Reviews


The publication of a new book on archaeology is nearly always of interest, but the appearance of a book aimed as a guide for amateurs and beginners in archaeology must be considered as of particular interest to all members of local archaeological societies, not least our own.

Dr. Corcoran, a member of the Thomond Archaeological Society and a contributor to our Journal, devotes five chapters of his book (110 of the 216 pages) to field monuments in Ireland and Britain. As there are few of us who are not familiar with at least some examples of these remains of the past, his observations should help in no small way to provide a meaning for them, to explain their origin and purpose, and to people them once again for us. Chapters listed under the general heading of Field Monuments are: Cairns and Standing Stones, Fortified Sites, Habitation Sites, Earthworks, and Miscellaneous (this last chapter includes sections on ancient trackways, crannogs, fulacht fiadha or ancient cooking places, etc.). These chapters are followed by one dealing with the many types of ancient objects likely to be found by chance. All chapters are well illustrated with explanatory line-drawings.

A simple definition of archaeology is the study and interpretation of the material remains of the past, and for this the author strongly recommends a closer examination of our museum collections and a study of the lay-out and structure of early sites as revealed by excavation. In this manner, he points out, we should all become better qualified to judge for ourselves when visiting sites in the field.

Of particular interest to many of our members will be the extensive list of books suggested for further reading. Numerous titles are included, dealing with books on archaeology in general and with books on ancient monuments in these two islands.

It may be only a minor point, but it is perhaps worth noting that this book is provided with an excellent index.

This attractive and easily read book can safely be recommended for inclusion in all public as well as private libraries. It should help to stimulate intelligent interest in the many antiquities which dot our countryside and, if as widely read as it deserves to be, may well aid in preventing destruction of the fine monuments which some, ignorant of their national and scientific importance, deem to stand in the path of progress.

GERALD O'CONNELL


Professor Estyn Evans, author of a number of important works on Irish archaeology and folklife, has, in this his latest book, produced an interesting and instructive guide which should appeal to all who have an interest in Ireland’s ancient monuments.
In a section dealing with “The Archaeological Background” the various characteristics of each class of monument from earliest times down to the 12th century are clearly described, illustrated by diagrams, and the geographical distribution of each class of monument is discussed. The megalithic grave-types are dealt with in particular detail and the funerary artifacts, whether of pottery, flint, stone or metal, are also briefly described and illustrated.

The greater portion of the book, however, consists of a “Gazetteer” of ancient sites, arranged under counties. While this is not intended to be in any way exhaustive, its great value lies in the condensed reports of many excavated sites, published and unpublished. Also included are the dates obtained from objects found during excavation and later subjected to radiocarbon tests, determining, within known limits, the approximate age of the object found and, thus, of the site itself. Such information is normally only to be found scattered throughout numerous scientific journals not readily available to the general reader or amateur archaeologist. While it is admitted by the author that the northern counties have been more fully covered than the remainder of the country, the reader may feel that some counties, such as Wexford deserved more than one or two entries or, failing that, the inclusion of an illustration to occupy the otherwise vacant space on the page. North Munster readers will find details of many sites on both sides of the Shannon and within easy reach, such as the Ballinphuntha wedge-grave, the monastic remains at Killalee, Inishcaltra and Cashel, Moghane stone hill-fort, and the neolithic sites around Lough Gur. The following comment on page 72, with reference to Moghane should be of interest to members of our Society:

“Plans are now afoot to clear the scrub and ‘develop’ the site as a tourist attraction, and the enterprise, sponsored by the Shannon Free Airport Development Co., is being watched with some anxiety by Irish archaeologists.”

At the end of the book there is a useful glossary of archaeological terms and a bibliography giving the sources for further information, where available, about the sites listed. These references might, however, have been more usefully and conveniently placed after each individual entry. The book is profusely illustrated with drawings and photographs of a very high standard; many of the photographs were taken from the air and show details which might not be obvious from the ground. Assistance in locating each site is supplied by reference to the relevant 1/4-inch Ordnance Survey map, to the National Grid number, and to the distance and direction from the nearest town or village. There are a few minor topographical errors, such as the siting of the Dalkey cross-slab (p. 109) on the island instead of on the mainland, but these do not detract from the value of this book which is a very real contribution to the popular literature on Ireland’s past.

