

Group for the Study of

IRISH HISTORIC SETTLEMENT

NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

With the appearance of this, the third issue, your NEWSLETTER has grown from six (No. 1) to eight (No. 2) and, now to sixteen pages. In the course of this expansion it has become somewhat more than a newsletter while not quite a journal: perhaps 'Newsletter and Journal' best describes its present state of evolution. This steady progression, which owes much to members who have contributed articles and reviews, has, nevertheless, been accomplished on the basis of a limited paid-up membership and has entailed some depletion of those funds accumulated during the period 1984 to 1993 when publication of the previously published Bulletin had ceased.

The publication of a regular twice-yearly Newsletter/Journal can only be sustained if the paid-up membership of the Group is expanded and if annual subscriptions are renewed. This can best be done by completing a bank standing order. If, therefore, you are not already a member of the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement or if you have not renewed your annual subscription for 1994-95, due on 1st. May, 1994, continued receipt of the Newsletter cannot be guaranteed after the current issue. You can ensure receipt of issue No. 4 (Spring, 1995), to be published in March 1995, by completing the enclosed subscribed renewal form and forwarding it immediately to the Hon. Treasurer. I hope the contents of the present issue will encourage you to do so.

EDITOR

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1994

The outstandingly successful 1994 annual conference was held in Youghal, Co. Cork (Devonshire Arms Hotel) from Friday 13th to Sunday 15th May. After an address of welcome from the chairman of Youghal Urban District Council, Councillor Jerry Russell, the participants were introduced to the history of *Settlement in Youghal and its Hinterland* by Kenneth Nicholls (University College Cork), from whom we learned that Youghal was at the centre of an extensive coastal area stretching from west of Cork harbour, from Clear Island to Waterford harbour, which was early settled and which was very open to external influences. It had close links with the Roman empire and with Roman Britain and was christianised before 400 - before the arrival in Ireland of St. Patrick.

A. F. O'Brien, also of University College, Cork, got the Saturday morning programme off to an early start with his paper on 'Medieval Youghal: town, port and economy'. T. C. Barnard (Hertford College, Oxford) on 'The Boyle Family and the Development of Youghal and its hinterland' and Lindsay Proudfoot (Queen's University, Belfast) on 'Eighteenth and nineteenth century settlement transformations' completed the

Saturday morning programme of lectures.

Also included in the Saturday morning programme was the formal launch of No. 4 in the Group's monograph series, *Irish Settlement Studies: Urban Improvement in Provincial Ireland, 1700-1840*, jointly authored by Brian J. Graham and Lindsay Proudfoot, both of whom were present. Brian Graham, who is a former president of the Group, outlined the scope of the study which, he explained, seeks to establish economic, social and cultural contexts for urban improvement in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Ireland, and to determine the scale and scope of the process.

Saturday afternoon proved ideal for the field trip which first visited the Romanesque cathedral and round tower at Ardmore, Co. Waterford, where archaeologist, Tadhg O'Keeffe, (University College Dublin) acted as guide. Particularly memorable was his description of the Romanesque figure sculpture decorating the west gable of the cathedral (anyone interested in the site should read his 'Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture at Ardmore' in *Waterford: History and Society*; Geography Publications, 1992)

From Ardmore the coach took us inland to Lismore, where Dean Weekes warmly welcomed us to St. Carthage's Cathedral on what was, by coincidence, the saint's feast day. Dean Weekes took great pleasure in sharing with us his pride in the Cathedral's treasures of church silver and early printed books, while Tadhg O'Keeffe described the early inscribed slabs (9th to 11th centuries).

After a foreshortened tour of the town, guided by Lindsay Proudfoot, and a visit to Lismore Castle to view a Romanesque archway dating from circa 1120 and, which, we learned from Tadhg O'Keeffe, came from one of three churches built by Cormac MacCarthy and which he described as one of the most significant Romanesque survivals in Ireland, we returned to Youghal and the Devonshire Arms Hotel for the annual dinner which, this year, celebrated the silver jubilee of the foundation of the Group in 1969.

On Sunday morning, after the business of the annual general meeting was quickly and efficiently accomplished, Ian O'Connell (University College, Cork) presented a paper entitled "*Nineteenth Century Youghal: property and people*" based on his M.A. dissertation (U.C.C.: 1993). He was followed by our distinguished visitor from the University of Leicester, Charles Phythian-Adams, speaking to the subject, "*The Genius of*

Place: local history as an academic discipline". Professor Phythian-Adams initiated a lively symposium by proposing that "the significance and importance of local history was as an absolutely vital antidote to national history, which", he argued, "constructs itself at a level of generalisation without actually thinking what the process of generalisation involves." Professor Phythian-Adams paper was responded to by Patrick O'Flanagan. (University College, Cork).

The conference concluded on Sunday afternoon with a walking tour of the town conducted by Youghal local historian, David Kelly. This included visits to St. Mary's Collegiate Church (13th century) and Myrtle Grove, the unfortified sixteenth century house associated with Sir Walter Raleigh, through the gracious generosity of Mrs Shirley Murray and her daughter, Iona, whose home the Tudor manor house is.

Thanks are due to our lecturers, our guides on the field trips, Dean Weekes, Shirley Murray, our hosts at the Devonshire Arms Hotel, Stephen and Helen O'Sullivan and their staff, and to the British Council, who provided financial support. They, each in their separate ways, contributed to a memorably successful 1994 annual conference.

EDITOR

"THE IRISH SEA PROVINCE": A PLEA FOR ACADEMIC CO-OPERATION

For this English visitor, the 1994 conference at Youghal was immensely stimulating because of the new awareness it provided of complementary fields of historical interest that span the Irish Sea. On that occasion, however, it was only possible for me to outline some of the concerns of those of us investigating "cultural" divisions on the *English* side as contexts for the understanding of the inter-connected societies inhabiting them. One crucial element in defining such cultural areas has, however, to be the direction in which each one "faces" and, in the case of Western England - from Cumberland southwards to Cornwall - the degree to which the component provincial divisions look separately not only towards Wales and south-west Scotland, but above all to the eastern coast of Ireland. The English impact on that littoral was clearly very different from the Irish influence on the

western edge of Britain, but the former problem has obviously received far more systematic historical attention than the latter.

What then, more precisely, were the interconnections between *all* sides of the wider Irish Sea? How should we seek to categorize such connections and cross-influences in cultural terms? Can we even agree on definable regions around all its shores and identify (especially for periods before the nineteenth century) the variable densities of settlers mutually "foreign" to each (for surely, such an investigation must concern people on the ground for the most part rather than the fleeting connections established by trade). Do the immigrant families tend to cluster (on or near the coastlines)



Annual Conference, 1994: Tadhg O'Keeffe (right) describes Romanesque archway at Lismore Castle.

thus creating small "liminal" societies which (but for how long?) pass relatives through them on to further destinations and, in so doing, conserve and develop cultural traits connected with, but increasingly divergent from, the mother country? How are such traits to be measured, and do different traits predominate according to the nationalities of the migrants? To what extent, finally, are they assimilated by the host cultures?

When related to a huge geographical area and for all historical periods, such questions are daunting. That said, they surely comprise a central programme of inquiry without which a genuine understanding of the *shared* destinies of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England would be impossible. Such a programme, moreover, would be quite unthinkable without inter-national co-operation. Is there then some way in which, initially through interested individuals and then through their institutions, we might be able to create some sort of consortium of interest focusing perhaps on a long-term programme of well-spaced conferences? As it happens, the Department of English Local History at Leicester, for instance, will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 1998 with a major international conference devoted naturally, in this particular case, to the impact on the English regions of the cultures surrounding the country on *all* its sides (including, therefore, European influences). It would be highly appropriate were a goodly proportion of that Conferences to be devoted to the issues sketched out above. Similar conferences centering on each of the Celtic nations concerned could take place in turn. Perhaps when I attend the 1995 conference, therefore, it may be possible for me to contact anyone even vaguely interested in getting some sort of scheme off the ground. It would be helpful to all of us working on the separate national shores of the Irish Sea, I suggest, not to be operating in quite such glorious historical isolation from one another in the future.

CHARLES PHYTHIAN-ADAMS
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER,
ENGLAND

THE YEAR OF THE BRONZE AGE

Following a ministerial agreement in Malta in 1992, the Council of Europe has decided to launch a campaign on the theme of The Bronze Age: The first golden Age in Europe. Beginning in 1994 and running until 1996, individual states will organize a programme of events and activities, designed to promote a greater public awareness of our rich Bronze Age heritage. 1995 has been chosen as the focal year for the Irish campaign and a committee, chaired by Professor George Eogan, is presently making plans in this direction.

The *Bronze Age Campaign* will be overseen by the Office of Public Works, in collaboration with the Northern Ireland authorities. O.P.W. have planned an important conservation initiative as part of their contribution, whereby one or more important Bronze Age sites or landscapes will be taken into State care. It is hoped to organise a major academic conference on recent research in the Irish Bronze Age, together with a programme of public lectures by local societies across the country. The conference will be held in Dublin Castle on the weekend of 21-23rd April, 1995 and will include contributions from both Irish and overseas researchers.

In addition to reviewing the state of academic research on the Bronze Age, an important object of the *Campaign* is to raise public awareness of this important period of our prehistoric past. To this end, a photographic exhibition covering all major themes of this period is planned. Beginning in October 1994,

this exhibition will be displayed in county museums and libraries in both the Republic and in Northern Ireland. A number of other museum exhibitions and media promotions are planned and the Committee would welcome any suggestions in this area. Any person wishing to obtain further information on the *Bronze Age Campaign* may write to Billy O'Brien, Department of Archaeology, University College Galway.

