

Obituaries

ANTHONY T. LUCAS,

M.A., D.Litt., D.Litt.Celt. (*Honoris Causa*), M.R.I.A., F.S.A.S. (*Hon.*)
(1911-1986)

A few short days before Easter 1986, on the 26th of March, Dr. A. T. Lucas, former Director of the National Museum of Ireland (1954-76) and scholar supreme, passed on from an honoured place among us mortals to take his well-earned place among the immortals. Although primarily a Dubliner, his immediate ancestry was rural Irish (his mother was from Nobber, Co. Meath) and foreign (his father was from near Graz, Austria), factors which gave him both an all-Ireland and an international outlook on the world around him. His interest in North Munster was no less than that of any part of Ireland—indeed, he was not only a member of our Society for over twenty years but lectured to us on a few occasions, most recently (17/4/1984) on “Relics and Reliquaries in Irish Tradition”, since published in *J. Roy. Soc. Antiq. Ireland*, 116(1986), 5-37. During his lifetime his published oeuvre included a book on the *Treasures of Ireland* (reviewed in our *Journal*, see below), a lengthy monograph on *Furze: A Survey and History of Its Uses in Ireland* published in *Béaloidias*, 26(1958), 1-203 and which was republished in book form in 1960, and over a hundred scholarly papers and book reviews, of varying lengths but almost all of major academic importance. It is of interest to note that not only did he publish some sixteen times in our *Journal* (see list below) but both the first and the last papers he ever wrote were published with us. True, his *magnum opus*, not a paper but a book, has still to appear. Two days before he died he finished correcting the typescript and it was only on the morning of that final day that he settled on its title: *Cattle in Ancient Ireland*. Many members will perhaps remember his fascinating lecture on “Ancient Cattle-Keeping Customs” which he gave us in December 1970, a lecture which included much to be covered in the forthcoming book and which our then Hon. Secretary, the late Tom Pierce, rightly described as “undoubtedly one of the most interesting and important heard by the Society for many years”.

Dr. Lucas' work reaped many rewards. Not only did he obtain the initial B.A. and subsequent M.A. in U.C.D., but in 1961 he received a D. Litt. from the National University of Ireland which further honoured him with the award of a D. Litt. Celt. (*honoris causa*) in 1979. Another honorary title of which he was also very proud was that of Honorary Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland which was awarded him in November 1968 “In Recognition of Distinguished Services to Archaeology”. He also was elected President of various learned Societies, most importantly, perhaps, to the Presidency of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland from 1969 to 1973, a Society with which his name had been virtually synonymous since 1946 when he had become its Hon. Gen. Secretary. That Society further showed its appreciation of his scholarship in 1976 when it published a major *festschrift* called *Folk and Farm* (edited by our member, Caoimhín Ó Danachair) in his honour. But it is by his own work that he will be remembered, by publications ranging across almost every activity of man from earliest times to the present day, including ploughing, trapping and snaring, washing and bathing, hair hurling-balls, dug-out canoes, souterrains, vernacular houses, bog-roads, straw-rope granaries, shoes, sacred trees, horse-hair fishing lines, famine and pre-potato food, bog-wood, block-wheeled vehicles, sweat-houses, Penal Crucifixes, etc., etc., etc. He also published important archaeological and historical papers, including the above-mentioned book on the *Treasures of Ireland* and the paper he wrote for *North Munster Studies* (see below). Republication of Dr. Lucas' papers in collected format is being discussed and will, we hope, soon

materialise. Meanwhile let us all be grateful for having known him and for benefitting so greatly from his wide knowledge.

I measc na sain-eolaithe eile atá imithe roimhe, ag plé gnáth-rudaí na seanaimsire leo agus ag cómhraí lena mhuintir agus le cáirde a óige, go raibh a anam macánta i gcónaí.

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The following is a list of Dr. A. T. Lucas' publications in the **North Munster Antiquarian Journal**:

1. "Excavations of a Small Crannog at Rathjordan, Co. Limerick"—5:2-3(1946—47), 68-77 (with Seán P. Ó Ríordáin).
2. Review of *Map of Monastic Ireland*, 2nd ed. Dublin 1964—10:1(1966), 90.
3. "A Horizontal Mill at Knocknagranshy, Co. Limerick"—12(1969), 12-22.
4. Review of *Arthur Young's Tour of Ireland (1776-1779)* edited by Arthur Wollaston Hutton (reprinted Shannon 1970)—13(1970), 66.
5. "A Stone-Laid Trackway and Wooden Troughs, Timoney, Co. Tipperary"—*Féilsgríbhinn Éamonn Mhic Giolla Iasachta*: 17(1975), 13-20.
6. Review of *Harvest Home: The Last Sheaf—a selection from the writings of T. G. F. Paterson relating to County Armagh*, Armagh 1975—17(1975), 132-133.
7. "A Stone-Laid Trackway and Wooden Trough, Timoney, Co. Tipperary: A Further Note"—19(1977), 69.
8. Review of *Kenry, The Story of a Barony in County Limerick* by Mairtín Ó Corrbuí, Dundalk 1975—19(1977), 78.
9. Review of *The Meaning of the Irish Place Names* by James O'Connell, Belfast 1979—21(1979), 63.
10. Review of *Irish Fairs and Pilgrimages* by S. B. Gmelch, Dublin n.d.—23(1981), 105.
11. Reviews of *Irish Folklore* and *Irish Myths and Legends* by Bríd Mahon, Dublin n.d.—23(1981), 105-106.
12. "Houses with Decorative Roof Linings at Dunabrattin and Ballynakill, Co. Waterford"—24(1982), 81-91.
13. Review of *Topothesia: Essays in Honour of T. S. Ó Máille* edited by B. S. Mac Aodha, Galway 1982—24(1982), 112-113.
14. Review of *Brian Boru: King of Ireland* by R. C. Newman, Dublin 1983—25(1983), 87-88.
15. Review of *The Desmond Castle* by T. J. Westropp, (reprinted from *J. Roy. Soc. Antiqs. Ireland*, 1909/1910), Newcastle West 1983—26(1984), 114, 115.
16. "A Two-Chute Horizontal Mill at Newtown, Co. Tipperary"—28(1986), 16-27.

Dr. Lucas also contributed a major paper, almost 50 pages in length, on "The Plundering and Burning of Churches in Ireland, 7th to 16th Century" to *North Munster Studies: Essays in Commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (edited by E. Rynne), which was published by this Society in 1967.

The following two relevant reviews also appeared in this *Journal*:

Review by Charles Thomas of A. T. Lucas, *Treasures of Ireland—Irish Pagan and Early Christian Art*, Dublin 1973—17(1975), 122-123.

Review by L. B. Mayer-Jones of C. Ó Danachair (ed.), *Folk and Farm, Essays in Honour of A. T. Lucas*, Dublin 1976—18(1976), 87-88.

ETIENNE RYNNE

EDWARD A. MacLYSAGHT, M.A., D.Litt., LL.D. (*Honoris Causa*), M.R.I.A.
(1887-1986)

A standard type of obituary, listing the main events and achievements of the deceased's life, is not really necessary for the late Dr. Edward MacLysaght—and, furthermore, would take up more space than is available here. Indeed, interested readers are referred for such relevant information to the two autobiographical books he published in 1978 and the autobiographical article which appeared in 1979 (see below), the biographical memoir which we understand is being prepared by Charles Lysaght and shortly to be published by the National Library, the various newspaper articles dealing with him in *The Irish Times* (e.g. 25/5/1970, 8/10/1973, 7/2/1978, 23/1/1980 and 8/3/1986), the *Irish Press* (e.g. a memoir of his time on the first Senate of 1923-25, published in January 1983), and elsewhere, and, of course, to the introductory contributions in "Féilsgríbhinn Éamoinn Mhic Giolla Iasachta", vol. XVII of this *Journal*, published in his honour in 1975. Suffice to remind ourselves that 'Mac' was the longest-serving link with our past: he bridged the ten-year gap between the discontinuation of the North Munster Archaeological Society in 1919 and the restarting of antiquarian and historical research in our area with the Thomond Archaeological Society in 1929; he was elected a Vice-President of the Society in 1971 and an Honorary Life Member in 1973.

Dr. MacLysaght lived a long and productive life. For over ten years before his demise he had not only been telling people but actually putting in print that whichever was his most recent publication was "positively the last" or "definitely the final volume", but he continued to work and to publish new or revised/enlarged material up to within a few months of his death. Indeed, he seemed to be virtually indestructable, which explains and is typified by one of the many amusing stories told about him, perhaps even apocryphal but none the worse—or less true?—for that: at the age of 92 shortly after an operation for an artificial hip he was seen bounding up the stairs of the National Library as sprightly and lively as ever—only to become very worried and dejected when a 'friend' reprimanded him and told him that such hip replacements generally lasted only ten years!

Ever an idealist, optimism, a faith in the future and hard work kept him going. Indeed, this attitude was summed up for me when I rang him on his 98th birthday (6th November 1985) and his first comment over the telephone was an excited "Two to go! Two to go!" No wonder, then, that on hearing his unexpected and rather sudden death announced on the late night news from Radio Éireann, on the 4th of March, 1986, my *immediate* comment to my wife was a blurted "It will kill him not to have made the hundred!" And wouldn't he have enjoyed receiving the standard gratuity from his friend and fellow Clareman, Dr. Patrick Hillery, Uachtarán na hÉireann?

