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Wednesday, June 3, 2009

Deceased go online as council uploads burial register

By Jimmy Woulfe Mid-West Correspondent

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 03, 2009

THE dead went online in Limerick yesterday when the city council became the first local authority in the country to put its burial register on the internet.

Burial records for the city's largest cemetery, Mount Saint Lawrence, dating back more than 150 years, will now be easily available online.

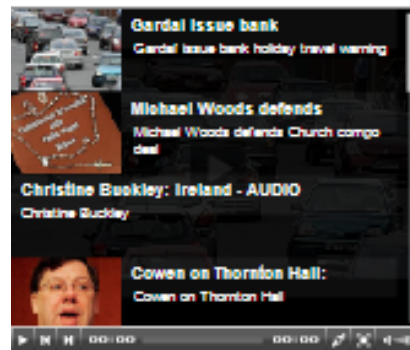
A spokesperson said: "We wanted to ensure that a preservation copy of these vital Limerick records was created and commissioned local firm Medrex Systems to microfilm the records and to convert these into digital format.

"This means that it is now possible to access a copy of the original handwritten entries of burials in Mount St Lawrence cemetery, from 1855 onwards on Limerick City Council's website, www.limerick.ie."

Each entry in the record is handwritten and records the name of the person, the date of burial, the location of the grave, the age of the deceased and the last residence. With the click of a mouse, it is possible to turn the pages of the book to view the next set of entries.

Mount St Lawrence was first opened in 1849 when a new graveyard was needed in Limerick as a result of the both the 1830's cholera epidemic and the Great Famine of 1845-1850.

Limerick city archivist Jacqui Hayes said: "The register is a mirror to Limerick society from this time, as all sections of society were buried here. Every person buried has a one-line entry and these persons came from every street and lane in Limerick. For many years the majority of entries on a single page are from the Limerick Union and Limerick Lunatic Asylum. These were later known as St Joseph's Hospital and the City Home. All strata of society were buried here and the registers record the burials of many former mayors of Limerick,



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from Michael O'Callaghan and George Clancy, who were killed during the War of Independence, to Jim Kemmy in recent times."

The registers, she said, are also important from a demographic point of view as they provide statistics for the changing life expectancy rates and death rates.

Mayor of Limerick Cllr John Gilligan said the burial registers are an absolutely vital record for all Limerick citizens whose relatives are buried in the city cemetery over the years.

"It is wonderful that these records have survived and that the technology is now available to put these records online," he said.

Anton O'Carroll of Limerick-based microfilm specialists Medrex Systems said the project involved creating a permanent microfilm copy of the burial registers, scanning these images to digital format and printing a paper version for use in the cemetery office.

This story appeared in the printed version of the Irish Examiner Wednesday, June 03, 2009

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