PADRAIG Ó hÉAILIDHE


The arrangement of the second volume of the Megalithic Survey of Ireland, published under the auspices of the Ordnance Survey Office, in general follows that of Volume I, which dealt with Co. Clare and which was reviewed in this Journal in 1964 (Vol. IX, 86
no. 3, pp. 130-1). The subdivision of the county into baronies, adopted in the Co. Clare volume, has been abandoned, and the tombs are numbered consecutively according to the 6-inch sheet, plan and trace. One welcome innovation is the generous provision of the relevant sheet (3) of the 1:250,000 (approximately 1/4-inch to one mile) Ordnance Survey map. This sheet also covers Co. Clare and will, therefore, be of value to users of Volume I.

In their introduction the authors of the Co. Mayo volume acknowledge the help given by Major R. B. Aldridge, a resident of the county. Of the fifty-five sites recognised in the county since 1950, no less than thirty were brought to the authors' notice by Major Aldridge. This is an excellent example of beneficial cooperation between local part-time field-workers and full-time professionals. So often it is the local man with a deep knowledge of his locality who is able to notice (provided he know what to look for) features of archaeological significance which might be overlooked even by a trained archaeologist in his necessarily brief stay in an unfamiliar area. Professor de Valéra and Mr. Ó Nualláin have been meticulous in their examination of all evidence, both written (published and unpublished) and in the field. They have been able to add new sites by following clues such as place-names and early editions of Ordnance Survey maps. They have also shown that several sites, hitherto accepted as megalithic tombs, are simply natural features.

The present tally of tombs in Co. Mayo is 101. Of these, 15 are unclassified, 6 are Portal Dolmens, 19 are Wedge-shaped Gallery Graves and 61 are Court Cairns. In their discussion of the place of the Mayo tombs in the Irish series the authors concentrate on Court Cairns. This is a difficult task as, with the exception of Behy (Ma.3), none of the tombs in the county has been excavated adequately. It is notoriously difficult to draw conclusions from surface features and, indeed, Professor de Valéra's excavation at Behy itself has yielded unexpected evidence in its dry-stone walled court (cf. JRSAI, 95(1965), 6-8). Since Professor de Valéra's paper on the Court Cairns of Ireland (PRIA, 69, C (1960), 9-136) a further 64 cairns have been identified, 36 in Co. Mayo. As a result, the distribution of the class as a whole (for which the authors use the generic term court cairn, but which also includes the type known elsewhere as horned cairn) has an even stronger concentration in the western counties. This fact is used to reinforce Professor de Valéra's theories of a western origin for the type of tomb, set forward in his paper of 1960. The most serious objection to the theory of a western entry is the complete absence of an external prototype for the full courts, whereas the open forecourt is known outside of these islands. Some influences may have entered the west of Ireland—the transepted chamber, perhaps—but the genesis and development of the class as a whole is surely more complex than that proposed by Professor de Valéra. Recent excavation in Britain has begun to provide evidence to suggest that some large, complex structures in trapezoidal mounds may have developed from earlier, simple structures, such as Portal Dolmens. This certainly appears to be true of the horned cairns of south-west Scotland.

The value of the Co. Mayo volume, however, does not rest on hypotheses concerning Court Cairns, but on the very detailed body of facts, meticulously recorded, illustrated and documented. Hypotheses are bound to be modified. The data presented in this volume will for a very long time to come serve as an essential tool of research.

J. X. W. P. CORCORAN
Marten Stenberger, "A Ring-fort at Raheennamadra, Knocklong, Co. Limerick",
Price 7/6.

The Irishman who ponders 'what is the stars?' must surely ponder what means the
country raths which are to be found in every parish. History, folklore and tradition
supply part of the answer but it is for the archaeologist with the spade to provide
the facts against which the traditional lore can be measured.

