

Book Reviews

David Drew, *Aillwee Cave and the Caves of the Burren*, The Irish Heritage Series, no. 43, Eason & Son Ltd., Dublin 1984; pp. 24 (not paginated). Price: £2.50.

Since that noted antiquarian and botanist, G. H. Kinahan, penned his whimsically titled "Three Days amongst the Bats in Clare" in 1859 (*Proc. Dublin Nat. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3) the caves of the Burren region of north Clare have become internationally famous. In that bible of Irish speleologists, *The Caves of Ireland* (Tralee 1965), J. C. Coleman informs us that Kinahan's paper was one of the first published descriptions of a natural cave in a county which, in his own words, is now "one of the most important cave regions of Ireland with almost 30 miles of caves, stream passages and potholes surveyed or examined". It is a measure of the interest and potential of the Burren for speleologists that by 1984, when this present booklet was published, the figure had increased to over 43 miles (70 km.).

Dr. David Drew, the author of this well illustrated booklet, tells us that Aillwee is only one amongst 300 or more natural limestone caves in the Burren region. Its popularity (80,000 visitors per annum) is due not so much to its interest to speleologists—Coleman devotes only 1½ lines of his inventory to it—but to its accessibility and the thoroughly imaginative way in which it has been presented and marketed. This booklet forms a very effective adjunct to this marketing. Through its beautifully crisp colour photographs, clear line-drawings and readable text, it succeeds in explaining the processes which lead to the creation of limestone caves and their striking natural formations. As the title indicates, the major part of the booklet is devoted to the splendours of Aillwee which, in the 'best' traditions of showcaves, are afflicted with the most incongruous of names—the Carrots, the Praying Hands, the Charnel House.

Unfortunately, little mention is made of what is, for the present writer, the most spectacular of Aillwee's many attractions, the coldly named 'Access Building'. Admittedly, it is both a recent and a man-made edifice, but the design of Andrzej Wejchert has created an enchanting place of transition between two very contrasting environments—the windy pavements above ground and the dripping underworld of the Burren. For many, the attractions of a coffee and a scone are an integral part of a visit to Aillwee. To these can now be added Dr. Drew's fine little booklet which will serve all as a worthy memento of a visit to Aillwee.

PAUL GOSLING

Geraldine T. Stout, *Archaeological Survey of the Barony of Ikerrin*, Roscrea Heritage Society in association with AnCO (the Industrial Training Authority), Roscrea 1984; pp. 146 + xiv. Price: £15.00.

This attractively produced hardback book is the second such detailed regional survey to be published, being modelled upon the *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal*. It contains descriptions, plans and illustrations of 285 archaeological sites of all types, identified as a result of a survey of over 600 potential sites, with discussions regarding their significance and contexts, both cultural and environmental.

The site entries are presented in a clear and concise manner and as a result we are provided with systematic and objective summary descriptions of Ikerrin's archaeological sites. While this survey will form an essential reference for anyone working on the Ikerrin area, its greater importance is due to the fact that with its publication and those of other detailed surveys we will be able to form an objective national view of archaeological sites, rather than relying on varying and scattered sources as before. The need for the implementation and publication of such a widespread survey is made more evident with the publication of destruction rates such as the one noted here where over 35% of the 285 sites described are no longer extant (p. 5).

Inevitably as with all publications, there are some points with which readers might disagree. There are only a few typographical errors and most of the illustrations and photographs are of a good standard, but the reproductions of Leask's drawings of the Romanesque details at Monaincha could be much better. While the site entries are mainly devoted to recording the remains, there is a certain amount of discussion and it seems clear that this aspect could have been elaborated had time been available. It is, for example, somewhat surprising to find no mention of de Paor's work on the Irish Romanesque in the entry dealing with Monaincha.

Of more consequence, however, is an awareness of a certain ambiguity in the terminology used to identify sites and in their arrangement. Earthworks (defined in the glossary as "a generic term applied to monuments constructed of earth" page 139) are dealt with under several headings. A few, identified as ring-barrows, ring-ditches, mounds and miscellaneous sites, are grouped under the heading "Earthworks" in the section dealing with prehistoric Ikerrin. Two-hundred and five sites are listed as ring-forts, and, finally, six large sites are listed as enclosures in the section entitled "Ecclesiastical Sites". These groupings are based upon the presumed cultural and chronological affinities of the sites rather than simply listing various possible dates as was done in the

Archaeological Survey of County Donegal. The consequences of this can be seen when one reads that 79 destroyed sites are listed as ringforts. Thus slightly over 38% of ringforts listed have not been conclusively identified in the field and, as the author admits (p. 32) some could have been circular earthworks of a different type. Some, e.g. Clonmore 7 (page 51), might not have been monuments at all. Would it not have been better to list these sites as "destroyed enclosures" as was done in the *Archaeological Survey of Donegal*? It may also be worth noting that five of the six moated sites listed are destroyed and that in three cases it appears that the only evidence for the identification of the earthwork is the first edition O.S. 6" survey, a source which cannot be relied on exclusively.

The discussions which precede each section of the site descriptions vary in their approach. Some are summaries of the current opinions regarding the particular site type and of the relevant historical evidence. The introduction to the ringfort section is quite detailed however, and involves an analysis of the Ikerrin evidence in conjunction with that available from County Donegal and the Barony of Small County, Co. Limerick, with interesting and original conclusions. In comparison, the introduction to the "Prehistoric Ikerrin" section is very short and offers a summary of only some of the current theories regarding the development of megalithic tombs. While this apparent imbalance may be due to other causes, which are discussed below, it does point up the question as to for whom books such as this are directed. Few publications today will satisfy both the archaeologist and the informed member of the public and it is likely that the single largest market for this survey will be the people of the area itself. It may be that, in the future, and if resources permit, a range of pamphlets or even typewritten and photostated notes briefly describing individual sites should be provided in conjunction with detailed regional surveys, for those who actually own the sites or live close by.

