



Antiquarian News

Newsletter of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland

Edited by Chris Corlett

Spring 2007

Message from the President

Dear Fellows and Members,

In the same envelope as this *Newsletter* you will receive a copy of the Programme of Meetings, Lectures and Outings for 2007. I hope that you will all find much of interest and that you will be able to participate in this full programme.

In keeping with the tradition set last year the Thursday lecture in January will be devoted to an aspect concerned with Society House. This year we are delighted to welcome Paul Arnold, conservation architect to the Society. That Thursday will also be an opportunity for the Hon. Treasurer, Brendan Twomey, to update Fellows and Members on the progress of RSAI 160. May I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have contributed so handsomely to this appeal and also to take the opportunity to remind those of you who have not yet subscribed that the Hon. Treasurer would be delighted to hear from you !

Those of you who have walked along the South side of Merrion Square recently will be aware of the improvements which have taken place to the front of Society House. As in other years we are grateful to Dublin City Council which continues to part-fund the restoration of Society House. During 2007 the Society hopes to be in a position to complete work on the external fabric of the House and, in 2008, to move indoors.

This year, in 2007, The Society celebrates the ninetieth anniversary of the purchase of Society House. In 2009 the Society will celebrate its one-hundred-and-sixtieth birthday. The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland is a far different society from that established in Kilkenny in 1849. Progress has changed every aspect of the Society – its name, its centre of influence as well as its membership. In general this has all been for the best. The challenge for the next one-hundred-and-sixtieth anniversary will be to continue building on this progress. Let us all aim for this together.

May I wish you all a very Happy and Peaceful New Year !

Aideen Ireland

President

Autumn and Winter Excursions, 2007

Trip to Laois (Saturday, 30th September)

Forty eight Members took part and the excursion was led by the President. Michael Fewer, *Member* had organised the day which started at Lea Castle. The owner David Callanan met the party and escorted us over his very mucky yard, it had been raining heavily the day before. Ben Murtagh, *Member* met us and gave a detailed description of the castle which is now in quite a ruinous state, but was once a great Norman castle built by the Marshalls or the Fitzgeralds.

We travelled then to Portarlinton for a lunch and then walked through the town with Ronnie Matthews, local historian and Petra Coffey, *Member* describing various buildings on the way to the French church.

Our last stop was Emo Court, home of the Earls of Portarlinton and designed by James Gandon. The members were divided into two groups and while one had a tour of the house the other visited the beautiful new tea rooms, just opened the previous day by the Taoiseach. Emo Court is surrounded by magnificent parkland which is open to the public. The house itself has been taken over by the OPW and some of the rooms have been restored, but still retaining a very 'lived in' atmosphere.

Many thanks to Michael Fewer and to Petra Coffey for helping to organise the day.

Pro Cathedral and Rotunda Hospital Chapel, Dublin (Saturday, 21st October)

Dr Michael O'Neill organised a very successful afternoon outing. We met at the Pro- Cathedral and Kevin Mulligan explained the architecture. We spent some time inside and then proceeded to the Rotunda chapel. This is a gem of Roccoco architecture wonderfully ornate and beautifully maintained. The final visit was to St. Mary's Church which has been converted into a pub restaurant. The church memorials have been left in place and it gives the impression of a theme pub, which I found quite disturbing. Kevin Mulligan again explained the history and walked us around the outside of the building. The graveyard has been completely done away with and the graves have been transferred to Glasnevin cemetery.

Geological Survey and Print Museum (Saturday, 18th November)

Our last outing of 2006 was to the Geological Survey, courtesy of Petra Coffey, *Member*. Petra has been working there for some years and she had brought out a sample of the exhibits for us to see. The Director of the Survey Dr Peadar McArdle welcomed the members and thanked the Society for having purchased the du Noyer sketch books after his death. We were then treated to some other wonderful work by George du Noyer who had worked in the Geological survey in the 19th century and had been apprenticed to George Petrie.

We walked across then to the Print Museum where a very welcome cup of tea or coffee was provided followed by a short video telling the history of printing. We then had a tour of the different machines which were used in the process. The staff were most informative and enthusiastic.

Once again our thanks to Petra Coffey and to Michael Fewer.