At Raheennamadra one such rath has been excavated and this account of the
findings adds considerably to our knowledge. In response to an Irish invitation, the
distinguished Swedish scholar, Professor Marten Stenberger, came here to share his
extensive knowledge and experience with us and carried out the work with a team of
Swedish and Irish students. The result of the excavation confirms the pattern of
similar excavated sites in Ireland. It was a detached homestead, protected by its
surrounding bank and water-filled fosse. Though the number of the objects recovered
from the site was slight, the scientific knowledge gleaned about the construction of
the enclosure and the structures within, was considerable. It was built and occupied
about the 7th century A.D. The house itself was little more than a hut and attached
to it was an outside souterrain. Members of this Society who visited there while the
work was in progress may now see the final picture that emerged.

The souterrain is more like an underground stone house with two rooms in which
people could stand upright. Yet there is no evidence of primary habitation in it. This
one could be an important unit in the study of the evolution of souterrains. It could
have been used to give protection during the Winter or indeed at night-time, while
the rather flimsy hut might have sufficed in better weather.

The finds from the site are now preserved in the National Museum and the catalogue
used for this report was prepared there by Mr. Etienne Rynne, a member of our
Society. The finds are from the everyday equipment of country people of Early
Christian times. One group, the bone objects described as "spearheads", are in-
triguing to say the least of it. The older notion that they may have been used as
marrow scoops might be less misleading. We must admit frankly that we do not
know what they are. They have been found from Ireland to Scandinavia, generally in
habitation sites, dating to the Bronze Age and subsequent periods—there is even one
from a Neolithic hoard in Denmark. There are many minor variations in these
objects which might reveal their purpose. It has been assumed that those with
perforations were hafted—perhaps some of the perforations were for suspension-
holes? They have been called by many names: shuttles, spoons, chisels, borers,
gouges, needles, bodkins, awls, lansenzipzen. Little is to be gained by adding to the
list of inspired guesses.

Dr. Stenberger reminds us that we have not yet found an accurate generic term
for the monuments known as ring-fort, rath, lios, dun, etc. Reverend Professor Francis
Shaw has demonstrated that the Irish words are inaccurately used in so far as the part
is equated with the whole (see The Archaeological News Letter, vol. 4, no. 5. (Jan. 1952),
p. 73). However, common usage gives this practice a certain validity and perhaps
rath may be a more acceptable term than ring-fort. This excavation report is certainly
stimulating and makes one look forward to further Scandinavian-Irish co-operation
in archaeology.

ELLEN PRENDERGAST

88
Price 84/-.  

The work of collecting the dying traditional material of the last generation by the Irish Folklore Commission is now only being in any way widely appreciated when the last bearers of this heritage have almost gone from us. The island miracle of Ireland, where the traditions and way of life of the Celtic settlers of more than two thousand years ago could be seen alive in the twentieth century, has up to now been more appreciated abroad than at home. In collecting this material, the Folklore Commission have made a beginning, now the scholar-interpreters must go to work on it and make it yield cultural patterns.

The work of scholarship under review is one of the few synthoses to appear so far; its object was to document and interpret the body of customsanciently surrounding the first day of August. Assemblies on heights or by lakes and rivers seem to have been common on this day; features of these assemblies were the gathering of fruits, ritual fights and courtships, while often the name of a forgotten Crom Dubh is dimly associated with the festival. Some modern fairs held about this time appear to be survivals of ancient *aonachs*. Time has scattered these customs over the period from the end of July to mid-August, but most of them still centre on Garland Sunday, celebrated in most places on the first Sunday of August. Calendar changes, loss of tradition, and the influence of rival church feasts all combine to obscure the picture, but the author's critical examination of the traditional material combined with her knowledge of the fragmentary ancient historical sources brings its outlines into focus. We can now confidently hold that these traditions are the remnants of Celtic customs surrounding a festival of the Celtic god Lugh at the beginning of harvest-time.

In the course of her examination, the author goes particularly deep in the examination of promising sites. One of these is Tailteann of the games in Co. Meath. What an opportunity for co-operation between archaeologist and Celtic historian! Aerial photography must help in recovering traces of the lost sites and help Miss MacNeill achieve greater certainty in her interpretation of the place and its ritual. Surveys of the surrounding area might point to closer connections with Loughcrew—perhaps this is the cemetery of Talitiu grouped with Cruachu in Connacht in *Sonchas na Relech*? One might even suggest that a cult of Lugh, the *sámthaích* or artificer, is indicated by the *La Tène* decorated bone slips found by Eugene Conwell and Dr. Joseph Raftery in such numbers in Cairn H.

