Reviews


The Old Athlone Society was founded in 1865, and two years later opened its folk museum in Athlone Castle. It has now moved a stage further, and issued the first number of a journal in which it offers to its readers no less than eight articles, and also some shorter notes, all dealing with widely different aspects of Athlone's past.

The first article, contributed by W. English, Hon. Secretary of the Society and also Hon. Editor of the new journal, is a description of all the megalithic tombs within about twenty miles of Athlone. Included are a number of tombs not previously recorded, and also those which had formerly been described as ancient monuments but were subsequently identified as natural rock formations. Mr. English shows that he is familiar with megalithic tomb types and also with the sources from which information pertaining to the monuments can be obtained.

The next article is on the identification of Isail Chiarain, an ancient monastery associated with St. Ciaran before he founded Clonmacnoise. Liam O. Cox presents a most convincing case for placing this site at Twyford, Co. Westmeath, a place well-known to archaeologists for the fine High Cross which is located there. He bases his case on historical, onomastic and topographical evidence, and he brings forward a most impressive list of well-documented authorities to support his case. Mr. Cox obviously has a deep personal knowledge of the locality and of early maps and documents relating to the area. His article should be an example and a headline to contributors to all local archaeological journals.

Dr. Arthur Moore follows this with a brief article on "The Cell of the Canonesses Regular of St. Augustine at Clonoghill," in which the remains of the church are described and its history recounted.

In his paper on Athlone at the end of the seventeenth century, Harman Murtagh quotes from a number of contemporary authorities covering the period of the Williamite Wars. A quotation from Sir Henry Pieris, dated to 1682, describes the defences of Athlone as consisting of stone walls, with timber bastions, and a large rampart of stone and earth. The works were set with a quick hedge which was well kept and shorn. This is a feature which is not usually mentioned as a defensive measure, yet it must have been just as effective as the modern barbed wire.

Dr. Michael Quane, a member of our own Society and contributor to our Journal, writes on "Ranelagh Endowed School, Athlone". Long acknowledged as the leading authority on Irish educational establishments of recent centuries, Dr. Quane maintains here the usual high standard which we have come to expect from him. In addition to the Ranelagh School, he also supplies much valuable information in this article on the Charter Schools in general, establishments which were set up under Royal Charter in 1733.

In a short article on the early theatre in Athlone, Brendan O'Brien refers to visits by theatrical companies, the earliest record of which dates from 1781. He deals at some length with Robert Ovensen, an Irish-speaking actor who was the first to try to found a national theatre in Ireland and who composed "Rory O'More," and also with Andrew Cherry, the son of a Limerick bookseller and the composer of "The Dear Little Shamrock"; both of these actors played in Athlone during the late eighteenth century.

Another member of our own Society and frequent contributor to our Journal, Oliver Snoddy, has an important article in this new publication. Mr. Snoddy throws new light on the whole background to the formation of the Irish Volunteers, which was preceded by and much influenced by the foundation Midland Volunteer Force, in Athlone, in September 1913. The O'Rahilly, who wrote about the foundation of the Irish Volunteers, and many later writers following his lead, have denied or ignored the existence of the MVF and the influential part it played in initiating the whole movement. Mr. Snoddy reproduces a contemporary photograph of the first Committee of the MVF, and, to crown all argument, has also reproduced an enlargement of a printed handbill which is held by one of the members. This handbill gives details and date of an assembly and parade, a parade which was actually held and was reported on in the local newspaper of the 26th October, 1913.

This new journal also contains an interesting description of some historical buildings in Athlone, by E.H.L.M. There are also several snippets of Athlone interest, culled from old publications by Mr. English.
This journal is a welcome addition to the increasing number of local historical and archaeological periodicals. The standard of its contributors is high, and in some cases the results are of primary importance. Great credit must go to the Old Athlone Society and to its Honorary Editor—it is to be hoped that the high standard will be maintained in future numbers.

PÁDRAIG Ó Béalidhe


In order to review any publication one ought to be an expert in its subject matter, but to properly review this particular book one would need to be an expert in a great many fields.
The Way That I Went is an amazing book. Even though written over twenty-five years ago, it is, today, alive with interest for all those with a flair for geology, botany, archaeology, folklore, or honest-to-goodness adventure. It is also a useful reference book for the professional and, for the beginner, a charming introduction to all those subjects—and to Ireland. In it can be found an outline account of the geological structure of Ireland, and also botanical and archaeological surveys of the island. Nor is the book lacking in history or mythology. Much useful information of the type seldom found in other books of its kind will be found in this book. For instance, when the author describes and discusses Rockall and Hy-Brasil, both islands—one real and the other mythical—far off the west coast of Ireland in the Atlantic. Likewise when the history of the frog in Ireland is discussed, when the composition of some of our so-called coral beaches is described in detail, when the dietary use of the shamrock is referred to, when, indeed, the nature of the true shamrock is questioned, when water divining and witchcraft are commented upon, when rare plants, birds and animals are learnedly but readably brought to our notice.
The archaeologist is fairly generously treated in this book. For example, Praeger entertainingly recounts the discovery, discarding, and subsequent re-discovery of the beautiful gold gorget of Late Bronze Age date which was found in Gleninsheen, in the Burren, Co. Clare, and which is now one of the prized possessions of the National Museum. He also tells us something of the thrill he experienced when he was the first person in about 4000 years to enter a megalithic tomb (a Passage Grave) at Carrowkeel, Co. Sligo. He does, however, mistakenly (such was the general belief when the book was originally published) suggest that the Passage Graves at Carrowkeel, on the Loughcrew Hills and in the Boyne Valley, date from the Bronze Age, rather than from the Neolithic period. The huge cairn on the summit of Knocknarea, near Sligo, is suggested as being a cenotaph to Queen Maeve of Connacht who reigned in the first century after Christ. It is now believed that the cairn covers a Passage Grave (there are also some satellite Passage Graves around it) and, furthermore, that Maeve (Medb) was not a real person but a goddess—the goddess of intoxication! Kitchen-middens, ringforts, cashels, and several other types of field monuments are discussed in detail in this book. There is even a description of the Clonfaneagh Stone, but this bit requires rather drastic revision in the light of Dr. J. S. Jackson’s scientific examination which he discussed in the Society’s book, North Munster Studies.

