BOOK REVIEWS

Jeremiah Sheehan. **"The Eskers of Ireland"**, ***Occasional Paper No. 6,*** Moate Historical Society, September 1993; pp. vi + 53: ISBN 0-9521923-0-6. *Price*: £5.00 (pbk.).

This is perhaps an unusual and strange wee book. Why? Because it is about a geographical feature which seems so naturally part of the landscape that it could seem hardly worth writing home about, never mind producing a publication of universal interest and popular appeal. However, *an rud is annamh is íontach*, and for a Corkman transposed by profession and marriage to the Midlands I suppose the extended rolling eskers encountered reasonably regularly across Ireland from Dublin to Galway were always bound to fascinate. And the result is this beautifully produced booklet, one to instruct and to textually and visually satisfy its readers: published on glossy art-paper, clearly printed, and illustrated with many coloured and black-and-white photographs, maps and line drawings, including attractive nineteenth-century sketches by G.V. Du Noyer and C.M. Grey.

The contents, however, are the main attraction, and cover a wide and varied field. The author sensibly starts by informing us as to what eskers are, quoting from several relevant sources. I find the quote from John Feehan's *The Landscape of Slieve Bloom* (1979) probably the best: "...the esker [is] a long mound of sand and gravel deposits of sub-glacial stream origin, left upstanding on the landscape when the banks of ice finally melt away". The following chapter details not only the main esker, the famous Eiscir Riada, running across the centre of Ireland but also most of the spurs and minor branches, hillocks and ridges immediately north and south of it. It also provides a list, on pages 22–24, indicating the scientific interest (e.g. ecological, geomorphological, botanical, etc.) of each length.

Chapter Three provides a brief but useful series of notes and comments on how man has utilised the eskers over the centuries, ranging from Early Bronze Age burial-sites through historically known routeways and territorial boundaries, early monasteries such as Clonmacnoise, Clonfert and Clonard, Anglo-Norman mottes-and-baileys, medieval castles and towns, more recent sources of burnt lime, and, even today, for sand and gravel for building and road-making. This chapter will probably provide the greatest interest for most, though perhaps only marginally so for some who will find Chapter Four, on the "Flora of the Eskers", equally interesting.

A Bibliography is also included, making this a most useful, handy and informative little publication, one which will have an appeal by no means confined to residents of the Midlands.

ETIENNE RYNNE

Elizabeth Shee Twohig and Margaret Ronayne (eds.), ***Past Perceptions: The Prehistory of South-West Ireland***, Cork University Press, Cork 1993; pp. xvi + 256; ISBN 1-902561-89-8. *Price*: £17.95.

This important book is the result of a highly successful conference in University College, Cork, in 1992, focused on recent and on-going research on the prehistory of south-west Ireland (principally counties Cork, Kerry and Limerick). The papers presented here are by a number of researchers working in the region and consist of a series of chapters in roughly chronological order under three general headings - the Interpretation, Survey, and Perception of the Past. The work consists of new, not-so-new and re-worked research. A single bibliography and index help to give a sense of unity to the volume although the variation in the quality of the illustrations, including many dealing with the same area, is frequently a detraction from the overall quality of the presentation.

The range and scale of the papers varies considerably, but overall there is an excellent balance of detailed and general research scales. For the Mesolithic, the volume contains a detailed account of the excavations at Ferriter's Cove, Co. Kerry (Peter Woodman and Madeline O'Brien), as well as a very useful regional description of the period (Liz Anderson). There is a closely argued exploration of the beginning of farming in Ireland by Mick Monk, showing that an influx of farmers from north-west Europe can no longer be considered as the only model. This paper also contains a summary of the vegetational developments in the south-west up to the first millennium A.D.

The Final Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age receives considerable attention, with several papers dealing with the Late Neolithic - Early Bronze Age in some detail. The south-west has a range of important archaeological sites which provide it with a unique character during this period. While much of this work stands on the shoulder of earlier researchers, most notably Fahy, O'Kelly, Ó Nualláin and Ó Ríordáin, there are new perspectives and approaches, as well as the incorporation of developments outside the region. Some aspects of the archaeological record have previously been the subject of detailed study - metalwork, stone circles, wedge tombs, alignments, boulder burials *etc.* - but the present papers form an exciting new springboard to future research.

One interesting feature of the collection is that it shows the different approaches of the researchers to broadly contemporary evidence. The most impressive is the work of Paul Walsh, which presents an outline of the evidence and an examination of the spatial associations of three of the major monument types (stone circles, stone rows and boulder burials) of the unique south-western concentration of megalithic sites (Ó Nualláin's 'stone circle complex'), which also includes wedge tombs, four posters, single monoliths and radial stone cairns and enclosures. Quite apart from the complexes, places where several sites occur in close proximity to each other, such as at Mill Little or Kealkill, Co. Cork, the associations are striking but not universal. Walsh discusses the range of evidence and makes a critical examination of four hypothetical models of the significance, for dating, ritual practices and cultural continuity, of the information. It is refreshing to read research that is not afraid of question marks!

A quite different approach is adopted with regard to the rock art of the Iveragh peninsula, dealt with by Ann O'Sullivan and John Sheehan. This contains some basic descriptions, details of location and discussion, but it also attempts to establish an understanding of the material in terms of dating, association and function. Much of this is based on broad observations of the distribution pattern, and the paper would have benefited from some more detailed spatial analysis of the type carried out by Paul Walsh. At a generalised regional level the concentrations of rock art appear to be in areas outside the main clusters of other monument types (such as wedge tombs and stone circles). However, there are rock art associations with the stone circle complex, such as at Bohonagh (stone circle and boulder burial), Kilbeg (radial stone cairn), and Kilnacranagh West (radial stone enclosure), in west Cork. The suggestion of a strong case for a Neolithic date is based on very selective comparison with British evidence and is partly, but not overtly, derived from the distributional assessment. Early Bronze Age material in Ireland, such as cists with capstones decorated in the same tradition as rock art, are not mentioned, apart from a recent example from Teeromoyle, Co. Kerry, nor is there an attempt to identify contemporary Neolithic evidence in the area, nor the place of rock art in a wider landscape context.

Research into the origin and dating of the megalithic complex is presented in William O'Brien's excellent re-assessment of the problem. The Final Neolithic construction dates for Lough Gur, Altar and Labacallee (dates for the latter previously published by Brindley and Lanting), constitute a real breakthrough in wedge studies. In the case of Altar and Toormore there is also the demonstration of the long use-history of wedges, one that can be paralleled in the south-west at Lough Gur, Labacallee, and perhaps Island. The wider implications for this research in terms of the megalithic complex are also discussed with the summary of dating evidence for stone circles, stone rows and boulder burials. The use-history of the latter monuments is shown to span the Middle-Late Bronze Age and has a long overlap with that of the wedges, a chronological advance that complements Walsh's spatial one in a significant fashion.

Martin Doody has an overview of the existing data on Bronze Age habitation-sites in the region, and documents his preliminary research into settlement complexes where domestic sites are closely associated with funerary sites such as barrows. Lough Gur provides yet more new information through Rose Cleary's ceramic research and a re-assessment of the contexts from Ó Ríordáin's excavations. She demonstrates extensive Middle-Late Bronze Age settlement on Knockadoon through the re-dating of some of the coarse ('Class II') pottery. The former near-island has produced a significant assemblage of contemporary bronze artifacts while the lake was an important repository for the deposition of artifacts right through the prehistoric period so the presence of domestic sites overlooking it should occasion no surprise. There are still some unsolved problems regarding coarse pottery (setting aside the considerable quantity of already identified coarse domestic Beaker), particularly the material which appears to come from the same contexts as the Western Neolithic pottery ('Class I and Ia'). The development of a second domestic ware, *i.e.* in addition to Class I, seems an insufficient explanation and, in view of the presence of 'grooved ware' from several Lough Gur sites, it may be that an exploration of the introduction of that ceramic tradition might yield profitable results. The difficulties of Cleary's task in assessing the stratigraphical sequence on Knockadoon in relation to the pottery is demonstrated by the problems encountered by Woodman and Scannell (in a paper on the stone artifacts from Lough Gur) in trying to determine a sequence in either lithic technology or artifact-types.

One of the most characteristic features of North Munster in prehistory is the enormous wealth of gold ornaments from hoards and stray finds of the Late Bronze Age. George Eogan presents a series of wider horizons to examine the contemporary contexts of this material outside the region. The paper builds from a very considerable research base, and deals with other regional assemblages in Ireland as well as a consideration of the place of North Munster in a western European setting. One of the most interesting aspects of the work is the identification in the artifact record of two distinct Munster regions: the north with its spectacular ornaments, and the west and south which are typified by what might be termed ceremonial objects - bronze horns and cauldrons. While there is no doubt that, as Eogan identifies, Munster, both north and south, drew inspiration from Atlantic Europe during this period, it should also be remembered that very similar contrasts in the character of the province can be identified in the Early-Middle Bronze Age. The stone circle complex is represented principally in south Kerry and west Cork while in the north

Cork/Limerick area *fulachta fiadh*, barrows and cist- and pit-burials are the most common signifiers. A shift in the distribution patterns of tools and weapons away from early concentrations in the south-western areas of metal production (pointed out by William O'Brien in his paper on early metallurgy) to later abundance in North Munster, suggests a major internal dynamic behind the emergence of the regional patterns in the Late Bronze Age.

The second section of the volume, on 'Surveying the Past', contains three brief papers on the survey of counties Cork, Limerick and south-west Kerry. Sean Kirwan (Limerick) has a useful breakdown of prehistoric monuments in the county, as well as interesting summary description and illustration of the distribution of barrows, standing stones and *fulachta fiadh*.

This book is an important milestone in the study of prehistoric Munster, or at least the southern portion of it. Some pointers for future research in the area are provided by Richard Bradley's commentary amongst which was the need to step back in scale from the south-west to view the wider context of the region, as well as the importance of varying the questions and setting aside some of the assumptions about what the archaeological record for any particular period *should* look like. Some of these themes are echoed by the editors (Margaret Ronayne and Elizabeth Shee Twohig) in the final chapter. They note the importance of scale, and periodisation, in regional assessment, and highlight the place of local patterns in the formation of regional identities. Furthermore, there is no danger of expecting regions to retain distinct character through prehistory or, indeed, even from one period to another.

The work presented in this volume is especially important as it constitutes the first wide-ranging prehistoric assessment of the region. The statements and interpretation will provide the basis for much future study and are an indication of the wealth of archaeological research activity in southwestern Ireland. It has to be said that, collectively, the papers cry out for an integrated assessment. It is largely a missed opportunity but one which remains as a rewarding challenge for a researcher with appetite for a comprehensive regional study.

EOIN GROGAN

John Waddell, ***The Bronze Age Burials of Ireland***, Officina Typographica, Galway University Press, Galway 1990; pp. xiv + 166; ISBN 0-907775-36-5. *Price*: £22.95.

Like other nations in Europe, Ireland has been unlucky because so many of her most informative prehistoric burials were excavated before archaeology had emerged as a distincitive discipline. As a result, the material riches of the Irish Bronze Age exist in something of a vacuum. Many of the cist-graves were discovered by accident and were recorded in a piecemeal fashion. In many cases there is little to tell us whether these burials were deposited in isolation or whether they formed part of more extensive cemeteries, and in areas with a long history of cultivation we cannot even say whether they had been covered by a mound. Given such problems, the need for a disciplined and thorough analysis of the surviving material is all too clear. Professor Waddell's book addresses this task admirably.

