

The Records of Ulster's Office 1552-1943

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While there is evidence of the existence of heraldic officials in Ireland in medieval times, the appointment of an Ulster King of Arms in 1552 marked the creation of a continuous office granting and overseeing the use of arms. Ulster's writ was not confined to the northern Irish province from which his name derived, but extended to the whole of Ireland. In practical terms of course it was not until the English conquest was completed in the early seventeenth century that Ulster's jurisdiction was effective throughout Ireland. Ulster's Office also came to be titled loosely the Office of Arms, but unlike the English College of Arms it never received a charter of incorporation.¹

The first holder of the post of Ulster in 1552 was Bartholomew Butler, who was appointed by patent of Edward VI on 1 July of that year.² A pattern soon emerged whereby Ulster's position tended to be transmitted somewhat nepotistically between a number of families, including Ussher, Carney, Hawkins and Fortescue. Notable Ulsters during the nineteenth century included Sir William Betham (1820-53), who greatly expanded the range of the office's records, and Sir John Bernard Burke, a member of the famous publishing dynasty (1853-92).³ The term of office of Sir Arthur Vicars (1893-1908) was marred by the scandal of the theft in 1907 of the Irish 'Crown Jewels', that is, the regalia of the Order of St Patrick which were in Ulster's care in a safe in the Library of his office in the Bedford Tower, Dublin Castle. A century after the theft, the identity of the thief or thieves is still not known for certain, although the prime suspect remains Vicars's titular assistant and housemate, Francis (Frank) Shackleton, Dublin Herald.⁴ Revelations concerning the acquisitive tendencies of Francis Bennett Goldney, Athlone Pursuivant and also Mayor of Canterbury, have amplified suspicion that he could have played a role in the theft.⁵

1 John Barry, 'Guide to the Records of the Genealogical Office, Dublin, with a Commentary on Heraldry in Ireland and on the History of the Office', *Guide to the Genealogical Office, Dublin*, Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin 1998, pages 57-59 (article originally published in *Analecta Hibernica*, 26, 1970, pages 3-43); Thomas Woodcock and John M Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry*, Oxford 1990 Edition, page 140.

2 T Blake Butler, 'The Officers of Arms of Ireland', *Irish Genealogist*, 2, 1945-55, page 6.

3 Same, pages 6-41; Frances-Jane French, 'Nepotists and Sinecurists: A History of Ulster's Office 1552-1943', *Irish Genealogist*, 10, 2000, pages 335-350. Terence MacCarthy, *Ulster's Office 1552-1800*, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1996, is not without value, but in view of the author's now discredited claim to be the 'The Mac Carthy Mór, Prince of Desmond', the work should be used with caution (for a corrective see the present writer's *Twilight of the Chiefs: The Mac Carthy Mór Hoax*, Bethesda, Maryland, 2004).

4 Francis Bamford and Viola Bankes, *Vicious Circle: The Case of the Missing Irish Crown Jewels*, London 1965.

5 Audrey Bateman, *The Magpie Tendency*, Whitstable, Kent, 1999; see also the present writer's 'A Centenary Report on the Theft of the Irish Crown Jewels in 1907', <http://homepage.eircom.net/%7Eseanjmurphy/irhismys/jewels.htm>.

The disgraced Vicars was succeeded as Ulster by Sir Nevile Rodwell Wilkinson, an archetypal 'safe pair of hands', who continued to reside in England and left the day to day running of his office to deputies, successively George Dames Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadleir.⁶ Wilkinson is probably best remembered for the creation of the doll's house 'Titania's Palace', but more pertinently he oversaw the foundation of an Heraldic Museum in the Bedford Tower in 1908.⁷

The achievement of an independent Irish Free State in 1922, with Northern Ireland remaining part of the United Kingdom, obviously posed problems for the status of Ulster's Office. In the first months of independence there was a proposal by the new Free State Government to transfer the records of Ulster's Office to the Public Record Office of Ireland, located elsewhere in Dublin in the Four Courts complex. This proposal was not implemented, which was very fortunate given that most of the archives in the Public Records Office were destroyed in June 1922 in the course of the civil war which followed Irish independence.⁸ Indeed the collections of Ulster's Office constitute one of the most important survivals helping at least partly to compensate for the loss of records in 1922. After independence, no decisive steps were taken to resolve the issue of Ulster's Office for some two decades, at least partly because of Wilkinson's unexpected longevity, and the office survived as an isolated remnant of British rule in Dublin Castle.

