

NEWSLETTER

Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement.

No. 2

Spring 1994

EDITORIAL

Founded in 1969, at the instigation of Professor Robin Glasscock, then at the Queen's University, Belfast, and now, for sometime, at the University of Cambridge, the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement this year is twenty-five years old. This is, in itself, a notable achievement, and is a monument to the many people, from different academic disciplines and from none, whose common bond has been a shared interest in the history of Irish historic settlement. In addition to Robin Glasscock, many others have made significant contributions along the way to attaining this milestone. In particular Liam de Paor, the Group's first president, Paddy Healy, the late Billy English, the late Basil Wilson, Margaret Mac Curtain, Brian Graham, Terry Barry, Annagret Simms, now president, Ronnie Buchanan, Harman Murtagh, Niamh Crowley and Kevin Whelan have all made important contributions to the Group over the quarter-century. Many others have also helped along the way and their contributions are also acknowledged.

In addition to annual conferences, which have focused on the history of settlement in different parts of the island, the Group has, since 1985, published a series of monographs, **Irish Settlement Studies**, and the fourth of these is due to be launched at its 1994 Annual Conference in Youghal. A major review of twenty-five years of Irish settlement studies is being edited by Dr. T. B. Barry of the Department of Medieval History at the University of Dublin, and is due to be published by Routledge in 1995. The Group faces into its second quarter-century in a vigorous state of health with an energetic and highly motivated committee and a strong commitment to build on the achievements of its first twenty-five years.

EDITOR

LANDSCAPE STUDY AND ARCHAEOBOTANY - THE EVIDENCE FROM VIKING DUBLIN.

Archaeobotany, the study of plant remains from archaeological sites, is a part of environmental archaeology. This may be defined as the investigation of the past human environment using a range of biological and pedological techniques. In a debate on the 'conceptual framework' of environmental archaeology, Professor Martin Jones of Cambridge wrote

There are some human groups who have lived independently of pottery, architecture, civilization but all have belonged to the global ecosystem, and, try as they may, have been unable to exist, change or develop independently of it. Every transition in the human past has had an ecological dimension.¹

Plants are particularly sensitive to environmental change, and the study of them, and of their archaeological remains, is a valuable source of information on past landscapes.

Plant remains are divided into two groups - microfossils, those items so small that they can only be seen by using a microscope, and macrofossils, things visible to the naked eye. The latter term can be slightly misleading as it covers everything from seeds less than half a millimetre long to large pieces of wood. Microfossils include pollen, spores and phytoliths. Pollen grains are produced by all plants, and some, particularly trees and grasses, generate very large quantities, which are spread by the wind (as hay fever sufferers know to their cost). Pollen grains have characteristic shapes and can be identified to genus or species. They are also very strong, and survive in wet deposits, for instance in lake muds or peat bogs, for thousands of years. Identification and analysis of pollen grains from sequential deposits laid down over a long period of time gives a picture of environmental change. Most of our knowledge of how the Irish landscape developed from the end of the last ice age to the present are derived from the work of palynologists including Knud Jessen, Frank Mitchell, and Michael O'Connell.

When trying to look in more detail at environmental change over a shorter period, or in a small area, the broad picture given by pollen analysis is inadequate, and it is in this situation that macrofossils come into use. Wood was an essential commodity in the past, as both building material, fuel, and raw material for artefacts. The examination of wooden artefacts, buildings and trackways yields a remarkable amount of information about the species and size of trees used, the kinds of woods they grew in, and the way in which the woodlands were (or were not) managed. Archaeological wood is a huge study area, and the questions of the extent, composition and management of woods in Ireland in the past are only starting to be tackled.

The smaller macrofossils, especially seeds, but also mosses and leaves, have been studied in more detail for longer. They may have been preserved in two main ways: carbonization (charring) or water-logging. The first is the usual way in which plant remains survive on a dry site, and is the typical condition of cereal grains found in archaeological deposits. They are often the result of an accident during crop-processing or cooking, though some spectacular finds of charred plant material abroad have been caused by larger scale fires, for example the huge quantities of partly malted barley grain found in a burnt-out 13th century brewery in the excavation of medieval Oslo. The study of charred cereals is a sub-discipline in its own right, and is especially concerned with the species and types of grain grown at various times in the past, and the ways in which they were cultivated, harvested and processed.

Water-logged or anaerobically preserved plant remains can be found anywhere where moisture is collected and retained, such as pits, wells and ditches. Some sites, including many medieval towns, have deep layers of water-logged deposits, and these are one of the best sources of plant macrofossils. Dublin is a good example of a site with a wealth of this type of archaeobotanical material.

Over a number of years I have carried out a detailed study of the plant remains from one series of fine superimposed early medieval houses in Fishamble Street, Dublin. The excavator, P. F. Wallace, has established that the houses, built of posts and wattle, and roofed with thatch, survived only ten to fifteen years before their demolition and replacement, and it seems likely that this pattern of repeated rebuilding in one spot was a cause of the excellent preservation. Within the houses a central floor was flanked by benches used for seating and bedding. The back and front yards of the houses often contained pits up to 3-metres deep, filled with a soft, greenish brown sediment quite different from the darker, structured peaty deposits inside the houses.

