BOOK REVIEWS


"I shall wander on with all senses alert, questing as ever. As I go I brood on the many facets of my surroundings, both natural and artificial and, with gratitude, continue to marvel at the beauty of the environment which delights and embraces me."

So ends Frank Mitchell's in his journey-book around Ireland, having followed routes and by-ways of pioneering explorations. Praeger would have been pleased to have such a sequel to his The Way that I Went and to see the rich tapestry that Mitchell weaves. Solid scholarship is presented amid a pleasant mix of anecdotes, regret at what might have been, and a de-buzzing of bees in Mitchell's much-travelled bonnet. But above all else in this book, during unremanned wanderings around this island, a master explains the intricacies of an enigmatic landscape when he understands it and is not afraid to say so when he doesn't. His lucid accounts highlight the difficulties others face in trying to explain simply what they don't really understand. In the context of the Quaternary Period Frank Mitchell's life is hardly even a tiny grain, but in the field of human endeavour he is a giant rolling erratic, interpreting and distilling knowledge for a multitude of lesser mortals.

In the main, his journeys are to the hidden Ireland with some notable exceptions. Few will have travelled as comprehensively as Mitchell or will have laboured through so many periods of change in thinking, attitudes and awareness. To his eternal credit, he has always remained a modern scholar—fighting his corner, yes, but embracing new ideas and technology with an agility of mind and a stamina envied by many younger men. In Irish landscape studies Frank Mitchell remains unique: no one sees the full picture better than he. And what an exceptional career he has enjoyed? Not many scholars become one-man departments in a major university. For to accommodate his numerous interests Trinity College created a Chair of Quaternary Studies for him in 1965, a chair which he held with distinction until his formal retirement in 1979. Since then, thankfully, he has remained fruitfully active. Among his fields of expert knowledge are geology, archaeology, botany, zoology, ornithology and art, not to mention peripheral interests. In The Way that I Followed, acknowledging his fortunate family circumstances, he tells how he came to these disciplines and how he integrated them in his pursuit of an overall understanding of how our landscape developed. Those of us who were late starters will nod at his query: "When did you start to work?"

He has shared his scholarship generously in the field, in the lecture room and in many publications. Among his recent books are his well-known and well-thumbed The Irish Landscape (1976), updated and republished in 1986 as Reading the Irish Landscape, and the popular book of the Irish Countryside which he edited in 1987. He combined all his skills with Archaeology and Environment in Early Dublin and Man and the Environment in Valencia Island, the latter being a particular study of a place he knows so well, having worked on and off there for twelve years.

This present book, both paper and hard back, is an excellent Irish production, a credit to Country House. It is particularly well designed, although I found the maps disappointing. A work of this kind needs not just good maps but detailed ones too: it is sometimes difficult to follow a route with text alone. For instance, to follow the journey around Inishown one would have to know the area quite well, picturing the stops in one's mind's eye: a small accompanying map would have helped. Those general maps included at the chapter headings are mainly illustrative and may be pressed into service twice. However, this is but a minor point in a superbly presented book and, to be fair, the detailed chapters on the rivers Erne and Shannon are well supported by maps.

Over many years his diverse forays noted in passing puzzling aspects of the landscape, many mentally filed away awaiting further explanation. For example, he wryly tells about his discovery in 1947 of the hut-circles on Maeve's Knockarea and of their subsequent 'rediscovery' and excavation by a Swedish team in the early 1980s, giving them a late Neolithic date. Will those hut-sites on Turlough Hill in the Burren prove of similar date?

His asides into some major controversial issues of recent years—Derrynaslan, Wood Quay, Black Valley, to mention a few—allow glimpses of their complicated background. And he doesn't always take the conventional or popular side of the argument: at Carrowmore he argued that filling in the quarry site beside the megalithic cemetery was the best long term solution. His anguish at the decay of island life, at the practices which 'desertifies' them is very real. As we know, the proper utilisation of cutaway bogs will become more and more controversial.
as the problems become more common. Frank Mitchell is very much aware of the experiments—none totally successful. How right he is when he reminds us that the E.C. does not want more land, certainly not poor-grade land. But I don’t think that his ‘let it revert to wetlands’ will find much support among the blinkered economists who seem to control more and more every day, the destiny of our land. His thoughts certainly find an echo in Gerard Manly Hopkins’ words:

‘What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and wilderness? Let them be left,
Oh, let them be left, wilderness and wet,
Long live the weeds and wilderness yet.’

We are reminded, time and time again, that knowledge is ongoing, that the last word on the disappearance of woolly mammoths or the arrival of mesolithic man has hardly been written. He would be the first to encourage a reassessment of the primary evidence rather than a reiteration of the conclusions. The extent of medieval woodland cover in Ireland is one such pressing research area. This writer is of the opinion, based on limited research, that the ‘timber’ tree cover in Ireland by the seventeenth century could have been as low as 2 to 3 per cent—or even lower—and that for a long time we have engaged in landscape nationalism, blaming the English for our ensuing woodland poverty! Too much is at stake not to know the real story.

In laying out his circuit of Ireland Frank Mitchell must have agonised in his choices. It was difficult for him, too, to play down his favourites. Sometimes he fails and his unbounded enthusiasm for a particular site shines through. He tries, and fails magnificently, to deal comparably with Knowth and Newgrange. His fatherly interest in person and place in Knowth is only rivalled by the excavator’s own ‘powers of application and persistence’. His criticism of Newgrange is gentle but so effective, ‘the wall as erected overstates the case’. Praeger and Macalister get a mild rap too for their work at the Hill of Uisneach: they ‘excavated here in the twenties, though not with any distinction’. But what a day that must have been at the Clonfinlough Stone when both Macalister and l’Abbé Breuil unfettered their fertile imaginations. And what a modern fairy tale evolved at Townley Hall? What a perfect setting for a naturalist to live?

The Way that I Followed is a pot pourri of a lifetime’s work, compulsory reading for anyone interested in Ireland. The ways that Mitchell and Praeger did not go or follow remain much the poorer. The day that another Irish scholar becomes competent to follow in both their footsteps, and to enrich us with their enthusiasm and love of our land, will be one of rejoicing.

GEORGE CUNNINGHAM


The three books reviewed here present an interesting study in contrasts: two of them have their own archaeology in that they are the product of collaboration (Herity and Eoghan) or, as in the late M. J. O’Kelly’s Early Ireland, a manuscript continued and brought to publication by his widow Claire seven years after his untimely death and, as she generously acknowledges, often in consultation with others. We are not dealing with the pure O’Kelly tradition although his keen intelligence and deep scholarship shine through a text which of necessity must have been greatly modified to take account of things which became known after his death. It is as easy to note the intrapolations in the text as it is to spot the Herity-Eoghan caesura in Ireland in Prehistory. Of the three, Harbison’s Pre-Christian Ireland is the only seamless garment showing throughout a consistency of approach and composition which make it an easier book to read than the others. Harbison’s text is aimed much more at the popular lay audience than the other two which clearly are intended to be of assistance to the student as well. Pre-Christian Ireland was commissioned as the companion to the De Paor’s Early Christian Ireland in the Thames and Hudson Ancient Peoples and Places series, and it is a worthy addition to those distinguished volumes. Nor does Harbison fail the student, clear text, useful bibliography and a number of well thought-out illustrations make for essential reading for anyone with a serious interest in Irish prehistory.

All three books present us with an interesting study in contrasts of archaeological style and approach—there are fashions in these as in all other things. The O’Kelly book makes more convincing use of radiocarbon dating and shows the author’s deep interest in technology and field-methods for example, but all three books are fairly
traditional and, inevitably because of the need for reportage, overlap greatly. All three show a similar uneasiness with megalithic tombs—they are rarely integrated into a comprehensive view of the material culture of prehistory. Like the elephant in the parlour, they cannot be ignored but their social value is limited. Heritage and Eogan on the one hand and O’Kelly on the other may be read by connoisseurs of these things as palimpsest accounts of once hotly disputed aspects of tomb morphology, siting and purpose. It would be unfair to dwell too much on these aspects because Ireland in Prehistory is essentially the unchanged text of the 1977 edition other than the dropping of the overlong, and therefore largely redundant, introductory excursus on the history of Irish archaeology. On that point, Harbison provides a short and valuable account of the history of research into Irish archaeology and neatly provides the historical context for new advances as they arise in the text. Ireland in Prehistory then has the strength and weaknesses of the original edition. As it has been extensively reviewed in the past, one need only say here that it must be consulted by anyone who wishes to study Irish prehistory seriously. It represents a summation of the work of a particular generation of a distinctive school of archaeology at the time of its first publication, but much has happened since then and to compare it with more recent texts on the score of completeness would be invidious. Its authors have continued to make contributions and to develop their younger and some newer areas of interest and, as they are still with us, may be expected to inform and challenge us for many years yet.

Not so alas, Brian O’Kelly—Early Ireland must be considered his valedictory and despite—or perhaps because of—the work of his successor we can take stock of a lifetime of achievement which has given so much to the discipline of archaeology in Ireland. The first thing which may be said is that O’Kelly was a dedicated teacher and that he inspired a very distinctive and committed body of students whose own contributions find full and generous acknowledgement in the book. He was especially devoted to excavation and the range of sites dug by him illuminated much of prehistory—Newgrange, Shanballyedmond, Moneen, to mention but three, are still models of technique and of prompt reporting. His experimental work on cooking-sites is a classic and is, appropriately, given extended treatment in the text.