Ancient Lugudunum, which the French now call Lyons, and Dún Lughaidh at the foot of Errigal both enshrine the name of the god Lugh, the Celtic Hermes, after whom they were named. The author has covered half of Western Europe and twenty centuries of tradition in her study, and deserves our best thanks for it.

But this is only a beginning. Let us hope that this author's example will be followed many times over. Let the standard of this work be only approached and we shall have studies worthy of the material itself and of those through whose foresight it is preserved for us.

Michael Herity
Price 7/6.

This most important aid to research was first published in 1959. This second edition has been prepared by the original compiler, Mr. R. Neville Haddock, and incorporates additions resulting from his further work on the subject and from information supplied by other scholars. Although, admittedly, incomplete for the early period, since the positions of a number of monasteries known to have existed have not yet been settled, the map is the first visual conspectus of the ascertainable locations of Irish monastic sites. As such, it is not only of itself a very notable contribution to knowledge but is an invaluable help to persons working in many fields, not necessarily of a strictly ecclesiastical nature.

To recognize its importance as an instrument in Irish studies is also to recognize that the data it contains demand a more spacious format than the present one. A single map, measuring approximately 29 by 22 inches, simply cannot bear the amount of detail thrust upon it, however subtly the visual emphasis of the various categories of data has been graduated to leave the distribution of the monastic sites the paramount feature. These are indicated by no less than 52 separate symbols on a background which shows the National Grid, the main road network, the diocesan boundaries and the names of counties, towns, villages, mountains and rivers. Many of the symbols are, in consequence, uncomfortably minute but neither this expedient nor the fact that the principal sites are identified by name, obviate a puzzling overcrowding in places where there is a multiplicity of foundations. An attempt to alleviate matters has been made by printing the symbols for the “Celtic” foundations in red in this edition but in spite of this the usefulness of the map is essentially restricted to the location of individual monasteries and to viewing the number of different foundations at any particular site. The person who wishes to see the overall distribution of Celtic establishments or of the houses of any one order must make his own distribution map. It is to be hoped that it will be possible to spread this superabundance of riches over a number of maps in the next edition to achieve both ease of consultation and justice in presenting the cumulation of scholarship which has gone to its compilation.

It seems, too, a pity to have treated so much of that scholarship as an expendable by-product of map-making, when, if published in conjunction with the map, it would have formed a valuable corpus of documentation. In the case of the Celtic establishments, the Irish names with, where they occur, their Latinized versions would form a profitable supplement to the excellent index and county lists supplied. In the case of the later establishments, the addition of foundation dates would add a new dimension to the usefulness of the index and even if less precision is possible in the case of the earlier sites it should be possible to devise a system to incorporate some key references to such chronology as exists concerning them. So little of this kind of information is readily accessible that it seems almost quixotically selective not to make available every aspect of the research undertaken in connexion with the map which lends itself to presentation in a codified form.

A.T.L.

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One can, of course, be over-hasty in spotting a winner, in the world of learning as much as on the turf; but this reviewer suspects that Dr. Hughes’ book will come to be regarded as a classic. It is certainly the most impressive, and the most exciting, study of an early Irish topic produced by the present generation of Celtic historians. It is not a ‘popular’ book; it is not an archaeological book, and indeed deliberately avoids archaeology; and it demands a certain amount of familiarity with the historical background. The plates form an attractive but quite unnecessary appendage, and one suspects were wished upon Dr. Hughes by her publishers, to keep up with the Joneses. The type is clear and the binding, like Methuen’s previous Irish books, is in a tactful dull green. The price may seem a little steep, but is not excessive for 300-odd pages.  

The author has set out to discuss exactly what she implies in her title; the role and status of the Church (viewed as the organised, hierarchical, human expression of the Christian faith) within the complex and equally hierarchical society that we know to have existed in Ireland, probably rooted back in the Iron Age, until the Norman period. This task demands, naturally, a very considerable knowledge of the published literary sources, both secular (e.g., the various Law Codes) and hagiographical, including the overlap world seen in the early Irish Penitentials. Dr. Hughes gracefully expresses her debt to both Professor Binchy and the late Père Grosjean, S. J., Bollandiste, but by including (pp. 275-281) her own translation (with notes) of the early and remarkable Liber Angeli from the Book of Armagh recension, shows herself independently at home in this field.  

