant, general assistant at Woodstock Workhouse and daughter Frances is a school boarder aged 10. In 1916, **Frances FOWLER** married **Henry Ridgeway WALDEN**.

Advice

There is nothing to do about the past but learn from it. Many people walk in and out of your life but friends leave footprints in your heart. They say it takes a minute to find a special friend, an hour to appreciate them, a day to love them and an entire lifetime to forget them.

Growing older is mandatory.....

Growing up is optional.....

Laughing at yourself is therapeutic.



THE LOST CHILDREN OF TUAM Contd....

Ireland wanted to forget, but the dead don't always stay buried.



With the children grown, Catherine began contributing essays to the journal of the [Old Tuam Society](#) about local history, all the while grappling with debilitating headaches and anxiety attacks. The episodes might last for days, with the only relief at times coming from lying on the floor, still, away from light. Burrowing deep into the past, though, provided welcome distraction, and at some point she chose to delve into the subject of the old mother and baby home: its beginnings as a workhouse, its place in Tuam history, the usual. Nothing deep. But there were almost no extant photographs of the home, and most of the locals were reluctant to talk. Every question Catherine raised led to another, the fullness of truth never quite within reach. Why, for example, did one corner of the property feature a well-manicured grotto centred around a statue of the Blessed Virgin? Oh that, a few neighbours said. A while back, an older couple created the peaceful space to mark where two local lads once found some bones in a concrete pit. Famine victims, maybe. The story made no sense to Catherine. The famine dead weren't buried that way. Who were these boys? What did they see?

Frannie HOPKINS was about 9, Barry SWEENEY, about 7. The two were at the fledgling stage of boyhood mischief as they monkeyed around some crab apple trees, all within view of the deserted home that figured in their fertile imagination. Some evenings, Frannie's father would delay his pint at the Thatch Bar, at the top of the town, until he had watched his son race down the Athenry Road, dodging ghosts from the old home to his left and the cemetery to his right, all the way to the family's door. But on this autumn day in the early 1970s, the boys were daring in the daylight. Jumping into some overgrowth at the property's southwest corner, they landed on a concrete slab that echoed in answer. Curious, they pushed aside the lid to reveal a shallow, tank-like space containing a gruesome jumble of skulls and bones. Frannie nudge-bumped Barry and the younger lad fell in. He started to cry as any boy would, so Frannie pulled him out and then the two boys were running away, laughing in fun or out of fright. They told everyone they met, prompting Frannie's father to say he'd get a right kick in the arse if he went back to that spot. County workers soon arrived to level that corner of the property. The police said they were only famine bones. A priest said a prayer. And that was that. In adulthood, Barry SWEENEY would go to England to find work, and Frannie HOPKINS would travel the world as an Irish soldier. Both would return to Tuam, where their shared story would come up now and then in the pub or on the street. People would tell them they were either mistaken or lying. Barry would become upset that anyone would doubt a story that had so affected him, but Frannie would take pains to reassure him. "*Barry, he would say. The truth will out.*"

Now, 40 years later, here was Catherine CORLESS, amateur historian, trying to unearth that truth, applying what she had learned in her community centre research class: Use "why" a lot. When her headaches and panic attacks eased, she pored over old newspapers in a blur of microfilm. She spent hours studying historic maps in the special collections department of the library at the national university in Galway City. One day she copied a modern map of Tuam on tracing paper and placed it over a town map from 1890. And there it was, in the cartographic details from another time: A tank for the home's old septic system sat precisely where the two boys had made their ghastly discovery. It was part of the Victorian-era system's warren of tunnels and chambers, all of which had been disconnected in the late 1930s. Did this mean, then, that the two lads had stumbled upon the bones of home babies? Buried in an old sewage area? "*I couldn't understand it,*" Catherine said. "*The horror of the idea.*" Acting on instinct, she purchased a random sample from the government of 200 death certificates for children who had died at the home. Then, sitting at the Tuam cemetery's edge in the van of its caretaker, she checked those death certificates against all the burials recorded by hand in two oversize

books. Only two children from the home had been buried in the town graveyard. Both were orphans, both “legitimate.” Neither the Bon Secours order nor the county council could explain the absence of burial records for home babies, although it was suggested that relatives had probably claimed the bodies to bury in their own family plots. Given the ostracizing stigma attached at the time to illegitimacy, Catherine found this absurd.”

