BOOK REVIEWS

Ann O'Sullivan and John Sheehan, ***THE IVERAGH PENINSULA: The Archaeological Survey of South Kerry,*** Cork University Press, Cork 1996; pp. 481; ISBN 0-902561-84-7. *Price:* £25.00 (Hbk).

It's always nice to feel proud of one's former students, and I get that pleasure often, particularly when I see them and their achievements lauded in learned journals and newspapers. Nor does it have to be regarding matters archaeological as I quite appreciate that the beneficiary of a good university arts degree is provided with a real all-round advantage in later life, though perhaps even more so if the all-embracing subject of Archaeology has been taken to degree level. But when my former students shine as archaeologists I feel so proud of them that my hat, if I wore one, would no longer fit me! I feel like claiming some of their glory, hoping somehow that some of their well-merited success might reflect well on me and that, like Mor-iar-ity of the well-known song, I will be greeted at the gates of heaven with "Your reward you've won, for work well done, flap your wings....", for it is surely true that a university professor should be judged as much by his own researches (which inevitably owe much to his own professor and lecturers) as by the success of his students. So thank you John Sheehan and Ann O'Sullivan, and thank you Michael Connolly and Frank Coyne, two other archaeologists, graduates of University College Galway, who were among those who helped in the survey work for this fine book. 'The Kingdom' surely owes 'The West' one!

For over eight years from August 1986, a number of archaeologists and surveyors, and over 120 trainees, worked on a FÁS training project investigating some 2,550 sites, dismissing 615 of them as of no archaeological consequence and recording the remaining 1,935 for posterity. Of all those sites, only about 30% had been marked on the Ordnance Survey maps, and the other 70% were discovered by examining various publications and also manuscript sources in public and private collections, by aerial survey, by talking with the local populace, and by dint of walking and personally examining virtually every field, mountain and valley in the peninsula. The Survey only included monuments, presented here under 37 different classifications, which were deemed to date before 1700 A.D., which is a pity — with a bit of leeway other ancient monuments such as old limekilns, old bridges, martello towers, and suchlike (perhaps even ruined and abandoned Big Houses, railway lines and stations?), might usefully have been included — *archaeological, ancient* and *old* are terms which are often interchangeable and in many ways synonymous.

The main text of the book opens with a general introduction to the 'Geography and Geology' of the area (acknowledged to Dr. William Warren and David Howard), and a brief account of the 'Archaeological and Historical Background', followed by a very brief outline of 'The Survey' itself. After these introductory words the book presents us with 22 chapters on the field-monuments. Each chapter is introduced by a useful explanatory few words about the monument-type being listed — indeed, these introductory notes might with relative ease be abstracted, slightly rewritten here and there, and then published together, with a few accompanying and relevant illustrations, as a small handbook for the non-specialist local or visitor to the peninsula.

The book is also well-supplied with a Bibliography, though it could be usefully extended by a few extra publications, *e.g.* the important summary article on Fulachta Fiadh by Diarmuid Ó Drisceoil in vol. 33 (1991) of our own *Journal* and the book on the same monument-type called *Burnt Offerings,* edited by Victor Buckley (1990), while personally I would have thought that my comments on Leacanabuaile (monument no. 62) in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,* 63(1962-64), pp. 272–273, and also my comments on the same site in *Decantations, A Tribute to Maurice Craig,* edited by Agnes Burnelle in 1992, pp. 196–207, deserved mention in the text and listing in the Bibliography; perhaps also my article on swastikas, published in vol. 32(1990) of our *Journal,* might have been mentioned *vis-à-vis* those on the pillar-stones at Cloon West (monument no. 938).

But maybe I am being too personal - an all too easy fault to fall into. Let me more seriously say that I cannot find fault with this book, other than one minor misprint: the caption for black-and-white plate 105 (on pages xvii and 379) is incorrectly given as for monument no. 1100 — it should be for no. 1110.

This large and beautifully produced book, copiously illustrated with 123 black-and-white photographic plates, 29 glorious full-colour plates (6 full-page, 23 two-per-page, *i.e.* 52 colour photos in all, only a few of which one might mildly criticise, colourwise), and 259 line drawings, is a real pleasure to have and to hold. It is of enormous credit to all who were in any way concerned, directly or indirectly, with its publication and production. At its price it is a

giveaway, something which is no doubt largely due to its 16 major and 81 lesser sponsors, all of whom must surely be immensely proud of the achievement ... unstinted and sincerest congratulations are due all round.

ETIENNE EYNNE

Mary Tunney (ed), Geraldine Stout and Margaret Keane, ***FARMING AND THE ANCIENT COUNTRYSIDE***, Teagasc & The National Monuments & Historic Properties Service, Dublin, 1996; pp. 24; ISBN 1-901138-00-3. *Price:* £1.00 (Pbk).

This concise booklet of just twenty-four 21cm.-square pages contains 28 colour photographs (including one before-and-after pair on p. 20), five maps, eight ghost drawings of objects, and short sections of text, some of archaeological background information and some of guidelines and legal extracts, all designed to get across a simple message: We have a wonderful archaeological heritage in this country, it is under threat from modern practices in farming, forestry, *etc.*, and here are some ideas as to how to prevent destruction and ensure that heritage survives for future generations.

The booklet is divided into sections on farming in its broadest meaning, in grassland, arable land, wetlands and woodlands. For each section there is an information panel, photographic and map information, and then an advice panel. Monuments of earth and of stone are included and there is also consideration of landscape. It is primarily intended for use by Teagasc advisors and farming agencies and was produced in the early days of the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme to establish a common code of advice for those who own the bulk of our heritage.

The photographs include examples of damage through overstocking, work practices too close to, and even within, ancient monuments. We have seen variants of the theme of many photos many times. The photo of a sheep-scarred mound, P1.4, is repeated within 100 metres of where I write in County Sligo, the hedges have been removed and the thorn bushes on the small Cloonagh barrow, which survived medieval road builders by a whisker, is now the refuge for many heavy cattle in times of heat and cold; the stone core is becoming exposed at an alarming rate. The water trough set in a megalithic tomb reminds me of a Sligo megalithic tomb that was planted with daffodils. More recently the writer had no difficulty convincing a farmer in the Broadford, Co. Clare, area that the boulder he had put on a small wedge tomb for its protection was only causing damage by cattle walking on the tomb while scratching on the boulder, the only surviving scratching place left after scores of acres had been stripped of every boulder and bush.

Solid advice is given as to procedures in relation to keeping activity away from monuments, be that reclamation, cattle feeding, tree and scrub removal, drainage and dumping of rubble or refuse on monuments. The principles enunciated here are applicable to all practices disturbing ground, mining, engineering works, *etc.*

The recommendations imply the need for educating landowners as to the heritage they delicately hold in their care. This booklet is a beginning in that regard but repeated back-up short television inserts would have a major educational impact. Many landowners simply do not know what heritage they have on their lands. Not all farmers have chosen to participate in the REPS scheme.

The suggestions that a 5 metre margin (p. 13) is sufficient in ploughland and 20 metres in woodland (p. 21) ignores the concept of a fallow area as enshrined in the Supreme Court decision of 1989 concerning the Carrowmore, Co. Sligo, megalithic tombs. The extent of fallow areas is something that is site and situation dependent and should not be a mathematical figure. One should consider the visual amenity of each monument, its visibility in the landscape and its degree of uniqueness. A medieval church, a high cross or a megalithic tomb require different fallow areas to each other but also different fallow areas to low elevation earthworks. This is something that needs to be sensitively decided on an individual basis by a competent archaeologist.

One cannot fault the booklet for what it contains — a copy of this booklet in the hands of everyone dealing with the land, land-owner, farm-worker and administrators, will certainly do much to save our heritage for the future— but there are omissions. There is no list of further reading — besides the county inventories there is a mass of useful material that can be had off the shelf. Perhaps one would not expect *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* to be mentioned, but Frank Mitchel's *Reading the Irish Landscape,* Peter Harbison's *Guide to National Mounuments,* Seán P. Ó Ríordáin's *Antiquities of the Irish Countryside,* Terry B. Barry's *Archaeology of Medieval Ireland,* and Con Manning's *Irish Field Monuments* certainly should have been. Many farmers genuinely want to know just what they have on their lands.

Contact addresses are given for the National Monuments & Historic Properties Service, nowadays *Dúchas*, the National Museum of Ireland, the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit and Teagasc. Herein lies a major omission. There is no mention of the roˆ le of the Gardaí who are locally and rapidly available, nor of the University Departments of Archaeology — the exploits of our Hon. Editor and others, both individually and collectively, in pursuit of monuments under threat and of recent finds is legendary - the pages of this and other local *Journals* record some of those successes. Neither is there mention of the many long-standing local archaeological and historical societies which have protected our heritage for over a century. And have we forgotten the power of the *píseóg?* It is worth recording that our late member Cannon Martin Ryan gave a yearly sermon from the alter on the seriousness of the *píseóg* and its effectiveness in preservation. Also there are many members of the Irish Association of Professional Archaeologists working throughout the country. In other words, interim protection and accurate information is to be had closer to hand than the official agencies in the far removed capital city. One feels that the fault does not lie with the authors or the editor of this handy little booklet, all of whom use locally provided information in their daily work, but with the State attitude that all can be done from a Dublin office. The day of the County Archaeologist has to come, and the sooner the better, if to do nothing more than reduce this writer's phone and petrol bills!