BILLY O'BRIEN

NEWS FROM THE IRISH HISTORIC TOWNS ATLAS OFFICE

Irish historic towns atlas no. 6 Athlone, by Dr Harman Murtagh, has now been truly launched in two separate functions. The first was in July immediately after publication, when the Royal Irish Academy, temporarily homeless due to renovations, held its launch in Dublin Castle, courtesy of the Office of Public Works. Such an historic venue might have been hard to match for the local launch in many of our towns but not, of course, in Athlone. The Athlone launch in October was held in Athlone Castle's heritage centre, a glass and metal construction snuggled inside the castle walls and framing views of the surrounding thirteenth-century structures. Athlone Regional Technical College, with the support of the Old Athlone Society, provided a warm welcome, and Minister Mary O'Rourke - who modestly forbade to admit that she had been born in one of the buildings listed in the topographical information (the old Ranelagh School) - was very complimentary about the work of the towns atlas.

Athlone sold briskly at this local launch, and is doing well generally. Indeed the whole series is selling well, and some fascicles may soon be totally out of print - would-be purchasers will then have to wait for the first bound volume.

"Downpatrick" (Dr Ronnie Buchanan and Mr Tony Wilson) and "Maynooth" (Dr Arnold Horner) are now fully in the editors' spotlight, and both should appear during the first half of 1995 - the first north-south pair since *Kildare* and *Carrickfergus*. Mr John Bradley is still paying regular visits to the towns atlas office - when he can find it, that is, since we are now in our second temporary quarters this year - to work on Kilkenny. Dublin, Belfast and Limerick are all claiming attention, and Dr Avril Thomas is biting deep into the work for Derry. We have more towns making good progress now than we have ever had - long may this continue!

MARY DAVIES

Irish Historic Towns Atlas: editors J.H. Andrews, Anngret Simms, H.B. Clarke and Raymond Gillespie. No. 1 *Kildare*, no. 2 *Carrickfergus*, no. 3 *Bandon*, no. 4 *Kells*, no. 5 *Mullingar*, no. 6 *Athlone* are available from the Royal Irish Academy or from main booksellers, price £15 (1 and 2) and £18 (3,4,5 and 6).

ARTICLES

ECONOMY, GROWTH AND SETTLEMENT IN MEDIEVAL IRELAND

'Linguistic evidence, and, to a lesser extent, that of archaeology, shows Ireland to have been a Celtic country; untouched by Roman conquest it retained Celtic culture and polity, and classical accounts of the continental Celts are reflected to a remarkable degree in Irish literature and

historical documents. Almost every chapter in Caesar's narrative of the Gallic war could be illustrated by Irish parallels...¹ Early Irish society was not subjected to the range of political and economic forces which, in the early medieval centuries, produced feudalism in much of western Europe. Kindred organization survived in early Ireland. Accordingly, early Irish society has been described as 'tribal, rural, hierarchical, and familiar' in the sense that 'every free man belonged to a *fine* [an agnatic kindred or family group]'. 'This institution', it has been said, 'recalls the Germanic *comitatus*'. Nevertheless, this society was far from static and, as on the continent, a combination of economic and social forces produced some bonds of clientship and, by the twelfth century, the *famulus* or bondman had appeared in Irish society.² Thus, the traditional bonds of kindred society were being seriously modified. These bonds were slackened also, if not in some cases completely undermined, by contemporary economic developments. These included, notably, a significant increase in population. The monasteries and their estates played a key role in this complex of socio-economic changes.

The tempo of trade increased in line with population growth and burgeoning international trade affected internal exchange also. The growth and development of both internal and external trade in Ireland reflected the quickening pace of commerce and the trend towards a greater market economy which Europe as a whole witnessed in this period. In these circumstances, the monasteries assumed an important economic function and formed part of a growing market infrastructure necessary for the distribution and exchange of merchandise and this process was further promoted by the example of Norse markets and trading towns. It has, therefore, been argued that 'from the tenth century onwards it is reasonable to describe the major church sites as monastic towns. Although these proto-urban sites were centres of religion, education, industrial activity and local trade they were also at the hub of a redistributive system'.³ The major monasteries 'harboured a rather mixed population on their fringes. It is probably the existence of this aspect of the population that stimulated the need for local exchange. From the late eighth century onwards we get references to markets on monastic sites'.⁴ This was a development of major importance and, particularly after the coming of the Norse who strongly promoted the slave trade,⁵ the monastic towns became important in overseas trade in general and the economics of slavery in particular. 'They were exploited by both the Norse and the Irish for the slave trade from the ninth century onwards. The resultant trade, augmented by raids in England and the continent, brought a massive influx of gold and more particularly silver into Ireland'.⁶ The provenance of much of the silver bullion imported into Ireland by the Vikings was the Harz region.⁷

The eleventh and twelfth centuries, therefore, saw a marked growth in Irish overseas trade. However, it must be emphasized that 'from the earliest period foreign trade seems to have been considerable. The earliest map of Ireland, that of Ptolemy, is undoubtedly a trader's map based on information from merchants. Tacitus says that the harbours and approaches to Ireland were well known to traders.'⁸

This raises an important issue. Far from being a barrier, the sea in history has been a means of communication between different regions. Seaborne transport has facilitated cultural interaction and trade. Thus, it has been pointed out that 'archaeologists... no longer speak of the Irish Sea completing the 'insulation' of Ireland... For the student of early western cultures no longer does the sea divide and the land unite; on the contrary, the seas unite the lands around their shores, while the mountains and the boglands of inland territories divide one culture from another.'⁹

Access to Ireland by sea facilitated the Viking invasions which began at the end of the eighth century. Therafter, the Irish Sea became a major artery in 'a network of trade routes stretching from Ireland, via centres such as Birka in Sweden and Hedeby in Denmark, to Constantinople and Baghdad' created by the Scandinavian peoples between the ninth and the eleventh centuries.¹⁰ 'It seems that the [Viking] Atlantic traffic tended not to be directed along the western coast of Ireland but rather up the Irish Sea via Dublin... The Irish Sea seems to have been a veritable "Viking Lake" from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. It was dominated by Dublin, which looked eastwards to the Isle of Man, north-western England and across the Pennines to Northumbria and York. Dublin traded extensively with Chester ... until 980, when ... trade with Chester declined and swung round to emergent Bristol in the south-west. This tilt southwards in Dublin's main trade axis could have had as much to do with the decline of direct Norse contacts and of trade routes to the north as with the political eclipse of Chester.'¹¹ Accordingly, 'the archaeological evidence at Dublin suggests an increasing shift southwards of the trade axis towards south-western Britain and towards France in the eleventh century ...'¹²

The Viking contribution to the development of the economic infrastructure and the promotion of Ireland's trade in general from the tenth to the twelfth centuries was one of the greatest importance. Small Ostman colonies 'centred on the trading towns of Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, Wexford and Cork' were established.¹³ The foundation or development of these towns and proto-towns, such as Youghal, added considerably to urban growth in Ireland. 'Dublin became an important centre in the eleventh century. It was well situated both for taking a share of the long-distance trade which linked the northern lands with western France and the Mediterranean, and for conducting business across the Irish Sea. English coins had begun to circulate in the tenth century; towards the end of the century Dublin struck its own, exact copies of the current English silver pennies obviously primarily for use in England ... Wexford and Waterford also conducted a busy trade across the channel so that communications of all kinds became much more regular.'¹⁴

Reference to overseas trade raises the question of the commodities traded through the developing Irish port towns. Early Ireland has been described as 'mainly a cattle country' but one with some variation in agricultural practice 'according to conditions throughout the island'.¹⁵ Since cattle dominated the economy of medieval Ireland, hides constituted the principal export, although wool was important also.¹⁶ Wine became a staple import in Irish trade and remained such throughout the middle ages and beyond. Not only was it consumed by kings and nobles but also it was a commodity of great liturgical importance. Seventh-century documents indicate that 'the Biscay ports [particularly Nantes and Bordeaux] engaged in an extensive wine trade with Ireland'.¹⁷ The trade continued through the Norse period and beyond and the testimony of Gerald of Wales in the twelfth century could suggest that it was very extensive. 'Imported wines ... conveyed in the ordinary commercial way [to Ireland], are so abundant that you would scarcely notice that the vine was neither cultivated nor gave its fruit there. Poitou out of its own superabundance sends plenty of wine, and Ireland is pleased to send in return the hides of animals and the skins of flocks and wild beasts.'¹⁸ By that time not only Poitou but 'Rouen was also involved' in trade with Ireland.¹⁹ The slave trade was central to this development 'and it is likely that Rouen was an important slave market well into the middle of the eleventh century.'²⁰ Reciprocal trade between Ireland and Normandy survived the demise of the slave trade and continued throughout the remainder of the medieval period, wine and other commodities (in the late middle ages these included

cereals) being sent to Ireland from the Port of Rouen.²¹

In the medieval period as a whole Ireland needed to import two other staple commodities, iron and salt. In the early medieval period the latter was imported principally from Cheshire, although, certainly by the later middle ages, these supplies were supplemented from the Bay of Bourgneuf. The principal source of iron was the Iberian peninsula. Spanish iron was imported into Ireland either directly or indirectly, principally through the major ports of south-western England, notably Bristol.²²