This book provides both a catalogue of finds from Irish Bronze Age burials and a rigorous analysis of the information that can still be gleaned from their contents, organisation and distribution. As a catalogue it works well and rests upon a considerable amount of careful documentary research as well as first hand acquaintance with the artifacts. As an analysis it is shrewd but not over-ambitious, for Waddell treats his evidence with restraint and does not drive the reader towards clear-cut conclusions where none are possible. It provides an excellent basis for devising a new campaign of research.

Several questions come to mind at once. Why are these burials more common towards the east coast than in the west? What was the social relationship between the people buried in flat cemeteries and those deposited in mounds? Given the extraordinary riches of Irish Bronze Age metalwork, why was such a limited range of artifacts buried with the dead, and in what circumstances did more spectacular artifacts enter the archaelogical record? It is a merit of Waddell's careful analysis that it is now much easier to identify the questions that have to be addressed. This well produced book allows us to set our sights on the next phase of Bronze Age research.

RICHARD BRADLEY

Brendáin Ó Ríordáin and John Waddell, ***The Funerary Bowls and Vases of the Irish Bronze Age;*** pp. xxv + 289, 31 text figures, 26 plates and 132 corpus figures; ISBN 0-907775-46-2; Galway University Press (for the National Museum of Ireland), Galway 1993. *Price*: £31.50.

It is no longer easy to compile a successful corpus. Advances in computer technology mean that catalogues can now be stored on disc together with visual images, and it is an easy matter to extend or revise these lists. Distribution

maps can also be prepared and amended mechanically. The process of cataloguing is made substantially easier by storing the information in such a flexible medium, and it is possible to manipulate it for many different purposes. It follows that a published corpus must be able to provide information that could not be managed in other ways.

This is a successful example of what a modern corpus can be. The detailed catalogues remain, supplemented by high quality drawings and distribution maps, but this is very much a book rather than a list. It is the result of work carried out over a considerable period of time and provides the basic record of no fewer than 646 ceramic vessels of the type most frequently referred to, generically, as Food Vessels, the majority of which form part of the remarkable funerary record of the Irish Early Bronze Age. The text is lucid, as well organised and easy to use.

To be published in book form a corpus must provide more than this, and the authors have no difficulty in doing so. This is a study which extends the whole way from the history of artifact studies in Ireland to the technology of pottery production; the latter is considered in a very useful chapter contributed by Dr Alison Sheridan. Ó Ríordáin and Waddell handle the typology, chronology and associations of these vessels with considerable dexterity - unlike Bell Beakers, these pots will not need reassessing every few years. To some extent this is because of the disciplined use that has been made of radiocarbon dating: a technique which can become a blunt instrument in less careful hands. At the same time, as Professor Waddell's earlier work would lead us to expect, these artifacts are not treated as collectors' pieces in a museum case, and the text is alert to the possibilities of employing this kind of evidence in a more ambitious analysis of prehistoric funeral rites. There is a particularly welcome discussion of the relationship between these vessels and a whole variety of Early Bronze Age burials.

In recent years we have seen considerable progress in reducing the riches of prehistoric Irish archaeology to at least a semblance of order. The metalwork has been studied to considerable effect. A well-conceived research project at the Groningen laboratory has resolved many apparently intractable problems of chronology, and work in the south-west of the country has shed entirely new light on prehistoric copper-mining. This corpus is another significant achievement. It will be widely used and deserves to be widely acclaimed. It is yet another sign of the vitality of modern Irish archaeology.

RICHARD BRADLEY

Mainchin Seoighe, ***County Limerick, Its People and Places***, Aughinish Alumina, Askeaton 1993, pp. 93. Not for sale to the public.

In the early 1970s, the island of Aughinish (pronounced Ahanish by us locals) on the Limerick side of the Shannon Estuary was acquired by Alcan (Ireland) Ltd., as a site for an alumina plant. In 1993, the giant Aughinish Alumina Ltd. (A.A.L.) complex went into production. Mainchín Seoighe, the noted county Limerick historian, was asked to contribute a series of articles on local places and their history to an in-house quarterly publication, known as the *AAL News*. These articles proved so popular that in 1993, A.A.L., to mark their 10th year in production, published an edited collection of these articles, as they appeared in the magazine. The booklet (thus described by Mainchín Seoighe in his introduction) consists of forty-six separate articles on local places (listed alphabetically) mainly in West Limerick - what might be termed the hinterland of Aughinish. A number of places east of the river Maigue, the traditional dividing line between east and west Limerick, are also happily included, notably, Lough Gur, Knockainey, Kilmallock, Bruff, Mungret and Kilfinane. Each article is two pages long and includes two, and sometimes three, good quality black-and-white photographs.

In his review of Mainchín Seoighe's excellent "*Portrait of Limerick*", 1982, Tony O'Riordan of the *Irish Times* wrote of the author, "...no man has devoted himself with more diligence to the pursuit of knowledge about his native place". This is again very well demonstrated in this little gem of a collection. However, it is just not his knowledge that comes through in these pages, but also his love and affection for his native county. In each place that we visit, we hear of the origins of its name, its history, architecture, lore, industry, as well as meeting some of its more interesting characters - the Wise Women of Mungret, the Knights of Glin, Filí na Máighe, Aubrey de Vere of Curraghchase, and many more. We also hear some of the songs and poetry written by people of their much loved home places, including my own favourite, "*The Fowler's Paradise*", which recalls the days before industrialisation came to Aughinish Island and mentions all the old beautiful Irish place-names now sadly almost forgotten. Of course it is not easy to do justice to some places in just two pages, Lough Gur, for instance, with its vast archaeological wealth, merits many more, but given the strict editorial confines within which the author had to work, he has done extremely well.

The booklet is designed by Bovenizer Design, Ardagh, Co. Limerick, and printed by Treaty Press of Limerick. Unfortunately it is not available to the general public (as yet), as it was published privately for the staff of A.A.L.

and their friends. If it is published commercially, (a distinct possibility, according to Mr. Pat Lynch, Public Relations Manager, A.A.L.) may I suggest the inclusion of a title page and also that the excellent map of Co. Limerick, on the outside of the back cover, be moved to the inside. Since the title implies that all of the county comes within the scope of the booklet, perhaps the author might add a number of other articles on places east of the Maigue?

It is a shame that this publication is not more widely available because it would be of considerable interest, not just to native Co. Limerick people, but, no doubt, also to visitors and tourists alike.

PETER DUNDON

Kevin Hannan and Patrick J. O'Donnell, P.P. (eds.), ***Patrick's People - Historical Perspectives of an Ancient and Developing Community***, Limerick 1994; pp. x + 390. *Price*: £20.00.

As a Galwegian, and conscious of the havoc caused by Vikings with a Limerick accent on the religious houses about Lough Corrib in 927, not to mention the devastation caused to Galway's trade when the king's stable in wool was removed from the City of the Tribes in 1377 due mainly to complaints by our Limerick cousins, I was rather reluctant to acceed to this journal's editor to review a book about the southern city. You see, memories are rather long here in Galway! My reluctance knew no bounds, however, when I heard it was a book about a parish in Limerick, mainly because of the recent explosion in such 'parish epistles'. While of immense importance in recording the heritage of a community, and of great interest to intended parishioners, such publications often degenerate into a boring litany of team photographs and a million names of former G.A.A. warriors.

Not so this publication however, because when its immense bulk, consisting of hard-cover and four hundred heavy A4 pages, was placed into both my hands, I knew I had received more than the usual 'labour of love'. Here, indeed, was a publication, which went were none of its genre dared go before, into the realms of scholarship written clearly for the lay man and woman, where even legend enjoyed the realities of archaeology. There are photographs here also, hundreds it seems, but in this work on the evolving parish of St. Patrick's in Limerick, they showed thousands of real characters with faces, not faces without character. Their eyes stare right out at us with a clarity that is frightening and say, "This is our world by the Shannon, so there!". Thanks to the marvellous expertise of the printer, who unfortunately, is not recorded in this important work, we join them 'there' and for the many hours it takes to read this book, we experience a world that has mostly slipped away, but, now, will never be forgotten.

Here, we relive the old world of Park, where City Folk once 'held their noses when passing through', and where, according to the Foreword by Patrick J. O'Donnell, P.P., we can dip into the origins of this Limerick Green, and see again its customs, industries, recreations, practices, characters, beliefs, modes of transport, churches, mills, schools, bridges, great houses, wells (and how they loved their wells!), cemeteries, weirs and other institutions. Here, we can set out with the Wren Boys again in their "primeval mission" in pursuit of the 'thimblefuls of melody'. We can join the old 'tossing schools' (remember them?) and burst our pants at the tug-o-war in Kitty O'Doherty's back garden (see photos on pages 113 and 73 respectively). Not so pleasant is our meeting with the hangman James 'Stretcher' Ryan who, among many others, 'stretched' John Scanlan and Stephen Sullivan, the murderers of Ellen Hanley (the Colleen Bawn). The Match-Maker was nice to see again, however, and Kate Madden, on her knees beside her potato-plot in 1937, relived memories of the Great Famine for us, for she was already ten years old when 'Black 47' took away so many of her friends.

Jim Kemmy notes the poetry and writers of Park, but everywhere throughout this marvellous publication, I sense the hand of Kevin Hannan, whose knowledge of Old Limerick is equalled only, it seems, by the depths of his roots in this ancient part of Ireland... I wonder do they have Corrib mud on them?

PEADAR O'DOWD

Simon James, ***Exploring the World of the Celts,*** Thames and Hudson Ltd., London 1993; pp. 192; ISBN 0-550-05067-8. *Price:* £16.95 stg.

This book opens well, the very first comment stating that "The Celts are among the greatest peoples of European history, and indeed prehistory", finishing on the same page by telling us that new archeological evidence, "combined with reassessments of the fascinating details that Caesar, Polybius, Strabo and other Classical writers *did* record, has permitted a fresh understanding of the world of ancient Celts. They can now be seen as an intelligent, complex, wealthy and accomplished family of societies, who came to play a pivotal role in the making of Europe".

Who of our members would not be so proud to read that, especially most of us who consider ourselves, rightly or wrongly, as Celts? And having read that we would surely read on, to discover the "fresh understanding" now available.

Is this the book we have all been waiting for? Yes, in many ways it is, for it is just the kind of book which will satisfy the amateur and anyone interested in getting short, well-written, concise accounts of pretty well all relevant aspects of the pagan Celts; it is ideal for students! The text is, furthermore, admirably aided by numerous illustrations of all sorts (drawings, photographs, reconstructions, charts, maps, plans, etc.). A huge amount of useful and up-to-date knowledge is packed in these 'snapshots of the past', and the book, with its eleven chapters broken up into sixty-seven short 'essays' of one, two, or very rarely more pages, provides not only a fairly continuous narrative but can be dipped into anywhere, at any stage, each 'essay' standing adequately on its own though linked and complementary to others in the same chapter. The book is, furthermore, beautifully produced on excellent quality art paper, finely bound in hard cover, printed in clear, easily-read typeface, and of good size.

