

# BOOK REVIEWS

Michael Ryan (ed.), **THE ILLUSTRATED ARCHAEOLOGY OF IRELAND**, Town House and Country House, Dublin 1991; pp. 224; ISBN 0-946172-25-0. Price: £19.95.

This is a wide ranging and useful book in which the editor has brought together some thirty-seven contributors to cover many aspects of Irish archaeology. It is an indication of how specialised Irish archaeology has become that no one author could deal with all the aspects of the subject with any degree of authority. The book is well designed and profusely illustrated, largely in colour, and while its format gives it the appearance of a coffee-table book its high quality content belies such a dismissive classification.

The book is divided into seven sections. The first, called "Interpreting the Evidence", contains a number of contributions dealing with archaeological method and dating, and excavation under different conditions such as rescue, underwater and wetland archaeology. The other sections follow in chronological order from the Stone Age to the Early Modern Period. The choice of topics in these sections has been dictated to some degree by the expertise of the chosen contributors. The multiplicity of authors has inevitably led to some unevenness in style and content but this has been minimised by skillful editing and short introductory parts by the editor. Not all the contributors are archaeologists. In the prehistoric sections there are useful chapters on geology and raw materials by the late John Jackson, and on the environment is one of its strong points and is a feature of the Early Medieval Section also, where Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has written a chapter on Early Irish Christianity and Bernard Meehan, one on manuscript production.

Generally the information in the prehistoric sections is authoritative and up-to-date, being based on the most recent results from excavations, research and radiocarbon dating. The latter has radically altered our picture of the Neolithic in particular, and has placed certain burial and pottery types in a different order than heretofore. For example the Linkardstown-type burials and certain decorated pottery types found with them, which were formerly thought to be very late in the Neolithic, are now accepted as belonging to the earlier Neolithic having been pushed back over a thousand years by radiocarbon dating.

In older publications on Irish archaeology the Bronze Age often seems dull, consisting only of typologies of pottery, gold and bronzes, illustrated with line-drawing. In this book spectacular colour photographs of monuments, gold and bronze objects and pottery add life to the text, while recent excavations are throwing more light on the settlements of the period. The section on the "Iron Age", a difficult period with its dearth of habitation-sites, is both readable and scholarly.

The section on the "Early Medieval Period" is the longest in the book. This covers the period from the coming of Christianity around 400 A.D. up until the arrival of the Normans in the twelfth century. This has usually been known as the Early Christian Period in Irish archaeology. The editor has pioneered this new terminology which certainly brings us more into line with British terminology, which certainly brings us more into line with British and Continental usage, but is still not widely accepted here. The period is well covered in this section with much new information from excavations such as Deer Park Farms and the cities of Dublin and Waterford. The ornate metalwork possibly gets undue emphasis in comparison with everyday objects, and weapons which are not dealt with at all.

The next section covering the period from the Norman incursion up to about 1600 A.D. is called "The Later Medieval Period", a not altogether satisfactory term for what was hitherto known in Ireland as the Medieval Period. To call it the High and Late Medieval Periods might have been more consistent and would have fitted better with the title of David Johnson's chapter (Later Medieval Castles), which covers the later part of this period: the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The final section, "The Early Modern Period", is short but interesting, containing information not easily available elsewhere on the Munster and Ulster plantations by Denis Power and Brian Lacy (the spelling Lacey is used for some strange reason).

While the text is almost free from errors (apart from misplacing Killeel, Co. Kildare, in Co. Dubin, Kiltinan, Co. Tipperary, in Co. Kilkenny and Shinrone, Co. Offaly, in Co. Tipperary) a number of errors have crept into the illustration captions and a few illustrations have been printed in reverse (Tara on p.124 and the Black Abbey, Kilkenny, on p.180). Tullaghoge (not Tullahogue as in the caption on p.181) was not the inauguration site of the O'Neills of Clandeboye but rather that of the main branch of the O'Neills of Clandeboye but rather that of the main branch to have been changed but the old caption left in place.



A major shortcoming is the total lack of references or even a select bibliography. There is no suggested further reading for the interested person whose appetite has been whetted by this stimulating book. Hopefully this lack will be redressed in further editions of the book, which is undoubtedly a landmark in Irish archaeological publishing and deserves every success.

CONLETH MANNING

Peter Harbison, **BERANGER'S VIEWS OF IRELAND**. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1991; pp.111; ISBM 0-901714-93-3 (hbk) and ISBN 0-901714-94-1 (pbk). Price: £30.00 (hbk) and £19.95 (pbk.).

This is a beautifully produced book, one for which the printers, Betaprint Ltd., the publishers and the author of the text deserve the highest praise. Superficially, perhaps, it might be mistaken for a 'coffee-table', but it merits better - it is a valuable scholarly production of importance to all interested in the 'cromlechs' and 'old ruins' of Ireland's past.

Gabriel Beranger was a Dutchman, born in Rotterdam about 1729, who came to Ireland at the age of twenty-one and lived here until he died in Dublin, in 1817, at the ripe old of 88. A competent draughtsman rather than a great artist, he spent much of his adult life travelling around Ireland sketching the antiquities. Much of his work survives today, and forms an invaluable legacy through which we can see those ruins, apparently accurately, as they were over two hundred years ago. They form an invaluable record for architectural historians, archaeologists and others, and are pleasing if not great art. Most of his work was done between about 1760 and 1780, but he was still producing his attractive water-colour sketches many years later.

The present volume consists of a useful introduction by Dr. Peter Harbison and 47 well-produced illustrations taken from a volume of Beranger's work now housed in the Royal Irish Academy. This album contains 91 such water-colours, and while the 47 reproduced in full colour are no doubt representative, one wonders why the number was not increased to a round 50, with the other 41 perhaps produced in black-and-white.

While all the illustrations are by Beranger, they are all post-factum copies, 25 of his own original work and the other 65 copies of the work of others, e.g. 22 by General Vallency, 14 by the Rev. Mr. Seymour, 3 by Jonathan Fisher, the landscape painter, and 1 by A.M. Bigari who is himself noted for his antiquarian sketches of Irish monuments. A full page is devoted to each of the 47 chosen reproductions, each facing page presenting an informative extended note by Dr. Harbison. Five of them show monuments in North Munster, as follows: No. 8, Carrick-on-Suir Castle, Co. Tipperary; No. 9, Askeaton Friary, Co. Limerick; No. 11, Adare Friary, Co. Limerick; No. 12, Holycross Abbey, Co. Tipperary, and No. 17, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick, which latter is a general view of the town from a distance which shows considerably extant town-walls, no longer disappeared, and provides a useful elevation to go with the pictorial map of about 1600 published by Dr. Andrews in our Journal, 11 (1968), 27-35, Pls. IV and V. One page 111 is an excellent map of Ireland showing where the 47 sites of the illustrations are to be found.

All-in-all, this book is a pleasure to have on one's shelves, on one's coffee table, or to hold and peruse, truly a production of which the Academy can rightly be proud.

ETIENNE RYNNE

J.W. O'Connell and A. Korff (eds.) **THE BOOK OF THE BURREN**, Tir Eolas, Kinvara, Co. Galway 1991; pp. 228; ISBN 1-873821 - (hbk) and 1-873821-00-x (pbk). Price: £15.95 (hbk) and £9.95 (pbk).

This work is more a book of the Burren rather than the book of the Burren claimed in the title. It will never be possible to produce the definite work on this part of Co. Clare. That being said, this is the best effort yet at condensing between the covers of one book the wide range of elements that make up the Burren. We already have excellent maps of the Region, guides to its flora, fauna and archaeology, suggested tours and studies of its caves, but in this book all that, and more, is presented.

The geology of the region, over- and under- ground, is described by John Feehan in the clear and attractive way, we have come to expect from the presenter of R.T.E.'s highly acclaimed series "Exploring the Landscape". Cilian Rodem and Gordon D'Arcy tackle the flora and fauna and complete the first part of the book, as it were, in presenting the non-human landscape. These three essays and an "Interlude", also by C. Roden, are splendidly



illustrated with photographs, many in colour, drawings, and Gordon D'Arcy's water colours of animals, birds and insects.

John Waddell covers a span of 4,000 years or so in his paper on the prehistory of the Burren. The Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages, as evidenced in the Region, are discussed. The well-known archaeological features (Paulnabrone portal tomb, Poulawack cairn, Ballykinvarga stone fort and Gleninsheen gorget) are all described in some detail. This approach of a generalised discussion highlighted by a deeper examination of examples of the principal monument-types succeeds well.

Paul Gosling and Leo Swan, both archaeologists, again deal with monuments, mostly stone forts and souterrain in Gosling's paper and the ecclesiastical remains in Swan's. Both also draw on historical sources in their discussions. Leo Swan includes a useful inventory of 80 ecclesiastical sites in the Burren. Again, the standard of illustration in these three archaeological essays is very high, the stunning colour aerial photographs in particular.