Geraldine Stout and Margaret Keane who supplied the text, Mary Tunney who edited it and Caroline Maloney who was responsible for layout and design, Teagasc and the National Monuments & Historic Properties Service, are to be warmly congratulated for a wonderful little booklet that can only benefit the preservation of our heritage. Variants of this booklet directed to others who impinge on our heritage, particularly those who drive earth-moving equipment, should be produced and widely distributed.

At the giveaway price of £1 this is a worthwhile investment by Teagasc and the State into the preservation of our heritage; it is worthy of the widest distribution and the greatest success.

MARTIN A. TIMONEY

Dr. Muiris O. Sullivan, ***MEGALITHIC ART IN IRELAND***, Town and Country House, Dublin 1993; pp. 46; ISBN 0-946172-36-6. *Price:* £4.95 (Pbk).

The subject of Megalithic Art is one which invites speculation from anyone interested enough to voice an opinion. Indeed, so much old nonsense has been written on the topic that it is refreshing to find such a concise and accessible book which will be treasured by layman and student alike.

Although *Megalithic Art in Ireland* is a rather slim volume which can be leisurely read in an evening, it is also a very useful and informative handbook for those who have little or no knowledge of archaeology. Having said that, it has a lot to offer those, such as myself, who may wish to refresh their memories or do a bit of quick brushing-up.

Firstly, Dr. O'Sullivan puts megalithic art in its proper archaeological context by giving the reader a description and overview of Irish megalithic tombs. He then proceeds to track the development of the art from an original 'standard style', in which basic geometric elements were depicted on a surface with little reference to the shape of the stone itself, to what he calls a more developed 'plastic style', in which the ornament is moulded around the stone's shape and configuration. These findings are, in fact, the results of the author's research for his doctorate and differ slightly from our member Dr. Elizabeth Shee-Twohig's major work on the subject (*The Megalithic Art of Western Europe*, Oxford 1981).

This booklet is very attractively illustrated with 12 black-and-white photographs, 3 drawings, 1 map and 22 colour plates, which is quite profuse in a book of only 46 pages. I particularly liked the colour plate of the apparently anthropomorphic figure on page 28 popularly sometimes known as "The Clown" (or "King Tut" as it was christened by the workmen who found it) as well as that of the decorated macehead found at Knowth on page 20 and its development on page 41. Thankfully, all of the stones were well chalked-up or suitably lit before they were photographed. A beautiful close-up of Kerbstone 52 at Newgrange adorns the cover and is the perfect invitation to give this book the attention it deserves. The photographs throughout are credited, and a credit to John Scarry.

The reader is guided by a logical progression from chapter to chapter and everything is in clear English with none of the mumbo-jumbo that you often find in books on the same theme written for the transatlantic tourist market. Although there is no example of megalithic art in North Munster, many members of this society have visited, or maybe planning to visit Newgrange, Knowth or other such sites for which a book like this would be very useful preparation.

The layman, however, will probably be a little bit disappointed with *Megalithic Art in Ireland* if they want clear answers as to the meaning of the enigma which is megalithic ornament. Dr. O'Sullivan quite rightly sits on the fence by saying that "all lines of enquiry, as long as they are followed with due deference to the evidence, are valid." He comes out strongly against the pseudo-scientific interpretations which have only served to tell "us more about the authors than the artists" and "diminishes the background and sophisticated achievements of Stone Age people." However, considering that "the most decorated sites, accounting for more than four-fifths of the decorated stones, are in Co. Meath", it would have been nice if there was a map included of the Boyne Valley to consult, not to mention plans of Newgrange, Knowth and Fourknocks; the passage-tomb and its decorated stone at Tara might also have been mentioned.

This book, while physically lightweight, is an interesting and handy introduction to an intriguing topic. Its clear language and useful glossary will suit the non-specialist while there is a select bibliography for those who wish to investigate the subject in further detail. If *Megalithic Art in Ireland* was written to foster or, as in my case, to rekindle interest, then its purpose has been served very well.

PAUL MCNAMARA

Edel Bhreathnach and Conor Newman, ***TARA***, The Government of Ireland, Stationery Office, Dublin 1995; pp. 56; ISBN 0-70776-1695-6. *Price:* £3.00 (Pbk).

The aim of this very attractive handbook seems to be to try to tease out the facts from the mythology of one of our most mysterious archaeological sites, the Hill of Tara, and present it in an accessible way to the non-specialist. The information contained within this booklet stems from The Discovery Programme, which carried out major research on Tara and its environs using modern investigative methods of which the layman may never have heard, such as geomagnetic imaging, digital terrain modelling and resistivity surveys. Fortunately, these state-of-the-art techniques are presented in such a way that they deepen, rather than frighten off, interest.

Tara is an excellent introduction to what must be one of the most tangled webs of Irish archaeology, considering that there are so many periods represented and that most are enshrouded and immortalised in myths and legends which many Irish people want to believe, even if they are not true. The achievement of this book is that it largely succeeds in giving an accurate picture of the function of the Tara complex without throwing out the baby with the bath-water. Indeed, many of the stories about Tara are used to flesh out the archaeological evidence, such as the convergence of a number of disused roads at Tara having parallels with one tale which "relates how five roads, Slige Midlúachra, Slige Asail, Slige Chualann, Slige Dála and Slige Mór, appeared magically to mark the birth of Conn Cétchathach, a mythical king of Ireland" but that the antiquity of the disused roads "cannot be verified to the extent of relating them with the five mythological roadways of Tara."

However, other legends such as St. Patrick's visit to the Hill of Tara do not fare so well. According to the authors, the description by the seventh century monk, Muirchú, of Patrick's clash with the druids at Tara was part of an attempt by the great church at Armagh to forge "a strong alliance with the increasingly powerful Uí Néill dynasty, who were using Tara as a symbol of their authority. Armagh's claim to ecclesiastical supremacy in Ireland would have been assisted by the knowledge that its patron saint, Patrick, had converted Lóegaire, an early Uí Néill king of Tara, to Christianity. There is, however, no contemporary historic evidence to support the claim that Patrick ever visited Tara."

The second half of the book is more concerned with the archaeological aspect of Royal Tara and is introduced by an eyecatching timeline spread over two pages, 30 and 31. It is here that one encounters the relatively new archaeological tools of computer-based topographical survey and geophysical prospection. The non-specialist will no doubt be impressed by how scientific and useful these new technologies have become to archaeologists. Throughout *Tara*, but especially in the second half, there are stunning aerial photographs of all the relevant sites, as well as appropriate illustrations of their phases. It is a very colourful, well designed and clearly laid-out book. Indeed, every page either bears or faces a photograph or illustration. Particularly attractive is Denis Brown's calligraphy which is used for all the headings. The cover design combines a wonderfully simple vignette of Tara on the front complemented by a clever Tara-centered view of Ireland on the back.

Tara is written in very readable English (there is also available an Irish version, *Teamhair*) and the authors obviously take pleasure in re-telling the old legends, even if they do not necessarily believe them. Each site is

discussed individually and its physical proximity to its neighbours can be easily checked on the site map which folds out from the back cover, a very useful feature which should be part of every archaeology book of this nature.

On page 43 is a very brief, one-sentence mention of a group known as the British Israelites who dug, apparently at random, in the Rath of the Synods between 1899 and 1902 (Recte 1898-1903), doing a large amount of damage there in the mistaken belief that the Ark of the Covenant was buried in the Rath! It would have been nice to have been given a bit more information on this strange event, but we believe that we can look forward to a major monograph on the subject shortly.

[A minor comment: In the English version of *Tara* the above mentioned one-sentence paragraph on the British Israelite activities is followed by another one-sentence paragraph telling us that scientific excavations in 1952 and 1953 revealed four major phases of activity at the site — the Irish version runs these two paragraphs together, almost suggesting that the 1952–53 *tochailtí eolaíochta* had revealed *ceithre phríomhcheim ghníomhaíochta for* the 1898–1903 explorations!]

In short, *Tara,* and indeed *Teamhair,* are both very useful, informative, and accessible handbooks, in which their excellent layout, beautiful colour aerial photographs, as well as their introduction of cutting-edge technologies into the layman's view of archaeology, have made them essential guides for anyone planning to visit the area.

PAUL MCNAMARA

Edel Bhreathnach, ***TARA: A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY, Discovery Programme Reports*** **3**, Royal Irish Academy (for the Discovery Programme), Dublin 1995; pp. x + 173; ISBN 1-874045-35-6. *Price:* £9.99 (Hbk).

"Ah sure, we all know about Tara" is a not uncommon reaction to mention of the royal site. But how much and what exactly does the average person know about Tara, apart from the fact that it was the seat of the High Kings of Ireland, that St. Patrick visited (under arrest/ duress as it were) the site in A.D. 432, and that there is nothing to be seen there except a few mounds and hollows! And even that much consists of only a few half-truths. There are many books, booklets and pamphlets providing information on the site and its monuments, some good, some bad, but none of which can provide as much readable, interesting all-round information as this beautifully produced book, a real credit to its author, publishers, typesetters, and printer. It is a most elegant and easy-to-handle book, printed on superb paper and extraordinarily reasonably priced, a book which ought surely be in all public and private libraries having any pretensions to an interest in Ireland's past, for this book is much more than a bibliography.