In addition to these staple commodities, Ireland imported luxury goods and manufactures. Excavations in Viking Dublin have shown that imports 'range from finished articles, such as cloth, glass vessels, pottery' and the like 'to raw materials that were brought in bulk to be manufactured locally.'²³ These latter include particularly amber and lignite. The range and quality of these imports testify 'to the wealth of tenth- and especially eleventh-century Dublin. Some, such as silk, came from Byzantine or Islamic centres.'²⁴ 'Ireland was largely acceramic until the Anglo-Norman period, except for the north-east'. Viking Dublin, therefore, was a major pottery importer, importing particularly 'late Anglo-Saxon pottery [which] came from the western parts of England, especially from the Cheshire region and possibly through the port of Chester.'²⁵ In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries this was supplemented by Norman and Saintonge ware from south-west France. Dublin's trade with Chester and its hinterland was well-established before the Anglo-Norman invasion of the of the late twelfth century: 'in the later Viking period of the tenth and eleventh centuries Chester had been Dublin's main point of contact with England'.²⁶ However, it is not correct to say that Chester's role in this regard 'passed to Bristol with the coming of the Anglo-Normans'.²⁷ On the contrary, Dublin's trade with Chester received a renewed boost, certainly from the thirteenth century onwards,²⁸ while Bristol's Irish trade was directed mainly to the ports of southern and south-eastern Ireland, viz. Cork, Kinsale, Youghal, Waterford, New Ross, and Wexford.

The Anglo-Norman invasion profoundly affected not only the politics and racial composition ('the fact remains that Ireland would never again be Gaelic in the sense that it had been before 1169')²⁹ but also the economy of medieval Ireland. While some of the changes which occurred in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were due to factors other than the invasion, not the least of which was the demographic revolution and economic growth which Europe as a whole witnessed in this period, there is no doubt that the invasion and settlement, quite apart from its political consequences, brought pronounced social and economic innovation. This included the introduction into Ireland of the feudal socio-economic system. Part of this process was the establishment of the manorial economy in the conquered areas. Thus, an inflow of settlers increased the population of Ireland, undermined finally in the conquered and settled areas the traditional bonds of kindred society, and contributed greatly to the considerable growth which thirteenth century Ireland witnessed. An increased population also made available to lords the labour services necessary to sustain the labour intensive, arable farming, manorial economy. Moreover, the steady increase in agricultural prices, particularly cereal prices, combined with the continuing decline in labour costs in real terms, as inflation eroded the value of money wages, greatly increased agricultural profitability and encouraged the growth of demesne farming.³⁰ This, in turn, made available the vast surplus of corn for export which was so pronounced a feature of agricultural production in thirteenth and early fourteenth century Ireland.³¹

Political developments in the period also had important economic consequences. With the creation of the English lordship of Ireland by Henry II, Ireland became part of the dominions of the crown of England. This intensified existing trading and cultural links with England, especially Chester, Bristol and (later) other developing ports in the English west country, notably Minehead, Ilfracombe, Barnstaple, Padstow, St. Ives, Fowey, Plymouth, Dartmouth, Exeter, and Poole, and with Gascony (for long a source of wine supply for Ireland) and Normandy which, likewise, had an established pattern of trade with Ireland.³² The political connection with England had economic effects in other ways also. Irish commerce was further promoted, particularly in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, by an influx of Italian merchant bankers who acted as tax collectors for the English crown. In this capacity, they collected in Ireland, as in England, the Great or Ancient Custom, which was imposed by Edward I on the export of wool, woolfells and hides in 1275. Quite quickly they extended their activities beyond tax gathering and engaged in large scale, not least speculative, trading ventures.³³

Irish overseas trade extended beyond the dominions of the English crown and, in the course of the thirteenth century particularly, an extensive trading network linking Ireland with important commercial centres in continental Europe was developed. The basic trading area on the European mainland extended from the Low Countries to south-west France, although activity appears to have been more concentrated on the latter region.³⁴ Irish trade, however, was not unknown in the Baltic region, if only exceptionally extending to such ports as Danzig, but it is very doubtful that direct trading was extensive in that region.³⁵ Trade with Spain and Portugal developed appreciably in the fourteenth century and intensified in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.³⁶ Although Irish trade with southern Europe was principally with the countries of the Iberian peninsula, at least on occasion, Irish wool was exported to northern Italy.³⁷

In response to these buoyant economic conditions, which brought about a remarkable growth in trade, there was considerable growth in settlement, both agrarian and urban, in thirteenth century Ireland.³⁸ Particularly important in this connection was a striking urban growth and expansion. Existing towns flourished and expanded and many new ones were founded. This was particularly so in the case of the seaport towns of Viking origin, but growth was by no means confined to them. In general, it can be said that political, demographic and economic factors combined in Ireland to promote urban growth. This was accompanied by the development of an extensive network of weekly markets and yearly fairs which, apart from their local trading significance, acted as points for the distribution and marketing of imported goods and the collection for export of goods produced in their localities. Thus, together the boroughs, markets (some but not all of which were associated with boroughs) and fairs constituted an impressive commercial infrastructure.

Most of these markets and fairs were established in the course of the thirteenth century, very many of them in the first half of that century. Thus, in 1234, markets were established at Youghal, Buttevant and Carrigtohill, Co. Cork, and Buttevant also acquired a yearly fair. In 1242, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, was given the right to hold a yearly fair, while, by mid-century, Innishannon, Co. Cork, had both a market and a fair.

Other examples of yearly fairs established before 1230 are Limerick, Waterford, Dublin (apparently established by Henry II and confirmed in 1204, Dublin being again confirmed in 1214, 1215 and 1229), the archiepiscopal liberties of Dublin (1226) and Swords (1213), Co. Dublin, Naas (1226), Co.

Kildare, Ferns and Enniscorthy (1226), co. Wexford, Tipperary (1226), Athassel (1224), Clonmel (1225) and Cashel (1228), Co. Tipperary, Adare and Knockainy (1226), co. Limerick, Ballymore (1204), Athlone (1221) and Mullingar (1207 and 1226), Co. Westmeath, Trim and Kells (1204), Nobber (1227) and Dunboyne (1229), Co. Meath, Drogheda (1221), Dundalk (1230), the royal manor of Louth (1221) and Carlingford (1227), Co. Louth. By 1230 also weekly markets existed, for example, at the archiepiscopal liberties in Dublin (1226), Clonmore (1226, 1230), Co. Louth, Dunboyne (1226) and Rathkenny (1229), Co. Meath, Enniscorthy and Ferns (1226), Co. Wexford, Bray (1213), Co. Wicklow, Emly (1215), Co. Tipperary and Mungret (1225), Co. Limerick. ³⁹

By the end of the thirteenth century, in County Cork alone at least 37 market towns were known to the English government in Ireland. These were the city of Cork and the towns of Timoleague, Carrigtohill, Buttevant, Ballyhay, Middleton, Castlemartyr, Cloyne, Mogeely, Tallow, Corkbeg, Glanworth, Castlelyons, Shandon, Mallow, Bridgetown, Ballynamona, Carrig, Kilworth, Mitchelstown, Ballynoe, Carrigrohane, Ballinacurra, Doneraile, Dunbulloge, Innishannon, Grenagh, Ballyhooly, Kinsale, Ringrone, Ringcurran, Ovens, Castlemore, Ballinaboy, Carrigaline, Douglas, and 'del Fayth', which was located in the bishop's town in the present Barrack St./Dean St. area of Cork city. ⁴⁰

It will be noted that all the markets and fairs set out above were located in the areas most densely settled and heavily manorialized by the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

By the fourteenth century, the English lordship of Ireland was clearly in crisis. The malaise which now affected it was 'produced by both political and economic factors' notably the 'political dislocation resulting from the decline of the authority in Ireland of the crown of England ... and the general fourteenth-century economic malaise aggravated especially by the Black Death which affected Europe as a whole.' ⁴¹ A combination of political turbulence and lawlessness in Ireland, particularly in the fourteenth century, 'contributed greatly to economic dislocation also. Internal trading routes linking particularly the seaport towns ... with the network of market towns and markets in the interior (the development of which had been such a striking feature of the growth of the economy and polity of Ireland in the thirteenth century) became more difficult and hazardous to traverse, at least for so long as the hinterland lacked government by some firm on authority.' ⁴² That situation was compounded by incessant attacks on shipping and disruption of maritime trading routes in the course of the Hundred Years War and, indeed, afterwards. Finally, economic contraction in Ireland, it has been argued, ⁴³ was due also to deteriorating climatic conditions. The consequential decline in population and the contraction of settlement produced marked agricultural decline particularly in arable farming. As a result, cereal production sharply declined. Accordingly, Ireland ceased to be a major cereal exporter and, in particular, the south and south-east regions needed to import substantial quantities of corn to meet their needs.

The polity of late medieval Ireland was exceedingly complex. By the fifteenth century, 'English' Ireland consisted essentially of (1) a relatively small area centred on Dublin under the direct control of the royal administration and commonly called the Pale and (2) the great Anglo-Irish feudal lordships which owed nominal allegiance to the English crown but which, in practice, were autonomous. The remainder of the island was in the hands of various Irish rulers. Between the two races, however, there was considerable interaction, including strong trading contacts, which was reflected in the pattern of Irish

overseas trade.

