

## Editorial, 1987

More time has passed since publication of the last issue of our *Journal* than was intended, and apologies are not only in order but offered. To lay the fault on any or many particular factor(s) would be easy and perhaps justified, but a good deal of it must be shouldered by myself, your Honorary Editor, who is, I suppose, ultimately responsible. However, though the backlog is greater than anyone wants, it should perhaps be pointed out that it is no worse than for many other similar local and national journals in Ireland and, indeed, abroad. Hopefully the matter will be rectified during the coming year when the aim is to produce two numbers, material for which is already mostly to hand, some of it actually in page-proof stage.

\* \* \* \*

1987 was the year in which Australia celebrated 200 years of European civilisation (after some 40,000 years of aboriginal way of life), a celebration in which Ireland participated in many ways. North Munster, and more especially Co. Clare, figured largely: not only did our member, Nacy Cleary of Sinsearlann and Chláir, Corofin [see this *Journal*, 24(1982),1, and 28(1986),1], get invited out to Australia to lecture about Irish-Australian

family connections, etc., but when the National Museum of Ireland organised a small exhibition for Australia-Ireland week in April one of the two special exhibits was the Smith-O'Brien Cup, a 19-inch high gold cup weighing 125 ounces which was made in Melbourne in 1854 and "Presented to William Smith O'Brien Esq., By His Friends in Victoria Australia On the occasion of his visit to Melbourne After his release from a long and painful Captivity, In testimony of their respect for his Character, Admiration for his Patriotism And sympathy for his suffering in the Cause OF HIS COUNTRY. July 22 1854", as is inscribed on it. William Smith O'Brien (1803-64), a direct descendant of Brian Boru, was born and reared in Dromoland Castle, Co. Clare, represented Ennis and, later, Limerick as a Member of Parliament, lived in Cahermoyle House, near Ardagh, Co. Limerick, was for a time an O'Connellite but later became a Young Irelander, leading them in the abortive rising at Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary, in 1848, for which he was gaoled and tried in Clonmel, sentenced to death but transported for high treason to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), off the southern coast of Australia. In 1854 he was granted a conditional pardon, went to Melbourne (where he was presented with the Cup) and then returned to Europe; in 1856 he was granted a full pardon and



The Smith O'Brien Cup.  
(Photo: Brendan Doyle,  
National Museum of Ireland)

returned to Ireland. In 1870, six years after his death, a statue to him was erected in O'Connell Street, Dublin. Some years ago, in 1981, Blanche Touthill wrote an outstanding

biography of Smith O'Brien which was published by the University of Missouri Press, a book which we had hoped to have reviewed in our *Journal* at the time but, regrettably, due to various circumstances the review has not yet come to hand—maybe next year? Meanwhile, let us congratulate Australia on its bicentennial and be proud of North Munster's part in so many aspects of her history; apart from Smith O'Brien's involvement there was, for example, the discovery of Kargoorlie goldfields ('The Golden Mile') by Paddy Hannan from Quin, Co. Clare, not to forget Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne, a native of Charleville, Co. Limerick.

\* \* \* \*

Limerick continues to show most of the other major Irish cities how to treat their urban heritage. Though some worthwhile buildings have been destroyed or drastically altered, Limerick can boast not only of a fine museum and of such elegant and suitable restorations/renovations as the 'Granary', of expert archaeological excavations such as those at Charlotte's Quay, of the appointment in 1986 of a City Archaeologist, and of restoration work on the surviving parts of the old city walls: on the 28th of September the Minister for Defence, Mr. Michael Noonan, unveiled a plaque at the Mungretgate section of the walls, commending the Limerick Civic Trust for the restoration project carried out there. Limerick can be proud: *rath Dé ar an obair*.

\* \* \* \*

In 1990 North Munster will be celebrating not only the 300th anniversary of the first siege of Limerick but also the 750th anniversary of the founding of Ennis. Perhaps the best account of the former event is that written by the late Dr. J. G. Simms and published in 1967 by our Society in *North Munster Studies, Essays in commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (ed. E. Rynne), while we are also 'ahead of the band', as it were, with the fine, major article by Brian Ó Dálaigh on Clonroad Castle in this *Journal*, an article which will no doubt be frequently referred to in 1990.

Another important article in this *Journal* concerns the building of the electricity power station at Ardnacrusha; it commemorates the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Electricity Supply Board. This is the first of a trilogy of articles by Paul Duffy on the history of the Shannon Scheme. The second will appear in the 1988 number of the *Journal* and will deal with the archaeological aspects arising from the Scheme, while the third will be a really major one dealing with the social and economical aspects of the Scheme which was successfully completed in 1929. We gratefully acknowledge most generous sponsorship from the E.S.B. for the publication of this first article in the series, and also for supplying the *Journal's* frontispiece which breaks new ground for us in being "in glorious technicolour".

We also gratefully acknowledge a generous grant-in-aid from University College, Galway, towards the publication of "Evidence for a Tympanum at Aghadoe, Co. Kerry" by Etienne Rynne.