

Raheny Heritage Society

Getting Started on your Family Tree

Slide 1

This presentation is called 'Get Started on your Family Tree' and at the end of this introductory slideshow we hope you will be encouraged to get you started!

Slide 2

Genealogy and tracing your family history has never been so popular. It is no longer just for American and Australians searching for their family roots. TV programs like 'Who do you think you are' are creating great interest. Last year RTE ran its own version using Irish celebrities. We heard all about Charlie Bird's ancestors from the West Indies, Joe Duffy's grandmothers, one from the Dublin tenements and the other born in India while Dana's great grand father walked out on his wife and children. Most people's family history does not reveal such colourful stories as 75% of Irish people are descended from Irish Catholic tenant farmers!

Slide 3

The best place to start is with your own family. Talk to your parents, grand parents if still alive, elderly aunts & uncles, cousins and find out as much as you can. Names, rough dates of birth, marriage, deaths, where they lived, names of town lands & parishes, where they worked, where they are buried, old stories etc. Try and get you hands on old photos, memorial cards which will give you addresses, date of death and age. You need to become a detective!

Slide 4

Before you start it is very important to decide on a method of storing and recording your data. You will be surprised how fast it builds up and remember you will be researching a lot of people: two parents, four grandparents, eight great grandparents, sixteen great great-gran parents ...that's 30 files already! You can start of by keeping stuff in simple folders or filing cabinets, or maybe on your computer in either word or excel / access format. Maybe you would prefer a professional genealogy package – there are lots to choose from – the Family Tree Maker, The Master Genealogist, to name just a few.

Slide 5

Ireland was one of the earliest countries to have surnames, starting in the 11th / 12th century. Surnames can be formed from the name of an ancestor, from a place name, from an occupation or from personal description. When talking to relations get the various spelling of your name, also the Christian names on birth certs etc may be different to the name your ancestor were known by. In the 19th century and early 20th century, particularly in rural Ireland, the naming of children followed a common pattern, using the names of both families in an ordered sequence: the first son was called after his paternal grandfather, the first daughter after her paternal grandmother, the second son after his

maternal grandfather and so on etc. A good book to start with is Edward MacLysaght's 'Irish Families, their names, arms and Origins'

Slide 6

Sadly many Irish records were destroyed or pilfered over the centuries. In 1304 many of the records of the Court of Chancery were destroyed when a fire broke out in St Marys Abbey, Dublin where they were stored. Later government records were destroyed in Dublin Castle when the Bermingham Tower burned down.

Slide 7

In 1711 a fire in the Custom House has destroyed many books belonging to the Surveyor General's office. After this, in 1810 the Commission of Public Records was set up and they started to collate all the records.

Slide 8

In 1867 the Public Records Office was built and located in the Four Courts. Sadly in 1922 it was occupied by Irregular Forces, it was later attacked by the Provisional Government and there was a huge explosion and fire. They say that charred documents were found as far away as the Hill of Howth. This was a huge national tragedy.

Slide 9

I have listed here the major sources – I will go into further detail on some of these in a few minutes. The Tithes Applotment books are the results of a survey carried out between 1823 & 1838 to assess tithes to the established church – C of I. The best known Dublin street directories are Thom's, there are also directories available for other cities – Pigot, Slater.

Slide 10

Occupational records are if your ancestor was a soldier, policeman, medic, teacher, clergy, lawyer, etc. There is also the Freemans list which lists trades and John Grenham has just completed the Dublin Freeman and Trade Guild database. Glasnevin cemetery has now put their records on line on www.glasnevintrust.ie The Irish times digital archives are now available on line and starts from 1859.

Slide 11

Civil registration of all births, deaths and marriages in Ireland began in 1864. Non Roman Catholic marriages were recorded from 1845. When carrying out research you can access annual alphabetical indexes. You do not have access to the original registers. A small fee is charged for each 5 year period of the indexes for births, deaths & marriages. Once you have identified the relevant entry it is then necessary to purchase a printout of the original register entry to obtain the full information it contains. The indexes are now available online on the Mormon website.

Slide 12

The modern form of census commenced in 1821 and was carried out every 10 years. Unfortunately many were destroyed in the fire in 1922, others from 1861 – 1891 were

destroyed by government order, all that remained were a few fragments. After the introduction of the old age pension in 1908, the census returns for 1841 and 1851 were used by many people to prove that they were over 70. They sent a query to the National Archives, who then carried out a search which were completed on 'green forms'

Slide 13

The earliest complete census returns are from 1901, - this is the census return for James Joyce's family - and 1911. As these were stored locally they were not destroyed. These are now online on National Archives website or on microfilm at their office in Bishop St, Dublin 8.