The book gives a continuous narrative of Irish prehistory, starting with a careful review of the evidence for early settlement. The account of the Mesolithic period makes use of the evidence from the fieldwork of his successor at Cork, Peter Woodman. This has extended our knowledge of the range of hunter-gatherer communities to Munster. A preliminary evaluation of Ferriter’s Cove occupation-site, likening it to the eastern late Mesolithic sites which seem to show some Neolithic elements but distinguishing firmly the Mesolithic from the later tradition, follows Woodman’s views closely. On the spread of the Neolithic way of life through significant immigration, O’Kelly is a skeptic: he regards seasonal and familial contact outside Ireland as just as likely an engine of change as substantial population movement. The exotic way of the food-producing way of life is not of course contested. Megalithic tombs are discussed in a separate chapter and here O’Kelly’s approach is at its most traditional—he devotes a good deal of space to discussing the typology of the structures and he addresses the nature and origin of the Wedge Tomb—indigenous he believes—at some length. He laments the passing of the old ‘northern’ and ‘southern’ classification on morphological rather than distributional grounds, and he reminds us of the complexity of dealing with this most numerous class of Irish megalith with its variety of associated finds (especially pottery) and its long chronological range which suggests their use and perhaps construction, until a very late date in the Bronze Age. His interest in the architecture of the tombs leads him to avoid the canard that a tomb-type, such as the Linkardstown cist, can be defined not on its morphology but primarily on the pot-type sometimes found within it, although the contributor gives some credence to this bizarre notion. He is very convinced by the early dates for the construction of the Carrowmore tombs obtained by the Burrenliat excavations, and is rigorous in pointing to the context of radiocarbon dates quoted for megaliths which are often derived from contexts which do not date construction and use. He stresses the indigenous nature of all megaliths in Ireland, while admitting that Passage tombs have claims to be considered ‘international’. It is both refreshing and nostalgic to see the text slipping occasionally into older terminologies of tomb classification and ‘Dolmen’ and ‘Passage Grave’ make their fleeting appearances. Given the prevalent fashion to think about megalithic monuments as more than sepulchres, it is perhaps appropriate to remark in passing that all nomenclatures which carry the notion of burial as their primary qualifier, are tendentious.

O’Kelly’s account of the Bronze Age contains no surprises—his penchant for technology is reflected in his discussion of stone moulds and the question of exploitation of ores is brought up to date with O’Brien’s work on the mines of the South-West. His own excavations at Carrigillihy were controversial in that they proposed a very early date in the Bronze Age for the primary stone house within the enclosing wall which some had looked on as a form of prototype for the ringforts of later times. The status of the site is now clarified to some extent by, admittedly, a single radiocarbon date which suggests that the primary phase belongs to the period of around 1100 BC. It takes its place among the growing number of habitation sites of that general period and happily the debate about the origins of the ringfort has moved into more productive avenues. The text relies heavily on the work of Dr. John Waddell in dealing with Bronze Age single burials, and here one would have wished for more analysis to take over from reportage but one supposes that respect for the author, and a natural reluctance to father too many novel ideas on his reputation, must have inspired caution.
In the Iron Age section problems of Later Bronze Age lake-settlements are discussed and referred to as crannogs. However the contextual is careful to note, following Lynn, the morphological character that distinguishes the true crannog of Early Medieval times from the lake-side dwellings of the Bronze Age. Here too the work of Dr. Barry Raftery on both artifacts and monuments is to a great extent followed. O’Kelly’s distinctive contribution to metalwork studies—the analysis of the ornament of the Cork Horns and related objects—does not go unnoticed, although there are many who would regard the evidence he advanced to explain the technique of ornamentation in his classic paper as indicative of post-manufacture treatment rather than primary fabrication.

All in all, the book is an interesting and informative overview of Irish prehistory which is a welcome vehicle for the insights of a distinguished colleague whose loss is still deeply felt. It is a must for anyone who wishes to learn about the archaeology of Ireland. Of the three books briefly noticed here, I strongly recommend the lay reader to begin with Harbison and to progress with O’Kelly and then to finish with Herity and Eogan’s Ireland in Prehistory. The members of this society will find in almost every chapter of all three books evidence garnered from North Munster described and illustrated.

Micheal Ryan


It is now nearly twenty years since rescue archaeology became an issue of public debate, and increased state funding for excavation in advance of development gave rise to a new professionalism in field archaeology. Some of the more apocalyptic predictions that, at the prevailing rate of destruction, there would be no more archaeological sites left at all by the end of the century seemed hardly less extravagant then than they do now. Yet, there was a moral fervour about the ‘rescue’ campaign which even implied that to engage in research excavation rather than putting one’s shoulder to the wheel of the ‘rescue’ bandwagon was criminally culpable. The lone voice of one senior academic ran counter to the prevailing view, in an article entitled “Rescuing Rubbish” questioning whether the fact that a site was threatened with destruction necessarily enhanced its significance to the point where it warranted the cost and effort of excavation. In too many cases the question remains unanswered, even after publication, because the modern style of excavation report is commonly concerned only with the ‘objective’ presentation of the record, and not its academic evaluation. The fact is, of course, that for all their technical skill in the field, the new generation of professional excavators is hardly equipped to provide a scholarly evaluation of everything they uncover on a complex, multi-period site, any more than we should expect them to be. The modern excavation report, like the modern excavation, is plainly a collaborative affair, and it is crucial that a positive academic input is integral to the strategy from the outset.

Against this backdrop, Three Irish Gas Pipelines: New Archaeological Evidence in Munster may reasonably claim to be a model report. For many, the main reason for consulting the report will be the account of the Neolithic house from Tankaerdstown South, Co. Limerick (pp. 26-43), the early dating of which is now confirmed by a series of half-a-dozen radiocarbon dates (kindly made available to the reviewer through the good offices of Dr. Gabriel Cooney) which, together with the one available at the time of publication, all cluster remarkably closely around 3000 B.C. The less well-defined occupation site at Pepphill, Co. Cork (pp. 44-51), also yielded a radiocarbon date broadly within the same bracket. Both sites, with their evidence of cereal cultivation, afford important new insights into the Neolithic settlement of south-western Ireland. Neolithic settlements are not that thick on the ground in Ireland (nor, indeed, in Britain), and our senior academic archaeologist might well have argued that it would have been preferable (had circumstances permitted) to have conducted a more extensive examination of the environs of these sites, in the prospect of uncovering related structures and learning more of their context and function, even if this could only be achieved at the expense of a ring-ditch or fulacht or two elsewhere. Such, however, is not the way of things, and that should not be thought to detract from the value of the present report.

One of the risks attached to prompt publication of archaeological fieldwork is that the subsequent provisional estimates based upon conventional assessment of structures and material remains. It is greatly to the credit of this report that no such come-uppance has materialised. For the Beaker and Bronze Age sites the dates now available substantially endorse the report’s conclusions. Of particular interest is the date of 3020 + 90 B.P. (uncalibrated) for material associated with the stone palstave-mould (pp. 92-93) from Raheen, Co. Limerick. Of equal interest is the apparent confirmation of the Early Bronze Age date for the fulacht at Raheen, though the radiocarbon dates for other excavated fulacht are more problematical.

Confirmation is still not available for the date of the interesting ring-groove structure at Clough Lucas South, Co. Cork (pp. 116-128), which the excavators compared to later prehistoric house-plans in Britain, and provisionally assigned to a context between the Late Bronze Age and the Early Christian Period. Whatever the final determination, the site represents a class about which we know tantalisingly little, and which we might wish there had been more opportunity to examine.

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In sum, *Three Irish Gas Pipelines* is a thoroughly professional piece of work. It contains important new evidence, the significance of which is indeed discussed in the wider context of its contribution to Irish archaeology. Eoin Grogan’s synthesis of the pipeline sites in the context of the prehistory of the Limerick area (pp. 149-157) is itself a vindication of the collaborative strategy which this project exemplifies.

The book is profusely illustrated with some excellent coloured photographs, several rather cloudy black-and-white photographs, and good maps and line-drawings. It also contains seven Appendices, including specialist reports on animal bones, botanical samples, wood, geology, etc. Those responsible for this report are to be congratulated, not least Bord Gáis Eireann whose support evidently made possible the realisation of the project and its publication.

D. W. HARDING


Megalithic studies of Co. Sligo began with Edward Lhuyd in 1699 and received a major boost with George Petrie, assisted from 1828 onwards by his Sligo friend Roger C. Walker of Rathcarrick, and with the first Ordnance Survey of Sligo. Some years later James Ferguson was to comment that “Carrowmore is more easily accessible than Carnac... but no one thinks of the Irish monuments”. Sligo landlord Col. W. G. Wood-Martin did even more than just think about the monuments. Just over a century ago, he wrote *Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland: County Sligo and the Island of Achill* in what was intended as the beginnings of a national survey of megalithic tombs. That scheme does not seem to have got very much further, though in Co. Clare T. J. Westropp published many of the megalithic tombs. It was another sixty years before a new survey was initiated under Ruaidhrí de Valera. Five volumes of that Survey have been published since 1961, this being the first under the sole authorship of our member Dr. Seán Ó Nualláin, who duly acknowledges the many discoveries by Sligo Field Club members.

The task of competing the work is being assisted by Eamon Cody and Paul Walsh, two of our Editor’s many successful students.

The bulk of this volume is devoted to detailed descriptions, 79 figures of plans at a scale of one hundredth, and 36 plates of photographs of Co. Sligo’s 128 court-, portal-, wedge- and unclassified tombs. There is a discussion of the Sligo tombs in the local and national setting, and summary descriptions of the finds from those tombs. There are orientation diagrams for the court-, portal-, and wedge-tombs. Brief descriptions of the passage-tombs are included but we must await a separate final volume for plans and photographs of these. A most welcome feature of this volume are lists of the 1,448 megalithic tombs in Ireland, all of which have been authenticated in the field up to the end of 1988. This is the first list of all known Irish megalithic tombs made this century. Distribution maps of each tomb type, including, for the first time, one for the unclassified tombs, are given, as well as location details and the more important references. The volume, the largest so far, is physically substantial, weighing 3kg; despite this my copy has survived considerable use without showing signs of disintegration.

The wealth and variety of Sligo megalithic tombs is as follows. Eleven (6%) of the 174 Irish portal-tombs are in Sligo, with Tawnatraffan and Carrickglass making up in quality for the low numbers. Fifty-nine (15%) of the 391 Irish court-tombs are in Sligo (the six varieties are noted on p. 101), with Deepark and Creevekeel being two of the better Irish examples. Of Sligo’s thirty-five (8%) of the 465 Irish wedge-tombs, Gortakeeran, Cabbagh and Cudaly are the best. Twenty-three (12%) of the 189 megalithic tombs which do not fit into any of these classes are in Co. Sligo. At least sixty-seven (29%) of the 229 Irish passage-tombs, including the Carrowkeel, Carrownore and Knocknarea cemeteries, are in Sligo (Herity, *Irish Passage Graves*, 1974, gives a total of 114 in Sligo, though several of those he describes are clearly not passage-tombs). Twenty-nine sites or structures previously suggested as being tombs are rejected. And the count does not end there, for since this volume went to press two more court-tombs, Farranphery (Sligo SMR No. 19:11; G.521.321) and Aghanagh (Sligo SMR No. 40:127; G.784.102), were recently discovered by Tom Condit of the Sites and Monuments Record Office, using high powered magnification of the vertical Geological Survey of Ireland aerial photographs. Two real oddities, the monuments at Achnory and Knockatootaun (reminiscent of Lannion Quoit, Cornwall) are included in the appendix of sites rejected as being megalithic tombs; exceptionally for such rejected sites, plans and photographs of both are given.

