

## 1957 PROCEEDINGS AND RETROSPECT

Professor Duignan of University College, Galway, lectured to the Society in February 1957. He threw much light on the church site at Peakaun, between Bansha and Cahir, where he had carried out a trial excavation jointly with Mr. John Hunt. Their work led to the discovery of many slabs and fallen architectural fragments and to the partial restoration of the inscribed cross to the SE of the ancient oratory. Though the inscription has not been deciphered we may at least conclude that it is in Irish, not Latin. The first word in the last line is unmistakably 'Dernad' (was made). It is curious that slabs now assembled within the little church bear such names as Cummene, Ladcen, Domnic (Mo Domnog) for we have independent evidence that the seventh century Beccan, from whom the place is named, had distinguished contemporaries and neighbours bearing the same name.

In recent years Bunratty Castle with some adjoining ground was purchased by Lord Gort at about the same time as the building was listed as a national monument. For the past year the castle is being restored on behalf of the proprietor and of the Board of Works. The work is being superintended by the Inspector of National Monuments who during a visit in April delivered an illustrated lecture to the Society on local architectural curiosities.

Mr. P. J. Meghen, County Manager, sketched for our Society in December the development of highways in our area, using such sources as the journeys of St. Patrick as recorded in the Tripartite Life, the approach routes to medieval abbeys, the lines of movement of Elizabethan, Cromwellian and Williamite armies, and the more ample material in 18th century maps. He showed how the thoroughfares laid down under the Turnpike Acts led to our modern road system.

During the early summer the Society held outings, favoured by excellent weather, to Lorrha, to Holycross and Cashel, and finally to Glin, Carrigafoyle, and Lislachtin Friary.

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Sixty years ago this Journal was first launched. In the difficult period after the first Great War publication lapsed for some years but the revival came in 1936. Two years previously a young official of the National Museum came to County Limerick to conduct an excavation at Cush, Kilfinane. A few years later he and the enthusiastic band of archæologists he had inspired transferred their activities to Lough Gur. Meantime Dr. Sean P. O Riordain had become professor of archæology first at Cork and later at University College, Dublin. Contributions from his pen appeared on the first issue of the revived Journal and in many issues during the score of years when he was active as an excavator in our neighbourhood. He lectured time and again to the Society; with patient courtesy he



welcomed our members on their frequent visits to the sites where his excavators were at work. And so it was with a deep sense of personal loss that our members learned of his death in the spring of this year just at the time when the sensational tidings of his discoveries at Tara were beginning to reach the public.

Two years after the Journal was revived Robert Herbert came to Limerick as city librarian. With the co-operation of the city authorities he promptly rearranged the civic collection of antiquities. He catalogued the fine collection of historical sources in the Library, and threw the Reference Room open to the public. From 1945 to 1952 he edited this Journal and its pages afford fine examples of the research and lucidity with which he explored the antiquities of Thomond. His death last July, following so soon after the passing of Sean P. O Riordain, has been a great loss to our Society.

The names of O Riordain and Herbert will ever be linked with those of T. J. Westropp, Archdeacon Begley, Dr. George J. Fogerty, Father Woulfe, and James Grene Barry among the stalwarts whose work and service launched and maintained the Thomond Society. Their memory must inspire our members through the uncertain years that lie ahead.

