
This handbook of the National Monuments in the charge of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, comes in a convenient size, well-bound, and with clear printing on good quality paper.

The monuments are arranged in the order of the schedule in the Office of Public Works and can easily be located in the book by reference to the index. Unfortunately, however, many places containing two or more monuments appear under several often widely spaced numbers. Appendices deal with the various monuments of the Aran Islands, the Dingle Peninsula, Lough Gur, and Lougherew—such grouping of the monuments of one area has much to commend it and might usefully have been extended to other areas. A special section deals very briefly with the twenty-five monuments in Northern Ireland which were in State care before 1920.

The chief value of this little booklet is, however, the section at the beginning giving a brief outline of the various types of monuments, the bibliography for general reading and the glossary of terms used. Also included is a folding map of the country on which the monuments listed are marked by numbers and classified by symbols, and six detailed maps of specified areas.

There are many rather obvious errors in the text. To single out but one example: no. 216, Tully (but indexed under Lauganstown), Co. Dublin, where it is stated are two ringed crosses when, in fact, only one of them is ringed. Many complex sites such as Glendalough and Cashel are dealt with unnecessarily briefly.

The handbook is profusely illustrated, containing 78 illustrations in black-and-white and 23 in half-tone, the same picture being reproduced in both media in three instances. The black-and-white illustrations are produced by a process which suppresses the half-tones and exaggerates the cast shadows. While this can be effective in the case of carved stones and crosses, it has in many instances, such as Staigue Fort, Athassel Abbey and the first of the two illustrations of Holycross Abbey, resulted in a messy picture. No. 440, the early 17th century wayside cross at Duleek is correctly so described in the text but is illustrated by the 9th century high cross in the adjoining cemetery which (see no. 199) is not in State care.

Although some rather extraordinary entries are included, such as those which merely inform the reader that the monument (type never specified) is "No longer maintained by the State" or "Vesting inoperative" (e.g. nos. 7, 9, 20, 37, etc.), this handbook is useful in providing the interested taxpayer with an annotated list of the monuments towards the upkeep of which he is contributing. Its use to the tourist or scholar, however, will probably not be commensurate with his hopes.

PÁDRAIG Ó HÉAILIDHE.


Martel's general account of Irish caves was written at the end of the last century, and for a long time now there has been absolutely nothing available on this topic.
The author—an inveterate cave hunter and the leading Irish student of these matters—has filled the gap with an informative, attractively produced, and nicely illustrated booklet. A work of this sort must either be a specialist production, packed with essential data and with a minimum of decoration, or it must be a comfortably-written and not too crowded volume which treats simply the background of the study and which will stimulate and instruct the general reader.

The author has evidently chosen the first course: this is a book written by an enthusiast for cave enthusiasts, and as such will be invaluable. All available data, much of it new, is carefully set out, and the more important caves, including many in North Munster, are documented in extended form. All this does not make for easy reading, however, and the ordinary person would probably like a little less detail and a little more of the general picture. There is much unnecessary interjection of technical terms in the preliminary chapter which will bother the lay man, yet it is not altogether satisfying in its content for the specialist. Would a simple, illustrated, outline of Karst development and its peculiar landscape features, not be more appropriate here? Similar remarks might apply to the chapter on cave archaeology.

Commendably, the author notes that cave excavation without a license is illegal. One would like to see this high-lighted rather than concealed within a long appendix. No other type of archaeological sites is so vulnerable to spoliation or so meagre in occurrence, and incautious tampering—perhaps from sheer amateur enthusiasm—could well remove for ever the possibility of elucidating this important page in our country’s pre-history. We should remember that the most significant of all inhabited Irish caves, Kilgreany, Co. Waterford, remains an enigma as a result of the unfortunate history of its investigation.

JAMES C. BRINDLEY.


Last year Muintir na Tire published this survey of County Limerick, a publication which deserves to be much more widely known and read everywhere in Ireland and which is a must for the bookshelf of everyone interested in the past, present and future of Co. Limerick. The results of this survey first appeared in five Interim Reports published between July 1960 and January 1964, and all five have now been attractively produced in this fine book of well over 300 pages at a very moderate price which should be within the means of all.

The first part of this Survey deals with the “Physical Geography and Geology” of the County and includes specialist chapters on the geology, soils, and arterial drainage.

