

IRISH HISTORICAL STUDIES

VOL. XI. No. 41

March 1958

Twenty years after

The Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies and the Irish Historical Society (founded respectively in February and November 1936) have recently celebrated their coming of age; and *Irish Historical Studies*, the joint journal of these two societies, has completed twenty years of publication. These are facts of some significance for Irish historical scholarship.

When *Irish Historical Studies* made its first appearance in March 1938, there had never been a journal exclusively devoted to the scientific study of Irish history. Without such a journal research could not flourish, and nothing was so vital to Irish history as a continuous flow of research. Not only was it essential that the results of research should be communicated to scholars and to the public, but there was also urgent need for the regular publication of bibliographical and other aids to research, guides to work in progress, and critical reviews of new publications. These and other needs have now been served by *Irish Historical Studies* long enough to make it hard for the younger generation of scholars to realise how adverse were the conditions in which research on Irish history had to be carried on twenty years ago.

Irish Historical Studies has, we believe, played a worthy part in that renaissance of Irish history of which the pioneers were Eoin MacNeill and Edmund Curtis, Robert Dunlop, W. F. T. Butler and Philip Wilson, Mary Hayden and Constantia Maxwell. These scholars worked largely in isolation. But the great MacNeill was one of our most inspiring supporters in the founding of this journal, and the

scholars who have succeeded to the place that his generation occupied in Irish historiography—Rev. John Ryan, Rev. Aubrey Gwynn, Mary Donovan O'Sullivan, James Hogan and others—have all in one way or another been associated with *Irish Historical Studies*. Many of the most characteristic books on Irish history from R. Dudley Edwards's *Church and state in Tudor Ireland* (1935) onwards are the work of men who have been actively concerned in the running of this journal. The series 'Studies in Irish history' which began with R. B. McDowell's *Irish public opinion* and has reached its seventh volume with J. G. Simms's *Williamite confiscation* has been, in effect, an auxiliary to *Irish Historical Studies*.

A distinctive feature of the activity that centres round this journal is cooperation—between workers in Irish history throughout Ireland and beyond, between academic historians and teachers of history in schools, and between all these and others who, whether actively engaged in historical work or not, are devoted to Irish history and seek to promote the study of it by their interest and support. The institutional framework of this cooperation has been the two parallel societies in Dublin and Belfast, which, working together in unbroken harmony, have maintained a constant supply of original papers for publication. These have been contributed by a variety of scholars, Irish, British, and American, but most distinctively by postgraduate students of the three Irish universities and by members of their teaching staffs. From the Irish universities this journal has always received unflinching support, both moral and financial. They have not only continued the annual grants with the help of which the journal was launched, but, in face of the ever rising cost of production, have generously increased their amount. For the hope we expressed in our first issue that *Irish Historical Studies* would soon become self-supporting, was quickly dashed by war conditions and remains unrealised.

Of those with whom we set out on this adventure twenty years ago, we recall with special gratitude the names of R. M. Henry (professor of Latin in the Queen's University of Belfast), Eoin MacNeill (professor of early (including medieval) Irish history in University College, Dublin), and Rev. J. F. O'Doherty (professor of ecclesiastical history in St Patrick's College, Maynooth)—Ulstermen of powerful intellect and

personality, now, alas, no longer with us. Of the other members of the original committees, D. A. Chart (formerly deputy keeper of the public records of Northern Ireland) has remained continuously in office and has always been a wise and valued counsellor. Apart from the original joint editors, only Rev. Leo McKeown (of the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies) has so long a record. But there are others who have served on the committees of the journal for many years—James Carty, Rev. N. D. Emerson, G. A. Hayes-McCoy, M. Ó Dubhghaill, and T. Ó Raifeartaigh, of the Irish Historical Society; J. C. Beckett, David Kennedy, and Samuel Simms, of the Ulster Society. From 1941 till his untimely death in 1950, there was no more enthusiastic and energetic committee-member than the genial Francis O'Kelley, of Dublin; and during the same period the late John J. Monaghan, of Belfast, who was so much endeared to us both for his character and his devotion to local history, gave valuable help in the financial affairs of the journal. J. C. Beckett, a member of the committee of management since 1939 and secretary of the Ulster Society since 1945, has long been an indispensable link between his society and Dublin; and in the detailed work of the journal, T. Ó Raifeartaigh has for years played a part as far-reaching and beneficent as it has been unobtrusive and unrecorded.

A special tribute is due to the men who have discharged the office of honorary treasurer—T. Y. K. Mayrs (1937–41), J. J. Auchmuty (1941–4), A. J. O'Connell (1944–52), and F. S. L. Lyons, who has been conducting our finances with such smooth efficiency for the past six years. We are also grateful to our honorary auditors, John Green (1937–46), formerly bursar of Queen's University, Belfast, A. J. O'Connell (1940–4), formerly secretary and bursar of University College, Dublin, and C. B. Kennedy (since 1944) accountant to the University of Dublin. Among many others from whom the journal has received valued help and encouragement may be mentioned the late J. E. Todd (professor of modern history, Queen's University), the late Rev. Paul Walsh, Rev. Patrick Rogers, M. A. O'Brien (formerly lecturer in Celtic, Queen's University, now senior professor, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies), David B. Quinn (formerly lecturer in history, Queen's

University, now professor of modern history at Liverpool), G. O. Sayles (formerly professor of modern history at Belfast, now professor of history at Aberdeen), K. Povey (formerly university librarian at Belfast, now at Liverpool), R. J. Hayes (director, National Library of Ireland), Rev. Aubrey Gwynn (professor of medieval history, University College, Dublin), P. Henchy (National Library), L. Bieler (University College, Dublin), and E. G. Quin (Trinity College, Dublin).

While we have enjoyed the blessings of continuity and stability, we have been scarcely less fortunate in receiving infusions of new talent, especially during the past ten years. T. P. O'Neill, Kevin Nowlan, Oliver MacDonagh, E. R. R. Green, William O'Sullivan, F. S. L. Lyons, David Large, Rev. F. X. Martin, Maureen Wall and Hugh Kearney, who are all actively connected with this journal, are examples of a new generation of historical scholars, keen, critical and productive. One comparatively recent recruit, T. Desmond Williams, professor of modern history in University College, Dublin, was elected joint editor in October last when, after twenty years in office, R. Dudley Edwards resigned his editorship.

As founder of the Irish Historical Society and co-founder of *Irish Historical Studies*, as secretary of the one and joint editor of the other, Dudley Edwards has rendered services to Irish historical science that are immense and inestimable. His incomparable energy, his enthusiasm for, and his prodigious knowledge of, Irish history, his exacting scholarship, and his formidable power of criticism have made him a unique force in the Irish historical movement of the past two decades. As professor of modern Irish history in University College, Dublin, he has been the inspiring genius of a school of young historians who are making important contributions to Irish scholarship. Though Dr Edwards has decided to devote himself to Irish history in other ways than in the editorship of *Irish Historical Studies*, he has not severed his connection with the journal, and he has retired from the secretaryship of the Irish Historical Society only to become its president. It is therefore not on any valedictory note that we place on record our deep appreciation of all that he has done for Irish history, and especially for this journal, and offer him our warmest good wishes for his historical enterprises of the future.

T. W. M.