The most important question raised by this publication is, in my view, the constraints placed upon the survey by the way in which it was created and financed. The author details how the actual work of the survey was organised in part of the introduction and the nature of the achievement in undertaking a survey of this calibre is emphasised when one realises that it was done in 18 weeks with a staff of two senior assistants and 11 inexperienced trainees. To have listed over 600 potential sites of interest in the first week and to have started field work in the second could only have been possible with the enthusiasm of the trainees and the managerial skills of the author and her assistants.

Other projects might not be so fortunate however, and there is a real and inherent danger in these heritage schemes which are sponsored by various state bodies such as AnCO and which are multiplying at an alarming rate. The primary aim of these state bodies is to provide a training for young people, not to undertake and publish original archaeological research. So while, at best, projects could produce results as good as this, at worst such archaeological surveys could be done to an unsatisfactory standard because sufficient time, skilled staff and resources were not available, or the sponsoring body was unaware of the standards to which the projects should work. This problem is not confined to archaeology however, there is, for example, the danger that genealogical indexing will be done in an uncoordinated and inaccessible fashion or that small local "museums" will be encouraged to undertake overambitious schemes without permanent staffing or financial arrangements. It is important therefore, for all those involved with these projects to realise their inherent restrictions and consequences. Happily this particular project achieved its aims, having not only published its results but also managing to achieve a 100% trainee placement record (page 1).

In conclusion, therefore, the *Archaeological Survey of the Barony of Ikerrin* is a result of dedication and enthusiasm from all concerned, and will, despite a few minor blemishes, become part of the basic reference material for the study of archaeological monuments in Ireland.

PATRICK HOLLAND

Charles Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to A.D. 500*, Batsford Ltd., London 1981; pp. 403, 60 figs., 8 pls.
Price: £14.95 (stg.).

In *Christianity in Roman Britain to A.D. 500* Professor Thomas concerns himself with the initial transmission of the Christian faith to Roman Britain and with its establishment and development there. Its appearance is justified by the fact that so much new evidence has come to light on this subject in the past few decades, and that this needed to be coalesced and assessed in a manner from which a new starting point could be agreed upon for the study of the subject. This, the author has achieved admirably by co-ordinating the full range of evidence from the disciplines of history, archaeology, and linguistics (particularly placenames and colloquial Latin). The book ends with the advent of the emergence of organised monasticism in Britain, and thus may be regarded in some sense as a detailed introduction to the author's *Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, published in 1971.

The reader is introduced to the problems associated with the study of Romano-British Christianity in Chapter 1. The three major religious manifestations of Roman Britain are outlined—Native Celtic cults, Roman Official

cults, and Oriental Mystery cults—Christianity belonging to the last category. Essentially, however, this chapter is a methodological one, in which much of the text is taken up with a discussion on archaeological *evidence* as opposed to archaeological *inference*, and in which a critical assessment of the relationships between history, archaeology and language is offered. The historical evidence and its background forms the core of Chapter 2, which explores the written records and historiography and gives an account of fourth and fifth century British ecclesiastical personalities, notably Alban and Pelagius. The extent of the controversy to which the latter's doctrines gave rise suggests to Thomas that "a late Roman British society able to produce a Pelagius must . . . have had its more interesting side" (p. 54). The linguistic, literary, and artistic aspects of this side are investigated in Chapter 3, where it is argued that colloquial Vulgar Latin continued in use, alongside spoken *British* (a Celtic tongue) and more formal written Latin, well into the fifth century in parts of Britain. Thomas also notes the occurrence of ecclesiastical Latin loanwords in British and suggests that elements of this hybrid vocabulary may have been both strong and widespread enough to have reached Ireland before A.D. 400, an argument expanded upon later (p. 303). The idiosyncratic nature of Romano-British Christianity is reflected in the use of Christian art—a practise strongly condemned at the early fourth century Council of Elvira—on mosaics, silver bowls, wall-plasters, etc. Thomas notes the occurrences of the *chi-rho* monogram, the *alpha* and *omega* symbols, and of derivative representational designs, and comments on the absence of both the 'Greek' and 'Latin' crosses, suggesting that neither device had yet come into general use as a Christian symbol in Late Roman times (pp. 86-95).

Chapters 4-9, the central core of the book, comprise thorough and concise reviews of the material evidence for Christianity in Roman Britain. It is in these chapters that the archaeologist will feel most at home, although the author's multi-disciplinary approach is still adhered to. In Chapters 4 and 5 the author aims to establish the actual extent of Christianity in late Roman Britain by mapping three categories of evidence—*material*, *literary*, and *negative*. His *literary* evidence comprises documentation of bishoprics and martyrdoms, the *negative* evidence relies on the assumption that "observed traces of fourth century destruction of non-Christian temples and shrines suggest that this was undertaken by Christians" (p. 133), while his major category, the *material* evidence, comprises both structures and objects which are by their very nature Christian. A threefold spectrum of evidential weighting is introduced for the evidence: for instance, *negative* evidence is assigned the low weighting of 'one', *literary* a value of 'two', while in the *material* category fixed evidence (e.g. churches, cemeteries, etc.) is assigned a high weighting of 'three' and portable evidence (e.g. finger-rings with Christian inscriptions) a weighting of 'one'. All such weighted evidence is combined in fig. 16, a contoured density map designed to chart not only the presence but also the strength of Christianity in late Roman Britain. Apart altogether from the value of this exercise and of the results derived from it, Chapters 4 and 5 contain concise and useful discussions of portions of Thomas' *material* category, such as churches, baptistries, mosaic pavements, hoards of silver objects (including an important assessment of the Water Newton find, pp. 113-121), lead caskets, 'Icklingham' type tanks, finger-rings, 'Rivenhall' type strap-tags, etc.