During the excavations samples of all the deposits from the site were collected on a regular basis. Attempt was made to keep 1-3 litres of soil from each distinct area and layer within the houses and the pits. These were then processed by washing them through a stack of sieves with mesh sizes ranging from 10 mm - 0.25mm. This had the effect of removing all the fine silt and leaving the larger material roughly graded. The contents of the sieves then had to be sorted using a low powered (x10 - x40) zoom lens microscope, and the seeds and other identifiable particles set on one side. In order to identify archaeological seeds it is necessary to have a reference collection of modern specimens for comparison. Books of photographs and drawings of seeds exist, and are a useful starting point, but are not adequate alone. Collecting reference material is not always easy, as some plants, particularly field weeds, which were common in the medieval period, have since become scarce or even extinct in Ireland, possibly because of changing agricultural practices. Once the seeds have been identified and counted the data is tabulated and can be analysed.

In Fishamble Street, scientific analysis soon confirmed what had already been suspected; that the smelly fill of the pits was faeces. The presence of the microscopic eggs of two intestinal parasites, the worm (*Ascaris*) and the whip-worm (*Trichuris*) established this to be of human origin. From an archaeobotanical viewpoint this was valuable material, as it contained the remains of plant foods that had passed through the human gut before entering the pit. It became apparent that early Dubliners had access to foods from a number of wild habitats, including frochans from the Dublin mountains ten kilometres away, and wild sloes, apples and blackberries from hedgerows. Many hazelnut shells were found on the site, and mosses in the pits (used for wiping purposes) came from woods (probably of hazel) on the base rich soils of the Liffey valley. Hazel rods were used in the walls of the Dublin houses, and it seems probable that the woods were coppiced regularly. The pits also contained massive amounts of cereal spermoderm (bran) probably of wheat. It was obvious that wholemeal bread was a major part of the diet, implying a large acreage under cereal cultivation to supply the town. The cereals were heavily infested with weeds, including corn marigold and the slightly toxic corn cockle, whose ground seeds may have caused mild illness in people who ate too many of them. Although wheat bran was so common in the town's pits, carbonized grain was very rare in the deposits - it is thought that bread-flour may have been milled outside the town and sold in its processed form. Some charred grain was found in the town - mainly barley, mixed with oats in a ratio of about 5:1 - this mixed grain, known as dredge, was a typical medieval crop, but was still grown in Northern Ireland until the 1950s.

The other crop plant strongly represented in Viking Dublin was flax, almost certainly grown for linen production. Evidence from the house floors suggests that the processing of the crop was carried out on a domestic level. Beans were also grown and eaten.

The combination of wild fruits and nuts complementing cultivated crops is typical of early medieval towns in Europe. In other cases, examination of material from later periods shows increasing dependence on farm and garden produce, and a shift away from wild resources. It would be interesting to see if, and at what date, this happened in Dublin.

The examination of the plant remains from the town has thrown light on some important aspects of everyday life in the town that would not have been revealed in any other way; it also underscored the importance of the town's hinterland, and the amount of information about the rural landscape that can be derived from the archaeobotanical study of the early medieval town.

SIOBHAN GERAGHTY
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

1. Jones, M. (1990) *Comments on Boyd: Towards a framework for environmental archaeology: Environmental archaeology as a key to past geographies*. In *Circaea* 7:2 pp 71-72.

THE DISCOVERY PROGRAMME: AN INTEGRATED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The Discovery Programme was initiated by the then Taoiseach, Charles J. Haughey, in 1991. Its purpose is to enhance our understanding of Ireland's past through a major programme of research and archaeological excavation. The Discovery Programme Panel, a committee of thirteen persons, has been charged with the general direction of the work.

As a first step, the Panel set out to identify the major subjects in Irish archaeology worthy of investigation and to formulate an integrated research strategy to address these questions. This in itself was a challenging undertaking, for modern Ireland has been formed not merely by a long historical process but by an even longer prehistory.

A recurring theme that arose from this study was the extraordinary dearth of information on many aspects of settlement in virtually every period. Important studies of many artefact types and of a range of tombs and burials of various dates have been undertaken, and while much work needs to be done in these areas, there was wide agreement that the habitation aspects of settlement should be a principal concern of the Programme at this time. As far as general strategy was concerned, it was agreed that the Programme should begin its work by focusing on a particular core period. The period chosen for the initial 3 - 5 years study is the Later Bronze Age and Iron Age (c. 1200 BC - 550 AD), an era of exceptional change and development in Irish prehistory.

Within this long time span of more than a millennium and a half, significant developments occurred in the field of metalworking, in gold, bronze and iron; long distance exchange networks were established with Britain and the Continent; and a complex, hierarchical, Celtic-speaking society emerged. Though a wealth of fine metalwork survives, our knowledge of the people who produced it is limited: for instance, we have remarkably little information about settlement sites and socio-economic matters.

Within the chosen period, the Panel agreed four major projects and these were up and running by the Summer of 1992:

NORTH MUNSTER PROJECT

Directed by Dr. Eoin Grogan, this project is focused on the Lower Shannon region, an area which has produced large quantities of prestige metalwork including many gold ornaments. The identification and excavation of settlement sites belonging to the core period is a primary aim of this project. At a broader level, efforts are being made to understand the total complexity of the prehistoric landscape through artifact research, survey, excavation and palaeoenvironmental research. To date, excavations have focused on the Knocklong area of Co. Limerick and Mooghaun hillfort, Co. Clare. A large enclosure at Clenagh, Co. Clare is scheduled for excavation in 1994.

