

## Canon Patrick Power

### A Talk by Msg. Michael G. Olden presented at Canon Patrick Power Seminar, WIT, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012

The choice of this very day, 8 March 2012, on which to pay tribute to a distinguished scholar is in itself significant. We are honouring Canon Patrick Power on his birthday, exactly 150 years ago. He surely approves that we have chosen, with an eye to precision, the exact day. Exactitude was very important to him in his historical and archaeological interests and pursuits. He will also wish it to be demonstrated that all of us here present know what we are talking about when we deal with the various scholarly pursuits about which he was so passionate and energetic.

Patrick Power might not have sought the honours of this day but I believe that he was not averse to affirmation. During his long scholarly life as he mingled with the learned and academic people, whether at Feiseanna organised by the Gaelic League in Waterford or Dungarvan or Ardmore, or with the academics of University College Cork or with his colleagues in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, he was, I believe, quite sensitive to his own lack of specialised training and, perhaps, a little envious of opportunities which had not come his way, opportunities which fate might have presented to lesser men.

Patrick Power was a countryman, of farming stock, born on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1862, in the townland of Callaghane, in the parish of Ballygunner, sometimes called Ballygunnermore or, more anciently Ballygunner Temple, where a significant church ruin still stands. The present extended and renovated Ballygunner church stands on the site of its predecessor which was built about 1820 on a still earlier church site. In the present church Patrick Power would have attended mass and, across the village street from the church he would have received his earliest schooling. I think it might demonstrate something of Power's probing style and deep scholarly curiosity to draw brief attention to his treatment in **Placenames of Decies** of some details of his own ancestral townland.

*Callaghan, Ceallachan. The meaning is doubtful; apparently 'Little Place belonging to a Church' or perhaps (and less probably) the name is an Irish diminutive of the Old English word Callow- therefore 'Little Wet Place'. 'Callow' is still commonly used in the Leix County to denote wettish land which is often submerged in winter and grows long coarse grass in summer. The present townland contains a large area of bog and was mainly noted a century ago for its output of peat, hence the epithet – (Ceallachan na luaithe bhuidhe). O'Donovan states that the place-name here is the personal name Callaghan. Elsewhere he notes that in Co. Roscommon the word caladh designates a meadow, strath, or holm by the margin of a river; the first syllable, however, in the present instance, is pronounced slender – i.e. ceall. Callahane was in the possession of John Lee, Irish papist, previous to Cromwell's confiscation, and the Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery enable us to trace portion of its previous history. The authority quoted recites the following alienations of the lands previous to that date.*

1. James Power of Callaghane to Patrick Coppinger and Richard Meaghe (Meade)
2. Said Coppinger and Meaghe and William, son of aforementioned James Power, to William Dobbyn, his heirs etc.
3. Said William Dobby and William Power to John (son of James) Sherlock and William Walsh

Area, 447 acres

Two subdivisions in townland:

- a. *Baintn a'Chaptaoin* – name of a field
- b. *Cuinne an Ghabha* – 'The Smith's Angle'

Thus, unemotionally and without any personal references to his own family, does he treat of one townland with a thoroughness and breadth of knowledge which is remarkable. Multiply such treatment throughout all the townlands of the entire Déise region and we have some picture of the detailed industry of the man.

The schooling of this bright scholar took him into waterfor city to what was called 'The College School' or 'The University School' (affiliated to the Catholic University in Dublin) which was owned by the diocese of Waterford and Lismore and was located in Stephen Street, under the presidency of Fr. Joseph Phelan who, much later, in 1881 was appointed president of St. John's College until 1888 when he became parish priest of Ss Peter and Paul's Clonmel. Phelan was a brilliant literary man who surely must have influenced young Patrick Power during both his secondary school years and later in St. John's College where he studied to be a priest. Power, modestly and without any reference to himself, praises the University School: "*the school, he says, was attended by about 120 day pupils whose fees were its sole revenue. It is remarkable how many of these boys rose afterwards to literary prominence*". In 1887, years after Power had left the school, the de la Salle Brothers opened a National School in the old building that had previously housed the University School in Stephen's Ward.