Parts of this fine book may require revision and updating; it is true, but nonetheless The Way That I Went, for far too long unobtainable, well warranted reprinting at a low cost. It is provided with references (supplied and brought up-to-date by Christopher Moriarty), an index, a foiling map, and is copiously illustrated—a welcome sight back on our bookshelves.

EDWARD FOX


This book is essentially the publication of some 67 aerial photographs of Irish archaeological monuments. The photographs, taken over a number of years, represent some of the results of the Cambridge Committee for Aerial Photography’s annual programmes undertaken in Ireland. The text is the result of collaboration between Dr. J. K. St. Joseph (Director of the Cambridge Air Reconnaissance Unit), who took all the photographs, and Dr. E. R. Norman (Lecturer in History, University of Cambridge), an authority on the 19th century Irish Church.
The value of aerial photography in revealing hitherto undetected features of monuments, and discovering entirely new sites, has long been recognised. The plates in this book demonstrate the
usefulness of the ‘bird’s-eye view’ very well. For a better understanding of the photographs, a lucid account of the technique of aerial photography is provided in the ‘Introduction.’

The remainder of the text does not, however, live up to either the excellence of the photographs or the rather ambitious title of the book. However well presented, the evidence of aerial photography is an insufficient basis for a wide-ranging account of the archaeology of Ireland from prehistoric to early historic times. That this should have been attempted by a non-archaeologist is, to say the least, puzzling.

The second chapter (entitled ‘Before the Celts’) deals with the prehistory of Ireland, a field of research dangerous enough, even for the expert! This might have been an extremely important chapter in that it is the first extended statement attempted on the topic for some years, and it is possible that it may be taken as gospel by many. There are many errors of fact and interpretation in this chapter. One could instance the misunderstanding of how to express dates B.C. (p. 18), a commonplace of prehistory. The account of the Irish Neolithic (pp. 19-21) is naive, e.g. it is stated that the well-known axe-factory of Tievebulliagh (Co. Antrim) is Late Neolithic in date (p. 17), but on the following page it is remarked that the megalithic tombs begin to be built in this country only when the factory is at the height of its production! We find it further stated that the tools traded from Tievebulliagh were of “Sint”—one of the porcellanite products of Tievebulliagh manufacture was, incidentally, found during the excavations at Lough Gur, Co. Limerick. One could, furthermore, point to considerable uncertainty in the author’s understanding of the dating and context of megalithic tombs in Ireland (pp. 18-19).

With regard to the Bronze Age, one learns with surprise of Beaker cist-burials in Ireland (p. 31), although it is a well-known fact that such burials have not been identified in this country to date. A confused account of cist-burials in general is to be found on the same page. Referring to the burial customs of the Later Bronze Age (about which we know nothing since none has yet been identified, the author implies that the rite common in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages continued in practice (p. 34). This statement ignores the important redating of Chieftain Urns by Butler and Smith published in 1958.

In dealing with the later period one could criticise the emphasis placed on the comparison between field-patterns near Lady’s Island, Co. Wexford, and at Askov, Danmark (pp. 38-39) and figs. 38-39). The reference to “King Hy Mains” (sic), on page 100, will raise a smile amongst Irish readers.

One might make many more criticisms, but this would tend to obscure the very real value of the book, which depends on the superb aerial photographs. Many of these provide evidence for new sites (e.g. the palisaded (?) enclosures figured on page 10), and from others a wealth of new evidence in support of current hypotheses is obtained, as for example the occurrence of large enclosures around early monasteries (cf. figs. 59 and 61, showing Canon’s Island, Co. Clare, and Ardpattick, Co. Limerick, respectively.) Some other illustrations of special interest to readers of this journal include figs. 4 (field-systems near Killfenora), 30 (Cahermany stone fort, Co. Clare), 46 (Caher-ballykinvarra, Co. Clare), and 53 (Kilcooly Abbey, Co. Tipperary).

The book is well produced and an index is provided.

Michael Fitzg. Ryan


At first sight it might seem strange to read a review in a local Irish archaeological journal of a book on Danish prehistory. Yet were any justification needed for the review of this excellent book in such a context, it might lie in the fact that the bogs of both Ireland and Denmark have yielded some of their most prized archaeological treasures. Furthermore, both are small, largely agricultural countries, rich in the remains—structures and artifacts—of their distant pasts.

Professor Glob’s book is concerned primarily with the finds of well-preserved bodies uncovered in the bogs of his own country. Of these, Tollund Man and Grauballe Man perhaps are the best known, as they were found, studied, and have received much publicity in Denmark and elsewhere since the discovery of the former in 1950. The book, in fact, begins and ends with Tollund Man. In between, there is offered in a skillfully concise manner a considerable amount of detail of the finding, examination and interpretation of the more recent discoveries of bog-bodies. This is accompanied by a simple exposition of the significance of some of the scientific techniques used in
the examination, dating and preservation of the finds. Following this there is a summary of what is known of earlier finds in Denmark and beyond. The earliest recorded find dates from 1649, but the first adequate documentation is that of a female body found in 1781 in a peat-bog on Drumkeragh Mountain, Co. Down (Archaeologia, 7 (1786), 90-110). The latter part of the book relates the bog-bodies to their cultural background, both secular and spiritual.

The majority of the finds date from the Iron Age, that is from the four centuries or so on each side of the birth of Christ. To Irish readers, familiar perhaps with some of the many bodies found in Ireland (nineteen are referred to by Professor Glob), the preservative properties of peat-bogs will not be surprising. But the bodies of Denmark and neighbouring areas of northern Europe are unique in that they appear to represent the ritual deposition in bogs of executed men and women, some undoubtedly sacrificial. The method of execution varied: strangulation, hanging, decapitation, drowning and throat-cutting. Professor Glob does not minimise the gruesomeness of this aspect of his study, but he does not treat it sensationaly. Rather, does he maintain a scientific objectivity in discussing not only the circumstances of death, but also the overall data offered in terms of physical anthropology, diet and disease, in addition to wider considerations of economic, social and ritual import.