WESTERN STONE FORT PROJECT

Claire Cotter is addressing questions posed by certain stone forts along the western seaboard which have often been ascribed to the prehistoric Iron Age. The short-term objective of this project is to compile a corpus of sites which might be considered to come within the scope of the project. This study will then lead to an examination of the distribution of these monuments in terms of settlement geography and economic subsistence and to an analysis of both current and new evidence for their chronology and function. Excavation to date has concentrated on Dun Aonghasa, Inish More, Aran Islands which now appears to have been inhabited as early as the Later Bronze Age.

TARA PROJECT

This has two elements. The first, directed by Conor Newman, consists of a comprehensive survey of the Hill of Tara and its immediate environs in order to establish a baseline for all subsequent archaeological work there. It is a survey of a ritual landscape, combining detailed archival and fieldwork, the latter making use of the latest survey techniques and computerised data management facilities.

The second element is a comprehensive analysis of the documentary sources relating to Tara from the seventh century onwards, which is being carried out by Dr. Edel Bhreathnach. This literary and historical research project, working in parallel with the archaeological project, and seeking to elicit information about Tara from a different perspective, should add considerably to our understanding of the site.

BALLYHOURA HILLS PROJECT

This project, directed by Martin Doody, is examining a range of monuments, in a region centred on the Ballyhoura Hills which lie on the Cork/Limerick border, which may have been constructed during later prehistoric times. These monuments include linear earthworks, an inland promontory fort, hill-top enclosures and lowland enclosures which are identified mainly through crop-mark evidence. Extensive use is being made of aerial photography and geophysical survey and excavations are taking place at a Bronze Age settlement site near Emly, Co. Tipperary.

Minor projects may also be undertaken from time to time, and at the moment, Dr. David Weir is completing a programme of detailed palynological analysis in Co. Louth which should throw some light on environmental conditions and agricultural practises during the core period.

Dissemination of the results of these researches is of paramount importance and already, the project results of 1992 have been published through the Royal Irish Academy

(Discovery Programme Reports 1: Project Results 1992). The wider public will not be forgotten - popular publications are planned and a poster for schools is near completion.

ANN LYNCH
DIRECTOR
THE DISCOVERY PROGRAMME

IRISH ESTATE TOWNS: ADARE, CO. LIMERICK

Adare (Irish Ath Dara, the ford of the oak trees) stands on a fording point on the River Maigue, in the lush limestone lowlands of county Limerick. Shrouded in trees and greenery, its thatched houses are set in what the novelist Gerald Griffin called 'a soft retreat of sylvan splendour'. Adare's skyline, with its rich array of medieval buildings, speaks to an ancient past, but the town as we know it is essentially a nineteenth-century one.

Adare originated as a Norman town in the thirteenth century. It had a large castle, a parish church, no less than four monastic foundations (Trinitarian, c. 1260, Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, Augustinians (1315) and Franciscans c. 1464), a stone bridge (c. 1400), a wall grant (1310) and rights to fairs and markets from 1226. This array of buildings indicates the importance in medieval times, when the river Maigue was still navigable for flat-bottomed boats (cots). However, the town languished in the aftermath of the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1539, when these properties were privatised and secularised. They gradually fell into picturesque decay, a decay accentuated by seventeenth-century upheavals in Irish politics, and by the lack of a resident landlord.

By 1800, Adare had shrunk to little clusters of thatched cabins, hovering in the shadow of the medieval ruins. It was then that the local landlord, Windham Guin, second earl of Dunraven, began to take an interest. He married a wealthy Welsh heiress, Caroline Wyndham in 1810, and this gave him sufficient income to invest in the town. Both he and his wife had strong romantic and antiquarian leanings and they decided to remodel the house, demesne and village in a romantic medieval style.

Firstly the Franciscan friary was restored for use as a Protestant church in 1807, followed in 1811 by the reconstruction for Catholic use of the Trinitarian church (originally an order founded to ransom and liberate christian captives in the Crusades). They added a hotel (the Dunraven Arms), a post office (1810), a constabulary barracks, two school houses (1815 and 1829), a charming forge with horseshoe-shaped arch (1840), and a courthouse of cut limestone (1840), (now the tourist office). These were dotted through the highpoint of these activities - by 1828, a whole new range of estate cottages had been completed, consciously built in imitation of medieval English half-timbered thatched houses. Both Dunravens were keen to make the village pleasant and pretty, and offered prizes for the most neatly kept cottages and gardens, with a special prize for the 'training of creepers and flowers'. By 1844 their agent could proudly report: 'I went over thirty cottages for premiums and found them all clean and most of them comfortable, far superior to an ordinary English or Welsh village.'

The new town was counter-pointed by the rebuilding of the big house and demesne. Adare Manor was built between 1832 and 1850, under the close personal supervision of the couple themselves. No architect was employed and the work

was entrusted to a local mason, James Connolly. The house was self-consciously tudor in style, a style best seen in the great hall, with its gargoyles, antlers, blazoned shields, suits of ancient armour, minstrel's gallery, oak panelling from Antwerp based on Froissart's Chronicles, oak roof and stained glass. By 1850, the happy couple could proudly cut the following motto over the door: This goodly house erected by Windham Henry, Earl of Dunraven, and Caroline his Countess, without borrowing, selling or leaving a debt (1850).'