Patrick Power would have entered St. John's College on John's Hill about 1879 or 1880. St. John's had previously been in the Manor where WIT has part of its campus today. The move to John's Hill took place in 1871. So the College would still have been in its infancy when Patrick Power became a student. Students (especially the brighter ones) of the time would undoubtedly have been influenced by a strong legacy of Gaelic scholarship both throughout the diocese and with the college itself. In the 1870s and 1880s the memory would still be strong of the Gaeltacht regions where Irish had been spoken, especially Rinn O Guanach and Sliabh gCua, Kilrossanty and the Comeragh areas. Memories and manuscripts were still cherished of the renowned Seathrún Céitinn and his many works, particularly *Foras Feasa ar Eireann*. Céitinn was a priest of the diocese of Waterford and Lismore who died in 1650. Other remarkable Gaelic writers of poetry and prose since Céitinn's time included: Tadhg Gaedhealach Ó Súilleabhan, a Limerick man who lived in Waterford county and city and who died in 1795 and is buried in Ballylaneen. Donnchadh Rua MacConmara, from Co. Clare who spent much of his long life in Sliabh gCua and died in 1810 and is buried in Newtown near Kilmacthomas. Pádraig Denn from Modeligo who was a schoolmaster and sacristan in Cappoquin where he died and was buried in 1828. Philb Barún who established the short-lived Irish College and centre for publication of Irish literature near Bunmahon in the 1830s; he died in 1860. Seán Ó Dálaigh from Sliabh gCua who established a book shop for Irish history and literature in Bedford Road in Dublin which became well known centre for Gaelic scholars. Ó Dálaigh was considered an authority on the Munster poets. He died in 1878. Sean Pléimeann (Fleming), a native of Mothel taught in Rathgormack school and published much. The great Celtic scholar from Germany, Kuno Meyer, considered Pléimeann to be one of the finest Irish scholars of the period. Riobárd Bheldon

from Kilrossanty, a close friend of Patrick Power, and a poet of considerable repute and influence, died in 1914.

Irish scribes whose calligraphy was a marvel, were to be found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in various parts of the Déise region. Chief amongst them was Thomas Hickey, a native of Ballygray near Killenaule, Co. Tipperary. He came to Co. Waterford about 1820 and worked as a scribe for Fr. Patrick Wall, parish priest of Carrick Beg, later of Mothel, later still of Stradbally. Hickey accompanied Fr. Wall from one parish to the next. He was both labourer and scribe to the scholarly priest. In the 1830s we find Hickey attached to St. John's College and was particularly employed by a leading member of the staff, Fr. Dominic O'Brien, president of the college 1834-53, and bishop of the diocese 1855-1873. O'Brien was an avid collector of Gaelic manuscripts and he engaged Hickey to copy many of them. He also employed him to teach Irish to the students of the seminary. Many of Hickey's beautiful works are now carefully housed in bishop's house in Waterford and are still consulted by Gaelic scholars. In Patrick Power's student days they were open to all to read and study in the library of the college. One of Hickey's finest copies was one of Plunkett's Irish-Latin dictionary, which had been compiled in the Franciscan convent of Trim in 1662. I have no doubt that Power was strongly influenced by the Gaelic tradition which he encountered in St. John's College and by the manuscript copies of great Irish works to which he had access in the library of the college.

The Ireland, the region, the diocese, the college, in which Patrick Power was formed was strongly flavoured by Gaelic scholarship, history and literature. It is noteworthy that Power had contemporaries, particularly, priest friends and companions who, like himself, were steeped in love of Irish history and related subjects. They were all natives of the diocese of Waterford and Lismore, some spent their entire lives working as priests and also pursuing scholarship within the diocese. Others, including Power, were to hold high academic posts in other places.

I will very briefly refer to them in chronological order:

Abbot Muiris O Faoileáin (1853-1931), Abbot of Mount Melleray. He was a native of Kilrossanty and was an acknowledged Irish scholar. He was patron and adviser to many local and national Irish scholars and he was particularly close to Patrick Power. Power was considered the Abbot to be one of his closest friends.

An tAthair Micheal O hIcí (1861-1916). He was a native of Carrick beg and studied for the priesthood in St. John's College, being ordained priest in 1884, a year before Patrick Power. In 1896 he was appointed professor of Irish in Maynooth College, succeeding Fr. Eugene O'Growney. He quarrelled with the Irish bishops who were Trustees of the college over the question of whether knowledge of the Irish language should be an entrance requirement to the recently (1908) founded National University of Ireland. O hIcí was dismissed from Maynooth in July 1909. He appealed his case against the bishops to Rome but he was not successful. He died in 1916 and is buried in the Friary Cemetery in Carrick Beg.