The work is divided into five sections. I, *Birth*, sketches (perhaps a little hastily) the pagan Irish background, the rise of the Church in the Roman Empire, and the transmission of the Faith to western lands. II, *Growth*, is a masterly essay in seven chapters describing the introduction and establishment of monasticism in Ireland (and Britain generally), and possibly forms the most important contribution in the whole book. III, *Maturity*, takes us from the 7th to the 8th century, and shows how the Church, or rather, monasteries viewed as social units, were incorporated into the world of secular law, and with what sociological results. IV, *Adversity and Recovery*, deals with the Norse era, and its impact on a Church which had already undergone profound changes since the time of the ‘Great Monastic Founders.’ The final section, V, *Transmutation*, is concerned mainly with the 11th century, and, though short will be welcomed as a rare treatment of this particularly obscure period in Irish history.  

It is impossible to summarise, in a review, the wealth of detailed commentary, of skilful employment of the most unexpected sources, and the cogency with which entirely novel arguments are presented. In section II, perhaps the most stimulating facet is Dr. Hughes’ demonstration that the episcopal 5th-century church we associate with Patrick and his contemporaries was not entirely eclipsed by the rapid spread of monasticism in the early 6th century, but that a network of territorial bishoprics continued to exist in the background. No previous writer has faced this problem at all, but (as with the question of Patrick himself, the supremacy of Armagh, the importance of Vinnian[us] or Finnian, and other spectres of the period) Dr. Hughes shows herself more than equal to the task.
From a more subjective standpoint, it was a delight to read this book, and it will stand—nay, demand—considerable re-reading. The prose is a model of clarity and consiseness, and even in the most technical passages retains the unlaboured elegance which reveals a final text, achieved through the most careful preparation. The word 'elegant' is the one which I should choose to describe the arguments; these are set out with economy, with logical persuasiveness, and with great conviction. Dr. Hughes takes nothing previously written on trust. She makes no concession to the most august views, should some freshly-perceived text from the period prove them inept; and yet, by the continuous exercise of a most lively and original mind, manages to present what would, in a lesser writer be destructive criticism in the guise of fresh bricks placed upon an existing structure. It is this considerable gift as an author, a gift already displayed in her shorter essays in the period (cf. p.288), which, coupled with the sheer weight of the book itself, justifies (in my opinion) the use of adjectives like 'classic'. This is a work which any other writer, upon this period—indeed, any serious student—must not only possess, but read and digest, and that as soon as possible.

CHARLES THOMAS


This work is a catalogue of all the Carolingian coins in the British Museum covering the reigns of Pippin the Short (751-768) down to Lothaire (954-986), and includes copies and derivative types of later date, with an introduction by the authors and summary giving the source from which the coins were acquired by the Museum. There is also a summary list of the ten hoards, eight from Great Britain, one from Ireland (Mullaghboden, Co. Kildare, found in 1871) and one found during the construction of the Vatican wireless station in Rome in 1928, in which some of the coins catalogued were discovered. There are twelve pages of plates illustrating 342 coins in their actual size, all of which are excellently produced.

The authors do not provide a general outline of the history of these coinages and the book must, therefore, be used as a source or factual reference to such coins as are actually in the cabinets of the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum: a book for specialist numismatists. The British Museum and the authors are to be complimented on the excellent standard of presentation in the printing of the text and plates.

WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN

For anyone even remotely interested in the earliest Irish coinage this book is essential, and for anyone who wants to study the Vikings in Ireland it is invaluable. Mr. Dolley, a member of our Society and of West Limerick ancestry, a contributor to our _Journal_ and author of a few hundred papers on coins, particularly Irish coins, has done us proud in this, his finest work to date.