Their son, Edwin Wyndham Quin, the third Earl, inherited his parents' enthusiasms. A convert to Catholicism, he built a Roman Catholic parochial house (1852), a Christian Brothers School (1853), a Sisters of Mercy convent (1854), and added a new wing to the house, by the English architect P. C. Hardwicke. The third Earl was a noted antiquarian, founder of the Irish Archaeological Society (1840) and the Celtic Society (1845), and author of the valuable Notes on Irish Architecture.

His son, Thomas, the fourth Earl, was a well known Irish unionist politician, and author of twelve books on Irish political history. As late as 1911, he added a community hall to the town, and a new set of cottages, inspired by the designs of Detmar Blow.

The redesigned village and house were set against the backdrop of the remodelled demesne. This was designed by the Edinburgh landscape gardener, James Fraser, in the 1820s and 1830s, in the naturalistic style. He used an immense variety of trees, shrubs and vistas, silhouetted by a rim of distant mountains, the silver loop of the River Maigue, and the embattled skyline of the old town, to create a superb demesne. Lady Caroline wrote that the trees were the chief beauty of Adare, describing lovingly 'that great wall of trees which shuts out the surrounding world in Winter by a deep brown curtain, in summer by a bright tapestry of varied green'. One oak tree in the garden is now 200 years old, and bears a conversation message on a stone at its base. 'I came from the woods of Killarney in 1791 in the pocket of Sir Richard Quin's shooting jacket. Dear owner of Adare, don't put me in your pocket.'

Taken together, the house (now a hotel), demesne (now a golf course) and town of Adare compose a charming ensemble. The timbered verandahs and trellis's the pastel coloured lime washes and the heavy thatched roofs draped over the eaves gives a picturesque and unique character to the town, while the medieval buildings convey an atmosphere redolent of age-old continuity which is frequently lacking in Irish towns. Adare has many other charming features - the medieval dovecot and washing pool beside the Roman Catholic church, the five ogham stones in the garden of Adare Manor, Lady Caroline's fountain, the brooding hulk of Desmond Castle, the sequence of weirs on the Maigue, occasionally the scene of spectacular salmon leaps. On the whole, Adare is a surprisingly early example of sensitive building and restoration in a historic environment. This well maintained town is a tribute to the sensitivity of the second Lord and Lady Dunraven - a sensitivity that still emanates from their pretty town after the lapse of almost two centuries.

KEVIN WHELAN
ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

NEWS FROM THE IRISH HISTORIC TOWNS ATLAS OFFICE

After the publication of *Mullingar* by the Royal Irish Academy in 1992, the town atlas spotlight moved slightly further west across Co. Westmeath, and Athlone became the main focus of attention. Dr. Harman Murtagh is the contributor for Athlone, and he has chased up every minor piece of information with his customary good humour. It has been an arduous task, for his town is the largest we have completed so far, with over seven hundred separate items - street names, churches, town gates, factories, hotels and so on - to be listed in the topographical information section.

The dense mass of information to be included has meant that there has been little room to spare in the sixteen-page text section. But it has proved possible to squeeze in several illustrations, including an important reproduction of Thomas Phillips's 'Prospect of Athlone', usually only seen as a somewhat distorted engraving. The original pen-and-wash drawing, preserved in the National Library, gives a far more convincing impression of Athlone castle, the bridge with its conspicuous monument to the builders, and the mills, houses and cabins at the waterside, as they stood in the late seventeenth century.

The Athlone fascicle will, of course, be on the same lines as those that have already appeared, and will include an essay and various maps and facsimiles, with the four-colour plan reconstructing the town in 1837-8 as a central item. The fascicle will be published shortly as no. 6 in the towns atlas series.

Other towns have also engaged our attention. Downpatrick is next on the list, and Mr. Tony Wilson, Co-author with Dr. Ronnie Buchanan, has been travelling regularly from Belfast to Dublin to give shape and form to the topographical information on the towns atlas's word-processor screen. Mr. John Bradley has not had so far to travel, but he too has been in frequently to work on Kilkenny. Our Bord Fáilte research assistant, Miss Cíara O'Rourke, is now in her second year, and she has assembled nineteenth-century material both for Kilkenny and for Youghal, Trim, Roscrea and Kinsale.

Compilation of early Dublin material for the fascicle to be prepared by Dr. Howard Clarke has been facilitated by FÁS, and Mr. Rayner Lysaght, better known as an early twentieth-century historian for his work on the Limerick soviet, spent eighteen months enthusiastically combing through the sources. Research on the other of our largest cities is also underway, including Dr. Stephen Royle and Dr. Raymond Gillespie working on Belfast, and Dr. Eamon O'Flaherty on Limerick. At the other end of the size range, Dr. Arnold Horner is hoping to complete Maynooth by the time of St. Patrick's College's bicentenary next year.

Besides his Belfast involvement, Raymond Gillespie has recently joined the editorial board of the atlas. Dr. J. H. Andrews remains with us in spirit, as consultant editor he manages to visit Dublin several times a year, keeping a benevolent long-distance eye on editorial standards between times.

Professor Annagret Simms keeps a high profile for the Irish atlas in Europe, serving as convenor of the working party on towns atlases for the International Commission for the History of Towns. The Irish Historic Towns Atlas is well thought of by the International Commission, and periodically it is held up as a model atlas worthy of emulation by newcomers to the atlas scheme!