He goes further, not only in relating these finds to those of the Danish Iron Age generally, but also in drawing on the wider evidence of classical writers, particularly Tacitus, and ancient history generally. He looks briefly at cult-practices in the prehistory of Scandinavia, and so allows the evidence relevant to the Iron Age to be seen in perspective. One aspect of his study may interest Irish readers in particular, that relating to Celtic cult-practices. In this, his references to the Celtic ritual vessel found at Gundestrup in Denmark are of special significance. In both Celtic and Teutonic myth and ritual there appear to be similarities, the result perhaps of a common Indo-European ancestry. But there can be little doubt, on the evidence both of mythology and archaeology, that two thousand years ago the Celt and the Teuton already had produced cultures distinctive of themselves.

This book clearly was not written for the specialist, although he will find much of value, not least in the very detailed bibliography and competent index. As the introduction reveals, the book in part was prompted by the desire to answer the author’s many correspondents—particularly the non-professional archaeologists—who had asked him for further information as to his own part in the more recent work on the bog people. In particular, these included some schoolgirls from the Convent of the Assumption at Bury St. Edmunds, England, who, together with his daughter, Elsebeth, are characteristically honoured in the dedication. This unashamedly is a popular book, and that comment is not intended in any derogatory sense. There are few who could bring alive the Danish Iron Age to the general reader, for this book really is a primer of that subject. In addition, any reader would receive also the bonus of much incidental information and deliberation on wider generalities of European prehistory.

An important feature of the book lies in its seventy-six excellent photographs—like parts of the text, perhaps—gruesome, but nonetheless essential. Not only are the major finds relevant to the core of the book reproduced, but there are also many splendid photographs of artifacts ranging in date from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages. It is rare for a reviewer in an archaeological journal to refer to the style of writing of the book reviewed, but to the present reviewer, at least, it was a delight to savour the charm and descriptive powers of the word-pictures which related the circumstances of discovery of many of the more recent finds, and of the Danish countryside in which they rested. In sum, this is one of the best of all recently published archaeological books of haute vulgarisation. For readers of the English language edition, not a little credit must go to the skill and sensivity of the translator, Mr. Rupert Bruce-Mitford.

JOHN X. W. P. CORCORAN


This volume of "Essays in Honour of Iorwerth C. Peate" was presented to him on the occasion of his retirement from the office of first President of the Society for Folk Life Studies. A worthy tribute it is to one who has dedicated himself so whole-heartedly to the study of his people of Wales. Each essay hinges on his work, ranging over his wide interests from prehistory to modern times, each with a general application for anyone interested in people.

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There are twenty essays assembled together. As so often happens, the writer is at his best within a limited space and gives a précis of a specialist study; as well, in this instance his sights are set on the Peate eminence. Perhaps the topics of greatest interest to Irish readers are those discussed by the Irish contributors. George Thompson, Director of the Ulster Folk Museum, pays due homage to Dr. Peate, the founder-spirit of the Welsh National Folk Museum at St. Fagan's, near Cardiff. These two are still the only national folk museums in these islands. The Folk Park in Bunratty, in Thomond, has the honour of being the pioneer in southern Ireland. The story of the Ulster Folk Museum, from the birth of the idea in 1938 to the opening at Cultra to the public eight years later, illustrates the vigour of the inspiration and the determination to achieve results which cut across the lip service of the half-hearted.

Cadhlaín Ó Dánaigh is a contributor an important article on "Representations of Houses on some Irish Minoi of c. 1600," together with illustrations from the maps. Any information that can be gleaned on ringfort or rath houses is valuable, and when based on coloured drawings by a professional draughtsman it is invaluable, especially in Ireland where this is such a rarity. With his archaeological, historical and military training, the author is well equipped to interpret those precious maps. Another article of more than usual interest is that by E. Estyn Evans on "Sod and Tuff Houses in Ireland." His term as Professor of Archaeology at The Queen's University of Belfast gave this Welsh scholar an opportunity to do much for Irish folk studies. One wonders how much evidence of housing is lost or overlooked because of its very perishable nature. The use of sods as a building material as far back as the Neolithic and Early Bronze Ages was noted at the Dromnah burial mound and dramatically demonstrated at the megalithic tombs at Fourknocks, Newgrange and Knowth, "waste" of good, scarce, agricultural land notwithstanding.

Anything relative to the history of turf-working in Europe finds an echo in Ireland, and there are several essays on this topic, as may be appropriate in a 'Peate' festschrift. The tools of the trade are well illustrated, described and commented on for the Fenland, by Eunis Porter. It is interesting to compare the 'Historical Aspects of Peat-cutting in Wales' with our own. Some of the contributions deal with facets of the history of agriculture. One such by A. T. Lucas, Director of our National Museum, on "Sea Sand and Shells as Manure," is a documentary in tabloid style. Another is about sheep in Orkney, with a corpus of sheep-marks and their meanings, a model that might well be copied in any sheep-farming community.

Straw-rope twisting is quite familiar to us here, but less familiar is the 'rope-wood,' a gadget which makes the tying of loads so effective. This small item of equipment is evocative of generations of do-it-yourself countrymen and enshrines something of folk art as well. In a similar way, for the distaff side, the history of spinning and the invention of the 'Great Wheel' is told for the Scandinavian countries by Maria Hoffman, engagingly. The history of "The Welsh Plough Team to 1600" extracted from the ancient Welsh Laws is as fascinating as would be a similar account plucked from the Brehon Laws of Ireland. Ploughmanship was appreciated in agricultural communities, and the first essential stipulated for the aspiring apprentice is that 'he know how to make the plough from the first nail to the last." Archaeological remains such as wooden ox-yokes bear out the literary evidence: oxen rather than horses were used for ploughing here as elsewhere. The ox seems temperamentally more suited to it and responded to the singing and the whistling of the drivers just as milch cows responded to the milking girls chanting. The beneficial effect of music in the byre is recognised even in this age of mechanised Philistines.