Chapters 6 and 7 concentrate on the documentary and archaeological evidence for churches in late Roman Britain. Chapter 6, in particular, details much of the Irish evidence in dealing with the background to the subject, and contains the interesting suggestion that the obviously non-congregational 'Gallarus type' stone churches may in fact be insular versions of Mediterranean and North African *memoriae* or *martyria* cult-shrines (pp. 150-52). In Chapter 7 the author proposes a tripartite categorization of Romano-British church types—extra-mural (cemetery), intra-mural (congregational), and estate (private)—and offers brief descriptions of examples from each category. In the following chapter the historical and archaeological data concerning Romano-British baptism and baptisteries is collated, and a baptismal purpose is assigned to the 'Icklingham' type lead tanks, while Chapter 9 is devoted to an assessment of the problematic area of Christian burials and cemeteries in Roman Britain, and incorporates important thoughts on grave orientation.

With the exception of the final chapter, the remainder of Thomas' book is essentially concerned with the development of Christianity in Britain through the fifth century. The author does not concur with the view that this Christianity was extinguished in the early part of that century to be later re-implanted from Gaul, and in Chapter 10 argues cogently against this. Chapter 11 offers a welcome synopsis of Christianity in southern Scotland and of St. Ninian, who, it is argued, may have been the initial converter of the Picts rather than our own Columba/Columcille. Chapters 12-14 will be of particular interest to Irish readers, for while one is concerned with pre-Patrician Christianity in Ireland the others both deal with St. Patrick and the Patrician Problem. Chapter 12 summarises the evidence for the existence of close encounters between non-Christian Ireland and Britain and the Continent, and suggests that "in the generations between about 360 and 430 the Church may, and probably did, gain a real foothold in Ireland" (p. 300 and fig. 67). The prominent, southern-based, non-Patrician ecclesiastics are briefly treated of (pp. 302-304), as it is the important linguistic evidence. The devotion of Chapters 13 and 14 to Patrick is justified by the suggestion that, as Patrick himself was a fifth century Briton, inferences can be made about the Church in Britain during this period from what he said and wrote. The first chapter deals with the chronology (contained entirely within the fifth century) and personal geography of Patrick, and proposes a somewhat spectacular but broadly acceptable historical model of his life and career (pp. 319-329), while the

second deals more specifically with the Latinity of his writings, possible inferences concerning the contemporary Church in Britain contained in them, and the possibility that other, now lost, writings may be implied in the *Confessio*.

Turning from its content to its presentation, *Christianity in Roman Britain to A.D. 500* offered only a smattering of misprints to this reviewer. The good quality of its plates, line-drawings, and numerous maps, is uniform throughout, and the jacket design (incorporating the Wallesby frieze and a Water Newton chi-rho) by the author himself, is quite attractive. The three indices, covering persons and places, non-English words and phrases, and general topics, are convenient. On the debit side, however, the arrangement of the in-text references (grouped at the end of the book and cross-referenced to the bibliography) is vexatious.

Professor Thomas has delivered another tremendous book, formidable in its scholarship. Historians, archaeologists, and linguists, working on material from either side of the Irish Sea, will find themselves returning to it time and time again. And it is not just a book for *academia* for there is sufficient elucidative material in it for it to be assimilated and, moreover, enjoyed, by the interested layman. In presenting us with *Christianity in Roman Britain to A.D. 500* the author modestly underestimated its importance and value when writing in the Foreword: *forsan placide libellus adiungeretur?* Hardly!

JOHN SHEEHAN

John B. Kenyon, *Castles, town defences and artillery fortifications in Britain and Ireland: a Bibliography*, Volume 2, C.B.A. Research Report 53, London 1983; pp. 83 + iv. Price: £4.95 (stg.).

This slim volume, covering the years 1977-82, is a supplement to the bibliography for 1945-74 (with appendix listing material to March 1977) published in 1978 by the same writer. The major difference between the two volumes is the inclusion of Ireland in the second bibliography.

The volume itself is divided into three parts: Part 1 consisting of a list of books, pamphlets and articles in periodicals on castles and related sites. These references are listed in alphabetical order according to author. Following this we find the main section of the bibliography covering England, Wales and Scotland. The various entries are grouped according to the new county and regional divisions and within these under the various site names.

Part 3 is devoted entirely to Ireland—all 32 counties. The introduction provides us with a brief resumé of the published works on Irish castles prior to 1977 and in particular the contribution made to the aspect of Irish medieval studies by the late Dudley Waterman. A short section dealing with the books, pamphlets and periodicals is followed by the main bibliography. This is arranged under the various counties beginning with Antrim and with a large number of entries for Co. Down reflecting the publications following on from the work of the Archaeological Survey of Northern Ireland in that county. For some of the other counties the bibliography is filled out with the references to the reports published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* on foot of the series of excavations undertaken by David Sweetman for the Office of Public Works. The very significant contributions made by Paul Kerrigan and Frank Loeber in the area of the later 17th to early 19th century fortifications are also fully listed. Our *Journal* figures quite frequently in the bibliography up to November 1982, and a useful footnote—for British readers—lists the unfamiliar Irish journals such as *An Cosantóir*. Since the bibliography was published, a number of important works dealing with Irish castles have appeared, including Tom McNeill's volume on Carrickfergus Castle, Brian Graham's pamphlet on *Anglo-Norman Settlement in Ireland*, and the detailed inventory of the Donegal castles contained in the *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal*.

John Kenyon and the Council for British Archaeology are to be congratulated on this 83-page work containing, as it does, a wealth of bibliographical information on castles of all periods in both these islands and a worthwhile purchase for any medievalist at its price.

THOMAS FANNING

T. J. Westropp, *The Desmond Castle* (reprinted from the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 1909/1910), Newcastle West, Co. Limerick 1983; pp. 36. Price: £2.00.