In late medieval Ireland economic conditions also varied. Although towns existed in Gaelic Ireland and overseas trade was conducted with all the Irish coastal regions, the seaport towns of 'English' Ireland were the most developed socially and economically. Subject only to the ultimate authority of the great feudal lords, these towns were governed by urban patriciates who controlled the bulk of the overseas trade of the towns. These merchants became increasingly wealthy as trade, internal and external, recovered in the course of the fifteenth century. Economic recovery continued into the sixteenth century and produced sufficient wealth to finance increasing imports of manufactured and luxury goods. Quite apart from the staple commodities of wine, iron and salt, Ireland needed to import manufactures, for the most part goods of high or relatively high unit value. By contrast, Irish exports, whether from Gaelic or 'English' Ireland, consisted largely of primary commodities (principally hides, skins and fish, especially salmon, hake and herring), that is to say goods of low unit value. ⁴⁴

The economic recovery which late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Ireland witnessed was reflected not least in a significant urban revival and renewal. This resurgence of town life and a burgeoning economy increased the wealth of the ruling urban patriciates and strengthened their position. A striking feature of the new conditions was a marked revival of the seaport towns. ⁴⁵ Not only did the major ports prosper, but so also did ports like Dungarvan which never rose above the third rank because it was overshadowed by Youghal, on the one hand, and New Ross and Waterford, on the other. ⁴⁶ Moreover, ports such as Ballyhack, Co. Wexford, for the first time featured in overseas trade, if only on a limited scale, and Ballyhack was not unique as can clearly be seen from an examination of the records concerning Irish trade with Bordeaux in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The Irish ports mentioned in regard to that trade, a trade by no means confined to wine, were the following: Youghal, Waterford, Kinsale, Cork, Dublin, Drogheda, Galway, Limerick, Dingle, Dungarvan, Baltimore, Sligo, Lough Foyle (Derry), Skerries (Co. Dublin), Dundalk, Ballinskelligs, and Valencia Island. ⁴⁷

At the end of the middle ages, therefore, although culturally divided, politically fragmented and economically underdeveloped, Ireland experienced some measure of economic revival, and urban renewal and growth and, certainly by Irish standards, it enjoyed a modest prosperity.

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Notes:

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11. Wallace, op. cit. 132.
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20. Hol, op. cit. 344.
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BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT IN IRELAND: THE CONTRIBUTION OF AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

For many years now archaeologists have relied on excavations to provide the information necessary to reconstruct aspects of prehistoric settlement in Ireland. Excavations provide us with significant insights into the function and economy of individual sites. However, questions concerning the extent of settlement throughout prehistory still remain.

The systematic use of aerial photography is a relatively recent development in archaeological research in Ireland. Projects such as the Sites and Monuments Record Office of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, OPW, have maximised the use of existing aerial photography, in particular the vertical stereoscopic collections of the Army Air Corps, the Geological Survey of Ireland and the Ordnance Survey. To date, few vertical surveys have been carried out for specifically archaeological purposes. The Cambridge Collection of aerial photographs still forms the principal source of oblique photography and contributes much to our knowledge of subsurface archaeological remains through cropmarks and soilmarks.

At its simplest, the evidence to date for the development of Bronze Age society indicates a ceremonial focus in the Early Bronze Age through to what appears to be a more secular society in the Late Bronze Age, with an emphasis on hillforts and prestige artefacts which indicate a high degree of material wealth. The funerary background also reflects the changing view of the landscape in the Bronze Age, with widespread use of burial mounds and barrows in the Early Bronze Age, the less obvious secondary burials and ringditch complexes of the Middle Bronze Age, and an apparent absence of burial rite in the Late Bronze Age.

Aerial photography can make an obvious contribution to tracing Bronze Age settlement across the landscape. Significant sites and complexes have been recognised throughout the country; for example, the identification of a complex of barrows and earthen embanked enclosures in the vicinity of Boyle, Co. Roscommon, has highlighted an important Early Bronze Age ceremonial focus in the heart of the ancient territory of Moy Lurg. These large, community-built monuments provided a focus for the barrow complexes located to the south of the River Boyle. Aerial photography ultimately provides the dryland evidence of sustained prehistoric settlement for the crannogs in Lough Gara excavated by the late Dr Joseph Raftery in the 1950s. At the Giant's Ring, just outside Belfast, Barrie Hartwell, QUB, has used aerial photography to discover a significant number of previously unknown subsurface remains, including ceremonial post pit circles, in the vicinity of the well known embanked enclosure there.

The Middle Bronze Age sites are not as easily identified in the landscape, but aerial photography in the SE Limerick region has highlighted the existence of a large number of ringditch

cemeteries, low visibility sites best appreciated from the air, which date to this period. Of greater interest in terms of settlement are the remains of field systems and enclosures often found in close association with these cemeteries. Similar ploughed-out sites have been identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs in the Nore and Barrow valleys in Counties Kilkenny and Carlow.

Hillforts, which display increasing evidence of Late Bronze Age origins, have been one of the most singularly significant monument types to be identified on aerial photographs. Many of the sites are so large as to be missed on the ground; indeed, identification of spectacularly large sites and their grouping indicate the significance of, for example, the Baltinglass area in the later prehistoric period. More recent discoveries made as part of the North Munster Project of the Discovery Programme highlight the existence of two large hillforts in the general vicinity of Killaloe in Counties Clare and Tipperary. In these cases fragmentary evidence of the hillforts has been followed up by a programme of oblique aerial photography, which in the case of the Fermoy hillfort has aided in the identification of the other half of the monument.

In a sense the identification of these spectacular sites is (with hindsight) a relatively easy task. Much more difficult, however, is the assessment of the significance of these monuments in terms of the development of the Bronze Age landscape. Again, the evidence of aerial photography can sharpen our appreciation not only of the sites themselves but also of the landscape in which they are located.

Current research in the North Munster Project is addressing the question of the overall development of the landscape in the prehistoric and early historic periods in order to understand the few visible indicators of late prehistoric activity. This information is being combined with the records of finds of archaeological artefacts, in particular Late Bronze Age hoards, with interesting results even at this stage of preliminary assessment.

Some of the information emphasises the historical value of the aerial photographs as a record of the landscape. Fragments of co-axial field systems and nucleated field systems have been identified on the images; many of these are no longer visible in the field because of recent reclamation. Thus the aerial photograph is the only evidence for the existence of the field patterns which must have formed the backbone of the prehistoric landscape. The exposed karst of the Burren region is well known for the palimpsest of prehistoric field systems which survive there. Recent results have shown similar survival in the grassland areas of SE Clare, barely visible at ground level even under the optimum lighting conditions.

Current research has been looking in detail at what could be termed the 'provincial royal capitals' of Navan, Co. Armagh, Dun Aillinne, Co. Kildare, Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon, and Tara, Co. Meath. Significant parts of these landscapes are Bronze Age, for example the hillfort known as Haughey's Fort and the ritual man-made pond known as the King's Stables at the Navan complex. Because of the scale, diversity and even the individual characteristics of the monuments in these complexes it is clear that they were of immense significance throughout the prehistoric period, clearly linked even in the Iron Age to ceremonial and kingship. Recently, similar sites have been identified on aerial photographs in the Knockainy/Bruree region, Co. Limerick, which indicate 'royal' associations at least in the Early and Middle Bronze Age. While these sites are not concentrated on a single location like the remains at Tara, their presence most likely indicates a 'royal' focus in at least one part of Munster which may be the 'Mumu' equivalent of the other better known provincial centres.

In summary, aerial photographic research is having a significant impact on our knowledge of the Bronze Age landscape, and in a sense what we get from the photographs depends on our agenda of questions. Indeed, one of the most exciting contributions is the identification of large Bronze Age complexes which, in the absence of documentary evidence, challenges those interested in Irish historic settlement studies to reconstruct the 'politics' of the period based on the emerging, apparently territorial, significance of these remains.

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DOING LOCAL HISTORY

At first sight the question "What do local historians do?" seems a silly one. The term itself seems self explanatory: it is the writing of history using one locality as a unit of study rather than the nation, a continent or even the world. A well defined sense of place, or, as Estyn Evans described it, 'personality', constitutes the appeal of local history for many of its practitioners. Yet, that very strength may also be a fatal weakness in the practice of the study of the local past. The work of the Ordnance Survey in the nineteenth century produced a geography of townlands, parishes, baronies and counties all defined with precision and used as a basis for the collection of much of the data which historians use. Units such as counties were reinforced in the popular mind by the rise of the provincial press and the G.A.A. Under these influences place becomes our organising principal and the basis of the questions which we ask about the past. We become absorbed with place to the exclusion of other more important ways of looking at the past.

Impressed by the spatial organisation of the evidence produced by government since the seventeenth century, local historians have often forgotten the origin of those units. They were created and maintained by people who found it useful to divide the landscape into blocks for taxation, legal, ecclesiastical or other purposes. Sixteenth and seventeenth century land disputes were resolved, not by consulting maps, but by calling together the oldest inhabitants of the area to recall what they had remembered or been told of the boundaries of a particular territory. Where they found boundaries and land units useful they remembered them but equally the boundaries of redundant or unoccupied land were quickly forgotten. The Irish landscape, as much as its English counterpart, was made by people and it is the shapers of that landscape which should lie at the centre of the world which local historian should strive to recreate for his or her readers.