The present total number of Sligo tombs, including passage-tombs, is close to two hundred or 14% of the Irish total, making it the highest concentration of such monuments in Ireland, perhaps even in Europe. Why Sligo and the other counties around Donegal Bay should be so saturated with megalithic tombs is a subject of current unresolved discussion. Regrettably, while we know that so many Sligo tombs survived the best part of 4,000 to 6,000 years, some eleven court-, portal- or wedge-tombs have not survived through the last two centuries. Only a photograph from the Sligo Field Club collection and a rough sketch-plan made in 1951 (not included in this volume) of the Clough wedge-tomb survives. The observed destruction of the Carrowmore wedge-tomb...
in 1959, three photographs of which are included on plate 26, surely would not be allowed happen today! Today, however, there is another type of threat to our megalithic tombs: the two Tawnatruffaan and the three Kilsellagh tombs are now within recently-planted coniferous forest. The pre-destruction record of the Breeoge wedge-tomb is that by our Editor and the reviewer.

Despite all these superb megalithic structures, many of them excellently photogenic and adaptable as a logo, the logo for the ‘Sligo is Surprising’ campaign is not based on any of them but, North Munster people will be horrified to learn, on one of the glories of Co. Clare, the Poulnabrone portal-tomb. Why Tawnatruffaan or Carrickglass portal-tombs, or Carrowmore No. 7 passage-tomb or the distinctive profile of Knockarena with Miocén Meadhonna in the background, were not used is beyond reasonable reasoning!

The Cloverhill structure, p. 92, is tentatively included by Ó Nualláin under passage-tombs; in 1971 a water diviner ‘indicated’ to the reviewer that the structure is the right-hand recess of a cruciform passage-tomb within a circular kerb and that there is also an inner kerb of smaller stones, but until such time as it is excavated it will remain one of the orphans of Irish archaeology. Perhaps likewise the structure east of Carrowkyle Cairn K which could be the chamber of a passage-tomb or a cist-grave of megalithic proportions. For many years Carrowkyle Cairn E has been interpreted as a transversal court-tomb with a blind entrance at the other end of the long cairn; here Ó Nualláin clearly interprets the burial chamber as being more akin to cruciform passage-tombs.

County distribution maps end at county boundaries, and while this may have been justifiable in earlier volumes, for Sligo it is not, as all the surrounding counties have been published. The distribution patterns clearly continue down the Moy Valley in the southwest and into Co. Leitrim in the northeast. Due to the sheer intensity of wedge-tombs in the Burren of northwest Clare and of court-tombs in northeast Mayo these areas have been shaded in on the distribution maps and the equivalent areas shown enlarged about three times with a dot marking each tomb. A combined national distribution map of all five tomb-types, even though comprising over 2,000 years into one, would also have been of benefit; this is done for the individual counties. Four national distributions are given side by side in fig. 84; the map of unclassified tombs, being the odd one out, is given in fig. 89. The absence of the passage-tombs from the Sligo distributions is a major omission considering the proportion of the Sligo Neolithic that they constitute.

While overwhelmingly applauding this volume, one has a number of minor quibbles. Absent from references is our Editor’s publication of a “Survey of a Probable Passage Grave Cemetery at Blemore, Co. Dublin” in J. Roy. Soc. Antq. Ireland, 90(1960), 79-81. Sligo Field Club is erroneously described on page 17 as County Sligo Field Club. The word trapezoidal is incorrectly spelled trapezoidal throughout. Two township names, Primrosegrange and Deer Park, are correctly so spelled as on the OS maps though generally Primrose Grange and Deerpark respectively are the common usage; this is similar to Lehinche, Corofin, Ennistymon and Ballyvaughan instead of Lahinch, Corofin, Ennistymon and Ballyvaughan in Co. Clare. The Clougher boulder-burial is SSE, not NNW, of Achnony (p. 98). The term ‘Megalithic Survey Files’, used in credits and references, is not explained. For some tombs both plan and section are given but the placing of the north point with the section is confusion. The listing for Carrowmore is a bit short, but no doubt Ó Nualláin is applying the criterion—no megalithic stones therefore no megalithic tomb. There is no explanation (p. 114) as to why eleven previously accepted wedge-tombs are omitted from the national list.

We can be most thankful to the Ordnance Survey, its Assistant Director Muiris C. Walsh, and to Dr. Ó Nualláin in particular, for this detailed record of this part of Sligo’s and Ireland’s cultural heritage. One wonders how long before the powers that be will appoint County Archaeologists to manage this heritage which goes back 6,000 years. Hopefully the remaining volumes will be published rapidly; the country owes that much to Dr. Ó Nualláin a scholar who has been working on megalithic tombs for at least forty years; we, too, deserve to have the fruits of his labours within his lifetime.

MARTIN A. TIMONEY


This publication from one of our leading Iron Age scholars marks an exciting and long overdue initiative in Irish archaeology. The background to this research lies in the extensive tract of peatland which covers much of Central Ireland today. In ancient times, this landscape was a vast expanse of wet marshland, interspersed with small islands and larger areas of dryland. Living in such a wetland environment posed special problems in terms of communication and access. From as early as the fourth millennium B.C., human inhabitants adopted the practice of laying down wooden trackways, popularly known by the Irish term togthers, to permit the safe movement of people and animals across the bogs and marshy ground.

Large numbers of these trackways are preserved in the 1.3 million hectares of peatland which covers the Irish landscape today. Their special interest lies partly in the unique quality of preservation in the waterlogged environment.
of the peat bog. The wooden branches and planks which make up these structures are often as fresh as the day they were laid down. Locked within this wood is a wealth of information on past vegetation and climatic history, while tooling marks provide us with an important insight into early woodworking technology.

The recent interest in Irish bog trackways is a truly ‘Green’ initiative, reflecting an increasing concern about the conservation of wetland environments across Britain and Europe. For centuries, the Irish trackways lay safe within a protective mantle of bog, occasionally exposed by manual turf-cutting in different parts of the country. The appearance of mechanised cutting from the 1950s onwards saw the widespread destruction of these and other wetland structures across Ireland, particularly in the large commercial bogs operated by Bord na Móna. Writing in the pages of this *Journal* in 1984 (“Irish Bogs—The Time Is Now”), John Coles strongly argued for the establishment of an archaeological survey to identify the extent and quality of this wetland heritage. Such a survey has now thankfully been established, encouraged no doubt by the recent success of the Somerset Levels and other wetland projects in Britain.

This publication records five years of excavation and research on ancient wooden trackways in the Mount Dillon complex of bogland in Co. Longford. The information is presented in summary form, well illustrated by high quality photographs and line-drawings. The author assembled a team of students and wetland specialists from University College Dublin and the University of Exeter, with funding generously provided by the European Social Fund. Over this period, a total of 57 trackways were investigated, often at short notice and in difficult conditions. Radiocarbon and tree-ring dating has provided a sequence of trackway construction stretching from the mid fourth millennium B.C. up to the Early Christian Period. Particularly exciting is the long history of trackway used at individual locations, for example, at Corlea Bog, Co. Longford, where examples dating from Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age times have been found.

These trackways vary widely in form and construction, ranging from loose bundles of branches and brushwood to carefully laid hurdles and split plank arrangements. The various trackway components exhibit a range of tooling marks which provide an important record of early woodworking technology. These include an example from Corlea dating to 2259 B.C. which may provide very early evidence for the use of metal axes in Ireland. Equally exciting is the record of skilfully woven hurdle trackways dating to the Bronze and Iron Ages. The large quantity of hazel rods used in these hurdles suggests that some form of deliberate woodland management such as coppicing may have been employed. In addition to the wealth of environmental information, the author also lists some rather enigmatic wooden finds, including a possible Iron Age totem pole!

The trackway phenomenon has many interesting implications in terms of contemporary settlement in these wetland areas. In discussing the function of these trackways, Dr. Raftrey examines the possibility that the Corlea-Derraghlan Iron Age road may have been part of a route-way linking the ancient Celtic centres at Cruachan and Usineach. While the relationship to contemporary settlement is problematic, these trackways offer a new approach to understanding the organisation of prehistoric societies. For the student, there is an interesting insight into the application of palynology, insect analysis, tree-ring studies and other environmental techniques to wetland archaeology. In conclusion, the author urges that the initiative provided by this work should be continued with the establishment of a State-sponsored wetland survey. It is a tribute to this research that such a survey unit has recently been created by the Office of Public Works, which will hopefully help safeguard our important wetland heritage.

**William O’Brien**


The above title is on the cover of this attractive little booklet, though inside it is simply *Craggaunowen, Co. Clare* by Elizabeth Healy, with Peter Harbison as Consultant Editor. It is in many ways an ideal publication for the tourist, schoolchild, or even amateur archaeologist visiting the site. It is excellently laid out, incorporating a precise and highly informative text, with colourful and practical photographic and other illustrations which adorn every page and also both sides of the front and back covers.

By way of introduction, a general map of the area is presented, followed by a tribute to the late John Hunt, founder of the Craggaunowen Project in 1973 and principal collector, with his wife Putzel, of the many wonderful archaeologically and artistically important artifacts that comprise the famous Hunt Collection, at present housed in the University of Limerick pending a more permanent home at Craggaunowen and in the general region. Each part of the Craggaunowen complex is then described individually in a general way, yet in sufficient detail to provide the visitor with valuable and interesting facts about Celtic life in Ireland long ago.

The last four pages of the booklet deal briefly with the Hunt Collection and provide a very suitable follow-up to Dr. P. F. Doran’s publication in this *Journal*, 20(1978), 3-15, the article which first introduced the splendid Collection to the general public. Many of the artifacts in the Collection are mentioned and are described with
suitable illustrations. One regrettable omission, however, is an illustration of the "two outstanding statues of the Virgin and Child, which some believe to be among the most precious items in the collection"—one of them is a late 14th century Burgundian limestone statue which is dealt with on pages 41-45 of the same Journal, "Studia in memoriam John Hunt". Three pages are also devoted to the "Brendan", the leather boat in which Tim Severin and his courageous four-man crew sailed across the Atlantic in 1976-77, following the route of the legendary voyage of St. Brendan the Navigator, possibly (probably?) the true discoverer of America in the middle of the sixth century; this boat is now housed in a modernistic glass pyramid at Craggaunowen.