A great part of this book consists of material which will be of particular value to the specialist in numismatics. Nevertheless, non-specialists will find a great portion of the book of interest as Mr. Dolley has gone beyond the bounds of the average old-fashioned coin-expert and made the numerous coin-hoards tell a coherent story of the Vikings in Ireland and Britain, a story which enlarges and at the same time throws light on the accounts given in the annals, chronicles and sagas. The author also deals with non-Irish coin-hoards and, in fact, provides maps and lists of all known coin-hoards from Great Britain and Ireland between about 795 and 1105 A.D. In this manner he is able to reveal the intricate relations between the Irish, English, Vikings in Ireland and Vikings in Britain. The result is a chapter on the period in general, which in many ways presents the military history of the period more accurately than has hitherto been possible.

Of the 26 coin-hoards from these islands which contain Hiberno-Norse coins, 22 were found in Ireland. The earliest is one of the two from Clondalkin, Co. Dublin, for which Mr. Dolley suggests a deposition date of within two years of 997 A.D., and the latest would seem to be that from Castlelyons, Co. Cork, for which a date of within ten years of 1140 A.D. is suggested. Mr. Dolley, thanks to his work on coin-hoards in Scandinavia, has thus succeeded in showing that coins were first struck in Ireland about 995 A.D., that is, about five years earlier than hitherto generally accepted, in segregating seven principal classes and in suggesting fairly limited dates for each hoard and type.

It should be borne in mind by all readers of this book that, as Mr. Dolley is so careful to emphasise, the manufacture and use of coins in Ireland at this period were purely foreign conceptions. The Irish did not deal in coins either before, during or after the Viking Period, and, indeed, it is significant that with the decline of outside contacts between the Vikings in Ireland and elsewhere, coinage dropped out of use. Also of significance is that all the coins minted in this country were struck in the Norse Kingdom of Dublin, though there is a slight possibility of minting at Clonmacnoise during the later portion of the period. The absence of mints at Limerick (see page 132) Waterford and other Viking centres emphasises their insignificance in international commerce of the times.

The numismatist and historian will welcome this book and use it often as an essential reference book for the Viking Period in Ireland, but although excellent value at the price, the average reader, no matter how keen he is on history, will probably prefer to order it from his local library—and every library in Ireland which makes any pretension to having a good history section should include it on its shelves.

_Etienne Rynne_

93
This is a pioneering work—the first of its kind ever undertaken about a Co. Limerick parish—and the Reverend author has laid us all, but especially the people of Murroe and Boher, under a deep debt of gratitude. The amount of research undertaken by Dom. Mark is considerable, and a vast treasure of local lore has been unearthed by him. One need not necessarily be from Murroe or Limerick to enjoy and profit by the book because the story it unfolds over the years could, mutatis mutandis, be told about almost any other parish in Ireland: the springs from whence the action flows are the same. Future parish historians will turn to this book, not only as a model of research, but also for its calendars of Documents and its Bibliography (though a notable omission from the latter is Dom Hubert de Varebeke’s note listing the various “Names of Abington” published in vol. IX, pages 74-75 of this Journal).

The work is divided into two sections, Ecclesiastical and Secular, and the author admits that such a division posed a problem. Many readers may feel that in the history of an Irish Catholic parish there is no room for such a division, which, as in the present book, tends to interrupt the continuity and forces the author into episodic chapters that mar the flow of the narrative. How can anyone succeed in separating the story of the priest from that of the people in the Ireland that brought us into the twentieth century? Was not the Tithe War (1831-38), which is featured in the Ecclesiastical Section, almost more secular than ecclesiastical inasmuch as it was a war by landholders against the unfair exactions of another Church? And how is it possible to divide the happenings that gave rise to the saying of Mass in Brittas Castle and at Cappercullen Mass-rock, to the famous 1821 Incident at Murroe and to the faction fights in the 1830s, to the Visitations of the 18th century and the concomitant Hedge Schools, and to the parochial affairs and the social and economic problems of the parish? Surely each event flowed from and was dependent on the concerted action of priest and people who always acted in unison.