Irish Historic Towns Atlas: editors J. H. Andrews, Anngret Simms, H. B. Clarke and Raymond Gillespie, No. 1 *Kildare*, no. 2 *Carrickfergus*, no. 3 *Barinny*, no. 4 *Kells*, no. 5 *Mullingar* are available from the Royal Irish Academy or from main booksellers, price £15 (1 and 2) and £18 (3, 4 and 5).

MARY DAVIES

NEW MAPS FROM THE ORDNANCE SURVEY

ORDNANCE SURVEY OF IRELAND, 1:50,000, Discovery Series, Sheets 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 30, 37, 56, 75, covering Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Wicklow-Kildare, Kilkenny, 1993. £3.90.

These new maps are quietly revolutionising the popular map coverage of the Republic of Ireland, both in content and in the potential of the new technology which they represent. They are radical improvements on the older Preliminary and Rambler editions published at the same scale over the past few years. Altogether, the 1:50 000 maps now bring Ireland into line internationally in terms of popular maps. Produced on a new digital database, based principally on plotting directly from air photographs, the OS is now reaching the stage when the so-called 'seamless' map is possible. This is where a map can be generated for particular areas from the database, without being tied to the conventional single sheet format. The previous preliminary versions had many disadvantages, not the least of which was their lack of aesthetic appeal. They did, however, demonstrate the potential of the scale and the data archive for students of landscape and settlement, and successive productions showed what was possible. For example, sheet 25 in the Rambler series for Collooney, Co. Sligo included antiquities derived from the Sites and Monuments Record of the OPW, with ring forts somewhat garishly marked by bright red asterisks. The new Discovery Series is a bit more selective in its representation of antiquities, but there is still an extensive array of detail on mottes, megalithic tombs, castles and holy wells.

These new maps are a pleasure to look at and in this review note it is only possible to make cursory report on them. Though they are still noted by the publishers as 'preliminary', they represent a significant advance on their predecessors. The major improvement is the addition of colour tints - layering of browns and light greens to the highly accurate 10-metre contour lines - which serve to give a striking immediate impression of the landscape topography. Additionally there is a wealth of detail on elements of settlement: roads, lanes and tracks are shown; housing and buildings in the countryside (seemingly dating from the seventies airphoto survey) are shown in detail. Presumably it will be possible to update this material on the database as new information becomes available in future, possibly from updated air surveys. From the viewpoint of settlement studies, the main advantage of these new 1:50,000 maps over the old half-inch, is the amount of space covered by the map, and the opportunity it offers for studying the landscape more intensively. In Sheet 75, for example (covering the south Kilkenny-Waterford area), there is a wealth of information available on medieval sites and townland and other placenames that was not available on the half inch. The one-inch maps, of course, which are the closest equivalent in scale (1:63 000) are totally obsolete now - though they are of interest to landscape historians and it will be interesting to compare the two. In all the newly published sheets the major placenames are given bilingually, and in the Donegal, Mayo and Galway areas, the Irish

versions of the townland names are also provided, apparently in the most up-to-date versions from the Placenames Department in the Ordnance Survey office.

Mistakes will almost certainly be discovered when the maps are used in the field because what is being undertaken here is the matching of two methodologies, the techniques of digital mapping and then the filling in of social and cultural detail from other sources, with relatively little opportunity for field checking. However, the advantage of having the data on a digital database is that it can be updated and rectified on an on-going basis and I'm sure the OS will take note of mistakes reported to them for future reference! However, I don't want to finish on a negative note - I would like, on the contrary, to highly recommend these delightful new maps to anybody with an interest in the Irish landscape.

P. J. DUFFY

REVIEWS

LAND, POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TIPPERARY, BY THOMAS P. POWER.

Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993 384 p.p. £40 stg.
0-19-820316-0

This handsome volume of 330 pages of narrative plus 30 pages of bibliography is impressive. Tom Power brings us an account of one of Ireland's most varied and enigmatic of counties, during the black hole of historical research, the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century presents problems for any historical researcher and has as a result often been avoided. Masterly national accounts such as Lecky's five volumes have not prompted the number of local comparative studies one would wish for. For many local historians the eighteenth century has been glossed over and summarised by 'the penal laws' the 'Anglo Irish ascendancy', etc. This is largely the result of the difficulty of eighteenth century sources. The hardy annuals of research, like the Civil Survey of the seventeenth century and Griffith's Valuation of the nineteenth century are absent for the eighteenth century. The sources are there, but they are dispersed, diffuse, often difficult and rarely uniform or universal in coverage. Power has put in long hours ferreting out these sources, and the volume proclaims that prodigious work.

The page layout and typeface are attractive and the printing of footnotes at the bottom of the page will please anyone interested in the source material. Surprisingly the book only contains one map, outlining the baronies and towns of the county together with the major rivers and mountains. Much more use of maps could have been made, especially in the third chapter dealing with landed society. Table two on estate income would be enhanced if it were illustrated in this way.

A fascinating part of this chapter brings you into the intimate financial problems of individual estates such as the Mathews of Thomastown and the Meades, Earls of Clanwilliam. The contortions performed by catholic landed families, such as the Cahir Butlers and the Ryans of Inch, to keep their property are meticulously illustrated and illuminate the realities of the penal era.