Following Wilkinson's death in 1940, the British and Irish governments agreed in 1943 that the Office of Arms and its records would be retained in Dublin, while the post of Ulster King of Arms would be transferred to the College of Arms in London. The title of Ulster was united with that of Norroy King of Arms, and at Irish government expense copies of the more important Irish heraldic and genealogical records were provided to the College of Arms.⁹ Henceforth, Norroy and Ulster's authority was to be confined to Northern Ireland, which is composed of six of the nine counties which make up the northern province after which the herald was named.¹⁰

While remaining in Dublin Castle, the Irish successor to Ulster's Office was associated with the National Library of Ireland in Kildare Street, although it was not entirely clear whether it was an integral department or a separate institution merely sharing facilities and staff. Edward MacLysaght was appointed first head of the new Irish office in April 1943, and uncertainty whether heraldry should be part of his brief was reflected in the fact that he was initially styled Genealogical Officer only. MacLysaght's recommendation that heraldic functions should be maintained was accepted by the Irish Government, and his title was amended in 1946 to Chief Herald and Genealogical Officer.¹¹ Since that time the duality of terms Genealogical Office and Office of the Chief Herald has continued to be employed, with a greater tendency perhaps to use the former, which is seen as the seat of the Chief Herald, and still appears on his letterhead. There was clearly some unease on the part of the College of Arms

6 French, 'Nepotists and Sinecurists', pages 352-53.

7 Hood, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance*, pages 82-83.

8 Herbert Wood, 'The Public Records of Ireland Before and After 1922', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th Series, 13, 1930, pages 45-46; Susan Hood, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance: The Survival of the Office of Arms*, Dublin 2002, pages 112-15.

9 Same, pages 160-61.

10 Woodcock and Robinson, *Oxford Guide to Heraldry*, pages 139-40.

11 Hood, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance*, pages 200-01.

concerning Irish continuance of Ulster's functions, and while cordial relations have generally been maintained with Dublin, these issues have never entirely been resolved. The new Irish heraldic office had been established not by statute but by ministerial order, and in recent years there have been growing doubts concerning the Chief Herald's legal authority to grant arms, leading to calls for the passage of proper enabling legislation.¹²

The heraldic and genealogical records of Ulster's Office came to be designated Genealogical Office manuscripts under the new regime. This is an important point to be borne in mind, that while the Genealogical Office/Office of the Chief Herald has generated its own records since 1943, the bulk of the archive is composed of the old records of Ulster's Office. Of course, with the conjoining of the post of Ulster with Norroy in 1943, a new series of Ulster's records commenced which are held in the College of Arms. Although the records were apparently closed to the public in Ulster's time, it was the writer's experience that they could be inspected by arrangement by members of the public in Dublin Castle in the late 1970s and early 1980s at least. In 1981, following the discovery of structural defects in the Bedford Tower, the Genealogical Office/Office of the Chief Herald were removed, and in 1987 were relocated to new premises at 2 Kildare Street, within the expanded National Library complex. Wilkinson's Museum, now called the State Heraldic Museum, was also transferred to Kildare Street with a reorganised set of exhibits, many still relating to Ulster's Office. The Bedford Tower has since been refurbished as part of a conference centre in Dublin Castle, and while there has been significant internal rebuilding, some of the rooms of Ulster's Office survive, including the Library.¹³

Having sketched in the historical background, it is now appropriate to consider the range of Ulster's Office records. The most important of the records were microfilmed by the National Library of Ireland in two series, and are available in the main library building in Kildare Street, Dublin.¹⁴ Broader access to Ulster's manuscripts is facilitated by the fact that the Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) completed a set of microfilm copies in 1949-50, totalling 175 reels. These microfilms cover a wider range of the records than the National Library set, and are accessible internationally through the network of Mormon Family History Centres.¹⁵ Microfilming of records of course is rapidly being replaced by digitisation and delivery online, and it is to be hoped that the National Library intends to include its genealogical and heraldic manuscripts in its plans in this regard.

As indicated, the records of Ulster's Office have been retitled Genealogical Office manuscripts, and can be classified under the following headings:

Visitations

Grants and Confirmations of Arms

12 Noel Cox, 'The Irish Law of Arms: A Lingering Question of Authority', *Genealogical Society of Ireland Journal*, 7, no 2, 2006, pages 75-103, copy online at http://www.geocities.com/noelcofiles/Irish_Law_of_Arms.pdf (viewed 10 May 2007).

13 Guided tours of Dublin Castle are provided, but it should be noted that parts of the complex may be closed to the public when conferences and official functions are in progress.

14 National Library of Ireland microfilm (NLI POS). The first series covers selected items from GO MSS 47-188 (NLI POS 8286-8312), the second includes all of GO MSS 1-46 (NLI POS 9216-9223).