A pictorial view of the sites can be seen on the Society's website www.rsai.ie



RSAI at Pro-Cathedral, Dublin on Saturday 21st October, 2006

New Logo

NEW ERA FOR THE SOCIETY

Those of you interested in the history of the Society will know that the President's Medal was introduced in 1912 following a proposal by Thomas J. Westropp and Patrick J. Lynch, consequent on the granting of a Royal Charter in 1912. The Medal is of tripartite form with the dates 1849 at the top, 1890 to the right and 1912 to the left. This Medal is still worn by the President at formal meetings of the Society, and adorns the portraits of many past Presidents hanging in the Library. For many years the medal has been used on all publicity material (including the *Journal*) coming from the Society.



As part of its RSAI 160 appeal the Officers and Council considered designs for a newer image for the Society. We congratulate Ger Garland for designing a modern and elegant image for the Society where the "A" (for antiquities, archaeology, architecture, art) in "RSAI" is to the fore. The blue colour of the Society is retained. The President's Medal will be retained and this tripartite image will continue to adorn the cover of the *Journal*.

Kilkenny Archaeological Journal - first five volume

As part of the celebrations of the 150 years of the foundation of the RSAI in 1999 we re-printed several hundred copies of the first five volumes of the Journal of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society. This innovative project was made possible by the generous financial support of Life Member Siobhán de hÓir who paid for the printing costs. Over the years as we have sold volumes we have been able to repay Siobhan most of the expenditure incurred. Many members are now the proud owners of these beautiful volumes and they have been a great publicity vehicle for the society as well as becoming a collectors item in their own right.

Siobhán has now added to her earlier generosity by donating the remaining stock of the five volumes to the RSAI - this means that future sales will be an income source for the Society. Income from the sale of the volumes will be devoted to the library acquisitions fund.

The cost per set of 5 volumes is €90 for members. If you have not got a copy of these volumes and would like to purchase a set please contact the office. Remember, all income from the sale of these volumes will be invested directly into the much-needed purchase of books for the Society's library.

Once again thank you Siobhán for your ongoing generosity to the RSAI.

Library News

As always, our thanks to all who have donated books to the Society's Library. In particular thanks to Dr Dorothy Kelly and Charles Smith. Also, many thanks to Peter Healy for donating several interesting lantern slides to the Society's growing Photographic Collection.

Those of you who use the Library regularly will be aware of some new developments designed to make users more aware of the priceless collections, which the Society holds. A bank of lockers for coats and bags has been placed at the bottom of the First Floor stairs for the convenience of users. An Application Form to apply for a Reader's Ticket, the Reader's Ticket itself as well as Rules for Readers are all part of the Society's commitment to the safety of its collections. The Application Form for a Reader's Ticket and the Rules for Readers are available also on the Society's web-site. Standard research rules for the Library apply – signing of the Attendance Book on each visit, use of pencils only, nothing to be brought into the Library which might damage a book or document. The Reader's Ticket features the new image of the Society and is in the Society's chosen colours of white and blue. There is no charge to either Members or non-members who avail of a Reader's Ticket, however, for non-members of the Society a daily charge is levied for use of the Library. We hope that this will encourage all non-member users of the Library to become Individual or Institutional Members of the Society instead!

**Chris Corlett,
Hon. Librarian**

The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, in association with the Discovery Programme, presents a one-day seminar on

Life and Death in Iron Age Ireland

in light of recent archaeological excavations

Friday 2nd February 2007

Helen Roe Theatre, 63 Merrion Square, Dublin

9.00am Registration

9.15am Introductory remarks by Professor Barry Raftery

Session 1 (9.30-10.50): Chaired by Tiernan McGarry

9.30	Grace Fegan	Ring ditch at Ballydavis, Co. Laois
9.50	James Eogan	Ring ditch at Ballybranogue, Co. Limerick
10.10	Red Tobin	Ring ditch at Corbally, Co. Kildare
10.30	Frank Ryan	Ring ditch at Ferns, Co. Wexford
10.45	Margaret Keane	Ring barrow at Derroon, Co. Sligo
11.00	Discussion	

