

RATHMICHAEL HISTORICAL RECORD

1993

EDITORIAL, 1993

A number of things have happened in 1993 to distinguish the year. The Irish archaeological world in general has been affected over the past few years by the incentives offered for building development in urban areas under the Urban Renewal Act. Many of these areas throughout the state are in the medieval cores of towns and the building boom that has resulted from these incentives has brought a parallel boom in archaeological excavation. It looks, however, as if this bonanza is coming to an end as the financial incentives depend on the buildings being completed by July 1994 and it is unlikely that this deadline will be extended. Archaeological investigation comes at the earlier stages of the development of a site and so already this aspect of archaeological work is winding down.

Some of the most exciting items to appear under this scheme have appeared this year. Most notably, two structures have been discovered in Dublin along the line of the city wall. The first of these was a thirteenth century building which came up in a development off Ross Road in the liberties close to the site of Geneval's tower. This structure is associated with parts of the city wall but does not seem to be the tower itself. A controversy blew up over the future of this tower, with proposals to "mothball" it underground for future investigation being rejected eventually in favour of making it accessible beneath the development which is under construction on the site. It is a pity that it needs a major controversy before funding is made available for this kind of work rather than funds being held in readiness for the unexpected. The other structure is the spectacular circular foundation of Isolde's tower which came to light beneath a group of buildings demolished on Essex Quay. This was an important tower as it

would have been the first part of the city's defences to be met by any force which might have sailed up the river. For the moment the structure remains clearly visible to the public from the footpath on Essex Quay.

Structures were also lost this year. In the Shankill area the most notable loss was Palermo, an 18th century house which had stood in a substantial demesne. The original house was built by an alderman of the City of Dublin in 1772 and burned down less than four years later. The site was left vacant until 1783 when it was bought by the Right Reverend William Gore, Lord Bishop of Limerick who set about building a substantial house that he could occupy while he was in Dublin to attend at the House of Lords. He did not live to enjoy the house, however, as he died in 1784. The new owner was Sir Francis Hutchinson, whose family is best known for its association with the house as he and his various collateral descendants lived at Palermo for almost a century. The house was leased then to a Thomas Revington whose daughters lived there for many years. Palermo lost some of its demesne to the Shankill-Bray motorway and the balance is now due for development for housing. Palermo was vacant in February when it came under attack from vandals and a series of fires ended in a blaze that destroyed the house at the end of the month. Palermo was demolished a few days later.

A happier note sounded at Shanganagh Park House in Shankill in November when a wing of the house rose from the ashes. A single storey extension to the house was built early this century as a billiard room and contained fine timber panelling. It was gutted by fire caused by vandals but local people felt strongly enough to rebuild it as it was. A great deal of skill went into the refurbishment of the billiard room and this culminated with the visit of the President, Mrs Mary Robinson, in November to reopen it. The Rathmichael Historical Society was represented at the opening by Joan Delany. Shanganagh Park House itself dates from the 1820's and is now a community centre.

6th January 1993**17th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

This year our AGM was attended by twenty five members. The reports of Treasurer, Secretary and Courses Sub-committee were read and adopted and the elections of Committee and Officers were held. As the number of candidates proposed for the committee equalled the number of vacancies, no election was necessary. The following were appointed for 1993:

President	Gerard Slevin
Secretary	Rob Goodbody
Treasurer	Howell Evans
Editor	Damian MacGarry
Committee	Kay Merry Máire Nic an Airchinnigh Dickie Pilkington Alan Merry

As usual, the meeting concluded with an informal show of members' slides. **Paddy Healy** showed a slide of a Rathdown slab at Killegar which had been missing since early this century and has now been found by Mrs Palmer during her stalwart maintenance of the grave yard. He also showed us slides of two circular enclosures which appeared as crop marks in a field alongside Loughlinstown Hospital, now developed for housing, and slides of the medieval wooden statue from St Mary's Abbey. **Nicholas Healy** showed a number of slides from the 1977 Summer School at Ballybetagh which brought memories back! **Howell Evans** had a number of slides from the weekend outing to the Kilkenny area while **Rob Goodbody** also had slides from that weekend, but generally of other sites. **Ray Ó Ceallaigh** took us to southern Africa with slides of Zimbabwe and rock art in Lesotho, followed by several 18th century grave inscriptions from Co Galway and an enigmatic horse's head found under floorboards in Temple Street and dating from 1791. We were also taken abroad by **Stephen Harrison** who had spent ten months in Norway and showed views of excavations he had carried out there, ranging from the Mesolithic to 19th century house sites.

3rd March 1993**THE POST IN SOUTH-EAST COUNTY DUBLIN**

A talk by **John Lennon**, member

A General Post began in Ireland in 1656. Mail was carried from Post Town to Post Town where letters had to be collected and handed in, there being no official arrangements for delivery or collection. Many Postmasters augmented their incomes by setting up private local services. This continued for over a century in Dublin and nearly 200 years in the rest of the country. Until late in the 18th century the people of south County Dublin would have had to bring their letters to the General Post Office in Dublin or to Bray, made a post town around 1730, as there was no other Post Town in the area.

In 1773 a Penny Post was established in Dublin. Although a separate establishment from the General Post it was housed in the GPO and letters were transferred from one to the other as required. It had 18 Receiving Houses opened in Rathfarnham, Milltown, Donnybrook, Booterstown and Blackrock in the south county. There was a delivery, once a day, up to 4 miles from the GPO.

The Irish Post Office gained independence in 1784 but this had no effect on the area of interest. The penny post was completely reorganised in 1810 and new Receiving Houses were opened in Dundrum, Drummartin (Goatstown), Stillorgan and Dunleary with deliveries extended up to 6 miles from the GPO. As a result of this reorganisation, and the inability to expand the premises in College Green, the new GPO was built in Sackville Street.

Residents of Cabinteely were disappointed at being omitted so, being on the route of the new Wexford Mail Coach, they applied to be made a Post Town as "the centre of a populous and very respectably inhabited country". They succeeded and the Office opened on 5th April 1811, the first full Post Office in the south-east of the County. (Tallaght became one in 1802).

Drummartin Receiving House was closed in 1817 and new ones opened in Kingstown 1823, Roundtown (Terenure) 1823, Golden Ball 1825 and Enniskerry 1825. Dunleary was closed in 1825.

The next major step was when the British Post Office resumed control of the Irish Post Office in 1831 and asked for a report on the organisation of the Dublin penny post. The first area to get attention was "the villages of Booterstown, Stillorgan, Blackrock and Kingstown which are represented to have much increased in population within the last twenty years. These places are clearly entitled to some better arrangements than the dilatory mode in which their letters are at present delivered, viz. by Letter Carriers dispatched direct from Dublin, twice a day, at 8am and 11am, and who are not able to complete their deliveries in less than 5 of 6 hours afterwards."