History, archaeology, and indeed architecture, combine again in Paul Gosling's second essay "The Burren in Medieval Times". The castles and tower-houses are set against the landscape of the time and the changes in ownership resulting from various political and military struggles. That there was a significant continuity of settlement from the Early Historic Period is also shown, and this overlap with castle and tower-house building is frequently overlooked. This overlap was purely architectural but also cultural, social and linguistic.

Jeff O'Connell takes the Burren story from about 1600 to the present century in a general survey of the history of those centuries as witnessed in this area.

The unique flavour of this book is provided by the final five essays in the collection: Lelia Doolan on the holy wells and the cures and lore associated with them, Caoilte Breatnach on shepherds and shepherding, Charlie Piggott on traditional music and song, and Anne Korff on the Burren as painted and photographed by a variety of artists. Beautiful colour reproductions decorate the Korff essay and give a perspective on the Burren that one is only infrequently made aware of in other books on the region. The final essay by Patrick Sheeran is a spiritual, or perhaps philosophical, look at the Burren.

The editors, Jeff O'Connell and Anne Korff, have done a commendable job in assembling such a range of contributors and material. Their view of the Burren rightly goes beyond the flora, fauna, geology and archaeology. What is a place without its music, its songsters, its artists, its folklore? These also belong to the story. The book is a delight to read and leaf through. The hundreds of photographs, line-drawings and reproductions of paintings are a joy in themselves, but coupled with texts that must have been very difficult to condense to such manageable proportions, give us one of our best contributions to "Burrenology".

I would like to highlight one fault. The cover design and presentation of the book do not do justice to what lies inside. A more ambitious packaging and cleaner cover design would, I feel, better complement the efforts of contributors and editors alike. However such a presentation might have put the price beyond what the average buyer would be willing to pay.

That said, buy it.

DIARMUID A. Ó DRISCEOIL

Bernadette Tarrant and Grainne O'Connell, **EXPLORING THE RICH HERITAGE OF THE NORTH KERRY LANDSCAPE**, Fóras Áiseanna Saothar, Listowel 1990; pp. xiv + 209; ISBN 0-9516103-0-9 (hbk) and 0-9516103-1-7 (pbk.) Price: £6.00 (hbk) and £ (pbk.)

This informative guide to the archaeology, history and folklore of North Kerry has been compiled, in the main, from the painstaking work of the North Kerry Archaeological Survey team lead by Caroline Toal, B.A., and Neol Guering, the Project Archaeologist and Surveyor respectively. The text and illustrations were prepared by Bernadette Tarrant and Grainne O'Connell, under the aegis of the Listowel Archaeological and Historical Committee, and the Preface, entitled "Precious Wonders", is by the renowned poet and author, Bryan MacMahon.

The book starts with a 24-page "Introduction" briefly introducing the archaeology and history of the area, comprised the baronies of Iraghticonnor and Clanmorris, and this is followed by five chapters, each one covering a specific region in North Kerry in the form of a brief tour. The text is easy to follow and the descriptions of the archaeological and historical sites are often accompanied by interesting folk memories and legends which along with the numerous pen and ink illustrations, give an interesting perspective to the book.

While it might seem to be invidious to point out a few minor errors, it should perhaps be pointed out that the



illustration on page 2 perpetuates the outdated idea that capstones were raised on to Portal Dolmens by means of a ramp and rollers when the process of using levers and fulcrums to raise the stone is much more likely to have been the method used. The stone axehead from Carrig Head illustrated on page 52 is difficult to recognise as such because only a side view of the object is shown and the same might be said even more strongly for the illustration on page 85 allegedly showing Dromin Ringfort and that on page 99 purporting to show the multivallate ringfort at Ballydonoghue. In general, however, the illustrations serve their purpose, though one might be forgiven for criticising the rather old-fashioned 'Romantic' frontispiece which seems out of place in such a book, while the artist might well be severely criticised for the inaccurate depiction on page 81 of 'The Maid of Erin', the best-known example of the plasterer's art in Listowel, which instead of being naked to the waist is drawn with her much-photographed bosom prudishly clothed! The Sheela-na-Gig illustration of Kilnaughted Church's two-ope stoup (incorrectly captioned a font) on page 61 is a useful addition to the number of such stoups published in our Journal, 14(1971), 76-77, by Martin Timoney.

Taken all-in-all, however, this very reasonably priced book provided a well-researched, well-written and useful survey, containing a wealth of information on North Kerry which will be of interest to anyone visiting that part of 'The Kingdom'

MICHAEL CONNOLLY

Gerard Beggan, **IN THE BARONY OF PUBBLEBRIEN: PATRICKSWELL AND CRECORA - HISTORY OF A CO. LIMERICK VILLAGE AND IT ENVIRONS**, privately published 1991; pp.iv + 101 Price: £5.00

This book is one that deserves to be especially drawn to the attention of local historians. The author, Dr. Beggan, who was reared in the heartland of Pubblebrien, is a former national school teacher and secondary school inspector of mathematics, and is at present a Statutory Lecturer in U.C.G.

In his book Dr. Beggan describes Pubblebrien as a long narrow barony, about twelve miles long, running in a north-west to south-east direction from the River Shannon to the River Camogue. Very roughly speaking, it extends from Carrigogunnell to Manister Abbey, and is comprised of more than 70 townlands. The Ó Conaings were for long the ruling family in the Carrigogunnell area, Carrigogunnell being, in fact, a corruption of Carraig Ó gConaing (The Rock of the O'Conaings), but their lands passed to the de Burgos after the Normans had established themselves in Limerick.

William de Burgo married a daughter of O'Brien, Prince of Thomond, and some time later we find John of England granting the lands around Carrigogunnell to Donnchadh Cairbreach O'Brien, King of Thomond. In this way the O'Briens got their first foothold in territory that would later form part of Pubblebrien when the barony was created. In 1499 James Mac Garrott, Earl of Thomond confirmed to Brian Duv O'Brien the already-mentioned lands of Carrigogunnell, together with most of the other lands which, with those of Carrigogunnell, were to form the barony of Pubblebrien, a name deriving from the Irish Pobal Bhriain, meaning Brian's (*i.e.* Brian Duv) People or Country. Brian Duv (Brian Dubh) had one son, Donnchadh; but this Donnchadh had no fewer than eleven sons, among whom he apportioned all the lands of Pubblebrien. Gerard Beggan lists the different townlands each received.

The O'Briens of Pubblebrien lost all their lands at the time of the Cromwellian Confiscations, their properties passing to that category of English Planters known as Adventurers. And so new names came into Pubblebrien to replace the old native names - Peacocke, Barnadiston, Barker, Sweete, Green, Tuthill, Rose, White, Westropp, etc. Dr. Beggan is very good at explaining how Pubblebrien was eventually divided up among the Adventurers according to their original financial contributions to the Cromwellian campaign; he is also very good at disentangling the various complicated land transfers and acquisitions that took place in the course of the two centuries following the Cromwellian plantations.

The book has many fascinating snippets of information. For example, shortly after 1851, Edward White became owner of Fort Etna House, which had been built by Thomas Peacocke in 1790. A son of Edward's, Arthur White, being solicitor for the railway company which planned to lay a line from Limerick city through Patrickswell, had enormous influence in determining where the railway stations should be placed. Arthur had married Mary Massy-Westropp of Attyflin, and had moved into Attyflin House to live. The obvious site for Patrickswell station, according to Gerard Beggan, would have been near the crossing of the Crecora road by the rail track. But for his own convenience Arthur had it sited near his own home in Attyflin.

A full chapter is devoted to Attyflin, both house and townland. The name Attyflin comes from the Irish Áit Tí



Flainn, the site of Flann's House, the Flann in question being a 16th century Flann O'Brien. Attyflin came into the possession of the Westropp in 1703. Of this family was Thomas Johnson Westropp, born in 1860, a scholarly and devoted antiquarian, to whom local historians in Limerick and Clare, and archaeologists everywhere are forever indebted.

Dr. Beggan believes that it was Thomas Rose who, in 1689, first used the name Patrickswell to denote a particular area of land. Prior to that the name applied only to the local holy well dedicated to St. Patrick. Dr. Beggan also believes that it was Thomas Rose who established the village of Patrickswell. In this very valuable addition to the local histories of specified areas in Co. Limerick, the author of *In the Barony of Pubblebrien* covers much more than the ascendancy families and Big Houses. He deals with the townland names, for example; with the ringforts of the area and with the carved image of St. Patrick at the holy well in the village of Patrickswell. And, by the way, in order to end speculation, wouldn't it be well if some expert could be got to pronounce on the antiquity or otherwise of that image of St. Patrick?

