Reviews


Here, at last, we have a book which deals with the art and decoration of prehistoric Europe in a manner which is reasonable, acceptable and, at the same time, readable. It is devoid of the almost-standard vocabulary consisting of the well-nigh meaningless superlatives and stock catch-phrases of the average art critic. Even when discussing the sometimes near-abstract art of the Palaeolithic hunters or that of the much later Celts, the author manages to confine himself to a clear statement of fact and appreciation, without, however, appearing dry or uninspired: Mr. Powell has shown himself to be adept at appreciating the finer aspects of art while still remaining its historian rather than its judge.

In this book the reader can follow the changes and developments in European art from about 25,000 B.C. to the overrunning of the Celtic world (Ireland excepted) by the Romans, culminating in the conquest of Britain in the 1st cent. A.D. Aided by some 263 photographs, 47 in full colour and all of which have longer than usual explanatory captions, no one can fail to follow the trend of argument on the excuse of inadequate illustrations. That some of the illustrations, particularly those in the first chapter, leave much to be desired is regrettable.

Ireland figures fairly prominently and the illustrations of the well-known neolithic, spirally-ornamented stone at Newgrange and of the Celtic ritual standing-stone at Turoe, Co. Galway, are surely the most attractive ever published.

An archaeologist primarily, Mr. Powell has managed to make his book serve a twofold purpose, for not only does the story of prehistoric art emerge from his writing but also a most useful picture-supplying the archaeological background. In combining the archaeology with the art, he has provided the students of both sciences with an invaluable treatise for serious or merely general reading.

Etienne Rynne


Interest in Irish megalithic studies has centred since 1962 on the Bend of the Boyne. It is inevitable that some time will elapse before definitive excavation reports are published. For that reason alone, Mrs. O’Kelly’s reference to some of the new information derived from her husband’s excavation at Newgrange is welcome. The book under review, however, must be judged as a guide, which is its purpose. In this, it succeeds admirably.

Mrs. O’Kelly has acutely appreciated that visitors’ needs may vary. Those coming in organised parties may have only limited time; others may be fortunate in being able to pay a more extended visit. In order to accommodate both classes, the guide is divided into three sections. The first is a short, straightforward description of the principal structural features. The third section, in addition to offering a more detailed account of these features, discusses Newgrange in relation to neighbouring prehistoric monuments, gives a summary of early descriptions of the cairn and refers to possible references in Early Irish texts. An inventory of the decorated stones comprises the middle section.

All but two of the forty photographs have been produced especially for this book. These are clearly reproduced, and provide a useful record for the visitor of some of the more important structural and artistic details of the tomb, including several hitherto unpublished. There are three line-drawings: a sketch map of the area, a plan of the cairn, and a plan and sectional profile of passage and chamber.

The Guide is clearly arranged, with a detailed list of contents, a good index and a useful bibliography. Those who read it before visiting Newgrange will perhaps derive the greatest benefit, but for those who may not read it until after their visit—and even those who have not yet seen the monument—will find that this is more than an ephemeral guide-book.

Both the publishers and Mrs. O’Kelly are to be congratulated on their prompt prescience in publishing this attractively produced guide to one of the outstanding monuments of prehistoric Europe. It provides an example which might profitably be followed in respect of several sites in these islands.

John X. W. P. Corcoran

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The amount of data currently available to the European prehistorian is considerable. Much of it is to be found scattered throughout a variety of learned journals. Many sites remain unrecorded in the field, and perhaps a greater number of artifacts lies unpublished, and in many cases unrecognised, in museums. It is a measure of the growing maturity of prehistory as an academic discipline that in many countries the need to codify both published and hitherto unpublished material has at last been recognised. Prehistorians have tended in this context to lag behind their colleagues in Classical Archaeology, who for decades have been producing corpora of, inter alia, inscriptions and pottery. As Dr. Eogan himself might say, "This is the age of the Corpus."

Several papers have been published in recent years on bronze age artifacts found in these islands, including several by Dr. Eogan himself. In each case it is usual to find as an appendix a corpus of one form or another. In such cases however, the corpus has tended to be incidental to a discussion of the particular artifact or group of artifacts referred to in the body of the paper. In his Catalogue of Irish Bronze Swords, Dr. Eogan has reversed the order of precedence.

The catalogue proper occupies approximately three quarters of the volume, and provides descriptions with line-drawings of more than 600 swords found in Ireland. Although the list of swords is arranged to Eogan’s classification, cross-references are usefully given to provenance (arranged under counties) and present location. There are also lists of associated finds, chapes and sword-moulds. Reference is made to swords now lost, but which have previously been mentioned in literature. A series of distribution maps of localised finds completes the illustrations.