To shift the attention of the local historian away from a particular place towards the people in it complicates the local historians task. It expands the options for study away from the traditional townland, parish or county to a wider range of units which were relevant to people in the past. A river valley, such as the Nore or the Suir, may have created as great a sense of shared identity as the more traditional parochial or county communities and the landed estate certainly provided enough commonalities to make it as significant in the lives of people as the county was. Thinking in this way quickly makes it clear that people in the past, living in a restricted geographical area, belonged, not to one community determined by geography, but to a network of communities. The same individual might belong to a religious group (meeting in a parish), be a farmer or trader (doing business at a market or fair) and a political activist (meeting in various societies).

In this way the distinction between local and national history disappears. The people of one region (whatever that might be) were linked by a network of contacts into sub-regional and regional groups and finally to a national level. What is important about the local dimension is how ideas formulated at national level were adopted and adapted in the localities. A nineteenth century parish priest was almost certainly trained centrally at Maynooth and armed with the penny catechism but what did his flock make of that figure? Only a study of the folklore of religion at local level will answer this sort of question. Again, national figures, such as Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell, might have well-articulated political ideas but we need to know who were the brokers between the national and local worlds who organised local support. What did such local political groups perceive to be the end they were working towards. Again, landlords who visited Dublin for the season and sat in parliament were brokers, bringing new ideas of social order, agricultural improvement and the latest fashions into the local world.

Beginning a local study by asking questions about people rather than places opens up a number of well defined questions: how many people were there and how were they distributed throughout the locality: what were their contacts with the outside world through, for example, travel and emigration; how did they distribute the resources of the locality, such as land, among themselves and what happened when disputes arose over the distribution of those resources; what was the role of the landlord in the locality and so on.

One fruitful area for exploring local mentalities is that of sociability. Clubs and societies, such as the Orange Order, the Freemasons, the fenians and the A.O.H., all provide evidence of how society worked at a local level. More informally, patterns of marriage and visiting provide evidence of the sort of worlds in which different social groups moved and helped in building up a picture of the cultural regions which made up Ireland to complement the pattern of administrative divisions.

Sociability, of course, does not take place in some anonymous world but rather the actors play out their roles on a familiar stage of the local landscape both natural and man made. It is vitally important to understand this setting. Since houses are essentially man made spaces for living, the way in which houses are laid out can often provide important clues as to relations within families. The material culture of the past provides an indication of wealth and social stratification and an understanding of agricultural technology and how it changed helps us to understand the limits which constrained people in exploiting their resources. Even topography and archaeological monuments rarely exist in isolation but are surrounded by folklore and explanations of their use and functions. This is important in interpreting how people understand their world and how they attempted to explain it to themselves and others.

To illustrate the importance of this approach of trying to view the local past through the eyes of people it is useful to look at the case of parish history or the history of a church. To begin by focusing on a building or a territorial unit is to risk concentrating excessively on the fabric of the building, lists of the clergy who officiated there or the services, such as education, which were provided by the parish. All these are important but they are by no means the whole story of what the people who worshipped in that building at different times thought and how they acted. To think of the parish or church not as an institution but rather as a place of religious sociability is to broaden the range of our understanding. Worship in the church becomes only part of the story and other occasions of religious sociability, such as visits to the holy well or other local centre of pilgrimage, and also what

happened at these venues, become important. Other occasions of religious sociability such as Sunday-schools, sodalities and other religious assemblies also need to be studied. Moreover, looking at the church through the eyes of the people in it forces us to take seriously the issue of what these people believed. In particular this raises the question of what beliefs were shared within the local religious communities and which ideas divided them. To write the history only of one religious group in an area is to miss an important part of the story. To write the history of a group of people in a parish from the point of view of the pulpit is equally misleading. The ideas of people in the past were not dictated by the clergy. Ideas drawn from formal theology were certainly important in shaping views of the supernatural but, equally, tradition, experience, and stories about fairies, ghosts and banshees played a part. To understand what people in the localities of Ireland really believed about the supernatural world is one of the biggest challenges facing the local historian today. It requires a sophisticated approach with the ability to be equally at home with the folktale and the sermon.

Writing local history is not an easy task. Ireland has a fine tradition of local history from the medieval annalists onwards. That is a tradition we need to foster and develop. In particular, we need a great deal more work to be done on primary sources. Much less was destroyed in the 1922 fire in the Public Record Office than is generally believed and much more exists in untapped treasures, such as estate papers, the Valuation Office, the Registry of Deeds, the Folklore Commission, nineteenth century novels and the newspapers. We need to be more creative in our use of sources but I have no doubt that the local historians of Ireland will rise to the challenge.

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HERITAGE AND 'AUTHENTICITY' : a reply to Patrick Duffy.

In the first issue of this Newsletter, Patrick Duffy raised the large, complicated and difficult issue of conflict in and between tourism and heritage. Large, because large sums are being spent, complicated, because both these two concepts are like boxes containing other boxes, and difficult because the concepts are the focus of sharp problems of identity, history and modernity. At the conclusion he asks whether or not a scholarly body such as The Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement might not be able, with some changes, to undertake a more active role in promoting a greater understanding of the nature and effects of tourism and 'the heritage industry' on our understanding of the landscape and other major features of Ireland's cultural environment. This article both criticises and supports his contentions.

It is certain that public debate on these issues needs to be informed if not led by academic debate, because it is only through close study that one can understand what is happening. Part of this must be a questioning of terms, and here I want to move the debate forward, by arguing that Professor Duffy uses 'heritage' as if it were an unproblematic term. This emerges clearly in his treatment of 'landscape'.

What we call landscape is not something given, natural or (in his terms) 'authentic'. It is an artefact produced over centuries both by design and default. It is, amongst other matters, the product of concepts of ownership, rights and tenantry, just as surely as the engine of a car is the product of (and almost a

diagram of) formulae for the expansion of gases. It is just as surely the product of forms and methods of agriculture, and of the exploitation of natural resources. My understanding of the Ulster plantations (for example) is that they were driven as much by the insatiable demand for oak products, as by political or military pay-offs. Oak was as essential to the 17th century as oil and steel to the 20th; necessary as the primary material for shipbuilding and timber-frame housing, necessary as a medium of iron-smelting, necessary as the source of barrel staves and (possibly even more important) fish packing boxes. Lastly, green oak bark was necessary for tanning. Ulster contained the last great resources of oak in all the islands... ergo... Antrim, Derry (!) and Tyrone show the signs of deforestation to this day. The small field patterns, so common in Ireland, the poor quality of drainage, the amount of waste ground etc. are the product of a history that, where land ownership and use are concerned, has been poised between criminality and disaster.

Of course, with cultural expectations formed around the ideas of the Picturesque and the Sublime, we find the results delightful and celebrate it as 'scenery'. But 'authentic' it is not; and, with more space, I would argue very strongly that the notion of 'authentic', linked as it is to ideas of unspoilt, virtuous nature v. vicious and exploitative civilization, is actually a device whereby the disadvantaged are persuaded to collude in their own subordinate status. 'Scenery' and 'landscape' are aesthetic categories, not natural realities, and they are created and designated as part of a system of power.

So also with the tourist's 'sight-seeing'. As a form of social behaviour, it is decidedly odd. Its origins lie with the eighteenth century custom of viewing the world through the frame that one carried about on country walks, as a sort of non-recording camera. One 'framed' nature (preferably wild and 'authentic' nature with ruined abbeys and castles and cottages), then discussed the picturesque qualities. One composed one's own pictures. The relation of this to the postcard and the holiday snapshot is clear enough. A process of appropriation is at work. First, a site is objectified by framing; that framing leads to its commodification either as a photograph or (more subtly) as an 'experience'— which is then removed from its context and as it were assimilated into the life of the visitor. Looked at in this way, the primal process of consumer capitalism has its origins in the romantic concept of the picturesque. Modern tourism can be regarded as the mechanisation of the picturesque.

But the picturesque, though it may hark back to old, forgotten, far-off things, and battles long ago, is essentially defined by taste, not substantial history. It reduces the problems of the past to an aesthetic pleasure.

'Heritage' too may be part of an ideology that presents the past to us as something given and unproblematic. The 'stately homes and gardens' which two thirds of Ireland's tourist visitors frequent are a case in point. How are they experienced by our visitors? How do they understand what they have seen? To what degree do they come away comprehending the ambivalence of the 'big house' culture? And if they then go across to Britain, do they interpret great houses and estates in the same way?

On a larger scale, and taking off our hats to the 'peace process', what is this 'Ireland' whose 'heritage' they inspect? Is it a political or a geographic entity; or some kind of thing existing only in the mind? Robert Hewison argues that the British 'heritage industry' has to be understood against a climate of national decline; but against what background can an Irish heritage industry be studied? Certainly not decline. There is much that might be said about contemporary Ireland,

but decline would not be high on the list. Perhaps a movement toward an indigenous modernity. There is certainly some process of self-definition and reassessment at work, both politically and culturally, and a study of heritage has some part to play in it. And a major element in this process is the laying open of problems, contradictions and plain lies. Heritage, looked at in this way, becomes a site on which the present is being defined.

It is here that close academic work can be of real assistance, because it continually reveals the provisional and problematic character of historical knowledge. It is precisely because the past is always found to be more complicated than we thought, that academic history can act as a corrective to the simplified – and frequently tendentious – 'histories' of the heritage parks and interpretive centres. Somewhere, between the academic and the populist/commercial, lies a common history (or domain of histories) which can be told both directly and critically, which allows each visitor or listener or reader to participate in the judgements made. There are signs that this open-ended strategy of interpretation is being attempted, in such locations as Strokestown.

