



A.N.D.F.H.G. Inc. News Sheet

Issue 49 - July 2013

ELECTED COMMITTEE 2012-2013

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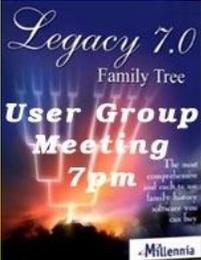
From the Committee

This year our group celebrates its 7th birthday as a family history group. The years seem to have gone by so fast with members coming and going, new ones joining and a lot of members coming back from year to year. We appreciate everyone's membership which keeps our group moving forward especially into the technology age. In saying that, membership subscriptions are due in July, so please keep your group going by rejoining for the 2013/2014 financial year. The subscription has not changed since we started i.e. **\$20.00** which is quite cheap as far as family history groups go. The two software groups namely Legacy Users Group and Family Tree Maker Group are still very active and enjoyable, so if you would like to come along to either group, you will be made very welcome.

We would especially like to see more of our members come along to our Annual General Meeting on Saturday 27th July at 1.00 pm. The formalities usually take half an hour to elect a new committee and then we all enjoy a barbeque afterwards. This is a great time to meet and chat to other members so please come along.

Our President gave a superb talk on Australian Cemeteries in June with lots of interesting information so if anyone can contribute to this site, please let us know. Some of the committee went to Dublin History Group on Sunday 23rd June to give their members a few tips and hints about looking for their family members on the Digger Disks and BISA as well as the more familiar UK sites. A very enjoyable day was had by all.

In this month's newsletter, we have a very special story about a member's grand great uncle from Yorkshire, who was imprisoned in Russia during the First World War. We realise it is quite a long story, and it was decided to print the whole story, rather than in two parts. Please persevere and read it all – the ending is surprising. We hope you enjoy reading it.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>1st July</p> 			<p>4th July</p> <p>Mid Week Open Day 10 am – 4 pm</p>		
				<p>11th July</p> <p>Mid Week Open Day 10 am – 4 pm</p>		<p>13th July</p> <p>Research and Networking Day 1 pm – 4 pm</p> <p>Committee Meeting 2 pm</p>
				<p>18th July</p> <p>Mid-Week Open Day 10 am – 4 pm</p>		<p>20th July</p> 
				<p>25th July</p> <p>Mid-Week Open Day 10 am – 4 pm</p>		<p>27th July</p> <p>Annual General Meeting 1 pm – 4 pm</p>

Richard Bielby 1859-1957 – An Englishman in Bolshevik Russia

By Sharon Norman



A family tale told to me by my second cousin Tony, by his Auntie Lavinia was that “the wife of her great uncle was questioned by the Russians to find out what the British were up to” and this newspaper clipping is what started the long and very interesting research on the life of my long lost Great Grand Uncle Richard Bielby. Richard was one of four sons born in 1859, at Patrington Yorkshire to Robert and Jane Bielby. Not long after Richard was born the family moved to Hull. The children seemed to have had a good education as Richards first occupation was a Clerk for Lawson's Shipbuilders in Hull which he soon became the Chief Clerk. At that time Hull was a thriving port with several docks serving the various trades. St Andrews Dock was the home of the fishing fleet and the other docks were busy with trade with the Russian Empire and the Scandinavian states. The Russian Empire under Tsar Nicholas II was a great trading partner with the

British Empire under Queen Victoria and Hull was ideally placed for business with its Baltic ports. It was in one of these Russian Baltic ports, Libau (now Liepāja in western Latvia) that Richard set up business. We (Tony and I) had no knowledge what happened to Richard or his whereabouts till reading the newspaper clipping which stated he was living in Latvia. We are not sure when he decided to emigrate to Latvia but it was in the mid 1880's. Between 1890 and 1894 he was in partnership as Hoffmann & Bielby who initially shipped freight. However, the late 19th century was also the beginning of mass migration around the world. Shipping companies would give lectures in Russia on the wonderful life that could be had in the new worlds of America and Australia. Several ethnic groups also took the opportunity to escape persecution. However, at that time in Russia, migrant ticket agents risked serious repercussions if their bribes to local authorities were not sufficiently large. Despite this Hoffmann & Bielby was an agent for the Holland America Line providing passengers with the necessary passports and paperwork. Their emigration offices were situated within 200 yards of the Central Railway Station in Libau, strategically located for migrants passing between the train and the dock facility in Libau. By 1894 Richard was trading in the Baltic as Bielby & Co., and he became a merchant of the 2nd Guild.