All-in-all this little publication is a first-class production and will serve as an invaluable guide to the site and act as a useful souvenir to take away afterwards.

CARON MCCARTHY


This small publication serves as the guide-book to the Knock Folk Museum, one of the few purpose-built museums in Ireland. Its most striking feature is the lavish number of illustrations: drawings, sketches and photographs. A small fault which must be pointed out however, is that the captions on the photographs do not always follow the convention of naming the subjects from left to right and, where necessary, in rows.

This is a fascinating book, giving the visitor a good, comprehensible, insight into life in Ireland during the 18th and 19th centuries, with particular emphasis on the last century. For the person who obtains the book other than in the Museum Shop it would certainly tempt them to visit the Museum, which should be the secondary objective of a publication such as this.

Any criticisms are minor and not too serious, e.g. there should be an apostrophe in Hallowe'en. Also, of North Munster relevance, was it not a mark of the respect and regard with which Sarsfield was held by his enemies that he was permitted to leave Ireland with officers, men and equipment at the end of the Siege of Limerick—despite the fact that he made it clear that he intended fighting on against the English but in continental armies? This respect for Sarsfield was borne out after the Siege when a French fleet arrived to aid the Irish army following the signing of the Treaty but before Sarsfield's forces had departed: having given his word, he refused to take up arms again, despite the arrival of these reinforcements. It is, therefore, surely a mis-representation to state that the officers were forced overseas through terms dictated by the Williamite generals (p. 119).

Ceapaim féin go bhfuil sé tabhachtach gach uile ní a dhéanaimh chuimh an Ghaeilge a choimhde beo. Dá bhar sin, táintionn sé go mór liom go bhfuil ainmneacha do gach uile rud 'san musaem, atá sérfa faoi ins an leabhair, agus tideallacha na caibidil san leabhair, tugtha ní amháin i mBéarla acht fheidhre i nGaeilge.

The Knock Folk Museum is to be congratulated on its work to date; they are amongst the many unsung heroes striving to protect our heritage. We learn that the present excellent curator, the author of this book, may be leaving his post shortly—now that Knock has amassed this wealth of material, and taken it into care, it is to be hoped that due consideration will be given to the appointment of a professional to maintain the high standards of custodianship already achieved.

TOM CASSIDY


For Irish readers, at least, the name Laing does not automatically inspire confidence [see this Journal, 17(1975), 125-126], and in some ways this latest book (with an Irish publisher?) will explain why. It is a revealing book, perhaps telling us more about the authors than they might have intended. Despite any fears one might have had when first seeing the book, it can be regarded as useful and worthwhile—but not for the amateur.

Reading through this book, one can readily appreciate not only the extensive and wide-ranging reading undertaken by the two authors (though the North Munster Antiquarian Journal is apparently beyond their ken), but one also appreciates their critical, perhaps destructively over-critical betimes, approach to the various and numerous problems which every archaeologist encounters. Little or nothing is accepted as fact, and they leave very little that most authorities would accept as probable unquestioned. It is this attitude which makes the book interesting, raising unsought and often unexpected questions in the minds of those who might otherwise have comfortably considered that everything was relatively straight-forward. Such an exercise is useful, though dangerous when read by someone who might not know enough to realise that the authors are probably sincere when they tell us in the Preface that their book is intended for discussion, not as a statement of total conviction on all issues—but

First, and immediate, impressions are that this is a beautifully produced book with a very readable text copiously illustrated with 122 black-and-white photographs or line-drawings and 9 lovely colour plates, all well-chosen and some quite original. Nor is one disappointed.

The book's title might easily be misunderstood, and would perhaps have benefited by being lengthened with an explanatory few words such as "after the Romans" or "AD 400-700". With the Roman conquest of Britain that island lost much of its Celtic character and the Romano-British period began. With the departure of the Romans from Britain in the early fifth century the Lowland Zone was invaded and settled by Germanic peoples, principally the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and others, while the Highland Zone experienced a sort of Celtic revival. The two areas are still clearly distinct, as much culturally as geographically: England is recognised as predominately Anglo-Saxon while Scotland, the Isle of Man, Wales, and even if to a somewhat lesser extent Cornwall, are regarded as basically Celtic. It is this separation of cultures that the author studies. In his brief "Preface" he identifies the two components of the British nation and informs us that, as his title indicates, he will be dealing with the Celtic-speaking regions of Britain, excluding Ireland of course, it not being Britain and, due to the non-arrival of the Romans, presenting a quite different set of problems. While not presuming to expertly interpret the more Celtic parts of Britain to the English, he presents the evidence which relates the past to the present and, indeed, succeeds admirably in explaining to them the background for what he identifies as "the reassertion of regional identities in Britain" since 1963, a reassessment which almost totally appears "in a wholly Celtic guise". Britain is Britain, the whole island, and England is England, a large part of Britain, a fact that is not always adequately
appreciated by everybody. Those who read this book, however, will have little difficulty in understanding this: the author has succeeded in his aim of making the background for the internal divisions of Britain more readily available to the non-Celtic part. En passant it might be mentioned that on page 16 he gives a useful, concise outline of the present and past political situation vis-à-vis the United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Orkneys and the Shetlands, and the Channel Islands, all of which he terms "a geopolitical complexity"—on page 20 he gives us the truism concerning Ireland "not the least tragic aspect of which is that it has apparently been beyond the comprehension of almost every British (record English?) politician". His book will, if studied carefully, go a long way to solving that problem too.

The scene is set in the first two chapters, "Celtic Britain today" and "The end of Roman Britain", and the story unfolds in the third chapter "Celtic Britain: the 5th and 6th Centuries". The next three chapters deal in some detail with "Early Cornwall", "Early Scotland" and "Early Wales"—presumably the Isle of Man is not discussed because, like Ireland, never experienced Roman rule? The Irish dimension appears in these chapters, notably the latter two, but even more so in the following chapter, that on "Church and Monastery", where St. Patrick (on whose life the author is an acknowledged expert) figures prominently. Irish archaeologists will find much of this chapter of importance to an understanding of early Irish monasteries. But perhaps it is the next chapter, that simply titled "Art", which will most interest the Irish reader, including as it does much Irish material.

The book finishes with a brief "Epilogue" in which the author sums up the whole question of the Celtcity of Britain in the post-Roman and pre-Viking period and puts it into its present-day context. This is a book which helps demonstrate and explain the problems which for centuries have arisen from the Anglo-Saxon v. Celtic greater and lesser confrontations, confrontations not alone confined to the rugby pitch or the boxing ring but which have too often entered the intellectual, political, academic, and human relations spheres. It should be read not alone for the archaeology involved which will greatly inform everyone, including Irish specialists and amateurs alike, about our Celtic neighbours, but also for the pervading philosophy throughout with which the author interprets the evidence. It would be difficult to recommend it too highly.

Etienne Rynne


North Munster has many ancient sites associated with the well-known pagan festival of Lughnasa, some of which have been subsequently christianised, e.g. St. Bridget's Well at Liscaher in County Clare or the 'turas' along 'Casain na Naomh' (the Saint's Road) to the top of Mount Brandon in County Kerry. None, however, are as famous as Croagh Patrick, near Westport, in County Mayo, undoubtedly the best known of Ireland's sacred mountains. Although the 'Reek' itself is justly renowned, the associated pilgrim's road leading to it is not, something which has now been rectified. Tóchar Phádraig: a Pilgrim's Progress is a useful and handy guide written by Fr. Fahey under the auspices of FÁS. The booklet traces 'Saint Patrick's Road', ancient trackway, from Ballintubber Abbey to Croagh Patrick, a distance of over 18 miles. Ordinance Survey maps are used to define parts of the Tóchar, but local topography and various field-monuments of Patrickian legend knit the Tóchar into a continuous road. Published as a pilgrim's guide the booklet also gives a cultural and historical account down through the ages, as well as the spiritual journey symbolised by the Tóchar. Some of the local traditions and folklore accounts are fascinating and it seems that every stone, every hill and hollow cry out with a story. The historical record of the Tóchar is well researched and documented by the author. However, the archaeological evidence and interpretation is not adequate to indicate that the trackway pre-dates Saint Patrick. It is said that 'Saint Patrick's Chair' (a well-carved rock) and four elaborate tallstones (to use the local Mayo term), one carved with concentric circles, mark the route of the Tóchar. If these monuments pre-date Saint Patrick's sojourn it could be suggested that they mark an ancient trackway leading from Lankill to the sacred mountain and possibly associated with the Festival of Lughnasa. If so, this area of spiritual significance and symbolism was probably associated on the first missionaries in a victory of Christianity over paganism and later developed into an organised pilgrimage route.

It is clear from the annalistic records that by the early 12th century Tóchar Phadraig was a long established pilgrimage route. The Chronicon Scotorum for the year 1109 records that Ua Longain, Archimnec of Cragh Phadraig, was burnt by lightning on the mountain. In the year 1113, on Saint Patrick's eve, the Annals of Louth CE record that a thunderbolt of lightning destroyed thirty pilgrims who were fasting and praying on the mountain. It also noted that the pilgrimage was held in high esteem and perhaps protected and patronised by the O'Connors, Lords of Connaught. In the booklet there are many references, like stepping-stones through the successive centuries, recording various events along the Tóchar and on the 'Reek'. The lone grandeur of Croagh Patrick with its soaring peak holds a strange fascination for man (pagan or Christian) and Maire MacNeill's The Festival of Lughnasa is captured to illustrate this point.
A reflection of the popularity of the pilgrimage and its importance to monasteries situated along the route may be seen in a Papal Suit between the Archbishops of Armagh and Tuam as to the proprietorship of the church on the 'Reek' and the church of Aughagower. The dispute was submitted for adjudication by Pope Innocent III. It is assumed that the service of the oratory on the mountain and the ceremonies of the pilgrimage were in the charge of the monks of Aughagower. The Papal Register Records for 1216 indicate that the dispute was settled in favour of Tuam and in the same year Ballintubber Abbey was founded.