In December 2012, Catherine’s essay, titled “The Home,” appeared in the historical journal of Tuam. After providing a general history of the facility, it laid out the results of her research, including the missing burial records and the disused septic tank where two boys had stumbled upon some bones. “Is it possible that a large number of those little children were buried in that little plot at the rear of the former Home?” she wrote. “And if so, why is it not acknowledged as a proper cemetery?” She also shared her own memories, including that joke she and a classmate had played on two home babies long ago. “I thought it funny at the time how those little girls hungrily grabbed the empty sweet papers, but the memory of it now haunts me,” she wrote. Her daring essay implicitly raised a provocative question: Had Catholic nuns, working in service of the state, buried the bodies of hundreds of children in the septic system? Catherine braced for condemnation from government and clergy — but none came. It was as if she had written nothing at all.

There was a time when Catherine wanted only to have a plaque erected in memory of these forgotten children. But now she felt that she owed them much more. “No one cared,” she said. “And that’s my driving force all the time: No one cared.” She kept digging, eventually paying for another spreadsheet that listed the names, ages, and death dates of all the “illegitimate” children who had died in the home during its 36-year existence. The sobering final tally: 796. Five-month-old Patrick DERRANE was the first to die, from gastroenteritis. Weeks later, Mary BLAKE, less than 4 months old and anaemic since birth. A month after that, 3-month-old Matthew GRIFFIN, of meningitis. Then James MURRAY, fine one moment, dead the next. He was 4 weeks old. In all, seven children died at the mother and baby home in 1925, the year it opened. The holidays were especially tough, with 11-month-old Peter LALLY dying of intestinal tuberculosis on Christmas Day, and 1-year-old Julia HYNES dying the next day, St. Stephen’s Day, after a three-month bout of bronchitis. Measles, Influenza, Gastroenteritis, Meningitis, Whooping cough, Tuberculosis. Severe undernourishment, also known as marasmus. Nine home babies died in 1930. Eleven in 1931. Twenty-four in 1932. Thirty-two in 1933. The Tuam home was not alone. Children born out of wedlock during this period were nearly four times more likely to die than “legitimate” children, with those in institutions at particular risk. The reasons may be many — poor prenatal care, insufficient government funding, little or no training of staff – but this is certain: It was no secret. In 1934, the Irish parliament was informed of the inordinate number of deaths among this group of children. “One must come to the conclusion that they are not looked after with the same care and attention as that given to ordinary children,” a public health official said. Thirty died in the Tuam home that year. In 1938, it was 26. In 1940, 34. In 1944, 40. In 1947, a government health inspector filed a report describing the conditions of infants in the nursery: “a miserable emaciated child...delicate...occasional fits...emaciated and delicate...fragile abscess on hip...not thriving wizened limbs emaciated...pot-bellied emaciated...a very poor baby...” That year, 52 died.

Catherine felt obligated to these children. Continuing to plumb the depths of the past, she eventually cross-checked her spreadsheet of 796 deceased home babies with the burial records of cemeteries throughout counties Galway and Mayo. Not one match. “They’re not in the main Tuam graveyard where they should have been put initially,” she remembers thinking. “They’re not in their mothers’ hometown graveyards. Where are they?” Catherine, of course, already knew.

Catherine now lives simply, almost monastically. She favours practical clothing, usually black, and has never been one for a night at the pub. She doesn’t drink alcohol or eat meat. Give her a bowl of muesli at the kitchen table and she’ll be grand. Those headaches and anxiety attacks, though, remain a part of her withdrawn life. Aidan, her husband, has become accustomed to attending wakes and weddings by himself. A few years ago, he booked a Mediterranean cruise for two; he travelled alone. “*A very quiet, introverted person, wrapped up in her own thoughts,*” Aidan said of his wife. “*Suffering, if you like.*” But thoughts of the dead children of Tuam pushed Catherine beyond her fears. Believing that the body of even one “legitimate” baby found in a septic tank would have prompted an outcry, she suspected that the silence met by her essay spoke to a reluctance to revisit the painful past - a past that had consumed her own mother. Now she was angry. Adding to her fury was the knowledge that when a Tuam hospital run by the Bon Secours closed in 2002, the religious order disinterred the bodies of a dozen nuns and reinterred them in consecrated ground outside the nearby pilgrimage town of Knock. “I feel it at times: that those poor little souls were crying out for recognition, a recognition they never got in their little, short lives,” Catherine said. “It was a wrong that just had to be righted some way.”