The tenurial arrangements are examined in chapter four and two distinct phases of leasing arrangements identified. In the early eighteenth century extensive acreages on long leases of low rents was the dominant pattern. This changed after 1750 with the expansion of production and its intensification into tillage, especially cereals. From a Kilkenny perspective it is

highly amusing to learn that Tipperary landlords were described as "as wild and savage as 'tis possible to be conceived". I am certain I remember references to landlord patronage of hurling at this period!

In conclusion the volume is a well balanced and finely honed study, which will be of value to anyone seriously interested in Ireland's past. Economic, social, sectarian and political history are well researched and presented. An unpalatable fact however is, that low sales on such books push up the price which, at £40.00, will in turn deflate sales. For those who do purchase this book it will gain a place on the shelf along side Donnelly's study of nineteenth century Cork.

JACK BURTCHAEILL

LANDSCAPES OF SOUTH ULSTER

A Parish Atlas of the Diocese of Clogher

by Patrick Duffy Institute of Irish Studies, Belfast, (1993)

38 maps in colour £45. 0-85389-500-7

Paddy Duffy is to be warmly congratulated on the appearance of his long-awaited parish atlas of his native diocese, the product of a decade's painstaking work. Here are presented 7,000 placenames, 4,200 townlands, 38 parishes and three counties (Fermanagh, Monaghan and Tyrone) in both cartographic and textual form, in very handsome wide-volume format. Each parish profile is premised on the notion that both people and places have histories which combine at the local level. The local sense of the landscape derives from the intersection of the matrix of memory with the texture of topography, and encoded in the loving lore of placenames. Duffy, in assured command of the sources, the local detail and the bigger picture, surveys each parish in turn, backed, by a general survey, bibliography and meticulously detailed index. The centrepiece for each parish is a map highlighting the townlands, boundaries and churches, superimposed on a more general map.

The result is a landmark volume, a striking vindication of its author's assertion that place is a common legacy, even in a divided community. The language of landscape, quite but insistent, persists under the noisy political rhetoric; the intricate townland lattice still defines how people place themselves locally, even in the age of Madonna, Maradonna and Maastricht.

For the settlement historian, the lesson is to be more sensitive to the invisible elements which infiltrate the landscape at every point - territorial boundaries and affiliations, which structure settlement in deeply resilient ways. The modern parish structure of Clogher, for example, is essentially derived from the divisions of the Gaelic kingdom of Airghialla; it was within this framework that subsequent adjustments took place, so that the modern network is one of the strongest survivals from the medieval world. There are many other fascinating points. Consider, for example, the contemporary relevance of the surveyor's William Starat's report from Ederney in 1716: in this black cattle country, each townland had often detached 'Barr' (upland) and 'Bunn' (lowland) components, essential to seasonal grazing requirements, which were carefully adjusted to maintain sustainable grazing capacities (a Fermanagh lesson there for the overstocked hillsides of the west of Ireland). There is also the relationship between joint tenancies and clustered settlements on the Bath estate in the late eighteenth century and a neat demonstration from mid seventeenth-century Fermanagh of how the Gaelic population was being filtered to the hills overlooking the planter townlands.

As one might expect, drumlins dominate the discussion. Duffy notes how settlement girdled them and how they dominated toponymy; my estimate is that 47% of townland names in the region refer to these hilly hummocks strewn in profuse confusion across the south Ulster countryside. Five hundred townland names begin with the single element 'drum'. Less expected, but pervasive, is the watery nature of this kingdom: appropriate enough in the complex interdigitations of land and lake in the Erne basin, but almost oppressively surplus to requirements elsewhere - from the cloying clabber of the drumlin bottoms to the mist covered mountains, from bedraggled fair day streets to the steaming sweathouses which ameliorated rheumatic and arthritic bones, from weeping cabin walls to clogged tubercular lungs. No wonder that there should also be a constant praise for ditches and drains - valiant allies in fighting this constant enemy.

A welcome feature in this volume is the carefully chosen literary extracts which brighten the text. The expected Kavanagh, Kiely, McCabe and Heaney are joined by newer names like Mary O'Connell and Evelyn Conlon. These literati are jostled by more homespun townland bards and chroniclers. Who could beat Patrick Brannigan's encapsulation of the unseemly dash of his neighbours up the chapel to give their 'offerings' at his funeral mass; They rushed up to the table like sheep going through a fence', or Patrick Kavanagh's pen picture of 'thin-faced parishes whose hills were perished noses running peaty water'. There are also some charming extracts from the IFC school's collection of 1938.

More recent statistics are also included, like details from the 1990 diocesan census. Sadly, the figures show that the emptying of townlands continues apace, evoking the fear that Duffy's work will soon seem more like a mausoleum to a vanished rural civilisation than a celebration of a vibrant living community. And this is no new phenomenon. County Monaghan's total population in 1991 was 53,000; it lost 60,000 in the single decade 1841 - 1851, a figure which instantly deflates revisionist efforts to downplay the impact of the Famine.