The Land War and the Plan of Campaign, as they affected the parish, are full of interest and make the history of that period live again. The Chapters on Clonkeen, Abington, and Glenstal, contain much material of interest to the archaeologist and the historian alike, and should be required reading for every member of our Society. In a book of this kind it is only right that the story of the religious and social life of the parish should preponderate, but at the same time one is left wondering what part, if any, Murroe and Boher took in the stirring events that led up to the 1641 Rebellion, to the turmoil that must have vexed the surrounding countryside during the two Seiges of Limerick, to the Rebellion of ’98, and at the Risings of ’48, ’67 and 1916. The historic happenings of 1916-22 as they affected the parish do not deserve to be dismissed in ten or eleven sentences culled from “an account written by the late Michael Hayes of Moher.”

The author is hardly fair to the memory of Bishop Jebb when he accuses him of “killing two birds with the one stone” in accepting relief money for the 1822 famine victims in Ireland from the London Committee, and in the summer and autumn of that year applying a portion of it in “the lowering of two steep hills which obstructed the market road from Abington to Limerick.” According to the records quoted in the book (p. 107), the Limerick Grand Jury at the Spring Assizes of 1822 accepted “the contract of the Rev. John Jebb, D.D., and Samuel Keayes, to keep in repair for 7 years from
this Assizes, 696 perches of the road from Nenagh to Cashel and Limerick..." (no price is mentioned). It must be conceded that repairing a road is an entirely different matter from removing a hill—the two works bear no relation to each other, beyond the fact that they each ultimately contribute to better and safer roads—but to say, as Father Tierney does, that Jebb was "helping the poor of the parish in giving them employment, and helping his own road-building contract into the bargain" is surely imputing a mean kind of dishonesty on grounds that do not appear to exist.

A friendly atmosphere pervades this book from the moment where the author welcomes us to his parish at the lovely doorway of Clonkeen until he bids us farewell at the gracious gates of Glenstal. It is a book that should be in every Limerick home and should serve not only to make Murroe and Boher people proud of their past heritage but also to stimulate other parish historians into emulating Dom Tierney's example and producing histories as full and as stimulating as those contained in the work under review.

ROBERT CUSSEN


Neither on the cover nor anywhere in this little booklet are we told when or by whom it was published. Instead of a title page the book opens with the "Editor's Note" which is followed by a "Preface" written by the late Bishop of Killaloe, the Most Rev. Joseph Rodgers, and by "Some Prefatory Remarks" by Fr. T. MacCosair, Parish Priest of Inagh and Kilnamona; the following 47 pages comprise the history proper. From the contents of the Note, Preface and Remarks it seems reasonably clear, however, that it is produced by the parishioners, and one can only regret that they did not choose to so inform us and thus reap the credit which they have earned. It might be suggested that in future editions the three blank pages at the end be transferred to the beginning to provide a title page and a list of contents.

The contents are kaleidoscopic in their variety, covering almost every possible aspect of the parish's story, and all presented in a very readable manner. Indeed, it is easy to dip into this book anywhere and find something of interest, especially as the large sub-titles greatly assist selectivity, enabling each item to be read as a separate unit should one so desire.

One of the principal attractions of the material presented is the unassuming way in which all manner of seemingly irrelevant information is interspersed throughout. At times one might imagine that well-nigh everyone who ever lived in the parish is mentioned somewhere in the book and that every incident which ever happened in the parish is recorded. Although this approach to local history may appear somewhat naïve to the more sophisticated reader, it is obviously ideal as far as the people of the parish themselves are concerned. Everyone who has any connection whatsoever with the general area is likely to find something of personal interest in this book—
this reviewer, for instance, was proud to note the prominence of his family-name in all fields of sport!

This parish history is a genuine, sincere effort at providing the people of Inagh and Kilnamona with the type of history which not only gives the principal facts but which is also meaningful and personal to them: a history of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Etienne Rynne

Stiofán Ó hAnnracháin, Caint an Bhaile Dhuibh. An Clóchomhara Tta., Baile Átha Cliath 1964. Luach 15/-.  

