

The Bookworm

BY BETTY WARBURTON

If you are like me, you have lists of ancestors with births or baptisms, marriages and deaths or burials and not much else. How you envy those people who have old letters or diaries of their ancestors recounting important events in their lives, from which a lively and informative family history can be created. Take heart. We just have to be more creative. We need to read social histories to learn what life was like in the era in which our ancestor lived, learn about our ancestor's occupation or profession and become familiar with the parish in which he/she lived.

It is in these areas that the Brian O'Regan Memorial Library can be most helpful. The library has many titles dealing with social life and customs such as:

England

Burton, Elizabeth. *The Early Victorians at Home, 1837-1861.*

Guest, George. *A Social History of England.*

Hartley, Dorothy. *Lost Country Life.*

Laslett, Peter. *The World We Have Lost: England before the Industrial Age.*

Porter, Roy. *English Society in the Eighteenth Century.*

Rowse, A. L. *The England of Elizabeth: the Structure of Society.*

Virgoe, Roger. *Private Life in the Fifteenth Century: Illustrated Letters of the Paston Family.*

Youngs, Joyce. *Sixteenth-century England.*

Ireland

Bowen, Kurt Derek. *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority.*

Danaher, Kevin. *The Year in Ireland.*

Miller, Kerby A. *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America.*

Murphy ed., Frank. *The Bog Irish: Who They were and How They Lived.*

O'Brien ed., John A. *Vanishing Irish: the Enigma of the Modern World.*

Russell, Charles. *New Views on Ireland or Irish Land, Grievances, Remedies.*

For information about occupations, I particularly like *Boy's Book of Trades and the Tools Used in Them.* This little book was published originally in 1866 to inform young men about the many occupations available. It describes 32 trades such as baker, plasterer and blacksmith and illustrates the tools needed for each. Many issues of *Family Tree Magazine* have articles on trades and professions. The Bookworm

column (*Anglo-Celtic Roots*, Summer 2005) has a list of the articles published before 2000.

The Brian O'Regan Memorial Library has a growing collection of British local histories. To find out whether the library has a history of your ancestor's birthplace consult our online catalogue. Type in the name of the place and click on "Subject". If no local history is available, you may find something in one of our county histories. In the *Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles*, you are sure to find a brief account of the location and size of the place, numbers and names of the churches, railway lines, etc. A brief history of a place is often found in directories, such as:

Champanie and Whitrow. *The Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce and Manufacture, 1791.*

Pigot & Co. *1830 Directories: a Compendium Set of Eighteen 1830 Pigot's County Directories.*

Combined Pigot's Directory of Scotland, 1825/6.

Also useful for information about places are:

Lewis, Samuel. *A Topographical Dictionary of England, 1831.* 5 vols.

Lewis, Samuel. *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland.* 2 vols. (published 1837)

Smith, Robin. *The Making of Scotland; a Comprehensive Guide to the Growth of its Cities, Towns and Villages.*

I wish you good hunting.

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