Among other matters dealt with in the book are Whiteboy activities in the area, hedgeschools, the rifled kyle at Attyflin and the surviving one at Kilcornan, the fair of Patrickswell, the "threshing machine" site marked on the 1840 Ordnance Survey map, the kind of farming carried on in the area and the crops grown. Nor is local rhymers John Ryan forgotten. In fact the book brings us right up to date as it deals with the development of Patrickswell in recent times. This book is a very good example of what a local history should be. It is comprehensive, it is authoritative, and its unobtrusive scholarship ensures that it is eminently readable. Molaim an t-údar!

MAINCHÍN SEOIGHE

Bernard O'Hara, **THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF KILLASSER, CO. MAYO**, The research and Development Unit, Regional Technical College, Galway 1991; pp.227; ISBN 0-9517270-0-1 (hbk) and ISBN 0-9517270-1-X (pbk). Price: £12.00 (hbk) and £6.00 (pbk).

To review a book about a Co. Mayo parish in our journal might seem strange, but first of all the author is a member of our Society and secondly the book is an exemplary model for anyone who intends to publish an historical/archaeological account of a parish or similarly sized region.

Some years ago I was invited to spend a day in Co. Mayo in a place called Killasser. "Killasser", I replied "where in God's name is Killasser, and why in hell should I go there?". I was promptly informed that it was a parish somewhere northeast of Swinford, in Co. Mayo, and that "they" were discovering interesting archaeological field monuments up there "by the new time". I went, not once, but several times, and as a result am quite prepared to accept that there are probably more archaeological sites of interest and importance in Killasser than in any other parish in Ireland. But despite my many visits there, I would have great trouble, even now, in finding Killasser on my own. It is a hilly, irregular area, full of strange winding roads, lakes, hollows, and everywhere sloping land, land which is often wild and overgrown and well-nigh impassable. This is why Killasser is so densely populated with previously unrecorded ancient field monuments: the inhabitants seem to have been always relatively isolated within this rough landscape, and interested outsiders seem to have either got so lost there that they missed out on the great wealth of antiquities or simply never found the place! The very difficulty of finding the parish, and of travelling around it having once found it, has protected its rich heritage from unwitting destruction and for posterity. But that heritage had to be discovered and adequately recorded before posterity might benefit. This Bernard (Bernie) O'Hara has now done.

The author is a native of Killasser but now resident in Galway City. Inspired and enthused by his colleagues in the Regional Technical College there, notably Peadar O'Dowd and Eddie Fox, both graduates in Archaeology from University College Galway, and members of our society, he started looking around him on his frequent return visits to Killasser, and having an enquiring mind he began first to question and then to record his new-found appreciation of his environment. He has many friends in Killasser, and soon he had passed on his own enthusiasm to a small group, friends who soon themselves were walking every field and bog in the parish, seeking out and inspecting every strange bump, hollow, stone or ruined building in the area. They formed a virtual archaeological field survey team, slowly acquiring more and more knowledge and experience so that before long archaeological field-monuments were almost jumping out of the landscape at them until now it is possible to record over three hundred of them in this book. Of course they made several mistaken identifications and interpretations, but they realised the likelihood of this and consequently they plagued the professional archaeologists until virtually every monument in the parish



whether previously recorded or a new discovery, whether easily typed or unclassifiable, has been inspected by myself, the members of the Archaeological Branch of the Ordnance Survey or some other professional. "They", the local group of enthusiasts, did their job well.

The result is this book, an outstanding contribution to our knowledge of a fascinating and unknown area which will undoubtedly serve as a model to be aspired to by all who wish to record their own region. This is no ordinary parish history - it provides a palimpsest of the parish from which the past of thousands of years can be interpreted.

The Contents gives a good idea of the book's contents: 1 Killasser: An Introduction; 2. Archaeology: An Introduction; 3. Megalithic Tombs; 4. Ancient Field Systems and Habitations-Sites; 5. Mounds, Cairns and Barrows; 6. Standing-Stones, Alignments and Stone Circles; 7. Ancient Cooking-Places; 8. Crannogs; 9. Ringforts and Souterrains; 10. Ecclesiastical Sites and Monuments; 11. A Post-Medieval Miscellany; Appendix A. Killasser Artifacts in the National Museum; Appendix B. Other Archaeological Sites near Killasser; Bibliography; Index. Each chapter starts with a short verse or two, not always relevant but a not unattractive if rather old fashioned approach, and, apart from the first two chapters, includes a descriptive list of the relevant monuments. The book also contains 27 line-drawings, unfortunately almost all without captions (Fig. 4, on page 49, has an incorrect caption, that for Fig. 15) and 56 photographs. Among the former are 9 useful distribution maps - North Munster readers may be surprised to find the shape of Killasser Parish looks rather like that of Co. Limerick!

Among the photographs is one (Pl.12) showing a perfectly normal Late Bronze Age javelin-head found in 1988 near the unclassified megalithic tomb in Prebaun townland. However, the caption describes this as "a bronze fish-spear" but it is nowhere else mentioned in the book, not in the bit about the Prebaun megalithic tomb, Chapter 2, Appendix A, nor in the Index - students of Archaeology would like to know more about it as, no doubt, would the National Museum!

This is a useful book, invaluable in many ways, one which opens up a whole new area of interest for study and enjoyment. With this book now available to all, no-one will ever again be justified in asking "Where in God's name is Killasser?". Indeed, the real danger is that Killasser might in the foreseeable future be overrun with antiquarian groups flocking to see the many unique and intriguing sites there!

ETIENNE RYNNE

Seán Spellisey and John O'Brien, **LIMERICK, THE RICH LAND**, Spellisey/ O'Brien Publishers, Ennis 1989; pp. 286; ISBN 0-95122474-1-7 (pbk) and ISBN 0-95122475-2-5 (hbk). Price: £30.00 (hbk), £11.95 (pbk).

Agriculturists may quibble at the phrase "Rich Land" in the title, but, as this latest offering from the Spellisey-O'Brien team shows, Limerick is indeed a veritable Aladdin's Cave of historical and antiquarian treasures. In style this publication resembles the authors' previous work, *Clare County of Contrasts* (reviewed in this journal 29(1987),109) but the format is radically improved. This is a much more user friendly book of better shape, and printed on gloss paper resulting in sharper text and greatly improved photographic reproduction. The photographs are generally of a high quality but those on p.22 - the Westropp Memorial - and p.23 - the Galway-Bultingfort-Stritch monument are somewhat grey. However, the remainder of the photographs add greatly to the text, some of the colour plates being superb. I suspect that in years to come many of Mr. O'Brien's aerial photo's will form the basis of a research archive by a future generation of urban historians.

In compendium works of this nature it is easy to nit-pick about items included, excluded, or not emphasised in the text. In this latter regard greater prominence could have been given to Barrington's Bridge at Abington - one of Ireland's earliest iron bridges. Also the Le Fanu bridge at Glenstal should have been included. Le Fanu, one of the great 19th century Irish railway engineers, was son-in-law to Matthew Barrington and, indeed, was persuaded by Barrington to become an engineer. The Dargin mentioned as a Dublin architect (p.137) is more famous as a railway contractor. But then this reviewer's predilection is for engineering history. Whilst mentioning that a modern bridge was built over the ford at Knockainey (p.192), Spellisey omits to state that the ford was marked, up until 1932, by three standing-stones, one in the centre of the river and one on each bank. Knockainey ford is one of the very few Irish fording-places known to have been delineated. The markers indicate that the ford was at all times submerged. The account of Thomas Henry Cleeve (pp. 77-78) arriving in Limerick for a holiday and setting up in business almost by accident, is a nice piece of folklore. In fact, Cleeve came to Limerick as an apprentice to his uncle, J.P. Evans. Subsequent to Evan's death, Cleeve took over the running of this concern in 1872 and afterwards established his Condensed Milk Factory, bringing his brothers over from Canada to help him.



Overall Spellisey's text is crisp, sure, easily read and has a good flow to it. Starting with "Viking Limerick", he proceeds through the city and covers the county, area by area. The uncluttered map (pp.8-9) is very useful as one can see at a glance the relationship of any area with the rest of the county. It also enables Sunday excursionists to plot a touring route ensuring an enjoyable excursion provided they bring this gazette of essential information with them. The Sunday afternoon sightseer will not be the only one to find this publication essential reading. The local historian who will find his/her task made so much easier by the inclusion of a bibliography of 284 numbered references. Each section ends with a "Source Reference Numbers" listing, indicating the sources from which it was compiled. The whole is rounded off by two extensive indices, one for places and one for "faces" (i.e. people).

To conclude, it should be stated that this reviewer is an infrequent visitor to Limerick; I suspect that is why I was asked to review this book. On my last visit to the city I took it along. The end result was three very enjoyable and informative hours well spent exploring; one very late appointment, apologies to the party concerned, and a decision that on my next visit the first item into the briefcase will be Limerick, The Rich Land.