In his discussion and classification of the Irish bronze sword, Dr. Eogan offers a valuable summary of present knowledge and opinion. It is useful to have this current view, even if future research should demand eventual revision. That this may be possible is suggested by the relatively few swords which have been found in any form of datable context. Should such a revision be necessary, it will not detract from the value of the catalogue proper, which will quickly become a classic in the literature of European prehistoric studies.

The National Museum of Ireland and the Stationery Office justly merit all prehistorians’ gratitude for commissioning this volume, for providing such a generous format, bound in hard boards, and at such a reasonable price. Although it does not lessen the book’s usefulness, it is unfortunate that the drawings of the swords are so unpleasing—they could have been drawn just that little bit more artistically.

JOHN X. W. P. CORCORAN

Charles Thomas, CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES OF CAMBORNE, H. E. Warne Ltd., St. Austell, Cornwall 1967. Price 35/-.

Recent issues of this Journal have carried reviews of local and parish histories, and this book, by a member of our Society, is another such publication—but one with a difference. For Camborne is a parish in Cornwall which is rich in antiquities from the Early Christian Period and which provide proof today of the ties which linked Cornwall with Ireland in those far off times. Charles Thomas, a native of Camborne, gives us a detailed account of these remains and also a valuable picture of early and medieval Christianity in this important area. He does more than this, however, for in discussing the antiquities and sites he draws on his vast knowledge of the period, placing them in the wider context of Britain and Western Europe.

The chapter on "Early Chapels in Camborne" makes fascinating reading and has many references to Irish saints and Cornish legends about them. There is, in fact, good evidence, historical, traditional and archaeological, for an Irish colonisation of west Cornwall during the latter half of the 6th century A.D. This was probably sort of missionary enterprise and many ancient church-sites and holy wells in Cornwall are still ascribed to Irish saints, e.g. St. Ia, patron of St. Ives, is regarded as being one of the initial band of missionaries and a church at Troon, in Camborne, built on the site of a holy well, bears her name.
The chapter on "Early Christianity in Cornwall" treats of that very important but too little known period when post-Roman Christianity began to flourish along the Cornish and Welsh coastlines. Here the author outlines a probable sequence which began with the closed cemetery of post-Roman times and which, in some instances, can be traced right up to the parish church and cemetery of modern times.

The remainder of the book deals in the main with the history and description of the later Camborne antiquities. Early altar stones, fonts and crosses, feasts, fairs and markets, and the parish schools and glebe lands are all discussed. Although on this account it may be considered primarily of interest to Cornish readers, this book must be strongly recommended to all potential parish or local historians. In its layout and approach it is a model and guide to all engaged in such work. Too often local histories tend to be haphazard and naive while, on the other hand, a mere survey of local antiquities can be dull and uninteresting to all save the expert. Charles Thomas has avoided both these pitfalls and so has produced a well-illustrated work of accurate scholarship, readable and absorbing.

Thomas Fanning


Professor Bieler is perhaps best known to the general reader as the author of Ireland: Harbinger of the Middle Ages, and one may begin by remarking that the History of Irish Catholicism edited by the new President of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, could have gone much farther afield and failed to find a better harbinger for the project. The achievement is the more remarkable when it is recalled that Dr. Bieler himself has been a reluctant protagonist in the bitter controversies that have centred on the problem of Patrick's date. This is not to say that Ireland's foremost paleographer has adopted middle-of-the-road positions for their own sake. More than one eyebrow will be raised by his substantial acquiescence in a Patrician date for that curious farrago of canons known as the First Synod of St. Patrick, and there are others than Dr. Binchy who believe that it has still to be proved that Patrick was ever in France. Generally, though, Dr. Bieler has taken up a moderate position, and the dissent of others is indicated with scrupulousness even though perhaps dismissed in some cases without real comprehension of its validity. For example, insufficient weight surely is given to the argumentation for a "late" (i.e. 493) date for Patrick's death based on the annalistic obits of his contemporaries and disciples.

It still seems to the reviewer that students of Patrick do not stand back far enough from their hero. For example, what non-Irish sources there are, and for once they are quite explicit, make it very unlikely that there was on Britain an Irish attack of any magnitude in the first years of the fifth century. Britain, too, it can be argued was formally abandoned by the Roman legions in 410 not because the situation was hopeless, but because the defence of the island did seem well within the resources of the native population. Contrariwise, the silver hoards from Ireland do suggest very strongly that there was heavy Irish raiding of Britain in the decade after 420, and it is easy to forget that O'Rahilly, this time with no Patrick are to grind, once argued very convincingly that Niall of the Nine Hostages died 427, and Niall is the Irish king whom Irish tradition has specifically associated with Irish raving of Britain. O'Rahilly, indeed, appears to have had a peculiarly compartmented mind, and a minor mystery is why he appears to have overlooked in 1946 what he had been at such pains to establish in 1942—from the point of view of his earlier argument there could be nothing more satisfactory than good grounds for thinking that the Patrician captivity may have begun c. 425. Dr. Bieler's open-mindedness, incidentally, is seen to excellent advantage in his generous acceptance of Dr. Carney's cursus for cursus (Confessor 19), but the whole incident revives the reviewer's scepticism concerning the hypothesis that the newly escaped Patrick and his companions, all of them apparently adult males, very nearly starved to death because they were unlucky enough to land in a Gaul newly devastated by the Vandals. It is J. B. Bury himself who appears to be responsible for this dangerously attractive synchronism, but surely there is something to be said against a chronology which involves Constantine III in denuding of its garrison an island seriously menaced by an Irish thalassocracy which only a few years before had carried off Romano-Britons by the thousand?