The first chapter on "Who Were the Celts?" provides one of the best available and most sensible discussions on the subject. It deals with most relevant aspects, including linguistics, but concentrates on identifying the Celts archaeologically. The author concludes (p. 15) that the Hallstatt culture ("now thought to span a period from *c.*1200 to 475 BC") in its later Early Iron Age phase included "relics of the earliest Celts as defined by their first mention in the Classical texts", although also pointing out that "it is very likely that other than Celtic-speakers are included under the Hallstatt label". The chapter concludes with "The La Tène culture is identified very closely with the Celts" and that "La Tène is the culture of the Celts who featured so prominently in the history of the ancient world".

Having thus set the scene, the author follows with ten further chapters, on "The Earliest Celts", "The Celtic Lands", "The Patterns of Life", "The Celts at War", "Gods and the Afterlife", "La Tène Art and Technology", "The Celts and the Classical World", "The Celts of Ireland", "The Celtic Renaissance", and "To Modern Times". The main headings thus presented, the reader can then pick and choose among 67 sub-headings, each presenting a short 'essay'. Some of these short essays are most unusual and make great reading. Among these one might include "People, Population and Disease", "Celtic Men", "Celtic Women", "Feasting and Fighting: how Society functioned", "The Celtic Gods", "Druids, Priests and Seers", "Holy Places and Sacrifice", "Lindow Man: Dead Men do tell Tales", "The Revolt of Vercingetorix", "Boudica's Revolt", "Ireland and the Roman Iron Age, AD 1-400", and "Myths and Legends of Ireland" which is a really readable and enjoyable piece.

There are over 300 illustrations, 59 of which are in full colour, many, whether photographs, line-drawings, maps or charts, having lengthy, useful captions expanding the relevant text. The text itself is printed with a wide margin which is always for most of its length filled with illustrations and/or fascinating snippets of relevant information. To give but two examples of these snippets: on page 179 is a note on Irish concubines, quoting firstly on old Irish law on which the author comments that "Concubinage was permitted, but wives did not have to acquiesce without a fight! Medieval Celtic women often had more rights than their English or French sisters, as their 'foremothers' had more rights than Graeco-Roman women", while on page 131 we learn that Caratacus, probably the most noteworthy leader of the Britons against the Romans (though Boudica/Boadicea is the best-known), when captured and brought to Rome ended a proud speech to the Emperor Claudius with *"For if you would rule the world, must it follow that the world must welcome servitude?"* - words that should be (should have been?) written in large letters at the head and foot of every imperialist ruler's bed to be carefully considered last thing at night and first thing on awakening every morning!

The maps and charts are numerous, excellent, and readily understood. Indeed, one could almost abstract them and republish them as a useful and interesting handbook. The illustrations are not from the general run (though *as usual* the back of the Tara Brooch, not the front is used) but are a much more unusual and wide-ranging selection than normally found. Can one fault or adversely criticise any of them? Not really, unless it be to state that the map of Ireland on page 155, purporting to show "The provinces of Ireland during the early centuries AD." names but does not show them, and that while it rightly indicates the capitals of Tara, Dún Ailinne, Cashel, Cruachan and Navan/Emhain, it also for some unknown and unfounded reason shows the religious sites of Armagh, Clonmacnoise and Glendalough! One could not take exception to the last illustration in the book, that showing Oliver Sheppard's lovely and emotive statue of the dying Cú Chulainn, the raven perched on his shoulder, now in the G.P.O. where it commemorates the Easter 1916 Rising, but one might legitimately criticise the rather facile part of the caption which reads. "It is remarkable that a strongly Catholic state like Ireland should choose a pagan symbol for a great national shrine: Celtic roots are deep indeed" - maybe an ugly Christian(?) Cenotaph would have been more suitable? One might also query the complete absence of pillar-stones - maybe future editions might include an essay, with illustrations, on those Celtic examples such as Phalzfeld, Waldenbuch, the Turoe Stone and the Lia Fáil?

The book also includes a Glossary, a Gazetteer (a list of museums containing Celtic artifacts and some important Celtic sites), an excellent list of Further Reading, arranged for each chapter, and a detailed Index.

This is a book which is very sympathetic to the Celts and as it began with some complimentary words it ends with two paragraphs presenting us with a most intriguing idea:

> With hindsight, it seems that the Roman destruction of most of the Celtic worlds was inevitable - but was it? There was a single moment when, if things had gone slightly differently, the history of the Celts, and ultimately of the entire world, would have followed quite another course.
>
> In 390 BC the 'barbarian' Celtic Senones had the young city of Rome at their mercy. Suppose that, instead of accepting ransom and withdrawing, they had destroyed the city, killing or enslaving its population (as the 'civilized' Romans had just done at Etruscan Veii). Without Rome - soon to develop unique skills in war and empire-building - Celtdom might still be a major power in continental Europe. Without Rome, we can imagine a Gallic urban civilization growing north of the Alps, forming a great Celtic-speaking medieval state in place of France. What then would have been the history of Europe, the Americas, or the rest of the World? Without Rome, this might have been a very different book - and in Celtic instead of English.

What a thought to conjure with: *agus b'fhéidir go bhfuil an ceart ag údar an leabhar íontach seo.* But one doesn't have to be nice and flattering about this marvellous book - get it and understand why!

ETIENNE RYNNE

Barry Raftery, ***Pagan Celtic Ireland: The Enigma of the Irish Iron Age***, Thames and Hudson Ltd., London 1994; pp. 240, 143 Figs. + 79 Pls.; ISBN 0-500-05072-4. *Price*: £24.00 stg.

The name Barry Raftery has become synonymous with Irish Iron Age studies over the last few decades. He was the first scholar to establish that hillforts were a major component for the monumental archaeology of later Prehistoric Ireland. His researches have also been artifact-based and in 1983 and 1984 Professor Raftery published two major academic works, *A Catalogue of Irish Iron Age Antiquities* and *La Tène in Ireland*. His most recent major work, *Pagan Celtic Ireland: the Enigma of the Irish Iron Age*, is another work of academic excellence which is clearly set to become the standard text-book dealing with the period. Written in a style which makes it more accessible to the general reader than the two earlier books, it is a substantial work which attempts a synthesis of a period which the title acknowledges its enigmatic.

The relative paucity of archaeological objects and sites allows the author to undertake a comprehensive review of the evidence while, at the same time, making it difficult for him to achieve definitive solutions to the problems encountered. The origin, date and function of hillforts is examined by Professor Raftery who draws extensively upon the results of his own excavations and extensive field-survey. Initially considered to be a phenomenon of the Iron Age, which led Professor Raftery to undertake extensive excavations at Rathgall, Co. Wicklow, it is now clear that some hillforts (perhaps all?) have their origins in the Later Bronze Age and do not produce finds of La Tène artifacts. The Royal sites of Dún Ailinne, Navan Fort and Tara also appear to have been occupied during the Late Bronze Age but there appears to have been significant new activity during the final centuries B.C., contemporary with the occurrence of La Tène decorated objects in Ireland and the erection of defensive linear earthworks. Added to this is the evidence of the Corlea bog-road - excavated by Professor Raftery - the construction of which would have required resources similar to those needed to build the Royal sites and linear earthworks. The appearance in Ireland of La Tène decorated objects and the construction of the major Iron Age sites and monuments is linked by the book's author to the rise of an aristocratic élite.

The observation that the bulk of La Tène objects in Ireland are of native manufacture argues against a large-scale 'Celtic invasion' to explain these developments although Professor Raftery admits the possibility of small bands of intruders imposing themselves as a ruling élite. This possibility is perhaps bolstered by recent finds of British material at Ballydavis, Co. Laois; however, the discovery came too late for consideration in the present work. The thorny issue of the introduction of the Celtic language is acknowledged but side-stepped as a philological rather than an archaeological problem. The character of the Iron Age in the southern half of the country - where La Tène material is largely absent - is summarily disposed of due to the apparent lack of archaeological evidence with which to address the issue. The author's suggestion that the southern hillforts may hold a key to future understanding seems unpromising in the light of the Late Bronze Age character of sites already investigated. In his discussion of the early centuries A.D. and Roman influences in Ireland, it is interesting to note that Professor Raftery leaves open the possibility of a direct Roman presence in Ireland - a topic which has often been the subject of serious debate.

Throughout the book, descriptions are clear and precise and technical terms are carefully explained, although the poor quality of reproduction of some of the illustrations (*e.g.* figs. 96-97 showing the 'Petrie Crown' and Cork Horns) mars an otherwise admirable production. If the major problems of the Iron Age in Ireland remain unresolved

it is due largely to the difficult nature of the evidence. What this work ensures is that the parameters of the problems are better defined and a comprehensive body of material, much of it new, is now available for the consideration of scholars and students alike.

EAMONN P. KELLY

Eamonn P. Kelly, ***Early Celtic Art in Ireland,*** Town House and Country House Dublin 1993 (for the National Museum of Ireland). pp. 47; ISBN 0-9461720-34-X. *Price:* £4.95.

Attractive and beautifully produced, this slim booklet is also an important and worthwhile addition to the ever-growing list of Irish archeological publications. Printed on good quality art paper, the text is of good clear size and easily readable, while the 28 black-and-white photographs and the 17 full-colour plates provide illustrations easy on the eye - one might, however, suggest that any subsequent edition would reverse the two-page aerial photograph of Tara (Pl.9) which is here printed back-to-front, that the photograph of the Newry armlet (Photo 11) would be inversed as it is here printed upside-down, and that the two-page illustration of the Attymon bridle-bits (Pl. 13) be printed on one page so that the important central link (as specifically mentioned in the text on page 40) is not lost in the fold.

But the importance of this publication is not based on its illustrations - any coffee-table book or booklet could easily provide a similar supply - but on the text. Unfortunately for the general reader, *e.g.* those visitors to the National Museum who might acquire this publication "on sight" as it were, the text is often more scholarly than would be easily assimilated by the non-expert. The author consciously provides us with a most useful if sometimes rather heavy-handed blow-by-blow description of the individual artifacts discussed, something from which his academic readers might benefit but which might too easily "lose" those whose interest is inherently superficial. A book like this is not easy to write and the text of the expert who attempts it is always likely to fall between two stools.

Opinions on art-historical matters are always open to discussion and not always acceptable to one's colleagues, though apart from some contentious dating (*e.g.* for the Etruscan bronze figurines and the Turoe Stone), and some strange descriptive comments (*e.g.* "a highly stylised horse" on the Mentrim plaque; "a bull-like outline of the smaller [*sic*] of the two brooches from Navan"; "openwork designs made up of curvilinear bird heads" on two of the Lambay scabbard-mounts), the art-historical aspects of this booklet will not cause undue hassle, though few will accept the statement on page 11 that "The Broighter collar may be viewed as the main point of departure for all later examples of Early Iron Age art in Ireland". But there are also regrettably, many minor details and inaccuracies, real and arguable, with which one might quibble. This is not the place to list these, but a few might usefully be mentioned.

On page 7, the author writes "A box-like feature at the back of the [Clonmacnoise] collar allowed both halves to pivot, enabling the wearer to place it in position". This is definitely not so - it might superficially look like that was the method used, but in this case, as in the case of some of those from continental Europe (*e.g.* the Praunheim Collar), the collar was opened and placed in position around the neck by temporarily detaching a part of the collar (the undecorated left portion of the Clonmacnoise collar as can be seen in Photo 1).