This booklet is a facsimile reprint (the original pagination is retained) of an article in two parts by T. J. Westropp which is now re-published by the Castle Committee, Newcastle West, together with a short introduction by Peter Harbison, a biographical note, and a portrait of the author. The major part of the text is devoted to an historical account of the western branch of the FitzGerald family which founded the castle and were associated with it from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. This contains a great deal of miscellaneous information on various

persons connected with the site. There follows a description of the features of the buildings which were accessible when Westropp wrote, much of it being at the time smothered in ivy or incorporated into later structures.¹ These are indicated on a plan which shows two halls, a peel tower, a keep and some other fragments of the fortifications. In addition, there is a map of the district, photographs of some of the more conspicuous remains and sketches of windows and other architectural details.

A. T. LUCAS

Christopher Lynch, *Bunratty Castle*, The Irish Heritage Series no. 41, Eason & Son Ltd., Dublin 1984; pp. 24 (not paginated). Price: £2.50.

This attractively illustrated booklet is essentially a shortened version of an earlier guidebook *Bunratty Castle, Co. Clare: illustrated guide to the historic seat of the Earls of Thomond* by John Hunt and Christopher Lynch, first published in 1964 and re-issued in an updated form in 1983. The present booklet differs from the earlier guide in two respects. Firstly it contains a number of additions relating to the family history of the O'Briens, and secondly it omits the account of the Gort collection of art and furnishings, concentrating instead on the history and architecture of the castle.

The historical section is a succinct and concise summary of events in the development of Bunratty while the architectural section consists of a floor by floor description. The booklet is most useful as an on-the-spot guide but it would have benefited greatly by the addition of floor plans and a cross-section; their presence might have clarified the somewhat surprising statement that the corner towers predate the main block. For the casual observer, like myself, it is difficult to believe that the towers were ever anything other than an integral part of the building and the fact that their foundations are deeper is surely a structural consideration rather than a chronological indicator. Two small points: the rebuilding of the castle by Sir Thomas de Rokeby occurred in 1353 not 1355; *Sheela-na-Gig* is the normal anglicised spelling rather than *Sile gCuig*. These are small points, however, and do not detract from the usefulness of this beautifully illustrated booklet as a readable and concise guide, most suitable for visitors to Bunratty Castle.

JOHN BRADLEY

John Lowe (ed.), *Letter-Book of the Earl of Clanricarde, 1643-47*, The Stationary Office (for the Irish Manuscripts Commission), Dublin 1983; pp. xlix + 504. Price: £42.00.

Ulick Burke, fifth earl of Clanricarde, was one of the most conspicuous and important personages on the Irish scene during the 1641 rebellion. Clanricarde's importance is added to for the historian by the large volume of his correspondence with such a wide variety of people which has survived. Indeed, those mentioned in the contents list of this volume provide a veritable 'Who's Who' in Irish affairs during the period in question.

In a masterly introduction John Lowe traces the origin of Clanricarde's four letter books through the various copies made, seen, or claimed to have been seen, by various people. The first and fourth letter books were published in the 18th century whilst this volume publishes the second letter book; the third volume still remains missing, but a large portion of this section of Clanricarde's correspondence can be found in the *Carte Manuscripts* in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The second letter book was acquired in a private sale by the British Library in 1930.

Clanricarde as well as being a devout Catholic was a convinced Royalist and had large estates in England as well as in Ireland. Depending on the turn of events, Clanricarde stood to lose, at best either his English or his Irish estates, at worst both. Had there been a Cromwellian victory in England and a Confederate victory in Ireland it is highly likely that Clanricarde would have lost everything. In the final event the Cromwellian conquerors allowed him to retain his English estates whilst his Irish lands passed to Henry Cromwell.

After retiring to his English estates, and prior to his death in 1657, Clanricarde prepared his *Apologia*—a skilfully edited version of his correspondence relating to his affairs in Ireland. He did not live to see its publication. *Apologia* or not, however, the publication of this letter book is to be welcomed as an invaluable collection of documents which will contribute to our understanding of the personages and events involved in the complicated Confederate Period. Mr. Lowe's skilful modernisation of archaic spelling, punctuation and grammar does not detract from the text. However, one small complaint: the pagination referred to in the index relates to the original manuscript and not to the published text, but this is a minor irritant when one considers that this volume contains over 500 items of correspondence. Both Mr. Lowe and the Irish Manuscripts Commission deserve our congratulations

for making readily available this rich store of documents, albeit at a fairly high price which will place it beyond the reach of most general readers though not, hopefully, of every Irish public library with pretensions to an historical section.

PAUL DUFFY.

Sean Kierse, *The Famine Years in the Parish of Killaloe, 1845-1851*, Boru Books, Killaloe 1984; pp. 86. Price: £4.50.

This book, the development of a prize-winning essay in the Local History section of Listowel Writers' Week, is a valuable addition to publications on the history of County Clare. It is divided into three parts—Pre-Famine Killaloe; The Famine; and The Effects of the Famine—followed by appendices.

I found the first part, which deals with the parish from 1830 to 1845, an extremely interesting overview of the social history of a Clare parish in the years before the major changes brought about by the Famine. Early marriage was the norm and a man was considered "stale at 30, and a woman at 20", according to a witness giving evidence to a commission of inquiry in 1835. Emigration on a small scale was already taking place to North America and Australia. One of the emigrants to Australia at this time was able to return in 1853 with over £10,000 in cash and "a large quantity of gold in nuggets which he deposited in the Bank of Ireland". In his descriptions of how the various classes of society lived, Sean Kierse highlights the plight of widows, orphans, the sick and the elderly who had no resources and who either depended on the charity of their neighbours or, as a last resort, went outside the parish to beg. Old age came early and "a man would not be readily employable after 55". Poverty in the area was not quite as bad as in West Clare, if one judges from the types of houses listed in the census of 1841. Nevertheless, 28% of the houses in Killaloe parish were windowless one-roomed mud cabins with virtually no furnishings. There was a good deal of labour-intensive employment in the area, but this must be seen in the context of a very high population, roughly four times the present figures. Many depended on the river for their livelihood and there were regular sailings from Killaloe in both directions, to the upper Shannon and to Limerick. The illustration on page 71 of the busy Pier Head in the 1840s shows a pattern of travel and transport that has long since vanished.