What of the general reader? It has been said that the book is one that strives to be fair, and not least of its merits is the extent to which it is made clear that Patrician students beg to differ. It is good to find such obvious pietas in the case of the late Father Grosjean, and it deserves to be more
widely known that this eminent Bollandist withdrew from Patrician studies because sickened by the virulence of certain of the protagonists, Dr. Bieler not being of their number. How one regrets, too, that Miss Mohrman was not presented with the right problem, or rather set of problems. On purely historical grounds Esposito's brilliantly logical case for a fourth-century date for Patrick is easily shot down, but it would have been interesting to have had the great Dutch Latinist's views on whether or not the language of the Confessio and Epistola gave any hint of composition towards the middle or towards the end of the 4th century.

Dr. Bieler, then, has made a most workmanlike job of an extremely delicate first volume in a series which promises to be one of surprises. The criticism can be made, though, that he has lent too heavily on Latin authors. However, another choice of author might have favoured unduly some other part of the evidence, and one might have missed those qualities of temperance and judgement that commend the present volume. A more serious criticism might be that Dr. Bieler, labouring under the disadvantage of writing before the appearance of Miss Kathleen Hughes' magisterial The Church in Early Irish Society (reviewed in this Journal, pp. 91-92), has told us too much about Patrick and not enough about the coming of Christianity, nor about the episcopal church which Patrick organised. Certainly the evidence of the coins seems to favour the view that Christian missionaries were labouring in Munster and Leinster long before Patrick tackled the 'Black North,' but in fairness it must be said that we have not the next volume in the series. It could well be that the pre-monastic episcopal church will be dealt with adequately and more appositely in the opening chapters of Father Ryan's contribution to the series, and in this case much can be said for Dr. Bieler's volume ending with a panegyric of our national apostle. It only remains to observe that the new series is well-printed on good quality paper, and the reviewer will be surprised if the economically priced fascicules do not find their way, as they successively appear, to the shelves of a majority of this Society's members. On the evidence of this hors d'oeuvre, they would seem certainly to fill a real need.

MICHAEL DOLLEY

An tAthair Tomás Ó Fiaich, IRISH CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN EUROPE, VIIIth TO XlIIth CENTURY (KEY TO MAP), Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, Dublin 1967. Price 5/-, with map 7/6.

Many readers will already be familiar with the attractive map (by Thurlough Connolly) of the same name, issued some years ago by the Cultural Relations Committee. This little handbook, an equally attractive publication, expands the information, and provides a useful guide to the European activities of a number of Irish saints and scholars, some hardly known outside their present patronal areas.

The weakest part is, unfortunately, the section dealing with the immediate Irish missions and colonies on the British mainland. Under 'Scotland,' it should be noted that few scholars would accept that St. Ninian was trained at Rome, that he really dedicated any church to St. Martin of Tours as early as the 5th century, or that any form of organised large-scale monasticism was present in Britain as early as circa 400. Melrose (Bede's Ma Acad) is known as 'Old Melrose' as distinct from the Cistercian foundation of 'Melrose' which is several miles away.

The site given as 'Rosmorkyn' is presumably Rosemarkie in Ross, Ros Maicniadh, but the evidence for this having been a 7th-century monastery of an obscure saint, Curitan, is far from strong; it would have been better to include Applecross (Apor Crossan), the partly-visible monastic establishment of St. Maelrubba, and Lannore, the house of St. Moluag, both of which have good claims to be Irish foundations independent of Iona, and both of which exercised wide influence in the evangelisation of western Scotland and the Isles.

Malmesbury is normally spelled 'Malmesbury.' To call Glastonbury "an Irish monastery" runs well ahead of all the evidence, nor was "the district colonised from Ireland"; the post-Roman Irish colonies are much further west, on the Cornwall-Devon border and in west Cornwall. In fact, Glastonbury, like Tintagel and Llancarvan, seems to represent the initial implanting of monasticism in south-west England and south Wales a generation before it took root in Ireland; as well as being geographically a more probable sequence, imported Continental pottery found at Tintagel, on Glastonbury Tor, and in the south Welsh plain, bears out this primacy, Tintagel in particular going back a little before A.D. 500.