On page 13 an Early Iron Age bronze trumpet from Roscrea is mentioned - this is an error, not for the first time repeated, due to a misprint in Wilde's *Catalogue* (1857, p. 630); the horn listed as from Roscrea is of Late Bronze Age date (Wilde's no. 7 should read no. 5).

On page 37 another oft-used provenance is given, namely Tanderagee, Co. Armagh, for one of Ireland's best-known pagan stone idols - however, T.G.F. Paterson and O. Davies showed, convincingly I believe, that it originated in Cathedral Hill, Armagh [see *Ulster J. Archaeo.*, 3(1940), 83, 90–91].

On page 37 also, Newgrange is mentioned as "associated with the powerful Celtic god known as the Daghdha". It is, but only indirectly - *Brú Oengusa,* the ancient Irish name for the site, refers to the son, not the father.

One has to bring the period of "Early Celtic Art in Ireland" to a close at some stage. While the Romans ended that art in most of Britain and on continental Europe, they never came to Ireland and so an end to the period is difficult to identify. Nor did the advent of Christianity terminate the use and development of Celtic art over here, though inevitably it gave rise to certain changes, changes which are touched upon by Eamonn Kelly before bringing his book to a close.

Taken all-in-all, this publication is, as stated at the beginning of this review, an important and worthwhile effort, one for which the author and the National Museum must be thanked.

ETIENNE RYNNE

Nancy Edwards, ***The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland***, B.T. Batsford Ltd., London 1950; pp. xiii + 266; ISBN 0-7134-3567-2. *Price*: £35.00 stg.

This is an excellent survey of the archaeological evidence for Early Medieval Ireland and is, in every respect, a worthy successor to the pioneering volume by Liam and Máire de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland*, which appeared nearly forty years ago. Edwards takes a commendably broad view of 'archaeology', and combines a first-hand knowledge of the artifactual material with well-chosen selections from the historical, art historical, and manuscript evidence to offer a survey of developments from the fifth century to the twelfth. This is presented in eight chapters: (1) The Roman Impact; (2) Settlement; (3) Settlement Types; (4) Food & Farming; (5) Crafts, Exchange & Trade; (6) the Church; (7) Art; and (8) the Vikings. These are copiously illustrated with many excellent line-drawings (all, thankfully, to a uniform scale) and photographs, fully referenced and with a very comprehensive bibliography.

The remarkable paucity of Roman material in Ireland is reflected, rightly, in the brief five pages devoted to the subject here. While Roman influence must have been behind the invention of the ogam cipher (dated by Edwards to the 4th-5th century, though some Celtic scholars would now argue for an earlier date), there are remarkably few Roman artifacts in Ireland, mostly stray finds and some burials showing signs of Roman contact (Donaghadee, Co. Down; Lambay, in Dublin Bay; Bray, Co. Wicklow, and the notorious Stonyford, Co. Kilkenny). The settlement archaeology of the period is excellently discussed in chapters 2 and 3, with a clear and concise statement of the problems involved in establishing an acceptable chronology for the evidence. Crucial sites, such as Lagore, the crannog at Island McHugh, Co. Tyrone, and the Coolcran ringfort in Co. Fermanagh, are shown to be susceptible to much more accurate dating than previously thought possible (mainly due to the application of new technologies). The various settlement types (raths, caiseals, cathairs, dúns, etc.) are succinctly described and classified, and well illustrated. An interesting connection is proposed between the proliferation of ringforts in the 5th-6th centuries and the momentous changes in the political and social fabrics epitomised by the rise of the Uí Néill. The controversies among archaeologists over the continuity of such settlements are judiciously handled.

The change from circular to rectangular-shaped housed *c.* 800 is a thorny problem which, it must be said, is not altogether satisfactorily resolved here. The influence of rectangular churches can hardly be the sole inspiration. Chapter 3 covers the topic of crannogs and other settlements types, such as promontory forts and the neolithic structures at Knowth, Dowth, and Newgrange. Interestingly enough, Newgrange alone of the three yielded no traces of use during the Early Historic Period.

Chapter 4, on the Church, is rather odd – though not as odd as the statement on the inside front dust-jacket, which describes Ireland as 'a country nearly converted to Christianity'! This chapter is concerned principally with the structural fabric of the ecclesiastical sites and buildings. Within this is included a discussion of ogam stones, which sits rather uncomfortably in this context and might have been better placed in Chapter 1. (The ogam inscriptions are rendered into English without reference to the grammar of the original Irish.) The evidence of aerial photography is used to particularly good effect in this chapter, illustrating how the contours of early ecclesiastical sites can still be retrieved even in the most unpromising modern conditions. Documentary evidence is then brought fruitfully to bear on the discussion. The concluding remarks in this, as in the other chapters, make abundantly clear how many questions remain to be answered (and in some cases, to be asked). To that extent, the separation of secular and ecclesiastical sites in the discussion is somewhat artificial – however logical it may appear at first sight.

Chapter 7, on art, deals mainly with fine metalwork and decorated manuscripts. Here again Edwards's treatment is comprehensive and clear. Items such as the Ardagh and Derrynaflan Chalices are covered, along with old faithfuls like the Moylough Belt-shrine, penannular and pseudo-penannular brooches, latchets, hanging-bowls, house-shrines, and croziers. A great deal of material is covered in a remarkably small space, but without sacrificing the necessary detail. The discussion of Insular illuminated manuscripts is balanced and intelligent (though this reviewer is erroneously credited with the belief that the Echternach Gospels were written in Ireland). There are useful remarks on some of the later manuscripts, such as the MacRegol ('Rushworth') Gospels, the Macdurnan Gospels, the Harley Gospels, and some 11th–12th century decorated psalters (though not the Ricemarch Psalter, oddly enough). Irish-language manuscripts such as Leabhar na hUidhre and the Book of Leinster are also covered, along with continental Irish manuscripts associated with Marianus Scottus. Although the discussion does not mark any advance on the work of Françoise Henry and Genevieve Marsh-Micheli, nevertheless it is good to have in this volume (even if discussion by palaeographers has been more wide-ranging than Edwards's account might lead one to think).

On the stonework Edwards is clearly in her element: her discussion of the high-crosses is particularly good. The pioneering work of scholars such as Bruce-Mitford (on the design techniques of the Lindisfarne Gospels) has yet to be fully exploited, however, while the fieldwork discoveries of the current generation of archaeologists are all the time adding new material to the corpus.

The closing chapter, on the Vikings, is an excellent treatment of the documentary and archaeological evidence, well illustrated with distribution maps and with drawings of Viking Dublin house-types. Recent work by Raghnall Ó Floinn has suggested that the earlier view of Viking settlement at Dublin may require revision (though it must be said also that the evidence is not conclusive). All in all, though, Edwards's is an excellent treatment of material.

Text, illustrations, and bibliography are first-rate, and the author and publishers are to be congratulated. Errors are few and insignificant: ogam translations (103); F. Masai (not E.M.) (150); the Irish word for 'market' is *margadh* (not mogadh); (191); Musée des Antiquités (not Musé des Antiquities); and a few misprints here and there. None of these detracts from the quality of the book, which is a model of how such things should be done, and a joy to use.

DÁIBHÍ Ó CRÓINÍN

Peter Harbison, ***Irish High Crosses, with the figure sculptures explained***, The Boyne Valley Honey Company, Drogheda 1994; pp. viii + 111; ISBN 095-1782-371. *Price*: £7.95.

Dr Harbison has long been one of our most prolific archaeologists both in ideas and in writings published on various topics, and also one of our most civilized. This compact paperback, stoutly produced and obviously designed for taking into the field, is a spinoff from his three-volume corpus of the Irish crosses, academically published in Bonn a few years ago. It was designed by Jarlath Hayes and is of the high standard we have come to expect from that artist, and it has excellent illustrations by Hilary Gilmore, of County Clare. There is a foreword by Lord Killanin.

It is a book to be pocketed when visiting any of the country's numerous sculptured crosses, and it will provide a useful text for on-the-spot discussions of the meaning of the sometimes puzzling scenes depicted. Dr Harbison undertakes to explain them to us, and this is the main purpose of the book. A very useful undertaking it is. There have been many previous explanations of the carvings on the crosses, some of them very fanciful (for example, Kingsley Porter's ventures into the quicksands of Irish mythology and legend), others (like the elucidations of Helen Roe) following better-trodden art-historical paths. A great many of scenes depicted, of course, are obvious: the Crucifixion, the Last Judgment, the Fall, and so on, but the less obvious representations are quite numerous, and many clearly have no basis in Scriptural text, but relate to other, probably secular, narrative or themes, or perhaps, in some cases derive from the whim of the sculptor. We are not well informed about the Irish background of these iconographical schemes, and, while some of the scenes clearly draw on a common Christian stock of motifs (many of which in turn derive from pre-Christian Roman art), others do not, or at least not so clearly.

The author has valiantly faced this hazard, and offers tentative suggestions or guesses in many cases (conscientiously indicating his uncertainty). He has studied these sculptures for a long time and has taken the pains to make a comprehensive record of them; his views must be respected accordingly. But there is no finality. Why, to take an example at random, suggest that the two figures with crosiers on the east face of the Doorty cross at Kilfenora, represent SS Paul and Anthony? They appear to be plunging the ferrules of their staves into a carrion bird (described by Dr Harbison as "winged beast") which is feeding on dismembered bodies, and could just as well be SS Mac Creichea and Mainchín fending off the plague. Or that's one way of looking at it.

Differences of interpretation are unavoidable. In many cases reading the deeply weathered surfaces of the carvings is the equivalent of doing the psychologist's elementary ink-blot test: we impose our own fancies and preoccupations on them to some extent. Being offered an explanation, however tentative, on the other hand, is good for us, and debate on these matters does, every now and then, produce an agreed answer. Dr Harbison has done a service to the enquiring pilgrims who visit these monuments of Ireland's early Christian past.

LIAM DE PAOR

Conleth Manning, ***Clonmacnoise***, The Office of Public Works, Dublin 1994; pp. 48; ISBN 0-7076-0388-9. *Price*: £2.50.

Clonmacnoise has been the subject of much antiquarian, historical and archaeological interest from as early as 1658 when James Ware published the first plan of the site, with commentary on its antiquities, in his *De Hibernia et antiquitatibus eius*. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the antiquarians, Petrie, O'Donovan, Graves, Brash, Dunraven, Westropp, and Macalister, provided descriptions and some interpretation of its many churches, high crosses and graveslabs in various scholarly books and journals. By 1907, the then Board of Works had compiled the first detailed report on the site, including ground-plans and elevations of the principal churches and an inventory of over 200 graveslabs.

Guide books to the site with more popular appeal made their first appearance in 1949 with local school teacher, Brendan Molloy's *Guide to the Ruins of Clonmacnoise,* reprinted in 1950 and again in 1956. This was followed in the 1960s by an attractive booklet compiled and published by the Old Athlone Society, illustrated by Niamh Woods and priced at one shilling. The need for a more informative guide book was recognised in the 1970s and led to the publication of *Clonmacnoise: a historical summary,* written by Rev. J. Ryan and issued by the National Parks and Monuments Branch, Office of Public Works. This booklet [reviewed in this Journal, 21 (1979), 57] represented in condensed form Ryan's life's work on Clonmacnoise, which he hoped would stimulate the scholar and add to the pleasure of the visitor to the site. As an historian, his emphasis in this work was largely placed on the establishment of the early monastery by St Ciarán and its administration by the many bishops and abbots associated with it throughout its early history. While the historical content was refreshingly informative, he paid considerably less attention to the monuments, leaving much to be understood and explained.