Ireland's most noted genealogist, he traced his own family through many centuries and generations, showing them to have migrated often but to have begun and ended in Co. Clare. Originally from Kilshanny, near Kilfenora, one of his ancestors then moved to Limerick in the late 15th century, where he set up as a goldsmith. The family seems to have moved further around Co. Limerick before being transplanted back to Clare during the mid-17th century Cromwellian Transplantations, but this time to Ballymarkaham, near Quin, in the south-east rather than the north-west of the county. Later on his great-great-great-grandfather, William Lysaght, emigrated to Portugal for a while, but returned to Ireland about 1750, settling the family at Hazelwood, between Mallow and Doneraile, Co. Cork. Then, in 1908, his father, S. R. Lysaght, himself a poet and author, acquired a fine house and land at Raheen, near Tuamgraney, in east Clare, and there the family still resides.

His own life also involved much travel. At various times he either lived in or travelled to such places as England, Wales, France, South Africa, Australia, Japan, America, and no doubt elsewhere too. But Ireland and, more particular, Clare, kept calling him back, and back he came.

A many-faceted man, he can be described as being, or having at one time or another been, a farmer, horticulturalist/nurseryman (our last meeting was in late 1985, he coming from working on potted seedlings, with earth and weeds still adhering to his hands), lecturer, writer, poet, novelist, historian, genealogist, librarian, nationalist, Gaelic Leaguer, Senator, sportsman (rugby at school, played golf off a 5 handicap, and even played cricket for Co. Clare—once!), but perhaps those who knew him best will remember him as a friend, a letter-writer and conversationalist, a mine of interesting tales and knowledge, and as a whole lot more besides.

Of course, many would consider him as a bit of an eccentric and certainly idiosyncratic in many ways: about his age, for instance (it varied at certain stages of his life, notably before and after his official retirement—depending on whether he was being proud of his seeming youth or of his well-earned seniority!), about his birthplace (“born at sea and baptised in the Parish of Tuamgraney” is the entry in *Who's Who*), about his home (officially Raheen, Tuamgraney, but he generally resided elsewhere—mostly Co. Dublin), his name (Edward, Éamonn, Mac, Ned, Anthony; Lysaght, MacLysaght, Mac Giolla Iasachta; even ‘Jim Hogan’ for a while when working on a Somerset farm after being sent down from Oxford), about his wives’ names (Mabel/Maureen; Mary Frances/Mamie), about his ‘first’ language (English, of course, but he preferred Irish, wrote books, articles and his diaries in Irish, generally spoke Irish while in the Senate, and even tried to create a *nua-Ghaeltacht* at Raheen in or about 1917). And so on. . . . but always there seems to have been an acceptable if not necessarily totally sound reason for such apparent contradictions. He was, indeed, a ‘real character’, one whom it was a privilege to have known. Truly the description of him as “one of the great ‘Worthies of Thomond’” [T. P. O’Neill, this *Journal*, 27(1985), 101] is a valid one. *I bhFlaitheas Dé, i measg a shean-cháirde, a shinsir féin agus i láthair iar-scoláirí na hÉireann, go raibh a anam dílis.*

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The late Dr. MacLysaght did not keep a full list of his published work, a matter which created great difficulties in compiling that published in “Féilscríbhinn Éamonn Mhic Giolla Iasachta” (pp. 7-11). Since then that compilation has been added to and some of the publications listed in it have been revised and republished; the following is an attempt to bring it up to date; reviews in learned journals are still being omitted from the list, except for the two he published in our *Journal*; also being included in his own (but edited) contribution to the *Féilscríbhinn*, and a list of the reviews of his books which appeared in our *Journal*—*si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*

NORTH MUNSTER ANTIQUARIAN JOURNAL

1. Review of *The Galways of Munster* (1970) by Sir Henry Blackhall—13(1970), 68.
2. Review of *The Transplantation to Connacht, 1654-58* (1971) by R. C. Simington—14(1971), 89-90.
3. “Edward A. MacLysaght: Some Autobiographical Notes” (edited by Etienne Rynne)—“Féilscríbhinn Eamoinn Mhic Giolla Iasachta”, 17(1975), 3-6.
4. Obituary for “Sir Henry Blackhall, Q.C., LL.D. (1889-1981)”—24(1982), 117.