These points are detail, of course; the absence of any accessible account representing current views largely excuses Fr. Ó Fiaich on this score. The Continental houses are well covered.

CHARLES THOMAS
This is a most welcome addition to the already distinguished series. For the mediaevalist it is the more welcome because so many of the lectures are concerned with modern history, and there are corners of this island where the impression lingers that Irish history only begins when the surviving administrative records are written predominantly in English, and when there are no longer Irish chronicles to reproach the student of Ireland who boasts that he cannot be troubled to acquire even the rudiments of the Irish language. One of the great myths of Irish historiography, too, is the belief that the sources of mediaeval Irish history are painfully exiguous, and not the least part of the value of Father Ryan's survey of T.'s career is his easy mastery of a quite extraordinary range of contemporary or near-contemporary witness. For the run of readers, annals are off-putting, and anybody who has tried to work in the period in question will surely recognise at once that the lucidity of Father Ryan's narrative owes everything to his familiarity with the period and with his sources. There are some things, indeed, that can only be acquired by a lifetime of study, and it is for this reason that one is left feeling that this particular lecture will be read with profit and with pleasure long after a school of historians will have grown up to subject the evidence to the sort of detailed scrutiny that it deserves.

Father Ryan, of course, needs no introduction to members of our Society and it is perhaps superfluous to remark that this latest lecture of his can be recommended for its readability as well as as well as for its scholarship. The reviewer's regret, shared doubtless by others, is that he was not privileged to be present at its delivery. One would so have liked to observe the speaker's glance and to note the exact timing when he remarked of T. that the mention of 300 and more of his descendants in AFM shows that Toirdelbach, as an ancestor, had not struggled in vain, and that "on the lower levels of enterprise and courage his talent was considerable. He had seventeen sons."

If the lower could be a celibate other than a Jesuit suggest Manichaean and Jansenist undertones, dry aside such as these illumine speaker and subject, and to be rehashed is Father Ryan's comment on the rape of Devorgilla: "The 'elopement' of this bright young thing of 44 would be a fit subject for a modern film."

Since it seems likely that the next few years will see increasing attention given to the first decades of English rule in Ireland, the reviewer would end with a plea that Father Ryan will give us more of these studies of the Irish personalities between Brian Boru and Dermot MacMurrough. The detailed Quellenkritik very largely remains to be undertaken, but a lifetime with the chronicles means that Father Ryan is qualified as few others to take a bird's-eye view of the whole sweep of the period. The shadow of Clontarf falls starkly and heavily across the pages of our history, but a lecture such as this does remind one that Irish history did not come to a full stop in 1014 and begin again in 1167. One may wonder, too, whether it is not to the advantage of a historian to be less emotionally involved now that a largely mythical albeit splendid heroic age has died with another Turlough, Brian Boru's grandson, at the Tolka weir. T., after all, was one of the prime movers of the eclipse of the O'Briens, but the treatment he and his fellow conspirators receives from a very loyal son of Thomond is scrupulously fair. Figuring prominently in these pages are the Cross of Cong, the monastery of Clonmacnoise, and the proto-castle at Athlone. It is a wry thought that all three have figured in recent controversies, and the antiquarian may even wonder whether a monument aeques perpetuum to T. may not prove to be the present metropolitan status of Tuam. For the foreseeable future this should be safe from native spoliation, though what Rome has given, Rome can in theory always take away, and it is an agreeable reflection that the last sentence of Father Ryan's lecture would have a new force and relevance if the last word had been replaced or even omitted.

Michael Dolley


It is a current historical fallacy that after the defeat of the Armada a great many Spaniards got ashore on hospitable Irish coasts, settled down there and founded dark-eyed swarthy families whose descendants are still to be found around such places as Galway. This just is not true. It might conceivably be true that the Aran Islanders are descendants of marooned Cromwellian
soldiers, but it is demonstrably false that Connachtmen are descendants of shipwrecked Spaniards. Tudor Ireland was a hell on earth. "It is," wrote one of the few Armada survivors, a place "where there is neither justice nor right, and where everyone does as he pleases." The handful of battered and half-starved wretches who survived on the run in Ireland during the winter of 1588 certainly had no time to settle down. This book tells their ghastly story with skill and strength.

After the broken Spanish fleet had staggered northward, the northern conquest of Scotland, it had to make an agonising choice: to sail far into the West and then double south for Spain—and probably die of thirst and pestilence in the effort—or to risk the Irish coast, friendly Ireland, land of food, water and allies—or so it was thought. The minority which decided for the latter course soon found it tragically different. Misreading maps hurled them on to promontories which, according to the maps, just ought not to have been there. Anchors were inadequate and dragged hopelessly in savage September gales. Waterlogged hulks failed to answer their rudders or to sail into the wind. Tudor troops and their Irish adherents followed a settled policy of extermination: in Mayo one savage called McCab, massacred eighty of the Spaniards, mere "rags of men," with his axe. Only here and there were there chieftains strong enough to be able to befriend the fugitives. In Derry, for instance, Bishop Raymond O’Callagher was saviour to a few who got so far.