15 Family History Library British Film (FHL BF). This series covers almost every item in the range GO MSS 1-794.

The Records of Ulster's Office 1552-1943

Funeral Entries
Lords Entries
Registered Pedigrees
Royal Warrants
Administrative records and correspondence
Miscellaneous collections

Heraldic visitations involving inspection of arms and recording of pedigrees were conducted regularly in England, but they were less common in Ireland, even when the whole of the country had been brought under English control from the early seventeenth century onwards. Thus the records of only seven visitations survived in Ulster's Office, ranging in dates from 1568 to 1610, and covering mainly Dublin and the adjoining Pale area, with some coverage of Cork, Limerick and Wexford.¹⁶ It has been pointed out that the relative paucity of evidence of entitlement to arms in Ireland probably explains the evolution of the practice of 'confirmation of arms', whereby Ulster would register arms where it could be shown that an applicant's family had used them for at least three generations or one hundred years.¹⁷

Records of grants and confirmations of arms are very substantial, with some material surviving from the time of the first Ulster. A systematic chronological series commenced in 1698 and continued until the last years of the office in Dublin.¹⁸ There has been a tendency to dispersal of Ulster's Office records over the years, due primarily to the fact that the office holder was permitted to carry out private professional work, with the result that there was not always a clear line of demarcation between official and private records. Thus three sixteenth-century manuscripts of Ulster's Office found their way into Trinity College Dublin.¹⁹ Mention should be made also of the detached papers of James Terry, Athlone Pursuivant, who took records with him when he fled to France with James II.²⁰

The Funeral Entries comprise fifteen volumes covering the years 1588-1691, with a copy of a detached volume containing entries for the years 1622-1729, now in the British Library, and a volume relating to a romantic revival of the practice in the late nineteenth century.²¹ These important records were intended for 'the better preservation of the memory of the nobility and gentry, their marriages, posterity and arms',²² and help to compensate to a considerable extent for the small quantity of visitations.

16 Visitations, GO MSS 47-49 (NLI POS 8286, FHL BF 100228, 100225); indexed in GO MS 117 (FHL BF 100188). MacCarthy states that the Visitations end in 1618 rather than 1610, giving them what appears to be a now amended reference, GO MSS 45-47 (*Ulster's Office*, pages 86-90).

17 Barry, 'Records of Genealogical Office', page 65.

18 Grants and Confirmations of Arms, 1698-1941, GO MSS 103-111F (NLI POS 8290-8294, FHL BF 100201-100205, 100238); indexed in GO MSS 422-423 (FHL BF 100205). The last volume 111F, covering the years 1932-41, was actually assembled and bound by the incoming Chief Herald of Ireland, Edward MacLysaght. The series of Grants and Confirmations of Arms was continued by the Office of the Chief Herald and is still in progress (GO MSS 111G-).

19 Edmund Curtis, 'Extracts out of Heralds' Books in Trinity College, Dublin, Relating to Ireland in the Sixteenth Century', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 62, 1932, pages 28-49.

20 Charles E Lart, *The Pedigrees and Papers of James Terry, Athlone Herald at the Court of James II in France (1690-1725)*, Exeter 1938; Barry, 'Records of Genealogical Office', page 61.

21 Funeral Entries, 1588-1729, 1862-98, GO MSS 64-79 (NLI POS 8286-8290, FHL BF 100160-100163); indexed in GO MS 386 (FHL BF 100142).

22 Barry, 'Records of Genealogical Office', page 66.

The Lords Entries arose from Ulster's duty of keeping a regularly updated list of Irish peers. There are six volumes in the series of enrolments of Irish peers, dating from 1698-1939.²³ These records obviously related to the right of peers to sit in the Irish Parliament, but the series continued after the abolition of that body in 1800, no doubt due to the fact that the Irish peers maintained a right to elect representatives who sat in the British House of Lords.²⁴

Because heraldry and genealogy are so closely intertwined, Ulster's Office also accumulated a large amount of pedigree material. The most important official records of this class are the Registered Pedigrees, which are a multi-volume series commencing in the early eighteenth century and continuing until the closing days of the office in Dublin.²⁵ In a number of cases the pedigrees contain drawings or blazons of arms. Sources are rarely cited in these officially attested pedigrees, so that while they are extremely valuable as research aids, they should be checked against primary sources where possible. While Betham in general raised standards in Ulster's Office above that of his predecessors, he could be credulous, or perhaps pragmatically unquestioning in his acceptance of claims to ancient pedigrees and noble origins, as indeed could his immediate successor Burke.²⁶

In 1795 Ulster's Office commenced a series of records of Royal Warrants, which refer firstly to changes of names and arms, but deal also with other matters such as right to supporters and claims to titles.²⁷ A related series is the Baronets Records, again designed to control improper assumption of titles.²⁸