With the present publication, *Clonmacnoise*, written by Con Manning, Chief Archaeologist in the National Parks and Monuments Branch, Office of Public Works (though his name does not on either the font cover or the title page) that persistent vacuum in our understanding of the monuments has finally been filled. In this beautifully produced booklet, Manning displays his mastery of the historical and antiquarian sources relating to the site and his skills both as archaeologist and architectural historian. For the first time the public are treated to a truly comprehensive, scholarly and very readable guide to the site, covering its topography, early history, golden age and decline, an understanding of the nature of its settlement and detailed descriptions of its churches and buildings, high crosses, graveslabs, holy wells, and castle. He also includes commentary on the metalwork and manuscript produced by the Clonmacnoise workshop in the twelfth century, and mentions in brief the more recent excavations at the site and what they have uncovered in terms of settlement and finds.

For those of us who have been tried by the architectural complexity of the cathedral and churches like Temple Dowling and its adjoining Temple Hurpan, Manning unravels the sequence of their construction, rebuilding and renovation, making sense of multi-period windows, off-centre doorways, extensions outward and upward, and seeking where possible additional clues in historical records. He also proposes some relationships between monuments, suggesting for instance that the cathedral and Cross of the Scriptures may be contemporary, the high cross, facing the west doorway of the cathedral, possibly having been erected in 909 in thanksgiving for Flann Sinna's victory over the king of Munster at the battle of Belach Mugna. The Nuns' Church, so often overlooked or at best given a brief mention in earlier guide books, possibly because of its distance from the main complex, is treated in some detail, and he makes reference to surviving remains of an earlier nunnery visible in the nearby field fence to the southeast of the Romanesque church. The ogham stone discovered in the new cemetery in 1990, the first recorded from Co. Offaly, is explained and illustrated, and in his account of the graveslabs he outlines a chronology for them based on their design, and reminds us that the Clonmacnoise collection, amounting to an impressive corpus of 600, is the 'largest and most remarkable collection of pre-Norman graveslabs in Britain or Ireland'.

The text is wonderfully illustrated by the photographs of Con Brogan and John Scarry, both of the Office of Public Works, supplemented by others from the collections of the National Museum, National Library and Royal Irish Academy, with ground-plans by Fiachra Keyes, Catríona Quinn and Gerald Woods, and an artist's impression of the early settlement by Phelim Manning and Aislinn Adams. Con Manning's guide to Clonmacnoise is an invitation to both scholar and layman to enjoy a fuller understanding of this 'major centre of piety, learning, trade and craftsmanship' which, but for an accident of history, was likely to have become a significant cathedral town. The Thomond Archaeological Society has visited Clonmacnoise in the past, and future visits will be greatly enhanced by this excellent guide to the site.

ELIZABETH FITZPATRICK

Julian C. Walton, ***The Royal Charters of Waterford***, Waterford Corporation 1992; pp. viii + 56; ISBN 1-897775-01-6 (hbk) and 1-897775-00-8 (pbk). *Price*: £29.95 (hbk) and £7.95 (pbk).

The world of medieval manuscripts and documents is for most of us a remote arcane world, mysterious, dark and obscure to which only a handful of privileged scholars have the key. Even for those of us who still retain the rudiments of school Latin, it is difficult to approach this world with anything other than trepidation. Thus, when a new work arrives dealing with original, early source material which has hitherto been largely unrecognised and unpublished, it must inevitably attract a great deal of interest and comment.

This book, entitled *The Royal Charters of Waterford,* produced by Waterford Corporation, beautifully designed, with a text by Julian Walton which is both informed and lucid, rightly lays claim to our attention.

The format is somewhat unconventional, presenting a page which is broad in proportion to its length. Although one notices that an increasing number of recent publications share this lay-out, it must be said that the result is not easily accommodated on the standard bookshelf nor in the average bookcase. Nonetheless, it does lend itself to a clean and uncluttered appearance, with wide margins all round, and allows for a generous and varied number of illustrations, and in this case they are both generous in number and varied in quality. The introduction of individual chapter headings is accompanied by a superb series of detailed inserts such as the serpent and berries on page 15, the caterpillar on page 20, the butterfly on page 31 and the snail on page 39, almost providing the quality and ambience of a modern day Book of Hours. One would, however, deplore the inappropriate scale of certain illustrations. These, including figure 2, the king receiving the homage of the mayor and bailiffs, figure 3 which depicts Waterford in the late 14th century, and figure 14, showing the regal figure of Edward VI, might have been more appropriately reproduced to a larger scale. Similarly one feels that the format should have allowed the reproduction of a number of the charters, particularly that of Charles I, dated to 1626, to have been printed to a size which would permit an appreciation of the calligraphic detail.

The text provides a brief but authoritative history of the city from the 12th to the 19th century by describing and analysing the magnificent charters and other extant documents which are held in the municipal collection. We are told the origin of the well-known motto and learn the somewhat less well-known facts concerning the almost obstinate loyalty of the city to the House of Lancaster. We learn, too, about its almost foolhardy refusal to join the Geraldine earls in their ill-conceived support for a succession of pretenders to the English throne in the late 15th century. The good burghers of Waterford knew on which side their bread was buttered and their loyalty was amply rewarded with new charters and the motto 'Urbs Intacta Manet Waterfordia'. The analysis provides a fascinating account of the evolution and development of municipal government and administration from its earliest origins in this country. We are given an insight into the social organisation of a medieval town, illuminating the relationships and attitudes of the various grades of society to each other. We have contemporary illustrations depicting the dress and appearance of many of the civic officers, and we have the names of over 1,000 of them, of individual freemen, entered on the Great Parchment Book before the year 1650.

Breaches of planning permission, evasion of regulations concerning maintenance of gutters and disposal of sewerage, persistent refusal to obtain licenses for domestic animals, all find their place in the social history of the city. Perennial problems of exploitations by tavern keepers and ale-house owners of 'naughty corrupt women' led to an ordinance being passed in 1566 to the effect that 'no woman, maid, wife, wench or widow' should be allowed to serve in such an establishment. The penalties laid down would find no favour with a politically correct generation - a fine of £5 for the publican and gaol for the woman.

There are delights and surprises, both visual and descriptive, on almost every page of this work. In his introduction, the author states that 'In fact it is no exaggeration to say that the grim walls of Reginald's Tower and the inner fastnesses of City Hall contain archival treasures of enormous importance to the study of medieval and early modern Ireland'.

Nor is it any exaggeration to say that this beautifully produced, well-written book now places these treasures within easy reach of researchers, scholars, students and the general public. We are indeed much indebted to this author and his publishers.

D. LEO SWAN

Ivar O'Brien, ***Murrough the Burner: Murchadh na dTóiteán***, Ballinkella Press, Whitegate, Co. Clare, 1991; pp. xi + 68; ISBN 0-946538-06-9. *Price*: £12.00.

This "Life of Murrough, Sixth Baron and First Earl of Inchiquin, 1614-74" is a short account of one of the more colourful figures involved in the turmoil of war and politics in seventeenth-century Ireland. Clare had more than its share of them. One of the common activities of the grandees and magnates who took part in these affairs was trimming, or turning coats. A somewhat cynical opportunism was the way to personal survival and (even more important for them) to retaining property and status. And since it was very difficult to calculate what way the wind would blow next, in the infernally complicated and constantly shifting circumstance of simultaneous but different civil wars being waged in the three kingdoms, Ireland, England and Scotland (not to speak of involvements farther afield), opportunism was far from easy. Ivar O'Brien, however, is inclined to blame Murrough's "multifaceted behaviour" on the women in his life - although he as far from being the only O'Brien of his kind. Murrough not only changed sides (he was born and died a Catholic but spent most of his life a Protestant fighting for Protestant causes) but he earned a reputation for ferocity. However, the author rightly points out that he was not unusual in this.

This short book has drawn on primary sources and gives a lively summary of Murrough's career. It is, as the author says "surprising that little biographical material has been written on Murrough so far." The book is not greatly helped by the illustrations. Too many of them are irrelevant to the text, and they are not well reproduced.

LIAM DE PAOR

Hugh W.L. Weir, ***O'Connor People and Places***, Ballinakella Press, Whitegate, Co. Clare 1994; pp. 100; ISBN 0946538-17-4. *Price*: £7.50.

One of the main strengths of this book is its clear explanation of the diverse origins of the surname O'Connor. The author shows that the O'Conors of Connacht (with their three branches), the O'Connors of Kerry, the O'Connors of Offaly and various other groups of the same surname today, all descend from different people. These clans were and are not connected to one another in anyway. Here at last is a readily available publication that spells this out effectively. It should be of value to O'Connors attempting to find out which clan their ancestors belonged to in the past.

Mr. Weir's research on the genealogies of the various O'Connor clans is also impressive. His identification of the senior surviving branches today of both the O'Connors of Kerry and Offaly is important. Research for the book also presents questions for historians. Mr. Weir shows that in 1876 the O'Conor Don and the cadet branches of that sept owned over 20,000 acres in Sligo and Roscommon. This poses the question of how a staunchly Catholic family like this maintained its position throughout the period of the Penal Laws, emerging into the 19th century as important landowners in Connacht. It seems to suggest that while these laws were often difficult for Catholic gentlemen, in practice there were ways of blunting their effectiveness at a local level.

The author focuses in on a number of different O'Connors for individual treatment. This was obviously a question of personal choice on his part. Yet there are a number of surprising omissions. He surely should have mentioned Aedh O'Conor, victor of Athankip in 1270. This was one of the first substantial victories of the Gaelic Resurgence in Connacht. General Sir Richard O'Connor of the Offaly clan produced the first British victory of the Second World War, in 1940 over the Italians in North Africa. He was arguably the most eminent O'Connor of this century. Yet there are only two brief references to him in this book. Roderick O'Conor, now regarded as one of the greatest Impressionist painters and head of a cadet line of the O'Conor Don family, is tersely described as a 'landscape painter'. Some mention also should have been made of Charles O'Conor of New York for American interest. In 1872 he became the first Catholic nominee for the Presidency of the United States. However, it was correct to include Cardinal O'Connor of New York for special biographical treatment; even Cardinal O'Connor's most liberal critics recognise him as a man of great intellect and integrity.

There are also a number of inaccuracies in the book. Charles O'Conor of Belanagare's family did not lose their lands during the Cromwellian period but in the 1690s after the Treaty of Limerick. However, they managed to regain part of their old estates in 1720 when Charles was ten years of age. In 1726 or 1727 his father Denis built Belanagare House on this land. Mr. Weir states that this was the seat of the O'Conor Don throughout the 18th century. This is incorrect as Charles O'Conor of Belanagare's line were only a junior branch of that family during this period. The title passed to his grandson Owen in 1820 on the failure of the senior line. During the 18th century the O'Conor Don lived at Clonalis, in the old house there - the ruins of which are still visible today near the present farmyard. The book's description of various monuments and artifacts associated with the various O'Connor clans is also interesting. However, Ballintober Castle, Co. Roscommon, was not built by the O'Conors of Connacht but by Richard de Burgh around 1300. It was merely captured by the O'Conors during the course of the 14th century and held by the O'Conor Don down to the 17th century. The ruins of the castle were repurchased in the late 19th century by the O'Conor Don of the day.