HOFFMANN & BIELBY, Steam-Ship & Chartering Agents, LIBAU.
Registered Telegraph Address: HOFFMANN, LIBAU. (Private and Scott's Code.)

STEAMER FREIGHT REPORT.

Our market continues steady. More tonnage has been offering during the past few days, but there is still a fair demand for prompt steamers. The Russian Christmas holidays commence to-day, and business will be quiet for some time.

We invite your wire offers for the following cargoes — even at a trifle higher than rates named.

London	Prompt.	Any size.	1/3	
Hull (berth)	"	8/1000 tons	d. w. 1/21/-—1/3	(Sleepers & Turpentine for deck)
Leith (berth)	"	6/800 tons	d. w. 1/1 1/2	(Bitchwood for deck at 10/- pr. load).
Maas	"	8/1000 "	"	1/21/-—1/3
Antwerp	"	10/1200 "	"	1/4 1/2 (option part Flax at 25 fres. pr. ton.)
Dunkirk (berth)	"	6/800 "	"	1/3 (option part Flax at 25 fres. pr. ton.)
Ghent	"	6/800 "	"	1/3 (option part Flax at 25 fres. pr. ton.)

Water on the bar to-day 18'. Weather fine — 5° frost. Wind SE.
Libau, 24th December 1890.
5th January 1891.

During many random searches on Google for Latvian records I eventually found some old Latvian newspapers digitalised online for free and searched for the name Bielby. I had lots of hits as his name was reasonably easy to find among the Latvian language. I hadn't a clue what I was reading though, so I utilised the free online translators which were handy to translate most parts of the articles, but not all as they still used the archaic letters that were abolished after the Revolution, but I got an idea on what they were about. Most of the articles were for advertising his business and shipping details. I found a few references that looked like marriage and birth announcements. They all seemed to be in the St Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Libau. So I searched Google again and found the digitalised images of the church records free online!!! I systematically searched page by page throughout the relevant years and with a lot of luck I found the word Bielby. It looked like a marriage entry and not knowing what I was reading, I took a 'screen shot' of the

record and placed it on Rootschat (an online forum) and asked for a translation. Within 24 hours it was translated for me! On August 18 1894, Richard married Maria Margaretha Wanda von

Списокъ обрученныхъ, оглашенныхъ и бракомъ сочтат-					шихся въ приходѣ въ 1894 году.										
№ по порядку	Имя и фамилия жениха и невесты.	Знамя, чинъ, родство и мѣсто жительства къ.	Имя и фамилия родителей жениха и невесты, и въ какихъ ихъ родителяхъ или брать.	Породный знакъ жениха и невесты.	Вѣкъ: сколько лѣтъ, мѣсяцевъ и дней, или сколько лѣтъ, мѣсяцевъ и дней, или сколько лѣтъ, мѣсяцевъ и дней.	Мѣсто рождения жениха и невесты.	Сколько лѣтъ съ роду жениха и невесты.	Когда было это-то оглашение.			Когда и какъ совершено бракосочетание.			Особа замѣчана.	
								Въ первый разъ.	Во второй разъ.	Въ третій разъ.	День.	Мѣсяцъ.	Квѣтъ.		
64	Richard Bielby	Британскій офицеръ	Richard Bielby и его жена Jane, обр. т.	Об. слом. холост	33 л.	Пампартон & Англии	33 л.	1894	1894	1894	1894	1894	1894	1894	1894
	Maria Margaretha Wanda von Ramedloff	дочь генерала и кавалера	Katharina Ramedloff и ее жена Marie, обр. т.	Об. слом. холост	22 л.	Либавъ	22 л.	1894	1894	1894	1894	1894	1894	1894	1894

Ramedloff, daughter of Courtier and Knight Rittur Nicholai von Ramedloff and his wife Maria Eleonore von Ramedloff. They had two children, one I found a birth registration in 1906 she was named Elisabeth Maria Wanda Violetta Brunhilde Adda Bielby, at first I thought they had twins as there were so many names, by the kind person who previously translated the marriage information told me it was one child! The other child I have yet to find the name as the online records stop the year before the child was born. We believe Richard's father in law was also the head of Police or something very similar.