It was decided in April 1832 to make each of these Receiving Houses into penny post Receiving *Offices*, with the Keeper responsible for Revenue, and to have Letter Carriers attached to them. The mail from Dublin would be brought by horse and local deliveries would start at 9am. A Mail Car replaced the horse in 1833 and on 6th April 1835 the Railway took over. A penny post Office opened in Dalkey in May

1832. Except for the years 1904 to 1927, this area has remained apart from the Dublin Postal District.

Killiney residents memorialised in September 1834 for a Receiving Office, as the two Letter Carriers in Kingstown were unable to effect the delivery there early enough for a reply by return of Post. Instead an extra Letter Carrier was appointed in Cabinteely to serve Killiney.

Dundrum, Rathfarnham, Golden Ball and Enniskerry were made penny post offices with Letter Carriers in 1833 and a Mail Car was used to convey the mail.

In September 1837 the PO Irish Secretary wrote to the Lord Lieutenant "Applications have from time to time been made to the Postmaster General for the extension of the penny post to the populous country beyond Kingstown, viz. to Dalkey, Killiney, Cabinteely, Bray and Delgany". The latter three places had a General Post despatch by the Mail Coach each evening but a penny post delivery would give them their letters a day earlier. Approval for the extension was granted.

Postal charges had become so high in the 1830's that many couldn't afford them and those that could often abused the Free Post perk given

to MPs and other Officials. After years of inquiry, agitation and debate the whole system was reformed in 1840 with a Uniform Penny Postage. The effect of this was to increase the volume of mail and the number of Letter Carriers required. The Dublin penny post, virtually subsumed by the General Post in 1831, now disappeared and offices became either Post Offices or Sub-Post Offices.

Mail conveyancing was based on three radial routes from Dublin:- the Railway to Kingstown, the Mail Coach to Wexford and the Mail Car to Enniskerry. Roundtown and Rathfarnham were changed from the Enniskerry Mail Car to the Kilkenny Day Mail Coach, then the Blessington Day Mail Car and from 1888 to the Blessington Steam Tram. Enniskerry was transferred to Bray when the Railway reached there.

From 1840 to 1855 new Offices were opened in Killiney, Glathule, Merrion, Glenageary, Ballybrack, Carrickmines, Clonskeagh and Monkstown. With the growth of Kingstown a sub-office was opened in Upper George's Street. Another was opened on Merrion Avenue. Then the Pillar Box was introduced, PO Surveyor Anthony Trollope usually getting the credit. Clonskeagh, Glenageary and Merrion Avenue Offices were closed and letter boxes erected. Early Penfold Pillar Boxes (1865) can still be seen in Bray and Kilmacanogue. In 1856 all Offices in the area except Kingstown were reduced to Sub-offices. Wall letter boxes were introduced in 1857, the first being at Dundrum Station. A wall letter box was erected at Shankill Station in 1860 and the Sub-Post Master Loughlinstown received an allowance of 1/- a week to clear it once a day.

In the 1880's the whole area was dependent on the Railway. New Offices had been opened in Sandyford 1857, Foxrock 1861, Loughlinstown c1865 and (only for a short while around 1870) Kilgobbin. Roundtown, Rathfarnham, Rockbrook and Whitechurch were served by the Blessington Tram.

This period saw a large expansion in the business carried out by the Post Office:- The Savings Bank in 1862, Telegraphs 1871 and Parcels

1907 the Post Circulation Map shows Sandyford and Cabinteely served

1882. The new 'cyclostyle' was introduced in 1886 but even as late as by Mounted Postmen.

Golden Ball was redesignated Kilternan in 1901 and (finally!) Shankill was opened in 1907. The Irish Post Office took control on 1st April 1922 and closed Leopardstown shortly afterwards. Carrickmines closed with the Harcourt Street Line in 1958.

Delivery from local Post Offices ceased around 1960. Since then most deliveries and collections have been done by Blackrock, Dun Laoghaire and the Dublin District Delivery Offices.

The postal system is constantly changing. In 1994 deliveries were reduced to one a day and each postman's walk extended. To avoid having to go back to the delivery office to pick up the second half of the mail new 'pick-up' boxes are being placed on the walk, attached to pillar boxes or free-standing. Who knows what the future will bring.

Sources:

Dublin Historical Record Vol 4, No. 3 "The Dublin Penny Post 1773 - 1840" Dr J Stafford-Johnston.

The Irish Minutes (POST 36) PO Archives, London.

Almanacs, Directories & Newspapers

Thanks to National Archives, Dublin and PO Archives, London.

3rd March 1993**THE LEAD WORKS OF THE DUBLIN AND WICKLOW MOUNTAINS**A talk by **William Dick**

William Dick has been studying the industrial archaeology of the Dublin area for years, and a particular favourite of his is the Ballycorus Lead Works. He has published various articles on the lead works of Ballycorus and Wicklow, notably those which appeared in *Technology Ireland*. Last September he led an outing of the Society to Ballycorus as part of the 20th anniversary celebrations, repeating a visit led by Stan Corran in September 1972. This talk also fits into those celebrations and was chosen to mark twenty years since a talk given on 13th March 1973 by William Dick himself on the Ballycorus Lead Works.

In this talk, William broadened the scope to include the mines of the Wicklow Gap and Glendalough which were run by the same company as Ballycorus and which supplied much of the lead that was processed in those works.

Lead was discovered at Ballycorus in the opening years of the 19th century. In the 1820's the mines were taken over by the Ballycorus Mining Company, later to become the Irish Mining Company. The lead occurs here in the granite close to the junction between the granite and the mica-schist which surrounds the Leinster granite mass. At Ballycorus, however, the mines were never particularly productive and mining was abandoned and recommenced several times. The lead works that was set up at Ballycorus increasingly processed lead being brought from elsewhere and the company acquired mines at Glendalough and the Wicklow Gap which proved to be considerably more productive. They became uneconomical later in the 19th century and the company began to bring lead in from elsewhere, most

particularly the Isle of Man. Considerable remains of the mines and mine buildings survive at the head of Glendalough and near Turlough Hill in the Wicklow Gap.

The Ballycorus lead works was substantially enlarged in the late 1850's and early 1860's and this is when the familiar chimney was built on the hill top with its attendant flue rising from the works below in the valley. These works produced rolled lead sheeting for roofing, lead pipes, red lead and lead shot. By-products of the process included arsenic and silver. The Ballycorus works closed in about 1913 when its operations were transferred to Ringsend, bringing to an end a substantial source of local employment in the Rathmichael area.

7th April 1993

TWO SHORT TALKS

We ended our winter season of lectures with a double bill featuring talks by Jim Scannell and Rob Goodbody, both with a basis in the Shankill area.

A MALICIOUS DERAILMENT AT KILLINEY

A talk by **Jim Scannell**, member

While railway accidents are, thankfully, relatively uncommon, each occurrence is taken very seriously by the authorities and is investigated thoroughly to try to determine the cause. In many cases the cause is found to be human error or mechanical failure, but sometimes a more sinister cause is found. In his short talk Jim Scannell told us of such a case which occurred near Killiney station in January 1914.