And this leads on to the second main point raised by Patrick Duffy; the tension between 'heritage' developed and brought into consciousness through local efforts, and that which is driven by tourist agencies and interests. If I am right in supposing that heritage is a site on which the present is being defined, then this tension really matters. Who is making the definitions, and in whose interests? What is happening when American, British and German consultants are brought in to advise local initiatives? What sort of process is at work when, at the Navan Fort Centre, the multi-media presentation (devised by a Manchester firm) takes us through the Táin without once hinting at the political implications it has north of the border? And following on that, what are the real and lasting economic benefits of a thriving tourist trade? What are the qualities, skills and status of the jobs created; are they any better than those provided by a 'big house'?

At the moment these questions can only be posed in a rhetorical fashion, because of the lack of an over-arching theory that would enable us to balance economic, ecological and cultural arguments within the same frame of reference. The answers to these questions must begin with close academic study, and they need to lead toward that broad theoretical picture within which such varied questions can be related constructively one to another.

The relations in and between tourism and heritage, and how they relate to the broader picture of history and self-definition, touch on the nerve centres of a modern life. This is why study groups are important.

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REVIEWS

AN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF IRELAND, by
B.J. Graham and L.J. Proudfoot London:
Academic Press, 1993. 454pp. £24.50stg.
ISBN 0-12-294881-5.

The twelve chapters in this book are arranged in a broad chronological sequence and offer a series of perspectives on the development of Ireland between, roughly, A.D.500 and the present century. Eight of the chapters are by persons based at

university geography or environmental studies departments, while the remaining four are contributed by persons with a background in history or economic history. For readers of this Newsletter, there is the particular interest that the three "medieval" chapters are contributed by two of the early stalwarts of the Group for the Study of Irish Historic settlement, namely Brian Graham and Terry Barry.

Any major initiative that contributes to the understanding of Ireland's complex past should be given a welcome, and there is no doubt that this book will have its value. For example, as well as a good analysis of the post-famine rural economy and two strikingly-clear descriptive chapters on Irish emigration overseas, the concluding chapter by Professor Willie Smyth of U.C.C., entitled "The making of Ireland: agendas and perspectives in cultural geography" pulsates with interesting insights that one only wishes had been given more sustained scrutiny by some of the other contributors. Another strong point is that this book cuts across disciplines, with some of the early modern chapters in particular providing extensive footnote references to the work of economic historians. At a fairly loose level of generalisation, the book affords useful perspectives on some of the social, economic and political structures and processes that may be relevant to understanding historical geography. In contrast, the physical structures, the landscape and the "feel" of the country, characteristics that might have been highlighted by geographers in the past, are here played down, and it is only in the final chapter that we are offered a map to show us the location of one of the major limitations to settlement, namely the distribution of boglands.

However, although I found the book a worthwhile and interesting read, I would have reservations over its claims to be "a comprehensive assessment..." and "an essential textbook for students of Irish historical geography and economic history". Indeed, reservations might also be expressed about the additional claims to "synthesise recent research" and "present it within an explicit theoretical framework". The flag is raised that "the empirical world is a succession of ideological representations, constituted by ever-changing forms of social order" (p.4), but – perhaps fortunately – the contributors follow it with decidedly-variable degrees of enthusiasm.

A textbook, it seems to me, should describe and explain much in the manner of the two chapters on emigration. But in some of the other chapters I feel the emphasis moves too rapidly to a highly selective discussion of views. There are over sixty figures and illustrations, yet a more generous provision of basic distribution maps (adequate in the medieval sections but thin in the early modern chapters) might have allowed readers make their own assessments of regional variation. Despite copious footnotes, many chapters give only a limited impression of the range of relevant past literature. Space does not permit much expansion of these comments, but, put broadly, it seems to me that too much proceeds by assertion and that too much has been assumed away. These problems stand out particularly starkly in the extraordinarily patchy and uneven introductory chapter which asserts (p.12) that "traditional modes of explanation are vested... within [the] traditional nationalist model". The "empiricism" and "insularity" of past work is vigorously attacked, but it is the manner of the attack which rankles, for here we have a series of fairly bald assertions that reduces the distinguished work of earlier scholars such as Evans and Jones Hughes to a misleading caricature. There are important and interesting ideas in this chapter, but to be credible they require much more systematic exploration. The editors, it seems to me, protest too much as to the significance of their "new" approach and the corresponding limitations of earlier

contributions. To appreciate better the ideas which are lurking but only partly elucidated in this chapter, readers will have to explore some of Brian Graham's other writings of recent years, most notably his thought-provoking "No place of the mind: contested Protestant representations of Ulster", *Ecumene*, 1, 1994, 257-282. 2nd his more comprehensive critique of Evans in "The search for the common ground: Estyn Evans's Ireland", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New series 19, 1994, 183-201.

Quite apart from this, however, I feel this book may disappoint geographers. Put simply, I feel there is too much history, particularly economic history, and not enough *geography*. This is particularly the case for several of the early modern chapters covering 1500 to around 1900. If you want to find out *where* things happened and how significant were regional variations, these chapters are often extremely coy about telling you. For example, the demographic chapter, which is unapologetically entitled "...history", is a clear (if in places flacid, e.g. "a less than providential Mother Ireland" on p.175) read, but gives little sustained attention to regional and local variation; its 108 references include less than half a dozen works by geographers. The contributions by Gillespie and Proudfoot likewise offer some important perspectives on the broad context but become very patchy about particular *places*. The title to one of Proudfoot's chapters "Regionalism and localism..." seems especially inappropriate given its extensive chunks of frequently-aspatial social history, while its sub-theme "religious change and social protest" is surely incomplete without, for example, an assessment of the development of the religious orders or a reference to Tom Garvin's strongly-geographical work on underground political networks (*Past & Present*, 96, 1982).

For a geographer too, it can be puzzling to see so little being made of some of the more potentially relevant works undertaken by geographers. For example, the complex messages embedded in the extensive work of J.H. Andrews receive only fleeting analysis, while Willie Nolan's *The shaping of Ireland* (1986) gets just a couple of isolated references. Willie Smyth's comparative work on the early modern experiences of Ireland and America (*Irish geography* 11, 1978) is ignored by Gillespie although a similar theme is being pursued. Most puzzling of all is the way in which T.W. Freeman's *Pre-famine Ireland* (1957) has been virtually eliminated. A single map, redrawn and generalised, is reproduced, but there is otherwise scarcely a reference to this masterpiece. It is ignored, both in the introduction purporting to discuss Irish historical geography and in the crucial chapter on population history. Yet the meticulous detail and the pervasive sense of local variety that were hall-marks of Freeman – indeed, dare one say it, his empiricism – are qualities that would have enhanced the present book. In summary, readers may find themselves using *An historical geography of Ireland* more for some of its worthwhile general perspectives than as "an essential text." Surely there is more variety and life in Irish historical geography than my be suspected from much of this book?

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Have you renewed your annual subscription for 1994-95
(due 1st May, 1994)?

URBAN IMPROVEMENT IN PROVINCIAL IRELAND 1700 – 1840, By B.J. Graham and L.J. Proudfoot. Irish Settlement Studies, No. 4. The Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement, 1994. 60pp IR£6.00 pb.

Since there are few avenues in Ireland for publishing research results whose remit and scale fall above and beyond the length of an article but remain considerably shorter than normal book length, it is indeed appropriate that the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement has provided this kind of launching pad for works of this kind. It is then a pleasure to welcome the appearance of another thought – provoking monograph under the imprint of this Group. It is the fourth in their series of monographs but for whatever reasons notice of the preceding ones in this series are not mentioned anywhere. This volume is the fruit of cooperation between two now well known scholars and, besides the interpersonal cooperation involved, it is fitting to record the assistance of a trust which sponsored the research, as well as the contributions of a number of supportive individuals besides the editorial work of Dr. Kevin Whelan.

The piece is organised under six main chapter headings besides a brief introduction. The colour cover illustration of Ramelton, County Donegal adds an appealing dimension to the work, no doubt making it a more attractive proposition for the book browser and likewise a series of attractive plates of different settlements make for a welcome addition. The maps, however, are another question. There are eighteen of them but many are small, extremely selective on detail and perfunctory in design. This renders the purpose of some of them unclear and, more troublesome is the fact that they do not carry dates or sources. In one or two instances a page size reproduction might have been more advisable given the clutter of detail and the significance of the contents.

"Improvement" is then addressed under six main headings namely, morphology, social context, spatial incidence, the landowning instigators, the dimensions of the processes of improvement and, finally, a chronological framework is suggested. Some might feel that there is a certain looseness relating to the manner in which the conception of improvement is handled and, the bounded time period selected might be felt by some to be arbitrary, in that the transformations they discuss were not neatly enveloped within a century. The authors correctly question the validity and currency now given to the term "landlord town", given the enhancement of settlements was not solely the result of initiatives launched by an individual magnate. Towns like Macroom in county Cork, for instance, benefited at different times from the activities of three separate individuals, two of which could be considered as magnates and the other as a developer-speculator. But rentiers and legions of undertenants also participated in improvement schemes of one kind or another. In other cases corporate bodies also sponsored improvements in towns, particularly those where they held substantial property portfolios. A broader and more comprehensive discussion of the issue of improvement and its diverse manifestations and the conceptual baggage that sustained it might have sharpened the rather brief overall introduction to this crucial topic. A glance at any of the urban maps prepared, for instance, by the so-called "French School of Surveyors" illustrates other no less obvious dimensions of individual enterprise, namely the exquisitely laid-out gardens attached to many often unpretentious domestic residences. The minute books of corporate authorities might also be another useful source worthy of mining. Deeds, depositions and wills might provide additional material specifying the activities of the more comfortable elements of urban society.