The second part provides the “Social History” of Co. Limerick, and is written by a member of this Society, Mr. P. J. Meghen, formerly the Limerick County Manager. Mr. Meghen has dealt with the very long period from prehistoric times almost to the present day in a clear, obviously knowledgeable, and highly readable manner. In a mere 105 pages he has successfully synthesised the story of Co. Limerick through
the centuries, in a way which it would be difficult to parallel anywhere. This account is the real history of the people, and is an excellent example of the type of history one would like to see taught in all our schools. There are 43 chapters in this part, a great many of which, taken individually, are papers of considerable merit and which, if they had not been incorporated in a book such as this, would have been more than welcome in this or any antiquarian journal. A bibliography would, however, have improved this section.

The third part, called "Demography" and by Mr. Patrick McNabb, contains a wealth of interesting statistics about the general population of the County and its affairs. This is followed by "Social Structure", also by Mr. McNabb, which is to some extent a review of the present situation of the people of Co. Limerick and helps bring the statistics of Part III to life. Some of the most interesting—and amusing—material in this book is presented here in a most readable form. Indeed, it will be an eye-opener to many of its readers and there will be some who will disagree with a lot of it as it hits very close to the bone on numerous occasions—and not always the funny bone either! Some readers will, like Queen Victoria, simply be not amused, but it is perhaps these very readers who might benefit most from it.

The last part of this book is by Rev. Professor J. Newman, of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. It is titled "Social Provision and Rural Centrality" and is an attempt to find a solution to many of the problems confronting the rural population of Co. Limerick. The principal suggestion is that the larger towns in the County be developed so as to act as nuclear centres serving in every possible way the needs of the satellite villages around them. This, it is argued, would help remove the urge to emigrate to the more industrialised cities of Limerick, Dublin, London, and even farther afield.

One could without difficulty find several small points on which to adversely criticise this fine book, but apart from some minor misprints (including the omission of at least one line from the bottom of page 76 and of another on page 78) and the apparently thoughtless placing of a general map of the County between pages 48 and 49, the only valid comment would be that the book should have been provided with an index.

Every member of our Society can, without reservation, be recommended to acquire this book for themselves.

Etienne Rynne


This slim booklet of twenty-four pages gives a detailed and unbiassed account of the agreement signed in 1691 and known as the Treaty of Limerick, and the events leading up to it. It gives the international perspective, as well as the native. William of Orange, primarily concerned with the defence of Holland against the French, accepts the offer of the throne of England to gain another ally. The French are interested in Ireland only for their own ends as a long drawn out struggle there helps keep William's army tied down.

For the English and Irish, however, it is a continuation of the old struggle, only
this time the Irish are really fighting with their backs to the wall, in an effort to save their religion and to hold on to the little that is left to them of their lands. There were also other issues involved in the drawing up of the Treaty and so there was some very hard bargaining.

Finally, two sets of articles were decided on, one military, the other civil. The former set, drawn up by the soldiers Sarsfield and Ginkel, left no room for doubt and were adhered to. The civil articles, drawn up by the lawyers and bishops, were so involved that controversy has raged about them ever since. They brought about the Penal Laws and were in many ways responsible for the Famine.

This little booklet is a source of information that any student of the Williamite period in Irish history should have.

T. Pierce


Down through the centuries fishing has provided a sport for some and a means of livelihood for others. Unharmonious relations often developed between the owners or lessees on one hand and those who fished for a living on the other. However, in the twentieth century both owners and fishermen began to face a far more serious threat to their fisheries, as in the interests of national development large scale projects were undertaken which damaged or ruined the fisheries temporarily or permanently.

The author tells the history of the Abbey snap-net fishermen of Limerick, who found themselves deprived of a livelihood with the installation of the hydro-electric scheme at Ardnacrusha in the late 1920s. He traces a brief historical sketch of the Shannon fisheries of the Limerick area, drawing attention to the periodic disputes between the fishing community earning a livelihood, and the weir owners and lessees. From 1929, however, when the Shannon electric power scheme was put into operation, it became evident that the salmon were denied access to the upper reaches of the river where they could spawn, were damaged in the turbines and the fry upriver found themselves landlocked.

Unsuccessful representations to the Government in 1932 were followed by active protests in the form of public "poaching" with consequent legal action. In 1934 the Shannon Fisheries Act was drafted and the Electricity Supply Board offered £40,000 by way of compensation for the loss of property and living. At first the offer was rejected as totally inadequate but after unsuccessful negotiations and a poor fishing season it was finally accepted. The author's sympathies are with the fishermen, but the history is revealed in an unbashed manner, without rancour.