In Ireland, the Ultima Thule of megalithic tombs and monumental pigsties, James Walton's farflung and comprehensive chapter on "Megalithic Building Survivals" is music to our ears. Perhaps this tends to confirm the B.B.C. theory (mentioned on pp. 107-8) that megalithic tombs and primitive music are coincident in their distribution—a little nonsense now and then is relished even by archaeologists.

Many other features of peasant communities are dealt with in this volume too, and include studies of the language and of supernatural elements in place-names. Irish readers will be pleased that the G.O.M. of our Folklore Commission has here introduced Seán Ó Conaill to a wider audience than he could reach through his own language.

One might wish that an easier method of reference to the plates had been devised and that a less off-putting dust-jacket had been used, but this latter defect is easily remedied. The editor has assembled a fine lot of scholarly essays: the pleasure afforded Dr. Peate is readily shared with others of lesser calibre.

ELLEN PRENDERGAST

Of all the local histories written about parts of Co. Clare within recent years, this one is easily the most comprehensive. Kilmurry-Jibrickane borders the sea in West Clare; within its confines are the resorts of Spanish Point and Seaboard, the villages of Kilmurry, Quilty and Mullagh, as well as four islands of which Mutton Island (*Inisgoradh*) is the largest.

Archdeacon Ryan traces the formation of the parish from the earliest records available and, for the pre-Reformation period, from *The Calendar of Papal Records* (from 1150 on). He notes the first mention of an ecclesiastical connection with Kilmurry parish, namely Cornelius O'Dea, who, in 1394, before his ordination to the priesthood, was appointed to the parish. Cornelius O'Dea, from Dysert O'Dea, was later a well-known Bishop of Limerick.

But this is not merely a parochial record. The author outlines the main topographical features of the district, the type of husbandry practised, and the gradual improvement and extension of farm-holdings in recent years. He treats of the social and economic difficulties of the people in previous centuries, due to the harshness and insecurity of tenant life which was relieved only by such homely pastimes as story-telling, music-making and dancing. The terrible effects of the Great Famine in the parish are vividly described in the evidence given by the Revd. Thomas Moloney before a "Select Committee of the House of Commons" in June 1850.

The Atlantic Ocean plays no small part in the more momentous events in the story of the parish. The first major event recorded, for instance, is an entry in the *Annals of the Four Masters* referring to a land subsidence in the vicinity of Mutton Island in the year 894, which was followed by a tidal wave resulting in the loss of over 1,000 lives. The destruction of an Armada galleon on a reef off Tromore in September 1588 and the fate of her unfortunate crew is widely known. Two cannon, which the author suggests are of Spanish origin, are still to be seen in a pool near Mutton Island; however, according to Thomas J. Westropp, they "really belong to a ship wrecked within the present century" ([*JRSAI*, 29 (1889), 131].

During October 1907, another notable but less tragic event occurred. The 'Leon XIII,' a French sailing vessel, was driven on to a reef off Quilty during a violent storm. The sild and daring of the local fishermen, who in their canvas canoes (currahs) rescued the crew of twenty-two from certain death, made world headlines. In commemoration of their valour two public funds were opened, one for their material needs and the other for the building of a new church at Quilty. The church was dedicated with due honour and pomp in 1911, by the late Bishop Fogarty. A stone tablet over the west porch records the names of those who took part in the rescue.

Excellent and interesting though this little book is, it can be criticised on some points, notably on its production. Nowhere, for instance, are we informed of its publishers, although at the bottom of the fourth-last page we are told who printed it, and only thanks to the date appended to Bishop Hart's *Foreword* do we know when it was published. There is no title page or list of contents either, and it might be suggested that if ever it is being reprinted the three blank pages at the end be transferred to the beginning and used for those purposes... there is little excuse for spoiling the ship for the proverbial ha'porth of tar. But such criticisms cannot detract from the material within the covers of this book which will long be a valuable source of local history and an asset towards the completion of the *History of the Diocese of Killaloe* started by the late Dermot Gleeson some years ago.

GERALD O'CONNELL


You need a half-inch map to locate Kiskeam, a back-of-beyond little village in North-West Cork, not far from the Kerry-Cork border, in what was formally known as the Slieve Loughra district. You will not find it in the history books either; nothing of national importance ever happened there. Thus, to attempt a history of such a place one needs courage and enthusiasm, as its past is usually most difficult to unearth. Like the poor, such villages have short but simple annals—or none at all.

And so, much of the ninety-two quarto duplicate pages of Father O'Riordan's story of his native Kiskeam relies, of necessity, on folklore and tradition because of the paucity of written material. But it is all the more interesting for that very reason. History can be dull; stories based on folklife
and folklore seldom are. He is the perfect Seanchaí, telling his story with relish and with laughter, with a song or a good yarn, as the occasion demands. And when one learns that the compilation, editing, typing and duplicating of the entire work were done by himself, one envies this busy priest his energy and marvels at his enthusiasm.

He devotes the first twenty pages or so to a factual history of Duhallow, Ballydesmond, Pobal O'Keeffe, Kiskeam, and that way back, material for which can be found in most good histories. Then follows the local anecdote, the poems, the ballads and the verse (and there are more than 30 poems, good, bad and indifferent, in the volume). We are introduced to the local characters with their curious and colourful nicknames. Gradually we find that we are in the delightful and different world of Kiskeam folk-life. We are in the land of Aodghán O'Rahilly, of Eoghan Roe O'Sullivan, of Edward Walsh the poet and of an tÁthair Pádraig Úa Duínnín (author of the well-known Dictionary). We are back again in this quiet corner of Slieve Loughra, back again in a district still unaffected by tourism, television, or the 'pops.'