During WW1, Russia was undergoing serious internal turmoil due to opposition to the Tsar which led to the rise of a small but vocal political party known as the Bolsheviks. Their communist doctrine that all wealth should be shared equally amongst the Russian people rang true with the many million starving Russian's. The German's advanced on the Eastern Front and were keen to capture the strategically important Baltic Russian ports. It was in May 1915, whilst Richard Bielby was in the Russian capital, Petrograd, that the German navy shelled the port of Libau. His family home was hit and his mother-in-law, Maria, died a few days later from her injuries. Cut off from his family, Richard volunteered his services to the Naval Transport Office, based in the British Embassy. He acted as the secretary to Commander John Albert Leighton whose task at the time was to send naval intelligence information to the War Office in London, specifically shipping movements of the German and Russian fleets. When Commander Leighton returned to London to report on the situation in Russia, Richard worked for Captain Cromie at the embassy in Petrograd. In May 1917, aged 35, Cromie was appointed the naval attaché in Petrograd. The British Embassy was left with Cromie, Consul Woodhouse, some of Cromie's naval colleagues, Richard Bielby, a handful of clerical staff and some of the British commercial community that had bravely chosen to remain in Petrograd and who regularly frequented the embassy. There was also the Secret Intelligence Service men sent out from London by Admiral Reginal "Blinker" Hall who, by the spring of 1918, was determined to bring down the Bolsheviks. Although Lockhart was still of the opinion that the British should talk to the Bolsheviks, Cromie held the opposing view and was calling for Allied intervention. London's view was with Cromie. The Bolsheviks had to either renew their fight with the Germans or be brought down. Bringing the regime down would be no easy task. Although the British had secret service agents operating in Russia they were no match for Russia's long tradition of espionage and secret police. Bolshevik security was under the tight control of the Cheka the forerunner of what ultimately became the KGB.

In May 2012 I went over to England and met my second cousin Tony, (who has been working on this with me) we went to the National Archives at Kew. Here we found all the documentation in the Foreign Office files for Richard's arrest, imprisonment, why the English left him there and statements on his treatment in prison.

The following excerpts are in Richard's own words from his written statement held at the National Archives, Kew, England.

In the afternoon (about 5 o'clock) on the 31st August 1918, the premises of the British Embassy at Petrograd were raided by a band of about 12 armed sailors and four Bolshevik Commissars. Captain Cromie, the Naval Attache, met the raiders at the top of the stairs and after some words were exchanged several shots were fired and Captain Cromie fell dead in the entrance hall near the door. One of the Commissars was also killed and two others severely wounded, one of which was reported to have died the same evening. The 20+ people at the Embassy with the exception of myself, were marched under strong escort to the police headquarters. For some reason I was detained at the Embassy until the place was cleared of all stores etc. At about 7.30 p.m. I was taken by two sailors in an automobile to the police headquarters, where I was subjected to a very severe examination. I was then removed to another room where I found all the above named persons. After another examination by other Commissars we were removed in two parties to two large rooms.

Later on several more Britishers and Frenchmen were brought in. These people had been arrested in their homes and in the streets during the same evening. The room was provided with beds, but these were already fully occupied (2 to 3 persons for each bed), so we passed the night as best we could, some on the seats, some on the tables and others on the floor. The following day (Sunday) we received some so called fish soup and a little bread, hot water was also served out several times during the day, but having no tea or coffee, we bought at the bar in the room some raspberry tea (?) – well at least it was something to drink. On the Monday we were able to buy some cheese (the Commandant had graciously left us a few roubles for this purpose but otherwise he had cleared our pockets of everything) which was obtained through the president of the room.

On the 4th September we were all removed under escort to the Fortress of St Peter and St Paul, and the cells there being already overcrowded, we were divided between six or seven cells so that there were 20 occupants in each cell. In the cell where I was sent were three other British and one Frenchman (Mr D'Arcy). These cells were about 20' x 12' with one bedstead (affixed to the wall) and intended for one person only. The cells were very damp and we were compelled to sleep on the floor. As at this time we had no rugs or mattresses it was anything but comfortable. I would rather not dwell on the conditions existing in those cells – some of our fellow prisoners, a number of which were Russian Officers & officials, were in a state of semi starvation.