Seeing no other option, she contacted a reporter for The Irish Mail on Sunday, a national newspaper. Not long after, in the spring of 2014, a front-page story appeared about a certain seven acres in Tuam. It became the talk of Ireland! All who had been quiet before – the clerics, politicians and government officials – now conveyed shock and sadness, while the besieged Bon Secours sisters hired a public relations consultant whose email to a documentarian did little for the religious order’s reputation: “If you come here, you’ll find no mass grave, no evidence that children were ever so buried and a local police force casting their eyes to heaven and saying ‘Yeah, a few bones were found – but this was an area where Famine victims were buried. So?’” The news from Tuam had shocked many in the country, but the dismissive email reflected the lurking doubts about Catherine’s work. She was, after all, only a housewife.

Mary MORIARTY was getting her light-blonde hair done at a salon in Tuam one day when the beauty-parlour chatter turned to this troublemaker Catherine CORLESS. “*The entire matter should be forgotten and put behind us*”, someone said. Mary, a grandmother well known in town for her advocacy work, would have none of it. “*Well*”, she said. “*Every child is entitled to their name, and their mothers could be any one of us but for the grace of God*”. She left the salon, introduced herself by telephone to Catherine, and recounted a story that she rarely shared. In 1975, Mary was a young married mother living in one of the new subsidized houses built on the old mother and baby home property. One morning, close to Halloween, a neighbour told her that a boy was running about with a skull on a stick. The boy, Martin, said he had found his prize in the overgrown muck, and there were loads more. What the boy mistook for a plastic toy was actually the skull of a child, with a nearly complete set of teeth. “That’s not plastic, Martin,” Mary recalled saying. “You have to put it back where you found it.” Mary and a couple of neighbours followed the boy through the weeds and rubble, across the soft wet ground. Suddenly, the earth beneath her feet began to give, and down she fell into some cave or tunnel, with just enough light to illuminate the subterranean scene. As far as she could see were little bundles stacked one on top of another, like packets in a grocery, each about the size of a large soda bottle and wrapped tight in greying cloth. When her friends pulled her up, Mary’s legs were scratched and her mind was on fire. What had she seen? That very morning, she reached out to a person in town who might know. Soon a stout older woman arrived on a bicycle, her faithful dogs trotting by her side. Julia Carter DEVANEY, who used to work at the home. “*Ah, yeah, that’s where the little babies is,*” Mary recalled her saying as she came to a stop. Julia bent down at the hole and peered in. Mary never forgot what the older woman said next: “*Many a little one I carried out in the night time.*” Mary did not know what to make of this. Perhaps these were the bodies of still-born – and therefore unbaptized. Still-borns. Yes, that’s what they must be. Eighteen months after falling into the hole, Mary gave birth to her son Kevin at a Tuam hospital run by the Bon Secours sisters. After breakfast, a nun presented her with her newborn, who was swathed like a little mummy. The young mother’s mind instantly recalled those stacks of greying bundles, and straightaway she unwrapped her precious child. Now, after listening to the woman’s tale, Catherine asked whether Mary would be willing to tell her story on national radio. Of course!

The veteran geophysicist guided her mower-like contraption over the thick grass, back and forth across a carefully measured grid. Equipped with ground-penetrating radar, the machine sent radio waves through the topsoil and down into the dark earth. The curious machine was hunting for secrets concealed in the ground of the old mother and baby home, all beneath the gaze of a statue of the Blessed Virgin. This subterranean trawling was being conducted on an early autumn day in 2015 for the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes, a panel created by an embarrassed government in response to Catherine’s research. Its charge: to examine a once-accepted way of Irish life in all its social and historical complexity. The commission’s investigation into the homes – a network that by the late 1970s was falling into disuse – is focused on 18 institutions scattered across Ireland: in the capital city of Dublin, and in Counties Clare, Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kilkenny, Meath, Tipperary and Westmeath. The high infant mortality rate in some of these facilities was startling. In the Bessborough Home in Cork, 478 children died from 1934 to 1953 – or about one death every two weeks. The investigation’s broad mandate also includes scrutiny of the network’s links to the notorious Magdalen Laundries. The apparent coercion of unmarried mothers to surrender their children for adoption, often to Catholic Americans. The vaccine trials carried out on mother-and-baby-home children for pharmaceutical companies. The use of home-baby remains for anatomical study at medical colleges. It was all part of a church-state arrangement that, decades earlier, a long-time government health inspector named Alice Litster had repeatedly denounced, mostly to silence. This system marginalized defenceless Irish women, she asserted, and turned their unfortunate offspring into “infant martyrs of convenience, respectability, and fear.” The Tuam case incited furious condemnation of a Catholic Church already weakened by a litany of sexual abuse scandals. Others countered that the sisters of Bon Secours had essentially been subcontractors of the Irish state. But laying the blame entirely on the Church or the state seemed too simple — perhaps even too convenient. After all, many of these abandoned children had fathers and grandparents and aunts and uncles.