I can claim an intimate knowledge of two country parishes, but the wealth of tradition and all else unearthed by Father O'Riordan is in striking contrast to the absence of such traditions in the parishes I know. One can, I think, claim that Kiskeam and its surroundings exhibit a Gaelic ethos which is often, it appears to me, missing even from parts of the Gaeltacht.

It would be ungracious of me to cavil at the numerous mistypings. One criticism I would like to make: a simple map giving the location of the various place-names one comes across in the text would have been most helpful to all of us 'foreigners' who read this story. When the second edition appears, and I feel confident that it will, perhaps Father O'Riordan will remedy this defect?

Nowadays, everyone has the notion at the back of his head of retiring to some place away from it all when one's usefulness is spent. It is a measure of Father O'Riordan's enthusiasm for his native place that when my time comes I would not wish for a happier retirement than to

"Where Walsh the poet at midnight danced Down by the Araglen stream."

Copies of this book can be had from the author, Mount St. Alphonsus, Limerick, (postage 2/- extra).

P. B. LYSAGHT


In this volume Professor Connell presents new versions of his essays on "Illicit Distillation" in Ireland and on "Ether-drinking in Ulster," first published some years ago, and also two new studies of Irish peasant life: "Illegitimacy before the Famine" and "Catholicism and Marriage in the Century after the Famine."

In his first two essays the author has combed parliamentary papers, travellers' accounts and the occasional newspaper for every shred of evidence on illicit distillation and illegitimacy. His conclusions about the importance of illicit distillation in the mid-nineteenth century and its decline in the present century are arrived at after a vast amount of evidence has been carefully examined. The extraordinary low incidence of illegitimacy in pre-Famine Ireland might tend to invalidate a study of this aspect of society, but this account of attitudes towards the problem and the description of its geographical and social incidence make this a fascinating study, despite the negative conclusions. North Munster readers will enjoy reading both these essays with their numerous references to this region.

In the third essay the author describes the curious phenomenon of the rise in popularity in the 1870s and 1880s of ether-drinking in Ulster. This is, however, the least important essay of the collection and one feels that it might have been more suited to publication in a local journal.

The final essay is perhaps the most important in the book. In it the relationships between Catholicism and peasant marriage since the Famine are examined. Here Professor Connell breaks new ground as he did previously with his work on population. Religion in Irish history has tended to be examined as an aspect of politics and few have examined the sociology of religion in an Irish context. The author attempts to explain the relationship between marriage patterns in Ireland and the effects of the Catholic religion. Many have disagreed violently with his conclusions and his methods and, indeed, his use of the novel as a source is open to debate. But this essay should be seen as a presentation of a new aspect of history in Ireland, which, if it attracts as much attention from the historians as his earlier work on population, will do a major service to Irish history.
While historians may quarrel with the techniques used in this essay and while others may dislike its conclusions, yet the general reader will find it a most interesting interpretation of the evolution of one important aspect of modern Irish society. Here, Professor Connell has opened a debate which is likely to continue.

TIMOTHY P. O'NEILL


Up to the time of the publication of this fine work, very little was really known and readily available concerning the period of Irish history from the accession of James II to the English throne in 1686 to the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. Thanks to the painstaking work of Dr. Simms, it is now possible to get a clear understanding of the Irish situation during those vital years, when defeat meant Penal Laws and victory could well have meant French domination. The book concerns itself mainly with the fight in Ireland between Catholics and Protestants and, on a wider scale, with the expansion of France under Louis XIV. One can be easily misled if one does not understand why there were French, English, Dutch, Danish and German troops fighting in Ireland then. It was the first time in centuries that Ireland had become involved in a European struggle for the convenience of her more greedy neighbours.

It is interesting to note that James was not over-anxious about Catholics and their treatment in Ireland, and the author rightly stresses the fact that he was an English monarch and, as such, was concerned primarily with English interests. During his stay in Ireland James never really gave up the idea of crossing the Irish Sea. The Battle of the Boyne put an end to James’ immediate ambitions, even though it was little more than an encounter. Yet, when the news of the battle reached Dublin the Protestants felt that they would soon gain complete domination, while the Catholics began to develop the feeling that all was lost.

The conflicting ideas of the French and Irish boil over into jealousy rather frequently, leading to a great lack of co-ordinated action. Indeed, the same might be said of the Williamites, but their jealousy was controlled by their king whom they were all ready to follow and obey. Dr. Simms also makes it clear that both kings were more liberal than were their generals who little appreciated the attitude of the Irish. Ireland was but a pawn in a larger European game, and whatever the result the Irish were sure to be the losers.

The Battle of the Boyne was the dividing line in Jacobite Ireland and, indeed, led to a change in attitude on the part of the Irish who had up to then looked to James and the French to help set up a Catholic Ireland. James’ flight from the Boyne changed all this and the continuing fight was soon turned into a battle for survival—while the French were preparing to sail from Galway. If only the Irish had rallied under Sarsfield, whose bravery was noted by both sides, the defence of Limerick might have been different. The Ballynacerry ambush was a decisive blow, yet it only delayed the assault on Limerick by a few days. The desperation in the City is well portrayed, with the women defending the breach in the wall with stones and bottles, and finally driving the enemy back. French indifference to the eventual outcome is once again evidenced in the efforts of the French generals to bring the best Irish regiments with them to France, even before the fall of Limerick.

This book will clear up a point that arises in many minds, especially in those of militant sectarians, as to the relative significance of the Battles of the Boyne and Aughrim. The Boyne, the most celebrated of all, was but a skirmish whereas Aughrim was the decisive battle which sealed the fate of Ireland and inflicted on the Catholics the Penal Code.

Dr. Simms makes reference to most of his previous studies of the period but seems to have somehow overlooked his important paper on the first of the two sieges of Limerick, that of 1690, which was published by this Society in North Munster Studies. One might also comment on the use of Derry throughout the text but of Londonderry on the map of the siege shown on page 102 (but not in its caption)—Derry became Londonderry after the Plantation of Ulster so the form is technically correct, but the lack of consistency here shows that we ought not blame the author of the text for the howler on the map on page 164, where the castle at Limerick is named “St. John’s Castle.”

