1. **My Family Tree: Civil Records**

If you find yourself with more free time on your hands than usual, why not take the opportunity to connect with family members and together trace your family tree. There any many FREE online resources available to help you unravel your family histories and mysteries. A good place to start is civil registrations.

In Ireland, civil registration started on 1 April 1845 for non-Catholic marriages, and on 1 January 1864 for all births, deaths and marriages. You can search all Irish births (1864 to 1919), marriages (1845 to 1944) and deaths (1878 to 1969) for free here: https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/civil-search.jsp

All you need is a person's name and approximate date range along with their civil registration district, which was centred on the local market town. For Co. Galway, there are 13 relevant civil registration districts: Ballinasloe, Ballinrobe (Co. Mayo), Clifden, Galway, Glenamaddy, Gort, Loughrea, Mountbellew, Oughterard, Portumna, Roscommon (Co. Roscommon), Scarriff (Co. Clare) and Tuam.

In terms of making family connections, birth records are useful as they provide the place of birth (usually the townland) and the names of both parents (and vitally the mother's maiden name), and marriage records give the names of the father's of the married couple. Along with the census records of 1901 and 1911 (separate post to follow), these are invaluable sources for researching family history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The key piece of advice is to start with what you already know (you, your parents and grandparents) and work backwards, forwards and sideways from there! And remember, if you hit a dead end, try searching for variations of first names and surnames – e.g. Ó Máille, O'Malley, OMalley, OMally, OMaly, Malley, Maley, Mally, Maly, etc.

An additional useful resource is www.townlands.ie/galway/ which gives the names and locations of the 4,474 townlands, 235 electoral divisions, 115 civil parishes and 15 baronies in Co. Galway.

Happy Digging!

#IrishMuseumsOnline
#MuseumFromHome