Fr. Risteárd de hIndeberg (Henebry) (1863-1916). He was born in Mt. Bolton, Portlaw and he was educated for the priesthood in St. John's College and in Maynooth. He was ordained priest in 1892. He was sent 'on loan' to the diocese of Salford in England. There he met with John Strachan, professor of Celtic languages in Manchester University. De hIndeberg was gripped by the study of Irish and he was very brilliant, though eccentric. He went to the continent in 1896 and studied in the

University of Greifswald under the great professor Thurneysen and later in the University of Freiburg where his mentor was the renowned Celtic scholar, Professor Heinrich Zimmer and where he was awarded the doctorate in philosophy. When the Catholic University of Washington was established in the 1890s a chair of Irish Studies was set up, largely funded by Irish American groups and individuals; Risteárd de hIndeberg was appointed its first professor. Within a little over a year he relinquished the chair: he did not take to the Americans and they did not take to him. He returned to Ireland and worked in various chaplaincies in Waterford for a number of years. In 1908 when the National University of Ireland was established he was appointed the first professor of Irish in University College Cork. He held the post until his early death in 1916. He is buried in the parish cemetery in Carrick Beg. In 1898 he wrote **The Sounds of Munster Irish. A Handbook of Irish Music** was published in 1928 long after his death; it was edited by his successor, Tadhg O Donnchada (Tórna).

Michael Sheehan (1870-1945). He was born in Waterford city. The family moved to Dungarvan and he continued his education at the Augustinian secondary school. Then he studied in St. John's College, Waterford and then to Maynooth. He was a brilliant student and linguist. After ordination he went to Bonn University to do doctoral studies in Classics. He also studied in Oxford and Cambridge. In 1897 he was appointed professor of Classics in Maynooth College. He became Vice-President of Maynooth in 1919. He was appointed co-adjutor archbishop of Sydney in 1922. He was still co-adjutor to archbishop Kelly in 1937 when he retired and came back to live in Ireland, where he spent much of his time in his beloved Ring. Together with Risteárd de hIndeberg (1907), Séamus O hEocha and a few others, Sheehan is considered one of the core founders of Ollscoil na Mumhan in Ring in 1906. When he returned to Ireland in 1937 he resumed his summer classes in the Coláiste. He died in 1945 and is buried in a very special plot just outside the front door of the parish church in Ring. He published much in Ireland in Australia. Of particular interest in his Irish works are the following:

Sean-chaint na nDéise (1906)

Cro Croilleadh Craobhaighe (1907)

Cnuasacht Tragha (1908)

Arthach an Oir (1910)

Gile na mBlath (1912)

Gabha na Coille (1915)

Labhar den Lus Mor (1917)

An Teagasc Criostaidhe (1917)

The Irish of Ring, Co. Waterford, A Phonetic Study

Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine (vol. 1 1918, vol. 2 1923)

It is interesting that Patrick Power was not involved in the establishment of the Irish College in Ring.

William P. Burke from Clonmel. He also was educated in St. John's College, Waterford and in Maynooth College. He was ordained in 1891. He was parish priest of Modeligo and Affane 1922-1925; parish priest of Lismore 1925-1941. He wrote two major works:

History of Clonmel (1907)

Irish Priests in Penal Times (1914)

He also wrote articles in the Journal of the Waterford and South East of Ireland Archaeological Society on subjects such as Irish Music, Seathrún Céitinn.

Patrick Power and the men I have been mentioning were ardent and very able students of Irish, of Gaelic culture and history. But they were different from each other in many ways. I would consider Power to be somewhat of an outsider from the rest of this special group of his contemporaries. He ploughed his own furrow, was not particularly a 'team man', and was probably the most industrious scholar of them all. In his early years as a priest he was also in poor health. After ordination in 1885 he went 'on loan' to work in the diocese of Liverpool in England. After three years there his tuberculosis was not improving so it was decided to send him to New South Wales, Australia where the dry sunny climate might be more conducive to his health. He was to spend over five years there as a pastor in the newly founded diocese of Wilcania, later to be known as Wilcania-Forbes. He served in two very large parishes or districts: Cobar (1888-1893) and Bourke (for just a few months). He clearly was well regarded by the people as one can see from a scroll of farewell and good wishes presented to him on his departure for Ireland.