This took place at a time when a new stretch of line was being constructed to take the railway away from the cliff edge. During the construction works a set of points had been installed a little to the south of Killiney station to allow the original line to remain in use while construction traffic could be diverted onto the new line. A little before 8 pm one night someone placed a large boulder in the points. At 8 o'clock a train left Bray station bound for Dublin and headed for Killiney. As it approached the points the train slowed to cross them in preparation for a stop at the station. Not seeing the obstruction in the dark, the driver was unable to avoid collision with the boulder. As a result, the engine left the tracks and continued for some 150 yards before coming to a halt by the bridge over the railway at Military Road. The fifty passengers on board were shaken but no serious injury resulted, presumably because the train was travelling so slowly.

It is remarkable to record that it took just 45 minutes for a breakdown gang to arrive from Dublin and after a mere 40 minutes more they had

the 62 ton locomotive back on the rails and the track repaired and reopened to traffic. Despite the best efforts of the police and the railway company the perpetrators of this attack were never apprehended.

SHANGANAGH CASTLE

A talk by **Rob Goodbody**, member

There are two Shanganagh Castles. One is a 15th century tower house and its remains stand in the north of Shanganagh townland near the Shanganagh river. The other is an 18th century house at the southern end of Shankill village. It was this house that was the subject of the short talk. The original house dates to the early 1760's when Joseph Kathrens and his wife Mary began its construction. He died, however, when it was still a building site and it was left to his widow to complete it. This she did by 1769 when she sold it to George Roth. He found, to his dismay, that his predecessors had helped themselves to various tracts of land which were not in their lease and he had to negotiate with his landlord to put matters to rights.

George Roth gave the house the name *Fairview*, reflecting its aspects of the sea and the backdrop of hills. He also enlarged the property and was probably responsible for much of the landscaping, some of which survives. He leased the house to Sydenham Snow, whose name appears as occupier in Taylor and Skinners *Maps of the Roads of Ireland*. From 1789 the occupiers were Benjamin and Jane Archer, Jane being a sister of the ground landlord, John Roberts. Following Benjamin Archer's death the house was purchased by its most famous occupant, Colonel George Cockburn, in June 1800. He eventually rose to the rank of General and was knighted.

General Cockburn undertook a huge expansion of the house, using the well known architect Sir Richard Morrison and by 1818 the house had taken on a castellated appearance, complete with small turrets. He also renamed the property *Shanganagh Castle*. Cockburn was well known as a collector of antiquities, purchased in the Mediterranean area from dealers. While this is outrageous to modern sensibilities it was accepted practice at the time.

General Sir George Cockburn lived at Shanganagh Castle for 47 years and his descendants remained for a further 75 and sold up in 1922. It remained as a private house until 1936 and has since been used as a hotel, a college and is now occupied by the Department of Justice.

EXHIBITION : BALLYBRACK AND KILLINEY

Our exhibition panels on the history of the Ballybrack and Killiney area were produced last year for an exhibition in the locality. This year they were on view again. On the 1st May the Ballybrack Tidy Towns Committee celebrated winning in their category of the Tidy Towns competition by inviting the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach, to unveil a plaque in the village. As part of the event the exhibition was on view in the Working Men's Hall during the afternoon, and this was the venue for the refreshments after the unveiling.

In June, part of the exhibition was on display in the *A View of Your History* exhibition as described below.

Throughout the month of July the full sixteen panels of the exhibition went on display in Dean's Grange Library, and it seems to have been well received!

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16th May 1993

OUTING TO THE KILGOBBIN AREA

Led by **Rob Goodbody**, member

The area around Kilgobbin and Sandyford may be transformed over the next few years as the city creeps outwards and if a proposal for a motorway goes ahead. With this in mind, Rob Goodbody took us on a visit to the area to see something of the surviving history and archaeology. We looked at the old Church at Kilgobbin and heard how the building is comparatively recent, being less than 300 years old, though the site has been in use since Early Christian times. Many of the stones discovered in the mid 1980's at the site are on display there, including the decorated Rathdown slab and a fragment of another. The slab was in use as a lintel in the porch of the church and had been recognised as a Rathdown slab by Paddy Healy and Dickie Pilkington. When repair work was being carried out at the church they ensured that the slab was recovered safely to be recorded and displayed.

From the elevated church site it is possible to see the ring fort at Woodside, one of the few surviving examples in this area.

We moved down hill next to have a look at the castle of Kilgobbin of which half survives. The existing portion is in surprisingly good condition and shows what a 15th Century tower house must have looked like. Very few of the tower houses in this area are as intact as this one, which still has a substantial area of vaulting as well as the projecting stair tower. We heard how this castle was the scene of a skirmish in 1642, and how some kind of burial chamber was discovered near the castle in the 1830's.

Across the road from Kilgobbin Castle is Oldtown House which, it was explained, was built in the 1690's as an inn. This is one of two houses in this immediate area which date from the late 17th century. The name *Oldtown House* reflects the former existence of a medieval town here with its village green, animal pound and an indeterminate number of houses. The town survived into the 18th century, but in decline. The inn went out of use when Kilgobbin was bypassed by the Enniskerry Road in the 1820's.

Near the old town of Kilgobbin there is a lane which has a curious bend at its northern end. Rob gave us evidence to suggest that this bend is a result of the former existence of part of the old Pale Ditch which was thrown down in 1727. A few stalwarts went on from Kilgobbin village in the rain to view a longer stretch of the old pale ditch at Ballyogan which is in good condition over a length of about 500 metres and which has only recently been discovered. It is remarkable to think that several portions of this earthwork have come to light in this area as a result of local tradition which had remembered their original purpose.

10th - 13th June 1993

EXHIBITION : A VIEW OF YOUR HISTORY

Dublin Local History Network is an organisation sponsored by Dublin Corporation and Dublin County Council and brings together the local history societies throughout the Dublin area. It is not an umbrella organisation, and that function is more properly handled by the Federation of Local History Societies. Its function is to bring together the various societies at intervals in the form of a joint exhibition, along with attendant activities. This year's was the third such exhibition, the previous ones having taken place in 1988 and 1991.

The venue this year was the newly refurbished Dr Steevens' Hospital, now the administrative headquarters of the Eastern Health Board. The displays were arranged along the corridor upstairs. It was a little cramped, but this was due to the unexpectedly large number of participants, for which the organisers could be forgiven. More than forty displays were included, most of which were by local history societies over a distance from Balbriggan to Greystones and as far west as Lucan. Some other organisations had displays including Bewley's Museum, the Irish Jewish Museum, the Military Archives and the Drimnagh Castle Restoration Project.

A booklet was produced for the event, listing the participating organisations along with information about their meetings and a summary of their displays. Another section in the booklet included potted histories of the areas covered by each of the societies.

The exhibition was officially opened by the President, Mrs Robinson, who toured the entire display and met representatives from each of the participating groups. Each day throughout the exhibition there were lunchtime talks on historical matters.

As on previous occasions, the exhibition was a great opportunity to meet members of other organisations and we have now developed quite

a rapport with a wide variety of groups. We look forward to the next one, probably in 1995!

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Saturday 19th June 1993

TRIP TO ARDEE AND LOUTH VILLAGE

Led by **Alan Merry**, member

Having met at Ardee at 12 noon, we went to Ardee Castle with Mr Larry Conlon of the Ardee Historical Society, who gave us an excellent tour of the castle. Ardee Castle was built in the 15th century for the Pippards. Battlements and a two-storey porch were added in the early 19th century. The castle is still in use as the local courthouse, having also been used as the local prison until earlier this century.