Irish bishops attract a fair share of flak, so it is a pleasure to be able to complement Joseph Duffy, the bishop of Clogher, for his foresight in supporting this project financially. Indeed, Clogher has been fortunate that its last three bishops have all had a strong sense of place, and of history. Bishop O'Callaghan restored many of the medieval parish names in 1955; his successor, Patrick Mulligan, founded the Clogher Historical Society in 1952, whose journal has published a treasure trove of material, as is demonstrated by this atlas's use of it. These three bishops have exhibited a feel for the history of Irish Catholicism, and of the parish communities which were its enduring strength, which is all too rare in the institutional Church. The philistine destruction of the rich repertoire of vernacular chapels, as precious in their way as Newgrange or Carton, in the post Vatican II era can only be compared to a slaughter of the architectural innocents, a Cromwellian rampage perpetrated, not by hostile outsiders, but by those to whom this heritage has been entrusted. Such viciousness could only have been perpetrated by clergy profoundly ignorant of the finest traditions of their own Church. Indeed, the fact that this is the first such diocesan atlas project since the much less ambitious Cashel and Emly one (inspired by another historically minded prelate, Thomas Morris), indicates that the Irish bishops as a body have had a chronic attack of historical amnesia. One can only hope that this splendid atlas, like a good deed in a naughtily world, will bring these lost sheep back into the fold.

KEVIN WHELAN

NOTICE BOARD

CONFEDERATION OF KILKENNY SYMPOSIUM

Friday 17th. to Sunday 19th. June 1994.

Venue: Rothe House, Kilkenny and other.

Lecturers include: John Bradley, Padraig Lenihan, Glenn Thompson, Tadhg O'h-Annracháin, Fr. Donal Cregan C. M.

Full particulars from Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Rothe House, Kilkenny. (056/22893)

THE NORMAN CONNECTION 3RD. ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday 23rd. to Sunday 25th September, 1994

Venue: Hotel Naomh Seosamh, Fethard-on-Sea, Co. Wexford

Lecturer include Professor James F. Lydon, T. C. D.; Dr. A. F. O'Brien, U.C.C.; Michael Moore, archaeologist Office of Public Works; Bernard Murtagh, archaeologist; Mathew Stout, T. C. D., Celestine Murphy and Billy Colfer, M. Litt.

Programme and full particulars from Billy Colfer, Slade, Hook Head, Co. Wexford (053 97442)

ROSCREA AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Friday 4th to Sunday 6th November 1994

Theme: Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Ireland

Venue: Mount St. Joseph Abbey, Roscrea Co. Tipperary

Programme and full particulars from Mr. George Cunningham, M. Litt, Parkmore, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary (0505/21619)

GROUP NEWS

COMMITTEE 1993 - 94

Following the 1993 Annual General Meeting, held on Sunday 2nd. May, 1993, in conjunction with the Annual Conference in Birr, the Committee elected for the year 1993-94 was as follows:-

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| President | : | Dr. Anngret Simms, Associate Professor of Geography, University College Dublin. |
| Hon. Secretary | : | Mr. Michael O'Hanrahan, Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Kilkenny. |
| Hon. Treasurer | : | Ms. Niamh Crowley, Waterford Teachers' Centre, Waterford. |
| Hon. Editor | : | Dr. Harman Murtagh, Athlone Regional Technical College, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. |
| Committee | : | Dr. Kevin Whelan, Bicentennial Scholar, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. |
| | : | Dr. Patrick J. Duffy, Associate Professor of Geography, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. |

Committee (continued)

Mr. Charles Doherty,
Dept. of Early Irish History,
University College, Dublin.

Mrs. Margaret Hogan, Birr
Historical Society, Birr, Co.
Offaly.

Mr. Niall McCullough,
partner McCullough and Mulvin,
Architects, Dublin.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1994

The 1994 Annual Conference will be held in Youghal, co. Cork, (Devonshire Arms Hotel) from Friday 13th. to Sunday 15th. May 1994. While the Annual Conference has been held traditionally on the first week-end in May the designation of Monday 2nd. May this year as a Public Holiday has prompted your committee to move the dates back by two weeks. A notice providing full particulars of the programme of lectures and field trips and incorporating a registration form and list of conference accommodation is enclosed with this Newsletter.

LOCAL HISTORY AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

The Group is honoured that Professor Charles Phythian-Adams, head of the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester, has accepted its invitation to attend this year's conference and to present a paper, on Sunday morning 15th. May (11a.m.), entitled THE GENIUS OF PLACE: LOCAL HISTORY AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE. As head of the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester, Professor Phythian-Adams is the distinguished successor to Professor W. G. Hoskins, author of the classic THE MAKING OF THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE (1955) and FIELDWORK IN LOCAL HISTORY (1967), who "helped to raise the standing of English local history from the lowly level of less-than kindly condescension in which it used to be held by proper historians, to the status of an academic discipline"¹ and to the highly respected Professor H. P. R. Finsberg, who, in the LOCAL HISTORIAN AND HIS THEME (1952), attempted to define the parameters of local history.

Professor Phythian-Adams is the author of RE-THINKING ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY. (Leicester University Press, 1987) and is editor of SOCIETIES, CULTURES AND KINSHIP, 1580 - 1850: CULTURAL PROVINCES AND ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY (Pinter Publishers for Leicester University Press, 1993). He is particularly interested in seeing what can be done about encouraging the study of the Irish Sea area as a whole, and the interactions between the different societies and cultures inhabiting its edges. His attendance at the Youghal Conference will provide an opportunity for exploring what can be achieved in this area through co-operation between the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement and Professor Phythian-Adams's Department at Leicester University. These possibilities include the holding of a jointly sponsored conference about which this Newsletter will bring you news in due course.