After a lapse of about eight days, we were called early one morning and told to prepare to leave the cells. Great excitement now prevailed, then a whisper came from others in the corridor that we were to be sent to Kronstadt, and this was not good news. However the report was not true. After being paraded in the corridor we were marched for some distance when a halt was made; "English back again" was heard, and we were now sent back to the empty cells – ten of us being placed in each cell. This was at least somewhat more comfortable, as altho' the place was very small, we were all Britishers. We now got to work to clean up the cell and as there was a water tap in the cell, we used up all the old paper which had been left by our fellow prisoners in cleaning the floor etc. About this time we received from the Dutch Embassy some pieces of felt cloth to use as bedding, also a scrubbing brush and some disinfectant, and everything was done to keep the cell as clean and bright as possible. We suffered very much from vermin in the place and it was a long time before we could get rid of this trouble. We were now receiving parcels of food twice weekly from the Dutch Embassy, and the wife of the Ambassador – Mrs Oudendyk – made sure that we received our parcels as she came personally with them, and eventually it was arranged that some of our party should be allowed to go down to the entrance door of the prison and carry the parcels to the cells. This life went on without any change until the 22nd September when the first little flutter of excitement came – Mr Child (of the Consular staff), Mr Field and Mr Hylton-Brown junr being released. Hopes now ran high of a speedy release, the more so as in the meantime news had arrived that all of us were to be exchanged for the Bolshevik Commissar in London – Mr Litwinow – who had been arrested after the raid was made on the Embassy. At last, on the 6th October, news came that we were all to be released the same day, but unfortunately this report was only partly true, as several of us were left behind. Over the next few weeks many more were released, by the end of October only four of us were left and we hoped for our release every day. Eventually on the 3rd November, we had a visit from the then head of the police at Petrograd – Madame Jakoleva – and she assured us that all would be released the next day, and she kept her word so far as three of us were concerned – but I was now left alone, the only British prisoner in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. After a few days I was told to get my kit ready and that I was to be released at once – it was a happy moment. I was soon ready, and when the cell door opened and I stepped out I found some 30 to 40 other prisoners in the corridor. What was my surprise to hear from them that we were being sent away to Kronstadt, but this was not the case. After a wait of half an hour or so, I was taken to another cell (a fearful dirty place) with nine others and told to be ready to leave at 8 a.m. the next day – destination unknown.

With the exception of one, it is almost impossible to describe the class of people which we with me in that cell – criminals of the worst class. My hopes of freedom were no to be realised. At noon on the day following I was removed together with 29 others (under an escort of 20 Red Guards) to the City prison. I was then interned in a cell with 24

others, but only one of them was from the Peter and Paul Fortress. I had here for the first time since my arrest something easier to sleep upon – a sort of hammock canvas bed – and it was a luxury. In the cell we found many men of culture, the treatment was also much better than it had been in the Fortress. The warders were not communists and we had many little favours when opportunity offered. But when parcels of food arrived for me, as well as for other prisoners, it had to be shared amongst those who had not received any parcel, and it thus happened that on some days one received only about a third of what had been sent.

On the 23rd November I was removed from the large cell and placed in solitary confinement – two days later a Jewish provocator was placed in my cell, but not being to gain any information, he was removed on the third day, and four days later I was sent back to my old cell.

During all the time I was in the Fortress I had no open air exercise, but in the City prison we had 30 minutes exercise daily. It was during this time that I made the acquaintance of the Grand Duke Nicolai Michailowitsch and Admiral Wisolkin, who had been confined in the same prison for some time. During the forenoon of the 10th December last I was walking together with Admiral Wisolkin and he had heard nothing new as to himself. At about 2 a.m. of the 11th he called to me when passing my cell “Good bye, Bielby”; he was with 14 others & they were shot the same morning. The Grand Duke was also executed some time later.