The bitter truth was that the mother and baby homes mirrored Mother Ireland of the time. As its investigation continued, the commission would occasionally provide cryptic updates of its work in Tuam. In September 2016, for example, it announced that forensic archaeologists would be digging trenches to resolve questions “in relation to the interment of human remains.” While she waited for the commission to complete its work, the woman responsible for this national self-examination, Catherine Corless, returned in a way to those days when her children and the children of neighbours packed the house. Only now the ones gathering about her were in their 60s and 70s, with hair of silver. Home babies.

Often lost in the uproar over the many children who died at the Tuam home were the stories of those who had survived. And once Catherine’s research became international news, they began calling and emailing her, seeing in this introverted woman their only hope of trying to find out who their mothers were, who their siblings were - who they were. Catherine assumed the role of pro-bono private detective, following paper trails that often led to some cemetery in England, where many unmarried mothers had gone to start anew. The children they were separated from, she said, needed to hear that their mother had “fared all right.” Before long, some of these survivors were gathering at the CORLESS house for a cup of tea and a chat. In their habits and manners of speech, they reminded Catherine of someone close to her who also had been born out of wedlock. “They all have a kind of low self-esteem,” she said. “They feel inadequate. They feel a bit inferior to other people. It mirrored, really, the way my mother was.”

During her research, Catherine had built a detailed, wood-and-clay model of the home, large enough to cover a dining-room table. It had helped her to visualize. Now she and Aidan would occasionally remove the model from a high shelf in the barn out back so that survivors could do the same. They would touch the grey walls and peer into the small windows, as if to imagine themselves in the arms of their mothers. P. J. HAVERTY, a retired mechanic, sat at the CORLESS kitchen table one day, sipping tea and eating a ham-and-butter sandwich. He was born in 1951, the son of a 27-year-old woman who had been left at the home by her father when she was eight months pregnant. Eileen was her name, and she seemed to vanish a year after giving birth. The white-haired man remembers only a few snapshot moments of the home. Wetting the bed mattresses that would then be propped against the window to dry. Seeing himself for the first time in a car’s side-view mirror. Walking out the door with his new foster parents, the father choosing him because he looked sturdy for farm work, the mother because he had smiled at her. P. J. was happy enough until his teens, when he was called a “bastard,” and people avoided the pew he sat in, and girls at a dance tittered at the sight of him. “If the parents found out,” he said, “they’d tell them to keep away from that lad, you don’t know where he came from.” He considered drowning himself in the fast-moving river that coursed that coursed through his foster father’s field. “The things that I was called,” he said. “I just thought everyone was against me.” Thanks to a hint dropped here, a secret whispered there, P. J. managed in adulthood to locate his birth mother in South London. Plump and with greying hair, she reassured him that she hadn’t abandoned him. After leaving the Tuam home, she had taken a cleaning job at a nearby hospital and, for more than five years, returned every week to demand that she be given back her child, only to be turned away at the door. P. J.’s voice caught as he recalled what his mother, now dead, had said she told the nuns to no avail. “That’s my son you have in there. I want to rear him. I want to look after him.” It was true.

In early March of this year, the Mother and Baby Homes Commission reported that “significant quantities of human remains” had been discovered on the grounds of the Tuam home. The ground-penetrating radar and delicate excavation had revealed what appeared to be a decommissioned septic tank. And in 17 of that septic system’s 20 chambers, investigators found many human bones. A small sampling revealed that they were of children, ranging in age from 35 foetal weeks to three years, and all dating from the home’s 36 years of operation. Expressing shock, the commission vowed to continue its investigation into “who was responsible for the disposal of human remains in this way.” Once again, Ireland’s past had returned to haunt. His voice trembling with passion, the prime minister, Enda KENNY, addressed the Irish legislature on what he called the “chamber of horrors” discovered in Tuam. In the “so-called good old days,” he said, Irish society “did not just hide away the dead bodies of tiny human beings.” “We dug deep and we dug deeper still,” he said. “To bury our compassion, to bury our mercy, to bury our humanity itself.” Though the prime minister said that “no nuns broke into our homes to kidnap our children,” others directed their wrath at the Catholic Church and, of course, the Bon Secours order, whose only response so far has been to express its “continued cooperation and support” for the commission’s work.