Our next stop was at the Castleguard motte about one mile east of Ardee. This was the baronial motte of the same Pippards. Wright showed an outer fosse, two enclosing banks, ramps and two concentric octagonal structures in 1748. He also depicted an earthen wall crossing the ditches and running up the motte, with the opening or entrance to the building shown directly in front of the approach, while the opening of the central keep was shown on the other side. McIvor, a local historian, suggests that there was a wooden tower on the summit of this motte which was burnt by Bruce in 1315.

From Castleguard we travelled to Louth Hall motte in Tallanstown. We looked for the 'possible souterrain', but in vain, and so moved to Louth village for lunch.

Following lunch, we stayed in Louth village and looked at St. Mary's Abbey and St. Mochta's House and we then went up the hill to Artoney Motte, or Fairy Mount.

Louth village had its origins in the early Christian period, like many other villages in Ireland. During this period it was the most important ecclesiastical centre in the county.

The early Christian monastery of Louth was founded by St. Mochta and took over an earlier pagan site belonging to the druids. The vita of St.

Mochta records that a cemetery was established before the pagan site was obtained for church use; a sequence also seen at Armagh. We

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know nothing concrete of St. Mochta, but he is often regarded as a disciple of St. Patrick from the late 7th century.

The only physical reminder of this early stage in Louth's development is the remains of a single cell church, or oratory, dedicated to St. Mochta, and which has a chamber, or croft, in the roof.

In addition to St. Mochta's there is the site of a church or monastic foundation just north of the village. This church is known locally as the 'Pinnacle' or 'Cnoc na Seagan' and has traditionally been regarded as the site of the Augustinian monastery of Saints Peter and Paul. This monastery is said to have been founded by Aed Ua Caellaide and consecrated by St. Malachy in 1148.

It is interesting to note that in 1204 Louth is referred to as a 'city'. This may refer to its ecclesiastical rather than its urban status, as the first reference to burgesses in Louth does not appear until 1221. This same year, the King gave notice of forthcoming fairs at the 'villas' of Louth and Drogheda. As a settlement with a borough and an annual fair, Louth must have been quite substantial at this point, being both the royal manor and an important ecclesiastical site - or was the annalist trying to make it sound better to please the king?

Our final stop in Louth village was St. John's Church, which appears to be an 18th century church and graveyard now fallen into ruins.

The group left Louth for Louth Hall, just south of Tallanstown, this being the final site of the trip. Louth Hall is an old tower-house with an impressive 9-bay, 3-storey, addition of 1760 and a continuous skyline of early 19th century battlements. There are the remains of an 18th century artificial lake about 50 metres from the garden front. The plasterwork is very fine, but is now sadly falling apart. While it is in a very bad state of repair, Louth Hall is still an impressive building and

has not been occupied since 1969. The entrance front is currently being used as a cattle trough.

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18th July 1993

**RUSSBOROUGH HOUSE, BLESSINGTON, Co WICKLOW
AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BLESSINGTON AREA**

Russborough House

For our July outing we combined two quite different visits. On an appallingly wet day we were quite glad to have chosen an indoor venue at Russborough. We relied on the tour guides to show us the house and had a most fascinating look around. This starts with an audio visual introduction to the house and its history, telling about Joseph Leeson, later Earl of Milltown, a successful brewer, who built the house in the 1740's. The architect was Richard Castle whose work is so well known in Ireland and the house has been described as "arguably the most beautiful house in Ireland".

Leeson was a great collector of art and it is appropriate that the house should have come into the hands of Sir Alfred Beit who has assembled such a great collection of art in this century. As a result, a visit to the house has a dual theme, with the house itself vying for attention with the great works of art. Sir Alfred has donated the principal items in the collection to the State and they are now in the care of the National Gallery of Ireland. For the most part they remain at Russborough on display, though some of them in the house at any time are copies as the originals are on display elsewhere. Unfortunately, some of them are still missing as a result of theft.

Following our tour of the ground floor with its viewing of the principal rooms and art works, we noted that the weather was still atrocious and we opted to go on the other tour which is available, to see the upper floor. This floor is more human in its proportions and while magnificent, it is not overawing as is the ground floor. The upstairs is similarly full of art works, but they are of more modest standard and

underline the contrast between the two floors. We were glad to have taken both tours as it ensures that a more balanced perspective is gained of the house. Perhaps some day the working areas of the house will be on view - the kitchens, dairy, farmyards and so forth!

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The Archaeology of the Blessington Area

Led by **Paddy Healy**, member.

By the time we had finished at Russborough the day was clearing up, which was just as well as Paddy Healy had volunteered to conduct us around some archaeological sites in the locality. We started at the cemetery at Burgage. This is a modern cemetery with graves from a variety of periods. When Blessington lake was being filled for the hydro-electric scheme the remains in the old churchyard of Burgage were exhumed and reburied in a new graveyard above the water line. Pride of place in the new graveyard was given to a large granite cross. There are a few early grave slabs in the graveyard, moved from the old site.

It was appropriate that we should then visit the original site at this point and this we did. We found the church perched very close to the water's edge and very little is now left of it. Within the previous few months an entire wall of the church had fallen and it lay almost intact in a horizontal position on the ground. The site was not particularly safe to walk around on account of the unsettled position of the fallen masonry and Paddy Healy's dog, Lassie, had a near miss when part of the fallen masonry fell further. It was timely that a patrol from the ESB arrived and asked us to leave and we did so.

From Burgage we went to the castle at Threecastles where Paddy explained the complex history of the area, perched as it was, close to the boundary between the Anglo-Irish stronghold around Dublin and the Wicklow base of the original Irish clans. The battle at Threecastles illustrates how the stereotype of history is misleading, as this battle saw the alliance of the O'Tooles with the English against the Anglo-Norman Fitzgeralds. The whereabouts of the other two castles of the

name is unknown but we had a good look at the outside of the surviving tower.

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COURSES SUB-COMMITTEE : ANNUAL REPORT 1993

This year the society's Committee set up a sub-committee to look after the various courses run by the society. The amount of work involved in running courses and an archaeological excavation had come to take up a large proportion of the time at Committee meetings. Membership of the sub-committee was intended to include those who had been most involved in running the courses and as many of these people were no longer on the main committee it ensured that the necessary expertise was retained while avoiding the need to co-opt too many additional members to the committee.

At the beginning of 1993 the membership of the sub-committee consisted of: Rosemary Beckett, Joan Delany, Sylvia Desmond and Rob Goodbody. Sylvia was unable to attend meetings after the first few months and so Kay Merry was appointed as an additional member of the sub-committee.

The first course to be run was *Archaeology and Art*, which took place at the beginning of July. Twenty students attended this course and lectures and visits were led by Michael Tierney, Gillian Bird, Joan Delany, Siobhán Geraghty, Rob Goodbody, Leo Swan and Michael Herity. Locations included Rathmichael School, Killiney, Dalkey, The National Museum, St Doulough's, Newbridge House and The National Gallery. It had been three years since this course had been offered and we are glad to say that it was its usual success. The Department of Education recognizes the course for attendance by Primary School teachers and perhaps the best complement was paid by the Department's inspectors. We had a rare visit from an inspector at the

beginning of the week and he enjoyed the course so much that we had a further two visits later on!