The years in Australia seem to have corrected his health problems but they had kept him away from Ireland and from historical and archaeological pursuits in his native county and diocese. They also would have made it impossible for him to have serious access to relevant books on historical matters. And, of course, unlike some of his priest contemporaries in Waterford such as Michael Sheehan and Risteárd de hIndeberg he would have had no opportunity to pursue any specialised courses in his fields of special interest.

However, even in Australia, he had begun to write on Irish archaeology. He sent back to Ireland in 1891 a brief article on 'Casey's Lios Ballygunner, Co. Waterford' which was published that year in the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. This was his first article. His early interest in antiquaries had been evident when he was a student in St. John's College. In 1884, before he was ordained a priest, he had joined the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, of which he became a Fellow while still in Australia in 1888. A second article written two years later in Australia, responds to a query in the Journal regarding pubertal rites among the local aboriginal tribes. His third, and final article from Australia, was an account of the ancient ruined churches of Gaultier and was published by the Antiquaries in 1891.

So Power's name as a budding historian-cum-antiquarian was known, at least in a small way, by the time he returned to Ireland in 1894. His first pastoral appointment on return to Waterford was as chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Manor Hill for a short while. Then he was moved to the Cathedral as curate 1894-96. There has come into my hands through the late Fr. Desmond McCarthy of Dublin archdiocese the 'Visitation Book' used by Fr. Power during his time in the Cathedral parish. It demonstrates the zeal and intense pastoral energy which he brought to his work as a curate. It

was an energy that was to remain with him as priest and scholar all through the rest of his long life. The Visitation Book shows that in 1894, shortly after his arrival in the Cathedral parish, he visited every home in the district assigned to him and he made notes and detailed entries in his book: he visited Sergeant's Lane, King's Terrace, Whalley's Terrace, Barker St., Queen's Terrace, Thomas' Hill, Thomas' St., Foley's Yard, Anne St., Denny's Lane, Glass House Lane, The Glen, Glen Terrace, Glen Cottages, O'Connell St., Henry St., High St., Bluebell Tenement, Blackfriars, Conduit Lane, The Quay from no. 71 to no. 135, Bailey's New Street. The Visitation Book contains the names of each person, occupation, age, remarks on some of them e.g. "indifferent", "careless", "needs looking after", "delicate", "member of League of Cross", "separated from husband", "obstinate", "pervert", "not attending" (mass), "weak-minded", "living with a protestant", "E.D." (=Easter Duty – doubtful). It is remarkably careful and thorough all through. It shows the same detail and thoroughness which he was later to bring to his historical books and articles.

In the year that Patrick Power became a curate in the Cathedral, 1894, a new bishop Richard A. Sheehan, was appointed as bishop of Waterford and Lismore. He was a Cork man and he was to be bishop from 1894 till his death in 1915. He was a brilliant man who had been very renowned in Cork. Shortly after his arrival in Waterford he encouraged the setting up of an historical and archaeological society and publication by it of a regular record which would contain appropriate articles, lectures, historical notes, accounts of excursions and historical outings. He also encouraged the brightest from among his priests to pursue their intellectual interests. Through his encouragement and promotion several of them were to become professors in university institutions:

Fr. Michale O hici to chair of Irish in Maynooth	1896
Fr. Michael Sheehan to chair of Classics in Maynooth	1897
Fr. R. de hindeberg to chair of Irish in Maynooth	1897
Fr. R. de hindeberg to chair of Irish in Washington	1897
Fr. R. de hindeberg to chair of Irish in UCC	1908
Fr. Patrick Beecher to chair of Pastoral Theology in Maynooth	1904
Fr. Patrick Power to chair of Archaeology in UCC	1915

From the beginning Patrick Power was one of the intellectuals whom the bishop most admired. He strongly supported his appointment as editor of the newly formed Journal of the Waterford and South East of Ireland Archaeological Society. The choice was indeed an enlightened one. While continuing his various pastoral assignments: to the Cathedral as curate, as Diocesan Inspector of Schools throughout the entire diocese, as chaplain to the Good Shepherd Convent, as chaplain to de la Salle College, as curate in Portlaw (1908-1914), Power remained editor of the highly respected Journal. As well as editing the Journal he contributed many articles and notes to it until he left the diocese in 1915 to become professor in UCC. During the same period he also contributed many detailed articles for the local newspapers, especially the Waterford News and Star. In 1915 the pursuit of historical research in Waterford received several serious blows: Bishop Richard Sheehan died, Fr. Power left for Cork and the Journal of the Waterford and South East of Ireland

Archaeological Society ceased publication. There was a later attempt to revive it in 1920 but without much success.