The galleons which reached Munster fared less desparately than those farther north. Several refitted off Scattery Island—to the consternation of the Mayor of Limerick. And by a brilliant piece of seamanship, Joseph sailed his ships on a western tempest through a crack between the Blaskets, seized food and water from under the nose of Crown-Agent Trant of Dingle, and got clean away to Spain.

T. P. Killeen has written a splendid book on this tragic epic. Just as his book appeared I had completed an edition of Captain Cuellar’s Armada narrative. The reading involved in producing this edition made me realise just what a fine piece of research this book by Mr. Killeen is. Clearly he has lived with the Armada and his knowledge of it is encyclopaedic. This is a study of a very high scholarly standard and is told with the panache of a good historical novel. Very humbly, I congratulate the author and publishers on what must be the decade’s finest value in an Irish historical work.

ROBERT LIMERICK


The April-September number of the current volume of the Irish Georgian Society’s Bulletin should be of particular interest to members of the Thomond Archaeological Society, for it is devoted to an important paper on a Thomond man. In his "Francis Bindon (c. 1690-1765): his life and works," the Knight of Glin lists (with summary description, photographs, and several plans, etc.) all the buildings certainly, or possibly, by this son of David Bindon of Clooney, Co. Clare.

Bindon’s earliest work seems to have been Furness, Co. Kildare (c. 1731). From about 1742-43 to 1751 he was associated with Richard Cassels at Russborough, Co. Wicklow, and Belan, Co. Kildare. His first major independent house was Bessborough, Co. Kilkenny (much altered today); it was followed by Woodstock and Castle Morres in the same county, both now destroyed. His masterwork, if indeed he be his, is the great courtyard at Curraghmore, Co. Waterford.

Coming nearer home, Bindon built (c. 1745) Sopwell Hall, Co. Tipperary, and Altavilla, Co. Limerick. Certain features link Altavilla with St. John’s Square, Limerick, built from 1731 onwards, and now so sadly derelict. The house of George Evans Bruce in Patrick St., and Castle Park, near the city, may also have been by Bindon. Carnelly, Co. Clare (c. 1750), so long the residence of the late Dermot Gleeson, D.J., was built for Bindon’s brother-in-law, G. Stamer; it looks to be a Bindon piece. So too does charming Newhall, Killone.

To Bindon the Knight of Glin would also attribute Moyne and Roundwood, Co. Laois, together with the recently demolished market house at Mountrath; likewise Raftery, Co. Galway, and Coopershill, Co. Sligo (c. 1755-74).

M.V.D.
The only publishing firm which seems to be making a major effort to commemorate the Fenians in this centenary year is Anvil Books Ltd., as will be clear from the above four titles. One of the major coups of the Fenian Brotherhood in the U.S.A. was the organisation of the rescue of some important deportees from Australia. The Catalpa was bought, rigged out and crewed for this purpose, and while the aftermath of bickering among the over-wrought ex-prisoners is something of an anti-climax to this epic event, an epic it remains nonetheless, and in the Ballyferment writer, Ó Lúing, it has a first-class chronicler. His book, *Fremantle Mission*, was the first in Anvil Books' Fenian series.

The next was Rossa's prison memoirs as edited by the Clareman, Seán Ua Cearnaigh, whose task it was to reduce to about 100,000 words Rossa's long book, *My Years in English Jails*, which had never before been published on this side of the Atlantic. The exclusion of personal correspondence, of long aside on the politics of the day—especially those in the U.S.A.—and of verbatim reports, has cut the acretions from the nugget of one of the most important prison documents in Irish history. The full flavour of Rossa's personality, the details of the brutal treatment afforded him by the English, and his own long struggle against their system and for the retention of his own sanity, are all here—and are essential reading for any understanding of the period.

*High Upon The Gallows Tree* is the full story of the Manchester Martyrs episode in the history of Fenianism in England. The Martyrs, Allen from Tipperary or Bandon, Larkin from Lusmagh, Co. Offaly, and O'Brien from Ballymacoda, Co. Cork, were the innocent sacrifices made by the authorities to assuage the anti-Irish pogroms provoked by the death of police Sergeant Brett during the successful rescue of Col. Tom Kelly—then Chief Executive of the I.R.B.—and Capt. Timothy Deasy. Glynn's book is enhanced by twelve pages of useful illustration.