In order to retrace the steps of the past on the Tóchar, the booklet is cleverly divided into thirteen stages. Each stage gives relevant data, routine and duration of proposed walk. The information is light and easily understood; there are also seventeen hand drawn maps to show you the way through the fields of Mayo. The route is easily followed now, as Fr. Fahey and his FAS team constructed one hundred and thirteen concrete stiles along the Tóchar between Ballintubber Abbey and Croagh Patrick. However, the walk is a test of endurance and the pilgrim is not initially advised about the difficult terrain and may not be aware of the total duration of the pilgrimage. In fact, a time of over eight hours in all is given for the one way walk. This is a conservative estimate as time is needed to assimilate information. A two day journey would be a more practical and approachable feat. The Guide also contains over seventy plain but nonetheless effective illustrations: Saint Patrick's Cavalcade, Hangman's Bridge, Penal Mass Altars, Holy Wells, Tallstones, and symbols of treachery and spirituality are all depicted to bring the Tóchar to life.

It is evident that history has left its mark along Tóchar Phádraig, and Fr. Fahey has captured some of these events, Pagan, Christian, Norman, Elizabethan and Cromwellian traces to be unfolded for the pilgrim on the journey. We hear of a famine in Bohé in 1839, seven years before the 'Great Famine'. Stories are told of shipwrecked sailors from the Spanish Armada, Gallowglass soldiers and of 'Soap-the-Rope', a character whose idea helped the hangman. A gruesome story is also told of Seán Molowney (Seán na Sagar), the infamous priest-hunter, and of Lough na gCeannac where Molowney disposed of the heads of the priests after claiming his reward.

A lovely tale is told of 'Bob of the Reek', a nineteen century hermit who lived the last fifteen years of his life on Croagh Patrick. In all, the author gives identity and adds a human dimension to the archaeological field-monuments by contrasting the good and evil events which surrounded the penitential pilgrimage of Tóchar Phádraig and Croagh Patrick. The Tóchar is seen by Fr. Fahey not only as a physical test of endurance but also as a symbolic inward journey for the heaven-aspiring soul.

JACK MULVEEN


This major work, the result of seven years of painstaking survey and research, provides us with a real insight into the make-up of the castles of county Cork and, more importantly to the author, the people who inhabited those buildings. Books dealing with such a mammoth topic as castles, and especially in a vast area, tend to either concentrate on the architectural remains of the buildings or on the historical background. This book, while treating very generally with the former, is by and large an historical account of the families associated with the castles of county Cork.

Containing some 450 pages, 72 delightful line-drawings, and 10 maps while dealing with 435 buildings, this is a very comprehensive account. The preface is followed by a brief history of the county during the period of castle building, from the coming of the Normans to the Jacobite War. Tower houses are included as castles by Mr. Healy "...the purist might say that a 'tower-house' is not strictly a castle...but time and custom has accepted the castellian description, and so have I!" (p. 3). The author then divides the county into six study areas: 1. The Valley of the Lee and Cork City; 2. East Cork and Cork Harbour; 3. The More Western Area of West Cork; 4. The More Easterly Area of West Cork; 5. The Blackwater Valley—Western Part; and finally, 6. The Blackwater Valley—Eastern Part. Every castle in each area is dealt with. A map, produced by the author, accompanies each area. These maps while depicting the region, make quick identification of individual sites a little difficult. However, the problems of map-reading are more than adequately compensated by the inclusion of excellent and attractive line-drawings by Nigel Hay (a pseudonym of the author's), depicting the variety and beauty of Cork's many castles.

The castle descriptions normally begin with the translation into English of the building’s Irish name. This is followed by a general siting of the castle, its condition, and a little information on its architectural features and layout. Following this is an often lengthy account of the castle's history with the addition of interesting stories concerning their inhabitants. The supplied information gives the reader an insight not only into those who lived in the buildings but also a general insight into life in the country during the time of such buildings.

To those exclusively interested in architectural detail, the book may prove a little disappointing, but the author in his preface admits that it is primarily intended for the layman, and with this in mind he has avoided too much technical detail. This book is an ideal companion for a day's drive anywhere in County Cork though its awkward
size and shape (almost 1 foot long, by 8¾ ins. wide by 1¼ ins. thick), albeit solidly bound, makes it somewhat awkward to handle. With it, however, the castle windows of the county are open for all to enjoy.

The book is rounded off with an index of the castles of the county, followed by an index of them by the family name of their builders/owners, and finished with a glossary and bibliography.


This new publication launched to coincide with the Ennis 750 celebrations is considerably more than an expanded version of the Ennis entry in the same author’s Clare, County of Contrasts (reviewed in this Journal 29[1987], 109). It is moreover presented in a much more accessible format—A4 size. Indeed it might be argued, given the excellent gazetter section, that this publication should be octavo size so that it would be brought around as a walking guide to the town. The major problem with such a reduction in size would be a loss of clarity in the excellent photos, some in colour, of Mr. O’Brien. His cover and centre piece shots both deserve A4 size, whilst the photo of the Corn Stores (p. 9) would need a full page, octavo, to do it justice.

Mr. Spellissy has really divided his text into two parts—the first part being a lively, informative history of the town from earliest times. The author draws on a wide variety of sources (not listed)—Corporation records, estate papers, land survey maps, etc., etc.; one suspects that this Society’s journal featured prominently in the sources checked out for this publication. Unfortunately the author does not provide us with a bibliography, though he does however mention on page 38 that the bibliography used in the preparation of this publication has been presented to the County Library in Ennis. This might facilitate Ennis residents, but what of others who might wish to follow on from the author’s text? The bibliography should have been included in the booklet. The second part of the text, a brief historical and descriptive account of Ennis Abbey, the foundation of which inspired the 750 celebrations, followed by a street gazetter, reiterates in part the historical introduction but sets it in its immediate local setting and adds considerably to it. All-in-all, this is a very welcome and most useful guide to Ennis.


In his foreword to this fine book the Reverend John Leonard states: “The development of towns in Ireland began after the Norman settlement in the later twelfth century. Kilmallock is one of these towns and to this day retains the shape given to it by its Anglo-Norman builders, notably its cross-linear street pattern and borgage plots, many of which appear to be undisturbed since they were first allotted”.

Indeed, to a large extent, it still lies within a narrow oblong area once enclosed by walls and the line of medieval streets is reproduced in the streets of today. Also, in spite of its history, a substantial stretch of the late medieval wall, a town gate, a few old houses, the citadel, the collegiate church of St. Peter and Paul and the Dominican priory survive and impart a medieval flavour to the modern town. In their decayed or semi-ruinous condition they are a grim reminder of the aphorism that happy is the city that has no history. Kilmallock was the chief town of the Munster Geraldines and an early home of the White Knights. It shared in the general ruin during the war of annihilation which Elizabeth and her lieutenants waged against the Desmonds in the 16th century.

Mainchín Seoighe was already the author of some half dozen books in Irish and English and had contributed scores of articles to various newspapers and journals before he published this definitive story of Kilmallock. With its great detail and depth of knowledge it is unlikely to be superseded and will, in all likelihood, be the author’s magnum opus.

The story begins with the foundation by St. Mocheallóg of a primitive church which grew into a monastery. Eventually a town developed and became known as Cill Mocheallóg after the early church on the hill. The town itself commenced with the early Norman castle and was well established by 1221 when the holding of fairs was licensed. The history of the Dominican priory and the fortified town, the Desmond rebellion and sack of Kilmallock, the nine years war and the Cromwellian and Williamite epochs, are all presented attractively and in considerable detail.

The author relates the story of the ‘Wild Geese’ and local Gaelic poets as well as that of the Whiteboys and United Irishmen. He recalls descriptions of foreign travellers to the town and a visit by Crofton Croker. The old Kilmallock corporation and the Workhouse era are fully covered, and there are chapters on the Famine, Fenians and Land League. Over 250 pages are dedicated to the 20th century. While hard work and perseverance
may eventually produce a history of earlier times, a presentation of the modern development of this historic town required a special flair. With his background as journalist, archivist and author, Mainchin Seoighe has succeeded in telling the full story of Kilmallock from its origins on the hill up to the present time in a clear narrative and sometimes colloquial style. It is a book which will endure.

GERARD A. LEE


This little book is a welcome addition to the growing number of popular histories of the parishes and religious orders and denominations of the Limerick region. It is laid out in nine easy-to-read chapters, with appendices and an index. Six chapters deal with the history of the Order and three give biographies of many of the friars, including Fr. Jos. Hennessy. Fr. Butler has penetrated beyond the usual run of sources for such a popular booklet and much of the information he presents is new. What is more, he actually gives the references which is an area where many such booklets fall down. The title is somewhat misleading because Fr. Butler describes Killagh Abbey in Co. Kerry as well, but this little excursion over the county boundary is excusable because it ties together the two halves of the history. The main criticism of the work is that it is quite clearly written from the male perspective. The Canonesses of St. Peter, who were the first members of the Order in the city and who give the place-name St. Peter’s Cell to the city, are relegated to an appendix and their foundation date is not used for the title of the first chapter, “1215-1576”. The work extends into the county to discuss the friars at Adare but there is no mention of the nuns at St. Catherine De O’Conyl (Monasterneacallowdhuie). The date 1215 in the title of Chapter I is wrong for the foundation of Holy Cross: the surviving Irish Pipe-Roll of 1211-12 shows that it was being built at least four years earlier. There are a few minor typographical errors, but they do not detract unduly from what is otherwise a very good starting point for anyone who wishes to dig deeper into the Limerick Augustinians.

BRIAN J. HODKINSON

J. de Courcy Ireland and David C. Sheehy (Eds.), ATLANTIC VISIONS, Boole Press Ltd., Dún Laoghaire 1989; ISBN 0-906783-83-6 (hbk) and 0-906783-83-X (pbk); pp. x + 229. Price: £20.00 (hbk) and £15.00 (pbk).

This well produced volume is comprised of some twenty-three articles, originally presented as papers to the first international conference of “The Society of Saint Brendan” held in Dublin and Kerry during September 1985. Atlantic Visions is divided into three sections. “The Brendan Story: The Cultural Heritage” is the first, consisting of eight articles, all of a high academic calibre. Of particular note, and specific interest to this reviewer, is Sean McCarra’s outstanding article on “Pilotage and Navigation in the Times of St. Brendan”. In this he competently evaluates possible methods of non-instrumental navigation techniques in the first millennium A.D. based on archaeological and documentary evidence, along with relevant ethnographic parallels. These include mental evaluation of tide, wind and current while out of sight of land; and cloud formations, the flight of birds, etc., when close to shore. He also realistically acknowledges that the seafaring skills described in the saint’s Navigatio may be reasonably dated to the 9th century when the initial Latin versions were written down from the oral tradition (presumably, adding, if unwittingly, interpolations into the text) as opposed to the 6th century context of the Kerry Saint.