On the 18th January at 2 p.m. I was called to the commandants office and sent under escort to the police headquarters. I felt confident of my release this time. After a wait of some three hours, I was called to the Commandant who simply said: “Proceed at once to Moscow, your escort is waiting”. I started for Moscow at 10 p.m. and arrived there at 7.30 p.m. the following day. The middle of January a journey of 21 hours in a fourth class carriage, without any heating on a Russian Railway is anything but a pleasant matter. I was clothed in a thin summer suit and only a thin overcoat. But my troubles were only just commencing. When I got to the Police Department, the address of which had been given to my escort, they would not receive me, and the same thing happened at the second place where I was sent to. On arrival at the third place, it was now 10 p.m., I was again asked dozens of questions, and after a full statement had been made, my escort was dismissed, and I was sent to a temporary place of detention, a fairly large room in which were 69 men and two young girls, one of 15 and the other about 17 years of age, and here I remained for nine days. There were no beds, only some old doors, loose boards and such like things, but most of us had to sleep on the floor. The place was of the filthiest description. The room was on the second floor and the only latrines were in the yard, at the back of the building, and, of course, anyone using same had to be accompanied by an escort – this was the middle of January with +20 degrees (Reamur) frost. During the time which I was at this place, the Danish Red Cross, who were then looking after the interests of the British prisoners, could not get any news of me and therefore I did not receive any food from outside, having to do as best I could with the pint of cabbage soup and half a pound of bread which was received daily. The soup was served in wash bowls and 8 of us were apportioned to each bowl, but I had already become accustomed to this during my stay in the City prison at Petrograd. On the tenth day I was removed from this place, together with about 100 others, of which about 15 were ladies, to the Butirsky prison. The Butirsky is a convict prison with accommodation for about 4000 people. I shall never forget that 4 miles march to the prison, especially the leader of our escort, who always brandishing his large revolver, was going on ahead and holding up the traffic until we passed on. I was very weak and ill and had begged the Commandant to allow me to go on in a drosky, but all to no purpose, he treated me most brutally so I had to shoulder my kit (rug, blanket and felt, teapot, mug and a change of underlinen) to walk those four miles with over 18 degrees of frost. The streets were in a dreadful condition our progress was slow, and I scarcely know how I did succeed in keeping up until we reached the prison. After being registered I was placed in a cell (so called quarantine cell) with 61 others. This was another dreadful experience. With the exception of 4 or 5 people (one of which was Prince Trubutskoi) the occupants of this cell were a most filthy class of people, most of them criminals, and it was a most trying time. The latrines were in the corridor, some distance from the cell, and after the warders had counted us over at 6 a.m. daily, we were allowed to go to the lavatory, and again at 6 p.m. but at no other time we were allowed to leave the cell – comment is needless. On the second day after my arrival in cell No. 74 two of our number were removed to the hospital suffering from typhoid and another one on the fourth day (typhoid was raging in Moscow at that time). I was then suffering from dysentery, and trying to see the doctor, but it took two days before I did get an interview. Several of the hospital staff having died of typhoid, the doctors would not enter the cells, and the prisoners were taken to the corridor for examination, I begged the doctor to have me removed to the hospital, he told me, however, that the actual accommodation there was for 500 patients, whereas 600 were there under treatment, most of them suffering from typhoid, and he advised me not to take the risk if it could be avoided. I then asked him to assist me in being removed to a single cell and he promised to do so. I put in a petition to the Commandant of the prison asking to be removed, and, on the 2nd February, I was again in solitary confinement. This was certainly better than being huddled together with the people I had been with. I could at least keep myself clean, and with the help of food which I was then receiving from the Red Cross and from friends in Moscow, I commenced to recover again. I had now several interviews with Commissars (belonging to the department for investigation of counter-revolution) and it was always the same result: “You know more than you will admit; tell us the truth and you shall be free at once”. Having once made my statement at the police headquarters at Petrograd, I never veered from that statement, and often had to hear “You dirty English dog” and even much worse than that. I had meantime heard from a warder that there were other British prisoners in the Butirsky and therefore now put in another

petition to the prison Commandant asking to be transferred to the same corridor. I was successful and about a week later I was removed. When I got to the lower corridor in another part of the prison I found there eleven members of the British Military Mission to the Caucasus. I was very pleased to be again amongst our own people. After a time we received several concessions such as having our cell doors opened during the day, half an hours exercise together every day, etc. We were now receiving better food from outside and my strength improved.