The second part of the book, which describes the Famine from 1845 to the early 1850s, gives a clear picture, based on thorough research, of the collapse of the old way of life. Even the faction fights were not the same afterwards! The local relief committee, which tried very hard to alleviate suffering, was an ecumenical grouping presided over by the Hon. Ludlow Tonson, Protestant Bishop of Killaloe, and with Fr. Daniel Vaughan, P.P., as a member. (A few years later Vaughan became Catholic Bishop of Killaloe.) In particular, the work of William Digan, secretary of the committee, is stressed. Far too often people like Digan who made great efforts to alleviate the effects of the Famine have been forgotten. His frustrations with officialdom are illustrated vividly in a letter to the Under Secretary where he writes about "heartless delusion practised by well paid functionaries upon wretched starving creatures".

The landlords were not all insensitive to the problems of their tenants, and those who gave remissions of rent get due acknowledgment. And we find Captain Mann, a coastguard officer who was in charge of relief, advising on the kind of soup which should be made on Fridays "in order to meet the custom of the Catholic population". Although, according to tradition, there were no deaths from starvation in the parish, people became so poor that even the local pawnshop did virtually no business. One family when charged with killing an ass admitted the crime and said that this was the third ass they had killed and eaten because of sheer want.

The final part of the book deals with the effects of the Famine, in particular the decline in population and the huge volume of emigration from 1848 on. The Pier Head was now busier than ever as an embarkation point for emigrants on their way to take their ships for North America in Limerick.

I found the book well researched, well written, and a good read even for someone from the other side of the county. Sean Kierse is to be congratulated not only for his research and writing but also for ensuring that his work would be available to us in this attractive form.

IGNATIUS MURPHY

Reflections on Munster Railways, Limerick Museum, Limerick 1984; pp. 60. Price: £2.50

This booklet was published in conjunction with an excellent exhibition entitled "150 Years of Irish Railways" held in the Limerick Museum from February to April 1984. It has no author but, presumably, was edited by our member, Mr. Larry Walsh, the Museum's Curator. Anonymous or otherwise, the booklet's editor deserves great credit for assembling such an interesting collection of articles and illustrations.

The exhibition itself was centered on twenty-five models of trains and carriages on loan from the celebrated C. F. Fry Collection which is now housed in Malahide Castle by the Dublin Tourism Organisation. Amongst the exhibits were some of immediate Thomond interest, namely one of the 'Slieve Callan', a West Clare Railway locomotive of 1892, one of the 'Lisdoonvarna', another locomotive of the same line but of 1894, and one of the Great Southern Railway's transformer wagons designed specifically for use during the extension to the Ardnacrusha electricity power station in the mid-1930s. The exhibition was a timely reminder of Munster's vast and important railway history. Although Ireland's first railway was the line opened in 1834 from Dublin to Kingstown (*i.e.* Dún Laoghaire), the first railways proposed for this country was one from Limerick to Carrick-on-Suir and from Limerick to Cork, proposed in January and February 1825 respectively [see I. Murphy, *this Journal*, 23(1981), 95-96]. Neither, however, came into being, and it was not until 1845 that the former project, to be called the Waterford and Limerick Railway, was revived. In 1848 it opened its first twenty-five miles of track, from Limerick City to Tipperary, and the whole length from Limerick to Waterford was completed in 1854. An account of the building of this line is given (pp. 15-24) by Michael O'Dwyer.

One of Ireland's best-loved railways was that running from 1888 to 1924 between Listowel and Ballybunion and affectionately known as 'The Lartigue'. The brief account of it, provided by Fergus Mulligan (pp. 44-48), can be usefully complemented by our former President, Dr. Robert Cussen's article in the 1967 number of our *Journal* (vol. 10:2, pp. 213-217). Like the West Clare Railway immortalised in a song by Percy French, 'The Lartigue' was also associated with a song, 'The Song of the Lartigue' (see J. Anthony Gaughan, *Listowel and Its Vicinity*, Cork 1973, p. 283). This peculiar railway, balanced oftentimes precariously on its single track, was only one of several constructed on Francois M. T. Lartigue's principle around the world. According to an article in *The Engineer* (March 2nd, 1888, pp. 174-175), this was the first steam-powered Lartigue line, the others getting their motive power from animals or electricity. The positioning of the Listowel and Ballybunion Railway line was not well-chosen from a technical point of view, with a consequential loss in operating efficiency. However, the line lasted in use for thirty-six years, a much longer period than that of any of the other Lartigue railways.

Michael McCarthy deals with 'The Shannon Scheme Railway' (pp. 32-37), which ran from Longpavement, on the north-eastern edge of Limerick City, to Ardnacrusha, and most of which was electrified in 1927 in order to speed up delivery of goods to the site. In all, some 30,000 tons of plant and materials were imported from Germany into Limerick to build the line and for subsequent use in the construction of the power station which was completed in July 1929. This standard gauge line was extended throughout the Ardnacrusha site in narrow gauge form; no trace of the latter now survives, but photographs of it appear on pages 36, 37 and 43.

The booklet opens with an article (pp. 5-14) by W. J. South and L. Hyland on 'Limerick as a Railway Centre', reprinted from *The Railway Magazine* of May 1958—a very useful guide to the development of that city's railway history from 1826 (*recte* 1825—see I. Murphy's article mentioned above) to 1957. Other topics covered in the publication are three brief stories on the West Clare, Tralee-Dingle, and Schull-Skibbereen Railways (pp. 49-59), all three edited by L. Walsh, an article by Jim Kemmy on 'Two Railway Guides' (pp. 25-31), and a note by George Stacpoole on 'Railway Postcards' (p. 38 with illustrations to p. 43).