The span of John O'Leary's political life is that of the formative period in modern Ireland. If only for that Marcus Bourke's biography of *John O'Leary* (the only hard-covered book from Anvil in this lot) would be of interest, but when it is realised that O'Leary was central in most of the more important episodes, it is clear that the book is of major importance. O'Leary was an 1848 rebel, an 1849 secret revolutionary, a founder-member of the I.R.B., editor of the *Irish People*, an exile after imprisonment in common with so many Fenian leaders, an opponent of the New Departure and the Land League, a key figure in the literary revival, President of the I.R.B. as late as 1900, and President later of Cumann na nGaedheal which after his death in 1907 was to become Sinn Féin. Mr. Bourke, a member of this Society, has thoroughly documented his attractive study of the Tipperary separatist.


Oliver Snoddy


Mr. Jennett is a writer of considerable talent and in *Munster* he has employed it to the full and produced an excellent survey of the province. Written in a lucid, almost colloquial style, the book is easy to read and escapes the tedium which is often the lot of the more conventional guide book.
The reader is treated to a detailed description of a trip through each county in turn, written with a mixture of humour and pathos, expert knowledge and amusing conjecture. Perhaps it is true to say that the author is at his best when he is writing in a personal vein, for instance in his description of the Blasket Islands off the Kerry coast, one of the more memorable passages in the book. Here he includes a poem of his own, which captures the sadness of the abandoned isles, once full of life and laughter, now the habitat only of the wild creatures of the sea and air, there is everywhere in Mr. Jennett’s writing a longing for a beauty wild and unsullied, a spot not visited by many, unexploited, where a person might linger and feel at one with nature. At times, when he happens upon such a place, his descriptions verge on the idyllic.

The book includes descriptions of the better known monuments of archaeological interest in the province, while Early Christian remains also receive excellent treatment. However, one is left with the impression that the author’s interest lies mainly in the Medieval Period. Munster is dotted with the remains of medieval monasteries and castles, “where myth and legend go hand-in-hand with history.” Many of these are dealt with in considerable detail, both the historical background and architectural features being fully explored.

Another feature of the book is the constant commentary on Irish attitudes, ideals and customs. Though he dismisses the stage Irishman early on and though he is careful to present a balanced view of the Irish character, Mr. Jennett occasionally becomes over-sentimental, especially with reference to some of the religious customs of this country. On the other hand, while it is evident that the author is a sympathetic observer of Irish idiosyncrasies, he does not hesitate to criticise where he sees fit. He makes scathing reference on more than one occasion to the “fatuous and insensible Irish rating system” thanks to which there are in Ireland so many mouldering ruins and so few stately homes.

The book is attractively illustrated with thirty-two excellent photographs and is provided with a site-map. There are also a number of Appendices which, though useful, are not very comprehensive and add little to the value of the publication. The index, however, is excellent.

While the above volume is a first-class introduction to the counties of the southern province, The Travellers Guide, Ireland: Munster, edited by Mr. Jennett, is probably the best handy reference book for an actual tour of the area. It is published in paperback and its long format allows it to be easily slipped into a coat pocket. The Guide is comprehensive, including notes on all the places which are worth visiting and on many which are not. Street maps of Cork and Limerick are provided. The introductory notes deal with aspects of Irish life and material culture likely to be of interest to visitors, and inside the back cover is a cross-reference index of over 400 items mentioned but not listed alphabetically in the Guide. If one can bear with the sometimes garish and often bad colour photographs scattered through the pages, this Guide will prove an extremely useful acquisition.

Anne Maguire


This publication is a most praiseworthy effort on the part of two Ennis students, one from the Christian Brothers’ Schools and the other from St. Flannan’s College, who have recorded in it most of the events of historical importance relating to this well-known district. Events dating from the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the area, through the succeeding centuries to the ‘Penal Days’ and later to the impact made on the local people by Parnell and O’Connell who were involved in dramatic incidents at Newmarket-on-Fergus and Rossmanagher, will be found between its covers. The Young Ireland leader, William Smith O’Brien, who was born at Ennisland Castle, and the circumstances leading up to his famous duel with Thomas Steele, are adequately covered, while a pen-picture deals with the colourful figure of Seán Bui or ‘Fireball McNamara,’ who was a notorious duellist and who appears to have survived no less than fifty-seven of these engagements. Here, also, we can read of the first attempts at a co-operative farming movement in Ireland, namely that in 1832 by John Scott Vandeleur at Rahaline.

Well illustrated by photographs supplied by the National Library, this 30 page booklet should help to stimulate interest in the area and maybe even to encourage the authors’ fellow-students to write up their own districts, thus providing in time a complete coverage of the county.

Gerald O’Connell
KILMALLOCK (A TOWN WITH A STORY), Kilmallock Community Development Association, Kilmallock 1967. Price 3/-.