The 19th Rathmichael Summer School ran in August and, as usual, it consisted of two elements. Field Courses were held at Drimnagh Castle in conjunction with an archaeological excavation, while the Evening

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Lecture series took place at Rathmichael School. Leo Swan retired from his position of Director of the Summer School last year and it was decided to attempt to run the event without a single director. Instead the courses sub-committee shared the workload which included lectures, seminars, co-ordination of events and master of ceremonies. In general this approach seems to have worked reasonably well, though we are left with a greater appreciation of how much work Leo used to put in to the Summer School! In addition to the input to lectures and seminars by our own members, assistance was also given by the staff at Drimnagh Castle. Peter Pearson kindly delivered lecture sessions and Andy Halpin, Dublin City Archaeologist, led the Field Courses on a tour of the Walls of Dublin. Our Director of Excavations was Clare Mullins, archaeologist, who also took a share in lectures and seminars. The excavation has served the purpose of teaching admirably and we were fortunate to have the opportunity to work on that site.

The evening lecture series was a success once again. The series of papers presented was excellent, with contributions from Aidan O'Sullivan, Eamonn Kelly, Barra O Donnabháin, John Bradley and Claire Cotter. The attendance at the lectures was slightly down on last year's record levels, but was still very good, the average attendance being fifty-four. The final lecture was followed by the barbeque that has become a standard way of winding up the Summer School, but the weather was not kind this year.

Both the Summer School and the Archaeology and Art course turned in modest surpluses in their accounts. These funds will be put by towards

the cost of publishing the results of the various excavations which the Society has undertaken.

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DRIMNAGH CASTLE

Report of Excavation

The second season of excavations at Drimnagh Castle was carried out from August 9th to August 18th. The excavation was carried out in conjunction with and funded by Rathmichael Historical Society's summer school. This year the excavation trench was extended northwards towards the moat which surrounds the castle. The northernmost 3m was extended 2m eastwards, thus creating an L-shaped trench measuring 10m north-south, 2m east-west at the southern end and 4m east-west at the northern end.

Excavations in 1992 had revealed an old stony ground surface which appeared to date approximately to the turn of the century. Removal of the base of this stony layer in 1993 produced a mixture of modern delph, three shards of 17th century sgraffito ware and some locally made ware of 13th - 15th century date. The total depth of the stony layer measured approximately 25cm.

Directly under this stony horizon lay a layer of brown sod-like material. This layer was most clearly defined and of greatest depth on the east side of the trench. It was less concentrated on the west of the trench where it quickly peeled away to reveal the natural boulder clay. Removal of this sod-like material on the east revealed a similar but slightly stonier version of the same. The latter occupied a hollow in the boulder clay, the western edge of which ran north-south down the centre of the trench. The eastern extent of this hollow was lost under the eastern baulk. Towards the north this hollow formed a bottleneck

before flaring out again on either side. Both these soddy layers produced exclusively medieval pottery.

A roughly circular area of damp soil in the northern end of the above mentioned hollow proved to be the top of a funnel shaped pit cut into the natural. This pit was approximately 1m in diameter at the top and 1m in depth. It was filled with stone. Included amongst the stony fill was a drilled roof slate and two shards of 13th - 15th century pottery.

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While these features were being excavated, the level of the newly opened northern extension was reduced in spits. This area proved to be completely disturbed right down to the boulder clay at a depth of approximately 1m.

It is possible that the stone filled pit acted as a soakage sump and that the stratigraphically associated hollow in the boulder clay functioned as a gully, draining water into the sump. On excavation, the top of the pit coincided with the present water table.

Clare Mullins

16th August 1993

A HIDEOUS MUD OF HUGE BIGNESS - INTERTIDAL SURVEY IN THE SHANNON ESTUARY

Lecture by **Aidan O'Sullivan**

This enigmatic title actually summed up the subject matter with great precision. The estuaries of the Shannon and Fergus rivers reveal large expanses of mud at low tide. As part of the Discovery Programme a team of archaeologists has been investigating this morass for its archaeological content. The Discovery Programme is concentrating on the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age and as numerous finds from the period had appeared over the years in the lower Shannon catchment it was decided to look at the area closely in an operation known as the North Munster Project. Many of the finds in this district had been discovered in wetlands and so it seemed likely that the tidal area could contain significant material.

Aidan O'Sullivan gave us a résumé of the work of the North Munster Project and the background of discoveries in the area over the years which had led to this area being chosen for analysis. He then described in more detail the part of the project which had concentrated on the tidal areas. Unusual techniques are required to survey an area that is inundated twice a day and as a result very little excavation work is possible. Instead, the work is mainly concentrated on field walking, though that is hardly an accurate description! The salt marshes alongside the estuaries are good grazing land and may have been used as such in the past. The mud flats, which vary from soft ground to firm, would also yield archaeological material and would be carefully examined. Of the material which would emerge, timber would be the most common and this would include fish weirs, boats and fences. Ancient field boundaries of stone would also be found as would concentrations of bones, often of ancient date.

Each of the archaeological deposits to be found would be recorded in as much detail as possible, including carbon samples for dating where appropriate. In some cases it may be possible and desirable to return later to carry out excavations. At the end of the first season of searching a great variety and wealth of material had been discovered and it is hoped that this will continue in the second season.

17th August 1993

INVESTIGATION OF ANCIENT FORDS ON THE RIVER SUCK

Lecture by **Eamonn Kelly**

Throughout history the crossing points of rivers have been extremely important. Rivers were a barrier to travel and fords were strategically vital right through into the modern age. Even where goods were transported by river, fords were important as laden boats could not cross a ford and had to be unloaded. For these reasons, there tends to be significant amounts of archaeological material at fording points on rivers and a number of archaeological investigations have been carried out on Irish rivers. Such an investigation was carried out in 1991 when the Office of Public Works decided to dredge a section of the river Suck in order to make it navigable for pleasure craft. This was likely to affect a number of ancient fording places and so in advance of this work it was decided to carry out a search of the river and its banks. The work was carried out by the Athlone Sub-aqua Club and archaeologists from the National Museum of Ireland.

The techniques and problems of archaeological searches in rivers are necessarily very different. For a start, care has to be taken not to disturb wildlife such as swans and other users of the river such as anglers. A grid is laid out on the river bed using ropes and the area is systematically searched. Any item found in the river is recorded carefully, including the precise location from which it came. Amongst the finds from the Suck were weapons such as spear heads, axes and swords, ranging from the Bronze Age to recent times. Timber material was also common, from former structures such as fish weirs and eel weirs and pieces of boats that may have been ferries. Other, more curious, finds included gin-traps and a poitin still!

Apart from the intrinsic value to archaeology of the finds themselves, these investigations of rivers reveal an immense amount of information on the use of the river and its crossing points over many centuries. Light may be cast on the period of use of a ford or the time of construction of a road leading to the river. Information may appear in relation to battles fought in or near the river or traditional methods of fishing and boat construction. It is a pity that so many rivers have been extensively straightened, widened or deepened without a similarly detailed investigation by trained archaeological teams.

