THOMOND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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LECTURES

23 January  The Hedge Schools of County Limerick
              Dr Tony Lyons
              (Mary Immaculate College, Member)

5 February  Annual Luncheon: Bunratty Shannon Shamrock Hotel
              Dr Virginia Teehan
              (Director, Hunt Museum)

27 February The Conlan Coin Collection
              Rev. Patrick Conlon, OFM

13 March  Irish Bog Bodies: New Discoveries
              Dr Isabella Mulhall
              NMI, Dublin

27 March  Brian Merriman
              Brian Ó Dálaigh
              (Member)

24 April  The Invention of Hurling
              Dr Paul Rouse
              (UCD)

2 October  The Role of the Printer in Limerick City 1740-1800
              [Kevin Hannan & Jim Kemmy Memorial Lecture]
              Ms Jennifer Moore
              (UL)

23 October Irish Monks and Monasteries in Medieval Germany
              Dr Dagmar Ó Riain
              (UCC)

20 November History of Fashion in Ireland
              Ms Alex Ward
              (NMI)

11 December AGM and Social Evening
EXCURSIONS

3 - 12 May;
[Week]
Places visited

St Petersburg
Organiser Elsie O'Connell
Menshikov Palace, Church of Spilled Blood, Peter & Paul
Fortress, Hermitage Museum, Russian Art Museum,
St Nicholas Church, Yusopov Palace, Alexander Nevsky
Monastery, Peterhof, Catherine Palace, Pavlosk, Novgorod.

17 May
[Evening]

Freemason Museum
Organiser Brian Hodkinson
Speakers Stuart Milne, Jeffrey Ashton

26-28 May
[Weekend]

Clifden
Organiser Tony Browne
Speakers Delia Joyce, Tony Browne, Liam Irwin
Sites visited
Galway cemetery, Pearse's cottage, Rosmuc,
Kylemore Abbey, Ballynahinch Castle,

14 June
[Evening]

Ballysimon
Organiser Tony Browne
Speakers Tom Toomey, Tony Nolan, Tony Browne.
Sites Visited
IRA memorial, Ballysimon graveyard, Bloodmill.

25 June
[Full Day]

Portarlington
Organiser Brian Hodkinson
Speakers Ronnie Mathews, Brian Hodkinson
Sites visited
Dunamase Castle, Portarlington, Leap Castle, Ballytasna Castle.

5 July
[Evening]

Limerick Places of Worship
Organiser Cian O'Carroll
Speaker Cian O'Carroll, John & Nuala McKernan
Sites visited
Church of Christ the King, Caherdavin, Our Lady of the Rosary
Church, Ennis Road, Kilrush Church (Old Church) NCR.

23 July
[Full Day]

Tralee
Organiser Charlotte Murphy
Speakers Charlotte Murphy, Liam Irwin.
Places visited
Ballyseede Castle, Civil War Memorial, Dominican Church,
Day Place, Pikeman memorial, Courthouse, St Johns churches.

9 August
[Evening]

Tervoe
Organiser Tom Donovan
Speakers Martin Hayes, Liam Coughlan, Tom Donovan.
Sites visited
Maria Monsell Memorial Cross, Tervoe
House site, Lourdes grotto, church.
20 August
[Half Day]
Places visited
House

Nantenan
Organiser Tony Browne
Speakers Jim O'Riordan, Simon White, Tony Browne
Stony Man, Riddlestown, Nantenan Church and Rectory, Holywood

3 September
Heritage Week Event
[Half Day]
Places visited
Speakers

Oola
Organiser Tony Browne
Cluggin, Castle Lloyd, Newtown Ellard, Oola Hills Tower House.
Tony Browne, Brian Hodkinson

21 - 25 September.
[Overseas]
Places Visited

Belgium
Organiser Elsie O'Connell
Brussels, Louvain, Bruges, Ieper, WWI graves, Fontenoy
Appreciations