There is also a tendency in the book to treat mythological events and personages as historical ones. However, the book is a valuable addition to the growing number of works on Irish families and I would especially recommend it to overseas O'Connors searching for the origin of their antecedents.

KIERAN O'CONOR

Donal A. Murphy, ***The Two Tipperarys,*** Relay Publications, Tyone, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, 1994; pp. xxiv + 342; ISBN 0-946327-130-0 (hbk) and 0-946327-14-9 (pbk). *Price:* £25 (hbk) and £15 (pbk).

Throughout the Middle Ages the 'Premier County', established by the Anglo-Normans *c.*1250, remained a single administrative unit. This was largely due to the power and influence of the Butler family who were granted palatinate

rights in 1328. This in turn meant that the Butlers had all of the powers of a king within Tipperary, except for the pleas of the Crown: arson, rape, forestalling (assault on a public road) and treasure-trove. The country was administered as a private lordship until 1715 when the second Duke of Ormonde, who had Jacobite sympathies, was attainted for treason. In 1716 parliament terminated the palatinate and established Tipperary as "one county for ever".

Today, however, Tipperary is divided into two administrative units, the North Riding based on Thurles and the South Riding based on Clonmel. This book recounts the story of the division of the county in 1838 and its subsequent administrative history until 1994. The initial move to divide the county arose from the reluctance of the northern members of the Grand Jury to attend sessions twice yearly in Clonmel. The consequent creation of ridings doubtless satisfied their wishes, but it was to have several unforeseen long-term effects. Today the North Riding is part of the Mid-West region for local government and health board purposes, while the South Riding is part of the South-Eastern region. This means that industrial development, tourism and FÁS, for instance, are administered within the same county by two different bodies.

A Bibliography runs to seven pages (324-330) and includes relevant newspaper references. However, one critical comment seems justified: although C.A. Empey is given five bibliographical references on page 328, it is somewhat surprising that that which ought surely to have been one of the more relevant is omitted, namely "The Cantreds of Medieval Tipperary" which he published in our *Journal*, 13(1970), 22-29. An Index is also included, and the book is fairly generously illustrated with 16 plates (photographs and line-drawings), 8 figures (maps), and 6 tables.

This is a well researched study and the author is to be congratulated on the extensive use of newspapers and unpublished documents used in compiling his story. It is an important contribution to the hitherto neglected history of local government in Ireland.

JOHN BRADLEY

Micheál Ó Braonáin, ***Príomhshruth Éireann*** (eagraithe ag Seosamh Mac Muirí, Mainchín Seoighe agus Pádraic Breathnach), Bardas Luimnigh, Luimneach 1994; 1gh. 109. *Luach*: £11.95.

In 1794 is ea a chum Mícheál Ó Braonáin ó Lios Gobáin, i gCill Bhríde i gContae Ros Comáin, an dán ceiliúrtha seo, ar cheann de na dánta is faide a rinneadh riamh sa Ghaelge é, le breis is 1350 líne, ar abhainn na Sionainne, príomhshruth na hÉireann. Is é Séan Ó Donnabháin is túisce a bhain úsáid as an dán, sa chur síos a ghabhann leis an *Ancient Map of Clare* a rinne sé do Shuirbhéireacht Ordanáis na hÉireann. Chuir an Canónach John O'Hanlon sliocht as leagan an Donnabhánaigh den dán (rannta 287–8) i gcló ina dhiaidh sin, maraon le haistriú, i nóta le Beatha Sheanáin i *Lives of the Irish Saints* (iml. 6). In 1951 is ea a céadchuireadh an dán ar fad in eager san irisleabhar *Éigse* (iml. 6)) faoi láimh Éamoinn Uí Thuathail. Agus anois, dhá chéad bliain taréis dháta a chumtha, tá cóiriú nua curtha ar an dán, maraon le haistriú nua, ag freagairt do chaighdeáin eagarthóireachta na haimsire seo. Is iad Seosamh Mac Muirí, Mainchín Seoighe, Pádraic Breathnach agus Art Ó Maolfabhaill a chóirigh agus a d'aistrigh an téacs agus is é Bardas Luimnigh a shocraidh go gcuirfí i gcló é. Tá creidiúint an-mhór ag dul don bhuíon eagarthóirí agus do Bhardas Luimnigh as an eagrán maisiúil, slachtmhar seo a chur ar fáil de shaothar ar mhó go mór a thábhacht anois mar foinse seanchais ar mhionaibhnte, locha, oileáin agus bruachbhailte na Sionainne ná mar sheód liteartha.

Léiríonn an dán a raibh de shaibhreas Gaeilge fós i Ros Comáin i ndeireadh na hochtú aoise déag. Léiríonn sé leis an sárchur amach a bhí ag an bhfile ar an abhainn, agus go háirithe, ar ndóigh, ar an dtaobh ó thuaidh di. Bá é Loch Rí, mar a deireann na heagarthóirí, an 'ríloch' ag an bhfile, a thug breis is 250 línte suas dó. Chuireas féin spéis faoi leith sa chuntas aige ar naoimh an locha, Ríóg (ainm ná díochlaontar, d'ainneoin *Tobar Ríóige* na n-eagarthóirí) Inse Bó Finne, Ciarán Oileáin na Naomh, agus Líobhún na hInse Móire, ar dócha gurbh ionann a ainm agus *Laobhán (Laébán)* na staire, naomh a raibh baint aige le Cill Mhór na Sionna. Maidir le Ciarán de, is í Inis Ainín ar Loch Rí, ná luaitear aon naomh anseo léi (rann 138), a nasctar leis i scéal a bheatha.

Déanann Art Ó Maolfabhaill cur síos críochnúil ar a bhfuil ar eolas mar gheall ar an bhfile (1gh. 89–97). Ní ceart dó a rá, áfach, nách eol dúinn aon scríbhinn eile leis ach an méid atá i lámhscríbhinn 23 B 27 in Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann. Tá cúig cinn eile de lámhscríbhinní óna láimh san Acadamh chéanna. Cóipeáladh cuid díobh sin do Chathal Ó Conchubhair ó Bhéal Átha na gCarr, sa tslí nách foláir nó bhí an Braonánach ag obair dó sin leis mar scríobhaí. Ina theannta sin, tá dhá dhán curtha i leith file darbh ainm Mícheál Ó Braonáin in O'Curry 71 (c. 25) i Leabharlann Mhá Nuad.

Dán glórmhar ar rí-abhainn é seo, ach tá truamhéil leis ann, mar ba theanga i mbéal a báis í an Ghaeilge an uair sin, rud a thuig an file (rann 316):

Dá gcaillfí an Ghaeilge léirbhinn mhilis,
cá bhfaighfí an teanga nó an fear eolais,
a gheobhadh amach le grinneas céille,
gurb ionann *Loop Head* is Ceann Léime.

[Were the sweet melodious Irish language lost where
would the interpreter or the man of knowledge be found
who would discover with accuracy of perception that
Loop Head and Ceann Léime are identical.]

Tá an Ghaeilge, mar a b'eol do Mhícheál Ó Braonáin í, caillte, ach, ar ámharaí an tsaoil, tá fir eolais fós ann ar nós na n-eagarthóirí a chuir rompa an leabhar seo a thabhairt amach. Molaimís iad agus an Bardas a thug tacaíocht fhial dóibh.

PÁDRAIGH Ó RIAIN

Criostoir O'Flynn, ***When Dasher Died: Six Poems on the Death of a Horse***, Obelisk Books, Dublin 1994; pp. 3 + 50. *Price*: £4.95.
Criostoir O'Flynn, ***The Poets of Merry Croom***, Obelisk Books, Dublin 1994; pp. 45. *Price*: £4.95.

Born in Limerick city, Críostóir O'Flynn (or Críostóir Ó Floinn, the form of the name he uses when writing in Irish) is one of the most prolific writers in Ireland. Author of more than fifty books, in Irish and in English, his work includes almost every genre of literature - novels, short stories, poetry, plays and essays.

When Dasher Died is about six poems that were written in the 18th century on the death of a horse. The horse belonged to a Franciscan priest, Fr. Nioclás Ó Domhnaill, a scholarly man who had been Professor of Philosophy and Professor of Theology in Louvain, before returning to Ireland to take up the rather sad post of guardian of the broken Franciscan friary of Adare. Fr. Nioclás was a frequenter of the *cúirt éigse*, the court of poetry, that used to be held in Seán Ó Tuama's hospitable tavern in Croom. At this court used gather *Filí na Máighe*, the Irish-speaking Poets of the Maigue, and Fr. Nioclás was given the honour of presiding at their poetic sessions.

The Franciscan's horse was named *Preabaire*, a name that Críostóir O'Flynn has translated 'Dasher'; and when the horse died his owner wrote a lament for him. In the Introduction to the book, a scholarly and very readable essay that deals with the Gaelic literary tradition, the courts of poetry, and the character of 18th century poetry in Irish, Críostóir says: "It was the custom among the poets of the 'cúirt' to compose formal poems on the same topic, the first poem having been circulated among them as a sort of combined model and challenge. The responding poets would usually keep to the form and metre of the first poem. Thus it was that the death of a horse belonging to a member of the Croom court of poets gave rise to the composition of the six poems contained in this book".

The original poem that Fr. Ó Domhnaill composed drew responses from four other poets; and the sixth and final poem is again by Fr. Ó Domhnaill. It is interesting to find among the responding poets a Protestant landlord from Clare, Mícheál Coimín, All six poems will be found in the book, together with Críostóir O'Flynn's excellent translations. One of the poems, by Aindrias Mac Craith, includes the following stanza:

Do milleadh thú ar fad 's is feas gur díomá sin,
Is d'imigh do rath ar meath do ghearráin bhig,
Siollaire seang gan stailc nár starránach,
Is sibh-se nár leag i leacht ná i ndroch-bhearna.

Críostóir's ability as a translator is seen in his English rendering of the Irish stanza:

Deceased, he leaves you, 'tis plain, in want to abide,
Prosperity withered the day your little horse died;
Slender and strong, no stumble or halt in his stride,
On mound or in gap to dump you he never tried.

Also in the book are interesting biographical notes on the principal poets of the Maigue school.

The Poets of Merry Croom is an apt title for this, the second of Críostóir O'Flynn's books under review, for Croom was known to the poets as *Cromadh an tSubhachais*, Croom of the Merriment; Aindrias Mac Craith was known as "An Mangaire Súgach", the Merry Pedlar; and Seán Ó Tuama was known as Seán Ó Tuama an Ghrinn, Seán Ó Tuama of the Gaiety. In very informative notes in this second book the author elaborates on some of the topics touched on in the first book. He puts, and answers, the questions: "Who were the Poets?" and "What did they write about?". He tells of the difficult times in which they lived, and he describes the falling out between Mac Craith and Ó Tuama. Again we get some of the original poems associated with Croom - "Óldán Uí Thuama", "Aonach aerach Chromadh an tSubhachais" and, best known of all, "Slán le Máigh", with translations by Críostóir. The opening stanza and *curfá* of Mac Craith's famous song of farewell to the Maigueside, beginning

Slán is céad ón dtaobh so uaim
Cois Máighe na gcaor na gcraobh na gcruach

he translates as:

A fond farewell I send from here
To Maigue's fair fields where produce teems,
That peopled, pearled, plenteous scene
Of tales and tunes and hearts' good cheer.