Indeed, almost inevitably, many of the illustrations featured throughout this booklet are taken from postcards. On page 52 is one which is quite inadvertently of somewhat greater interest than is apparent at first glance. It shows a comic drawing of a train called 'The Flier' being manually pushed while a cricket game is in progress in the foreground, below which is overprinted 'OUR LOCAL EXPRESS Ennis to Kilkee'. This is a Scottish-made general issue joke card of about 1900, overprinted to suit the relevant railway centres wherever it was sold. Whatever about the running of the West Clare *à la Percy French* and the view depicted on this postcard, the foreground scene, at least, could well have been justified—cricket was played at least once in Co. Clare about that time! Readers of our *Journal* will perhaps remember the 1975 number (*Féilsgribhínn Éamonn Mhic Giolla Iasachta*) where on page 1 is mentioned that our Vice-President, Dr. E. A. MacLysaght, represented the county at cricket. Our Hon. Editor, Professor Rynne, informs me, furthermore, that the captain of that apparently once-off cricket team was his great grand-uncle, the late Dr. Frank O'Mara, R.M.S. at the Clare Asylum, Ennis.

This excellent publication is a fascinating pot-pourri of Munster Railway History, is a real credit to all concerned in its production, and is well worth acquiring.

PAUL DUFFY

Kevin J. Browne, *Éamon De Valera and the Banner County*, The Glendale Press, Dún Laoghaire 1982; ISBN 0 907606 08 3 (paperback); pp. 208. Price: £4.50.

The gift of prophecy is not required to predict with certainty that "of making many books" on De Valera and his times there will be no end. Yes; De Valera will yet be smothered by a confusion of studies on his life, his motives and his times. The remainder of this quotation from Isaiah, which is seldom used, should, I feel, be given as it is also apt and appropriate. It reads: "And much study is a weariness of the flesh".

What, we may ask does Mr. Browne's book add to the large corpus of works already published on the 'Chief'—a cognomen, if I remember correctly, originally conferred on him by one of his many Clare worshippers. It does this: it adds a great deal of minutiae to many of Dev's comings and goings to and throughout Clare from the day he first set foot there on the 23rd of June, 1917, a man with a strange sounding name who had been released from Dartmoor Prison ten days previously, and who was detailed to contest an election there against a local well-known Nationalist.

Surprisingly, he won the contest by almost two to one. It was a fairy-tale beginning to an association which lasted to the end, even if a civil war, far removed from fairyland, intervened.

The author, a journalist who must have witnessed many of the happenings he relates, tends to wear us down by his detailed account of the coming and goings, speeches and meetings, much of which will now be irrelevant to most readers. For instance—and many such passages could be quoted—when describing a meeting in O'Connell Street, Ennis, on the 30th of September, 1917, he writes, "... the estimated crowd of between 20,000 and 30,000 people almost went wild with cheering. Cries of 'Up Dev' pierced the cheering as women held babies aloft to catch a glimpse of the member for East Clare. Youngsters sat, perched on their father's shoulders..." etc., etc. All very well, but haven't we heard all this very many times before?

There is rather too much reportage in it; its scale is too narrow to interest many, apart from historians, academics planning studies of the great man, Dev worshippers, and, of course, almost all Claremen, who will most probably find mention of some chip from their dear departed block amongst the multitude of Councillors, Committee Members, Sinn Féiners and Volunteers mentioned, all too often, in the book. Sadly too, some will find mention there of some relative killed in action during the so-called 'War of Independence', but now all but forgotten in this materialistic Ireland of 1986.

There is very little attempt at any assessment of Dev's personality or character here. Indeed, the book has no pretensions at any such study of the man. The author does not indulge either in any naive adulation and hero worship, or on an equally one-sided vituperation of the man. Somehow we are not even tempted to form our own judgment on his actions; it is like that, it makes for easy reading. The many quotations from Dev's speeches peppered throughout the book are well chosen, and may give us a glimpse of Dev's simplicity and genius.

Perhaps it is churlish to complain so much. It has its good points and what it sets out to tell it does well. The author is simply a close observer, a good journalist, a Boswell to Eamon De Valera whenever he set foot in Clare. It will certainly give pleasure to the older generations of Claremen, and one would hope, a feeling of *déjà vu* to the younger generation from the Banner County—if they can be induced to read the book.

Professor Thomas P. O'Neill, a member of our Society and one of the official biographers of De Valera, provides a brief foreword to the book. Sub-titled "A Two-Way Loyalty", it underlines the close understanding De Valera had with most of Clare and that which most of Clare had for him from 1917. The book is also issued in hardback (ISBN 0 907606 07 5).

P. B. LYSAGHT

Edward MacLysaght, *Bibliography of Irish Family History*, Irish Academic Press, Blackrock, Co. Dublin 1981; pp. 69; ISBN 0 7165 0206 2. Price: £2.00.

Edward MacLysaght, *More Irish Families*, revised and enlarged edition, Irish Academic Press, Blackrock, Co. Dublin 1982; pp. 254; ISBN 0 7615 0216 0. Price: £19.50.

Our Honorary Life Member, indeed our oldest member and only surviving link with our predecessor, The North Munster Archaeological Society, which ceased activities in 1921, Dr. Edward MacLysaght, is still busy producing scholarly books—and he in his nineties! We ought not only be extremely proud of him but earnestly pray that we, ourselves, might be able to emulate him if ever we reach his age.

The *Bibliography* is a small, quarto-sized paperback, a straight re-issue as a separate publication of the revised bibliography he published in the third edition (1978) of his *The Surnames of Ireland*, but not included in the fourth edition of 1980. As a reprint it is not really necessary to review it here, but the copy the author gave to me has much additional information written in his own hand, information which it is worth recording in print.

Firstly, in the list of Abbreviations used he corrected the entry to our own journal by striking out the word 'Society', and he also added the two following entries:

Decies Journal of the Old Waterford Society.
O. Clare The Other Clare.