True, over two-thirds of the book consists of the "Bibliography", but it is no ordinary list of published works. Each of the 405 entries is annotated with a brief outline of its content, indicating any special reference to matters concerning Tara, and furthermore providing cross-references to many of the other entries. By just reading these brief entries alone one can reconstruct much of the whole story, theories and arguments concerning the site, they are so good and well-presented. The bibliography, we are informed on page 43, is based on a search through American, British, Continental and Irish journals..... through a series of published texts, and through a wide range of other miscellaneous works, a compilation of publications "which are most relevant to an understanding of the archaeological, historical, symbolic and topographical significance of Tara". It is divided into four main parts: (i) the primary sources, (ii) literary interpretation of the sources, (iii) historical interpretation of the sources, and (iv) the archaeology and topography of Tara. The last three sections refer to secondary works, but are none the less valuable for that in that it is they which provide scholarly discussion to the primary texts and to the monuments on the hill. The primary sources do not cover those dating from after about 1600 (e.g. Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn)* as those are to be dealt with as part of a later publication, as will the interesting account of the activities of the British Israelites who dug at Tara for the Ark of the Covenant between 1898 and 1903. However, for use with the primary sources we are presented on page 44 with a most useful chronological division of the earlier phases of the Irish language, one which many of us have long wanted, namely (i) Old Irish, AD 600–900; (ii) Middle Irish, AD 900–1200; (iii) Early Modern Irish, AD 1200–1650.

Good and all as is the annotated "Bibliography", perhaps the general "Introduction" and the brief explanatory pieces at the beginning of the main categories in the bibliography itself will probably be of even more interest to the general reader. This is not the place to list the numerous categories included, but in the "Introduction' the reader will find excellent assessments of current thoughts on the various grades and nature of kingship in ancient Ireland,

including comments on the *geisi* (taboos or prohibitions) associated with the king of Tara, on the claims to the High Kingship of Ireland by branches of Uí Néill, by the Eoghanacht in Munster, by Brian Boruma (albeit described as "usurper from Munster"), and by the Uí Chonchobhair of Connacht; comments also will be found on the various saints associated with Tara, namely Saints Patrick, Columba (Colum Cille) of Iona and Rúadán of Lorrha in north Co. Tipperary (who allegedly cursed Tara, causing its abandonment), and comments on Tara's monuments, and even a page and a half on the name of the site, *Temair*/Tara. The short explanatory bits include such items as genealogies, hagiology and calendars, prophecies, *mirabilia,* triads, inauguration rites, Lug, *Feis Temro* (the Feast of Tara), Tara and Iona, Tara and Cashel, Excavations, etc.

"But has the book no faults?" you might well ask. "Well, nothing serious anyway" would be the answer. Perhaps the only serious one is that there are no maps, *e.g.* a general map of Ireland to show the *cóic cóicid Érenn* (the five provinces of Ireland) and the royal and other major sites mentioned in the text, and also needed is a map of the Hill of Tara and its immediately surrounding area, showing where the monuments are located and how they relate to one another. However, the reader is recommended to acquire one or other of the new guide-books reviewed on pages 140-141 of this *Journal* and the matter of locating the monuments will be satisfactorily rectified.

Another small point concerns the discussion as to who the first real Ard-Rí was. Brian Bóruma (died 1014) and Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill (Máel Sechnaill II, died 1022) are both suggested, and both seem to have reasonably good and valid claims — until the earlier Máel Sechnaill mac Maíle Runaid (Máel Sechnaill I) is researched. He became king of Tara in 846 and was termed *rí Érenn uile* (king of all Ireland) when he died in 862. The small point? Not important perhaps, but certainly confirmatory and surely worthy of mention would have been that our member Liam de Paor had not only discussed the latter's claim but had found him described by name and three times as king of Ireland (ORAIT AR RIG HERENN), carved in stone on the Kinnitty High Cross — see Liam de Paor, "The High Crosses of Tech Theille (Tihilly), Kinnitty, and Related Sculpture", in E. Rynne (ed.), *Figures from the Past, Studies on Figurative Art in Christian Ireland, in honour of Helen M. Roe,* Dublin 1987, pp. 131–158.

Lastly, may I be forgiven for picking on one small niggling item concerning one of my own publications? Number 304 of the bibliography (on page 138) refers to my paper on "A Pagan Celtic Background for Sheela-na-Gigs?" (pp. 189–202 in *Figures from the Past* as listed above) in which the figure on Adomnán's Cross is discussed. Apart from the spelling of *Bluigne as Bluicne* (not so spelled by me nor so spelled elsewhere in this book), the article was not "A study of *the* non-Christian 'Celtic' *origin* of sheela-na-gigs" (italics mine) as it is here described, but was an examination of *a* possible pre-twelfth century *background* for the then introduced true Sheela-na-Gigs….. a perhaps overly subtle, but important, difference! By the way, the "image" on the front cover and also on the title page is by Louis le Brocquy and surely represents the two stones, Blocc and Bluigne, discussed in that article.

Misprints? None jumped off the page at me unless it be on page18 where *Bheith 'gearradh guirt air do dhruim* is translated as *cut grass of your hill* — I make no pretensions to being a Celtic scholar, but I suspect *of* should read *on*.

However, ignore all such minor criticisms and rush out to acquire this marvellous book before it goes out of print — I doubt if you will ever regret it.

ETIENNE RYNNE

Miranda J. Green, ***EXPLORING THE WORLD OF THE DRUIDS***, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London 1997, pp. 192; ISBN 0-500-05083-X. *Price:* £17.95 stg. (Hbk)

This book is one of a series with the general title *Exploring the World of...,* aimed apparently at the non-specialist British reader. There are captioned illustrations — frequently several, many in colour — on every page as well as boxed inserts which provide further information on points from the main text. This arrangement leads to much repetition and to the disruption of the narrative, making it a bumpy read. Technically and artistically the book is very well produced and is a credit to the unnamed Slovenian printing-house responsible.

Professor Green deals not only with the druids of ancient times but quite extensively (pp. 138–181) with the so-called druidic revival since the seventeenth century and with modern druidism, including a summary history of the Welsh Eisteddfod. She provides a surprisingly long directory of the contemporary druid organisations which exist in Britain, on the continent of Europe, and in the New World. No such body is listed for Ireland, but 'Irish Wicca', a sister organisation with an address in County Meath, is listed under 'Groups in the United Kingdom'!

The author's treatment of the ancient druids is based on three sources: the classical authors' references to the druids, modern archaeological discoveries, and medieval literature in Irish and Welsh.

On pp. 40–42 she gives a well-balanced judgement of the evidential value of the accounts of the druids in classical writings: 'probably contain elements of truth and fantasy... we must beware of embroidery, exaggeration and false accreditation'. But in her actual account of the druids based on these same writings she makes no effort to discriminate between truth and fantasy, much less to identify embroidery or exaggeration. Quotations from classical writers are prefixed to various sections and are given in the text, but no distinction is made between authors who may have had personal knowledge of the druids and those who merely repeated information which they lifted from earlier writers or, indeed, invented. The classical sources for our knowledge of the Celts are subjected to scholarly criticism by David Rankin in his book *Celts and the Classical World* (1987) where he shows that much of what was related of the Celts was commonplace in classical writings about barbarian peoples or was written by authors with a political agenda of their own.

In the chapter entitled 'Digging up Druids' Professor Green assembles a substantial amount of archaeological material as evidence for Celtic religion and ritual, but one wonders how much of it is relevant. She admits (p. 55) that the evidence for priests — and especially for Druids — 'has to be largely circumstantial'. Much of what follows is speculative, bristling with 'may bes', 'possiblys', and 'appears to bes'. Sometimes the speculation goes too far, as when (p. 61) she imagines that 'Irish Druids, wearing these tall horned crowns, presided over sacrifices or led processions'. The fact is that we do not know who wore the so-called 'Petrie Crown', and we cannot be at all sure that it *was* a crown.

The Calendar of Coligny, one of the most significant documents from Celtic Gaul is mentioned three times with varying dates: 'first century AD' (p. 8), 'first century BC' (p. 37), and 'early first century AD' (p. 89). In the most recent and definitive edition of the Calendar it is dated, primarily on palaeographic grounds, to the end of the second century AD by the editors, Paul-Marie Duval and Georges Pinault in *Recueil des Inscriptions Gauloises, Vol.* III, 1986, p. 35.

The captions accompanying some of the illustrations require revision: *e.g.* the Corleck idol is not a 'triple head' but is a three-faced head (p. 28); the 'trumpet' illustrated on p. 61 is not from 'a lake at Loughnashade' but is of Scandinavian provenance.

The chapter 'Sacrifice and Prophecy' (pp. 70-90) is devoted mainly to sacrifice, particularly the sacrifice of humans. Since there are no ancient illustrations of this, recourse is had to modern depictions of human sacrifice, including the notorious illustration of the 'wicker man' taken from a 1973 film. In this connection it should be remembered that neither Julius Caesar nor Strabo, who are our source for the story that the Gauls threw people into wicker images and burned them alive, say that the *simulacra* were in human form, so that the traditional representation of the 'wicker man', which goes back to the seventeenth century, has no ancient authority. I find the repeated emphasis on human sacrifice (24 references, one of the longest entries, in the Index) and the sensationalist illustrations very distasteful.

