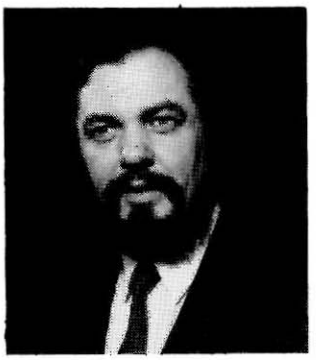
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Journeying to a Journal: the Society's Predecessors



By J.P. McCARTHY
(*Council Member 1988*)

INTRODUCTION

At a Council meeting of the newly-formed Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 17 November 1891, the Chairman/President, Revd R.A. Canon Sheehan, 'informed the meeting that Mr. Robert Day had been generous enough to place his valuable edition of *Smith's History*, with notes by Dr. Caulfield and Crofton Croker, at the disposal of the Society for publication'. At a subsequent meeting Wm Ringrose Atkins expressed the Society's thanks to W.A. Copinger 'who has kindly consented to edit Smith's *Cork* with Mr. Robert Day'. Thus began the work of rounding out close to two and a half centuries of antiquarian endeavour in Cork and of using its synthesis as a foundation for a new medium to record and communicate the social and cultural heritage of Cork city and county.

It was also in the month of November, in 1749, that the Physico-Historical Society in Dublin ordered the publication of the original manuscript of Smith's *Cork*. When published, the two volumes contained four parts: 'The Antient Names of the Territories and Inhabitants . . .', 'The Topography of the County and City of Cork', 'The Civil History of the County', 'The Natural History'. This attempt at comprehensiveness illustrates the focus of inquiry then fashionable, and underlying it is the philosophy of the Common Scientist. Academic life in Trinity College Dublin had been a haven for antiquarian studies for over a century prior to the appearance of Smith's *Cork*. Influenced by the establishment of the Royal Society in England, Wm Molyneux and Sir Wm Petty began a Philosophical Society in Dublin in 1683. It attempted county surveys, collecting data on antiquities and other topics. Interest in ecclesiastical history and in the 'ethnography of the wild Irish' found expression in tour journals and in field notes. The rude monuments of antiquity were viewed from the saddle and from the coach window. Diggings were accomplished and curios collected. Smith's work in the southern counties of Ireland epitomized the accumulated wisdom of efforts such at these.

CHARLES SMITH

Before progressing into Munster Smith worked for a time with Walter Harris, who had a family connexion with Sir James Ware as well as being the editor of his *Ireland*. They were both graduates of TCD, and it is interesting to note that the orientation of 'Common Science' drew to its ranks persons from the medical, religious and legal schools within this institution. In an annotation to his personal copy of Smith's *Cork*, Thomas Crofton Croker states that Smith was an apothecary in Lismore, while acknowledging that the Waterford historian, Ryland, said it was Dungarvan. Crone states that he was born in Waterford c. 1715. This may explain why Waterford was the first of his histories. Smith died in Bristol in 1762, one year after the death of his colleague, Walter Harris.



C. SMITH, M.D.

The story behind his histories began in Dublin when a group of gentlemen of means came together in 1740 to found what they called the Physico-Historical Society. Its objective was to collect materials for a book after the manner of Camden's *Brittania* to be published under the title *Hibernia or Ireland Antient and Modern.* As a means of collecting information, circulars were sent to 'many curious and learned gentlemen in their several counties'. Co. Down was re-investigated through the assistance of gentlemen in that county who were aided by persons sent from Dublin. The editors of the Co. Down volume which resulted were Charles Smith and Walter Harris. Three surveyors were employed to reduce the Grand Jury map, add to it, and survey several parts of the sea coast as well as the new canal. The resulting map was claimed to be the most exact that had yet been published for any county in Ireland. *The Antient and Present State of the County of Down* was published in 1744. It is interesting that neither Smith's nor Harris's name appeared on the title page. Smith and Harris also worked on a volume for Co. Dublin, but it was Smith's solo performance which created the stage on which Cork antiquarians would play out their role in the ensuing century.