Proinsias MacCana’s “The Voyage of St. Brendan: Literary and Historical Origins”, traces the literary traditions and elements of the genre out of which the St. Brendan Navigatio eventually evolved. He details the move from a pre-Christian form, tailored to suit the needs of the evangelizers, through “The Voyage of Bran” and similar works. He also outlines the impact of the genre, specifically St. Brendan’s Navigatio as its masterpiece, on hagiographic literature both in Ireland and on the European mainland.

Tómas Ó Coileamh, in his “St. Brendan Sources: St. Brendan and Early Irish Hagiography”, is on a similar line, and deals with the problems and profitability of the Irish hagiographic material in general and that associated with St. Brendan specifically. He gives an excellent catalogue of the different versions of the saint’s “Life” with stylistic similarities between these and other saint’s Lives and heroic biographies of similar date. These invariably include a variety of prophecies, preternatural signs and assorted miracles. Within this framework he demonstrates how the Navigatio of St. Brendan made its way into the more conventional form of saint’s “Life”.

Two articles of special note are, firstly, Robert Grenier’s “The Basque Whalers of Labrador”. He gives an introduction to the literary evidence for 16th century Basque whaling activity on the Canadian Coast and details the discovery, excavation and conservation of the whaling ship, the San Juan, sunk at port in 1565. Secondly, James P. Whittall II’s “Architectural and Epigraphic Evidence for Christian Celts in Connecticut, circa 500-700 A.D.”, gives a catalogue of possible sites along the Thames river on the N.E. coast of the United States which display examples of Christian Chi-Rho’s and Ogham inscriptions—few would accept these as genuinely ancient.

The final, “Miscellaneous”, section contains four articles and is, on the whole, a mixed bunch, moving easily from the sublime (John de Courcy Ireland, “The Contribution of Seamen of Irish Birth or Descent to Hydrography”) to, if not quite the ridiculous, the academically unsound (John Morwood, “Archaeic Navigational Instruments”).

Overall, however, this is an excellent collection of articles, well edited and pleasingly presented. With a few reservations this volume may be heartily recommended to both the academic and the general reader alike. Indeed, this book is for anyone who has an interest in our maritime heritage and a love of the sea.

ROBERT M. CHAPPLE


These three booklets form a concise, yet comprehensive account of one of the most turbulent periods in Irish history, a period in which many ways shaped the future of this island. It is an account which will be of immense interest not merely to the avid historian but also to the merely curious and indeed to the tourist.

The author of Historic Derry, Brian Lacy, traces the origins and history of an Irish city which, for better or worse, has become an item in world news. The author discusses the various accounts of the city's origin, most of which agree on its foundation as a monastic site in the 6th century; although at least one questions the role of St. Columcille as its founder. A fascinating and easy-to-read account deals with the shaping of Derry from St. Columcille to the Vikings and Normans, who seem to have had little influence in the northwest. We read that the 17th century was a watermark for Derry, from the Plantation, when London merchants, somewhat reluctantly, appeared, were persuaded to invest in Derry, and gave it what was later to become a controversial name, Londonderry; the story continues to the most significant event in its long history, the great siege of 1689. The post-siege events which contributed to its growth, such as the coming of the linen industry, the railway and the building of the great Guildhall, are recorded precisely and without frills by the author who also deals most effectively with the unfortunate turmoil of the 1970's and 1980's.

Mr. Lacy's account of The Siege of Derry, written in the same concise manner, is a fascinating story of one of the more influential events in Irish history. The characters of the two principal players in the drama, James II and William III, and their influence on events, are dealt with in a simple but effective manner, and the story is enlivened by names and people who have become not merely history, but folklore and propaganda too. These include Lundy, who appears to have been a victim rather than the traitor beloved of loyalists, and the apprentice boys, whose modern-day followers, the author suggests, have adopted a somewhat different role to those of 1689. The day-to-day events are also recorded, and naturally include the breaking of the siege by two ships, but what makes a more emotional impact is the horrific conditions of the besieged: items of “food” available include dogs, cats, mice and rats! The author records that one rather stout gentleman became worried by the many hungry eyes cast in his direction! The Siege of Derry became an international event and was news in all the capitals of Europe.

The picture of William of Orange which emerges from William III and Ireland is that of a liberal-minded heroic figure whose outlook was far removed from some of those who later acclaimed him as their hero. Rex Cathcart, in this booklet, outlines William’s emergence as a European leader, notably in his heroic and successful resistance, in his native Holland, to the powerful Louis XIV. We read that James II’s alliance with Louis, repugnant to the English, proved a fateful opportunity for William. The author follows the war of the two kings in Ireland, a war which placed Ireland on the European stage as part of what was an international conflict. Mr. Cathcart remarks that William and his army must have been struck by the contrast between the wealthy well-organised lowlands and the miserable conditions of the generality of the Irish. In a narrative unhindered by digressions or unnecessary detail, we follow William’s campaigns in Ireland, his arrival in Derry, the climax at the Boyne, where William’s composite army of many nationalities, many of them, ironically, Catholics, had numerical advantage, which however may not have been the decisive factor. William returned to England, following his
failure to take Limerick, a fact that was due in part to the heroics of Patrick Sarsfield. The author points out that William was strongly opposed to the Penal Laws imposed by his parliament. William’s victory ensured the success of the Protestant ‘Ascendancy’, but we are left with the impression that implications of the word “Williamite” to a later generation of Irish did scant justice to King William III.

All three booklets are liberally illustrated with excellent photographs (mostly coloured), maps and drawings which add to their appeal to the reader.

JAMES CASSERLY


The parable of the mustard seed, “which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and became a great tree”, can with justice be applied to Jim Kemmy’s Old Limerick Journal, which from its rather thin and inauspicious 38-paged first number in December 1979, has grown into a mighty tree of many branches, with the winter 1990 number, an impressive volume of 228 triple-columned A4-size pages with over 180 illustrations—portraits, places, maps and charts. Besides, it contains over fifty articles dealing with everything and anything connected with the abortive 1690 siege of Limerick.

Little of relevance to the siege seems to have been forgotten, and while many of the articles will be known to historians as they have previously appeared in journals and magazines, laymen will be grateful for their appearance here under one cover. As they are all both readable and attractively set out, they should in their own way remedy the reproach that history is no longer readable but dull. Flicking through it one unearths many interesting shreds of history. For instance, there was probably a higher percentage of Catholics in the army of William than in that of James II, and Sarsfield and his men most probably dressed in red rather than in the “jackets green” of romantic Irish history.

Liam Irwin’s masterly exposition of the European Dimension to the struggle sets the stage for Larry Walsh’s introduction to and paraphrase of the contemporary accounts of the siege, while W. Troop’s lucid article on Dutch sources for the Williamite campaign in Ireland will be new to many. It is perhaps invidiously simply mentioning these three articles since almost all the articles are pertinent and informative, but one must draw the line somewhere.

One should not quibble, but I feel that the green, white and gold cover is a little garish, hard on the eye. However, this is of little matter set beside its solid worth. Besides any review of the journal is of necessity a tribute and thanksgiving to Jim Kemmy for his intense energy and love for his native city. It can be said of him what Bacon said of Aristotle that “he hath his oar in many waters”, and the voyage with him through the tangled waterways of the 1690 siege is an exciting adventure.

PADDY LYSAGHT


While we possess the accounts of many visitors who travelled through Ireland during the latter half of the eighteenth century, it is surprising that Willes’ letters to the Earl of Warwick remained almost unnoticed until 1969, when select extracts were published in a volume of documents entitled Aspects of Irish Social History (1750-1766). Surprising, because his acute observations, anecdotes and comments on what he saw and heard during his nine happy years in Ireland (1757-1766) as Lord Chief Baron of the Irish Court of Exchequer, breaths the tape yards ahead of many of the more well-known travellers’ narratives, with the possible exception of Arthur Young’s Tour in Ireland (1780). And to add to the importance of Willes’ letters, they antedate most of the other accounts, as it was not ’till after 1770 that Ireland became popular with travel writers.

During his stay, Willes in his capacity as judge, literally did the whole circuit of Ireland, staying a night or two in each place in a reasonably good inn, if one were available, and if not, with a nobleman, gentleman or bishop as the case may be.

In the Ireland of his time the Protestant ascendancy was all but a fait accompli. He noticed many new and elegant buildings all over the country. He saw young trees being planted all about the estates, which as he prophetically wrote, “will alter the face of the country in 20 years time”. While he also noted the dullness and the dirt of many towns and the poverty of the peasants, he seems to have turned a blind eye to the way the Papists were ground down, who at the time as Swift wrote: “were harmless as women and children”.

Despite his love and identification with Ireland, Willes was essentially an Englishman. Except in his capacity as judge, it would appear that he had very little contact with ordinary people. His knowledge of them was related
to him by the grand jurors and the ascendency class over their claret and whiskey when a court session was over.
Yet despite his Englishness he is not afraid to air his concern about the landlord system and the lack of tenant rights. He sees the injustice in subletting land where the occupant “is almost a slave to him who is called in the country a small landlord”. He is aware too of “the one universal custom in the country which will always be a bar to tenants’ improving: that is at the end of the lease he must pay for his improvements”. While he was well inclined towards the Irish, he desired to see justice effectively administered, one suspects to protect the landed class, and he was anxious that Ireland should become prosperous for a selfish reason: “For this is a most certain truth: that the richer we are the better for England, as all our wealth will first or last centre in England”.

But what will interest most readers are his comments and the curious Irish customs he relates. In a few paragraphs Willes’ description of a gargantuan and prolonged feast an Irish chieftain gave for his clansmen and visitors is compulsive reading, bringing the hospitality, the vitality and the wild, dare-devil streak in the hidden Ireland home to us. From a summary, only a pale shadow of the atmosphere, the whole ethos of the gathering can be gleamed.

“A bottle of brandy was the wet before dinner”, and after much feasting on mutton, fish and potatoes, afterwards washed down by good claret and brandy punch, and when everyone grew mellow, the chief called his favourite girl, “a neat handsome jolly girl”, to sing. He then warned his guests that while they “were welcome to any liberties with her from the girdle upwards, he would not permit any underhand doings”. The anecdote is worthy of a place with the Cromwellian Captain’s remarks on the Burren, and will, henceforward be quoted as often.