The least satisfactory part of Professor Green's book is her treatment of the literary evidence for the druids of Ireland in the chapter 'Druids in Irish Myth' (pp. 122-137). To judge from the bibliographical section, 'Sources of Texts' (p. 186), the chapter is based totally on secondary sources, not all of them reliable. This has led to errors, many in the spelling of proper names, not only in this chapter but throughout the book, others of fact, as when Finnéigeas (or Fionn Éigeas), the poet from whom Fionn mac Cumhaill learned poetry and who caught the Salmon of Knowledge, is called a 'bard'. The text in question, *Macgnímartha Find,* does not call him a bard but a *file,* and his very name (or title) indicates that he was an *éigeas* = *file.* This is a minor point but is relevant to the author's argument on p. 125. The tale of the birth of Oisín, described (p. 125) as 'one of the central stories about Finn' is a modern Irish and Scottish folktale and occurs only vestigially in medieval literature. It is included here because one of the characters is said to have been called 'the Black Druid'. However, in the Irish text his name is Fear Doirche 'Dark Man', so that it has nothing to do with druids. The name of Oisín's mother in medieval literature was Blaí Derg, not Sava, which latter derives from Saav which is an anglicisation of Sadhbh, the name of another of Fionn's consorts. These inaccuracies are to be traced to Patrick Kennedy's *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts* (1866). The quotation on p. 132, said to be from the Book of Invasions is actually from *Cath Maige Tuired.* Neither it nor the quotation from 'The Fate of the Children of Tuirenn' on p. 130 is to be found in O'Rahilly's *Early Irish History and Mythology,* as stated in the Bibliography (p. 186). Moreover, O'Rahilly's book was published not by the 'Centre for Advanced Studies' but by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

In sum, I find that this book is lacking in integrity. On the one hand the author shows detachment and objectivity in her summary assessment of the evidence, on the other her presentation of the material is superficial, sensational, and at times inaccurate. The blurb includes 'scholars' among those to whom it says this book will appeal. I doubt if it will.

GEARÓID MAC EOIN

Thomas Fanning, ***VIKING AGE RINGED PINS FROM DUBLIN: Medieval Dublin Excavations 1962-81,*** Series B, Vol.4,_The Royal Irish Academy for The National Museum of Ireland, Dublin 1994; pp.xi + 140; ISBN 1-874045-27-5 (Hbk) and ISBN 1-874045-28-3 (Pbk). *Price:* £25.00 (Hbk) and £15.95 (Pbk).

The untimely death of Professor Tom Fanning in 1993 deprived Irish archaeology of one of its finest proponents. He was a talented and generous scholar who was equally at home in the lecture theatre as in the field. Although his research interests covered many different aspects of the medieval period in Ireland and abroad, the particular subject of study which most interested him was the Viking Age ringed pin.

Subscribers to the *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* will know that Professor Fanning's first publication on the topic of ringed pins focused on the examples in the Limerick City Museum and was published in this *Journal,* vol. 12 (1969) pp,6–11. This article contained an outline analysis and discussion of the type, and remained the standard work on the subject for many years. The subsequent discovery of large numbers of ringed pins in the Dublin excavations, however, provided him with the opportunity to broaden the scope of his study. This volume is the result of that opportunity and forms a fitting tribute to the memory of the author.

The pins from the Dublin excavations, amounting to over 250 examples, account for almost one-third of the total number on record from the Viking World. The importance of the Dublin series is that it derives from well-stratified contexts which can be closely dated. This enabled the author to assign other ringed pins, from elsewhere in Ireland as well as from Britain and Scandinavia, to clear chronological frameworks. In Ireland this development is of crucial importance as it may sometimes be used to distinguish ringforts and other settlement sites which were occupied during the pre-Viking Age from those that were current during the Viking Age.

The author's methodological approach to classifying the material is outlined in Chapter 2. The principle attributes used in the classification comprise the form of the pin's head and the type of ring. From the permutations and combinations produced by five types of head and six types of ring, nine discrete classes of ringed pin are identified. Each of these is fully discussed in Chapter 3, with particular attention being devoted to those classes which are characteristic of the Dublin assemblage. The validity of the classification is established by demonstrating that it corresponds to the stratigraphic sequences revealed by excavation at, for instance, Christchurch Place, Fishamble Street and Winetavern Street. The data presented in this chapter is accompanied by a series of important distribution maps and diagrams which illustrate the frequency of occurrence of the various classes in dated contexts. Questions relating to the method of manufacture of the pins and the manner of their wearing are dealt with in two appendices.

This volume clearly demonstrates the importance of the straightforward approach to artifact studies, largely based on typological, chronological and distributional aspects. It should be required reading for those archaeological theoreticians who become so entranced by theory that they fail to engage sufficiently with the core data. Professor Fanning was certainly not guilty of this approach, and his volume will undoubtedly become the standard reference for all scholars interested in Viking Age ringed pins in the future.

JOHN SHEEHAN

Eamonn P. Kelly, ***SHEELA-NA-GIGS: Origins and Functions,*** Town House and Country House (in association with The National Museum of Ireland), Dublin 1996; pp. 47; ISBN 0-946172-51 -X. *Price:* £4.99 (Pbk).

Sheela-na-Gigs have become something of a curiosity over the last few decades. Not only are they a source of controversy among archaeologists and an embarassment for ecclesiastics, but they are also heralded as symbols of female power and sexual liberation by the various feminist movements. Carvings of such renown and apparent

significance are bound to be the subject of a considerable amount of queries, and it is in answer to such that The National Museum of Ireland has brought out this publications on those carvings.

The booklet starts with Fig. 1 for which one might coin the term 'frontispage', it not really being a frontispiece so much as the first page of the text. It shows a distribution map of Sheela-na-Gigs in Ireland. Many are indicated in North Munster, particularly in Co. Tipperary; indeed, North Munster Sheelas seem, from the text following, to include many of the more important and worthy of comment; Co. Tipperary, in fact, was where the name 'Sheela-na-Gig' was first recorded in the early 1840s.

The text proper starts with a general definition of Sheela-na-Gigs: "carvings of naked females posed in a manner which displays and emphasises the genitalia". Although the publication is sub-titled, as it were, *Origins and Functions,* much more discussion is given to *Functions* than to *Origins.* Though not everyone will agree with it, the author's theory as to their origin is original and interesting, namely that increase in international travel during 'The Age of Pilgrimage' starting in the 11th and 12th centuries, introduced Romanesque art and architecture to Ireland and with them came the first early exhibitionist figures from which emerged the Irish Sheelas which, he argues, mostly date from the 13th to the 17th centuries. He suggests that the earliest Sheelas in castles "appear to be generally later in date than examples found on churches", that their primary function on churches "appears to have been as invocations against lust" and that "Subsequently ... when the figures began to be placed on secular buildings, they came to be regarded as protective icons".

The core of the booklet deals specifically with the Irish Sheela-na-Gigs, with numerous examples quoted throughout and discussed under the headings "Pose", "Other Features" and "The Locations of the Figures". The piece on "Other Features" provides a tantalising run-down of some of the individual characteristics of the Irish examples; the parallels between some Sheela-na-Gig and mermaid carvings are noted *en passant.* Their attributes are also discussed, though there seems to be some confusion as to what the Sheela from Kiltinane Castle, near Fethard, Co. Tipperary, is holding: on page 16 a dagger and shield or, perhaps, a lucky horseshoe are suggested, whereas on page 34 a comb and mirror, the common attributes of the mermaid, are suggested which, when its illustration is compared with that of the illustration of the mermaid at Kilcooly Abbey, Co. Tipperary (both on page 34), would seem to be far more likely.

Numerous photographs, many too much reduced, of individual Sheelas complement the text throughout, as do sixteen pages of coloured plates. It must be noted, however, that the poor reproduction of the Bunratty Sheela on page 36 is an unnecessary and irrelevant addition since it is already shown, somewhat but not a lot better, in Plate19b the latter, in colour, shows the stupid way the figure has been painted pitch-black on a whitewashed background — (one wonders whether the authorities intended to draw the tourist's attention to it or to colour it in such a dark manner that its 'erotic' details would be rendered indistinct!). Photo 5, showing a carved corbel in Margam, South Wales, is also redundant in being repeated in colour (but still looking grey) in Plate 5 — furthermore, it is not a Sheela, but an ithyphallic carving of a male figure. Such minor slights, along with the questionable relevance of some of the concluding remarks, are clearly the result of loose editing and could be easily rectified in a more rigid edition. The wealth of knowledge in this booklet, however, should not be overshadowed by minor criticisms, and should go a long way towards answering any question the subject of Sheela-na-Gigs might pose. Taken all-in-all, this publication is a valuable addition to the shelf of any museum bookshop and an interesting acquisition to have.

CARON MCCARTHY

Paul M. Kerrigan, ***CASTLES AND FORTIFICATIONS IN IRELAND, 1485–1945,*** The Collins Press, Cork 1995; pp. ix + 302; ISBN 1-89825-612-8. *Price:* £24.95 (Hbk).