The first chapter which addresses morphology derives inferences from the layout of the settlements regarding the concepts and idealism that inspired their creators. The role of the Enlightenment is especially noted as a major consideration. In the case of many Irish improved settlements, the authors stress that there is frequently a strange juxtaposition between grandiose planning principles and much more pedestrian domestic buildings forms, though some of the public buildings, such as churches, are often a cut above the residential buildings.

Arguing against a reductionist vision of landlord involvement by placing too much emphasis upon a small number of large scale examples, they claim that centres which display a considerable degree of morphological coherence are exceptional. At street level too, they argue, architectural variety is more common than uniformity. In addition they correctly stress that an army of individuals besides major landlords were actively engaged in improvement schemes but they do not have much to say about this important dimension.

The social context of improvement forms the substance of the second chapter which is mainly devoted to a critical gloss of the literature on this topic. It is examined under the following headings, namely; the landowning elites in eighteenth and nineteenth century Ireland; landlords and tenants and landlords, estates and their management. They argue that this class was by no means monolithic, nor was it uniform, hence their capacity to expedite change was often severely encumbered.

The third chapter deals with the difficulties of arriving at an acceptable definition of settlement improvement which could command support. Some 750 settlements fall into the "improved" category c.1840 on the basis of a checklist of traits. Strangely this important catalogue is relegated to an appendix at the end of the work. The employment of a filter of this kind, the authors admit, raises its own problems because change was often incremental and, or, sponsored by different agents. It is a pity then that there is no inventory of settlements so the reader could assess the logic of their classification but space constraints impose obvious problems. For these reason the classification procedure on figure 13 could do with more explanation, and, as this is an important map, would not a full page reproduction have been better? Finally their useful map (Fig. 18), which depicts the ratio of improved towns to cultivated areas raises interesting questions, one of which might be, the ratio of planned settlements to all other urban settlements per county.

Motivations for improvement are the concern of the next chapter and here political, social and aesthetic consideration are singled out for attention. Chapter five examines the principal processes claimed by the authors to be responsible for propelling the ethos of improvement into built realities. A consideration of the chronology of improvement completes the analysis and here the role of tenurial practise and the agency of institutions are evaluated.

On balance then the authors deserve to be congratulated for this addition to the literature, but it is clear that they have yet to make available a more detailed report on their ongoing research on settlement improvements in Ireland.

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PAST PERCEPTIONS: the Prehistoric Archaeology of South-West Ireland, E. Shee-Twohig and M. Ronayne (eds), Cork University Press 1993 183pp IR£17.95 pb. ISBN 0-902561-89-8

This volume contains sixteen papers presented at a conference held in University College Cork in February 1992, and two additional papers outlining the results of research projects in the region. South-west Ireland is defined by the editors as counties Cork, Kerry and Limerick, although South Tipperary and Clare are included in some of the contributions.

The contents are divided into three sections of which the first and largest, *Interpreting the Past*, has thirteen papers ranging from period surveys (Mesolithic to late Bronze Age) to in-depth studies of individual sites, site-types and chronology. The second section, *Surveying the Past*, which has three papers on the process of making archaeological surveys, would have been inconceivable little more than a decade ago when surveys were second-fiddle to excavations in the profession. The final section of the book, *Perceptions of the Past*, contains two reflective papers that seek to direct our thoughts to what we need to do next.

Settlement historians will find comparatively little to interest them in this volume: only one paper – that by Doody – deals explicitly with settlement, although articles on the sites at Ferriter's Cove and Lough Gur, and on the evidence for early farming in the south-west, are among a number relevant to the subject. Much of the record for the prehistoric south-west is comprised of artefacts and so-called "ritual" monuments, and settlement patterns can only be guessed at from the distributions of these two bodies of material; early prehistoric domestic sites in Ireland are generally found by chance rather than by design: thus, for example, the two sites described by Doody in his paper only became known when the Cork-Dublin natural gas pipeline was being laid a decade ago.

If there is a weakness in the book it has to do with the contextualisation of the data presented. Nobody could disagree with the editors in their assertion that "consideration should be given to local, regional, national and international trends when examining the prehistory of a particular area" (p156). But there is a tendency among the contributors, and it is particularly noticeable among those dealing with the Early Bronze Age, to treat the south-west in isolation when they move from the description of material into analysis. At worst the narrow geographical perspective is misleading to the non-specialist because it wrongly gives the impression that certain classes are confined to, or are most numerous in, the south-west; at best it is simply a missed opportunity to put the regional record in a context that allows us to assess its significance. O'Brien, for example, who makes available and discusses radiocarbon dates from wedge tombs in the south-west, barely acknowledges the existence of such tombs elsewhere in Ireland in his discussion of the origins of this type of monument. Walsh makes use of the evidence of survey rather than excavation in his account of stone circles and alignments, but again, if discussion of date and context is to be of value, it requires some allusion to the presence of these monuments elsewhere in Ireland. O'Sullivan and Sheehan claim that Rock Art is "predominantly a phenomenon of peninsular Kerry" (p75); what about the concentrations of Rock Art in places as far flung as Carlow, Kilkenny, Louth/Monaghan and Donegal?

The final two papers in the volume actually bear out this point about broader context: that by the editors, entitled of "A New Agenda: the South-West and Beyond," provides a summary of sorts, and raises questions that the editors might have asked

their contributors to address in their papers. The other paper, by Bradley, is explicitly about questions; in a short essay of about 2,500 words, he asks no less than 17 questions, many of which, again, have to do with broader, contextual, interpretation.

This criticism apart, there is much of value here, and we might not only congratulate the editors but marvel at their success in extracting texts from contributors and getting them into print so soon after the conference. The retail price of £17.95 is steep for a small format (18.5cm x 24.5cm) paperback of only 183 pages, but it is what we have come to expect of new books. One quibble with the publishers: margins less than 1cm wide are unattractive and unwieldy.

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DUBLIN.

DECODING THE LANDSCAPE, edited by Timothy Collins, Galway: Centre for Landscape Studies, University College, Galway, 1994. 170pp. IR£12.00 pb ISBN 0-907775-70-5

As the editor of this collection suggests, the landscape holds out the promise of forming a true integrating object of study in a world fragmented by specialisms. This book presents the work of scholars in various disciplines, all of them sharing a common interest in the landscape in its visible, cultural, literary and metaphysical dimensions. There are geographers, an anthropologist, a landscape specialist, a map maker, English and Irish literary scholars, a broadcaster, a poet and an army officer. This review will focus on a selection of the papers, which vary in quality reflecting in some cases a rather eccentric editorial policy with not a few typographical errors. A couple of the papers, for example, appear to have been published as they were spoken which gives them a somewhat disjointed feel.

Leersen's paper examines the emergence of the Celtic fringe as a chronotype of a peripheral, rural, sublime and timeless world on the western edge of civilisation – "a transitional zone between the historical reality of the mainland and the eternal dreamscape of the ocean". This is an interesting analysis of a wider European intellectual tradition which emerged in the 18th century Romantic movement and which was further developed by the late 19th century Celtic revivalists. These were the landscapes celebrated by Synge and Paul Henry in pen and paint which continue today in the images of tourism and the imagination of the City. This interesting theme is further elaborated in a provocative paper by Sheeran which looks at the narrative construction of place – especially as represented by WB Yeats. Sheeran looks at landscapes as texts: "land and place are made up of language as much as, if not more than, they are made of earth and buildings". He examines the intertextual implications of landscapes where "the boundaries between fiction and reality blur and scripts and simulations of the real become more real than reality itself". Innisfree means little without Yeats and Lough Gill only becomes meaningful as the location of the hazel wood where the wandering Aengus caught the silver trout! It is appropriate for a literary scholar to emphasise the significance of landscape as a locus of stories, fables, texts, narratives, a mode of representation which, the author notes, continues to see the west of Ireland as a timeless holy place.

These sentiments on the west of Ireland are echoed in Kevin Whelan's essay rejecting Estyn Evans' preoccupation with this region as a timeless refuge of settlement patterns and ways of

account of the details of the successful achievement of that penetration and its consolidation in the face of opposition from all sides between the years 1538 and 1590. He attributes much of the credit for this success to Sorley Boy Macdonnell, a shrewd sibling of the Lord of the Isles, who was entrusted with management of the MacDonnells' Irish affairs throughout much of this crucial period of the clan's history. The culmination of Sorley's long career was the securing of royal recognition to the MacDonnell claims in the Glynns and the route. The footnotes suggest that the author has worked long and hard on the contemporary state papers. His book is strong on the military, diplomatic and political aspects of the MacDonnell penetration, but beyond a brief acknowledgement of the importance of MacDonnell sea power in the form of the Highland galleys, he has little to say on the details of migration or settlement.

While the fortunes of the Scottish side of the family declined, Sorley Boy's son and successor Randal Arranach, later first earl of Antrim, skilfully maintained the position at the time of MacDonnells in Ireland by adapting well to change at the time of the Ulster Plantation and placing the economy of the settlement on a firm foundation. This base enabled his son and successor, Randal, the second earl and first marquis of Antrim, to become an important player on the royalist side in the upheavels which led to the overthrow and death of King Charles I, a dramatic series of events which convulsed Scotland and Ireland as much as England, and continues to be a major preoccupation of historians of the seventeenth century. A Scottish army crossed to Ireland at this time, while an Ulster army went to Scotland. Randal was adept at surviving it all, dying peacefully in his bed near Dunluce in 1683. His descendants are still honourably represented in the Antrim Glynns to this very day.