Chris O’Mahony

Dr Christopher O’Mahony, who died unexpectedly in May 2006, was a valued member of the Thomond Archaeological Society and served as its treasurer for the period 1984-6. To his family and school friends he was Séamus but to his wife Valerie and everybody else he was Chris and the modest yet warm familiarity of this name seemed to both suit him better and sum up his character. He was born 7 May 1933 in Kilmountain, Castlemartyr, the eldest of the four sons of Séamus and Máire O’Mahony. The family moved to Youghal in 1937 where Chris attended the local primary school. His secondary education was as a boarder at the Carmelite College in Castlemartyr where his father was a teacher. After his Leaving Certificate in 1950 he decided to join that Order and on completion of his novitiate year in Loughrea, he did his three year philosophy studies in Dublin. Following his solemn profession in 1954 he was sent to the Teresianum, the Carmelites Faculty of Theology in Rome where he was ordained a priest in 1958. Following further studies and a period back in Loughrea, he volunteered to teach in the Carmelite Seminary in Kerala, India. Finding an absence of useful texts he wrote and published two volumes of church history, the first of his many scholarly publications throughout his life. His next posting was to England where the order had a parish and house at Wincanton in Somerset. While there he obtained a Master’s degree from Bristol University, writing a thesis on George Tyrell. His logical next step was a doctorate and he chose to study the career of a seventeenth-century Carmelite, Fr Paul Brown who had faced personal difficulties with the official church and particular his superiors during the 1640s in Ireland.

As sometimes happens this mirrored personal difficulties in Chris’s life also and as he neared completion of his thesis he made the decision to leave the Carmelite Order. His original thesis which had focussed on theological issues was accepted by Professor Aidan Clarke of TCD as being essentially historical and thus it was in History that his doctorate was conferred. After his licenciature, Chris obtained a temporary lecturing position in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick in 1977 where he stayed for two years before moving to the newly created post of archivist for the Mid West Regional Development Organisation, a body at that time which involved co-operation between the local authorities in Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary. Setting up an archive in such a situation was no easy task but Chris showed his skills of organisation, presentation and persuasion to bring this about. In addition to cataloguing and organising the official records, Chris also did invaluable work in sourcing and acquiring documents from private sources, particularly solicitors’ offices. Travel between Ennis, Limerick and Thurles became a regular feature of his work. A potential crisis for the archive when the RDO experiment was abandoned was averted when Shannon Development stepped into the breach and its financial contribution kept it in being in a new format and more crucially kept Chris in his job. By then he had married Valerie Ross from Newry, bought a house and settled very comfortably into life in Limerick. However nothing comes without a price and in this new situation Chris was obliged to add a strong genealogical element to his work. Having already had such a varied life, it was merely one new challenge to be faced and overcome and he met it with the honesty, integrity and determination that characterised all aspects of his life. The Limerick archives, as it was now termed, provided a comprehensive and efficient service to genealogists from all over the world in addition to retaining its core role as a repository for the historical records of both the city and county.

Tracing people in the past dovetailed well with Chris’s view of history which should primarily be about people, if possible individuals and their lives. He concentrated particularly on emigration from the Limerick and Clare area, from the workhouses and through both government and
privately sponsored schemes. This led to a major book on Irish emigrants to Australia written in collaboration with Valerie Thompson and to many valuable articles in local journals, notably the North Munster Antiquarian Journal, Old Limerick Journal and The Other Clare. In retirement he continued to research and publish while offering advice, encouragement and support to all those interested in history and archives in the Limerick region. His last professional work was undertaken for the Irish Province of the Discalced Carmelites whose archives he had organised and catalogued just prior to his death. He was still involved in research and had a number of major publications either in the press or in preparation. His death is a great loss to local history in the Thomond region but his contribution to that region will stand as a fitting memorial to his memory. Requiescat in pace.

Liam Irwin

Morgan McCloskey

Morgan McCloskey was born on 21 April 1916, a birthday he liked to remind people that he shared with the Queen. His great-grandfather George McCloskey had moved from Kilrush to Limerick in the early nineteenth century and Morgan remained proud of his West Clare origins. George's son, Thomas was the Manchester buyer for Cannock's drapery store and he married Agnes O'Brien, daughter of a Limerick boot manufacturer and their son George, born in 1887, was Morgan's father. He also worked in Cannocks and married Ellen McMahon from whose family the name Morgan came to and to which he remained close all his life. He was educated at the Model School and from the age of seven at boarding schools, first in St Flannan's College in Ennis and then St Augustine's in Dungarvan. He finally had a brief 'finishing school' experience at the CBS in Limerick where as he put it himself 'they tried to teach me Irish' and a commercial course at the Technical Institute. His ambition was to study medicine but family funds did not rise to that so it was reduced to that of pharmacy where he could serve his apprenticeship at Lairds in O'Connell St which was managed by his uncle. However this lesser ambition was also still-born and after a brief stint working in a bonded warehouse for a McMahon grand-uncle, Morgan made the fateful decision to emigrate and in 1937 moved to Wolverhampton where his older brother had already settled. He settled quickly and happily into this new environment and married in 1942. His wife was embarrassed and worried that many people thought the name McCloskey sounded Russian so in the difficult conditions of war-time Britain he agreed to change it to McCallum, by which he was known in his professional life and was the name used by his three children. He reverted to his original surname again in old age when he returned to Ireland.