¹ Phythian-Adams, C. V, HOSKINS ENGLAND: A LOCAL HISTORIAN OF GENIUS AND THE REALISATION OF HIS THEME, Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. (1992)

GROUP PUBLICATIONS

The Group's most recently published monograph, **THE GEOGRAPHY AND PRACTICE OF ENGLISH COLONISATION IN IRELAND FROM 1534 TO 1609** by Dr Rolf Loeber (1991) continues to sell steadily @ £6 (retail). The previous monographs, **ANGLO-NORMAN SETTLEMENT IN IRELAND**, by Dr. Brian Graham (1985) and **IRISH TOWER HOUSES: A COUNTY TIPPERARY CASE STUDY** by Dr. Conrad Cairns (1987), have both sold out.

Number 4 in the series of **IRISH SETTLEMENT STUDIES** on eighteenth and early nineteenth century estate towns and entitled **URBAN IMPROVEMENT IN PROVINCIAL IRELAND, 1700-1840**, by Dr. Brian Graham and Dr. Lindsay Proudfoot, will be published in mid-May with an official launch at the Group's annual conference in Youghal. Dr. Graham was the author of number 1 in the series, **ANGLO NORMAN SETTLEMENT IN IRELAND**, and is a former President of the Group. He is a senior lecturer in geography at the Department of Environmental Studies at the University of Ulster in Coleraine. Dr. Lindsay Proudfoot, who is also a geographer, lectures in the School of Geosciences at the Queen's University, Belfast and will be one of the contributors to the 1994 conference in Youghal. Both authors are joint editors of **AN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF IRELAND**, published by Academic Press in 1993, a review of which will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

The committee is now committed in principle to the annual publication of a new monograph, and a contribution on ringforts has tentatively been planned for 1995. The main obstacle to realising this desirable objective is finance. Assistance from members with the marketing of current publications (and speedy settlement of accounts) would contribute greatly to resolving this problem. Please contact the managing editor, Dr. Harman Murtagh, Mount View, Athlone (ph. 0902/72420), if you can help with sales.

HARMAN MURTAGH

CONGRATULATIONS

The Newsletter is very pleased to bring you news of the recent election of Professor Annagret Simms, the Group's President, as a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

We are also pleased to record the recent appointment of Dr. Patrick J. Duffy, a conscientious and ever reliable member of the committee since 1992, as Associate Professor of Geography at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. We congratulate them both on their achievements.

OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR THOMAS FANNING, 1933-1993: AN APPRECIATION

The death, in July 1993, of Tom Fanning after some months of illness has robbed Irish archaeology of an energetic worker who had still much to contribute to the subject.

He initially studied archaeology in U. C. D. as a mature student having been teaching for some years and did his M. A. in 1969 on aspects of bronze ringed pins ... in Ireland. In keeping with the subject of his M. A. his interests remained very much in the historic period from then on and when he joined the staff of the Office of Public Works in 1970 he directed important excavations at Reask, Swords Castle, and

the priories of Clontuskert, Co. Galway and Kells, Co. Kilkenny. All have been comprehensively published, apart from Kells, the report on which was still incomplete at the time of his untimely death. His interest in the medieval period continued and in 1988 he produced, along with Elizabeth Eames, the major reference book on Irish medieval floor tiles published by the Royal Irish Academy. Ringed pins were also the subject of his doctorate and a major publication on the ringed pins from the Dublin excavations is due out soon, the proofs having been corrected by Tom in hospital in the weeks before he died.

Within the O.P.W. Tom moved to the survey side after a number of years and even after he became a lecturer in archaeology in U.C.G. he kept up a strong interest in and commitment to archaeological survey as an aid to protecting our archaeological heritage. In this regard he played a major part in organizing the archaeological surveys of Co. Donegal and the Dingle Peninsula, both of which are now indispensable reference books. He also advised on and was involved in the work of the archaeological survey of Co. Galway.

Tom was always helpful to students and colleagues and generous in sharing his knowledge. He had an easy manner and an infectious enthusiasm for his subject. His elevation to an associate professorship was a well deserved reward and it was fortunate that he lived long enough for it to go through but unfortunate that he did not live to reap the benefits. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

CONLETH MANNING
OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Newsletter is sorry to also record the deaths, since its last issue, of three long-time members of the Group: Mrs Mary Kenealy (Kilkenny), Miss Mai McElroy (Wexford) and Rev. Dr. Ignatius Murphy (Clare). Both Mary Kenealy and Mai McElroy had been presidents of their local societies - the Kilkenny Archaeological Society and the Old Wexford Society, respectively. All three had written many articles for local historical journals. Before his untimely death, Fr. Murphy had completed a scholarly three volume history of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Killaloe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the final volume of which has been published posthumously. May they rest in peace.

SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE

The annual subscription for 1994-95 (IR£5; students IR3) is due on 1st. May, 1994. This may be sent direct to the Hon. Treasurer or paid by Bank Standing Order. A subscription renewal form, incorporating a standing order mandate, is included with this Newsletter.

Members who have not amended their bank standing order to take account of the increased subscription from 1st. May 1993, should now complete a new standing order for the amended rate.

Copy for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor, Mr. Michael O'Hanrahan, 12 Oak Road, Duke's Meadows, Kilkenny, before 30th. September, 1994.

Issues No. 1 and No. 2 sponsored by THE ULSTER BANK