It is tempting to imagine Smith supporting himself as a Dungarvan apothecary and local doctor within the next two years, and to see these circumstances as the reason why the next counties chosen for investigation were so far distanced from Down or Dublin. From the date of publication of his Waterford volume in 1746 he went on over a ten-year period to produce the Cork volumes published in 1750 and the Kerry volume in 1756. The printer was A. Reilly of Dublin and the principal distributor was Exshaw. For the Kerry volume the booksellers Ewing, Faulkner and Wilson are added and perhaps this is indicative of concern derived from the demise of the Physico-Historical Society (1752). As seen in the preface, the Society no longer existed, which obviously burdened Smith financially and caused great disappointment.

Crofton Croker in 1832 said that Sir Wm Betham told him there were interleaved copies (belonging to Smith) of Cork, Kerry and Waterford in the library at TCD. A footnote to Crofton Croker's statement by Thomas Hewitt, Cork distiller and collector of antiquities, states that in 1854 the Kerry copy was in his possession. According to Crofton Croker these interleaved volumes for the three counties contained 'very considerable MS additions, and corrections by Smith'. The W. Wilson of 6 Dame St., who appeared as a bookseller for the first edition of the Kerry volume, emerged in 1774 with reprints of all three county histories. An advertisement bound in with the Cork volumes states that Wilson was inspired by the same motives as had urged Smith to prepare a second edition for Waterford. He had acquired the late Charles Smith's notes from a friend. Wilson's desire to encourage readers to

contribute to future editions set a course for local antiquarians to follow, ending in Cork in 1892 with the publication of the first issue of the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society.* The inclusion of Smith's history as a supplement to the three volumes which form the first series dovetailed both publications, leaving the *Journal* in its second series free to pursue a broader course of exploration commemorated in this centenary issue.

ENCOURAGING MINDS TO TRAVEL

Smith's Cork was a canal city, a Venice in Ireland to the imagination of some. Dutch and Spanish influences in its architecture intermingled with the Medieval in timber and in stone. Rich hopes filled the ambitious proposals of men like Patrick Aher, the mapmaker at Broad Lane. Nathaniel Grogan's sketches and paintings captured its tall ships and small boats, its multi-stacked cityscape and stubborn-willed populace. At Castle St. local printing presses first began imprinting title pages in the seventeenth century. The Exchange building dominated Castle St. and those of academic and polite literary tastes could purchase the latest novels, plays, newspapers, street ballads and satirical cartoons. The closing in of the canals and waterways and the opening up of new thoroughfares caused a geographical restructuring of commercial, industrial and domestic life with the onset of the nineteenth century. But before this the buying public for Smith's *Cork* would have looked to Castle St. for their requirements. Booksellers, along with city and county luminaries from civil and church life, were registered as subscribers to the work. If Smith is to be taken as the earliest point for the growth of interest among the general reading public in Cork's past, one can see a partial profile of it through the subscribers' list.

More than 500 persons made pre-publication subscriptions for Smith's *Cork.* Over 100 of these also subscribed to Smith's *Waterford,* indicating a market for the entire projected national set. The social positions of subscribers, where recorded, falls into nobility, landed gentry, merchants, booksellers, bishops, clergy, medical doctors, military. All are represented within the Cork purchasing community, and they provide an indicator to the existence of personal collections and private libraries. Smith's work would have made a valuable addition to their topographical sections. The effect of so many persons of position, ambition and influence reading the work should be considered, given that it provided the first opportunity to get to know the county in depth without having to travel it or rely on the gossip of the wayside wanderer. The presence of maps was an important enhancement as were the topographical views. It was a reasonably objective source of information and must have had many spin-offs in the way people used what it contained. One of these undoubtedly was a desire to visit, discuss and understand the 'reliques' of ancient Irish history.

Many of the Cork subscribers were by the nature of the Physico-Historical Society's scheme also contributors. The strategy as outlined in the Co. Down volume was to raise funds through a network consisting of 60 Dublin city members and 320 corresponding members, ten from each county. The bishops were asked to recommend the scheme to their parochial clergy and it was suggested that within four or five years the whole survey could be completed. By this means a self-financing, information-gathering network was to be put in place. Its focus was on topographical knowledge, on producing a descriptive record of the contemporary physical and human landscape. This landscape included ruins and objects derived from antiquity. Names and explanations of origins and functions for these were taken from contemporary scholarship, and it is interesting to note that many of the

ideas attached to them became deeply rooted in the folklore, and even in the archaeology, of later generations.