BOOKS REVISED/ENLARGED SINCE 1975

1. *More Irish Families*, Galway 1960 (revised and enlarged 1982—on pp. 15-20 of which edition "The Irish Chieftainries" is reprinted from *Burke's Irish Family Records* (American Edition), New York 1976).
2. *Irish Families, Their Names, Arms and Origins*, Dublin 1975 (reprinting or revised and enlarged 1957, 1972, 1978 and 1985).
3. *The Surnames of Ireland*, Shannon 1969 (revised and enlarged Dublin 1973, 1978, 1980 and 1985).

OTHER PUBLICATIONS SINCE 1975

1. *Leathanaigh ó mo Dhialann*, Baile Átha Cliath 1978.
2. *Changing Times: Ireland since 1898*, Gerrards Cross 1978.
3. "The 1890s & 1900s in Clare", pp. 104-115 in S. Gmelch, *Irish Life*, Dublin 1979.
4. *Bibliography of Irish Family History*, Dublin 1981.

REVIEWS OF DR. E. A. MacLYSAGHT'S BOOKS IN THE NORTH MUNSTER ANTIQUARIAN JOURNAL

1. *Irish Life in the 17th Century: after Cromwell* (1939)—M.M. [Mgr. Michael Moloney], 1:4(1939), 180-181.
2. *Calendar of the Orrery State Papers* (1941)—R.H. [Robert Herbert], 3:1(1942), 74.
3. *The Surnames of Ireland* (1969)—Etienne Rynne, 12(1969), 103-104.
4. *The Surnames of Ireland* (1973)—Etienne Rynne, 16(1973-74), 97-98.
5. *Bibliography of Irish Family History* (1981) and *More Irish Families* (1982)—Etienne Rynne, 26(1984), 118-119.
6. *Leathanaigh ó mo Dhialann* (1978) and *Changing Times: Ireland since 1898* (1978)—Thomas P. O'Neill, 27(1985), 100-101.

ETIENNE RYNNE



PROCEEDINGS, 1986

At the Annual General Meeting, held on the 19th of February, Mr. Liam Irwin and Mr. Patrick Lysaght were appointed Lecturers Organiser and Outings Organiser respectively; Mr. Tony Browne was appointed as Assistant to the Hon. Secretary. Messrs. Craig Gardner & Co. once again kindly agreed to act as Hon. Auditors for the year.

During the year seven lectures and ten outings were held. The highlight of the year was the trip to York, the second overseas outing for the Society.

LECTURES

- 2nd January: "The Priest and the Land War". Dr. James O'Shea, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.
19th February: "Archaeological Sites in Mexico". Rev. John D. Leonard, *Vice-President*.
18th March: "Urban Renewal in Limerick". Mr. Frank McDonald, Environment Correspondent, *The Irish Times*.
22nd April: "Bishop Edward Thomas O'Dwyer". Mr. Sean Rushe, Chief Executive Officer, Co. Limerick Vocational Education Committee.
21st October: "Newfoundland is a Wide Plantation". Mr. Aidan O'Hara, Radio Telefis Éireann.
19th November: "Marriage in Medieval Ireland". Dr. Art Cosgrove, Lecturer in Medieval History, University College, Dublin.
2nd December: "Medals as Social History". Mr. Michael Kenny, Art & Industrial Division, The National Museum of Ireland.

OUTINGS

- 29th March—6th April—England: York and its environs.
Organiser: Frank Johnson, *Member*.
Speakers: Various local guides.
- 18th May—Blackwater Valley, Lismore, Dromana, Cappoquin, Co. Waterford.
Organiser: Anne O'Brien, *Member*.
Speakers: William Fraher, John Keane.
- 8th June—Scattery Island (Iniscatha) and Kilrush area.
Organisers: Cian O'Carroll and Michael Hctor, *Members*.
Speakers: Cian O'Carroll and Sean Spellissy, *Members*.
- 29th June—Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.
Organiser: Patrick Lysaght, *Member*.
Speakers: Daniel Grace and Nancy Murphy.
- 9th July—Garrymore and Barrington's Bridge, Limerick.
Organiser and Speaker: Kevin Hannan, *Member*.
- 24th July—Castleconnell, Co. Limerick.
Organiser: Patrick Lysaght, *Member*.
Speaker: David Quaid, *Member*.
- 7th August—Raheen and Ballycummin, Limerick.
Organiser: Tony Browne, *Member*.
Speakers: Tony Browne and Liam Irwin, *Members*.

24th August—Ballyneety, Cullen and Emly, Co. Limerick.
Organiser and Speaker: Michael Corbett, Member.

14th September—Ballingarry area, South Tipperary.
Organiser: Tony Browne, Member.
Speaker: Dr. William Nolan.

20th September—Castle Oliver and Ardpatrick, Co. Limerick.
Organiser: Patrick Lysaght, Member.
Speaker: Mainchín Seoighe, Member.

LIAM IRWIN
Hon. Secretary