Those who are familiar with and have enjoyed Paul Kerrigan's articles in *An Cosantóir* and *The Irish Sword* will surely welcome the publication of *Castles and Fortifications in Ireland, 1485–1945.* The author begins his examination of the topic with the introduction of firearms in the fifteenth century, the first recorded date for the use of such in Ireland being 1487. The complex social and political structure of the early Tudor period onto which the Earls of Kildare and other Lords Deputys of the Crown attempted to impose some control is given a brief appraisal, and the Tudor monarchy's effect on Irish military fortifications is also explored. In doing this Kerrigan emphasises the gradual distinction which emerged between castles and the new forts garrisoned by the forces of the Crown. This analysis includes the larger 'Norman' castles at Carrigfergus, Roscommon, Athlone and Limerick, many of which

were established as royal garrisons when they were constructed some three hundred years earlier. Tower Houses, the fortified residences of the Anglo-Irish and Irish gentry built during the fifteenth, sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and a variety of later castles such as Bunratty, are scrutinized within the framework of this chapter and conclude this most illuminating survey of medieval fortifications.

In chapter three we are introduced to cannon and musket by the author; there is also an examination of the angled bastion form of artillery fortification developed in Italy in the sixteenth century, which was well established in Ireland by the end of the Elizabethan Wars. Sieges of towns and castles were commonplace in the decade following the uprising of 1641, and Kerrigan shows how contemporary European ideas in the design and construction of fortifications were propagated in Ireland by veterans of The Thirty Year's War who were in command here. The author also considers the classical period of bastioned artillery fortification, the architecture of which owes its origins to the genius of the French military engineer Sebastien le Prestre de Vauban (1633–1707), and which Kerrigan sees as being epitomised in Ireland by Charles Fort in Kinsale Harbour, built in the 1670s. This chapter concludes with a look at the town defences, forts, fieldworks and barracks which were built and utilised at such centres as Sligo, Dundalk, Athlone, Limerick and Galway during the War of the Two Kings, James II and William of Orange, 1689–1691. In this thorough examination light is shed on the defence of the Shannon during this period and the fortifications and entrenchments built at all the important bridges and fords including Portumna, Meelick, Banagher, Shannonbridge, Lanesborough and Jamestown. [For an insight into the history of the military fortifications along the Shannon see also C. Ó Danachair, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal,* 14 (1971), 53–64.]

In chapter four the reader's attention is brought to the "Century of Neglect, 1691-1793". This period, following the Treaty of Limerick, passed without regular military conflict, in sharp contrast to the proceeding century, and was characterised by the neglect of the town walls of such places as Limerick and Galway, so much so that by the middle of the century they were in a ruinous condition.

Kerrigan's indefatigable study progresses with a scrutiny of the Napoleonic defences of Ireland, on which he is the recognised authority. He diligently traces the origins of Martello Towers to a small circular tower at Cape Mortella in Corsica, whose form became the mainstay of British land-based defences against France during this period. In doing so, a course is plotted along the coast from Dublin and surrounding areas all the way to Lough Foyle and Lough Swilly in an analysis that encompasses such topics as the defence of Bantry Bay, the defences of the line of the Shannon and Shannon Estuary, and the West Coast defences.

Finally, the story of the defences of Ireland is brought up to date with an outline of the fortifications of the later part of the nineteenth century and first half of this present century. We are shown how the artillery fortifications introduced into Ireland in the middle of the sixteenth century no longer played an active role in local or national defence after some four hundred years of development. Furthermore, we see how these earlier fortifications gave way by the beginning of the nineteenth century to open gun emplacements backed by small ancillary buildings, often with little or no defensive features, and later again by concrete machine-gun posts known as pill-boxes at such places as the shipping channel leading from Lough Foyle to Derry, and, indeed, all over Ireland, notably at bridges. Kerrigan encourages public and academic awareness and the involvement of local and state agencies to preserve, conserve and restore these late medieval and modern artillery fortifications.

Two minor quibbles however. The book is a bit too tightly bound, not allowing enough of a margin at the inner edge of the pages to facilitate reading, and one also regrets, especially considering the importance of the River Shannon throughout the period under review in this book, that on Maps 1, 2, 5 and 6, for instance, Lough Allen is unnecessarily omitted. Nonetheless, with its fine illustrations, maps and photographs (although their captions are printed in very small type) this publication succeeds brilliantly, and allows the reader to immediately gain a visual impression of the military defences referred to in a well-researched, well-written and informative text.

FINBARR BASTIBLE

Gerard A. Lee, ***LEPER HOSPITALS IN MEDIEVAL IRELAND,*** Four Courts Press Ltd., Blackrock, Co. Dublin, 1996; pp. 72; ISBN 1-85182-271-2. *Price:* £7.95 (Pbk).

It is truly amazing just how little research has been done on leprosy in Ireland, and that despite the fact that the concept of the 'leper' has long passed into common usage as a term for and symbol of social exclusion. The topic

has received considerably more extensive treatment in England, and indeed in Scotland, in the latter case perhaps due to the fact that some of their most noted leaders (*e.g.* Robert Bruce) are believed to have suffered from the disease.

Leprosy, though probably not genuine leprosy, was traditionally thought to be a Near Eastern melody, Egypt being the place from which the disease was believed to have spread. Equally, any serious peeling, scabby or scaling skin disease, such as ulcers, running or open sores, even eczema, were generally looked upon as leprous — which accounts for the building of so many leper- or lazar-houses in the 13th and 14th centuries; the crusades are generally blamed for this spread of skin diseases, but it was a period when plagues were prevalent and frequent.

The quotations from eighteenth and nineteenth century researchers, both in England and here in Ireland, are particularly interesting. They suggest that many of the skin diseases referred to under the general rubric of leprosy were in fact caused by a diet of inadequately cooked meat or fish. Another reason, however, was the eating of half-cured and semi-putrid fish and meat, particularly pork. Dr. Gerard Boate in 1650 attributed the prevalence of "leprosie... in the province of Munster ... to the fault and full gluttony of the inhabitants in the successive devouring of unwholesome salmons" — so much for fishing out-of season! It would be interesting to know just how significantly dietary habits varied as between town and country, Gael and Gall: while it is in no way conclusive, it is worth noting that in the main the verified leper hospices appear either within or in close proximity to towns, and that a much larger number of these hospitals are indicated for Leinster and Munster, suggesting that there was less need for them in the more Gaelic provinces of Connacht and Ulster.

The author's searching for clues in placenames and elusive fragments of medieval history is meritorious and elicited a great deal of evidence for many otherwise unknown sites for leprosy and possible leper-houses in Ireland - a distribution map with solid spots for the more certain sites and open circles for the more doubtful would have greatly benefited this book. The author himself adverts to two of these issues which could do with deeper research: firstly, that while medieval endowment certainly indicates a hospital foundation it does not necessarily indicate an exclusively leper foundation, and secondly, notwithstanding the excellent work of P.W. Joyce on Irish placenames it is very difficult to establish whether the word *lobhar* (leper) occurring in a placename is truly indicative of some form of organised centre for the treatment of victims, or simply a place of refuge for one or more unfortunate sufferers living in isolation.

This little book, consists of a useful general introduction, an annotated listing of all known evidence for leper-houses in Ireland, by province and alphabetically by county, and also a chapter on the Order of Lazarus. Much of it first appeared in different learned publications, initially in the 1966 number of this *Journal* (vol. X, no. 1, pp. 12–26). Nonetheless, it is important to have these published as a unit in easily accessible form and for completeness. This book, by a long-time member of the Thomond Archaeological Society, is thus to be welcomed — even if, like all good pieces of research, it raises almost as many questions as it seeks to answer — for this, as well as for its other excellent qualities, it deserves to be read.

MICHAEL O'MALLEY

Mainchín Seoighe, ***STAKER WALLIS, HIS LIFE AND TIMES AND DEATH***, Coiste Scoil na Seoigheach, Cill Fhionáin, Co. Luimnigh, 1994; pp. 68; ISBN 0-9524401-0-5. *Price:* £00 (Pbk).

Chuala mé faoi Staker Wallis, don chéad uair, nuair a bhí mé i mo mhacléinn i mBaile Átha Cliath, sna seachtóidí. Bhí mé ag freastal ar seisiún, i Slattery's ar Sráid Capel, ag éisteacht le Chathal McConnell agus é ag seinnt fonn mall iontach ar an bhfeadóg mór. B'é "Lament for Staker Wallis" an t-ainm a bhí ar an bhfonn agus cheistigh mé duine in aice liom faoin ainm. Dúirt sé gurb é Staker duine de na cosantóirí ar ballaí Luimní i rith an léigir i 1690. Le bhlianta, ghlac mé leis an míniú sin go dtí go bhfaca mé an leabhar seo de chuid Mainchín Seoighe, a chuir ar an mbealach ceart mé.

This is a compact paperback, illustrated with some black and white photographs, on the life and times of a County Limerick tenant farmer who became embroiled in the republican politics of the late 18th century. It tells of his part in the subsequent violent events, which led to his trial and execution in Kilfinnane in the year 1798. Mainchín Seoighe gives us an excellent insight into the numerous difficulties, which had to be overcome in order to survive in the volatile economic conditions of the period. These difficulties were compounded by legislation

imposed by a native government, which was culturally, religiously and linguistically alienated from the vast majority of Irish people at the time.

Patrick "Staker" Wallis grew up in a family which had a long military history, his uncles having served in France with "The Wild Geese" after the Jacobite War. His native place, Kilfinnane, was home to many famous Gaelic writers and poets, *e.g.* Dáibhí Ó Bruadair, Seán Ó Tuama and Aindrias MacCraith. He was very much part of an educated, cultured society which produced such great literary works as "Slán le Máigh" and "Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire". The author quotes widely from the Gaelic poetry of the period and provides us with accurate and sympathetic translations.