The progress of thought on the subject of Irish antiquities experienced a minor explosion in 1772 when the Dublin Society's Committee of Antiquarians came into being, along with two warring secretaries, Charles Vallancey and Edward Ledwich. By 1774 it had evaporated leaving a bewildering legacy of thoughts and divergent schools of opinion. The foundation of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785 and the inclusion of antiquarian studies in its brief appears in retrospect to have restored order. Its prizes for essays provided the impetus for scholarship and by this course two works significant in the development of Cork antiquarian studies came to be written. The first was produced by a member of the medical profession, Dr Thomas Wood, and the second by George Petrie. Both works were countrywide in focus; however, the Cork aspect of Wood's work derives from his examples of antiquities and in Petrie's case it is in his criticism of the actions of Cork antiquaries. The RIA encouraged the publication of prize-winning essays and this led to the publication of Wood's essay in 1821 and Petrie's in 1845.

The Cork booksellers Edwards and Savage received copies of Wood's *An Inquiry concerning the Primitive Inhabitants of Ireland illustrated by Ptolemy's Map of Erin corrected by the aid of Bardic History* in 1821. The two other distributors were in London and Dublin. Thomas Wood MD was a native and resident of Cork and in the preface proclaims his use of 'sober investigation' and the 'penetration and sound judgement of this enlightened age'. His book is an interesting example of the use of antiquarian data and place-names as a means of illustrating and expanding knowledge available in manuscripts and in the works of classical authors. Though his chronologies are somewhat awry, the index contains significant entries for souterrains, raths with houses, weapons and *fulachta fiadh*. What appear to be his own field observations provided him with a commentary on ringforts in the South of Ireland, a drawing of a souterrain, a plan and interpretation of the relationship of ringforts, a description of 'the circular base of a house at Lios-in-Riagh situated at Cnoc Rathach . . . within six miles of Cork'. He is careful however not to tread dangerously and no digressions occur on either Ogham inscriptions or round towers even though pre-Christian theories concerning these abounded at the time. His statement that ringforts are 'erroneously ascribed to Danes' is a significant pointer to guided thought on these matters. Wood is an indicator that antiquarianism had awakened among the reading public in Cork. But how?

THE PEDESTRIAN IN THE LANDSCAPE

The appearance of Taylor and Skinner's *Road Maps of Ireland* in 1778 provided a useful handbook for travellers, whether by foot, by coach, or by horse. Long country walks became a popular pastime for Cork city and town dwellers. Some found natural history to be an enjoyable adjunct to this activity, while others enjoyed antiquities. Country life held its own fascinations and peculiarities. Holy wells, patterns, fairs and pilgrimages were captivating cultural experiences for these urbanites, many of whom had a different social, religious and cultural consciousness. Romanticism hot and fresh from London flowed in through the booksellers and creative imaginations began to look for meaning in the ways of knowing the past. Scottish Celtic romanticism fired such imaginations and drew reactions from Ireland. Born during the last quarter of that century were five individuals who would help create the foundation for a school of antiquarian study in Cork, inspired as much by romantic ideas as by the wish to savour the delights of the country traveller. A transfer of ideas began a Victorian pilgrimage into the folklife, folklore, monuments and history of Cork

County for Fr Matthew Horgan (b. 1775), Abraham Abell (1783), Richard Sainthill (1787), John Lindsay (1789) and Thomas Crofton Croker (1798). Along with John Windele and Richard Rolt Brash, from the early 1830s onwards they spearheaded what became known as the South Munster Antiquarian Society. To see its context one must return to the bookshops, libraries and literary societies of Cork city as the literary lustre of Castle St. dims and fades.