Is é rud atá sa leabhar seo, go hachomhair, cuntas ar a bhfuil le fáil anois d’iarmsaí na canúinte dúchas Gaeilge a bhloigh á labhairt i bhparóiste an Bhaile Dhuibh in iarthuaisceart Chiarráil. Déanann an t-údar amach, ó fhigíúiri daonáirimh agus cuimhne mhuintir an pharóiste mar thaca leo go bhfuil sé os cionn caoga bliain ó d’eag an Ghaeilge dhúchasach sa pharóiste. Faoin mbliain 1911, de réir an daonáirimh, ní riabh Gaeilge ach ag tuairim 14.5% de phobal an pharóiste agus bhí dhá dheireadh fíor os cionn seasca bliain d’aos. De na daoine is sine dar bhnaif leis, is beag duine acu a raibh Gaeilge ag a thuismitheoirí; is ag an ngélín roimhe sin a bhí sí.

Is eacsa a thuiscint, mar sin, gur beag d’iarmsaí na Gaeilge sin a bhí le fáil ag an údar seachas focail aonraic, corrabhairt ghearr agus roinnt ainmneacha áite. Liosta de na focail sin agus de na habairtí, i bhfoirm fhoclóra, atá sa chuid is mó den leabhar. Tugann an t-údar brí ag an fhocail agus sampla dá úsáid i gcaint, agus ní hé a dhearmad gan fuaim an fhocail a léiriú go cruinn. Déanann an t-údar miondealú freisin ar thréithe na canúinte ó thaobh fhualimeanna, chomh fada agus is leir iad ón ábhar atá cruinnithe aige. Tá tábhacht ar leith, b’fhéidir, lena bhfuil le rá aige faoin thithim na bheimhre fhocail, mar is abhar é nár mhíse tuilleadh staidéar a dhéanamh air.

Tá tábhacht lena leithéid seo de shaothar ar roinnt bealaí: don scoil éireannach, cuireann sé leis an eolas atá aige (agus is eolas é atá bearacht go maith go fóill) ar chanúintí na Gaeilge; don scoil éireannach agus freisin don té a bhaineas náithíseáid as an nGaeilge, cuireann sé lena fhoclóir, mar tá tuairim dhá chéad focal anseo nach bhfuil ag an Duinnín each agus tuilleadh a bhfuil malairt bhí léi seachas mar tá aigisean. Ní hí an tábhacht is lú atá le leabhar dá shórt seo go léiríonn sí don mhéid againn a tógadh le Béarla nach fada síar uaimh, ina dhiaidh sin, an Ghaeilge: mura raibh sí ar ár n-aithreacha bhí sí ag éirí seanaitreacha. Tá freármhacha na Gaeilge san ithir, ní sa Ghaeltacht amháin ach in ngach cuide den tír.

Tá a chuid oibre d’éanta go crochmhuí slachtmhar ag Stiofán Ó hAnnracháin sa leabhar seo: is sampla é dóibh siúd a thabharfadh faoi nós shamhail d’obair i gceantair eile. Tá na foilsitheoirí freisin le moladh as ucht a gcuidsean den ghnó.

Éamonn de Hóir
This booklet of 56 pages meanders in and out through the history and antiquities of the Foynes area. A study of the Geraldines, tales of the poets Ó Longáin, Ó Bruadair, and Ó Rathaille, stories of the Sheehys of Drumcollogher, of the Spring-Rices, the Hunts and the Palatines, do a useful pocket companion for a tour of the region.

O. S.


Although probably intended for the passing tourist rather than for the local resident, the latter will also find this, the most recent of the many guide-books to Ennis and its surrounding district, of great use and interest. In it he will discover much about the many fine amenities and attractions of the area, together with short notes on several of the places of historic interest. Almost 60 pages long and well illustrated, this little guide, edited by a member of our Society, is excellent value at half a crown. It has only one serious flaw: the inadequate, not to mention inaccurate, map of the town.

S. Ó R.


During this year, the Jubilee Year of the Easter Rising of 1916, there were many publications relating to that period, events leading to the insurrection, the actual fighting and the aftermath.

This publication, *Cuimhniönn Luimneach*, is a book of sixteen articles dealing with the part Limerick people played in the Rising. Some are eye-witness accounts, written by men and women who were actively engaged in the Movement, others are articles on the Limerickmen who gave their lives that this nation of ours might have a new birth. It is a worthy tribute to those who died, and to those who cherish their memory so dearly that they undertook this publication. It is informative as well as stirring reading, and deserves a place on every Limerick bookshelf.

T. PIERCE