This little booklet of forty-four pages has been published to commemorate the opening in Kilmallock of a new primary school for boys earlier this year. In the foreword, Dr. J. Cowper, parish priest in the town, traces the growth of educational facilities in the area over the last couple of centuries. He mentions particularly three historic personages whose memory has been perpetuated by a plaque on the site: Dr. Patrick O’Hely, Bishop of Mayo, and Fr. Conn O’Kourke, O.F.M., who were both hanged on a mound at the rear of the present Parochial Church in the autumn of 1579, and the gallant James FitzMaurice FitzGerald whose decapitated body was quartered and spiked in Kilmallock at about the same time. All three had left Spain earlier that year and had landed at Smerwick Harbour, near Dingle, with a party of Spanish and Italian soldiers who established themselves for a while in the fortress of Dunanore. Fr. Bartholomew Egan, O.F.M., gives the full story of the two priests in an essay entitled “Kilmallock’s Martyred Franciscans.”

Fr. Luke Tahaney, O.P., recounts the history and describes the main physical features of the Dominican Priory of St. Saviour which was founded in 1291 and which is known locally as the Abbey of Kilmallock.

Mannix Joyce, the well-known Limerick historian, has contributed two articles to this publication. The first, written in Irish under the Irish form of his name, Mainchin Seoighe, recounts briefly the life of the famous 18th century poet Andreas Mac Craith, perhaps better known as “An Mangaire Súgach,” who had close connections with the town and is buried there. His second article is called “Kilmallock Through the Centuries,” and in it the author describes the fate which befell the town and its famous buildings, and the historical events and personalities which form the subject matter of its story.

Two short notes by the Revd. H. C. Guernsey, describing the Church of Ireland Church of St. Peter and Paul and the Church of Ireland National School, conclude the text.

Some interesting photographs showing the old Parish Church and Round Tower, the Dominican Priory, old Sarsfield Street, and Blossom Gate, give a sense of historical continuity and background to the booklet, while the illustration of the Corporation Seal of Kilmallock, dated 1553 and showing the ancient castle, looks well on the cover and title page. The colour of the cover, however, is rather unattractive, but this should not be allowed to deter the prospective reader from acquiring this most excellent booklet.

GERARD A. LEE


This booklet deals with the “very few...sensational witchcraft cases recorded in Ireland”; the material presented gives a summary account of these, and includes material from Irish mythology and folklore which appears to be quite irrelevant. The evidence suggests that, in Ireland, witch hunting appears to have been peculiar to the Anglo-Normans of Kilkenny, and to some of the Protestant settlers of the sixteenth and later centuries. This is not a scholarly book, and is dear at the price.

L. D.


These two paperbacks by Seán Ó Súilleabháin are, presumably, primarily intended for the general reader but are of value also to those with a deeper than average interest in folklife, since they are not only extremely interesting but are also very readable and scholarly. The author, by virtue of his position as Archivist to the Irish Folklore Commission and because of his knowledge and understanding of the subject, is a recognized authority on Irish folk custom and belief. Both books are well produced.
Irish Folk Custom and Belief, which has the twin title of Nósanna agus Píseoga na nGael, is the latest number in the series of booklets on Irish life and culture published by the Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland. It consists of a collection of eleven essays with a foreword, in which it is explained that folk custom and belief were, in their origins, highly practical measures, deeply concerned with human life and welfare. In the essays, the reader learns of the impact of folk custom and belief on the mundane duties associated with subjects such as house-building and life in the home, with farming, fishing and trades, and with sickness. Examples are given of folk custom and belief associated with festivals and with the supernatural. The booklet has eight full-page photographs and a brief bibliography.

In Irish Wake Amusements the author deals in depth with one aspect of Irish folk custom and belief. The original version of this book, Caitheamh Aimsire ar Thórraimh, was published by An Clóchomhar Tta. in 1961. In the first chapter present day wakes and those of long ago are compared with regard to the consumption of food, drink, tobacco and snuff. In the succeeding chapters the various forms of entertainment, such as story-telling, singing, music, dancing, card-playing, along with the different contests and games formerly associated with wakes, are described. One chapter is devoted to keening. The reader learns that merrymaking at wakes was not confined to Ireland but followed a general pattern practised in Europe and other parts of the world. The Church through various synodal statutes, diocesan decrees, and condemnations issued by individual bishops and priests, endeavoured to curb the abuses at wakes but the people were very slow to abandon the traditional customs. In the final chapter the author offers the theory that the origin, not only of the wake itself but also of the various features formerly associated with it, which by present day standards would be considered shameful, stemmed not from disrespect for the dead but from fear of the dead. Each chapter is supplied with references and the book is provided with a bibliography and an index.

JOHN C. O'SULLIVAN


Mr. Danaher, a member of this Society, has added yet another volume to his works on Irish rural life. It is a life which has changed immeasurably in our own times. The greatest changes have taken place since World War II, with the extension of rural electrification and the development of the amenities which that made possible. There were other changes taking place over a longer period, the opening up of isolated communities by improved communications systems. These broke down local barriers and ended purely local customs. Mr. Danaher's book shows life as it was before it was radically altered by modern machinery or by up-to-date marketing methods. He describes the fair-day not the cattle mart, he tells of the blacksmith not of the motor mechanic, he deals with stone masons not with the men who lay concrete blocks. Irish Country People is a book which records an age which is gone, and rouses a certain nostalgia among those of us who have slept in settle-beds or watched the blacksmith shoe a wheel.