Alas! my woe, my low condition,
No food, no friends, no rights, no riches,
No joy, no jewels, no sport, no spirit,
Now doomed to dwell an outcast.

With these two books, which provide English translations, readers knowing no Irish will be enabled to make some contact with 18th-century Irish poetry. And they will learn something about the kind of society that produced the poets, so that 18th-century Ireland will no longer be for them a hidden Ireland. Críostóir himself has expressed it best of all, when referring to these two books and to The *Maigue Poets*, to be published later, he said he saw all three books as helping "to lead many readers to their own beautifully crafted works in Irish", and as being "three well-shaped bricks in the building of the bridge that could eventually span the yawning chasm now separating us, in our local version of Anglo-American culture, from that unique culture of our own nation which is enshrined in the unique ancestral language of the Irish race".

MAINCHÍN SEOIGHE

Matthew Potter, ***A Catholic Unionist: The Life and Times of William Monsell, First Baron Emly of Tervoe (1812-1894)***, privately published (printed by the Treaty Press), Limerick 1994; pp. 122. *Price* £8.99.

The stirring events of the closing years of the last century and opening decades of this one have been so influential in shaping our destiny that they tend to cast the events of the previous half century or so into a relative shade. It is this reality, no doubt, which prompts the author's opening remarks to the effect "That Emly [William Monsell] is a significant historical personage may not be immediately apparent", this to some extent because his life and times just pre-dated the events of Ireland's 'National Revival' era. The nineteenth century, however, certainly deserves at least our occasional interest, not only to savour the grace and style of the age but to better appreciate the respect that age accorded to ideas and thinkers and the pursuit of truth as distinct from propaganda. It was an era of philosophers, orators and statesmen, and the present volume gives us an ideal opportunity to encounter large numbers of these people. Many of the burning issues of the day find mention here, and a very good cross-section of the personalities of the period were either close friends or at least acquaintances of the subject, Lord Emly.

In just over one hundred pages we meet not only the statesmen of both Ireland and Britain, such as O'Connell, Smith O'Brien, Peel, Ward, Palmerston, Diraeli and Gladstone, but also the dominant churchmen of the age, notably Pope Pius IX, Newman, Lacordaire, Wiseman and Cullen. For its "Who's Who" of the 19th century alone, it is well worth the time reading this book.

But it appeals to me also for another reason. We are all familiar with the less edifying attributes of the typical nineteenth-century Irish landlord, and it is important, therefore, if only for the sake of balance and integrity to meet a landlord who was authenticated by no less than Bishop O'Dwyer of Limerick as "one of the most lovable ... one of

the noblest characters I have met". The author of this biography tells us (p. 46) that "What is most remarkable about Monsell the man is the wide range of his activities and his interests. He was an Irishman, an English gentleman [on p. 12 we are told that his education at the public school of Winchester had "made of him a thoroughly English gentleman"], an adopted Frenchman, and a cosmopolitan European", and later (p. 102), that "The long and fascinating career of the First Lord Emly was one of the most remarkable in the history of County Limerick". This may be a bit of an exaggeration, but his achievements were many and worthy. Read this interesting book and judge for yourself.

MICHAEL O'MALLEY

Maura Cronin, ***Country, Class or Craft? The Politicisation of the Skilled Artisan in Nineteenth-Century Cork***, Cork University Press 1994; pp. ix + 294; ISBN 1-85918-027-2. *Price*: £22.50.

The author of this book is a lecturer in history at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. The central theme of her impressive study is the gradual and complex process by which the craftsmen of nineteenth century Cork became politicised. The concept of politicisation is wideranging, involving not just participation in politics but also the ability to put pressure on governments and the development of a sense of identity both at individual and group levels. Artisans were skilled workers who had served an apprenticeship to a recognised craft. They jealously guarded their position and were in that sense exclusive. They were particularly antagonistic to the unskilled worker and to women in the workplace. This was largely based on their fear that both these groups represented a threat: they were perceived as a source of cheap labour which might replace the time-served craftsman in an era of increased mechanisation and elementary mass production.

Cork was basically a disgrunted city during the nineteenth century. The expectations of prosperity following from the 1800 Act of Union were not fulfilled; indeed economic stagnation and decline were the norm. This affected the merchant classes whose dreams of wealth and status were shattered, as well as the working classes who had to face the unemployment and poverty which resulted. This harsh reality was shown by a population decline: in 1901 it was six per cent less than it had been in 1841. This decline was greater among the Protestant population, and was concentrated among the lower levels so that by the end of the century Cork Protestants could be categorised simply as 'upper class'. This study does not discuss Unionist artisans, largely because of lack of source material which the author suggests reflects the realities of nineteenth century Cork society. Despite some occasional efforts to be sensitive to the politics of Unionist members, Cork trade unionism came to be closely identified with nationalism.

Politicisation of the Cork artisanate was a slow but inexorable development. Its beginnings are traced to the 1830s and the campaign for Repeal by O'Connell. It was further developed by enthusiastic support for Fenianism in the 1860s and reached its apogée in the Home Rule movement from the mid 1880s. The importance of social contact, whether in the workplace or through recreational activities, in furthering the politicisation process is also discussed. In this regard the role of temperance societies, musical bands and the Cork Workingmen's Association is seen as crucial. Dr. Cronin's approach is thematic rather than chronological, and there is a welcome emphasis on analysis rather than mere narrative. Thus, in addition to a core section on the instruments of politicisation, there are stimulating chapters on class as identity and trade as identity. The central search by the author, as the title of the book indicates, is for the ultimate source of the identity of the artisan. While there is no simple answer to this question, what seems to have mattered most to the majority of artisans was a dual allegiance to their native city and to their craft.

The study is based on a thorough familiarity with an impressively wide range of source material but it also incorporates comparative and complementary studies by other historians, not just in Ireland but in Britain and continental Europe as well. This broad approach give a more comprehensive and sophisticated analysis than is normal in Irish labour history, and it is to be hoped that Dr. Cronin's splendid pioneering example will be followed by others, particularly in the area of local studies. There is a regrettable tendency to present many scholarly monographs on localities as being microcosms of the national scene. Perhaps publishers are often to blame being fearful that a book without a general, impressive looking title, as in this case, will not be marketable if it is honestly presented for what it really is. Dr. Cronin also justifies her work in this way though she is tentative about her claims, and clearly recognises the value of her work irrespective of its cosmic applicability. Her tantalisingly brief consideration of the nature of local studies, whether merely arbitrary geographical bites out of the larger political system or the answering of big questions about small places, is an indication of the rich and varied stimulation provided by this excellent work.

Cork has been well served by its historians. In recent years major work has been published, ranging from James S. Donnelly's study of the landlords and Ian d'Alton's analysis of Unionism to Seán Daly's discussion of the city's working class and the eclectic collection of essays edited by O'Flanagan and Buttimer in the Geography publications county history series. To this embarrassment of riches we now add Dr. Cronin's masterly treatment of the artisans. As the author is based in Limerick the contrast in historiographical terms between the two counties should perhaps be noted. With some notable exceptions there has been a regrettable neglect of academic research on Limerick history. This concluding *cri de coeur* is issued by way of exhortation for a redress of the imbalance rather than in any spirit of tribal envy or jealousy towards the Lee-side city to whose historiography Dr. Cronin has made a notable contribution.

LIAM IRWIN

Kathleen Moloughney, ***Roscrea, My Heart's Home***, Roscrea People, Roscrea 1992; pp. viii + 136. *Price*: £7.95.

This book is, as its Acknowledgments and Introduction make clear, a follow-up to the writer's first publication *Roscrea Me Darlin'!* which was published in 1987 and was reviewed in this *Journal*, 29(1987), 110–111.The book has an A5 format, and is well produced, with a good thread sewn and glued binding and card cover. The layout is good and straight-forward with a clear, legible font and excellent proof-reading. The illustrations are not numbered but have clear, concise captions. Acknowledgments, a short Foreword by the historian, archaeologist and editor of the Roscrea People, George Cunningham, along with an author's Introduction, twelve chapters of text and a thirteenth section which includes "In Conclusion, Directory Extracts, Maps and [a list of] Sponsors and Patrons" comprise the book.

The content is well written, and is a very readable account of the history and social life of Roscrea and its vicinity during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This is a "people's local history" and for anyone from Roscrea or whose people came from that area there are many reminiscences of local events and folklore to dip into. People feature in many of the photographs and many of those depicted will be familiar to, or at least related to, natives of Roscrea and its environs. The book will make an ideal gift for all those who, for example, have emigrated from that area. Chapters on emigration (They Had To Leave), genealogy (Some Family HIstory), The War of Independence and Civil War (Troubled Times), as well as topographic and socio-historic chapters on the developments of parts of Roscrea (Out the Limerick Road, Along the Monastery Road and By the Templemore Road) comprise the first six chapters of the book. These are interspersed with a wide variety of other subject matter ranging from accounts of 'Big Houses' like Mount Dudley to brief accounts of people and places of interest associated with the local townlands.

One of the most interesting chapters to the reviewer's mind is chapter seven (Monumental Masons) which is an account of local stone-cutters. This is accompanied by photographs of two fine 'folk-art' headstones, one at Sean Ross Abbey and the other in St. Cronan's Churchyard, Abbey Street. Clearly there is good material for an article dealing with the symbolism and iconography of these stones. The first bears, among other things, cherubs, the cock-in-pot motif and what appears to be an angel who seems to have been pressed into service to do the job of either Stephaton or Longinus below the crucified Christ (the photograph is not clear enough to determine whether the figure holds a sponge on a lance or a spear). Anyone attempting to trace schools of 19th century stone mason's craftmanship would do well to study this chapter for its most useful details. The McNamara family of masons who worked in the Roscrea area, for example, came originally from Scariff, County Clare, and one wonders how many motifs, patterns and symbols they brought with them from there. Mrs. Moloughney is so right when she points out that "The value of old tombstones to our heritage and folklore should never be underestimated."

Chapter eight (Youthful Days) contains many reminiscences from the fairly recent past of a type which would be familiar to most older people throughout the country, as does chapter nine (Country Life) which is a more specifically local potted social history which recalls a way of life which has all but disappeared. The latter section includes memories of things as diverse as bogs, turf-cutting, and one of Roscrea's major industries in the past, the Bacon Factory. Chapter ten is entitled "Lifestyles of Women" and it and the succeeding chapter make fascinating reading, with chapter eleven (They Remember Well) being drawn from the reminiscences of local women, including Mrs. Sally Tynan of Ballyhall who in 1992 had reached the grand old age of 100 years!

The twelfth chapter (People, Places and Pieces) is a highly varied one with sections on Cholera and Famine, a Hero of War (Father Michael Bergin), along with tales of the super-natural and the banshee. More folklore would, indeed, have been most welcome as would a longer section on the travelling community, subjects which, no doubt, deserve further books in themselves. The main body of the book ends with an Appendix which gathers together some useful genealogical material for anyone interested in local or family history. Extracts are given from *Slater's*

Directory of 1846 and *Thomas Directory* [*recte* Thom's Directory] of 1934. This appendix is followed by three maps, one of Roscrea town and two of areas around Roscrea.