Secondly, as additions to the printed Addenda he listed:

Anthony — "The Anthony family of Carrigcastle" by Hubert Gallwey, *Decies*, XVI(1981). 15-22.
Berford — "The Berfords of Kilrue" by Hubert Gallwey, *Meath*, VI,4(1978-9), 89-115.
Barker — "The Barkers of Waterford" by H. T. Morris, *Decies*, XVII(1981), 17-23.
Clancy — *Clancy—MacFhlannchaidh—a brief family history* by Maria Clancy (1979).

- Dardis — "The Family of Dardis" by Hubert Gallwey, *Meath*, VI,2(1976), 58-80.
 Grey — *The Grey family in Co. Leitrim* by Fr. Mark Breen (1980).
 Rivers — "The Rivers family of Co. Waterford" by Hubert Gallwey, *Decies*, XII(1979), 52-61.

He misses out on the useful collection of brief accounts of the Roche families of Kinsale, Limerick, Cork and Wexford, privately published some years ago (1970 or 1971) in connection with the Roche Clan, though its absence may have been intentional as it would probably not be easily available to the general public.

Strangely enough, no-one seems to have published anything on the Murphys, those of the family name most frequently encountered in Ireland. In that regard, however, Dr. MacLysaght could perhaps also be excused for not including a long manuscript history of the Murphys completed in 1969 by Thomas A. Murphy, a microfilm of which has been deposited in the National Library of Ireland (see letter to *The Irish Times*, 23/7/1969). This history also deals with related families, including the Hayes, Carmodys, Frawlys, McNamaras, O'Sheas and Walls, all from Co. Clare; the Crowlys, O'Briens, Quinns, Kanalys and Winns, all from Co. Cork; and also the Tighes from Co. Sligo.

The author also made one minor correction in the text of the copy he sent me: on page 69, with reference to the Nihell family he corrected *Ir. Anc.* to read *Ir. Gen.*

More Irish Families is not a straight reprint of the 1960 edition (not 1970 as incorrectly listed on the back of the title page) but a much enlarged and revised version. Enlargement is apparent from the very beginning: in the 1960 edition the first name dealt with is Adair while that name is preceded in this edition by Abbott and (Mac)Abraham, the latter a name whose origin has always amused the author who derives it from Mac an Bhreitheamhan (son of the judge) through Macavrehon, Mac a'brehon and MacAbrehon. Revision is also apparent when the two editions are compared, a matter made easy for me by checking whether the author's hand-written emendations in the 1960 copy he gave me are incorporated into the 1982 edition—they are. Another important addition to this volume is the inclusion of an essay (pp. 15-20) on "The Chieftainries". In this, MacLysaght gives a succinct account of the main ruling Irish families of native origin, listing those referred to as chiefs in 16th century sources, including the sixteenth now officially recognised, the heads of which families can use 'The' as prefix to their surname.

Another difference is that the 1960 coloured frontispiece of the blazons of coats of arms of nine families has been replaced by a fine portrait-photograph of the nonagenarian author. Although heraldic experts might not agree, this is, I think, an improvement!

The Introduction is different but basically the same in both editions, but the Preface is not. The new version has a rather personal approach and directly and indirectly provides us with much information not only about Irish family surnames but also about the author. The last two sentences perhaps illustrate this: in the penultimate sentence he rightly esteems his own work so highly that he bluntly states that "this book should be a 'must'" for us, while in the final sentence, written in his beloved Irish (sean-litriú, of course!) he thanks all his readers—fair enough, perhaps, except that it is we who should thank him...and the book really is a 'must'!

ETIENNE RYNNE

Noel Kissane, *The National Library of Ireland*, The Irish Heritage Series no. 42, Eason & Son Ltd., Dublin 1984; pp. 24 (not paginated). Price: £2.50.

Dr. Kissane's brisk canter through the sources of information, mainly on Ireland, in the large collections of the National Library of Ireland is illustrated with eye-catching reproductions, many in colour, of maps, manuscripts, miniatures and other graphics, bindings and unusual printings, as well as photographs of the library itself, and the whole adds up to a worthy addition to Eason's handsome *Irish Heritage* series. One notes with regret that the excellent printing was carried out, one hopes for compelling reasons, abroad. One notes also from the excellent coloured plate of the Library's reading room that nearly half of the reading tables shown lack the soothing green shades which for fifty years have provided the cosy cones of silence so suitable for study.

The National Library's concentration on materials of Irish interest is of more recent origin than Dr. Kissane's necessarily short text might imply. Earlier librarians considered the library as a big city reference library with conventional nineteenth century concentration on what one can only call generally 'belles-lettistics'. Praeger, a noted natural scientist, seems to have tried to repair the lacunae left by the retention of scientific materials in the Royal Dublin Society when the stock of that society's library was bought by the state as the foundation collection of the National Library over a century ago. In fact the role and function of the National Library have never been formally laid down and it remains unconnected with any other library system, except in so far as the R.D.S. still nominates two-thirds of the membership of the National Library's council of trustees.

In exhibitions and promotional material, libraries naturally concentrate on the more colourful items in their collections, and it is no harm to emphasise that serious scholarship more often requires very tedious ploughing through masses of very dull-looking stuff indeed. It is nice, therefore, to be given the opportunity, in the fine

back-cover illustration to this booklet, to savour the vast amounts of information, social, ecclesiastical, architectural, military and other, which are to be gleaned from the beautiful pictographic maps of the Elizabethan intelligence agent Richard Bartlett. These reached the National Library through the good offices of an eminent and public-spirited English doctor and the late Prof. G. A. Hayes-McCoy, who published them in facsimile as *Ulster and Other Irish Maps* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1964). Dr. Kissane might have squeezed in the information that the stone throne featured in the Bartlett illustration chosen was the inauguration chair of Ulster kings.

(It was troubles also associated with Ulster which caused authority to erect the railings, noticeably absent in early illustrations, which divide the forecourt of Leinster House ever more restrictingly from the Library and the Museum.)