Long before Power was appointed to Cork he was tilling the soil out of which two of his best known works were to grow. In the Journal which he was editing he dealt in a great number of issues with Place-names of the Déise region which was to grow into a book in 1907. In the Waterford News and Star, especially in 1910, he wrote week after week on the history of nearly every parish in the diocese of Waterford and Lismore. The material of these articles was used in the compilation of a book of which he strongly disapproved **Parochial History of Waterford and Lismore during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries** (1912). Even as an old man Power continued to write in the Waterford News and Star. In 1945 he wrote a series of short articles about the old Catholic charities of Waterford city. He wrote them under the pseudonym “Nunc aut Numquam” (Now or Never). Behind the scholarship Power was a man with a mission to the ordinary people – he wanted them to know about their past, not to be ashamed of it, to be faithful to it. This sense of mission comes through repeatedly in his **Compendious History of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore** which appeared in 1937.

I mentioned earlier that Power was somewhat of an outsider, not really a team man, in his life and work. He worked with an incessant passion and he had little time for the poseurs and the pretentious in scholarship. He did not engage in academic politics and he was sceptical of those who did. It is of interest that he seemed to take no part, certainly no prominent part, in the great clash between Michael O hici of Maynooth and the bishops over the question of compulsory Irish for entrance to the National University. His treatment of O hici in his 1937 History of the Diocese is worth quoting. He is discussing the parish of Carrickbeg, the native place of O hici:

*Among distinguished natives of the parish Rev. Dr. Michael O’Hickey claims a place. He was born in Carrick Beg in 1860, but owing to the death of his mother while he was yet an infant, he was brought up by his widowed aunt, Mrs. O’Brien, proprietress of a small weaving factory. He studied first in the local schools and, then, in St. John’s College, Waterford, where he was ordained in 1884. Having served some years on the Scotch mission (diocese of Galloway), he was recalled to Ireland appointed curate of Kill, where he was secured for his successors the present pleasantly situated curate’s residence. This latter by the way had been a former parochial house. Upon introduction of Religious Knowledge inspection Father O’Hickey was made the first examiner under the scheme but, about a year later, he was called to Maynooth College to fill the chair vacated through the illness of Father O’Growney. While in Maynooth Father O’Hickey had conferred on him, honoris causa, the degree of DD. In 1909, owing to an unfortunate difference of opinion with the college president (Dr. Mannix) and the Trustees, Dr. O’Hickey had to withdraw from Maynooth. Thence he proceeded to Rome for the purpose of testing the legality of the action against him. His case dragged on, in slow and weary course for seven years when it ended Dr. O’Hickey’s death, from heartbreak, in 1916 Dr. O’Hickey’s writings, which are distinguished by a trenchant vigour, are mostly polemical and consequently ephemeral – evoked by the controversy over suggested essential Irish in the new National University curriculum. Owing mainly to Dr. O’Hickey’s fervid propaganda in the newspapers and in pamphlets Irish did become an essential subject for all National University students and consequently for students of Maynooth. The reader who wishes to follow this matter further will find in Rev. Dr. Walter McDonald’s clear, if pungent statement (‘A Maynooth Professor’) material for the purpose. Dr. O’Hickey did some useful literary work in collecting and editing the works of forgotten Co. Waterford poets like John Walsh and Michael Cavanagh of Cappoquin.*

I think we find in the passage quoted little enthusiasm on the part of Power for O'Hickey and his clash with Maynooth and the bishops. One feels that Power, probably with knowledge of O'Hici stretching back to student days (there was only a year between them), did not consider him a serious scholar and would have been more pleased to see him engaged in really substantial literary matters. The dismissive attitude of Power to the honorary doctorate in divinity granted by Rome to O'Hici is clearly noticeable. One recalls the 1914 history of the Diocese put together by Power at the strong request of Bishop Richard Sheehan. Much of it was O'Hici's work and Power considered it pretty awful. He refused to put his name to the book. His preface to the work makes his position very clear:

*The compiler (i.e. Power himself) disclaims any intention to offer the present work as an adequate history of the diocese during the period covered. He would present it rather as an ordered collection of material which will facilitate the work of the future historian and save him an immensity of time and labour. For the present it will also to some extent satisfy the general desire for knowledge of our ecclesiastical past. Publication of the material here presented may too, by the way, stimulate the advent of the future historian in question. The compiler begs to plead, moreover, that the idea of the work is not his. He has very reluctantly undertaken the task, and if left free he would not, under present circumstances, have attempted it at all; he has not had, he felt, for one thing, the necessary leisure to treat the subject as he should wish and as, he thought, its importance deserved. What he has done he has done in obedience – a fact which perhaps will plead in extenuation of the many defects of which he is conscious and the many additional which the careful reader will discover.*

December 1912

Power also had some negative feelings towards Father Risteárd de hIndeberg. He always refers to him as Fr. Henebry, clearly not willing to accept the Germanisation of Henebry which Risteárd had concocted. Power, as in the case of O'Hici, has some interesting remarks to make about de hIndeberg, again in the 1937 History of the diocese. He is dealing with the parish of Portlaw and he makes the following remarks:

*Rev. Richard Henebry D.Ph. was born at Mount Bolton in 1863. Gifted with a keen intellect, a taste for philological study and a native knowledge of Irish, he secured recognition as an Irish scholar at an early age. Unfortunately, his industry by no means equalled his natural ability or his independence of outlook. He was ordained in Maynooth in 1892 and spent a few years on mission work in Salford diocese. Upon foundation of the new Catholic University of Washington, Father Henebry was appointed to the chair of Irish therein – after he had qualified himself by taking his degree of D.Ph. at Greifswald University where he had studied for some time under Zimmer. Dr. Henebry's connection with Washington continued a few years only; he returned to Waterford and acted as chaplain in the city for three or four years when, on establishment of the National University of Ireland, he was allotted the chair of old and modern Irish in the Cork college. He died 1916 and was buried at Carrick Beg. Dr. Henebry suffered from ill-health during the later years of his life – a fact which, perhaps, explains his comparatively small output of literary work. His 'Handbook of Irish Music' is, however, a monumental work – on which indeed the scientific and musical world has not yet pronounced a final verdict. Dr. Henebry was a master of English as of Irish, diction; who can forget his brilliant defence of traditional Irish music against the professional musicians of Cork in the pages of the 'Cork Examiner' – in 1914. And this magnificent piece of writing was penned from a sick bed!*



Despite the praise at the conclusion of the above quotation there are hints of reluctant praise and general disappointment with de hIndeberg. He clearly had received chances, as had O'hici, which Power had not. Affirmation was important to Power just as criticism or the fear of it were painful to him. But there would be a 'Lá eile' for the 'Paorach'; real affirmation was yet to come in his appointment as professor of Archaeology in UCC in 1915 and when the National University awarded him the D. Litt in 1926 it was by no means 'honoris causa' but very well earned and deserved.

Patrick Power's entry into university life was considerably facilitated by Bishop Richard Sheehan of Waterford and Lismore. Sheehan, during his years in Cork, had become a very good friend of Sir Bertram Windle. Windle was the last president of Queen's College Cork and the first president of University College Cork. Windle, a convert to Catholicism, was a brilliant polymath. He came to Cork as President in 1904 and he resigned the presidency in 1919 to become Professor of Philosophy in the University of Toronto, Canada. During his time as president in Cork he was Professor of Anatomy from 1907 to 1909 and professor of Archaeology from 1910 to 1915. By 1914 the administration of the College was taking up most of his time so he looked for an assistant in Archaeology. On the advice of his friend Bishop Sheehan he engaged the services of Patrick Power who was curate of Portlaw. The following year, 1915, Windle resigned from the Chair of Archaeology. The post was advertised and the successful candidate was Patrick Power. Bishop Sheehan gave Power a very strong recommendation in a letter to Windle in October 1914:

*I have much pleasure in supporting the Rev. P. Power's candidature for the chair of Archaeology now vacant at the University College Cork. Fr. Power has devoted himself to archaeological studies all his life and his name is known and its authority respected everywhere amongst our archaeologists. Amongst other things he has for many years edited with skill and success the Journal of the Waterford and South East of Ireland Archaeological Society and has himself been a regular contributor to its pages. He has already given proof to the College of his fitness for the post by the manner in which he has discharged the duties of Assistant Professor. His appointment as a full Professor will, I believe, give satisfaction and pleasure to archaeologists in this country.*

*Richard Sheehan*

*Bishop of Waterford and Lismore*

Power must indeed have been pleased to have attained the recognition which he rightly would have felt he deserved. He appears to have settled into the academic community with considerable ease and was admired by his colleagues for his enormous industry, his very wide sweep of learning and, above all, for his slightly quaint gentlemanly manner. To the routine work of lecturing he brought a dutifulness and especially a passion and energy which must have impressed his students. As I mentioned already he never engaged in academic politics; but he held fast to the absolute centrality of truth in all education. I came across a letter from him to Abbot Muiris O'Faoileáin of Mount Mellera who had made some suggestions to him concerning a work which Power was preparing for publication. O'Faoileáin felt that some of the comments in the article were excessively hard on some people and on some events. Power's letter of reply is indeed a rejoinder to the holy and learned abbot. He writes "*Doctoring of history – even for edification – seems to me a much worse immorality than the evil it is intended to prevent*". I wonder what he might have to say to the Irish Church in the present sad times!

It is simplistic to suggest that Power was untrained in Archaeology. He was not untrained, but he was self-trained with a good monitoring eye, self trained as had been Sir Bertram Windle before him and as were his counterparts, Fr. John Hynes in UCG. Power was by far the most productive and industrious of the three. For him Archaeology was a science in itself but also, and importantly, a very powerful ally to narrative history in general. The sheer 'locality aspect' of Archaeology, the searching and detective work that were involved attracted his intellectual curiosity immensely.

Well before Power had entered the halls of UCC he has produced what is probably his magnum opus, "The Place-Names of Decies" or Log-Ainmneacha na nDéise". It appeared in 1907. The second edition did not appear until 1952, just after the author had died. His Introduction to the first edition is included in the second edition. It is indeed an interesting piece and tells us much about the character and attitude of the author. In it he locks horns with more trained and sometimes opinionated scholars and critics who had found some faults in his previous efforts:

*Native toponomy or the study of Irish Place-Names has hitherto received but scant attention at the hands of scholars. In the not distant future, however, the science is certain to attain a very considerable importance for, of the many branches of archaeology, there is not one more useful to the scientific historian*

Further on in the Introduction we find him criticising those who may be too poetic and even fanciful in dealing with Place-Names:

*...it is proper to note that there has been much exaggeration regarding the poetry latent in our Irish names. The imaginative in our place-names is far less, proportionately, than the same element in the literature – less even than what one should prima facie, somehow or other, expect. It is the dreamy country schoolmaster and the disciple of Vallancey who have read into local nomenclature so much unwarranted romance, or rather, complexity of idea. As a matter of fact place-names in general, and, Irish place-names in particular, are the simplest of simple things. In their concept there is no subtlety*

Someone like me who is inexpert and professionally untrained in phonology and toponomy cannot make a confident assessment of Power's views on such matters. But it is clear that he is regularly doing battle with intellectual critics (I would think Henebry would be one of them) and what president Harry Truman used call Monday-morning quarterbacks who can sit on the ditch and find easy fault with the industrious scholars such as Power himself who are painstaking and careful in their work on the ground. Again in the Introduction he says with increasing temper:

*There is no branch of Irish studies in which error has so run riot as in this of place-name interpretation. Things are improving, but till recently one could not take up a book, magazine or essay which touched at all on place-names in which one did not find error abounding. Irish toponomy was one field in which every literary dabbler conceived himself to run amuck-experimenting and theorising without responsibility.*

He concludes his introduction to the Place-Names of Decies with guarded and, to my mind, qualified thanks to some of his more academical confreres in Irish studies:

*My thanks are due likewise to Rev. Dr. Henebry for elucidation of (afterwards) some doubtful points, to Rev. Prof. Sheehan, D.Ph., archbishop, for lists of Ring place-names*

He is much more genuinely fulsome in the final thanks he gives:

*Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude – of which I tender this acknowledgement in part payment – to the Seanachies of Decies, those ancient men of beautiful minds whom I met and talked with on the roadside or in the fields, by the turf fire on winter evenings, or along the cliffs and up the Comeragh, Knockmealdown or Galtee slopes on Sundays in Summer.*

That passage describes beautifully, and, I believe, very accurately how Power the scholar worked as he gathered together with patience and also enjoyment the mountains of knowledge out of which this wonderful book was born.