18th August 1993

SKELETAL BIOLOGY IN ARCHAEOLOGY

Lecture by **Barra Ó Donnabháin**

While a great deal of archaeological research is concentrated on the artefacts and traces of activity which have been left behind by earlier human occupants, there is a great deal of scope for the study of the remains of the occupants themselves. Over the past 20 years there has been an increasing amount of work carried out on human remains in order to analyse the health of past populations. In this talk Barra Ó Donnabháin explained the background to this research and illustrated the kind of information which may be gleaned, using an excellent collection of photographs of bones which he has examined.

Examination of bones can show where the person suffered from physiological stress such as malnutrition, debilitating parasites, etc. Where bones are available from a number of individuals from the same population it is possible to build up a picture of the society from which they came. The obvious aspects such as height can be investigated as well as other, less straight-forward, issues such as life expectancy and labour productivity. In individual cases it is usually possible to tell the age and sex, though not usually the cause of death. Information may be gleaned about diet, diseases, injury and sometimes medical intervention. The habits, and perhaps occupation, of the individual may sometimes be inferred through greater wear on certain bones, for instance in the hand. Amongst a sample of individuals investigated from Tintern Abbey in Wexford it was discovered that the women suffered from upper back problems, indicating that they were more accustomed to carrying heavy loads than the men.

This was a fascinating talk, with large numbers of examples ranging as far back as the Neolithic. It is worth noting that investigation of a number of Neolithic skeletons showed that they were healthier than those that dated from the medieval period. This is because medieval society was under stress and led less healthy lives. Perhaps we could learn a lesson from this, particularly those of us who are city dwellers!

19th August 1993

URBANISATION IN IRELAND, 700 - 1100 AD

Lecture by **John Bradley**

John Bradley has often addressed this Society and this was not his first time to speak at the Summer School. As usual he managed to bring new aspects to the subject of Urban Archaeology and in this instance he concentrated on urban settlement in the pre-Norman period. He started, though, with a warning that archaeology can be prone to interpretation through the filter of whatever is the belief of the day. Hence there has been a tendency to interpret Ireland in the image of the tourist brochures or Hollywood productions as an isolated rural society, even though most of us live in urban communities.

There is substantial evidence for the presence of urban life in Ireland in Early Christian times. The annals and hagiographies dating from as early as the 7th century were written in monasteries which were urban in character. A description of Kildare at that time depicts it as a thriving urban community. These monasteries lay within enclosures about 200 or 300 metres in diameter and quite a number of them have given rise to modern towns such as Kells and Duleek.

The monasteries may have begun as places of seclusion but very soon they attracted larger numbers of people. In order to allow for the differences in the type of people in occupation the monasteries were divided into three sectors. The *Sanctissimo* was only for the most holy. The *Sanctior* was holy, but less so, and was the abode of the craftsmen and so forth. The outer area was for the non-holy, often those who sought sanctuary in the monastery and who would, almost by definition, be less desirable characters. Investigation in Armagh, which is perhaps the most eminent modern successor of an Early Christian monastery, has shown extensive areas of craft working over a long period indicating a significant non-monastic presence.

Excavations in recent years in all of our major urban centres have shown a wealth of early material. Many of them have Viking remains in

profusion, but in most cases there is earlier evidence on the monastic sites which pre-dated the Viking foundations. The Irish clans of the Viking period were also urban dwellers. The O'Brien stronghold of Kincora was linked with the small urban centre of Killaloe and the O'Briens were also linked with the urban centres of Limerick and Dublin. In a remarkable reversal of the normal thought, John argued that the great buildings of the Early Christian monasteries, including the cathedrals and the round towers, owed their existence to Viking wealth generated in the towns. The view of the Vikings as plunderers has been greatly modified by archaeology and it is now recognised that the monasteries boomed during Viking times, seemingly through their roles as market places. The Vikings also brought European thought as a result of their widespread travels and this was a two-way process, bringing Irish influence into towns elsewhere.

In all this was a tremendously thought provoking lecture and it will lead us to look at early towns and the monasteries in a new light.

20th August 1993

THE WESTERN STONE FORT PROJECT AND EXCAVATIONS AT DÚN AONGHUSA

Lecture by **Claire Cotter**

As we heard in an earlier lecture in the Summer School, the Discovery Programme has initiated a series of research projects with the aim of finding out more about the period at the end of the Bronze Age and beginning of the Iron Age. The Western Stone Forts Project is one of these and seeks to unravel some of the enigma behind these forts. Curiously, it is necessary to define what constitutes a stone fort before they can be studied and this has been done by identifying five attributes of the forts and agreeing that a fort must have at least two of these to qualify. The attributes are substantial walls, terracing, steps leading to

terraces, chamber or passage within walls, and chevaux de frise.

Claire Cotter has been working on the project and, most particularly, has been excavating one of the most impressive and best known, Dún Aonghusa in the Aran Islands. After an overview of the nature and variety of stone forts in the west she looked in more detail at the Aran Islands where there is quite a concentration. There are no less than four stone forts on Inis Mór, one on Inis Iar and four on Inis Maan. In the light of John Bradley's lecture it was interesting to hear her describe a fort on Inis Maan as being like a little town.

Dún Aonghusa has well over a mile of walls and encloses 14 acres at the highest point of the island's cliffs. The investigation of this fort included excavation but also involved extensive examination of the structure itself to try to determine the phases of building. This was hampered by the large scale tidying up of the site which was carried out in the 19th century. The investigation has suggested various conclusions about the evolution of the fort and it was sometimes possible to use excavation to test theories of phasing which had been derived from the structure of the walls.

The excavations revealed a surprising amount of material from a site which has been disturbed so much and which has never had a particularly great amount of soil cover. Hut sites were discovered and excavated and there was a certain amount of material which had been left in the successive layers as the floor levels built up. A fulacht fiadh was found dating from the late Bronze Age and this was not the earliest feature on the site, so that the fort site had been occupied since before the Iron Age, which had previously been considered to be the period when the forts were constructed.

While the excavation of this fort is somewhat prestigious, the working conditions for the archaeologists cannot have been comfortable in this extremely exposed location with little in the way of shelter and other amenities. We are grateful to Claire for braving the elements to carry out this investigation and for sharing the results so far with us!

11th September 1993**VISIT TO THE HERALDIC MUSEUM, KILDARE STREET**

Led by Gerard Slevin, President

Members of the Society were brought on a visit to the Heraldic Museum by Gerard Slevin, the Society's President, and former Chief Herald of Ireland. We are grateful to the present Chief Herald, Donal Begley, for his kindness in arranging to have the Museum open on a Saturday afternoon; it is open to the public Monday to Friday.

The museum was brought into being in 1909 by Sir Nevile Wilkinson, Ulster King of Arms. The collection, the first permanent exhibition of its kind in the world and for many years the only one, was located in the public library of the Office of Arms in Dublin Castle. In 1943 Ulster's office was taken over by the government of Ireland and became part of the National Library under the new title of Genealogical Office. In 1987 the museum was moved to the new premises in Kildare Street acquired by the National Library and handsomely housed in the former dining room of the Kildare Street Club.