The name of Ulster, that of the only king of arms appointed by the English throne in Ireland, must recur in reference to the encumbering of the National Library since 1943 with an heraldic and genealogical jurisdiction. In that year the late R. J. Hayes undertook laudable and successful proceedings to prevent the expatriation of the records, both colourful and useful, accumulated in Ulster's Office since 1552, but as a consequence had to see created a native heraldic office, headed by the Chief Herald of Ireland, within the National Library. The only photograph in Dr. Kissane's little book showing a member of the staff of the National Library depicts the Chief Herald at the faintly ridiculous task, for a librarian, of checking with a magnifying-glass a recently engrossed and emblazoned armorial patent.

ALF MAC LOCHLAINN

Maurice Carey, *St. Fin Barre's Cathedral*, The Irish Heritage Series no. 48, Eason & Son Ltd., Dublin 1984; pp. 24 (not paginated). Price: £2.50.

Many members of the society will recall a visit last year to William Burges's Castell Coch north of Cardiff, with its slate grey conical roofs rising out of green beechwoods and richly decorated Victorian-Medieval interior, and to his extraordinary fantasy castle in Cardiff itself. The admirable Irish Heritage series has now published a guide book by Maurice Carey to another of Burges's works, the Protestant cathedral of St. Fin Barre in Cork. Of Burges's three projected cathedrals (Lille, Cork and Brisbane) this is the only one actually built.

Only a few architectural pieces survive from the medieval cathedral over the grave of St. Fin Barre, enough to show that it must have been an architecturally important Irish church. Damaged in the siege of 1690, it was demolished in 1734 and replaced by a plain building looking externally more like a nonconformist chapel than a cathedral, though surviving fittings suggest a well appointed interior. In 1861 it was decided to replace this with a church costing not more than £15,000. The resulting competition was won by Burges. "Got Cork" he noted in his diary. Burges had travelled widely and a glance at the west front of St. Fin Barre's is enough to show his debt to the great thirteenth century cathedrals of northern France. The cathedral ultimately cost far more than the estimated sum and the extraordinary richness of its sculpture and decoration—with over 1,200 sculptured pieces—was made possible by local benefactors, notably a brewer and a distiller—surely the first time that a cathedral has been built from Porter and Irish Whiskey. The series of well chosen photographs of high technical quality in both colour and black and white give a very clear idea of the character of the finely proportioned exterior and of the rich interior, and Mr. Carey's fluent text describes the building in careful detail without ever becoming a mere catalogue. The reviewer noted only one very minor slip: freestone (p. 1) is not a type of stone geologically different to limestone, but squared and dressed masonry. Possibly the word 'rubble' or some similar term has dropped out after 'limestone'. One hopes that the statement that no freestone is now to be had in Cork is also mistaken, for St. Fin Barre's witnesses not only to the genius of William Burges but to that of the remarkable school of local sculptors who worked on the cathedral and of whose art every Corkman can be justly proud. It would be a tragedy if a school of stonework of such a high order were now extinct.

"Man makes the past in his own image"—or rather in what he wishes that past to have been—and there is something of this in Burges. In Wales he built two castles evoking the feudal past for the Catholic convert Marquess of Bute, of a not particularly old family but whose ground rents, from coal mines and blast furnaces, made him the Victorian equivalent of an oil sheik. In Cork he built a splendidly confident medieval Gothic cathedral for a beleaguered Protestant ascendancy whose Church was dis-established in the very year in which St. Fin Barre's was consecrated.

JEREMY KNIGHT

John Teahan, *The Dr. Kurt Ticher Donation of Irish Silver*, National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (no date, but 1984); pp. 96. Price: £2.50.

In the Preface to this catalogue, Breandán Ó Ríordáin, Director of the National Museum, describes Dr. Ticher's generous donation of silver to that institution as a "superb gift of carefully selected specimens". Even the briefest perusal of this beautifully produced and copiously illustrated catalogue will convince one of the accuracy of this description. There are fifty-six entries in it, covering some seventy articles from forty different silver/gold-smiths. Regrettable, however, that nowhere is there a date given for Dr. Ticher's donation, nor is there one for the publication of this catalogue—1980 and 1984 respectively.

North Munster readers will find at least two items to be of local interest. One is the plate (item no. 10) made in 1717 by Joseph Walker of Dublin, which was later engraved to commemorate the marriage of William Bury of Shannon Grove, Co. Limerick, to Jane Moore of Tullamore, Co. Offaly, on the 27th of January, 1724.

The other item of Limerick interest is a pill-box (item no. 52) made about 1775 by Collins Brehan, a Limerick silversmith. It is inscribed on its bottom with the instructions *One Pill daily before dinner* and *Rx. Pil. Rufi gr IV f Pil Mitti VI*; the latter can be expanded to read *Recipe Pilula Rufi, grani IV*, which in turn can be translated as "Take a rufus pill grains four; make a pill, send six." All-in-all, a nice little vignette of medical history.

Another item of medical interest is also featured in the donation. It is the umbilical cord clamp, or forceps (item no. 47), probably made by John Teare of Dublin in 1812. Appropriately enough it is in the form of a stork, the beak being the clamp. Within the body of the stork is the figure of a new-born baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, visible only when the clamp is open. The illustration with the description shows the object closed, but the open clamp, showing its precious cargo, is featured on the front cover: an inspired choice really, when one considers that the catalogue illustrates the fruitful co-operation between our National Museum and an outsider, *i.e.* one who is not a member of its staff.

Dr. Ticher is an expert on Irish silver, and it is regrettable that this catalogue does not include a bibliography of his works. Several of the pieces, for instance, were featured in his article on "Bits and Pieces of Irish Silver" published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 92 (1962), 41-44. Apart from this, however, the catalogue is all that a good catalogue should be. The bilingual text of John Teahan, Keeper in the Art and Industrial Division of the National Museum, is crisp, concise and clear, and the illustrations by the Museum's photographer, Brendan Doyle, are excellent.

As a nation we are fortunate that our National Museum Collections have been so enriched by Dr. Ticher's generosity, and our National Museum is to be congratulated for commemorating the donation in such a worthy manner.

PAUL DUFFY