After a somewhat long interval I was, on the 30th March, again called to the office of the Commandant to be heard by a judge in the matter of counter revolution. After an interview of some 45 minutes, I was told that I was most obstinate, etc, etc, and that I would be shot, told to stand back, and after a wait of 1 ½ hours I was taken back to my cell. After a very similar interview on the 17th April I was again kept for two hours in suspense and again taken back. On the 23rd April a paper was brought for me to sign, saying: "Your case is concluded, but you must be kept at Moscow as a hostage". During the latter part of the time we heard that negotiations were going on for our exchange and eventually, on the 29th April, all Britishers were removed from the Butirsky prison to the French refuge, where we were kept under guard, but still it was on step towards freedom. We were expecting to leave Moscow every day, but matters dragged on until the 25th May, where we were taken to the Nicolai station en route for the Finnish frontier. We had a second class carriage for our party of 18, and 14 marines as escort, Mrs Raskolnikoff, Commissar from the Foreign Office (who was going to meet her husband who was to be exchanged for our party) travelling with two other Commissars in a saloon carriage attached to the train. We arrived at Petrograd at 10 a.m. on the 26th May, the carriage being shunted some distance up the line from the station where we remained until 1 a.m. on the following day, when it was then shunted round to the Finnish station. We started at 12 noon for Beloostrow (Finnish frontier station) and arrived there about 1.30 p.m. At 4 p.m. news came that something was not in order and we were taken back to Petrograd. At 1 p.m. on the following day another start was made and we arrived at Beloostrow at 3 p.m. After a searching examination of baggage and our person (we were stripped to the skin) we were taken to the small bridge at the frontier, and, after the necessary reading out of names, etc., nine of us passed over the bridge and the Bolshevik Marine Commissar Raskolnikoff was taken to the middle of the bridge, after which the second nine of our party passed over and Raskolnikoff then went on to Russian soil. Most of our party wore clothes which were in a very dilapidated condition, I myself was wearing the only suit that I now possessed, and it struck us all particularly that Raskolnikoff was clothed in a new blue serge suit and carried a smart new suit case. We received a very cordial welcome from Finnish Officers and also from Mr H.T. Hall, representing the British Consul at Helsingfors. We walked to the next frontier station – Rajjoki – where we were provided with a good meal to which we did justice, and every one of us was overjoyed at being once more a free man. At 7.40 p.m. (Finnish time) we left for Helsingfors and arrived there at 9 a.m. on the 29th May. We were met at the station by Vice Consul Le May and Mrs Le May who gave us a hearty welcome. Some of our party left the next day for Stockholm via Abo, and others a few days later by direct steamer to Stockholm, but I remained for twelve days at Helsingfors, in order to gain a little more strength. I found that a tramp steamer was going from Helsingfors direct to Hull, and took passage by her and so had the benefit of the eight days sea voyage.

When I left prison at Moscow I learned for the first time that, on the night of my arrest at Petrograd the Red Guards with a Commissar had raided my flat and taken everything which they could lay hands on – cash, all wearing apparel, underclothing, boots, hats, blankets, quilts, etc. The housekeeper's fur cloak and 1800 roubles in cash were also taken, this notwithstanding that she is a Russian subject.

During the time I was interned in the Fortress of St Peter and St Paul, I suffered very much from rheumatism in both shoulders, which was no doubt contracted by having had to lay for such a length of time on the wet concrete floor. Up to the time of my arrest I never had occasion to use glasses, but my eyes became very bad during the time I was in prison, and am now compelled to take the aid of an oculist. My general health has suffered considerably, a real nervous breakdown, but being nearly sixty years of age, I must thank God that I had strength to come through such a severe ordeal alive.



After Richard was released, he stayed at his brother's home in Hull to recover. Richard later went back to Libau to find his family, we are unsure of when he did this. He stayed there and restarted up his business until 1930, when he returned to England for good. His wife didn't return to England with him, so we are assuming she died, also we haven't found any records of his children returning with him. He remarried in 1934 at Holborn, Middlessex to Edmunda Edite Tomaszewska. They lived in St Pancras till their respective deaths. Richard died in 1957 at the age of 98 years.

What a long eventful search we have had and it all started from a family tale and newspaper clipping.

p.s. We are now trying to find out why he was left imprisoned in Russia and not released with all the other British, and also if he was 'working' for both sides as we also found some statements referring to a "Mr Dick" tipping off the Bolsheviks .. On the reverse side of Richard's photo (top of page) are the words written, "Uncle Dick" ...

Ireland's General Register Office Records Finally to Go Online

The Irish government has announced that indexes to birth, death & marriage records which date from 1845 are soon to be made available through its genealogy portal www.irishgenealogy.ie. This is terrific news, announced in CIGO's 21st year, the year in which it 'comes of age'.