His vivid descriptions of a rural, farming community, for me, conjure up memories of my childhood visits to the North Cork Agricultural Shows in Newmarket, where one was as likely to hear Irish spoken as English. This was an 'aonach' where strong men in greatcoats and wellingtons studied horses and cattle with an intensity based on millennia of 'ciall ceannaithe', or experience wrought more from survival than mere interest.

As well as being an excellent biography, the book highlights, very well, the abuses and injustices of the Penal Laws, enforced for the greater part on a cultured, Gaelic peasantry, by an often ignorant, vulgar ascendancy, the seed of Cromwellian "Planters". The reader is informed of the more relevant deprivations suffered by the mainly Catholic farming communities after the Gaelic nobility had emigrated to the Continent leaving them without direction or indeed hope.

Although the work might appear to be a biased vindication of the republican ideals, which were responsible for much brutality and death during the rebellion of 1798, this is not the case. It is written in an unbiased, informed manner, highlighting the numerous attempts by Protestant legislators between 1772 and 1793 to alleviate the poor conditions of their Catholic tenantry by introducing various Catholic Relief Acts. These attempts, which appear to have arrived too late in the latter decades of the 18th century, allowed non-conformists to recover certain rights, including tertiary education, entry to the professions and the right to bear arms.

An t-Uasal Seoighe quotes widely from antiquarian lore, particularly the work of O'Donovan of the first Ordnance Survey in the 1840s. His numerous references to 'patrons' at holy wells, rituals at wakes and the 'Caoineadh' of the keening women at funerals, demonstrate how the ancient, pagan spirit existed side-by-side with a vibrant Christianity, until early this century.

The author does not attempt to force his ideas on the reader but in the true sense of scholarship and research he provides us with the facts and allows us to form our own opinions. The work is well researched and for such a short book is well served with notes, sources and an index allowing future scholars to continue the work.

The later life of Staker, his part in the events of 1798 when he was 65 years old, and his subsequent torture and gruesome execution by his old adversary Captain Charles Silver Oliver, descendant of a Cromwellian planter in Co. Limerick, are dealt with on two fronts. In the first instance the author examines local folklore and legend and how it was kept alive with amazing accuracy into our own time. Secondly, he looks at material collected from government and military archives, showing us yet again that folklore should not be treated as mere fiction but that it can often be a valuable resource in the study of history. This book also brings to light many hitherto little known events such as the Bruff Riots in 1793, in which twenty-three civilians were killed while showing their outrage at compulsory service in the local militia.

Mar chríoch, ba mhaith liom a rá go bhfuil an leabhar beag seo thar a bheith suimiúil. Tugann sé léargus iontach dúinn ar an saol, mar a bhí sé, i gceanntar tuaithe de Chonntae Luimní le linn an dara leath den ochtú aois déag. Taobh amuigh de phríomh ábhar an scéil, 'sé sin beatha Staker Wallis, is stair liteartha, sóisialta, poilitiúil agus eacnamaíoch é. Míníonn sé go furasta, an fáth gur ghlac daoine, a bhí ghnóthach, díograsach, béasach, airm idir lámha chun cómhras rialtais úr a chur ar bun.

RISTEARD UA CRÓINÍN

Peter Somerville-Large, ***IRISH ECCENTRICS***, The Lilliput Press, Dublin 1975 (reprinted 1997); pp. xiv + 286; ISBN 0-946640-67-X. *Price:* £7.95 (Pbk).

One suspects that it is the curious, especially those who like to pry into the whims and peculiarities of those who have diverged from the ordinary, are those who will read and enjoy this book which is a new edition, with fresh material added to the original published in 1975. Historians, at their peril, may be tempted to dismiss eccentrics as a

sort of sub-species, outsiders of little or no historical significance, but the number of eccentric Anglo-Irishmen with money and with influence who seem to have made their own miniscule dent into Irish history is surprising. History, as someone has said, is the final result of the many myriads of tiny human deeds, and if so we must take heed of those whose genius is "to madness near allied" and who were often resolved to rule or ruin the State.

Eccentries are not easily defined, but when we see or read about them, if we feel a warm affectionate regard for their foibles, their wild and often meaningless antics, then they are surely the genuine article. It is this that distinguishes them from madmen, murderers, rakes, cheats and their like. They are often happy human beings who should not be judged by the narrow modes of the common man. Here we meet dozens of them, men of God, scholars, spenders and spungers, hermits and wonder-workers, all bristling with the oddest of facts and ideas. Some few of them will be familiar: Buck Whaley, Dean Swift, the 'Pope' Mahony, and the worst novelist in the world, the one and only Amanda McKittrick Ros who, if remembered for nothing else, is justly famous for her "Lines on Westminster Abbey",

Holy Moses! Have a look!
Flesh decayed in every nook.
Some rare bits of brain lie here,
Mortal loads of beef and beer.

Many are only cursorily dealth with, but the more interesting and influential are given several pages each, and these are often the less well-known. For instance, who has heard of John Perrot, a Quaker missionary who tried to convert the Pope, or of Philip Skelton, who sold all his property during the famine of 1757, lived on the weeds of the fields like the starving Irish around him, and listen to this: he died in 1787 after leaving instructions that his throat be cut before he was coffined! Whether his gorey wish was executed is not stated.

As full of learning as of wit and humour, it is a book for the fireside as well as the study.

PADDY LYSAGHT

Robin A. Goodbody, ***QUAKER RELIEF WORK IN IRELAND'S GREAT HUNGER, 1846–1849***, Quaker Tapestry Booklets, Kendal, Cumbria, England. 1995; pp. 32; ISBN 0-9511581-7-1. *Price:* £2.50 (Pbk).

At last, a clear and concise documentation in a very readable form of relief work during Ireland's Great Famine aspired to and in great part achieved by the Society of Friends (Quakers). Unfortunately, though understandably, the very emotive subject of the Great Hunger is too often weighed down in soggy emotionalism. However, here the carefully laid out facts speak for themselves.

In November of 1844 Joseph Bewley, of the Dublin Quaker family of tea and coffee merchants, wrote to Irish Quakers suggesting that the Friends, as a body, should occupy their "right place in any united effort that the emergency may require". This resulted in the formation of the Central Relief Committee (CRC). Generous funding came from London and North America, *e.g.* in January of 1845 £16,000 came from America alone. A donation of more than eighteen tonnes of green crop seed (turnips and other vegetables) was given by the government to the CRC in May 1847 to relieve the dependency on the potato crop, a donation which was increased to more than sixty tonnes in the following year.

William Forster, a Quaker from Norwich, acting on behalf of the CRC, set out on a tour of Ireland to see how best to distribute aid to those in need, bearing with him authority to draw on CRC funds along his route wherever he felt necessary. Forster's tour brought him through Roscommon, Leitrim, Fermanagh, Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Longford and Cavan.

At all times the CRC stipulated that any project which was aided by the Quaker committees would be strictly non-sectarian and would make no preference in the distribution of relief on the grounds of religious profession. With the passage of time "Soup Kitchens", though not those organised by the CRC but many of those set up by a number of other evangelical missionaries, acquired — with some justification — a very bad reputation, but it must nonetheless be recognised that these soup kitchens did a great deal to relieve the needs of the starving populace. While these kitchens were sometimes abused, the number of incidents was very minor, taken overall. The Dublin

CRC Charles Street soup kitchen was set up in January 1847, not only to give relief to the local poor but also to act as a model for the provision of soup kitchens elsewhere. It not only dispensed more than a hundred thousand quarts of soup, an average of a thousand quarts a day, but the experience acquired at that soup kitchen indicated that cooked rice should be introduced as it was found that a purely liquid diet was causing bowel problems.

In 1849 Dr. Edward Bewley, a Quaker from Moate, Co. Westmeath, suggested the establishment of a "model farm" which would serve as a model for farms of all sizes. Six hundred and seventy-five acres, more than double the size Bewley envisaged, were purchased for this purpose at Colmanstown, near Athenry, in County Galway, to be combined with an agricultural school designed to teach the sons of local farmers the skills of agriculture. Colmanstown was a relative success and it survived until the early 1860s, by which time the Famine crisis and its aftermath were finally over. It was put up for sale and the proceeds, along with any other funds remaining, were to be donated to a suitable charity — the Royal Hospital for Incurables, non-denominational and the only such institution in these islands, was chosen. With that final donation the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends closed itself down.

The successes and the failures of the Quakers in their efforts to relieve the disasters of Ireland's Great Hunger tell of Christian belief put into practical application, though sadly too often coming to grief due to lack of understanding and foresight, both of which factors can be accepted in the light of inexperience in dealing with a calamity of such proportions. Perhaps there is a message in it for us in our present-day handling of large-scale relief-work internationally.

A point worthy of particular note, this reviewer felt, was that the businessmen who formed the CRC held themselves personally responsible for accounting to their subscribers as to exactly how the funds had been managed. In the light of present-day "mishaps", this seems an excellent policy and our politicians might do well to take note.

We should all take this opportunity to say a very sincere and long overdue thanks to the Society of Friends (about 3,000 in a population of over 8½ million at the time) for all their wonderful and unselfish help, and also to Robin Goodbody for an enlightening and excellent booklet.