Jane Ohlmeyer's biography of Randal, the second earl, places him firmly in his turbulent times, analyses his important political career, and assesses his character and attitudes with more sympathy and comprehension than most scholars heretofore. Her study is based on an exhaustive combing of contemporary sources - the accompanying bibliography is just short of fifty pages long! But, besides being, scholarly, her book is a thoroughly good "read". Although her concern is not primarily with settlement, she does have a certain amount to say on that subject in relation to such matters as the earl's progressive management of his estates, his improvements at Dunluce Castle, his relations with his kinsfolk and clansmen, and the movements of displaced people during hostilities.

Civil war and restoration in the three kingdoms may be rated an outstanding contribution to Irish historiography, not alone as the definitive treatment of its subject, but as a standard against which to measure all future biographies of other seventeenth-century Irish personalities. Together with *Raymond Gillespie's Colonial Ulster: the settlement of east Ulster 1600-1611* and Philip Robinson's *The plantation of Ulster*, the books under review would make an excellent preparation, in respect of the early modern period, for the Group's planned conference in County Antrim next May.

HARMAN MURTAGH

NOTICE BOARD

BALLYVAUGHAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP
BURREN WEEKEND
Friday 3rd. to Sunday 5th. February, 1995
Theme: 'Castles on the landscape, with particular reference to the Burren'.
Venue: Hyland's Hotel, Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare.
Secretariat: Mrs Mary Hawkes 065/77200 & 77091

CLARE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
7th. to 9th. April, 1995
Theme: 'Prehistoric Ireland'
Venue: Queen's Hotel, Ennis
Programme and booking: Mr John Culliney (Hon. Sec.)
Ballyalla, Ennis

ROSCREA SPRING CONFERENCE
Friday 21st. to Sunday 23rd. April, 1995
Theme: 'Christianity and The Environment in the Early Middle Ages'
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 FOR THE STUDY OF IRISH HISTORIC SETTLEMENT
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1995
Friday 5th. to Sunday 7th. May 1995
Theme: 'Settlement in the Antrim Coast and Glens and the influence of the narrow sea on Irish and Scottish settlement patterns'
Venue: Londonderry Arms Hotel, Carnlough, Co. Antrim
Lecturers will include Dr. Cahal Dallat (Glens of Antrim Historical Society); Dr. Sean Duffy (Trinity College Dublin); Dr. T. E. McNeill (Queen's University, Belfast); Dr. Raymond Gillespie (St. Patrick's College, Maynooth); Dr. W. H. Crawford (Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast) - programme to be completed.

GROUP NEWS

COMMITTEE 1994-95

Following the 1994 Annual General Meeting, held on Sunday 15th. May, 1994, in conjunction with the annual confrence in Youghal, the Committee elected for the year 1994-95 was as follows:-

- | | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| President | : | Dr. Annagret Simms, MRIA
Associate Professor of
Geography, University
College Dublin. |
| Hon. Secretary | : | Mr. Michael O'Hanrahan,
Kilkenny Archaeological Society,
Kilkenny |
| Hon. Treasurer | : | Ms. Niamh Crowley, Waterford
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| 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.

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

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

Mr. Tadgh O'Keeffe,
Dept. of Archaeology
University College, Dublin. |

GROUP PUBLICATIONS

With the launch, at the 1994 annual conference in Youghal, of *Urban Improvement in Provincial Ireland, 1700-1840* by Brian J. Graham and Lindsay Proudfoot, the Group now has two monographs in its series *Irish Settlement Studies* in print simultaneously. The other is No. 3, *The Geography and Practice of English Colonisation in Ireland from 1534 to 1609* by Rolf Loeber. No. 1, *Anglo Norman Settlement in Ireland*, also by Brian J. Graham (1985) and No. 2, *Irish Tower Houses - a County Tipperary case study*, by Conrad T. Cairns (1987), are now out of print.

The joint authors of *Urban Improvement in Provincial Ireland, 1700-1840* are Brian J. Graham of the University of Ulster at Coleraine, a former president of the Group, and Lindsay Proudfoot of the School of Geosciences at the Queen's University, Belfast. The latest monograph deals with the morphology and social context of urban improvement between 1700 and the middle of the nineteenth century, the nature and distribution of small-town and village foundation and improvement, the role of the landowning elite and the processes and chronology of urban improvement during the period.

Both No. 3 - *The Geography and Practice of English Colonisation in Ireland, 1534-1609* and No. 4, *Urban Improvement in Provincial Ireland, 1700-1840*, are available from the Hon. Editor, Dr. Harman Murtagh, Mount View, Athlone at IR£6.00 including postage and packaging, and from selected bookshops.

Matthew Stout, Department of Geography, Trinity College, Dublin, is at work on No. 5 in the series, which will have as its subject *Ringforts in Ireland*, and will be published as soon as the costs of No. 4 have been recouped. This is now likely to be published in 1996 in conjunction with the annual conference.

In the meantime Dr. T. B. Barry is busy overseeing the publication of the much awaited review of twenty-five years of *Irish Settlement Studies* to be published by Routledge, hopefully in 1995.

EDITOR

ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1995

The 1995 annual conference (5th to 7th May) will be held in the Glens of Antrim at Carnlough. The conference venue will be the Londonderry Arms Hotel, built in the mid-nineteenth century by the Marchioness of Londonderry, probably as an inn for visitors whom she did not wish to entertain at Garron Tower, and subsequently inherited by her great-grandson, Sir Winston Churchill, who sold it in 1926. Carnlough nestles on Carnlough bay, at the foot of Glencloy; after Glenarm the southernmost of the nine 'Glens of Antrim', on the coast road built between 1832 and 1842, by *The Men of the Glynnnes* under the supervision of the Scottish engineer, William Bald. (At the time of its construction it was the biggest civil engineering project in Ireland costing £37,000). Bald's road was a military road designed to open up the Glens, which were perceived as disaffected. Despite the arrival of the road and, later in the century, the railway, the Glens retained their own identity and Irish was spoken here into the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Hurling remains a popular sport and there are hurling clubs in Glenarm, Glenariffe, Cushendall, Carey and Ballycastle.

The Scottish coast is visible from north east Antrim with, on clear days, views of the Mull of Kintyre and Ailsa Craig. At

Torr head, the narrowest crossing point, the sea is only twelve miles wide. From Fair head the islands of Arran, Islay and Jura may be seen. It is not surprising, therefore, that the history of this area is closely bound up with that of south-western Scotland. From 495 A.D., when Angus, Loarne and Fergus, the sons of Erc, King of Dalriada, crossed the *narrow sea* and established themselves in what is roughly modern Argyle to institute the Scottish Dalriada, and long before, close ties have existed between Antrim and Scotland. Irish missionaries are known to have crossed the *narrow sea* including St. Ciaran, who is commemorated in Kilkeeran in Kintyre and, of course, St. Columba (Colum Cille) who journeyed to Iona in 563.

In the thirteenth century the direction of migration was reversed when, following their murder, in 1242, of the Earl of Atholl, the Bisset family were banished from Scotland, but, instead of undertaking a penitential crusade to the Holy Land, crossed the *narrow sea* to Antrim. There they acquired, from Richard de Burgo, Earl of Ulster, the territory of the Glens and Rathlin island and built their first stone castle five miles north of Carnlough, at Red Bay, on the site of an earlier Norman motte. Following his defeat at the battle of Metheun, Robert Bruce found refuge with the Bissets on Rathlin, from where he returned to Scotland to defeat the English at the battle of Bannockburn. In 1306 Hugh Bisset suffered a temporary loss of his estates on Rathlin and in the Glens, to which he was subsequently restored. These estates continued in Bisset hands until John Mór MacDonnell, Lord of the Isles, married Margery Bisset, the sole heir to the Bisset patrimony in Antrim, in 1399, beginning a long period during which the history of north-east Antrim was to be bound up with the MacDonnells and their interactions with the McQuillans and O'Neills. Field trips, planned as part of the conference programme, will include visits to MacDonnell castles at Dunluce (6th May) and Glenarm (7th May), the seat of the present Earl of Antrim.

The archaeological evidence bears witness to 9,000 years of settlement in the Antrim coast and glens. Flint implements have been found on beach sites along the coast, while there is evidence of flint workings at Ballygalley and porcelain axe factory sites at both Tievebullagh and on Rathlin island. There are significant court tombs at Glenaan ('Ossian's Grave') and at Glenmakeeran. Rathes, cashels, crannógs and souterrains survive from the early christian period (5th. to 11th centuries). Remains of medieval churches are to be found at Layd (near Cushendall) and Bunamargy Frairy (Franciscan: near Ballycastle) built in 1485 by Rory McQuillan and paradoxically, the resting place of Sorley Boy MacDonnell. All that remains of another Franciscan friary, built at Glenarm by Robert Bisset in 1465, are a few carved stones preserved in the Church of Ireland parish church.

Full particulars of the conference programme of lectures and field trips and including accommodation list, conference fee, etc. will be sent to *paid-up* members in early March 1995

SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE

The annual subscription for 1994-95 (IR£5; students IR£3) was 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 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 28th. February 1995.