PAUL DUFFY

V. Buckley (compiler) **BURNT OFFERINGS: INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO BURNT MOUND ARCHAEOLOGY**, Wordwell Ltd., Dublin 1990; pp.195; ISBN 1-869857-07-0. Price £9.99

Burnt Offerings, a compilation of articles concerning fulachta fiadh or, as they are otherwise referred to, burnt or boiling mounds (Britain) and Skärvestenhogar (Sweden), is the result of an international conference on the subject, organised by Victor Buckley of the national Monuments Branch of the Office of Public Works, and held in Trinity College, Dublin, in 1988. The conference recognised the importance of presenting the current state of research into this site-type in a single volume. As is claimed in the foreword, the publication is focussed on the provision of an "overview" of these monuments which "transcend national and international boundaries" - it provides an in-depth and comprehensive account of this little-known, though important and complex, monument-type.

The format of the book is divided into six parts, the first five parts dealing with material from Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales and Sweden respectively, while the final part contains specialist contributions on the topic. The geographical division of the book allows the researcher easy accessibility to the area he/she wishes to examine. The volume is 195 pages in length and is illustrated with 68 good quality figures and 19 photographic plates, 9 of which are in colour.

The individual submissions range considerably in scope and illustrate the variety of approaches which may be applied to the study of fulachta fiadh. Included are the results of regional studies on the distributions of the monuments, such as that detailed by D. Power in Co. Cork. P.S. Halliday analyses the difficulties encountered in attempting to establish the distribution pattern of burnt mounds in Scotland. There is also a representative sample of the results of intensive local surveys. Summaries of recent excavation from all the areas under discussion are included. A catalogue of the finds from Irish fulachta fiadh by Stella Cherry highlights the nature and the paucity of the artifacts which are associated with these monuments. Nonetheless, fulachta fiadh are one of the most common archaeological field-monuments found in Ireland, in excess of 7,000 presently recorded with more and more being found each year due to greater awareness and increased field-walking. There are over 2,000 examples alone from County Cork, and a huge number too from Co. Clare. Their study takes on renewed importance when one considers the ease at which such a monument can be destroyed, leaving no above-ground impression of its former existence other than a blackish smear and a scatter of small brittle stone.

The question of dating fulachta fiadh is addressed by A.L. Brindley and J.N. Lanting who present the dates available from a number of Irish sites. The evidence from 27 site samples shows a predominantly Early Bronze Age for the majority of fulachta fiadh in Ireland, with a continuation extending into the Late Bronze Age. The available evidence from Scotland and Wales would seem to support this date. Michaels Baillie's contribution assesses the feasibility of applying dendrochronology to fulachta fiadh.

The validity of such a multi-disciplinarian approach to the study of this site type is emphasised by the inclusion of submissions from Declan Hurl and Diarmaid Ó Drisceoil. Declan Hurl focuses on modern anthropological parallels for the usages of fulachta fiadh. Diarmaid Ó Drisceoil, drawing from the results of his M.A. thesis, offers astute insights into the relevance of the available historical literature, mostly written in Old, Middle and Modern Irish, to assess the function of fulachta fiadh; while including a number of riveting extracts from this literature in his contribution, he acknowledges the dangers involved in the indiscriminate application to prehistoric sites of such



documentation datable to the 12th century and later. The function of fulachta fiadh is also discussed by Thomas B. Larsson when dealing with more recent examples from Sweden, where the lack of evidence for cooking at some sites would seem to support a hypothesis for bathing, and their use as a primitive sauna bath is put forward. The most interesting and exciting reference from the early Irish literature which Ó Drisceoil quotes is that giving his own uncensored version of the encounter of Mis with Dubh Ruis, would certainly seem to lend weight to such a theory - this story is an absolute gem and should certainly be read irrespective of the archaeological implications!

Essentially *Burnt Offerings* is a timely and excellently presented collection of studies on fulachta fiadh. It exposes new insights and stresses the importance of adopting a variety of research methods to the study of these sites. The publication is an invaluable source of easily accessible information which provides a sound basis for future research on fulachta fiadh. The printers and publishers, Wordwell Ltd.-Academic Publications, aided by generous financial assistance from the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland and the Historical Buildings and Monuments Branch in Scotland, are all to be complimented and thanked for making this fine publication available at such a very reasonable cost.

PAULA KING AND DOMINIC MONAGHAN

Peter Harbison **PILGRIMAGE IN IRELAND**, Barrie & Jenkins, London 1991; pp.256; ISBN 0-7126-4732-5.

Price: £18.99.

Whatever Dr. Peter Harbison writes is written extremely well and this book, *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, is no exception. It is an informative and fascinating book for the novice and perhaps, a thought provoking book for the expert. Divided into three parts, pilgrimage people, pilgrimage places and pilgrimage things, and with brief chapters the book is easily understood. The superb colour photographs are a delight to see and lend a welcome relief from the overused and somewhat outdated black-and-white prints. This multi-disciplined writer discusses the whole theme of pilgrimage from the archaeological, historical and folklore perspectives. Peter Harbison (like Rudyard Kipling) uses his "six good men", What, Why, When, How, Where and Who, to give the reader an illuminated insight into what was a much neglected subject.

The history of pilgrimage in Ireland and abroad, together with the motivating factors, are given in vivid detail. There is also a section on Western Maritime Pilgrimage Places but only a few pages are dedicated to the ancient and better known mountain sites. It is unfortunate that only six pages of text are devoted to pilgrimage roads where possibly the best stories are told - the Irish Annals and other records have a great variety of information relating to human events along tochars. While some of the evidence may have been considered superfluous by the author, additional information regarding the penitential journey of the pilgrim would have embellished the text. Likewise, some of the exemplary papers on ancient roadways, for example "Toghers or Causeways: Some Evidence from Archaeological, Literary, Historical and Place-name Sources", by Dr. Lucas, published in 1985 (Proc. Roy. Irish Acad., 85c. #pp.2-60) are not cited. In order to prove his theory, the author was not just content in linking holy wells and various relics with pilgrimage. Harbison proposes what could be deemed as a fascinating and radical theory whereby he also associates Romanesque churches, crosses with arcs, sundials, cashels, round towers, clocháns, and ogham stones with pilgrimage. The touching or rubbing of a Sheela-na-Gig by enthusiastic pilgrim's (p.134), if true, adds another dimension to the sacred tradition of pilgrimage.

The book is appropriately sub-titled *The Monuments and the People*, as Harbison wants to populate the various field monuments of Early Christian and Medieval Ireland with a host of pious pilgrims. Even monuments which are thought to be purely monastic in character are given the same treatment by Harbison. Some of the monuments such as Romanesque churches and round towers, when chosen in isolation would seem to have no association with pilgrimage. Harbison would like to see round towers as a prominent feature of the landscape, an indicator of the location of the monastery to beckon the pilgrim from afar and to encourage his flagging spirit. Harbison also asks us (p.173) to consider the possibility that the reason for placing the door of a round tower well above the ground was to allow relics to be viewed and venerated in a secure setting. The siting of round towers and their occasional association with Romanesque churches, according to Harbison, gives additional evidence of pilgrimage. The fact that in a number of instances, round towers and Romanesque churches are located on the same site such as at Clonmacnois, Glendalough, Inishcealtra and Monaincha could suggest that unifying factor of pilgrimage. In addition, Harbison cites evidence (although tentative) of pilgrimage by St. Brendan to sites of subsequent Romanesque character; Ardfert, St. Canice's (Kilkenny), Clonfert and Annaghdown, in an attempt to consolidate his



theory. There is no reason to disbelieve Harbison as it is logical to assume that a twelfth century pilgrim would be fascinated at the first sight of a round tower of a Romanesque church. There is no doubt that such architecture in an open landscape would have enriched a pilgrim's journey but to suggest that such structures were primarily intended for pilgrimage is nonetheless questionable.

The representations of pilgrims carved in stone from five different sites are most interesting. To suggest that these monuments were positioned as markers to direct the pilgrim is a fascinating theory. In the mountainous parts of Cork, Kerry and Mayo where there is a tradition of mountain climbing for religious purposes, there is evidence of many 'standing stones' which are supposed to direct the pilgrim to the place of worship. A cross-slab from Inishcealtra with the incised footprints supposedly of a pilgrim may bear testimony to Harbison's hypothesis. Probably one of the most intriguing and controversial aspects of the book is the association of slabs bearing crosses of arcs with pilgrim activity. A map showing the distribution of crosses of arcs and their proximity to established pilgrimage routes is, at first glance most convincing. However, in this instance Harbison is probably stretching his hypothesis a little too far. There is little doubt that this theory will provoke other professionals to discuss the function of these Early Christian monuments, perhaps quite differently.