Before entering the Museum itself Mr Slevin spoke briefly in the Consulting Room about the origin and significance of armorial bearings; a romp around heraldry, he termed it, rather than a formal lecture. It was hoped that a projection of pictures from various sources would help to indicate the wide and continuing use of heraldry and also give some meaning to the terms constantly used by the professionals - shield, crest, supporters, quarterings, motto.

Perhaps the first display which catches the visitor's eye on entering is that of the heraldic banners which hang from the walls on each side of the lengthy room. They are those of recognized chiefs of their name, O'Brien, O'Conor, O'Kelly and many others. On the wall on the visitor's left are paintings of the armorial bearings of the Presidents of Ireland, and above them is the delightful oaken shield bearing the arms of Ireland which at one time hung over the Speaker's chair in the Commons chamber of the Irish Parliament building in College Green. The inner wall of the Museum is devoted to the arms of the counties, cities and towns of Ireland.

Our eyes fall naturally to the show-cases, which are well worthy of close attention. Therein are objects rare and illuminating, and of remarkable variety. The visitor's eye may be caught by a pavement tile of around 1500 from Bective Abbey, by Chinese porcelain made for Irish families in the eighteenth century, by a display of banknotes and postage stamps, by the insignia of Sir Roger Casement's knighthood, by tiny signet stones, by magnificent book bindings. The science and art of heraldry have proved to be both useful and fascinating.

18th and 19th September 1993**ANNUAL WEEK-END OUTING : LIMERICK**

The 1993 annual weekend outing took place, as in 1992, in September, organised by Damian MacGarry and Máire Nic an Airchinnigh. This time the area visited was the Limerick region. Following the usual custom of ensuring that everybody registered was actually travelling, the group met for a 'comfort stop' in Roscrea. This was an opportunity for another look at Roscrea Castle, which the Society had previously visited in 1990. Since then the drawbridge has been discovered and reconstructed. The Society is quietly proud of the fact that one of its members had first suggested that there might be a drawbridge there, drawing on his experience in Dundrum Castle during the Summer School excavations there.

Our next appointment was at the Hunt Museum in its new location in the University of Limerick - its final location will be in the restored Custom House. Here we were met and given a most informative and entertaining tour of a fascinating collection, by Mairead Dunleavy.

At this stage, the rain, not unknown to Society outings, started, and getting to King John's Castle, even if one were parked nearby, meant getting drenched. While the whole structure is very interesting, of particular interest are the excavations underneath the present castle showing the remains of pre-Norman houses and a defensive wall pre-dating the castle.

We continued in the rain to St Mary's Cathedral, which it had been intended to visit in 1990, but which was closed at the time. The original Romanesque church, of which some parts, including the west doorway, survive, was built by Domhnall Mór O'Brien between 1175 and 1190.

Dinner and overnight was at Carrigerry House on the banks of the Shannon. Only one item was planned for Sunday, a visit to Craggaunowen. Originally the brainchild of the Hunts, Craggaunowen has a tower house containing some items from the Hunt collection. However, the project's real importance lies in the reconstructions of Bronze Age and Iron Age buildings and trackways illustrating the life of the population in these periods and here we were able to see activities such as weaving.

Máire Nic an Airchinnigh

6th October 1993

DONNYBROOK FAIR

Talk by **Seamus Ó Maitiú**

Donnybrook Fair has long been synonymous with riotous behaviour and has passed the word *Donnybrook* into the American language, meaning a fracas. Seamus Ó Maitiú is a teacher who is at present studying local history at Maynooth, as part of which he is researching the history of the fair. He gave us a fascinating talk on the subject amply illustrated with contemporary sketches and engravings of the fair.

The fair at Donnybrook had its origins in antiquity and it seems to have been particularly significant in comparison with other fairs in Dublin in that it took place at the edge of the city where it bordered the less lawful hinterland. This would have allowed for trade between the city inhabitants and those from the outlying areas. It may have been for this reason also that the fair began to be frequented by a more rowdy

element. The fair was on the edge of the city limits and behaviour would have been more difficult to control.

It is difficult to assess at what stage the fair began to take on its more rowdy overtones. Certainly by the mid 18th century visitors recorded unseemly goings on and reports were appearing in newspapers. As the fair lasted for a week or more there was plenty of scope for those attending to become progressively less well behaved.

It must not be forgotten that Donnybrook Fair continued to serve its original purpose as a place of trade throughout its history and this was a very important function. Respectable people attended the fair to buy and sell animals as they did at many other fairs in the district. It is generally said that most of these fairs were closed down in the mid 19th century because of their reputations for bad behaviour, but none of them had the name that Donnybrook gained. Donnybrook was not closed by process of law, but in effect it was bought out. As the city spread out towards Donnybrook there was increasing pressure to suppress the fair. In the end, the charter which permitted the fair to be held was bought out from the family that had held it for many years and the privilege of holding the fair at Donnybrook was allowed to lapse.

3rd November 1993

THE ROAD TO GLENDALOUGH

Howell Evans and Wendy Guilford

Howell and Wendy produced an audio-visual presentation of the history met along the road. The following is a transcript:

The imagined travellers would meet at the Avoca Handweavers to see the weaver at work making the specialised material. People usually speed up the hill from Kilmacanogue and away to Glendalough as quickly as possible. Our purpose is to slow down sufficiently to first of all visit the ruined Church on the left opposite the Inn. This church of St. Canoc gives its name to the village. Strongbow refers to it in his Charter of 1172. Among the varied tombstones are those of the Quinn family, Bray.

Across the road is the present Church of St Canoc - one of the few to have escaped the dissolution. Parishioners have objected to any modern attention to its structure both inside and outside. Beside the Church is the renovated Coach Inn which still retains its old-day atmosphere. Higher up the road is a quaint Victorian letter box - one of a few - another is in the Main Street, Bray.

Should you venture along the narrow lane on the left it will bring you to an early souterrain in the woods. When you reach the Sugar Loaf car park look beyond the gate to see the traces of an early settlement or enclosure where the Kings of Leinster were crowned. Back now to the main road to a lane closed by an iron gate. This leads to the Devil's Mound. Other unexcavated mounds are also in the area. A quarter of a mile on the road takes you past the old Calary School built in 1835 by Lord Powerscourt for all denomination.

As you continue, you are familiar with Calary Church on the left. Before the Church was erected in 1834, services were held in Calary School which had a pulpit. When they moved to the new Church, the

Rector Rev. John Darby took the pulpit with him, so the church now has two.

Two renowned people worshipped here:- Miss Hilda Bissett - the first lady vet to qualify in TCD, in 1927; and Dr Collis - rugby player, rescuer at Belsen and set up hospitals in Nigeria.

You may now have time to visit:

Powerscourt Hotel - now a new lounge and mini golf.

Ballinastoe Bridge - the river in the late 1700's supported a flax mill - the large millstone is still there.

Roundwood Church - mostly built by the Glendalough miners.