11.10 *Tea & Coffee*

Session 2 (11.30-1.00): Chaired by Dr Ann Lynch

11.30	Dr Eamon P. Kelly	Recently discovered Iron Age bog bodies
12.00	Cara Murray	Wooden Vessel from Toar Bog, Co. Westmeath
12.15	Emmet Stafford	Enclosure at Kerloges, Co. Wexford
12.35	Discussion	

1.00pm *Lunch*

Session 3 (2.15-3.35): Chaired by Dr Christina Fredengren

2.15	Cóilín Ó Drisceoil	Settlement at Carrickmines, Co. Dublin
2.35	Gerry Walsh	Settlement at Lislackagh, Co. Mayo
2.55	Sebastian Joubert	Settlement at Cloongownagh, Co. Roscommon
3.15	Discussion	

3.35 *10-minute break*

Session 4 (3.45-5.15): Chaired by Dr Michael Potterton

3.45	Holgar Schweitzer	Iron Age complex at Rath, Co. Meath
4.05	Frank Ryan	Iron Age complex at Balrothery, Co. Dublin
4.25	Dr William O'Brien	Iron Age settlement landscapes in peninsular SW Ireland
4.45	Discussion	

-- Concluding remarks by Tom Condit

Admission €10 (payable at the door)

Booking is essential (contact the RSAI at 01-6761749; email: rsai@rsai.ie)

Lecture Programme for Spring-Summer 2007

(All lectures are held at the Helen Roe Theatre, 63 Merrion Square, and begin at 7.30pm)

Thursday Lectures

25th January, 2007 - AGM
DECORATION AND GEORGIAN HOUSES
Paul Arnold

22nd February, 2007
**RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN KILKENNY CITY:
THE RIVER NORE (KILKENNY CITY) FLOOD SCHEME AND
THE BISHOP'S PALACE:**
Ian Doyle;
**A MEDIEVAL POTTER'S YARD AT MC DONAGH STATION &
GEOPHYSICS AT ST CANICE'S CATHEDRAL**
Cóilín Ó Drisceoil

22nd March, 2007
**THE UNION PIPE OF SCOTLAND AND IRELAND: A
SHARED TRADITION**
Hugh Cheape

26th April, 2007
**EVIDENCE IN EARLY IRISH LAW: WHAT DO THE
DOCUMENTS TELL US?**
Professor Fergus Kelly

24th May, 2007 - Helen Roe Memorial Lecture
PONTIUS PILATE: AN AMBIGUOUS MAN
Dr Colum Hourihane

30th June, 2007 - Summer Quarterly Meeting
Title to be announced
(During Summer Excursion)

Further dates for your diary

As part of its commitment to encourage participation in events of the Society we are delighted to be able to invite you to a series of social occasions throughout the year. Each year, from now on, three major social events will be held after Lectures on Thursdays. These will take place after the A.G.M. in January, after the Helen Roe memorial lecture in May and after the Frank Mitchell memorial lecture in October. We hope that as many members as possible will be able to attend.

Further, an annual lunch will be held each year in February, in order to celebrate the foundation of the Society in February 1849. This year the lunch will take place at 1.00pm, on February 10th at the Davenport Hotel, Merrion Street, Dublin.

Details and a booking form for all these events will be found with this mailing.

Monday Talks

5th February, 2007
**'HE WILL BE WELL WATCHED', T.N. DEANE AND
THE BIRTH OF ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION
IN IRELAND.**
Dr Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh

5th March, 2007
**CARNFREE CO. ROSCOMMON
NEW DISCOVERIES IN THE HEARTLAND OF THE
O'CONOR LORDSHIP**
Brian Shanahan

2nd April 2007
**PREMONSTRATENSIAN MONASTERIES IN
MEDIEVAL IRELAND**
Miriam Clyn

14th May 2007
**CONSERVING THE SOUTH PEAK HERMITAGE ON
SKELLIG MICHAEL**
Grellan D. Rourke & Alan Hayden

Autumn Excursions

Saturday 24th February, 2.30pm
**National Museum, Collins Barracks,
Military Exhibition**