JEANNETTE HENEGHAN

Laurence Flanagan, ***FAVOURITE IRISH NAMES FOR CHILDREN: The top 200***, Gill and Macmillan Ltd.; Dublin 1993; pp. xviii + 118; ISBN 0-7171-2021-X. *Price:* £3.99 (Pbk).

This seems, at first sight, to be just the type of book on children's Irish names which we have long wanted: handy of size, readable, full of interesting, often amusing if not always entirely relevant or necessarily useful anecdotes, and cheap at the uncommonly reasonable price. The book is well-organised, even to the rather novel but eminently suitable idea of producing an index of the names as the Table of Contents at the beginning instead of at the end. It is well and clearly printed, well bound and all-in-all a credit to the publishers. However, it gives somewhat the appearance of having been rather hurriedly compiled and that with some additions and minor emmendations a second, revised edition will more properly fulfill the author's intentions and the claims made for it on the back cover of the book — *definitive* it is not.

And why not? Well, while it would be easy enough to find numerous little details to comment on, it would not be entirely fair to mention more than a few. One, at least, is serious: why is the author so incorrect (and inconsistent) with his use of "Uí" and "Ua" before surnames in Irish? Invariably the accent on the former is on the first letter while the U of the latter also has an accent incorrectly placed on it.

On the back cover it is claimed that the book gives "a complete list of alternative spellings and anglicised forms", but just take the names of Ireland's most important male and female saints, Patrick and Brigid, as examples. For the former we are offered *Pádraig* and *Pátraig* (surely an unusual version?) (pp. 98-99), but not *Pádraic* as most commonly used in Co. Galway, while for the latter we are given *Brigit, Brighid* and *Bríd* (pp. 16-17), but not the more frequently used *Brigid,* though *Bridget* is also given almost as an afterthought — for mention of her perpetual fire at Kildare, see under *Conláed, Conlaodh* (p. 33), a name for which the author offers *Conleth* and the less likely *Conley* as the anglicised forms.

Anglicised forms given are often unlikely and amusing, though frequently used, e.g. *Florence* for *Flann* (incidentally *Flannan* is not included anywhere in this book), *Lucy* for *Laoise, Dorothy* for *Doirind, Laurence* for

Lorcán, Charles for *Cathal, Grace* for *Gráinne, Annie* for *Eithne, Hugh* for *Áed/Aodh* (the strange use of *Winifred* for *Úna* is not included).

While the book is full of mentions of, with or without accompanying anecdotes, saints and more ordinary people who bore the name being discussed, there are some notable omissions. For example, while "one celebrated *Gormlaith"* (p. 66) is instanced as daughter of Flann Sinna, High King of Ireland from 879 to 916, and an outline of her various marriages is given, including that "her third regal spouse was Niall Glúndub ... who was slain in battle against King Sitric, at Dublin, in 919"— but Gormlaith, daughter of the King of Leinster and one of Brian Boru's four wives — the only one everyone remembers — and even more interestingly the mother of *inter alia*, Sitryg, King of Dublin who died in 1030 — is not mentioned. And while a 7th-century St. Cillian is mentioned as a missionary performing miracles in France, the great St. Cillian/Kilian, from Mullagh, Co. Cavan, who was martyred in 689, in Würzburg, Germany, is not included. The same for *Fionnuala, Fionnguala* (pp. 61–62). Some bearing that name are mentioned, with anecdotes, but probably the best-known of all, Fionnuala, spokesperson for her siblings the Children of Lir, does not feature. *Fenella* is given as a Scottish version, a version which is perhaps even better known in the Isle of Man.

Many of the anecdotes found scattered throughout this book will not be new to most readers but are often not only amusing in themselves but amusingly written. One of the better examples of this, for instance, is the recounting of that for *Berrach, Bearrach* (pp. 13–14). It reads as follows:

> Although included in the list of the four best women in Ireland that ever lay with a man', Berrach came only fourth. This was Berrach Brec (Freckled Berrach), daughter of Cás Cuailgne of Ulster and the wife of Finn mac Cumall (even here she managed only to come third!). Of the four, however, she excelled in goodness and generosity. Before becoming Fionn's wife she had been in fosterage with the parents of Goll mac Morna. Eventually it was agreed that she become Fionn's third wife: she went off with Fionn, and bore him three sons, Fáelán, Áedh and Uillen. With the passage of time, however, the clanna Morna turned to be spoilers and outlaws, with a particular grudge against Fionn, and in three battles with the Fianna they came off worse. Then, at the instigation of Conán mael mac Morna, a 'breeder of quarrels among followers, a malicious mischief-maker in army and in host' they decided that anyone close to Fionn was fair game. They offered Berrach impunity if she forsook Fionn and brought with her all her jewels and valuables. Proudly she refused, so they surrounded the *dún* in which she was living and attacked it. She made to escape to her galley and on the very shore she was hit by a javelin 'full in her chest, in her very bosom'. There is no received English version of her name.

North Munster names dealt with are many, including the more obvious, of course, such as *Íte, Íde* (pp. 71–71), and *Seanan, Senan* (pp. 107-108), Brian (p. 16), and even the unusual *Grian* (p. 68), meaning 'sun' or 'sun-goddess' and for which Pallas Green and nearby Cnoc Greine, Co. Limerick, are given as associated placenames — but why not Loch Gréine/Lough Graney in Co. Clare? Apart from Flannan, other notable North Munster exceptions would include Caimín, Maccon and Mahon, to mention but three from Co. Clare.

However, when such omissions and minor irritations are ignored, one must state that this book is not only useful but a good read — a book to dip into and to enjoy in snatches ... though one gets easily snared into not knowing when to stop, just as when one picks up a dictionary! I, personally, await an improved, revised and enlarged second edition, but meanwhile this one will certainly do to be going on with.

ETIENNE RYNNE

Diarmuid Ó Drisceoil & Donal Ó Drisceoil, ***THE MURPHY'S STORY — The History of Lady's Well Brewery, Cork,*** Murphy Brewery Ireland Ltd. Cork 1997; pp. 154: ISBN 0-953-1431.-0-4 *Price:* £20.00 (Hbk).

The doctor's orders to my mother were simple and to the point: "Give him a bottle of stout each day and that will soon build him up". Ever since my anaemic childhood, I have hated the usual black stuff — that is, until someone some years ago gave me a glass of Murphy's by mistake. It was delicious, smoother and lighter to the taste, and so my joy when I was asked to review this book about the manufacture of what is now my favourite stout.

Here, beneath its hardcover, ten chapters relate the remarkable survival story of a famous native industry, Lady's Well Brewery in Cork, which is known to 60 countries worldwide as Murphy Brewery Ireland Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Heineken International Beheer B.V. The world is its public stage (or should I say 'house') now,

and this book traces the Murphy enterprise from 18th century humble origins in Cork farmyards and tanyards on to the lofty heights of 19th century international trading and favoured properties in Montenotte, Glanmire and Blackrock. This was only the beginning, of course, for when James Murphy and his brothers established a distillery at a cost of £30,000 in 1825 in nearby Midleton, they were only laying the foundation for the next generation of Murphys to set up the famous Lady's Well Brewery in Cork City in 1856. Senior partner in the new company was another James Jeremiah Murphy who "guided the brewery through the first forty years of its life and he saw its output grow to over 100,000 barrels per year before his death in 1897".

This is one of the fascinating aspects of this book, for in dealing with this later James, who "led the venture that established the Munster and Leinster Bank" after the former Munster Bank 'crashed', we find that he is just one of the many members in the great Cork industrial dynasty that spanned the 19th and 20th centuries. This dynasty is peopled by colourful characters such as John Murphy, who "fell in with an Indian tribe with whom he wandered through the wilds (of Canada) for a number of years"

Seemingly, he was elected their chief and was known as 'The Black Eagle of the North'. He later became a priest and fought against proselytism during the Great Famine. Then there was Muriel Murphy who married Terence McSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork who died on hunger strike in 1920. She later became a communist activist, and, not surprisingly, "was very much the black sheep of the family"

The main portion of the book, however, deals with the setting up, growth, near demise and final take-over of the Murphy Brewery by the Heineken group in 1983, and upgrading of the firm to the tune of £55 million by the mid-1990s. Here, the book is at its best, because not only does it give fascinating insights into the story of the brewery, including the brewing process itself, but it also underlines the influences of the Great Famine, two World Wars, the Fight for Independence and the Civil War had on the operations of the brewery specifically, and on County Cork in general. Throw in the varied mix of "global and national economic shifts and changes in public tastes and expectations" not forgetting the unending competition from rival breweries such as Guinness, and you have the recipe for a literary disaster. Happily, it dosn't happen here, because our authors, two brothers, one of them (Diarmuid) a not infrequent contributor to our *Journal*, sail a steady course through the times in question, and backed up by a wealth of truly magnificent illustrations (nearly all in colour), clearly tell the Murphy story as it should be told. As a bonus, on the way we learn the difference between stout and porter (and how they got their names), and why Cork had become "the gathering place for all the bastards of the South of Ireland"! We learn also how the coming of the Picture House was so detrimental to porter sales, as, indeed, was the arrival of the Sweepstake ticket in a homely world filled with stout drays and welcome firkins.

As the dust jacket tells us: "This is a book with broad appeal. The general reader, the historian and the beer enthusiast will all be captivated by the story". This reviewer, too, has enjoyed its contents and like the group who visited Murphy's Brewery in 1902 to taste its stout, I, too, have "become hearty and cheerful and in a lively humour for further peregrinations"! Read it and you will, too!