TÓMÁS P. Ó NEILL

Liam de Noirdh, CEOL ON MUMHAIN, An Clóchomhar Tta., Baile Atha Cliath 1965. Luach 10/.

Seo cnuasach fonn—42 diobh—a bhailigh an t-údar i gCuíge Mumhan do Cholmisiún Béaloideasa Eireann idir na bliana 1940 agus 1946. I gCo. Chorcaí agus i gCo. Chiarral a bailigh beadh an chuid is mó acu agus an chuid eile i gCo. Phuirtlárige. Luadhtar ainm an duine ón a fuairathas gach fonn diobh agus an dta ón scríobhthacht. Soláthraightear na focla i dteann leis an gceol i bhfhradh nó a bfhonn. I mbrollacht an leabhair tugann an t-údar roinnt collais ar an gceol Gaeltachtaí agus ar na nosanna a chleachtal i seans-choláistir chumhachtile leo siad atá dál ar son fiosrachta a bhaineann leis an gceol. Tá an páipéar agus an chlárach a fhaisnéis a chéile leis an roinnt chumhachtile a bhí ann leis an gceol. Is trauigh freisin nár leagadh amach an t-ábhhar i dteach gur féidir na leath-leanachanach bána atá scalpithe tríd an leabhar a sheachaint.

C. M. L.

As the editor remarks in his Introduction, this is a personal collection of Swift's best-loved pieces, intended as an introduction for the general reader. In this book we find almost every facet of Swift's character: we see him as the greatest satirist of all time writing in the English language, as a politician, as a storyteller, as a friend, as a diarist and as a letter-writer; we see him, furthermore, as an Irishman and as an old man—we find the human Swift.

Swift is one of the most personal of writers. There is autobiography in almost every line he wrote, not too often the facts of his life but frequently the pulse and colour of his temper. In all his writings we see his wit, his loves and his hates. He was guided by his feelings and his loves were gentle and sweet but his hates were bitter and destructive.

Swift's loves are depicted in his *Journal to Stella*, in the numerous Stolla poems, and even in *Cadmus and Vanessa*. His hates come through in the biting satire of *The Drapier Letters*, in *A Modest Proposal* in which he propounds a scheme for eating the children of the Irish poor, and especially in *Gulliver's Travels*, a story and a commentary on human life. In his verses on death we find the astute Swift who knew well what people thought of him.

In this little paperback the President of this Society has accomplished a difficult feat excellently. He has culled from the prose and verse of Dean Swift a selection which brings Jonathan Swift to us as he really was and as he will remain in the hearts of all who read and appreciate his writings.

Olwyn Ryder


The need for a book on antiques in Ireland has been badly felt of late. For some time now, more and more people have become interested in and are buying antiques, a move in the right direction as every piece bought and kept at home is one less for export—would that the trend had begun earlier as far too much has left the country already. Silver, glass, porcelain, books, furniture, coins, prints and maps, are all part of our heritage, and there is an obligation on all of us to preserve that heritage intact.

People interested in antiques of all sorts will find much valuable information in this publication which is edited by a member of our Society and to which our President has contributed an essay on early silver. The survey of material discussed in the book ranges over almost the whole field of antiques. All the various essays are engaging, because the author in each case is master of his subject. There are some minor blemishes, however, and it is a pity that doubt is cast on the Irish origin of some masterpieces, as for instance, the well-known processional cross from Ballymacasey, near Lislahoughten Abbey, Co. Kerry, which is often referred to (as it is in the book under review) as the Ballylongford Cross. Must every object be stamped with the maker's name and address before it is accepted as *Deanta in Eirinn*?

The advice given in the chapter on book-collecting, to make a beginning with books of local interest, is sound, though even books of local interest can rarely be picked up at modest prices nowadays. In this field Limerick buyers are well catered for as a Bibliography of Limerick history and antiquities was published recently. Books also have been bought for transportation abroad and though, unlike silver, glass and clocks, the output over the years was fairly constant, there is now very little worthwhile stock still easily available.

The smallness of the book under review has led to a great deal of over-generalisation. Each subject could do with a book of similar size, at least, instead of being condensed into a brief chapter. How could any author do justice to Irish silverwork in seven pages? A meagre eleven lines are given over to Waterford glass. In the chapter on prints and maps there is no mention of a map! Yet the list of antique dealers in Ireland, and it is not a very comprehensive list, runs to some nineteen pages. And what, one asks, tempted one dealer to describe her wares as "elegant junk"?

However, this little publication is a good and worthwhile effort and we look forward to companion volumes to this *Guide* for many more years to come.

T. Pierce