

EDITORIAL, 1995

This time the *Journal* is very late, and the backlog is growing (has grown, in fact) inexcusably. While there are lots of valid (at least your Hon. Editor thinks they are valid) excuses, this is no place to air them. However, I think I will surprise you all with the speed the 1996 number will appear—just wait and see.

Meanwhile, this volume of the *Journal* is not only larger than usual, but contains many good and, we hope, interesting articles. The longest one is an important article of a type which has been published elsewhere but which is new to our *Journal*. It provides a most useful record of the gravestones in Ardagh Cemetery. Such recording is invaluable for genealogical purposes, especially as much of our past family records went up in smoke with the burning of the Four Courts in 1922 at the start of the Civil War. Equally importantly, perhaps even more so, are the accompanying biographical notes on those commemorated in the cemetery with which Jerry McMahon has amplified the record, notes which not only contain evidence of much historical research but also are often of the type of interesting and important information which only a profound local knowledge could supply. This article is, nonetheless, of more than local interest, and will be read and treasured by historians of our more recent past and by genealogists from all over Ireland. It sets a standard which will be difficult to emulate, but which hopefully will be before such local knowledge is lost, unrecorded, for real history is primarily local. To quote from the short poem *Epic* written by Patrick/Paddy Kavanagh when commenting on apparently minor local events (read Ardagh for Ballyrush or Gortin?):

That was the year of the Munich bother: Which
Was more important? I inclined
To lose my faith in Ballyrush and Gortin
Till Homer's ghost came whispering to my mind
He said: I made the Iliad from such
A local row. Gods make their own importance.

Archaeology is well served too. Mary Cahill and Ragnall Ó Floinn have again, this time working together, provided us with new information about old National Museum acquisitions from North Munster (see *Journals* from 1982, 1983, 1986, 1990, 1991 and 1993–94 for previous articles and notes by them). Two excavations are partly covered also. An account of the reconstruction of the important Romanesque doorway carried out during the major excavations on the Island of Inis Cealtra is presented here as a sort of *entrée* to the long and detailed report on the actual excavations which is already to hand for next year's *Journal*; the report on the excavations by Dr. Elizabeth Shee Twohig at St. Saviour's Dominican Priory, Limerick, is likewise only the first part—it sets the scene for part II which in the 1996 *Journal* will describe and discuss the finds from the site. Two of the notes in the Miscellanea section are likewise of archaeological interest, if perhaps not of comparable importance.

History is served in a real way —lateral thinking?— by the other articles and the third note. Indeed, the relevance of archaeological, onomastic and numismatic approaches to

history, and *vice versa*, are evident in these articles and notes, indicating the value of such interdisciplinary studies.

We promised in our last *Journal* (page 135) that in this, our next volume, we would include a Review Article on our late member, Monsignor Ignatius Murphy's three-volume *Diocese of Killaloe*, and also suitably updated notes on a souterrain in Kilkee and on the Birr Stone which he had sent for publication some years ago. Regrettably, due to a cumulation of circumstances only one of these items is ready for publication, and it is therefore being held over until the next *Journal* when all three should be available...apologies.

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Once again the society has much pleasure in sincerely acknowledging generous grants-in-aid: from the Ardagh Development Association and from Limerick County Council towards publication of Jerry McMahon's article; from the National Museum of Ireland towards publication of that by Mary Cahill and Ragnall Ó Floinn; from University College, Cork, for that by Elizabeth Shee Twohig; and from University College, Galway, for those by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, Breandán Mac Aodha, and Etienne Rynne.

The Hon.editor would like to gratefully acknowledge his thanks to our Vice-President, Mr. Paddy Lysaght, for his willing help and continual encouragement, to our President and our members and contributors for their saintly patience, and to Bernie Broderick who, as ever, graciously assisted us with typing, and indeed re-typing, many of the notes, reviews and other items in this *Journal*.

And then, of course, there are our printers, McKerns of Limerick—the Hon.Editor can only express his wonder at their patience with him and once again marvel at their placid acceptance of unacceptable procrastination... especially the calm endurance of the Director, Ivan Morris—go raibh míle maith agaibh uile.