Over the years Ulster's Office accumulated other miscellaneous records vital to its functioning. Those collections compiled by Sir William Betham stand first in terms of comprehensiveness and utility. Betham's pedigrees abstracted from Prerogative Wills to 1800 are of particular importance, as most original wills were destroyed in the Public Record Office of Ireland in 1922.²⁹ Other compilations by Betham include abstracts of medieval plea, patent and pipe rolls.³⁰ A collection of pedigrees by O'Ferrall is

23 Lords Entries, 1698-1939, GO MSS 183-188 (NLI POS 8310-8312, FHL BF 100192-100193); indexed in GO MS 470 (FHL BF 100152).

24 Barry, 'Records of Genealogical Office', page 68.

25 Registered Pedigrees, c1712-1930s, GO MSS 156-182 (NLI POS 8300-8309, FHL BF 100180, 100122-100128, 100236-100237); indexed in GO MS 469 (FHL BF 100152). The series of Registered Pedigrees was continued by the Chief Herald of Ireland until recent years, but has now been terminated (GO MSS 182-).

26 Barry, 'Records of Genealogical Office', pages 69-70.

27 Royal Warrants, 1795-1940s, GO MSS 149-154A (NLI POS 8297-8300, FHL BF 100189-100191, 100235-100236). The series relating to changes of name was continued until 1945 by the Office of the Chief Herald (GO MS 154A).

28 Baronets' Pedigrees, GO MSS 112-114 (NLI POS 8295-8295B, FHL BF 100187); indexed in GO MS 470 (FHL BF 100152).

29 Betham, Prerogative Will Pedigrees, 1536-1800, GO MSS 223-254 (FHL BF 100103-100112), Prerogative Administrations Intestate, GO MSS 257-60 (FHL BF 100114). See also Will Pedigrees, GO MSS 203-214 (apparently only partly filmed, FHL BF 100113). Important research aids are Index to Alliances in Prerogative Wills, GO MSS 255-256 (FHL BF 100113), and Sir Arthur Vicars, Editor, *Index to the Prerogative Wills of Ireland, 1536-1810*, Dublin 1897, reprinted Genealogical Publishing Company 1989. Betham's abstract notebooks relating to Prerogative Wills and other testamentary records are held in the National Archives of Ireland, Bishop Street, Dublin, where access to and copying from microfilms is self-service. A collection of Prerogative Will Pedigrees compiled by Burke is held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Balmoral Avenue, Belfast (T 559).

important for Gaelic families,³¹ and there is also a copy of this work with annotations by Betham and Burke.³² Betham also compiled pedigrees relating to Anglo-Irish families,³³ Milesian (Gaelic) families,³⁴ and various sketch pedigrees.³⁵

There is also a broad range of records of Ulster's Office which would be classed as administrative. Ulster's diaries exist for dates from the late seventeenth century until the 1830s, illustrating the regulation of state ceremonies in particular.³⁶ Burke was particularly punctilious with regard to ceremony, compiling a series of volumes dealing with precedence, dress code, guest lists, and so on.³⁷ As indicated, Ulster also played an important role in the administration of the Order of St Patrick, and a number of manuscripts of the office refer to that body.³⁸ A significant quantity of records relating to research carried out for clients by Ulster's Office has survived, a portion of which has been catalogued.³⁹

In the case of official correspondence, the quantity surviving for a given period relates to the care which the relevant Ulster took to maintain letter books. As indicated, some records were regarded as relating to Ulster's private work and were therefore removed on the retirement or death of an office holder. Due to the fact that a good deal of it has not been filmed, the correspondence element of the Genealogical Office records is probably the least known and used. Characteristically, Betham compiled an impressive series of letter books during his term of office, and although many of his papers did not remain in Ulster's Office, purchases in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries enabled the return of a good number of them to the archive.⁴⁰ While Burke was also a careful record keeper, the letter books remaining from his period are less substantial,⁴¹ which is perhaps explained by the fact that over a hundred of his volumes were bequeathed to the College of Arms in 1930 by his son, Sir Henry Farnham Burke, Garter King of Arms.⁴²

Particular problems arise in determining the quantity of official correspondence

30 Excerpts from Plea Rolls, Henry III to Henry VI, GO MSS 189-192 (FHL BF 100209-100210); Excerpts from Patent Rolls, Edward I to Edward VI, GO MS 193 (FHL BF 100210); Excerpts from Pipe Rolls, Henry III to Edward III, formerly GO MSS 194-195, now NLI MSS 760-761 (FHL BF 100210).