This book, Jacobite Ireland, is a study of one of the most amazing periods of Irish history, when the people little knew for what they were fighting. They knew what they wanted to fight for, but had to take the side of one foreign king or another to be in the game with a chance. While the fate
of Ireland was at stake, it was not, however, the major issue in the minds of the protagonists. With this work, Dr. Simms has filled yet another gap in the history of our land. He has provided us with a masterpiece which will be read by many, both serious students of the period and others.

THOMAS FAHY


"If I have prevented any abler person, I beg pardon of him, and my reader"—such is the humility expressed by the author, but as one reads his book how untrue that statement becomes! Already in a previous publication, A Short History of Ireland, Professor Beckett had given us a glimpse of his genius in historical narration, although inevitably such a general study had suffered somewhat from selection and compression.

More than ever today the background and importance of our modern State is relevant. Professor Beckett begins his story in 1603. One may perhaps justifiably ask why here, and not the coming of the Anglo-Normans or the Act of Union. But 1603 ushered in a period of unwonted peace, when Ireland was unified for the first time under a central administration. A new character in political and economic life was beginning to emerge. The opening decades of the seventeenth century were important for the future emergence of the Protestant Ascendancy from which the Ireland of today has largely arisen. Yet the earlier background is sketched in for us where relevant. The basic aim of Tudor policy in Ireland was the safety of England rather than the subjugation of Ireland, as it became under the later Stuarts. Yet their policy went far in determining the character of the new Ireland which was beginning to evolve early in the seventeenth century.

Treading vividly of the "glorious, pious, immortal memory of William III," Beckett's attitude towards the Battle of the Boyne as being "the decisive battle of modern Ireland" could be questioned. Had not the Battle of Aughrim more lasting effects?

William's wars at any rate led to the Protestant Ascendancy of the eighteenth century. Professor Beckett gives us a clear picture of events in this latter century, ranging from the social aspects to more legal questions such as the Undertakers or Grattan's Parliament. Dealing with the men of '98 his reference to "a crusade against the protestants" in Wexford is surely debatable. The rising in Wexford does not appear to have been solely a religious one—were not the bishops themselves against it?

Professor Beckett does not treat the Act of Union as a major dividing line but, rather, as an Act which led to a political life which seems almost drab and, to outward appearances, almost meaningless. But he fills the gap in political activity by discussion of the contemporaneous economic conditions and agrarian difficulties in Ireland, including the formation of illegal organisations such as the Whiteboys and others. 1829 is viewed as a more important turning point in the history of modern Ireland, the triumph of O'Connell in obtaining Catholic Emancipation being of greater significance than the removal of the Irish Members of Parliament to London.

The Great Famine of 1845-47 is another milestone in our history, political, social and economic changes occurring in rapid succession. Beckett bewails the fact that The Famine should have become a political question entangled in parliamentary conflicts of the second half of the nineteenth century. The succeeding sense of hopelessness was soon overcome by constitutional means under Gladstone, Butt, Parnell, Dillon and Redmond, but despite this there arose a new nationalistic spirit among the people, the growth of which is adequately treated in this book.

The importance of politics and religion in our history cannot be minimised. When we add to those the Land Question and the almost continual agrarian fight we have a union of passionate forces. Throughout this book Professor Beckett vindicates no theory, defends no particular policy, but is concerned, as he himself states elsewhere, "to disentangle a confused stream of events and to make the present situation intelligible by showing how it arose." But who can remain entirely immune to such passions as mentioned above? Post-1916 events, the Treaty and the formation of the Irish Free State, are presented in perhaps a more pro-British light than has hitherto been the case among Irish historians. Nevertheless, the Treaty being "a solution adopted rather than created," Ireland was quiet only from exhaustion, ready to erupt again. It appears that the legacy of bitterness left by this settlement "inaugurated for Ireland a longer period of general tranquility than she had known since the first half of the eighteenth century." Such is the author's closing sentence—the events erupting in the North at present might well demand the rewriting of this comment!
This history book can, nevertheless, be confidently recommended to all interested in the Irish political, social and economic scene. It is, furthermore, a basic text-book, indispensable to the serious student who will not only appreciate the text but also the very detailed bibliography which is classified under various aspects and also treated in chronological order, while for the student of local history there is a select list of such works. To quote another reviewer of this book elsewhere: "As an example of a humane, scholarly, expert history, Professor Beckett's book will be difficult to surpass."

ANN GANNON


This book, by a well-known commentator on affairs in the north-eastern corner of Ireland, draws attention to the tensions which have existed in that area for generations. Riots are no new phenomenon, and the Scarman tribunal has had predecessors. This book brings together a synopsis of the reports of many of them. It is a tragic story which brings one to question, in particular, the role of the Orange Order. Organised sectarian politics smack of atrophied seventeenth century thought. Yet it has survived into the present era. This is history still unchanging—a history which inspires more anger than thought.

TOMÁS P. Ó NÉILL


The author of this book, Dr. MacLysaght, is well known to all members of our Society—one of its first members himself, he has, furthermore, frequently contributed to the pages of its journal. It is fitting, therefore, that we should give a rousing welcome to his latest book, one which will probably exceed all the many other fine books which he has written in its popularity and general usefulness. For this book combines the learnedness of the born scholar with the unpretentious and readable prose of the born writer. Nor is it a case of haute vulgarisation—Dr. MacLysaght is too much of a 'natural' to be a vulgarisateur, however haut!