Saturday 12th May, 2pm,
Excursion to Dalkey

20th – 22nd April, Spring Excursion
Three day outing to Rathmullen/Letterkenny

29th June – 3rd July, Summer Excursion
Louvain



Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland

A few words from the Hon. Treasurer

RSAI 160

You will now be all aware of how you may become a very special Donor, Friend or Supporter of the Society as part of the RSAI 160 campaign. Further details may be had from the Hon. Treasurer, Brendan Twomey. In order to encourage participation, wherever possible, in the RSAI 160 campaign we would like to assure all of you that all contributions, no matter how small or large, will be welcome to the Society and that your name will be recorded in the special RSAI 160 ledger. We would also like to invite you, once a year, to a very special RSAI 160 party as part of the “Thank You” from the Society to you!

Developments

Many of you will be aware of the excellent photographic collections held by the Society. Indeed, many of you will have been fortunate to hear the Hon. Librarian, Chris Corlett, speak about these collections. Many more of you will know of the valuable work being undertaken by Susan Cuffe and Michael Fewer in cataloguing the Society’s photographic collections – all of which are in the process of being scanned, through an initiative of the Hon. Librarian and part-funded by a grant from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

As part of its commitment to its photographic collections the Society will, this year, purchase two Adjustable Steel Shelving Cupboards - 2100 mm high x 1000 mm long x 1212 mm deep. Each steel cupboard is fitted with six shelves, steel back panels and steel side panels with lockable double doors. These cupboards will be erected in the ante-room to the Helen Roe Theatre close to the stairs from the basement to the Ground Floor. In these cupboards will be stored the boxed glass plates and boxed photograph albums currently stored on Floor 1. This will go a long way to clearing space for the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland but, more importantly, will offer excellent security for part of the photographic collections.

As a further commitment by the Society to its own archives, this year the Darkest Dublin photographic collection has been sent to David and Edwin Davison to be scanned to preservation standard. This collection of glass-plates, which highlights living conditions in Dublin slums post the collapse of tenement buildings in Dublin in 1913, was used as part of a Parliamentary enquiry and was donated to the Society in 1925. The list of the ninety-five images has now been scanned in order to ease access to this valuable and unique collection. The Society is most grateful to the National Archives for sponsoring this digitisation project. We look forward to seeing many of these images on the website of the Society and of the National Archives.

How you may help the Society

There is an urgent need for volunteers in general, especially at the busy times of the year when large postings are sent out to the membership. There is an especially need for a volunteer to assist in the Society’s Office – especially on Fridays when the Executive Secretary has a day off. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer – please contact the Executive Secretary, Colette Ellison.

Brendan Twomey

Book Sale

The Society will hold a Book Sale on Saturday February 10th, at Society House. The doors will be open from 10.30am to 12.30pm. The date of the Book Sale is timed to coincide with the Society's annual lunch in the Davenport Hotel. All monies raised during the Sale will be invested in books for the Library.

The Helen Roe Theatre: Over the past few months we have been upgrading the theatre so as to be able to offer it as a suitable venue for hire. There is a Powerpoint facility as well as the carousel and overhead projectors. There are two screens. We have now in place a dishwasher and coffeemaker so that small scale catering can be organised on the premises. Hire of the theatre is €50 an hour with €150 being the minimum payment, which includes Public Liability insurance. Please contact the Executive Secretary in the office for further details.

Death Notices

We are sad to report the deaths of the following: Reverend L.T. Newman, *Life Member*, Mrs Joy O'Farrell, *Retired Member*, and Barbara Durack, *Member*.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Professor Gabriel Cooney on his recent election to the Heritage Council (we regret that Professor Cooney's name was inadvertently left out of the last issue of the *Newsletter*).

Office hours:

Monday to Thursday 9.45am - 12.45pm; 2pm - 4.45pm

Executive Secretary - Colette Ellison

Library Opening Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 10.00am - 12 noon; 2.00pm - 4.45pm
Tuesday and Friday 2.00pm - 4.45pm

Librarian - Nicole Arnould

Contact details:

(01) 6761749
colette@rsai.ie
nicole@rsai.ie

For further information on lectures, excursions, events, conferences and other Society news please visit the Society's website;

www.rsai.ie



If you have any news for the Newsletter, please contact Chris Corlett through the Society's office