31 Roger O'Ferrall, *Linea Antiqua*, 1709, GO MS 155 (NLI POS 8300, FHL 257780); this volume was in fact numbered as the first in the series of Registered Pedigrees.

32 Same (annotated and indexed copy), GO MSS 145-148 (NLI POS 8296-8297, FHL BF 100133).

33 Betham, *Ancient Anglo-Irish Families*, 5 vols, GO MSS 215-219 (FHL BF 100134-100135).

34 Same, *Milesian Families*, 3 vols, GO MSS 220-222 (FHL BF 100136).

35 Same, *Sketch Pedigrees, First Series*, 16 vols, GO MSS 261-276 (FHL BF 100116-100121), *Second Series*, 7 vols, GO MSS 292-298 (FHL BF 100129-100131).

36 *Ulster's Diaries, 1698-1837*, GO MSS 10-11 (NLI POS 9217, FHL BF 100223).

37 *Ceremonial Books*, GO MSS 348-50 (not filmed); Hood, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance*, page 18.

38 *Order of St Patrick*, GO MSS 308, 310, 312-313, 315-317, 320, 335-336 (not filmed), 344 (FHL BF 100194). For a history of the order see Peter Galloway, *The Most Illustrious Order of St Patrick*, Chichester 1983.

39 *Searches and Correspondence*, GO 800-822 (not filmed); a portion only of this series relates to the work of Ulster's Office, the balance to that of the Office of the Chief Herald.

40 *Letter Books, 1789-1853*, 19 vols, 1789-1853, GO MSS 361-368 (not filmed); the earliest letters in this series predate Betham's time. Inward correspondence is found in the Betham Letters, c1810-30, GO MSS 580-604, with a catalogue and index, GO MS 604A (FHL BF 257794-257805). Other Betham letters are held in the National Archives of Ireland, Bishop Street, Dublin (M 744-751).

41 *Official Entries and Letters, 1854-1921*, 7 vols, GO MSS 322-328 (not filmed).

42 Woodcock and Robinson, *Oxford Guide to Heraldry*, pages 151-52.

surviving from Vicars's period of service as Ulster, in that there are still not fully explained gaps in the record, and a considerable part of the correspondence remains uncatalogued a century later. Vicars's tenure saw the initiation of a series of letter books in 1893, but the first volume is found to contain no entries for the period of the Crown Jewels scandal, 1907-08, and indeed for some years before.⁴³ Official weeding of embarrassing records is the first explanation which comes to mind,⁴⁴ but this may not be the whole story. Vicars was not in fact a careful administrator, and a Dublin Castle contemporary, Sir Henry Robinson, subsequently described him as a 'notoriously forgetful, casual sort of creature, nearly always late for his engagements'.⁴⁵

There is in the archive a volume of correspondence for 1901-02 which has the following note attached: 'Bought from Townley Searle, 30 Gerrard Street W I for 10s, 10.10.1941'.⁴⁶ Searle was a London author and bookseller, and it is not clear how Ulster's Office records would have come into his possession. Speaking speculatively, it can be asked whether the volume could have come from the estate of Frank Shackleton, who had adopted the surname Mellor and died in Chichester in June 1941? It is much less likely that the volume had been acquired by Searle from the estate of Ulster Wilkinson, whose death as noted had occurred in 1940, for it is recorded that Wilkinson had taken care to restore to Ulster's Office another volume which had 'wandered from official custody, apparently about 1908'.⁴⁷ It would appear therefore that records as well as gems were removed irregularly from Ulster's Office around the time of the Crown Jewels scandal, some perhaps via official weeding, others possibly as a result of common thievery.

The Genealogical Office manuscripts include a volume compiled at a later period by J C Hodgson, containing letters by Vicars and other material relating to the Crown Jewels affair, which is clearly private in origin.⁴⁸ The National Library also holds copies of some twenty letters from Vicars to James Fuller, some of which touch on the matter of the Crown Jewels.⁴⁹ Letter books from Wilkinson's period as Ulster commence in 1909 and continue until the early 1920s.⁵⁰ As already noted, Wilkinson was a largely absentee administrator, and from 1921 the burden of work fell mostly on the shoulders of Deputy Ulster Sadleir. In 2001-02 a collection of Sadleir's papers was generously donated to the National Library by his son.⁵¹ Some of this material, particularly correspondence between Wilkinson and Sadleir, is clearly official in nature,

43 Letter Book, 1893-1909 (gap 1902-08), GO MS uncatalogued. After a number of applications, this uncatalogued material was examined by special arrangement with the Office of the Chief Herald in July 2006. The writer also briefly inspected a series of four files of in-letters dating from 1836-1921, again uncatalogued and very disorganised, and a Register of Letters of the Office of Arms, 1908-29. The writer was surprised to find among the unsorted early twentieth-century correspondence a letter from Terence MacCarthy to the then Chief Herald dated 9 May 1983, underscoring the archival chaos which also accompanied the MacCarthy Mór affair, and more misplaced items of various periods may yet turn up.

