

## PRESS NOTICE

Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

### National Library of Ireland Announces Launch Date for New Online Genealogy Resource

*– Almost 400,000 images of Catholic parish register microfilms to be available online for free from 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 –*

The entire collection of Catholic parish register microfilms held by the [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#) will be made available online – for free – from **8<sup>th</sup> July 2015** onwards. On that date, a dedicated website will go live, with over 390,000 digital images of the microfilm reels on which the parish registers are recorded.

The NLI has been working to digitise the microfilms for over three years under its most ambitious digitisation programme to date.

The parish register records are considered the single most important source of information on Irish family history prior to the 1901 Census. Dating from the 1740s to the 1880s, they cover 1,091 parishes throughout the island of Ireland, and consist primarily of baptismal and marriage records.

Commenting today, the NLI's Ciara Kerrigan, who is managing the digitisation of the parish registers, said: "We announced initial details of this project last December, and received a hugely enthusiastic response from people worldwide with an interest in Irish family history. We are delighted to announce that the project has been progressing well, and we will be able to publish all the digitised records online from 8<sup>th</sup> July onwards.

"This is the most significant ever genealogy project in the history of the NLI. The microfilms have been available to visitors to the NLI since the 1970s. However, their digitisation means that, for the first time, anyone who likes will be able to access these registers without having to travel to Dublin."

Typically, the parish registers include information such as the dates of baptisms and marriages, and the names of the key people involved, including godparents or witnesses. The digital images of the registers will be searchable by parish location only, and will not be transcribed or indexed by the NLI.

"The images will be in black and white, and will be of the microfilms of the original registers," explained Ms. Kerrigan. "There will not be transcripts or indexes for the images. However, the nationwide network of local family history centres holds indexes and transcripts of parish registers for their local areas. So those who access our new online resource will be able to cross-reference the information they uncover, and identify wider links and connections to their ancestral community by also liaising with the relevant local family history centre."

The NLI is planning an official launch event for the new online resource on 8<sup>th</sup> July. Further details will be available in the coming weeks.

**ENDS**

**Contact: Martina Quinn / Sarah Harte, DHR Communications, Tel: 01-4200580 / 087-6522033 / 087-9858259**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

The mission of the National Library of Ireland is to collect, preserve, promote and make accessible the documentary and intellectual record of the life of Ireland and to contribute to the provision of access to the larger universe of recorded knowledge. It is open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult the collections for material not otherwise available through the public library service or an academic library. The Genealogical Office, the Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street, and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are all part of the National Library. Further information is available at [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie), @NLIreland.