Obituaries

DR. SARAH O’MALLEY (1901-1981)

The late Dr. Sarah O’Malley was born in Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Her father at the founding of the state was County Engineer, and Sarah—or Judy, as she was known to her friends—embarked on a medical career at a time when very few women entered professions, and rarer still, in the field of medicine she specialised in, ophthalmology.

On her marriage to the late Charles O’Malley, dental surgeon and a former President of this Society (1965), Judy came to live in Limerick, and her residence in her lovely Georgian house in Pery Square gave her a background for all the things she loved.

Judy was a woman who was before her time, a pioneer in some ways, she embraced all the causes that enhanced the role of women. In her work she was consultant ophthalmist to Barrington’s and the Regional hospitals where she served for many years. She was a founder member of the Limerick Soroptimist Club, and her interests included anything cultural and in the many branches of the arts. Her friends included Seán Ó Faoláin, Donogh Mac Donogh, Ria Mooney, John Hunt and his wife, Gertrude, and Lennox and Dolly Robinson. Judy reminiscing was a fund of information on the early Abbey days, and all who came to Limerick were entertained by her. She was known to be an excellent hostess, and she had an elegance in dress that was admired by all her contemporaries.

With her affection for Limerick, the city of her adoption, she had a deep desire to have the statue of Patrick Sarsfield placed in a more prominent position where all entering Limerick could see it, and she went about this with her customary dedication; she was convinced that the women of Limerick should come to Sarsfield’s rescue again, and she collected £1 from each woman she contacted, and got them to do likewise from their friends. Sadly this ambition of hers did not come to pass, the City Fathers did not see eye to eye with her on the scheme, nor did they appear to realise the worth of her suggestion.

Among her proudest achievements was being President (1973-1975) of the Thomond Archaeological Society. She was the first woman to hold the office and was immensely proud of the beautiful chain of office, the replica of the 800 B.C. Glinmisheen neck ornament. She wore it with pride [see frontispiece, this Journal, 16(1973-74)], and fulfilled all the functions with grace and dignity. Her Presidential Address, published in the 1976 number of this Journal, sums up her work and hopes for the Society.

Judy was a supporter of all the theatrical, musical and artistic occasions in Limerick, and there are many who miss her presence: the Thomond Archaeological Society will remember her with affection. May she rest in peace.

KATE O’CALLAGHAN
DONNCHA Ó BRIAÍN (1893-1981)

Coigil aithinne d’aislinge,
Sceardh léi is éag duilt.

Siad na focalí sin as dán le Máirtín Ó Direáin is oiriúnaithe cur síos a dhéanamh ar ghné an-tábhachtach a bhain le Donncha Ó Briain—gur ghaibh sé chuige, agus é an-óg, luachta agus ideil a cheap sé a bheith fiúntach agus gur sheas sé leo go dtí lá a bháis.

An ghluaiseacht ar son na saoirse a lean Éiri Amach Sheachtain na Cásca dob é sin an rud is mó a chuaign i bhfeidhm air. Bhí sé ar scoil ag Ord na tSliainaitheora i Luimneach ag tús na tréimhse sin. Sar i bhfad bhí sé saithe i ngluaiseacht na poblachta, i Sinn Féin agus sna hOglaigh.

Bhi meas an domhain ar an ndúchas aige óna óige; agus nuair a bhi Cogadh na Saoirse thart luigh sé isticheach to dúthcharachtach ar obair Chomradh na Gaeilge. Chaith sé tamall ina mhúinteoir Gaeilge; agus ar fadhb támaill bhí sé ina Ard-Mhaístir ar Choláiste Éoghan Uí Chomhráin i gCarraig an Chabhartaigh, i gCo. an Chláir. Ansin ceapadh é ina Ard-Rúnaithe ar Chomradh na Gaeilge.

Timpeall an ama seo mhór Mary Spring Rice do Éamon de Valera gur chocó droi Donncha a roghnú mar iarraithóir don Dáil, mar gur mhas si go raibh an mianach ceart sa tighréarthaí Gaeilchóg seo ó Chontae Luimnigh. Ghlac de Valera leen comhairle. Togadh Donncha ina Theachta Dála do Fhionná Fáil i 1933, agus ag gach Olltoghcháin eile go dtí gur éirigh sé as an bpolaíocht i 1969. Bhí sé tamall ina rúnaithe parlaiminte.