44 Hood, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance*, pages 62-63.

45 Quoted in same, page 31.

46 Letter Book, 1901-02, GO MS uncatalogued.

47 Thomas U Sadleir, 'Ulster Office Records', *Genealogists' Magazine*, 6, 1932-34, page 437; the volume in question is a collection of pedigrees titled 'Barry', GO MS 412 (FHL BF 100145), indexed in GO MS 470 (FHL BF 100115).

48 Loss of the Irish Crown Jewels, GO MS 507 (FHL 100241).

49 Letters of Sir Arthur Vicars to James Fuller, 1904-16, NLI POS 4955 (copies of originals in possession of Basil O'Connell).

50 Letter Books, 1909-23, GO MSS uncatalogued.

and again it can be asked if its original removal was appropriate, and whether there might be more such documents still in private hands.

There are significant collections of copies and abstracts of Irish records, the originals of many of which were destroyed in 1922, including wills,⁵² some returns of the 1766 Religious Census and a number of 1821 census abstracts, freeholders lists, Dublin marriage licences and seventeenth-century hearth money rolls.⁵³ Also to be found among the records are document abstracts and pedigrees compiled by leading Irish genealogists such as Sir Edmund Bewley, J Atkins Davis, Alfred Molony, Denis O'Callaghan Fisher and W H Welply.⁵⁴ Other items include a series of volumes whose title is indicative of their varied content,⁵⁵ a collection of Irish pedigrees compiled by Sir Isaac Heard, Garter King of Arms,⁵⁶ papers relating to the Athenry and Berkeley peerage cases,⁵⁷ arms of British families in Ireland,⁵⁸ copies of some English visitations,⁵⁹ and various items of English interest such as a collection of municipal arms.⁶⁰

These then are the principal classes of records generated by the workings of Ulster's Office over the centuries, and it remains to outline how best they may be studied and what kinds of finding aids are available. Following a period of reorganisation over the last decade, the position now is that public access to Genealogical Office records has been improved significantly, but problems can still arise.⁶¹ It is expected firstly that applicants should view copies of records on microfilm where they are available in that format in the National Library's microfilm room.⁶² Where the manuscripts are unmicrofilmed or there are problems of legibility, or if they are uncatalogued but traceable, then at the discretion of the Chief Herald originals can be viewed in the Manuscripts Reading Room of the National Library, located upstairs in 2 Kildare Street.⁶³ As indicated, those living outside Ireland may access microfilm

51 Letters of Thomas Ulick Sadleir, 1893-1958, GO MS 1000, catalogue at <http://www.nli.ie/manuscriptlist/> (viewed 6 May 2007).

52 P Beryl Eustace, 'Index of Will Abstracts in the Genealogical Office, Dublin', *Guide to Genealogical Office*, pages 79-282 (article originally published in *Analecta Hibernica*, 17, 1949, pages 145-348).

53 Grenham, 'The Genealogical Office and its Records', *Guide to Genealogical Office*, pages 1-33 (article originally published in the author's *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors: The Complete Guide*, 1st Edition, Dublin 1992, pages 67-90).

54 Barry, 'Records of Genealogical Office', page 75; see for example the Fisher Manuscripts, GO MSS 280-285 (FHL BF 100138).

55 'Chaos', 5 volumes, GO MSS 93-97 (NLI POS 8290A, FHL BF 100208); indexed in GO MS 470 (FHL BF 100152).

56 Heard's Irish Pedigrees, GO MS 647 (FHL BF 100156); indexed in GO MS 470 (FHL BF 100152).

57 Athenry Peerage Letters, 1821-25, GO MS 482 (not filmed); Berkeley Peerage: Pedigree, Correspondence and Notes, GO MS 515 (FHL BF 257821).

58 British Families, 3 vols, GO MSS 44-46 (NLI POS 9223, FHL BF 100229); indexed in GO MS 115 (FHL BF 100188).

59 Visitations of Norfolk and Suffolk 1567, Yorkshire, 1685, Cheshire 1580, Dorset and Devon 1613, and Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire (no date), GO MSS 119-120 (not filmed), 123-124 (FHL BF 100232).

60 Arms of Cities of England, GO MS 129 (not filmed).

61 Murphy, *Twilight of the Chiefs*, pages 67-68, 221-223.

62 As yet there is no self-service facility for accessing microfilms in the National Library, but self-service copying from microfilms of manuscripts, including Genealogical Office material, has been introduced in 2008.