This interesting account, serious, and yet not without its humorous side, is ably recounted by Mr Lysaght. It forms a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the history of Irish fisheries, particularly in regard to the community of snap-net fishermen. However, the snap-net fishermen of the Nore, and Munster Blackwater, who still fish in comparatively large numbers and had similar struggles with the fishery owners in the past, would have been worthy of mention.
Photographs of the boats fishing and diagrams of the net and implements are included with explanations of their use, and one must compliment the author for his detail in setting down this information. However, it might have been worth adding that when the fish was felt to strike the net, the footrope was hauled on smartly, thus holding the captive in the fold of the net, while the boats drew up close. This was the origin of the term snap-net.

A detailed map of the fishery area is given, and the Irish and English equivalents of local placenames add a valuable contribution to the general history of the area. Mr. Lysaght is to be congratulated on publishing this short history of a period now almost forgotten.

C. O‘RIORDAN

Roisin de Nais, A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LIMERICK HISTORY AND ANTIOQUITIES. Limerick County Library, 1962. Price 6/-. 

This bibliography of Limerick was prepared by its author as part of her work for the Fellowship of the Library Association of Ireland. John McTernan produced a somewhat similar bibliography for Co. Sligo, but there is, in general, a striking lack of local bibliographies of worth. It is a gap which might well be filled by each county library.

Miss de Nais has spread her net very wide and has produced an excellent list of almost 600 books, maps, newspapers, magazines, and periodical articles dealing with Limerick’s history and antiquities. If, however, I may be allowed to add a few items: in vols. I and II of this Journal’s predecessor, those of the North Munster Archaeological Society for 1909-11 and 1911-13, Rev. J. F. Lynch has three papers on place-names in N.E. Limerick, while in vol. III (1942-43) of the present series is Fr. Ryan’s valuable account of the Dalcassians; in vol. XII (1922) of the Catholic Bulletin there is a twelve-page article on George Clancy, Mayor of Limerick; Francis Finegan, S. J., has written on Maurice Linehan in Studies, vols. XXXV-XXXVII (1946-48); a bibliography of Limerick printing is to be found in James Coleman’s contributions to vols. I and II (1897-1904) of the Journal of the Limerick Field Club and in E. R. McC. Dix’s contributions to vols. XVIII-XXI (1930-33) of the Irish Book Lover. Another important paper missing from this list is the first substantial account of the Ardagh Chalice, published in the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. 24 (1874), by Lord Dunraven.

A complete index of this Journal may fill some other gaps but, all in all, Miss de Nais and the Limerick County Library are to be thanked for producing a most useful source-book on Limerick.

MICHAEL HEWSON


This is the second of a number of publications which set out to describe and discuss the different issues of coinage which circulated in Great Britain and Ireland from the
ninth to the twelfth centuries. In it the series of Anglo-Danish, Anglo-Norse, and Hiberno-Norse issues of the ninth and tenth centuries are distinguished and illustrated by representative as well as by rare pieces now in the English National Collection.

A brief historical introduction draws attention to the fact that coin hoards reflect the tenor of the Danish and Norwegian raids on England and Ireland. The hoards have provided the majority of the Viking coins now known and their analysis has provided a relative, if not an unequivocably absolute, chronology for the series.

Of the three groups, the Anglo-Danish emerged first, in the late ninth century, when under Danish influence coins were struck in several areas of eastern England. The importance of York at that time was continued when it was the centre for the later Danish issues and, together with Lincoln and afterwards Derby, struck the Anglo-Norse coinages which followed in the succeeding century. The Hiberno-Norse coinage of Ireland was longer-lived than either of the English series and was of a different character altogether. The critical examination which Mr. Dolley has given to the development of each group will be of real help to students for whom there has been too little literature available on the topic, notwithstanding the publications mentioned in the bibliography.

E. J. E. Pirie


Dr. O'Sullivan's presentation in this publication follows much the same pattern as that of his earlier publication, The Earliest Irish Coinage. In it he distinguishes the different issues of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries after coining had been re-introduced into Ireland by the Anglo-Normans. The work is, to a large extent, based on the material in the hoard found in 1942 at Drummoher, near Corofin, Co. Clare.

The coins of John de Courcy and of John, first as Lord of Ireland and then as King, are described and discussed. The die varieties and their use are examined minutely, but the author does not commit himself to a definition of the periods for striking each type. The major part of the publication is a detailed catalogue of individual pieces. Numbering of the obverse and reverse dies separately has considerable advantages for Dr. O'Sullivan's purpose, but without the coins also having catalogue numbers, reference to the entries and to the plates is not easy. It is unfortunate that space did not permit of the illustrations being reproduced more clearly and at a larger scale.

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