With Harbison's gentle persuasiveness, the reader is tempted to see those so-called ecclesiastical monuments and relics, not in terms as having come into existence through the practices of ascetic monks but because of the activities of pilgrims. This reviewer, for one, would agree with the general thrust of Harbison's theory, namely that monuments especially those associated with pilgrimage should be seen as 'people power' or monuments populated by people. Dr. Peter Harbison associated with pilgrimage should be seen as 'people power' or monuments populated by people. Dr. Peter Harbison is to be congratulated for presenting us with such theories, and especially for his insight into 'contextual' archaeology which promotes the idea that monuments should be viewed not solely in the form of structure but with due regard to their function. Harbison's well presented hypothesis will undoubtedly act as a stimulus for further study.

JACK MULVEEN

Stella Cherry, **A GUIDE TO SHEELA-NA-GIGS**, National Museum of Ireland, Dublin 1992; pp. ii + 22; ISBN 0-901777-24-2. Price £3.00

The Sheela-na-Gig is undoubtedly a representation of Irish Late Medieval figure sculpture in its most peculiarly explicit and absurd form. Their crude sexual appearance and almost mystical allure are surely responsible for many a raised eyebrow or wry smile when they are viewed on the walls of various ecclesiastical and secular buildings around the country. They have certainly generated much curiosity for the many visitors to the National Museum, so much so that the museum recently undertook to publish this guide to these popular stone carvings.

The Guide is a slim paperback booklet with a brief but informative text in which Sheela-na-Gigs are concisely discussed under various headings, including origin, location and function. The author also states some arguments suggested for the term 'Sheela-na-Gig'.

The main body of the booklet, however, is a list of all the presently known Sheela-na-Gigs in Ireland. This is divided into different groups: those still in situ, those which are badly damaged or weathered so that certitude as to their nature is difficult (that on the bridge at Clonlara, Co. Clare, published in vol. 10 (1967) of this Journal, is rather surprisingly included in this doubtful category), those which are now housed in museums, those in private possession, and those for which only a record survives but which are acceptable as most probably Sheela-na-Gigs. Also listed are 19 exhibitionist figures which have been mistakenly identified as Sheela-na-Gigs. This comes to 109 in all, 90 of which are certain or at least acceptable as belonging to this class of sculpture.

The second part of the book is almost entirely devoted to an extensive bibliography. This is undoubtedly the most complete and up-to-date one available, though there are some omissions, at least one of major importance: J. Rafferty "A Sheela-na-Gig from Burgesbeg. Co. Tipperary", published on pages 92-93 of vol. 12 (1969) of our Journal. This bibliography will prove invaluable for anyone wishing to pursue the subject further.

On page 5 is a distribution map of Sheela-na-Gigs still in situ, though this selective limitation is nowhere mentioned and, in fact, takes from the map's value - had those now in museums and private collections been included, their find-spots perhaps differentiated by open as opposed to closed circles, the map would have been of greater use. The booklet is also illustrated with some large-scale photographs which well demonstrate the main characteristics of this type of sculpture; inclusion of any history or folklore associated with the carvings would also have been interesting had it been offered. Nonetheless, this well-produced publication is an ideal reference book for



anybody wishing to learn more about these pseudo-erotic Late Medieval Irish Sculptures, for which it can be recommended as a most useful introduction.

CARON MCCARTHY

Arlene Hogan, **KILMALLOCK DOMINICAN PRIORY: AN ARCHITECTURAL PERSPECTIVE, 1291 - 1991**, Cumann Staire Chile Mocheallóg/Kilmallock Historical Society 1991; pp. viii + 72; ISBN 0-9518727-02. Price: £6.00.

The Dominican Church and Priory at Kilmallock was founded in 1291. It was the twenty fourth foundation in Ireland. The first foundation was made in Dublin in 1224 three years after the death of St. Dominic at Bologna. What remains of the Kilmallock foundation today is one of the best surviving examples of a medieval Dominican building in Ireland. In her introduction to this architectural perspective Arlene Hogan writes: "the aims of this study is to analyse, in architectural terms, the structural remains of the Dominican Priory at Kilmallock and to examine the building in the historical context of the times in which it was built."

This analysis and examination is set in the context of St. Dominic's plan for his Order and the expansion of the Order in thirteenth century Ireland. A detailed analysis of the existing buildings is then given. The language is technical and a glossary of the terms used is given after the bibliography. To anyone as architecturally illiterate as the present reviewer the glossary is essential. Interestingly, the first substantial building to be erected was the church, a simple rectangular structure divided into a choir for the community and a nave for the laity.

The first phase of the building programme was followed about twenty years later by an expansion of the church. This probably indicates the growing popularity of the friars in the locality. A third building programme was undertaken in the fifteenth century which included the erection of a Tower and reconstruction of the Priory. This possibly corresponds to the new wave of expansion by the Irish Dominicans at that time.

The Henrician suppression on January 16, 1541 did not signify the end of the Dominican presence in Kilmallock. That did not happen until about 1790. The old building was reoccupied for some time in the seventeenth century. A Kilmallock chalice dated 1739 is in the Dominican church in Limerick. It was presented by Callaghan O'Callaghan and his wife Joan Butler in memory of Maurice Gibbon, son of the White Knight. John O'Heyne, O.P., in his memories of seventeenth century Irish Dominicans published at Louvain in 1706 refers to "a beautiful Abbey" founded at Kilmallock in 1291, "the ruins of which still in existence at the present time show the former magnificence of structure...It abounded also in more precious goods, namely members distinguished for sanctity and learning."

Ariene Hogan is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin and is Administrator of the Friends of the National Gallery. Her scholarly study of the medieval Dominican building at Kilmallock is a welcome addition to the history of the locality and to Irish Dominican history. Concerning the latter she writes: "the structural principles of their building so tightly aligned to their simple needs require a detailed study if it is to be properly appreciated." The stones speak to us if we have ears to hear and eyes to see. The book is lavishly illustrated.

HENRY PEEL, O.P.

Rolf Loeber, **THE GEOGRAPHY AND PRACTICE OF ENGLISH COLONISATION IN IRELAND FROM 1534 TO 1609**, Irish Settlement Studies No. 3; Athlone 1991; pp. iv + 82, Price: £6.00

This slim volume, written under the aegis of the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement, is a valuable guide around the interstices of sixteenth century Geography, Archaeology and History. First and foremost it is valuable because the author plots and describes the English frontier settlements founded during the seventy years when crown control was expanded from a bridgehead around the Pale to encompass the entire island. The broad chronology of settlement from 1534 to 1609 is broken into no less than five episodes and further subdivided by province; a technique which conveys the desired impression that expansion proceeded in regional spurts. Aptly chosen illustrations and a good quality map help the reader to make the necessary re-adjustments of time and place.

While the early 1700s saw the growth of new plantation towns, notably at Derry and Bandon, urban stagnation characterised the preceding fifty years. So, most of Loeber's settlements were quite small and associated with newly erected or restored castles and/or earthwork fortifications which marked the shifting but always militarised frontier. Charlemont town in county Armagh, illustrated on the book cover, was a typically modest settlement, with its two



dozen or so houses (mostly thatched) huddled in the shadow of a fort. The latter is an example, rare in Ireland, of a 'flanked redoubt' which was an intermediate type between the simple square redoubt and the bastioned fort, commonly called a 'star fort'.

In plotting the geography of settlement Loeber does not posit any simple one dimensional relationship between terrain and settlement. In particular, he contrasts the campaign forts of Laois/Offaly and Ulster, which were sited to protect strategically important roads and passes, with the random distribution of other settlements. The latter sprung up where land happened to be opened up for settlement, whether through confiscation of monastic properties, attainder of native landowners, or the 'discovery' of defects in title. He emphasises, for example, (p.49) that the Munster plantation did not form a contiguous area because the lands confiscated from the Earl of Desmond in 1585-86 were so scattered and that the consequent fragmentation helps to explain why the plantation was overrun so quickly some twelve years later. There was, then, no strategic or geographic blueprint for settlement, a fact further evidenced by the relative paucity of New English settlement within the old Pale, which left the seat of government dangerously exposed during the Confederate wars of the 1640s.

Loeber draws extensively on modern secondary works to sketch in the historical context, and here too his conclusions are sound. He errs once on the side of caution in differently suggesting that immigration of settlers "took place on a scale which rivalled the emigration to the colonies in North America" (p.4). This understates the importance of his subject, because British emigration to Ireland dwarfed emigration to North America before 1609 and continued to outpace it until the 1630s. So, the resurrection of destroyed settlements is less 'remarkable' (p.70) when account is taken of this continual reinforcement together with what is known of the internal mobility of settlers; a point which the author does discuss.

