

## Editorial, 1981

Mary Geary (née Duane) has always been one of the most committed, sincere and involved members of the Society, serving for twenty-seven years as an Officer, firstly from 1957 to 1962 on an Editorial Committee, secondly from 1963 to 1979 as a Vice-President, and thirdly, since 1980 as our President. There is no doubt that in unanimously electing Mrs. Geary as President we all looked forward to at least one full three-year term of active, inspiring leadership, and it was with sincere regret and some surprise that we learned after two years that she felt unable to continue as President for 1982. While we may regret it, few can fail to understand: despite devoting herself totally domestically at home, our President found the time and the energy to work unstintedly on our behalf, representing the Society and involving herself in matters of archaeological, historical and conservational interest above and beyond the demands normally made on any Officer of any learned Society. The period was an exceptionally busy one and our President did not shrink from the work it created but gave of her best, and with good results: the Society has increased in numerical strength, in its reputation, and has become locally, and to some extent nationally, a force to be reckoned with insofar as our heritage is concerned. What can we now say except that we are truly sorry that our President is retiring from the post after two such beneficial years in which she accomplished so much, that we know that as a Past-President she will continue to help advance the Society's aims and to assist in their achievement, and for us also to add a sincere and grateful "THANK YOU".

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One of the more exciting events of interest to our Society which happened in 1981 was the creation of the Lough Gur Interpretative Centre, opened on the 2nd of May by Mr. Desmond O'Malley, T.D., the then Minister for Industry, Commerce and Tourism. Lough Gur is not only one of the most attractive corners of County Limerick, but is also one of the more important and better known prehistoric sites in western Europe. While its secluded and relaxing nature may well be somewhat transformed by the new centre, few can seriously object. The Interpretative Centre is basically housed in two conjoined buildings, both modelled on houses excavated during the 1930s and 1940s on Knockadoon, only a few hundred metres distant, the rectangular one modelled on the Late Neolithic House A and the circular one on the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age House C. The new buildings have been constructed and sited with care, consideration and good taste, blending unobtrusively into the hillside, yet they are obvious enough to present a really pleasant feature in the lakeside environment (see Frontispiece). Limerick County Council, Shannonside Tourism and An Bord Fáilte are all to be congratulated on providing a most useful and attractive addition to our area, an addition which is important from educational, recreational, scientific and touristic viewpoints.

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The Society has always been closely associated with the Limerick City Museum, ever since its opening in 1916. In 1974 the collections were removed from the building in Pery Square, and in 1977, with a view to getting them once again on public display, in St. John's Church, a suitably qualified person, Mr. Larry Walsh, was appointed Curator by the Corporation. The church premises not being yet satisfactorily adapted for museum purposes, the basements and ground floors of houses nos. 1 and 2 St. John's Square were allocated for display of the collections. In Civic Week 1979 a small exhibition of the archaeological material was mounted, but the premises were not fully ready for opening to the public as even a temporary museum until March 1980, when a special exhibition of "Limerick Manufacturers, Commerce, Crafts and Trades" was opened for Civic Week. This excellent exhibition got the Limerick Museum (City seems to have been dropped) successfully off the ground, as it were, and ran for some months. Meanwhile the permanent collections were being increasingly exhibited, and in November 1980 another major exhibition, "Treasures of Thomond", was opened by Most Revd. Jeremiah Newman, Bishop of Limerick. The treasures of the exhibition were all of an ecclesiastical nature or association, and included the late eleventh or twelfth century Dy'sert O'Dea (St. Tola's) Crozier, the early fifteenth century O'Dea Mitre and Crozier, and the early seventeenth century Arthur Crucifix and Chalice. An excellent *Souvenir Catalogue* (price 50p) of this exhibition is obtainable in the Museum.

The "Treasures" exhibition brought us into 1981, when yet another exhibition of importance was mounted, this time on "Limerick Silver". It ran for the months of May and June, and not only was it a great success but for it Mr. Walsh, a Committee Member of this Society, produced a really excellent *Catalogue*, though stencilled rather than printed (also on sale at 50p). In it we are provided with introductory material on hallmarks (Limerick and other), on Irish silver in general and Limerick silver in particular, a list of known Limerick silversmiths (including a Donal Macgyllysaghta, 1559—one wonders if our most senior member, Dr. E. A. MacLysaght, is aware of this individual and of his strange spelling of his name), and a descriptive catalogue of the numerous exhibits. He also includes a bibliography of twenty-one works of which eleven are articles from our *Journal* and *North Munster Studies*—not a bad record.

We congratulate the Corporation and its industrious Curator on the excellent work done to date, but appreciate that much has yet to be carried out in the matter of adequate exhibition and storage space, not to mention staff numbers.

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This year's *Journal* contains one unusual article in that it was apparently prepared for publication, but never published, almost a full hundred years ago by the great Thomas Johnson Westropp. Where Westropp would have published it at the time is debatable, but we can hardly doubt that were our Society in existence then, and publishing a journal, he would almost certainly have offered it to us. Westropp, one of the most prestigious and distinguished antiquaries of his time working in these islands, was a North Munster man and we can be full sure that from his heavenly abode he, like us, is eternally (no pun intended) grateful to Professor Leo F. McNamara, of the University of Michigan,



U.S.A., for resurrecting his manuscript and seeing it through the press. We, too, are grateful to our Committee Member Cian O'Carroll for sub-editorial assistance in its final preparation.

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Once again it is with pleasure that we record the Society's grateful thanks to "Shannon-side", the Mid-Western Regional Tourism Organisation, for a generous grant-in-aid towards the publication of this *Journal*. We are also most grateful to University College, Galway, for grants towards the publication of the articles by Thomas Fanning, Breandán Mac Aodha, and Etienne Rynne, members of its staff.

The Hon. Editor, moreover, once again wishes to record his personal thanks to our Hon. Secretary, Fr. John D. Leonard, for his continuous and unfailing assistance of sub-editorial nature.