Founded as the GRO Users Group, but soon after renamed the Council of Irish Genealogical Organisations, CIGO began life as a direct response to the 1992 government announcement that the General Register Office (which holds Ireland's civil records) was to be transferred out of Dublin to Roscommon town. CIGO's successful lobbying quickly secured a commitment from the Department to retain a public search facility in Dublin and thus laid the foundations for its many acknowledged successes over the following 20 years. With reference to the GRO, particular note should be made to CIGO's part in securing provision of improved family data in Irish death registrations on both sides of the border.

Included in the newly published Social Welfare and Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 are amendments to section 61 of the Civil Registration Act 2004. These amendments will allow the Minister for Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht to make provision and legal framework for BMD indexes to be placed online. However, at this stage it isn't clear where the cut-off year will fall. What constitutes 'historical' as opposed to 'modern' records has not yet been released.

The announcement that BMD indexes will go online follows that recently made by GRONI (General Register Office for Northern Ireland) about its own records going online in the late autumn. Under provisions in the Civil Registration Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 - which CIGO was invited to give oral evidence on at bill stages - GRONI will be making 'historic' indexes and records available online for the first time on a pay-per-view basis.

By contrast, data on the Irish government's genealogy portal is free. In welcoming the announcement Steven Smyrl, Executive Liaison Officer for CIGO and current President of the Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland, said "This is terrific news. CIGO has lobbied long and hard for better access to civil records for genealogists and historians.

"It doesn't surprise me that this has finally happened under the current government. The two ministers involved in this decision, Jimmy Deenihan TD (Heritage Minister) and Joan Burton TD (Social Protection Minister) are both keen genealogists. In particular Mr Deenihan has proved to be fully supportive of the genealogy lobby since before he came to office in 2011.

"This move will make Irish genealogical research easier and no doubt play its own part in stimulating roots tourism."

For Irish genealogists everywhere this is most welcome news!

Source: Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter

Personal Ancestral File (PAF) Is Discontinued

June 21, 2013 By David Pugmire of Family Search Blog



Beginning July 15, 2013, PAF will be retired and will no longer be available for download or support. For full details and for information on alternative products, please visit <http://familysearch.org/PAF>.

A Great New Opportunity

For the last several years, FamilySearch has focused on building relationships with partner organizations to deliver better overall services to the market. This has facilitated better patron experiences with FamilySearch and the partner products. The past several years have seen Ancestral Quest, Legacy Family Tree, and RootsMagic introduced as significantly better alternatives to PAF. These products also all have free versions.

FamilySearch recently introduced the Family Tree to all users in multiple languages. Family Tree provides the capability for patrons to manage and share their family history information online at FamilySearch.org. Each of the products listed above support synchronization with the Family Tree.

This change further underscores the commitment from FamilySearch to form strong partner relationships that will enable:

- More and better conclusions about family information.
- Best in class technology with many more choices.
- Collaborative efforts that allow other organizations to build on and enhance FamilySearch products.
- More records to be indexed and published.
- Record availability from a variety of sites and products.

History of PAF

PAF was originally released in the spring of 1984 and has been a popular genealogy database application ever since, with over 3.2 million copies distributed. The current version of PAF is based largely on code provided by Incline Software (Ancestral Quest). While it has remained available to download, PAF has not been updated since 2002. Having been in service for about 19 years, it could be said that PAF is one of the longest running personal computing programs in software history. We recognize that as quite an accomplishment.

The Future Is Bright

At the same time that we give a big “Thank You!” and “Goodbye” to PAF, we are excited to embrace what the future holds. Beginning in 2007, family history-related online services of various types began to really take off. The growth of these services, including FamilySearch, has been an exciting thing to watch. Once isolated to paper documentation, or digitized record keeping on a single computer, we are now able to work together with family members across the globe on similar family lines in real time. Likewise, we see an increase in mobile and desktop apps that enable rich, interactive experiences, often connected to these online services. This is an exciting time for family history, with great new products and services that exist today and continue to emerge to fulfill evolving consumer needs!

1.30 pm Saturday 27th July

"2013 Annual General Meeting"

Come join us have your say in the Future of your Family History Group.

Then join the other members for a Free Barbeque.



Adelaide Northern Districts Family History Group Inc.
Committed in Promoting Family History Research.