Slide 14

The National Library has microfilmed almost all the RC registers up to 1880. Many of the Church of Ireland records were lost as it was the Established Church up to 1870 and hence held as public record and destroyed in 1922. Many early Presbyterian records were found in the C of I records. The Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) has the largest collection. Many Methodist records are also found in the C of I records. They typically recorded Baptisms & Marriages, but the C of I records also recorded burials. Many entries are in Latin and in poor hand writing and the registers themselves are often in poor condition. This is an example of a C of I baptismal register taken from the Irish Times website.

Slide 15

Griffiths Valuation began in 1847 and was carried out up till 1864 and it replaced earlier valuation as the basis of all local taxation. This survey recorded every landholder and householder in the country. There are 200 volumes of Valuations, there are the notebooks used by the surveyors (field books, house books and tenure books), there are the cancelled books, which detail ownership up to the present time and marked up OS maps. The cancelled books are manuscript copies of Griffith's Valuation that were updated every 12-18 months to record any changes in the ownership, occupancy and value of the property between Griffith's Valuation and 1977, when rates were no longer charged on residential property. This is an example of a valuation for a town land in Co. Galway. This is an image of a valuation office cancelled book.

Slide 16

This is an example of a valuation for a town land in Co. Galway.

Slide 17

This is an image of a valuation office cancelled book.

Slide 18

The collection of Irish wills some dating back to the 16th century were destroyed in 1922. Some progress has been made in collecting transcripts and other copies of these. The index to these has been published on CD-Rom. Also available is some record of all wills in the printed 'Calendars of Wills and Administrations'.

Slide 19

See example of calendar from 1871. Wills provide a clear picture of a family at a particular point in time, and can be used to develop a family tree.

Slide 20

It's probably best to start your research online at home if you have a computer or else use the library facilities. There are lots of sites available, some are commercial sites which you will have to pay to use.

www.census.nationalarchives.ie The Irish census on line
www.familysearch.org this is the Mormon website, get the GRO indexes on line
www.askaboutireland.ie Set up by libraries and museums, has Griffiths valuation on line
www.ancestry.com biggest commercial genealogy site
www.originsnetwork.com they have a good Irish section
www.ireland.com/ancestry is the Irish Times archive.
www.irishgenealogy.ie is Irish Government supported free web site
www.findmypast.ie commercial Irish genealogy site
www.glasnevintrust.ie has Glasnevin Trust digitised cemetery records

A number of the subscription websites can be accessed free of charge in the National Library and in Dublin City Library & Archive in Pearse Street .

All of the local public libraries give you access to computers for carrying out your research and some also have excellent local studies and references centres for example County Library, Tallaght and Clare County Library to name but a few.

Slide 21

The following locations are ones to get familiar with and hold the bulk of the records you require. Dublin City Library and Archive on Pearse Street has an excellent research room and holds microfilm of the GRO indexes, Dublin city church register databases, Griffiths valuation, Tithe Books, Dublin Electoral lists, 1901 & 1911 census returns, Dublin directories, newspapers including Freemans Journal. If you are looking for RC records, estate papers, free holders lists go to National Library in Kildare Street. The GRO is now located at the Irish Life building on Abbey Street and here you can access all the civil records. In The National Archives in Bishop Street you will find Griffiths valuation, Tithe Books, 1901 & 1911 census returns, Directories, Wills, Church of Ireland records on microfilm. It is worth looking up their websites to get more information.

Slide 22

Once you have done your research it is then possible to present it to a broader audience and there are many formats in which to do this; from a simple family tree diagram to a family tree chart to a list.

Slide 23

Family Tree Chart

Slide 24

List.

Slide 25

It's always great to share your interest with others and there is no better way than joining a society. If you are local there is the Raheny Heritage Society, which meets on the second and last Wednesday of every month at Raheny Court at 8pm. You can join the IFHS, who have an annual publication. CIGO is the Council of Irish Genealogical Organisations and IGRS is the Irish Genealogical Research Society. All run either evening lectures, seminars or outings.

Slide 26

For some further reading look out for the publication by Dublin City Public Libraries – 'How to trace your family History'. John Grenham's 'Tracing your Irish Roots' is an excellent guide to research all over Ireland. Anthony Adolp's recent book 'Tracing your Irish Family History' is also widely available.

Slide 27

From Eason's you can get a selection of genealogy magazines, from the Irish publication – Irish Roots to the UK publications – Family Tree, Ancestry and Your Family Tree.

Slide 28

There is no time like the present to get going on tracing your family history!