The survey concludes with several interesting signposts towards further avenues of exploration. Can the evolution of a new bastioned system of defence be traced? Did the Gaelic Irish adopt any of these innovations? (The crude fort built by Hugh O'Neill on the Black sometime in 1595-97 suggests that they did so very imperfectly.) Can any parallels be drawn with the Anglo-Scottish border? One might add here that contemporaneous lowland Scot's infiltration into the highland zone presents another possible point of comparison.

Loeber passes the baton on to local enthusiasts and specialists to pursue these issues and, if possible, to supplement his findings, perhaps by fieldwork, by vertical air photos. But to do so, one needs a site to investigate, because without this preliminary pin-pointing the follow-up work would be laborious in the extreme. Loeber has opened a few frontiers himself.

PÁDRAIG LENIHAN

Frank Noonan, **THE SIEGES AND TREATY OF LIMERICK (1690-1691)**, The Irish Heritage Series: 70, Eason & Son Ltd., Dublin, in association with 'Limerick Treaty 300; Dublin 1991; pp.24 (unpaginated); ISBN 0-900346-97-3. Price £2.95.

Limerick Treaty 300, the organisers of the commemoration of the tercentenary of the major events in the city in 1691, are to be congratulated for the emphasis they have placed on the publication of historical writings. The reprinting of Lenihan's *History of Limerick*, the commissioning of Judith Hill's study of the building of the city and the organisation of a major international conference at the University with the intended publication by Limerick University Press of the Papers, will be a permanent legacy of this year of celebration.

On a more modest level, Treaty 300 has also sponsored the publication of another pamphlet in the Eason's Irish Heritage Series. Frank Noonan writes a general account of the sieges of 1690 and 1691 and the subsequent treaty. The author provides a useful narrative account of the events of those two years. He begins with a brief sketch of the British and European background, essential to any understanding of Ireland's role as the theatre of war between James II and his nephew and son in law William of Orange. The 1690 siege is treated from the arrival of William in Limerick in early August to his ignominious departure three weeks later having failed to take the city. The revisionist questioning of some of the key events of this month, which has surfaced during the commemoration, is echoed here. The defence of the city by its female citizens is relegated to a folktale despite its unambiguous mention in two separate contemporary Williamite sources. While the rôle of the women of Limerick may have been exaggerated in past, there is no justification for doubting its fundamental veracity.

The charge that innocent women and children were massacred during the Ballyneety raid is taken as fact though all of the evidence for this comes either from people who were not there or had a vested interest in attacking



Sarsfield. While the sources are undoubtedly ambiguous, the testimony of the Williamite chaplain Rowland Davies, should be given the greatest weight as he provides the only direct eyewitness account. He emphasises that most of the dead were waggoners rather than soldiers, but he makes no references to women or children which strongly suggests that this claim is a later Williamite invention to denigrate Sarsfield.

The account of the second siege in 1691 is a standard retelling of the principal facts. The author's knowledge of the local topography makes his narrative more intelligible than some of the older works on which his account is based. The background to the signing of the treaty is briefly discussed and is followed by a short analysis of the document and its unhappy aftermath. Limitations of space clearly prevented the author from discussing more fully the complex reasons for the failure to honour the letter, and more importantly the spirit, of the civil articles and thus explaining the historical genesis of Limerick's epithet 'City of the Broken Treaty'.

The most impressive aspect of this whole series has been the quality of its production particularly the excellent photographs and maps. This booklet is no exception, with an excellent selection of relevant material including the delightful mural on the wall of the pub at Thomond Bridge, though the truncated print of Sarsfield's statue does not do justice to Lawlor's fine work. The updated map of the city walls, reproduced on the inside flap, should have been credited to Celie O'Rahilly, the Limerick City archaeologist.

LIAM IRWIN

Judith Hill, **THE BUILDING OF LIMERICK**, Mercier Press, Cork and Dublin 1991; pp.194; ISBN 0-85342-983-9. Price £20.00.

The publication of this attractive, handsomely produced, book coincides with the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Limerick and the author has set herself the daunting task of charting the city's story from earliest times to the present day. Refreshingly she approaches it from a new angle. Her primary interest is the built form of the city and how the character and individuality of Limerick has developed and changed through time. Overall the result is a stimulating study with many innovative insights.

The city of Limerick traces its origin to a Viking encampment established on Inis Sibtond (King's Island) in 922. There had been earlier Viking activities in the vicinity during the ninth century but they were of a temporary nature. From 922 to the present Limerick has been continuously occupied. The site afforded a number of natural advantages. It was easy to defend, there was direct access to the open sea, while the Curragower Falls formed a natural barrier restricting river traffic. Whoever controlled Limerick, controlled the lower Shannon. It was a significance which was not lost on the local Irish Kings. In 967 Mathgamain mac Cennetig captured the town and his descendants, known to us as Ua Briain, were to rule much of Munster and, occasionally, much of Ireland from Limerick for the next 230 years. By the twelfth century it was a strongly fortified town with gates and towers on its walls, streets lined with houses, a royal fortress, a cathedral and seven or eight churches. Its wealth was celebrated and its fame was far-flung. It is known as Hlymrek in the Icelandic sagas while for the Norman-French it evoked mystery, adventure and romance, as the chason de geste of *Chastel des mulins à Limeri* makes clear.

By 1197 the Anglo-Normans had taken control of the settlement. The occupation appears to have been a peaceful one made in agreement with the Ostmen and the Ua Briain. Limerick's earliest charter dates from 1197 and as early as 1201 there is evidence that the town was beginning to expand outside its Hiberno-Scandinavian confines. Work commenced on Limerick Castle during the first decade of the thirteenth century and part of it seems to have been built on property which had originally belonged to the Bishop of Limerick. The thirteenth century was a period of posterity which saw not only the expansion of the town but also the construction of new friaries belonging to the Franciscans and Dominicans as well as considerable work on the town walls. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the city became increasingly isolated largely as a result of the Gaelic Revival and it was actually stormed and plundered by Mac Con Mara in 1370. The royal records of this time are filled with petitions seeking relaxation of rents in aid of defending the city. Its loyalty to the crown was never in doubt, however, and it received an extensive series of royal privileges throughout the fifteenth century. The town remained an important port although its overseas trade became overshadowed by that of Galway and coastal traffic was further disrupted by outbreaks of piracy on the Shannon Estuary.

With the revival of the English Government's interest in Ireland during the second half of the sixteenth century the town became one of the principal administrative and provision centres of the Munster Plantation. During the Confederate Wars of the mid seventeenth century it initially remained loyal to parliament but after the capture of the



castle in 1642 it became one of the Confederate strongholds. In 1651 the town was besieged by the Cromwellians and eventually surrendered to their commander, Ireton. The town's most famous role in military history occurred in 1690-91 when it was besieged by the Williamites and held out for almost a year. Little of this siege is recounted here but it is a story which has often been told and is well covered in the pages of many histories, most notably, perhaps, that of Lenihan.

The refreshingly new approach of this book is that it concentrates little on the political and military events of Limerick's past and instead it seeks to chart the architectural history of the town. The arrangement is a chronological one, divided into five chapters. The first two deal with the Viking Age origins of the town and subsequent developments during the Middle Ages. The author, however, is not completely at home with the scrappy and idiosyncratic nature of medieval sources and does not make the most of them. The discussing of Viking-Age Limerick, for instance, would have been more substantial if the *Caithréim Callacháin Caisil* had been used while her view that the story of Limerick between 1250 and 1500 was of a "cautiously expanding" town doubling in size conflicts with the evidence from all other Irish towns and, it has to be said, from Limerick itself. She does not always use the best architectural accounts for these periods either and in her description of St. Mary's Cathedral she relies more on Hewson than Leask or Champneys with the consequent omission of these transepts as part of the twelfth century structure. These, and other, particularities lessen the use of the book for the scholar but the author's canvass is a broad one and the overall picture is not obscured by these blotches.

With the eighteenth century the author is on firmer ground and here there follows an account of John's Square, of Catholic Chapels, Corporation Almshouses, the dismantling of the walls and the building of the Custom House. Chapter 4 is given over to an account of the building of the Georgian New Town between 1770 and 1840 while chapter 5 deals with the Victorian City from 1840 to 1906 and looks in detail at the series of new churches built during this time. These chapters form the most substantial part of the book and provide a detailed architectural history set within its social context and illustrated with many photographs and plans. In her postscript the author reflects on the architectural present and future of Limerick. "There is ambiguity", she writes, "in the contemporary attitude to the past; there is the impulse to destroy the worn, there is fear of loss and reverence for the aged. The first drives the developer to flatten large areas of cities and allows city governments to demolish fragile, disused buildings. The other attitudes call for indiscriminating preservation and endorse pastiche style". She concludes by calling for the restoration not of past styles but of past understanding. The relationship between social behaviour and architecture is an intimate one and the social blight which has effected many historic cities cannot be laid solely at the feet of politicians. "Modern" architecture has been a failure in the historic cities of Europe largely because it has embraced ideology rather than people. If Limerick is to have an attractive future then let us hope that architects and planners will elevate the lives of people above ideology and expediency.