This story is probably the jewel in the pile, but the letters are peppered with such odd and curious bits of information. Not that he is incapable of being tedious on occasions. He rambles on too far explaining the beauties of Killarney, and the pages he devotes to the Giant’s Causeway and some other natural phenomena could benefit with pruning.

From his letters we learn much about the trades and industries in the towns. He is surprised at all the ruins of castles and churches he sees, and at the lack of woods all over the country. Fortunately, he has an eye for all those small but telling things one might easily miss. For instance, he notes that there is very little painted glass in Ireland; that the many eagles that live about Killarney add to the magnificence of the place; that “the Irish prefer milk kept a day or two, to be a little turn’d, to fresh new milk”. He observes that fish are so cheap in Galway that the soldiers are forbidden to eat it oftener than twice a week; the ladies of fashion play cards there every Sunday, and there exists a Galway by-law “prohibiting O’Flahertys and O’Rorcks etc. from setting their foot within the walls”. Other clans are permitted to live in the suburbs provided they shave their upper lip once a week.

As we have come to expect from Boethius Press, the book is well produced with footnotes, notes to each letter, and an index. If your curiosity extends to the landscape and to the life in Ireland long ago, this account will not disappoint you.

PADDY LYSAUGHT


The first four words in the title of this book, printed in large letters, stand out from the rest. Consequently, a cursory glance might suggest that this was another publication dealing with the sylvan delights of Victorian parklands. However, the ‘parcs’ in the title refer to intertidal stocking beds for rearing young oysters, the ‘passes’ refer to stone-built salmon ladders, and the ‘ponds’ were an essential component of the many salmon and oyster hatcheries constructed in Ireland during the second half of the 19th century, within the timescale of this book.

In fact, this comprehensive publication by Professor Noel Wilkins of the Department of Zoology, U.C.G., deals not only with the discovery of aquaculture by the ‘ancients’, and how knowledge of the art died with them, but also, and more importantly, with its rediscovery about two centuries ago. Ireland’s major contribution to this and to the first fifty years of the commercialization of fish-farming has now been written “in a way which not only informs but entertains and which is comprehensive without being trivial”, to quote from the Foreword.

Thus, one is rather proud to learn that the first-ever commercially operated salmon hatchery in the world commenced in Co. Galway (in Oughterard) in 1852; the first-ever large scale masonry fish ladders were erected in Co. Sligo (Ballisodare) that same year, and the first attempt to rear salmon in sea-cages was undertaken in Co. Dublin (Dún Laoghaire) in 1854. Happily, the human element is also present in this publication. Thus, pioneers in Irish aquaculture, including owners, “experts”, inspectors and commentators such as Edward and Thomas Ashworth, Robert Ramsbottom, William Ffennell and Limerick angling writer, Edward Fitzgibbon, are all mentioned in some detail.

One also learns about the life cycle and artificial cultivation of the Atlantic salmon and European oyster; the early history of the various Irish salmon hatcheries; the growth of the oyster culture 1863-1904. There is
even a chapter on the cultivation of seaweed... and sewage! All of this information is backed up with a fine selection of photographs, line-drawings and a most comprehensive Notes and Reference Section.

Some fine maps also illustrate the work although one might note the disappearance of Lough Allen from the Shannon system in the Hatcheries presentation. Excellent site maps of Carrig Island, off the shore of County Kerry in the Shannon estuary where the Sandes family had oyster beds in the 1860s onwards, and of the vast contemporary oyster pond and associated works of Robert Reeves just west of the present Killimer Ferry Terminal, are also included. This pond and some of its works are still visible, and, with the crumbling ruins of former salmon hatchery buildings recorded in this fine work, are archaeological monuments to the amazing efforts of these early aquaculturists who tried to enhance and augment the wild fisheries of their day.

This, then, is an important work dealing with a unique area of industrial archaeology and history during Victorian times when Ireland led the way in the development of both the inland and coastal fisheries. It should be of immense value to the specialist in these various disciplines and of more than usual interest to those who "wet a line" or enjoy the drowning of an oyster in a rather special liquid. The ordinary person will enjoy it too.

PEADR O'DOWD


Mention the words 'West Clare' and it's a fair bet that more people will think of the railway and the Percy French song than of the geographical area. Edmund Lenihan has written a most enjoyable and entertaining account of both the territory, which has evidence of human habitation for over 5,000 years, and the railway, which ran for just 76 years—though some of its earthworks will probably last for centuries.

Properly speaking, there were two railway lines, the West Clare, from Ennis to Milltown Malbay, opened 2 July 1887—the first sod was turned by Parnell two years earlier—and the South Clare, opened 23 December 1892.

This is a well-produced book with a handy reference map for frontispiece, good footnotes and some fine line-drawings by the author's brother, Mick. There is also an excellent selection of photographs from the Irish Railway Record Society dated 1952-54.

The author and his son, Keith, then aged 12, covered the 54 miles "from Ennis as far as Kilkee" (to quote Percy French) over 12 days between September 1987 and March 1988. He did the pilgrimage in winter, he says, because the remains of the line would not be covered with summer foliage. But in a countryside universally described as damp, cold and windswept, father and son endured many a wetting, many an encounter with furze and blackthorn.

Railways were pioneered by George Stephenson, who opened a working eight-mile track with locomotives in Hetton, Derbyshire, on 18 November 1822. In Ireland, the boom happened just after the Famine, but there were many areas left to be "opened up" where nobody would risk private capital. This led to the 1883 Tramways Act, which allowed light railways to be funded by baronial guarantee: each barony would guarantee the cost of building the track that ran through it.

The aim was to encourage social development and tourism: there were trams built for excursions to places like Blessington/Poulaphuca and the Giant's causeway; the Ulster and Connaught Light Railway Project envisaged a narrow-gauge railway from Newry to Clifden, all of 234 miles. The West Clare line was among the most successful of such publicly-funded projects, and resorts such as Lahinch owed their development to its existence. When first planned, the railway was designed to service the popular cruises on the Shannon Estuary, notably to Scattery Island, from Cappagh Pier near Kilrush. But such day-trips have fallen out of fashion and were never revived.

In purely economic terms the railway could never be justified. The terrain has neither the population nor prosperity to provide a viable traffic in either passengers or goods. The journey time for the 54 miles was 2 hours and 15 minutes, on gradients so steep that they often defeated the little steam engines. And the country was so windswept that trains were sometimes blown off the line. Page 149 of the book has a photograph of the anemometer at Quilty, used to measure wind-speed. If the wind was over 60 mph, the train was ballasted with concrete slabs under the seats.

Probably the most famous journey happened on 10 August 1896. Some weeds got into the water supply, and blocked the boiler of the locomotive, which was in danger of exploding. On the train was an entertainer, one Percy French, who spent eight hours trying to get to Kilkee to give a concert. He was late, the concert was cancelled, but the world got a song, and the railway an immortality which its directors fought in court. It was not an immunity which moved the likes of Todd Andrews when the decision was taken in 1961 to close the line.

Now, only 30 years later, it has largely vanished: only a few isolated bridges and earthworks remain from an integrated system. Indeed, if the author had confined himself only to the railway, this would have been a much slimmer volume. But he has a great mastery of a wealth of historical detail, from legend like the drowned
village of Cill Stuifin and the grave of Conan Maol of the Fianna, to the O'Connors and O'Briens, from the landlords like the Staecouples and Vendeleurs to tales of famine workhouses and the Black-and-Tan war. And it is all related with so much of the craft of the storyteller that the book would make a beautiful gift—if you could bear to part with it.

JOHN BROPHY


This book is a comprehensive history of the Valentia lifeboat, from its establishment in 1864 up to 1989. It is well illustrated with 80 photographs, together with sketches and diagrams. The author was born on Valentia Island, and has had a lifelong interest in lifeboats in general, and the Valentia lifeboat in particular.

The first half of the book covers the development of lifeboats, with graphic accounts of services rendered by the Valentia lifeboat; while the rest consists of appendices, including one describing the lighthouses within the area normally covered by the lifeboat—for one of the last of these, the Loop Head lighthouse, see our JOURNAL, 30(1987), 55-57.

Incidentally, the Air India disaster on the 26th of June 1985, saw the present lifeboat on the Valentia Station—Margaret Francis Love—travel 112 miles from base, to recover five bodies—far beyond its normal range. Up to the end of 1989, Valentia lifeboats were launched on 404 occasions, saving 330 lives. To quote the author: “That there is, and has been a continuity of courageous and selfless people from this remote community, ready to risk all for others, cannot and should not be forgotten”.

This book is a well deserved tribute to the past and present crews of the Valentia lifeboat, who nobly serviced, and still service, the seas off the North Munster coastline.

TED GLANCY


A short notice of this kind can scarcely do justice to this excellent little book on the remarkable Joyce brothers: Patrick, the scholar (1827-1914), and Robert, the songmaker and poet (1830-1883). Robert was the author of such well-known pieces as ‘The Boys of Wexford’ and ‘The Blacksmith of Limerick’. Much of Patrick’s work still endures, in particular his three volumes on Irish Names of Places, which was a great pioneering work at the time, and even now, after more than a century, remains the only comprehensive work on the subject, still of great value. His popularising books on Irish history and literature had wide influence at the time: Mainchín Seoighe reminds us that it was his Old Celtic Romances (a retelling of old Irish tales) that introduced Padraig Pearse to the Fiannaíochtaí literature (at a time when the Irish public were largely oblivious of their own literary heritage). His collections of Irish music and songs are of permanent importance as source-books, especially the material which he himself collected and preserved from Irish-speaking County Limerick: his Ancient Irish Music (1873) is a collection of one hundred tunes straight from the Limerick Gaeltacht, as are many of the pieces in his work Old Irish Folk Music and Songs (1909).

Both Patrick and Robert did very well in the professional world. This book leaves us wondering how this was accomplished financially: their father was a shoemaker living on the hillside at Glenosheen (the house is still lived in) near Kilfinane in Co. Limerick. Patrick became a teacher and went on to become the Principal of the Training College for Teachers in Marlborough Street, Dublin, with degrees (finally a doctorate) from Trinity College. Robert became a doctor and had a successful career in Boston where he was closely associated with the Fenian movement and was a close friend of O’Donovan Rossa and of many of the other leaders.