63 The Office of the Chief Herald is located at 2 Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Note that an additional reader's card has to be obtained to view original National Library of Ireland manuscripts, including GO manuscripts, as the general reader's card only covers material such as books and microforms.

copies of Genealogical Office manuscripts through Mormon Family History Centres.

Particularly in the case of coloured coats of arms, it may be found that sight of black and white microfilm copies is not sufficient, so that it may be necessary to apply for permission to view the painted originals, taking due care not to damage fragile pigment. In this connection the availability of full-colour digital scans of arms will aid the heraldic researcher in particular, and the Office of the Chief Herald has now added to its online illustrations some of the later arms grants of Ulster's Office.⁶⁴ A selection of coloured illustrations of the armorial work of Ulster's Office can be found in at least two publications.⁶⁵ A year before the centenary of the Heraldic Museum, the exhibits were removed from Kildare Street in 2007 to make way for a new exhibition, and it has not been possible to confirm if the Museum is to be reinstated.

Several commentators have observed that what is most wanting in relation to the records of Ulster's Office and the Genealogical Office is a single, comprehensive catalogue.⁶⁶ A reprint of Barry's analytical article on the records of the Genealogical Office,⁶⁷ together with a list by Grenham giving manuscript and microfilm references and some other material,⁶⁸ was clearly a scissors and paste stopgap rather than the required full catalogue, but nonetheless the work is not without utility.⁶⁹ The online catalogue of the Family History Library gives a summary listing of its microfilm copies of the Genealogical Office records.⁷⁰ There are a number of indexes compiled internally over the years which remain useful, and the most important of these have been indicated in the references to the records dealt with above. It is not known if the current Chief Herald has any plans to produce a full catalogue of Ulster's Office and Genealogical Office records, and at present the National Library website features only brief and summary information in relation to these archives.

In terms of published indexes, Hayes's compendious guide to Irish manuscripts incorporates a range of Genealogical Office records, including the Grants and Confirmations of Arms, Registered Pedigrees and Royal Warrants.⁷¹ Working from the Mormon microfilm copies of the Genealogical Office records, McAnlis has produced a very important finding aid in the form of a consolidated index.⁷² McAnlis's index, which

64 Exemplification of Arms Granted from 1936-1980, http://www.nli.ie/new_office.htm (viewed 6 May 2007); each illustration of arms is accompanied by the name of grantee and register reference, but not the date of grant or confirmation.

65 Noel Kissane, Editor, *Treasures from the National Library of Ireland*, Dublin 1994; Hood, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance*.

66 Grenham, 'Genealogical Office Records', page 9; Hood, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance*, page 255.

67 Barry, 'Guide to Records of Genealogical Office'.

68 Grenham, 'Genealogical Office Records'; this listing is also available online at *Irish Ancestors*, <http://www.ireland.com/ancestor/browse/records/genealogical/> (viewed 9 May 2007).

69 Irish Manuscripts Commission, *Guide to Genealogical Office*.

70 'Manuscripts in the Genealogical Office of Ireland', Family History Library Catalog, <http://www.familysearch.org/>, click 'Library' tab (viewed 9 May 2007).

71 Richard J Hayes, Editor, *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilization*, 11 vols, Boston 1965; *First Supplement*, 1965-75, 3 vols, Boston 1979 (no more published).

72 Virginia W McAnlis, *Consolidated Index to the Records of the Genealogical Office, Dublin, Ireland*, 4 vols, Issaquah, Washington, 1994-97, now available in PDF format on CD-ROM from the author at 82 Gunn Road, Port Angeles, WA 98362-9108, USA. The CD-ROM version enables faster and more exhaustive searches to be carried out. McAnlis's work is basically a consolidation of the following indexes: GO MSS 117, 148, 255-260, 386, 422-423, 470.

usually gives only surname but sometimes also full name, includes material not incorporated in Hayes's guide, such as the Lords Entries and Betham's abstracts and pedigrees. In the case of some record series, McAnlis follows a particular name entry with a continuous range of manuscript references, for example, (GO) MSS 261-276, but then provides a volume number, for example, Vol VI, which enables the particular manuscript reference to be established..