"Ireland was one of the earliest countries to evolve a system of hereditary surnames," we are informed in the opening line of the 'Introduction' to this book, some surnames having appeared even before the year A.D. 1000. Unfortunately for us in North Munster, the second sentence of the 'Introduction' jettisons the popular belief that the idea was introduced by our greatest hero, Brian Boru. The start was the obvious one: Mac was prefixed to the father's Christian name or O to that of a grandfather or older ancestor, thus conceiving a recognisable and meaningful surname. Later on other prefixes, such as Mac Giolla (e.g. Mac Giolla Issaiche), were used, and variations on the prefixes and prefixed word gave rise to the main types of Irish surname. The whole range of problems associated with Irish surnames is admirably discussed in this six-page 'Introduction', so skillfully indeed, that the dullest of readers will easily be able to follow it all, even to the extent of understanding why, in Ireland, Abraham is not of Jewish origin but a much-altered Anglicisation of Mac an Bhrítheachan—believe it or not!

Information concerning some four thousand Irish surnames is to be found in this book. There are, no doubt, many more names which might have been included, but those that are omitted cannot be too important. It is undoubtedly a major work of its kind, and nowhere else will the searcher for Irish surnames find so many dealt with, not even in all of Dr. MacLysaght's previous books on the subject. A glance at the enlarged and revised edition of his Guide to Irish Surnames published in 1965 will immediately show the difference in quantity, though only a closer examination will reveal the difference in quality. Much of the information included in the 1965 publication has been rechecked and the corrections modestly incorporated silently into this new publication, as for instance when the Blaney's are described as coming four hundred years ago from England in the former and from Wales in the latter. The new information concerning the reviewer's surname is welcome too, though the Clare Rynns had never for a moment believed that they had any connection whatsoever with the Rings of Cork, as had been suggested in Dr. MacLysaght's earlier publications. Indeed, the presence of the name Rynn in south Leitrim had long been known to them, a fact which strongly supports Dr. MacLysaght's new theory as to the derivation of the name from the Connacht Mac Browin.
The main part of this book consists of the notes regarding the surnames. These names are given in their most common Anglicised form and are listed alphabetically, irrespective of all prefixes such as O, Mac or De. The original Irish form is also given, as are the numerous variants, together with such relevant information as is available. The book also includes an Appendix listing the commonest English and Scottish surnames found in Ireland, an Appendix dealing with some modern simplifications of Irish surnames, and also as exhaustive a bibliography of Irish family history as can be obtained anywhere. There is also a folding map (in a pocket inside the back cover) showing the areas in which the more common surnames are found. Prepared in 1962, this map is not as up-to-date as is the book itself but is nonetheless useful in providing a quick guide—names of Irish origin are printed in black and those of Anglo-Norman origin in red.

This book will be used again and again as a reference book by all who wish to trace the origin, lineage or locality of Irish surnames, and will seldom be found wanting. Of immense interest to us all, it is a book which should be in every household and, without question, in every library. Thank you, Dr. MacLysaght!

ETIENNE RYNNE


Once again it is our pleasure to welcome the emergence of a new publication, this time one which appears twice yearly and which, in addition, may or may not carry a supplement with it, a free bonus to all subscribers. The aim of the journal is to "publish original source material and items of interest concerning Irish genealogy, biography and domestic history." Although there are several other well-established journals which publish such material, there is none which combines all such aspects while confining itself to matters of Irish family history, e.g. our own journal which has often published such material, but generally with a North Munster bias and alongside other papers dealing with other interests. Yet other journals concentrate on genealogies alone, but not so much on the related material such as "Household Stuff," a most interesting paper in this new publication contributed by the editor, Rosemary ffolliott. This new journal seems, therefore, to fill a need, and it will be found useful and interesting to all who are especially concerned with Irish family matters of the more recent past.

North Munster interests are generously catered for. The very first article is one on "Finucane of Co. Clare," but it is of a somewhat more genealogical approach than will appeal to the general reader—it contains too many abbreviations to make for easy reading, including the unsightly "2ndly." The paper on "Household Stuff," already mentioned, is largely based on wills and inventories from eighteenth century Tipperary and Clare, while the history of "The Family of Odell or O'Dell," by Brian de Brefny, deals with the English family which arrived in Ireland during the early seventeenth century, branches of which settled in Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Waterford and Laois, the most important branches being those at Ballingarry and nearby Odellville, Co. Limerick.

Other articles which should be of general interest to members of this Society include "The Value of Tombstone Inscriptions," "Christian Names in Ireland," "The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland," and one dealing with the exciting abduction of Miss Mary Pike, of Cork, by Sir Henry Browne Hayes in 1797. Another article, on "The Journal (1792-1808) of the Rev. Adam Averell," a Church of Ireland clergyman who converted to the teachings of John Wesley whom he had met in Dublin, makes interesting reading—though in some ways somewhat disturbing, particularly insofar as the unnamed "Irish Historical Society" which owns the manuscript seems to transact its business in matters historical (in her search for the journal, the author was induced to make a journey from America to Dublin, to purchase a portrait of Adam Averell, and to make "a contribution" a year and a half later when the journal was found and before she even managed to set eyes on it!).

All those who wish to subscribe to this interesting new publication are advised to send their subscriptions to the editor, Miss Rosemary ffolliott, Pitron House, Sydenham Villas, Dundrum, Dublin 14.

ETIENNE RYNNE

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In this article Sir Henry Blackall, a member of our Society of long standing, records the genealogy and history of the Burnells, an English family which settled in Ireland early in the fourteenth century, if not earlier. They were highly regarded amongst the gentry of The Pale, but were ordered “To Hell or Connacht” in 1655 and thus forfeited their lands at Castleknock, Co. Dublin, and moved to Ranaghan, Co. Clare. The history of the family in their new quarters was not without trouble, the final straw coming in June 1763 when an “undutiful son” became a Protestant and took proceedings against his father in order that the whole family estate should fall to him; this no-good son was defeated away his credit and eventually had to let the lands of the Burnells pass to his cousin Laurence Comyn.

The history recorded in this article is written in the manner in which genealogists seem to delight, i.e., briefly and to the point, with not a word wasted and a great many abbreviated—a syncopated style which might almost be regarded as a secret language, mainly jargon. Although this will render the article less attractive to the general reader, it does mean that an objective account is presented, one which provides veritable source material for historians and others—for which reason Sir Henry has wisely presented copies of the article to public libraries in Clare, Limerick and elsewhere.