The Reservoir Lake - completed in 1865, designed by Sir John Grey.

The Road to Luggala - on the right leads to Loughs Tay and Dan.

At the road junction is *Oldbridge Hall* built in 1912 to promote Irish dancing and language. Supported by Mr Erskine Childers who lived nearby - also supplying band instruments.

Killiskey Church - the only church built outside the settlement and mentioned in Vatican records.

Derralossery Church on the hill - see the final resting place of Mr Erskine Childers.

Castlekevin at Moneystown - memories of archbishops, kings and the O'Toole family.

The Giant's Grave - not far away from Roundwood.

Annamoe - one had a large mill - parts can be seen from the new bridge.

Her also is Suzy O'Toole's forge - Ireland's only woman blacksmith. Before you reach Laragh get to *St. Luin's Well* and then to the Bread and Butter Stone. After all this you should make Glendalough another day!

1st December 1993

THE SKETCHES OF GABRIEL BERANGER

Talk by **Dr Peter Harbison**

The sketches of Gabriel Beranger are to be found in many a volume on local history, most notably, in our area, in Francis Elrington Ball's *History of the County Dublin*. They represent one of the largest collections of watercolours of antiquities in Ireland from the later 18th century. Dr Harbison's own book *Beranger's Views of Ireland* contains nearly fifty colour plates of works by the artist, many of them appearing in colour print for the first time.

In this talk, Dr Harbison gave us an overview of the work of the artist, along with a summary of his life and career. This was amply illustrated with examples of the works and he used two projectors and two screens in order to present a fuller study of the subject through introducing comparisons with the present state of the monuments. Two major collections of the works of Beranger are available, one in the Royal Irish Academy and the other in the National Library of Ireland. The latter is more accessible to the public, though the two collections have a considerable overlap in their subject matter. Other examples of his works include some vignettes of great charm and Dr Harbison showed a number of examples of these in their oval format.

In this presentation, Dr Harbison concentrated on the views of subject matter in the south Dublin area. It was fascinating to see how some monuments that are well known to us looked more than two centuries ago. In other cases, we saw monuments that have since disappeared. The context of each antiquity is clearly depicted in Beranger's works and showed how the broader landscape has changed over time, principally through the growth of trees. Some of the works are enigmatic, such as the view of Shanganagh Castle which is difficult to reconcile with the topography and the remains of the building which survive today. At Monkstown he sketched the castle but called it

"Monkstown Abbey" while another building which he called "Monkstown Castle" remains unidentified.

While a substantial quantity of works by Beranger survives, others are documented but lost. Perhaps they will yet reappear in someone's attic!

OBITUARIES

Paddy Delany

We record with deep regret the death on July 11th of Patrick Michael Delany and offer our sincere sympathy to his wife, Joan, a founder member of the Society and an indefatigable worker on its behalf throughout its successful lifetime.

To say that Paddy was a man of many parts would be trite, but it is not easy to encapsule otherwise such a remarkable endowment of talent. Architect, planner, journalist - as such he was widely respected. But of his gifts as artist and musician there may not have been such public knowledge. His cooperation in the work of the Society and his cheerful presence at meetings will be remembered by many.

GS

Henry Aimers Wheeler (1916-1993)

Henry Wheeler, who died after a short illness late in 1993, was familiar to and liked by all antiquaries, both professional and amateur, in the Dublin region. In many ways in both his career and personality he seemed to bridge the divide between the antiquarian gentleman of former times and the professional archaeologist of today. In fact, when he joined the staff of the Office of Public Works in 1954 he was the first full time archaeologist to be employed by that body. Up until then he had worked mostly as a volunteer on excavations and surveys after he had studied classics at Cambridge and had done post-graduate studies at Trinity College, Dublin.

Initially his work in the Office of Public Works was involved with the identification and protection of sites and monuments threatened by grant-aided farm improvement schemes. Later he was involved in the general archaeological work of the National Monuments Service and even after he retired wrote readable and authoritative guidebooks and

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leaflets on particular monuments. He had an unrivalled encyclopaedic knowledge of Irish National Monuments and was frequently consulted by his colleagues as a result. Architectural history was a particular interest of his and while in the OPW he inspected and photographed many of the older buildings in County Dublin as part of an architectural survey of the county. His book in collaboration with Maurice Craig on the Dublin City Churches of the Church of Ireland (1948) is still an indispensable work on the subject.

Being always of a sociable nature he was involved in the activities of antiquarian societies and served for a term as president of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. His long association with and popularity among the members of the Cambrian Archaeological Society, the premier society of its type in Wales, resulted in his election for a term as president of that society also.

He was a member of and active in other societies especially in the Dublin region and was a loyal member of the Rathmichael Historical Society, to whom he delivered his lecture on *The Churches of Dublin* in 1989. Always generous with his knowledge and willing and anxious to share it with others, he will be remembered with affection by all who knew him.

Con Manning

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SECRETARY'S REPORT, 1993

[This is an abbreviated version of the report presented at the AGM in January 1994]

This year your committee consisted of those who had been elected at the AGM, plus past Presidents Wendy Guilford and Damian MacGarry who are entitled to membership of the Committee. We also co-opted Paddy Healy to serve on the Committee in order to benefit from his substantial knowledge and experience. One of the first acts of the incoming Committee was to set up a sub-committee to look after the running of the various courses run by the Society. Over the past few years the organization of courses has taken up a great deal of the Committee's time and it was decided that this should be undertaken by a sub-Committee consisting of those who are most closely involved in the running of the courses to free the main Committee for other matters. The membership and activities of the sub-Committee was reported earlier in this issue.

In July we were very sorry to receive the resignation of Howell Evans from the position of Treasurer of the Society. Howell had been Treasurer since 1985 and over the years had looked after an increasing portfolio of accounts as the Society went from strength to strength. In addition to this he kept the various book shops stocked with copies of *If You Seek Monuments*, thereby ensuring that our book accounts remained healthy. On behalf of the Committee and myself I would like to express our appreciation of Howell's work over the years. From July until the AGM Alan Merry was Acting Treasurer.

During the year the Society has had a column in the local Shankill newsletter SCAN, written by the Secretary and addressing the histories

of various local features. It is hoped that this can continue. SCAN is produced in the community centre at Shanganagh Park House.

Four years ago I reported to the AGM that our membership stood at its highest ever level, with 99 members fully paid up. That number failed to reach the magic 100 and, in fact, dropped slightly for a time. In 1993

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we had the largest ever influx of new members and some 21 new members were accepted into the Society. This brought the number of fully paid up members to 104. May this trend continue!

On a sadder note I regret to record the deaths of two of our members during the year. Henry Wheeler was well known in archaeological circles throughout a long and distinguished career and we were proud to have him as a member of this Society. He died in November. In July we lost Paddy Delany who had, of course, been associated with the Society since its inception. Paddy's intellect and wit were always welcome at our meetings and outings and we will miss him deeply. Our sympathies go out to Joan who had just completed running the *Archaeology and Art* course at the time of Paddy's death and who managed to play a major part in the running of the *Summer School* a short time afterwards.

Rob Goodbody
Hon. Secretary

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RECORD**

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