In heraldic terms, Ulster's Office has over the centuries generated a remarkable archive illustrating the various Irish armorial traditions, Norman, Gaelic and Anglo-Irish. With varying degrees of care, Ulster Kings of Arms also compiled important collections of pedigrees to complement the heraldry, which are valuable as genealogical tools when used critically. Notwithstanding unresolved questions concerning its own status in the wake of the Mac Carthy Mór scandal,⁷³ the Genealogical Office/Office of the Chief Herald sees itself as continuing its predecessor's work of granting arms. However, the office has effectively abandoned registration of pedigrees, and as noted has failed to fully catalogue either its own or Ulster's archive. It would be preferable if the records of Ulster's Office and the Genealogical Office were treated as separate classes and placed under the direct administration of the Keeper of Manuscripts of the National Library, who hopefully could arrange for them to be properly sorted, catalogued and in time digitised.

Realistically, the records of Ulster's Office will refer primarily to the armigerous and relatively wealthy, but information on middling status and non-armigerous families can also be found there. Thus McAnlis has pointed out that the letters A, B and C in her index encompass over one thousand surnames, illustrating that more than the nobility and gentry are documented in the records.⁷⁴ In conclusion, the records of Ulster's Office constitute an important Irish cultural asset in their own right, reflecting many aspects of the shared history of Britain and Ireland, and as noted above, but for good fortune might have been lost in 1922 with the other archives for which they are now a significant substitute.

⁷³ Murphy, *Twilight of the Chiefs*, pages 177-79.

⁷⁴ McAnlis, *Consolidated Index*, 1, page 3.

Appendix: Principal Records of Ulster's Office

Ulster's Office records are now classed as Genealogical Office manuscripts within the National Library of Ireland collections in Kildare Street, Dublin. Abbreviations: GO MSS - Genealogical Office Manuscripts; NLI POS - National Library of Ireland, Positive Microfilm; FHL BF - Family History Library, British Film.

- Visitations, GO MSS 47-49 (NLI POS 8286, FHL BF 100228, 100225); indexed in GO MS 117 (FHL BF 100188).
- Grants and Confirmations of Arms, 1698-1941, GO MSS 103-111F (NLI POS 8290-8294, FHL BF 100201-100205, 100238); indexed in GO MSS 422-423 (FHL BF 100205).
- Funeral Entries, 1588-1729, 1862-98, GO MSS 64-79 (NLI POS 8286-8290, FHL BF 100160-100163); indexed in GO MS 386 (FHL BF 100142).
- Lords Entries, 1698-1939, GO MSS 183-188 (NLI POS 8310-8312, FHL BF 100192-100193); indexed in GO MS 470 (FHL BF 100152).
- Registered Pedigrees, c1712-1930s, GO MSS 156-182 (NLI POS 8300-8309, FHL BF 100180, 100122-100128, 100236-100237); indexed in GO MS 469 (FHL BF 100152).
- Royal Warrants, 1795-1940s, GO MSS 149-154A (NLI POS 8297-8300, FHL BF 100189-100191, 100235-100236).
- Baronets' Pedigrees, GO MSS 112-114 (NLI POS 8295-8295B, FHL BF 100187); indexed in GO MS 470 (FHL BF 100152).
- Sir William Betham, Prerogative Will Pedigrees, 1536-1800, GO MSS 223-254 (FHL BF 100103-100112), Prerogative Administrations Intestate, GO MSS 257-60 (FHL BF 100114).
- Roger O'Ferrall, Linea Antiqua, 1709, GO MS 155 (NLI POS 8300, FHL 257780); annotated and indexed copy, GO MSS 145-148 (NLI POS 8296-8297, FHL BF 100133).
- Betham, Ancient Anglo-Irish Families, 5 vols, GO MSS 215-219 (FHL BF 100134-100135).
- Same, Milesian Families, 3 vols, GO MSS 220-222 (FHL BF 100136).
- Same, Sketch Pedigrees, First Series, 16 vols, GO MSS 261-276 (FHL BF 100116-100121), Second Series, 7 vols, GO MSS 292-298 (FHL BF 100129-100131).
- Ulster's Diaries, 1698-1837, GO MSS 10-11 (NLI POS 9217, FHL BF 100223).
- Ceremonial Books, GO MSS 348-50 (not filmed).
- Order of St Patrick, GO MSS 308, 310, 312-313, 315-317, 320, 335-336 (not filmed), 344 (FHL BF 100194).
- Letter Books, 1789-1853, 19 vols, 1789-1853, GO MSS 361-368 (not filmed).
- Official Entries and Letters, 1854-1921, 7 vols, GO MSS 322-328 (not filmed).
- Letter Book, 1893-1909 (gap 1902-08), GO MS uncatalogued (not filmed).
- Letter Books, 1909-23, GO MSS uncatalogued (not filmed).
- Letters of Thomas Ulick Sadleir, 1893-1958, GO MS 1000, catalogue at <http://www.nli.ie/manuscriptlist/> (viewed 6 May 2007).