Bhi an Ghaeilge go liofa binn blasta aige, agus ba í ba mhian leis labhairt i gcónaí. Fear mór leabhar agus léitheoiríreachta ab ea é leis. Saintréithe eile a bhain leis—creideamh láidir, agus grá buan daingean do Dhia is do Muirice. Fear céile caoin cneasta dá bhean Êibhlin ab ea é, agus bhí sí sin de shíor mar thaca aige.

Ba bhall diograiseacht é de Chumann Ársaíochta Thumhumhann, agus théadh sé ar thurasanna an Chumainn aon uair a bheadh sé saor. Bhí an-suim go deo aige sa stáir agus sa seanchas anibiliúil. Togha coideachta ab ea é, agus bhí sé ar fhéabhas ag ríomhadh seacht.

Tri shimpla agus tri ghníomh dhein sé cion fir ar son na hÉireann, agus ar son saol, cultúr agus teanga na hÉireann. Anois tá an laoch ar lár. Nior cuireadh feoil ionlán lena linn fein ar an aislín a spreag. Ni raibh sin indeanta is dócha. Cheap sé ina shean-aois go raibh "a chleacht ag imeacht ó rath"—nach raidhe an t-atáobhbeas Gaeilchog teacht. Ach chuair sé cloch le carn na sean. Mairfidh sé sin mar leacht cuimhneacháin dó i gcroíthe anáin.

PÁDRAIG DE BHÁI.

The Society also tenders its sympathies to the relatives of the following members who died during the year:

DIARMUID agus BEAN Ó RÍORDÁIN, Eas Géibhtine, Co. Luimní.
MISS MARGARET (PEGGY) RYAN, 5 Sunville, North Circular Road, Limerick.

May they rest in peace.

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PROCEEDINGS, 1981

Eleven committee meetings were held during the year and the following have been amongst the matters which have concerned or continue to concern the Committee:

(1) The proposed new road through King’s Island—the Society has been unceasing in its efforts to ensure that this road does not endanger the monuments or sites in its path, in particular the vulnerable north wall of the medieval Dominican Priory and the nearby Sally-Ports in the City Walls. When presenting their objections to the City Development Plan last December [see this Journal, 22(1980), 85-89], the Society’s representatives suggested an alternative route, carrying a narrower road away from the monuments to cross the convent grounds further north.

(2) The future of St. Mary’s Parochial House.

(3) The erection of plaques on buildings of historic interest in Limerick.

(4) The Society made representations to Kilmallock Community Council concerning the town’s remaining 16th century house.

(5) The generally unkempt appearance of the city during the summer—a small group from the Society cleaned up Merchant’s Quay.

(6) The Limerick Image Project—Mrs. Marie Condon attended meetings of the Project as an observer on behalf of the Society.

(7) The continuing delay in bringing the Society’s Journal up to date—the Society sought tenders for the printing of the Journal, and decided that its printing be transferred to Messrs. McKerns, Limerick.

(8) The proposed survey by the Society of Limerick City and County—Baron Brian de Breffny offered the Society £250.00 to cover the expenses of an archaeologist who was to begin surveying the Ballingarry, Co. Limerick, area but, due to illness was unable to start the survey.

(9) The proposed National Heritage Council—the Society made representations concerning the proposed Council to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Gene Fitzgerald, T.D.

On the 4th November the Society organised a reception held in the East Room, Plassey House at the National Institute for Higher Education, and very kindly hosted by the Director, Dr. Edward M. Walsh, at which a specially bound volume of the 1978 number of the North Munster Antiquarian Journal: STUDIA IN MEMORIAM JOHN HUNT, was presented by the President, Mrs. Mary Geary, to Mrs. Gertrude Hunt.

The following is a list of the nine lectures and twelve outings which were held during the year:

LECTURES


4th February: “Limerick Illustrated”. Mr. Cian O’Carroll; Member.

27th February: “You don’t Know me, but I Know your House: The buildings of Ireland Explained”. Professor Alistair Rowan, University College, Dublin.