An index, even a brief one of people and place, would be a useful addition in any future edition of this book, especially since so many individual locations are mentioned. George Cunningham in his Foreword hits on the importance of local accounts such as this when he says that "In a fast changing world such work is not just important but vital to enable present and future generations to know the richness of their heritage".

JIM HIGGINS

Patrick Howard, ***To Hell or to Hobart***, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, New South Wales, Australia 1993; pp, 193; ISBN 0-86417-550-7.

Emigration has been one of the central features of Irish history over the past two centuries. One of Ireland's most chilling historical statistics is that half of all those born here since 1829 have emigrated. There has been a curious ambivalence in our attitude to this topic. While there has been justifiable pride in the role Irish people have played in the history of Britain, America and Australia in particular, much less attention has been paid to the actual emigrant experience in personal terms. Recent historical work has begun to redress that imbalance, particularly through the use of emigrants' letters and journals. It is now recognised that detailed examination of individual and family histories can convey a more immediate and authentic picture of the reality of emigration than the former concentration on official reports, statistical analyses and sociological generalisations.

This book is a good example of the value of the personal approach. Patrick Howard traces the history of his great grandparents, Stephen Howard and Ellen Lydon, who were transported from Ireland to Van Diemen's Land in the 1840s. Partly to supplement the scarcity of family records, the author reconstructs not only their story but also the era in which they lived and the world of the immigrant in nineteenth century Australia. It is on many levels a fascinating story and the author tells it superbly.

As a child Patrick Howard was told that his great-grandfather had been the wayward son of a wealthy Irish family who was sent to Australia to avoid social embarrassment. In fact, Stephen Howard was a farm labourer from Croom, Co. Limerick, who was transported as a convict for stealing a gun. In Australia he married another Irish convict, Ellen Lydon from Galway; she had been convicted, along with other members of her family, for killing a sheep during the Famine and was transported in 1849. Their individual lives form the bulk of the book, followed by a brief glimpse of their subsequent marriage and the success of their descendants, particularly in the mining industry of Tasmania.

For Limerick readers the story of Stephen Howard is of more immediate interest. He was one of eight children born to a family living on one third of an acre in the townland of Ballintaw, near Croom. At the time of his arrest in 1842 he was working for a farmer named James Lynch in Granagh. Lynch was typical of the strong farmer class in pre-Famine Limerick, leasing a farm of 208 acres and living in a substantial house, Granagh Cottage, while his labourer occupied a one-roomed cabin or *bothán scóir* on the land.

While the details are sketchy, it appears that Stephen Howard joined the Whiteboys, and this had led to his involvement in the robbery for which he was convicted. This was on the home of the Hogans of Rathcannon, near Athlacca; a family noted in more recent times for their horse-breeding prowess. Six men raided the house, looking for firearms, on a Sunday morning in August 1842 while the family was at mass. Armed with a pistol, pitchfork and wattle, they assaulted and threatened two female servants and a visitor while they searched the house. After three quarters of an hour they left with just a single gun and two shot pouches. The raiders wore no disguises and the servants knew their identities. Nevertheless, it was not until the following December that Howard was arrested, having presumably been sheltered in the meantime.

He was tried along with one of his accomplices, Timothy Noonan, at the County Courthouse in Limerick on 7 March 1843. Despite a character reference and the suggestions of an alibi for Howard from his employer James Lynch, both men were found guilty by the jury after a mere five minutes deliberation. Three members of the jury were prominent landowners in the area, Captain John Shelton of Rossmore, William H. de Massy of Glenwillian, and John Cantillon of Manister House. The convicted men were each sentenced to ten years transportation, but a third man who had pleaded guilty to the charge was given a mere seven months imprisonment.

While both men were in Kilmainham Gaol awaiting transportation, petitions for mercy on their behalf were sent to the Lord Lieutenant. They were signed by the parish priest of Croom and, interestingly, the victim of the raid, Patrick Hogan. Sixteen other people, including many of the local gentry, signed Noonan's petition but not Howard's. The author makes the intriguing suggestion, based on handwriting analysis, that it was Hogan who drafted the

petition for Howard either at the instigation of the priest or due to shock at the severity of the sentence. It was stated that Howard was the sole support of his crippled father and of three orphan nieces. His father also sent a personal petition, but all were in vain. The judge who had tried the case recommended against any commutation, and both Howard and Noonan sailed to Hobart in early May, arriving in Tasmania at the end of August 1843.

There were four stages in the probation system, as the punishment was termed, and the author provides a detailed and valuable explanation of its operation. Howard, with a ten year sentence, spent the first two years on a probation gang engaged in hard physical labour. He then moved on to a probation pass, which allowed private work for wages. He held a number of jobs, mostly farm labouring, for the next three years. He had now completed half his sentence and was eligible for a ticket of leave. Provided he did not get into trouble and obeyed some relatively minor restrictions, this effectively made Howard a free man. He promptly became a policeman. This was apparently quite a frequent occurrence and it is hardly surprisingly that the Van Diemen's Land police had a poor reputation. According to Howard family lore, Stephen fitted in perfectly to the poacher-turned-gamekeeper role, and was deeply despised, particularly by roadworkers whom he supervised in a very brutal manner.

After his marriage in 1854 he turned to farming at which he was successful, building his own house and later acquiring further land. He and Ellen had eight children, and lived long and reasonably comfortable lives. Their love of Ireland remained strong and as they grew older their sense of loneliness and enforced exile apparently intensified. There is a moving reminiscence from his two youngest children of seeing him crying in old age for 'the green banks of Ireland'. Stephen Howard died in 1897 at the age of 80, without ever seeing his beloved county Limerick again. His illiteracy, the impact of the Famine and, later, emigration seem to have wiped out all links with the rest of his family, and the author makes no mention of finding any relatives in the Limerick area.

The story of Ellen Lydon is also reconstructed. In general terms her experiences mirrored those of her husband. It is not known how they met though the speculation that it was through their shared catholicism seems reasonable. Ellen was ten years younger than her husband and outlived him, dying in 1908. They have both been well served by their descendant who devoted nearly five years of his life to researching their story, both in Australia and in Ireland. He has clearly been dogged and untiring in his search for scarce and fragmentary source material. He shows commendable skill both in his handling of the documentation and his integration of family history into the wider social, political and religious context of the time. His recreation of social conditions in both the county and city of Limerick in the mid-nineteenth century is particularly impressive. However, the brief and unnecessary first chapter, attempting a summary of Irish history in thirteen pages, is a classic of the dungeon, fire and sword school, and mars what is otherwise an impressive work of scholarship.

LIAM IRWIN

Michael Kenny, ***The Road to Freedom: Photographs and Memorabilia from the 1916 Rising and Afterwards***, Town House and Country House, Dublin 1993 (for the National Museum of Ireland); pp. 48; ISBN 0-946172-35-8. *Price*: £4.95.

The National Museum of Ireland contains a fine collection of photographs, documents and artifacts relating to the 1916 Rising and to the years immediately before and after. Michael Kenny, who has become an authority on the subject during his twenty years of service in the Museum, has here compiled an absorbing selection of these memorabilia, which brings vividly to life the main events of the period. There could be a danger that the numerous illustrations, in full colour and black-and-white, would overshadow the text, but they are well captioned and, in fact, both text and illustrations complement one another very well. Kenny writes clearly and crisply, packing a great deal of information with unobtrusive authority into a very readable text.

Some over-simplification of a highly complex process and events is naturally inevitable in a short account. Apart from one or two small factual slips - it is not quite correct to refer to "the change in status from Free State to Republic in 1949", when the Free State terminated with the Constitution of 1937 - there are just two items of relevance that seemed to me debatable.

Firstly, it is not quite accurate, I think, to claim that the 1916 Rising was carefully planned. Kenny is quite right to stress the extent of the planning that went into preparing for a Rising in 1916. But the actual Rising itself was not, of course, the one that had been planned. The plans became the victim of circumstances, and much improvisation was required in the wake of the events of the weekend.

Secondly, churlish though it is to complain of an omission in a study that contains so much, the absence of any reference to the Government of Ireland Act of December 1920 may leave a misleading impression about the situation confronting the negotiating team on the Treaty in 1921, and indeed Dáil Éireann itself during the Treaty

LIMERICK CITY LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPT.

Debate. There still seems to be a widespread popular impression that the Treaty imposed partition on the country. But of course partition already existed, imposed unilaterally by the British under the Government of Ireland Act. Northern Ireland was already a functioning entity before the Truce was agreed for 9 July, 1921. Indeed, in the context of British politics, given that Lloyd George was effectively the prisoner of a predominantly Tory cabinet, it is virtually inconceivable that the British would have agreed to a truce until they had taken care of their Ulster friends. This greatly weakened the negotiating position of the Sinn Féin representatives in 1921.

These quibbles should not detract from the author's overall achievement. The clarity and conciseness of the text make it an ideal introduction for anybody not already familiar with the story - and that, unfortunately, means an increasing number of young people, given that fewer than twenty per cent of second level students now take history as a Leaving Certificate subject. And even readers already familiar with the period would usefully refresh their memory and deepen their understanding by pondering this evocative account.

J.J. LEE

Risteard Ua Cróinín, ***O'Dea - Ua Déaghaidh: The Story of a Rebel Clan,*** Ballinkella Press, Whitegate, Co. Clare, 1992; pp. xv + 142; ISBN 0-946538-07-7. *Price*: £15.00.

I imagine it is every clan's prerogative to perceive of themselves as 'rebels'. In the Irish context, at least, there always seems to be a nice emulsive feeling to be "against the flow", even if such a feeling is not always justified. However, in the case of the O'Deas there is some evidence for applying the epithet to themselves (this publication was specifically produced as a result of the first O'Dea clan gathering in 1990), especially as the memory of Patrick O'Dea, member of the West Clare Active Service Unit of the Irish Volunteers, who was fatally wounded in an engagement with British troops at Ballykett, near Kilrush, in 1920 (see p. 83), would be still fresh in the minds of many of the Clan.

The book consists of snippets of information, each a few pages in length, concerning a range of aspects relevant to the O'Deas, a notable south-east Clare family, allegedly dating from the tenth century when, we are informed (p. 12), Déaghaidh, from whom the O'Deas took their name, lived. The range is wide and varied, including the redoubtable but much-maligned Máire Rua (pp. 58-64), who of course was a MacMahon not an O'Dea but whose first husband was Daniel Neylon of Dysert O'Dea, whom she married in 1634 and lived as mistress of his castle until his untimely death five years later; Dysert Castle is now restored and the residence of the book's author.

Other notables of lesser or greater eminence are also noted, including, for instance, Jimmy O'Dea (pp. 97-98), probably Ireland's best known and best loved comedian, as are items such as various antiquities, field-monuments as well as artifacts, relevant to the O'Deas. I thoroughly enjoyed this copiously illustrated and quite light-hearted folksy romp through the lore, seed, breed and generations of the Ua Déaghaidh.

Some may think that the book's first-class binding and presentation is rather pretentious. I don't - this is not really a book for the shelf. It is more a sturdy companion for a field-trip or even for the side-pocket of a car door, to be sampled at odd moments rather than swallowed whole ... it needs its sturdiness. Its real charm, of course, is that it is a collection of clan memorabilia assembled to celebrate the renaissance of Dysert O'Dea Castle and the birth of the 'Archaeology Centre' there, initiatives most worthy of both acknowledgement and celebration.

MICHAEL O'MALLEY