His last word returns to the critics in a Wagnerian finale:

*With all its faults I believe that the present book must prove helpful to many a groper in the Celtic twilight. It marks a beginning; let others follow: each succeeding effort will be an advance. Hurler on the fence, if you would exercise your critical office with greatest effect, come down from your eminence and handle a camán yourself.*

Power might be faulted for his over-sensitivity to critics and also for his excessive rebelliousness against assumed posturing and pretence amongst academics. In his preface to the History of Diocese of Waterford and Lismore in 1937 he seems to me to overstep the permitted mark:

*In a compiling of his pages the writer (i.e. Power himself) has made use of all the usual authorities, printed and in manuscript. If he has not added a bibliography it is because he does not regard this now fashionable apparatus worth while; he suspects, in fact, that much of formal bibliography appended to books like the present is literary affectation.*

This statement is too strong and really does not do Power or his work any service. It probably even devalues some of the very good writing that he undertook in his History and Place-Names works. However, it is obviously an honest opinion and he does not shirk making it.

In my opinion there was one critic whom he really trusted and respected: the scholarly non-academic and saintly abbot Muiris O’Faoileán of Mount Melleray. He found no pretension in this learned Gael. In fact, it would appear that amongst the Irish scholars, priests and lay, from the Deise during this period Abbot Muiris, the man from Kilrossanty, was the God Father, the contemporary monastic Anam Chara, to whom so many of them turned with their personal problems and, more relevantly in the present context, with their historical and linguistic problems. His correspondence in the archives at Mount Melleray present a powerful picture of the influence which he had and of the great respect with which he was held.

On his appointment as professor in Cork in 1915 Power chose to live in a cottage in Rhincrew, “the horse-shoe headland”, as he translates it, overlooking the estuary of the Blackwater near Youghal. It is of interest that, even though his base of work was now in Cork, he still choose to live in diocese of Waterford and Lismore. From Rhincrew he cycled almost daily to Youghal from where he took the train to Cork. He loved Rhincrew and he wrote much while living there. Typical of his honesty he had criticisms to make as well:

*Rinncru belonged to the Hospitallers, being apparently a cell, grange or dependency of Mounse Abbey (in Co. Cork). The site is truly magnificent, affording extensive views of river, sea and mountains. Doubtless the founders of Rinncru found the scene more charming still when many a now bare slope and many a rugged angle were smoothed into rounded outline by primeval forest. The remains are rapidly vanishing; the place is unenclosed and cattle have free access even to the ruined church. The most important part of the ruin is a great vaulted chamber lighted by three curious opes in the side wall; these are carried some distance into the vault above. The church is in an advanced state of decay; this is some sixty-six feet long by twenty-seven feet wide and its walls are nearly five feet thick, but unfortunately not a door, window, or other definite architectural feature survives intact.*

It is typical of the man that, even in the hermit's abode which he treasured and the beauty of the surroundings which he loved, he could still be tormented by the neglect and carelessness which afflicted such an historic place.

When he retired from UCC in 1932 he left his beloved Rhincrew and took up residence in a bungalow on John's Hill, Waterford. Here he lived until his death in 1952. By his wish he was buried in St. Otteran's cemetery in Ballynaneesagh (the Town of the Decies) which was opened in famine times especially for the thousands who died of hunger in Waterford city and surrounding areas. A fine Celtic Cross was erected to mark his grave, a noble tribute to a noble Christian scholar.

Canon Patrick Power's Gave Stone

Very Rev. Patrick Canon Power

Waterford

Professor University College

Cork

Who died Oct. 16 1951

In the 66<sup>th</sup> year of his sacred Priesthood

R.I.P.

Pádraig de Paor

1862-1951

Sagart, Ollamh agus Údar

Beannacht Dé le n'Anam

Agas le h'anamana na Marbh