The CORLESS household, meanwhile, became an international newsroom, with family members fielding the constant telephone calls and accommodating the television crews forever at the door. Catherine answered every question out of duty, not vanity.

But when Ireland's most popular television program, "The Late, Late Show," invited her to appear as a guest, she balked. There was her ever-present anxiety, which now limited her driving to little more than weekly five-mile runs to the SuperValu grocery in Tuam. More than that, she feared being accused of self-aggrandizement at the expense of dead children. With her family all but demanding that she accept - *Imagine how many home-baby survivors, suffering in silence, might be reached* - Catherine reluctantly consented, but only if she would already be seated when the program returned from a commercial break. She did not want to be summoned from the curtain to unwanted applause. Aidan drove her into Galway City to buy an outfit: black pants and a black top, of course, brightened slightly with a silver trim. Then up to Dublin. "I was a mess," Catherine recalled. "But I said: 'This is it. I have to do it.'" When she finished telling the story of the Tuam home on live television, the audience rose in what the host described as a very rare standing ovation. Catherine nodded, smiled slightly, tightly, and exhaled. Watching on a monitor in an adjacent room, her husband fought back tears. "I'm married to her for 40 years," he said later, still astonished. "And I don't know her at all." Photographs of grandchildren adorn the walls, a silver kettle rests on the stove, a laptop computer sits open on the counter beside a window that looks out on a garden, a bird feeder and beyond, an undulating field of grass. This is the kitchen of Catherine CORLESS, and her office. She conducts her online research here, and keeps assorted documents on the kitchen table for easy retrieval when yet another call comes in. *Can you help me find my mother, my sister, my.....* She never refuses.

The future of the Tuam grounds that her questioning disturbed has yet to be revealed. The government is grappling with many complexities, including the sad fact that the remains of infants and children, the Marys and Patricks, the Bridgets and Johns, are commingled. One option is to leave everything as is. Another is to disinter the remains for possible identification and proper burial - although it is unclear whether DNA evidence can be recovered from those who died so young, and so long ago. Other issues also need resolution. Potential compensation for home baby survivors; litigation against the Bon Secours sisters, who run a vast health-care network; the propriety of children playing above the bones of other children.

And there remains the maddening mystery of why a Catholic order of nuns would bury these children in such a manner. Was it to save a few pounds for the cost of each burial? Was it meant as a kind of catacombs, in echo of the order's French roots? The baptism of these children entitled them under canon law to a funeral Mass and burial in consecrated ground. But perhaps the baptismal cleansing of their "original sin" was not enough to also wipe away the shameful nature of their conception. Perhaps, having been born out of wedlock in an Ireland of another time, they simply did not matter. Her auburn hair cut short, Catherine stands now at her computer, gazing through the window at the garden that blesses her with a sense of oneness with it all. Her begonias are blood-red bursts, her lobelias the bluest of blue, her mind forever returning to the past. A candy wrapper. Empty. She has searched school and government records many, many times. So far, though, she has been unable to find the name of one particular little girl from the mother and baby home, her long-ago classmate. "It would be nice to meet her," Catherine says, leaving no doubt as to what she would say if given the chance."

By Dan Barry, October 28, 2017





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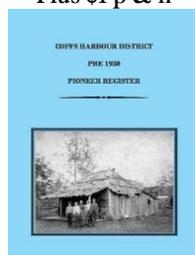
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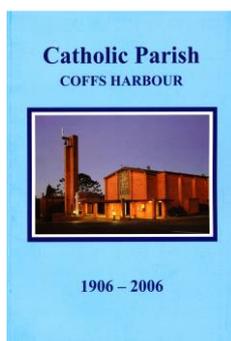
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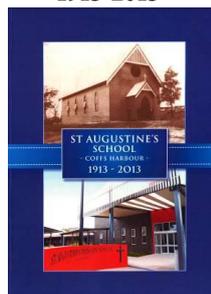
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