JOHN BRADLEY

Bernardine Dewar (ed.), **LIVING AT THE TIME OF THE SIEGE OF LIMERICK - ESSAYS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE**, Limerick Federation of Women's Organisations, Limerick 1991; pp.iii+78; ISBN 0-9517646-0-8.  
Price £3.00

This delightful booklet of essays is the Limerick Federation of Women's Organisations contribution to the Limerick Treaty 300 commemorations. Viewed in our changing times, in which women are claiming rightful equal status in so many walks of life, this publication gives a welcome impetus to that process, especially in the Limerick region. For, as elsewhere, it shows that behind the successful male, there lurked, according to the well known cliché, an equally ambitious partner eager to achieve success on the public forum, but stopped by the stifling conventions of the time to do so.

With the spread of English influence from the mid-16th century onwards, as Bernadette Whelan tells us in her essay, 'The Status of Women', "this colonisation process radically transformed Irish society and the earlier freedom enjoyed by Gaelic women both within and outside marriage under the Brehon laws was continuously eroded". Few women could thus achieve the status of Grace O'Malley, Elizabeth I and Mary Tudor, and many, although leading public lives, did so only as wives of important men of the day.

This is seen in the tragic tale, 'Honora Bourke - A Wife's Story' by Grace Cantillon, when she notes, "When the stirring deeds of Patrick Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan is told, very little mention is made of his beautiful young wife, and the effect on her life of exile from Ireland after the treaty". She went on to wed the Duke of Berwick, the illegitimate



son of King James and entered high society in France, a long way from her birth place in Portumna on the Shannon.

Perhaps, the real value of this publication is its overall look at women and not just their rather limited contribution to the policies and politics of the 17th century Ireland. In times of conflict, at both local and national level, women did 'seas an fód' beside their menfolk and none more so than "the very women who boldly stood upon the breach" in the siege of Limerick itself. This was the exception rather than the rule, however, and it is in their contribution to the social aspects of 17th century life that their worth shines forth in these pages.

Thus we learn of their work on the farm and in the town at a time when "illegitimacy was common, though it was not regarded as a serious handicap in life". Marriage at 17, wifely chores, clothes-making, 17th century Limerick through the eyes of an immigrant Dutch Lady, dress, education, prostitution, dance and song, are just some of the many aspects also covered in this timely publication. One of the most interesting essays, 'A Medical Miscellany' by Ann O'Malley, deals with such items as midwifery and childbirth. Some surprising facts appear in her notes about the medical treatments of the time, especially as regards phlebotomy or bloodletting, which, as we are told, was carried out to relieve "the accumulation of too much vital humour caused by overeating, too little exercise, or dissipation". An ideal remedy surely for the modern 'couch potato'!

PEADAR O'DOWD

Brendan Ó Cathaoir, **JOHN BLAKE DILLION, YOUNG IRELANDER**, Irish Academic Press, Dublin 1990; pp xii + 211; ISBN 0-7165-2467-8; Price: £19.95.

The subject of this monograph co-founded *The Nation* in October 1842 with his friends Thomas Davis and Charles Gavan Duffy. Davis, John Mitchel and James Fintan Lalor are the best-known of the Nation writers. The acknowledged leader of Young Ireland, William Smith O'Brien, landlord-descendant of Brian Boru, led a brief rebellion in July 1848 which was easily put down, to a great extent because of the discouragement by the priests of South Tipperary who feared a repetition of '98. Smith O'Brien plays a major role in the early part of this book.

In Smith O'Brien's opinion, "the people were prepared to die of starvation at home, or to flee as voluntary exiles to other lands, rather than fight for their lives and liberties". But Dillon, Thomas Francis Meagher, Michael Doheny, James Stephens and John O'Mahony were among those who joined the abortive rebellion, some reluctantly, others enthusiastically, until forced to flee the country when the people deserted them.

The Young Irelanders were constitutional nationalists. They followed Daniel O'Connell until his blanket condemnation of physical force under all circumstances made it impossible to support him further. Like the United Irishmen, Young Ireland was non-sectarian. And, as Mr. Ó Cathaoir writes in his low-key way, O'Connell had no sympathy with their "romantic nationalism".

The Liberator was dead fourteen months when on July 22, 1848, the Whig government of Lord John Russell suspended the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland, thereby conferring emergency powers on Dublin Castle. Dillon and Meagher drove to Wexford where Smith O'Brien was campaigning and the three agreed to call upon the people to rebel against English rule. Dillon played a leading although largely passive role in the subsequent rebellion except at Killenaule where he permitted a troop of Royal Irish Hussars to pass unmolested through the rebel barricade instead of disarming them and making them prisoners.

When the leaders decided to split up at Ballingarry, Dillon went on the run disguised as a priest - a suitable rôle for an ex-seminarian who in his private life was a religious man. After six weeks hiding out in Clare, Galway and the Aran Islands, Dillon was rowed by currach from Glinn Mheáin, near Fanore, Co. Clare, to the brig *Gem* and thus escaped to America wearing a suit of priest's clothes given to him by Fr. Patrick Ryder from Ballyvaughan. A long descriptive letter to his wife while on the run, which of course was intended for her eyes only, is a frank account of Dillon's political feelings and a valuable addition to our primary-source material on the rebellion of 1848. His appraisals of priests and people are surprisingly harsh for a political moderate.

He describes two priests, who were his unwilling hosts, as "very selfish and very cowardly". A third priest - "who was a very ardent patriot and made himself remarkable in that neighbourhood for his advocacy of war principles" - refused to give him shelter at 3 o'clock in the morning, saying "he would on no account expose himself to the danger of harbouring me". But it was the priest-president of St. Jarlath's College, Father Anthony O'Regan, who hid Dillon for two weeks and arranged his passage from Galway to New York - disguised as a priest.

"As for the *people*", Dillon wrote, "I have lost all faith in them. They are treacherous and cowardly, and if Ireland is ever destined to be free, her freedom must be the gift of strangers."



"It is in this connection I said my career as a patriot was almost closed. After what we have witnessed I think it would be madness to hope for any manly effort on the part of the Irish people; and the attempt to emancipate by foreign agency, a people who have not the spirit to raise an arm in their own defence, appears to me rather quixotic. All these are *secret* thoughts but no thought of mine is a secret from you ..."

Dillon returned to Ireland in 1856, tired of the feuding exiles in New York and eager to be home again. He was respected by his Young Ireland colleagues and retained the friendship of Mitchel, who disagreed with his growing political moderation. He defended Smith O'Brien from the attacks of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, and Meagher from the calumnies of the Catholic press which denounced him as "a red republican and an anarchist".

In Ireland Dillon became an acolyte of Cardinal Cullen, who lobbied the Vatican to excommunicate the Fenians and finally succeeded. Cullen sponsored Dillon's election to parliament for Tipperary in 1865 against Fenian opposition. Why did he change?

"It is clear, however, that he fell under the growing moral hegemony of the Catholic Church (and) gravitated towards that 'faith and fatherland' perspective which was to have a fateful influence in shaping modern Ireland. Like most contemporaries he did not realise the country was being partitioned mentally", Mr. Ó Cathaoir writes perceptively.

John Blake Dillon died in September 1866. His son, also named John, was a radical figure in the land war and a leader of the Irish Party until 1918. His grandson, James Dillon, led the Fine Gael party in the 1960s. Mr. Ó Cathaoir's spare study of one of the founders of *The Nation* and of Young Ireland, written in plain, sharp prose, provides a discerning commentary on post-famine and pre-Parnellite Irish politics.

SEÁN CRONIN

Anne O'Dowd, **SPALPEENS AND TATTIE HOKERS**, Irish Academic Press, Blackrock, Co. Dublin 1991; pp.441. ISBN 0-7165-2450-3. Price: £35.00

Much Irish history was written as if the subjects of this book, the migratory agricultural labourers, had never existed. This book limits itself to the workers who left their home areas on a temporary basis, and does not deal with those who worked more or less permanently on one farm or estate. The numbers were very high as farm work, up to the introduction of modern machinery and chemicals, was extremely labour-intensive.