After some years working as a Cinema Manager, he had a number of interesting jobs in publicity, journalism and television. He then became information officer for the Flat Glass Association and finally at the age of sixty-five, he started a new career as editor of Flat Glass International, a monthly journal devoted to the architectural glass industry. On retirement,
Morgan returned to Ireland, initially to Tarbert and then to Ballykeefe where he lived happily until his death at the age of 90. When he joined our society he became one of its most active members, serving on the committee from 1999 to 2003 where his expertise and advice were greatly valued. He attended virtually every lecture and outing and organised and led many of the latter. He published very interesting material in the Journal and also contributed articles to the Old Limerick Journal. He was also active in the Kerry Historical and Archaeological Society and the Limerick Classical Society to whom he gave well-researched and entertaining lectures. In 2005 he wrote a fascinating account of his interesting and varied life titled appropriately A Life of Variety which was privately published in Birmingham and distributed as a gift to his family and friends on the occasion of his ninetieth-birthday-party organised by his devoted son Stuart in April 2006. Sadly those of us privileged to be present that day were not to know that this would be his last birthday celebration and that less than six months later we would be attending his funeral. He faced his last illness with characteristic realism, courage and good humour and ensured that his contribution to the betterment of his fellow man would continue after his death by donating his body to medical science. He was truly a scholar and a gentleman and it was an honour and a privilege to have known him.

Liam Irwin

Mainchín Seoighe

Seán Mainchin Seoighe (John Mannix Joyce) was born 18 August 1920 in Tankardstown near Bruree in 1923 and where he was to live for all of his long life. He was the eldest child of John Joyce, a small farmer, and his wife Nora (née Deady). He was educated at Bruree National School, Kilfinane Vocational School and the CBS in Charleville. He was strongly influenced by one of his teachers at primary school, Donncha Horgan, who imbued him with a love both of the Irish language and local history, which were to be the central interests of his life thereafter. After leaving school in 1941 he obtained a clerical post in Limerick County Council where he was to spend his entire working life, eventually becoming Information Officer.

As a teenager he began writing and had articles published in Our Boys, the Capuchin Annual and in the Irish language publication Inniu. In 1944 the editor of the Limerick Leader, Con Cregan, invited him to write a column for the local newspaper. With his
characteristic modesty he did not wish to reveal his true identity, so he used the pen-name An Mangaire Súgach – which had been used initially by the great eighteenth-century poet from the Kilmallock area, Aindrias Mac Craith. This was to become arguably the longest-running column in newspaper history lasting continually for an incredible sixty years.

His first book, Marailídh Seinn Sabháit ar ãr (1964), was a sympathetic biography of the Limerick IRA man who had been killed in the course of a gun attack on Brookeborough RUC barracks on New Year’s Day 1957 during the IRA Border Campaign. This was followed by Cois Maighe na gCair (1965), Bruree (1972), Dromin Athlacca (1978), Portrait of Limerick (1982), De Valera and Brurree (1991), The story of Kilmallock (1987), The Joyce Brothers of Glensheen (1987), The Irish Quotation Book (1992) County Limerick: its people and places (1993), Staker Wallis (1994), From Bruree to Corcomroe (2000). In addition to his Oíds and Ends column in the Limerick Leader he also wrote for the Irish Press and all the Irish-language weeklies and monthlies.

He was active in Conradh na Gaeilge and Glór na nGaeil and taught Irish language evening classes. He established and ran the Joyce Brothers’ School to commemorate the nineteenth-century Glensheen born authors Patrick Weston Joyce and his brother Robert Dwyer Joyce. He devoted time and energy to the Kilmallock Historical Society especially its journal and local museum. He was a member of the Placenames Commission and in 1990 an honorary doctorate was conferred on him by the National University of Ireland, Galway in recognition of his contribution to local history. In 2001 he was presented with Gradam an Phiarasgaigh, the Pearse award, given to those who are deemed to have promoted the ideals of Patrick Pearse and in 2003 a room at the De Valera Museum in Brurree Heritage Centre, which he was instrumental in establishing, was named in his honour. His lifelong devotion to De Valera, who had been a neighbour, contemporary and friend of his mother was acknowledged when the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cui, gave a graveside oration at his funeral.