PEADAR O'DOWD

Seán Spellissy, ***THE MERCHANTS OF ENNIS***, On Stream Publications, Blarney, Co. Cork, 1996; pp. 200; ISBN 1-897685-85-8 (Hbk) and ISBN 1-897685-86-6 (Pbk). *Price:* £30.00 (Hbk) and £12.99 (Pbk).

Given the content, this book's title must rank as the catchiest and most appropriate title of the decade — it is, of course, purely coincidental that both the Shakespeare and Spellissy surnames begin with S! In this, his latest offering, the author provides us with a fascinating *pot-pourri* of information in his A to Y (no Zs here!) of Ennis business names. He has trawled through a wide range of historical works and trade directories to give a mercantile 'Who's Who' of Ennis from 1613 to 1996. In all, over 770 surnames, including that of our Hon. Editor, are listed. Some are long vanished, some are still represented in the business community and a few are just starting out in the Ennis commercial world. It was originally intended to publish a history of the Ennis Chamber of Commerce. With due respect to that august body, but the end result of Spellissy's labours will reach a much wider audience than would a narrow historical account, however interesting that may be, of the comparatively recent economic history of the town. To their credit, the Chamber of Commerce agreed with this and gave the publication their enthusiastic backing. The endorsement of the book by the present President and his five predecessors in office, including our member, Oliver Moylan, testify to this.

The book is a treasure chest of nuggets of information and shows the value of combining trade directories and local records in one's research base. In this context it is worth noting that Spellissy made good use of the surviving Free Masonry records for the district. He is the first local historian that I have come across to make such extensive use of this little-used archive. The book comes complete with a very useful glossary, which explains words like 'Beadle', 'Gauge', etc. The two-page map which shows the byways of old Ennis is very useful also, particularly in relation to some long-vanished addresses given in the text.

Should this volume ever be reprinted I would suggest that the number of illustrations be greatly increased. It is a pity that more photographs (preferably older ones) and bill-heads of Ennis businesses were not used. I would also suggest that the claim that the Duffy surname is of Dalcassian origin be omitted: the Duffy name was well established in the Raphoe area of Donegal in the seventh century. Aside from these, essentially minor quibbles, one can only congratulate the author on providing an essential reference for those working in the areas of industrial and commercial history. It only remains to say "Spellissy strikes again!".

PAUL DUFFY

Pádraic de Bhaldraithe, ***LOINGSEOIR NA SAOIRSE – Scéal Conor O'Brien***, Coiscéim, 91 Bóthar Bhinn Éadair, Baile Átha Cliath 13, 1996; ll. viii + 43. *Luach:* £3.00 (Pbk).

Cé nach bhféadfaí a mhaíomh go raibh tabhacht mhór le hEdward Conor Marshal O'Brien i stair na hÉireann, ná i stair na seoltóireachta féin, is fiú go mór an leabhar seo, nach bhfuil ann ach 43 leatanach, a léamh. Ba gharmhac an Brianach le William Smith O'Brien. Cé gur i Sasana a cuireach oideachas air, ba náisiúntóir é, agus bhí an Ghaeilge go maith aige, is cosúil. De réir na tuairisce a thugann de Bhaldraithe air, ba dhuine taghdach mífhoighdeach é a bhíodh dian ar an fhoireann in amanna. Tá an chuma ar an scéal go raibh sé mídhíscréideach chomh maith, go háirithe nuair a sheoil sé sreangscéil as Cowes go hAlice Stopford-Green ag fiafraí di cén fáth a raibh moill ar an *Asgard.*

Séard tá sa leabhar cuntas ar thrí thuras farraige a thug an Brianach. An chéad cheann an ceann ba ghiorra agus ba thabhachtaí, mar lena linn ghlac sé páirt san *Kelpie* leis an *Asgard* san eachtra thabhachtach a thug gunnaí agus armlón d'Óglaigh na hÉireann, gunnaí ar baineadh leas as cuid mhaith acu in Éiri Amach na Cásca, 1916.

Tá tabhacht eile leis an leabhar seo, mar d'ainneoin gur oileán í Éirinn, is ar éigin go bhfuil aon litríocht againn i nGaeilge a phléann le turasanna farraige – ní heol dom féin ach leabhar amháin eile ar an ábhar, faoin turas a thug Enda Ó Coinín trasna an Atlantaigh i mbád beag séite.

An *Kelpie* an bád a bhí ag an mBrianach agus é i mbun smuigléireacht airm. Cuirtéar 26 thonna a bhí inti, ach níorbh fhada aige í gur athraigh sé a rigín go ndearna cits di – 28 dtonna a bhí san *Asgard*. Ba as Faing, i gCo. Luimní, a sheoil an *Kelpie* ar an 29 Meitheamh 1914. In éineacht leis an mBrianach bhí a dheirfiúr, Diarmaid Coffey, dlíodóir agus cara, agus beirt eile d'fhoireann.

Shroich sí Cowes dé hAoine, an 3ú Iúl. Ba ar an gCéadaoin dar gcionn a shroich an *Asgard* Cowes. Shroich an dá bhád an t-ionad coinne leis an long Ghearmánach, ag long sholais Ruytigen, 25 mhíle soir ó Dover, ar an Domhnach. I St. Tudwell na Breataine Bige haistríodh na gunnaí go luamh Sir Thomas Myles, máinlia Ath Cliathach, an *Chotah*. Sheoil an *Kelpie* go Bré tar éis fuireach calaidh. Ba ar an 1 Lúnasa cuireach na gunnaí i dtír gCill Chúil.

Mar a rinne go leor Éireannach eile, ghlac an Brianach le comhairle John Redmond aguis chaith sé an cogadh i gCabhlach Shasana. Sa mbliain 1921, agus an *Kelpie* amach ó chósta Galloway na hAlban, thit néal ar an mBrianach agus, nuair ba chóra dó bheith ina dhúiseacht, chuaigh sí ar an carraigreacha. Ní raibh inti ach é féin, agus tháinig sé slán sa mbád calaidh, go ndeacha sé i dtír i bPort Phádraig.

An té nach bhfuil dúil aige sa seoltóireacht is lú an tsuim a chuirfeas sé sa dara turas a thug an Brianach. Ina dhiaidh sin tá cuntas an údair ar an turas anróiteach sin fior-shuimiúil. Is i nDún na Séad a tógadh an chéad bhád eile, an *tSaoirse*. É féin a dhear í. Citse a bhí inti, agus bhí sí in ann naoi sheol a iompar. 42 throigh d'fhad a bhí inti. Is as Dún Laoghaire a sheoil sí ar an 20 Meitheamh 1923. Is go Pernambuco na Brasaíle a chuaigh si trasna an Atlantaigh agus uaidh sin is soir a sheoil sí, thar Rinn an Dóchais. Thug sí cuairt ar an Afraic Theas, ar Mhelbourne agus ar an Séalann Nua agus, tar éis di Roinn an Choirn a scoitheadh in aimsir mhaith, chaith an Brianach tamall ins na hOileáin Malvinas.

Tá an chuma ar an scéal nár mhairnealaigh den chéad scoth a bhí mar fhoireann ag an mBrianach, seachas Kiao arbh as Oileáin Tonga ó dhúchas é agus a d'fhan leis go deireadh an turais. Chuile sheans gur ar an gcaptaen féin a bhí cuid den locht, agus a mhíchéadfaí is a bhí sé. Cibé faoi sin, bhí sé de nós ag an bhfoireann an bád a thréigint chomh luath is a bhí an uain acu. Sa deireadh, agus gan fágtha aige d'fhoireann ach Kiao dílis, a bhí tinn ag an am, chuir sé fios ar an dheirfiúr Kate agus sheoil an triúr acu an *tSaoirse* ós na hAsóir abhaile go Dún Laoghaire, áit ar cuireach fáilte mhór rompu.

Thug an Brianach turas fada eile trasna an Atlantaigh. Sa mbliain 1926 thug sé an *Ilen,* bád seoil 56 troigh, a tógadh i nDún na Séad, go dtí na hoileáin Malvinas, gur dhíol leis an Falklands Island Company í. Bhí an bád sin fós ar snámh sa mbliain 1994, ní hionann agus an *Kelpie* agus an *tSaoirse.*

Is fiú go mór an leabhar seo a léamh. An t-aon locht mór atá air a ghiorra is atá sé. Ba mhaith liom féin tuairisc i bhfad ní b'fhaide a léamh faoin bhfear suimiúil seo, faois na heachtraí a bhain dó agus faoi chuid des na daoine a ghlac páirt ins na heachtraí a bhfuil cuntas orthu sa leabhar. Cuirim i gcás, cérbh é Sir Thomas Myles, an máinlia ar leis an *Chotah?* Tá súil agam go mbeidh sé d'uain ag de Bhaldraithe an leabhar mór seo a scríobh.

Mar is dual do Choiséim, tá dearadh an leabhair, arbh é Peanntrónaic Teoranta a rinne a chlóchur, go hálainn.

GLUAIS

bád séite:	bád gur féidir aer a chur inti, i dtreo is go snámhfaidh sí.
cits:	bád chá chrann, a mbíonn an ceann is lú suite chun tosaigh ar an stiúir.
cuitéir:	bád aon chrann a bhfuil níos mó ná seol cinn amháin aici.

ROIBEARD Ó CUINN