The author's sources are primarily twofold: eighty-eight Parliamentary Papers spanning the years 1815 to 1967, and the manuscript collection in the Department of Folklore, U.C.D. This can make for strange bed-fellows. On one hand there is the crisp statistical data in Civil Service prose, on the other the folktales, some in Irish, some in English. The folktales are stylised, and versions have been collected over a wide area. For example, a story called "Last Night's Porridge", has been collected in Counties Clare, Kerry, Tipperary, Waterford and Galway. The folktale element might have been better handled as a separate book, leaving more scope for a fuller treatment of areas such as social and economic history. This book could have done with more background information, to give the context in which these facts and events belonged: I found reading L.M. Cullen's *Economic History of Ireland since 1660* in tandem with Dr. O'Dowd's book to be helpful.

Books like this often have fascinating pieces of information. One such in this book is the part taken by Irish Labourers in the enclosures of common land in England; between 1710 and 1790 three million acres were enclosed. The people who lost by this were on an economic par with the Irish doing the enclosing. Another is the relationship between the money made by weaving and emigration. When this trade went into a decline around 1800, weavers left. But each weaver would have been supplied with yarn by up to five spinners, the raw wool originating (for the west) in the great Wool Fairs at Ballinasloe, and thus many more were put out of work, and over a very wide area.

Within Ireland, labourers coming in to an area seeking work were often resented by the local labourers. The Parliamentary Papers of 1830 mention this happening in West Limerick to labourers from Kerry. Begley in his *History of the Diocese of Limerick* notes this incident as happening on a farm between Glin and Newcastle West. The house was surrounded at night and the Kerry men were forced to leave the area.

Gradually improving means of communication made both the spreading of news of work and actual movement of workers easier. There was also the intelligent and creative use of the English Poor Law system. This could mean a free trip home at the end of the harvest season. One needed to be destitute but this was easily coped with by a group giving their money to one person who paid his way home, or by sewing cash into one's clothes. Of course, in years of poor harvests, many would be genuinely destitute. Equally, many would set out looking for work begging their way,



but carrying tools. Women left at home often begged to survive, any livestock having being turned out before the men left.

R.F. Foster's *Modern Ireland* adds interesting pieces to the jigsaw. He notes that the 1884-85 Franchise Acts added a half-million voters to the register, mostly small farmers and agricultural labourers. But these labourers, whose votes were of great support to the Parnellite cause, were themselves very low on the national agenda. To say that they were considered to be an underclass would be putting it mildly. Government efforts to provide housing for them, which went back to the Labourers Act of 1883, had to be forced by a further twelve amending statutes before it had any real effect. This treatment of an element of Irish society has not really been faced up to in our recall of the past. It does not fit happily with our image of success, all united behind one big banner. The *Limerick Rural Survey* (1958-64) gives a picture of rural class division, but a more realistic one can be found in Pat Feeley's paper in the *Old Limerick Journal* (1979). In a few pages he provides the social analysis which is lacking in Dr. O'Dowd's book.

This book will open up a new field for many readers. It introduces a world with which many of us must have family connections, either as the hirer or the hired. It is not, however, the easiest book to use; the index is not detailed enough, for example no index entries for Irish counties, and only a few translations of Irish words are to be found in the index, though Irish when used in the main index is translated.

I hope the author continues to work in this area of study. We need to be confronted with the facts of our past, and hopefully we will find the experience, though painful at times, essentially liberating.

M. L. O'Connor

Helen Litton (ed), **REVOLUTIONARY WOMAN: KATHLEEN CLARKE, 1878-1972, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY**,  
The O'Brien Press, Dublin 1991; pp.240; ISBN 0-86278-245-7 (hbk) and 0-86278-294-5 (pbk).  
Price: £16.95 (hbk) and £9.95 (pbk).

Coming as she did from a family with a very strong national tradition Kathleen Clarke was to be a link in the Fenian tradition between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One of her early memories was the arrival of the news in Limerick of the arrest of her uncle John Daly at Birkenhead railway station. He was to spend twelve years in jail before he was released in 1896. One of his companions in prison was Tom Clarke who was released in 1898. Both Daly and Clarke were important figures in the underground revolutionary movement which survived from Fenian times and Kathleen's life was interwoven with theirs, especially when she married Tom Clarke in 1901. As the twentieth century unfolded she was close to the Irish Republican Brotherhood and to the preparations which led to the 1916 Rising, in the wake of which her husband and her brother, Edward Daly, were executed. The reminiscences of this woman must, therefore, give important insight into events which have been clouded in secrecy. The work of preparing for revolution must, of its very nature, be hidden. The executions which followed silenced forever the prime witnesses. Thus this book has a special significance.

Mrs. Clarke's autobiography reveals a relationship with her husband which was warm and close. The reticence of a secret society appears not to have inhibited openness between herself and her husband. Indeed, perhaps the most significant piece of information which she gives relates to the very confidential meeting at which the Proclamation of 1916 was signed. All of the signatories were executed so there has been no specific testimony regarding the date on which it was signed nor on any debate which took place in regard to the drafting of this most fundamental of Irish historical documents. Were it not for the trust which Tom Clarke placed in his wife we would still be unaware that the signatories met and signed the document on the Tuesday of Holy Week, 1916. Her account of this week is, of itself, sufficient to give her book an importance far beyond that of most personal reminiscences of the period. For the first time we know for definite where the signatories met - the home and business premises of Jennie Wyse Power - the length of time they spent discussing the draft - until the early hours of the following morning - and even the order of the signing. Much of this information was to be buried within a few short weeks in the graves in Arbour Hill.

It was in 1939, at a time when Mrs. Clarke became the first woman to be elected Lord Mayor of Dublin, that she first set about writing her memoirs. Now through the assistance of Helen Litton, herself a grandniece of Kathleen Clarke, the book is made available to the public. Ms Litton's work as editor has been carefully done. The original nineteen chapters have been reorganised into eleven and some repetitive material has been omitted. Additional information by the editor is found in notes at the back of the book and the editor adds a single page epilogue to Mrs. Clarke's autobiography, completing the story to her death in 1972.

This first class book has not yet received the historical attention which it deserves. Its story of the Daly, Clarke,



Dore and other Limerick connections in Ireland's revolution is here well told. There is a fire and vigour in the writing which truly reflects the firm opinions of the author. She was near the centre of Irish political life for very many years and, indeed, her family were at the heart of it. What she had to say was revealing, but of course like all historical sources it has to be weighed as evidence in regard to its trustworthiness on different phases of the struggle for freedom. Mrs. Clarke had strong beliefs and prejudices. Nevertheless she wrote a very balanced book. I do not accept her view that Eoin Mac Neill signed the 1916 proclamation. But that does not mean that she was dishonest in her belief that he did so. In fact this is an honest and revealing book which is an important addition to the history of the Irish fight for freedom.

THOMAS P. O'NEILL

James Kennedy, **THE PEOPLE WHO DRANK WATER FROM THE RIVER**, Poolbeg Press, Dublin 1991; ISBN 1-85371-141-1 (pbk); pp. 109. Price: £4.99.

When the editor asked me to review this book my initial response was lukewarm. The poor quality of the paper, the occasional insufficient space between words, the unattractive cover and the awkward enigmatic title, set me wondering how I might avoid damning it with faint praise. Here was another author, I thought, trying to recapture the past like Alice Taylor, hoping to cash in on what appears to be a lucrative market for reminiscences of rural life.

However, the author's brief introduction somehow convinced me that this memoir could not be equated with Alice Taylor's colourful account of growing up on a farm. Deeper and more thought-provoking, it is much more than a simple remembrance of things past in county Limerick almost fifty years ago. It was written, the author tells us, "to record aspects of that life style as a kind of social document, so that my children, in later years will, at least half know where they came from".

Those facets he chose to write and mull over are often recollected in sadness. He is, as he says, trying "to get rid of my madness" by returning to east Limerick again and again, in a search for the elusive happiness he once found there, as when "he tickled trout in the river and cupped one hand over its mouth and gills and the other around its tail. It floated gently and unafraid against my fingers. A gentle squeeze and I'd got my dinner." Apparently he was in harmony with his environment then and deeply in love with mother earth. "There is a time", he says "in the month of May and early June when the grass is new and shiny and dark green. I often felt not only lying down on it, but lying down with it."

But there is wit as well as wisdom peppered throughout the book as well. His experience of first love, his account of killing the pig, of saving the hay, of his attempts at killing the rat in the potato pit, and his sketches, loving and sometimes sentimental, of some of his neighbours are amusing.

The book deserves a cloth cover and less puzzling title, for the analogy between his title and St. Bernard's famous dictum, "Everyone has to drink from his own well", will, I fear, be lost on many. And it invites a follow up - an autobiography. Unconventional and reflective, and with a keen eye and a way with words, the ups and downs of his life's journey must be worth the telling. He has been in a monastery; he has envied an old black man his happiness as he watched him hacking away at a mahogany log beside a tropical river; he ruminates about the follies he observed at a funeral in Chicago; he was a priest for a time, and, "of all things, married a brown woman with slanty eyes while he was out trying to convert Southeast Asia."

PADDY LYSAGHT