13th March: “Irish Megalithic Tombs”. Professor M. J. O’Kelly, University College, Cork; Vice-President.
25th March: “Irish Politics in the 1850s, with Special reference to County Clare”. Austin Reid, St. Munchin’s College.
22nd April: “Air Photography and the Early Christian Church in Munster”. A. D. S. MacDonald, University College, Cork.
9th December: “Derrynaflan and Its Background”. Michael F. Ryan, National Museum of Ireland; Member.

OUTINGS

26th April — County Laois: Roundwood House, Ballyfin House, Coolbanagher Church, Emo Court, Moore Abbey, Rock of Dunamase.
Speakers: Mr. William Garner and Mr. C. D. Cholmeley Harrison.

10th May — The Burren: Raha Church, Parknabinna wedge-tomb, Cashlaun Gar stone fort, Oughtmama Churches.
Organiser and speaker: Mr. Brian Geary, Member.

22nd, 23rd, 24th May — South Wexford: Dunganstown (Kennedy Homestead), The John F. Kennedy Park, Dunbrody Abbey, Ballyhack Castle, Duncannon Fort, Loftus Hall, Hook Lighthouse, Baginbun Head, Tintern Abbey, Wexford Town, Johnstown Castle, museum and gardens, the “Fairy Tree” (sceac) near Kilmore.
Organiser: Revd. John Leonard, Hon. Secretary, and Mr. P. Lysaght, Outings Organiser.
Speakers: Miss Mai McElroy (Chairperson), Miss Agnes Warren, Messrs. S. Coe, Nicholas Furlong and Thomas P. Walsh—all of the Old Wexford Society.

21st June — Kinsale Town: Municipal Hall, the Gift Houses, St. Multose Church, Desmond Castle and Regional Museum.
Organisers: Mrs. Mary Geary, President, and Mr. Brian Geary, Member.
Speaker: Mr. Michael Mulcahy.

5th July — Kilmallock: Early Church site, SS. Peter and Paul Church, King John’s Castle, 16th century town house, Collegiate Church, Blossom Gate, and the Dominican Priory.
Organiser and speaker: Mr. Liam Irwin, Member.

22nd July — Limerick: St. Michael’s Church, Pery Square, Chamber of Commerce Building, O’Connell Street, Offices of Michael Punch and Partners, Pery Square.
Organiser: Mr. Cian O’Carroll, Member.
Speakers: Mr. Trevor Morrow, Mr. Tom O’Dowd, Mr. Michael Punch and staff.

26th July — Ardagh, Co. Limerick: Churchyard (Bishop de Lacy tomb, Burke-Dowling tomb and Cullum grave), Ardagh ringfort, Dunganville fort, Smith O’Brien mausoleum at Rathronan, Cahermoyle House and Caher.
Organiser: Dr. Robert Cussen, Vice-President.
Speakers: Dr. Cussen and Mr. Gerry McMahon, Member.
12th August—Athlunkard Bridge, Kilquane cemetery, Clonlara: St. Senan’s Church, Sheela-na-Gig, Limerick-Killaloe Canal, St. Senanliath’s Well and Doonass.
Organiser: Mr. Kevin Hannan, Member.
Speakers: Mr. Kevin Hannan and Miss Gail.

20th August—Charlotte’s Quay Excavation.
Speakers: Miss Ann Lynch, Office of Public Works, Michael Moore (Churchyard), David Teeling (Wall), Margaret Whelan (the Water Gate), and Breda Harvey (Finds).

26th August—Castletroy area: Kilmurry Churchyard, the Jewish Cemetery, Annacotty Mill and Mountshannon House.
Organiser and speaker: Mr. Kevin Hannan, Member.

13th September—Killaloe: R. C. Church, River Shannon and Bridge, Templekelly.
Organiser: Mrs. Hilda Shorten, Member.
Speaker: Mr. Sean Kierse, Member.

27th September—The ‘New Village’ Bunratty, Craggaunowen: castle, replica crannog and cashel, the ‘Brendan’ (curragh).
Organiser and speaker: Mr. Christopher Lynch, Vice-President.

4th October—South Co. Galway: Kiltiernan (early monastic enclosure) and Dromacoo (12th century church and slabs).
Organisers: Professor Etienne Rynne, Hon. Editor, and Mr. P. Lysaght, Outings Organiser.
Speaker: Mr. Tom Fanning, University College, Galway, Member.

REVD. JOHN D. LEONARD
Hon. Secretary