In Dr. Mainchín Seoighe, their namesake, we have a kindred spirit of the Joycees, the ideal person to tell their story appreciatively, as he does, introducing them to us through samples of their writings, and, along the way, letting us savour the atmosphere of the times they lived in, especially in the County Limerick of their youth.

Gur a dháta buan é i mbun pinn.

BRENDÁN O’MÁDAGÁIN

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Dr. Deeney shares with us his long and interesting life in this autobiographical book. Born in Lurgan, Co. Armagh, in 1906, the son of a General Practitioner in an undivided Ireland. He was educated by the Jesuits at Clongowes Wood College. He then entered Medical School at Queen’s University, Belfast. After graduating with Honours, he quickly accumulated a host of post-graduate qualifications including D.P.H., B.Sc., M.D. and M.R.C.P.I.

Deeney first joined his father in General Practice in Lurgan and stayed in a house built by his grandfather. He relates many interesting anecdotes of practice in Lurgan. Life was hard for the poor at that time. Large families, poor nutrition, and severe unemployment was a great breeding ground for illness. Antibiotics had not yet arrived on the scene, nor was the knowledge of many deficiency diseases well understood and, as a result, work for General Practitioners was very difficult. Despite this, he started a survey of nutrition, particularly malnutrition. This was the first of many surveys that Deeney carried out. His study of Pellagra, due to nicotinic acid deficiency, brought him to the attention of Professor Syndenstricher of the Rockeller Institute in 1942. By then this young General Practitioner was recognised as a world authority on Social and Preventive Medicine. Shortly afterwards, in 1944, he was appointed Chief Medical Advisor to the Department of Local Government and Public Health in Dublin. His observations of his early days in Dublin makes stimulating reading. Initially boycotted by his medical colleagues, he gradually won them around to his way of thinking. He gives us a great insight into the workings of the Civil Service and the interplay between himself, the Parliamentary Secretary and the Minister. Fireworks really started with the arrival of Dr. Noel Browne as Minister for Health. Prior to Browne’s arrival, the problem of tuberculosis was already recognised and plans were well in hand to combat this terrible scourge. Dr. Browne is credited by many as single-handedly overcoming the problem of T.B. in Ireland: rather, Dr. Browne acted as a catalyst, speeding up the implementation of the plans that were already formulated. Surprisingly, Deeney fails to mention the most important reason for overcoming the disease, namely the development of drugs such as P.A.S. and I.N.A.H. and Streptomycin. Having two strong personalities, namely Browne and Deeney, in the one Department resulted in a strong personality clash. Deeney’s health suffered and he sought and was granted leave of absence, and in consequence missed the upheavals that resulted from the attempted introduction of the Mother and Child Scheme by Dr. Browne. Deeney, incidentally, had conceived the idea of the Mother and Child Scheme and had so christened it. After the dust had settled, Deeney returned to the Department.

Deeney’s stature on the international stage had grown, and he was requested by the World Health Organisation to oversee major health programmes in many foreign countries, including Somalia and Indonesia. He tells many interesting anecdotes of his stay in these countries. At the age of sixty he retired from the Department of Health and immediately helped to found a college for the World Health Organisation. Finally, on a sudden impulse he returned to his roots, once again practising as a General Practitioner, on this occasion in far-away Fanad in Co. Donegal, where, incidentally, the local church had been built by his grandfather. Deeney’s last great challenge was a great honour for himself and for Ireland: he was invited by the Pope to go to Rome and accept the position as Special Adviser to the Holy See on medical matters. Dr. Deeney packed more into his life than any six normal people. He walked with Kings, Prime Ministers and a Pope, but, still retained the common touch. His book informs and entertains. This book will appeal especially to those in the Healing Profession but also to those who are interested in the history of the twentieth century in Ireland.

JOSEPH KELLY


This little book does not pretend to be anything more than “a memoir”. As such it succeeds very well, but it is not a history of the Circuit, nor is it the successor to Maurice Healy’s famous The Munster Circuit. It is one member’s fond recollections of his early days at the Bar practising as a Junior Counsel on the South-Western Circuit (part of the Munster Circuit of which he is now a Senior Counsel) from his call in 1942 until about ten or twelve years thereafter. The fact that those years included the years of ‘The Emergency’ make it extremely interesting. It was a very special period, and the flavour of the time is excellently captured by the author. Time, affluence and, more especially, inflation, have since about 1960 changed the whole scene on the South-Western Circuit.

The writing style of the author, a long-standing member of this Society, is most beautiful: it is poetic in a natural way. He brings a vision of slow, but pleasurable, travel by train which is truly delightful. He lists names of towns and other places which have musical names. Since the Englishman foisted his ridiculous spelling
on us it is difficult to feel sorry for him that he, the foreigner, will not hear the music! Perhaps a footnote or two giving phonetic pronunciations would have been a help.

While there are three or four excellent (and true) short pen-pictures of colleagues (all deceased), don’t expect a number of amusing or legal anecdotes, but read it with pleasure for its poetry and its accurate feeling for the times of forty years ago.

MICHAEL RYNNE


Nuair a thugann sé go foinsí a chabhróidh le staidéar a dhéanamh ar stair áitiúil tá an t-áth ñuathúil. Láimhínigh, mar is beag conac an bhfuil an oiread sin foinsí, sé sin foinsí foilisithe, aige is áth ág Luiumneach. Logainmneacha na hÉireann, Inleabhar 1: Contae Luiumneach an foiúchasán is deaín a bhaineann Luiumneach a tháinig ar an margadh. Tá sé beartaithe ag an gCoimisiún Logainmneacha a leithéid de leabhar a ullmhú i gcóir gach contae sa Stáit. Sa Réamhrá don leabhar ar Luiumneach, mínionn Art Ó Maolabhaí, an Príomhhoifigeach Logainmneacha sa tSuirbhéireachta Ordánaíos, conas a tharla gur roghnaithe Luiumneach mar abhar don chéad leabhar sa tsraith.

Deir sé:

"Tugadh túis é do chontae Luiumneach le foisiú i ríocht leabhar toisc gurb é an chontae sin tús a críochnaíodh faoi scéim oibre na Suirbhéireachta chun sráith nua lseachtaineanna dátheangacha ar scála méadhrach agus ar an eangach náisiúnta a chur ar fáil in ionad na sráite contae a foilsíodh roimhe".

This valuable work on the placenames of Co. Limerick carries a most informative Preface by Art Ó Maolabhaí, Chief Placenames Officer of the Ordnance Survey, in which he treats of the work involved in preparing the volume, the great number of sources researched, and how the evidence relating to the various names was analysed for the purpose of arriving at the Irish form ultimately recommended to be the official standard Irish form of the name. Local pronunciation sometimes provided the deciding evidence. This would apply in particular to a placename beginning with the element Kil(l), where a doubt might exist as to whether the Kil(l) represented the Irish word cill, a church, or coill, a wood.

Of the placenames listed in Contae Luiumneach, 1,944 (or about 90%) are townland names. Also included are barony, parish (civil), district, river, hill and mountain names. In the case of each placename the form of the names found in various sources over the centuries is given, as well as the date of the source. In most cases the meaning of the placename is given; where it is not possible to say what the meaning is we get the note: "Ní leir bri an ainm".

After the official Irish name of the townland comes the barony code (A for Clanwilliam; B for Connello Upper, and so on), and the map number (in the latest maps); then, after the official English form of the townland name, comes the map number indicating the location of the townland on the earlier 6 inch maps. A typical entry would be as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Dún Trí Liag E 59</th>
<th>Duntryleague 41,49</th>
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<td>Dún trí liacc</td>
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<td>1490c</td>
<td>Dun trí liacc</td>
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<td>1505</td>
<td>Duntrileig</td>
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<td>1550c</td>
<td>dún trí liag (g.)</td>
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<td>1615</td>
<td>Doontrileag</td>
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<td>Dún Tri Liag</td>
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<td>1655</td>
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<td>dún trí liag</td>
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*sort of three stones*

The abbreviated references shown above are set out in their full extended form at the beginning of the book. It will be seen then what a very valuable help to the student of local history this book will be, indicating, as it does, the chief sources of historical information for each townland in the county, and also in the city area. In all, over 170 references are listed.

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Looking up a place like Mungrue, we find 52 references to it listed, the earliest being for the year 743; Kilmallock has 32 references, the earliest dated 927; Limerick city has 79 references, the oldest being for the year 571; Donaghmore has 28 references, extending from c.900 to 1840.

It is interesting to find that, as a result of the evidence in the sources consulted, a number of old historic placenames have been restored as the official Irish forms. For example, in Irish the name Gardenfield (the name of a townland near Dromcollogher) is now officially Múscrai Úi Núnain, the name by which it was known in the 1300s and 1600s. On the other hand, some people have expressed regret that Brú na nDéise has now been officially superseded by An Brú, and Caileán Ó gConaing by Caileán Úi Chonail.

As for the placenames themselves—not a few of which may be 2,000 years old—they are mines of information. Some will be descriptive of physical features, hills, rivers, plains, fords, etc., or of early man-made features such as dún, lios, ráth, cathair, etc., some of which features may no longer exist. Others will enshrine personal or tribal names that go back to the dawn of history, or the names of Gaelic or Norman land-holding families. Others still record early church or monastic sites, or recall some incident from the distant past, as for example, Glenanair (Gleann an Air, the Glen of Slaughter), or Ballynarooga (Baile na Ruige, the townland of the rout).

The names of native flora and fauna occur frequently in the placenames. We have Knockaderry (Cnoc an Doire, the hill of the oak wood), Cooltree (Cill Threabhaigh, corner of the heather), Coolrahne (Cill Raithní, corner of the fern or bracken). And we have Lackanagrour (Leacan na gCreabhar, the hillside of the woodcocks), and Gorteenamrock (Goirtín na mBroc, the small field of the badgers).

This book on the Limerick placenames can be used without any difficulty by a person knowing no Irish, as, in addition to having an index of placenames in Irish, it also has an index of placenames in English. The book is a must for anybody interested in local history in Limerick; it is to be hoped, too, that every school in Limerick will provide itself, or be provided, with a copy.

Very fittingly, Contae Luainnigh is dedicated to the memory of a Limerick man and former Member of our Society, Eamon de hOir, a native of Glin, who was Chief Placenames Officer, Ordnance Survey, from 1938 up to his unexpected death in 1975.

Mainchín Seoighe