ETIENNE RYNNE


The Franciscan fathers in Ireland have a long tradition of Irish learning, going back to the great work of Brother Michéal Ó Cléirigh and his companions in the seventeenth century. There were others too, like Hugh Ward, Patrick Fleming and John Colgan, who were to be the principal inspirers of a Franciscan school of Irish studies at Louvain in that period. Their publications, such as Colgan’s Acts Sanctorum, are monuments to their industry and learning. The library at Killiney is perhaps an even greater memorial. In it are gathered many of the manuscripts brought together in Louvain by the Franciscans. There they had remained until dispersed by the upheaval of the French Revolution, when St. Anthony’s College, Louvain, was confiscated by the French government. At that time some of the manuscripts were taken to St. Isidore’s, in Rome, but it, too, suffered from the French revolutionary forces. The manuscripts ultimately were taken to Ireland in 1872, and lodged in Merchant’s Quay, Dublin, until the Franciscan House of Studies at Dún Mhuire, Killiney, was set up in 1946.

It is fitting that the late Father Canice Mooney, O.F.M., should have contributed to this catalogue. He was certainly an heir to the noble heritage of Michéal Ó Cléirigh. His colleagues in this present work, Professor Dillon and Pádraig de Brún, have co-operated to make this one of the most complete and detailed accounts of the contents of Irish manuscripts published. Undoubtedly the hand of Pádraig de Brún is to be seen in the final presentation of this work. He has drawn on the experience of other cataloguers and has made this one of the most elaborate catalogues yet available; it could hardly be improved upon. The highest tribute which can be paid to it is to say that Father Canice, beannachta Dé leis, would approve of it.

TOMÁS P. Ó NÉILL

AINMNEACHA GAELIGE NA mBAILTE POIST, Oifig an tSóisialtair, Baile Átha Cliath 1969. Luach 5/.

There are many who would say that this book listing the official Irish versions of all the post-offices in Ireland should be reviewed in the Irish language, but that, it would seem to the present reviewer, would perhaps be a little like writing a review of a book on phonetics in phonetic symbols. This book is not for Irish speakers alone, but for everyone—one does not have to know the language to be able to address letters in it (or how many of us would ever write to Japan, Finland or Kuala Lumpur ?).
This book provides us with what has for far too long been a very real need, especially amongst those who are sympathetic to the Irish language without being sufficiently fluent in it to know offhand the proper Irish version of the various towns and villages of Ireland. It is elegantly bound in hard cloth covers, excellently printed, well laid out so that anyone can find the placename required, and is extraordinary value at the phenomenally low price—being a Government publication it is presumably sold free of the abhorrent Turnover Tax to boot!

Who could complain? Far be it from the present reviewer to find fauldi with any of the placenames listed here, but one might be forgiven for commenting on some of them and perhaps even querying others. While it is generally accepted that some of the Irish versions for the counties, towns and villages of Ireland which most of us were taught at school and have come to accept as ‘official’ due to their use by the G.A.A., An Bord Páiste, various County Councils and other official bodies, and even the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, are not one hundred per cent accurate, few will be prepared to find so many new/revised versions as are in this official list. How many will fail to be surprised to learn that the Irish for Co. Offaly is not Co. Úi bhFáilge but is Co. Úilbh, Phaili? Others, while regretting the loss of the vestigial dhe in the Irish for Co. Meath will accept it as not altering unduly the pronunciation of the word, but what will they think of Co. Lá for Co. Louth? And if that county name is to be so abbreviated, then why not Co. Luimní for Co. Lúinnigh? The same might be said for Dún Laoghaire which one might surely write without grammatical error as Dún Laota?

Many of the names of the post-offices themselves bear comment. For instance, why is Leacht Úi Chonchuir (Lahinch, Co. Clare) abbreviated to An Leacht or Anach Umhthumhain (Nenagh, Co. Tipperary) to An Aonach or Gort Inse Ghaire (Gort, Co. Galway) to An Gort or Róth Luain (Charleville, Co. Cork) to An Róth or Sord Cholmchille or Sord Ainead (Swords, Co. Dublin) to Sord? or Nás na Rí (Naas, Co. Kildare) to An Nás or Ceannannus Mór (Kells, Co. Meath) to Ceannannus? One might continue on for quite a while with such questions, but suffice it to wonder—and then to wonder why Cloyne, Co. Cork, should be rendered as Cluin rather than as An Cluin, and why Baile Átha Cliath (Dublin City) is not abbreviated to An Baile or to An Bailey Mór, as it must surely have been usually called by most native speakers?

There are other minor causes of annoyance to be found throughout this book, but they are more the fault of officials than of the compilers of this list. One of these is the insistence with which long accepted ‘English’ placenames are translated into the Irish name of the townland rather than of the town. Examples of this are many, including Lahinch of course. Then there is the neat official packaging which transplants whole towns and villages from county to county with so much as an apology. For a long time Clare people have insisted that Shannon Airport is in that county and, if this reviewer remembers correctly, it was so agreed officially. According to this book, however, the airport’s post-office is still officially in Limerick—but then so is Mountshannon, Scariff, O’Callaghan’s Mills, Feakle, and a host of other towns many miles distant from that city. Other counties can likewise complain about similar losses, but what is the use of railing against the red tape of officiandom? Still, it was worth mentioning here, if only to forewarn readers who might unwittingly and unthinkingly use this book as a guide to geography through the medium of Irish.

This handy publication provides the official Irish versions of almost three thousand placenames and unless/until changes are made and published these versions should be accepted. Such acceptance might mean a lot of heart-reading on the part of many private individuals, but just think of all the work it will give all the official and semi-official bodies who have spewed up some very odd versions over the years, versions which are yet to be seen on our sign-posts, on our public buildings and—dare one say it?—on our post-offices!

ETIENNE RYNNE