He was one of the longest serving members of the Thomond Society and he frequently conducted outings for members as well as attending lectures and supporting and promoting all our activities. He published three important articles in our journal, ‘The Fenian Attack on Kilmallock Police Barracks’ (1967), ‘Robert Peel’s Views on the Peelers’ (1973-4) and ‘Fragments from the Lost Census Returns ... Kilfinane District’ (1975) in addition to book reviews, We honoured his contribution by making him a Vice-President of the Society in 2000. Our deepest sympathy to his widow Proinséas and his sisters Mary Herlihy and Nellie Buckley. Ar dhiós Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Liam Irwin

Paddy Yeoman

Richard Patrick Yeoman was a member of the Society from 1986 until his untimely death in 1997. He was born in Rosbrien but the family later moved to Ballinacurra where he grew up, the middle son of three born to Richard and Hilda (Tierney) Yeoman. He was educated at the Model School and the Technical Institute on O'Connell Avenue. During his seven-year apprenticeship with the Limerick Motor Works he obtained first place in Ireland in his motor mechanic exams and was awarded the Gold Medal of the Society of Irish Motor Industries. In 1962 he joined Aer Lingus at Dublin airport as an aircraft engineer, later transferring to Shannon airport. In the 1970s he worked for two periods in Zambia on secondment from Aer Lingus. Further study led to his obtaining eleven aircraft licences issued by the Irish and U.K. Departments of Transport and the FAA in the U.S.A. These qualifications would have been a passport to a job in the aviation
industry worldwide but he chose to remain at Shannon, where at the time of his early retirement in 1994 he was a Senior Aircraft Engineer.

He was an expert on his own family history and delighted in recounting it. His grandfather had come from Somerset to work as head coachman on the Belvedere estate near Mullingar and the family eventually moved to Limerick. Through his mother, he was a descendant of Elias Bohoureau, the first librarian of the famous Marsh's Library in Dublin though the family later transmuted the name to Borough. They eventually acquired land at Querrin, near Kilkee and when his great-grandfather built two houses in Ballinacurra, they were named Querrin Villas. One was given to Paddy’s grandmother on her marriage and it was here that he spent most of his childhood.

When he joined the Society Paddy took a keen interest in all our activities and his involvement increased considerably when after his marriage to Anne O’Brien, she became our Honorary Secretary. He strongly encouraged her to take on this demanding position and gave her unstinting support and help. Their home became the office of the Society, where all correspondence came and was filed, telephone queries from members were answered and mailing of newsletters and membership cards was organised. Paddy ably assisted Anne in all of this work but it was when the journal was published that he made his greatest contribution. All the boxes containing the journals were delivered to the sitting room where they were sorted, packaged and organised for delivery. The bulk of this mammoth task was undertaken by Paddy who in addition, personally made many hand deliveries to members. He cheerfully cycled in his spare time to areas like Cratloe, Castleconnell, Patrickswell, even Adare to ensure that the journal safely arrived to its correct recipient. He ruefully recounted some of the unexpected encounters arising from this, most notably with a Cratloe farm dog who was determined that the North Munster Antiquarian Journal would not make it past the gate: Paddy triumphed though not without some shedding of his own blood.

Due to the demands of his job, especially the necessity for shift work, he was not able to attend as many lectures and outings as he would have wished. He especially looked forward to his retirement when he would have time for these and his many other hobbies and interests, ranging from golf and cycling to model railways and the American civil war. Sadly this was not to be and he died on 30 October 1997. May he rest in peace.

This obituary was intended for publication in the 1997 journal which, due to circumstances beyond the control of the Society, was eventually only published in 2006. It has been included in the 2007 volume, at the request of his widow Anne, to mark the tenth anniversary of his death.

Hon. Editor

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We also remember the following members who died in 2006

Patricia Byrne  Maeve Greene  Frank McCord  Marcus McInerney

Fr Terry O’Brien  Teresa O’Neill  Gladys Ryan  Phil Shanahan
List of Members 2006
Libraries, Societies and Institutions

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Clare County Library, Ennis, Co. Clare.
Cambridge University Library ©, West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DR.
Cork County Library, Model Farm Rd., Cork.
Cork Municipal Library, Grand Parade, Cork.
DOEHLG, Placenames Branch, 17/19 Hatch St., Dublin 2.
Dublin City University ©, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.
Dublin Inst. of Advanced Studies, School of Celtic Studies, 10, Burlington Road, Dublin 4.
Franciscan House of Studies, Dún Mhuire, Seafield Rd., Killiney, Co. Dublin.
Friends of the Hunt Museum, Rutland St., Limerick.
Kerry County Library, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Limerick City Library, The Granary, Limerick.
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