LITERARY CANDLES

It is noteworthy that the Wilson edition of Smith's *Cork* should have a Dublin imprint. It reflects a direct connexion with Smith and his achievements. The lasting value of the work, as much in its historical information as in the patina time had come to place on its current information, is best interpreted by the appearance of a third edition with a Cork imprint in 1815 — that of John Connor, a bookseller who also ran a circulating library. Libraries of this kind enjoyed great popularity through the late eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century. Being principally a bookshop phenomenon, they had a direct advantage over institutional and society libraries of the time. New works and new editions from abroad and from Dublin found a place on their shelves. The special requirements of individual readers could be catered for, and cash rather than club or class dictated the nature of transactions. Gaps in the availability of popular works would be noticed readily. Connor advertised in Cork and Dublin newspapers and offered the latest London novels along with history and travel books. Revenue from sales and from lending made these businesses a viable proposition until the mid-nineteenth century when social changes in education and in the publishing of popular literature had the effect of changing the character of the market-place. Such premises provided for the literary-minded members of the community a focal point where literary talent and scholarly enthusiasm could blend and give rise to a desire for a literature which was native in both origin and content. Perhaps the demand for a reprint of Smith was occasioned by the appearance of Revd Horatio Townsend's *A General and Statistical Survey of the County of Cork* in 1810, produced on behalf of the Royal Dublin Society. A two-volume reprint of it appeared in 1815 and it partly relegated the status and the topographical currency of Smith's work to the realms of history. Townsend was one-time rector of Carrigaline and was involved with the beginning of learned societies in Cork city. His book was part of a national survey as Smith's had been and both surveys suffered a similar fate. While these topographical and historical works took their places on Connor's bookshelves in his Patrick St. shop, another bookshop became the fashionable centre of literary and cultural life for a young generation within the city. Some of them, like S.C. Hall and Thomas Crofton Croker, would leave to settle in London. A visit by Sir Walter Scott would leave a lingering memory of a rags to riches and fame story in the Victorian art world. It tells of how John Bolster the proprietor brought the young Daniel Maclise to Scott's attention. The birth of this new age of artistic and scholarly activity within the city coincided with the structural changes taking place within it, reflecting the wealth of its merchant princes as Patrick St. became its most prominent thoroughfare.

Robert Day reminisced about John Bolster's *State Lottery and Printing Office, Account and School-book manufactory, Juvenile and Circulating Library, Book, Stationery and Fancy Warehouse* with the words:

> In years past I have often sat and listened to Richard Sainthill, Doctor Coppinger, Richard Caulfield and Doctor Wall when gathered round the fire on a winter's evening in the Old Cork Institution, as they spoke of 'John Bolster' and his place of business in

Patrick Street, which was the favourite lounge and resort of all literary men of Cork, by whom he was greatly esteemed; among them were William Maginn, the Rev. Francis Mahony, James Roche and Crofton Croker etc. . . . Many others, in those restful days, took little note of time as it swiftly flew, but quietly culled from its perfumed flowers of literature much of their sweetness and fragrancy, which are now lost in the rush of business and the strife for wealth. (1902, 101-3).

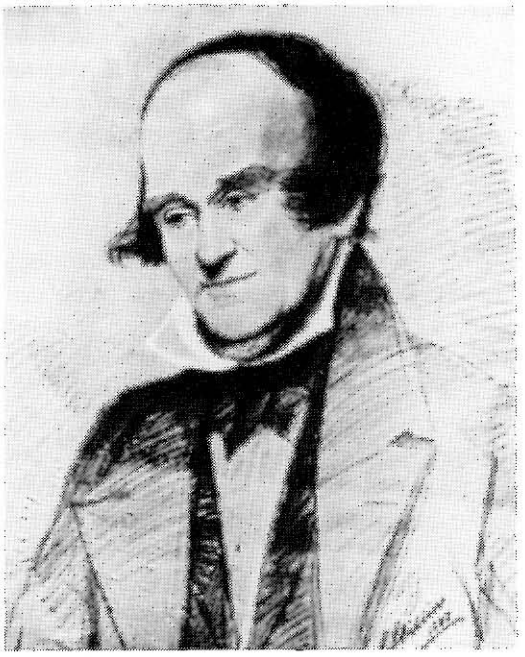
Among the many would have been the earliest identifiable generation of Cork antiquaries, represented by Abell, Horgan, Sainthill and Lindsay. The founding of the Cork Society of Arts and Sciences in 1782 began the chameleon-like existence of antiquarian groups in clubs, home meetings, tavern talk and country walks. Up to 1830 these attempted 'learned societies' were mostly, as described by Canon Sheehan, multi-phased and multi-faceted. They cultivated men of extraordinary eccentricities and produced the city's first — despite occasional failing and faltering — archaeologist in John Windele (1801-1865).

Richard Sainthill was partly educated by an eccentric schoolmaster named John Fitzgerald who produced the first *Cork Remembrancer* in 1783. Its success would be followed in 1792 by Anthony Edwards and in 1837 by Francis H. Tuckey who can be said to have brought the genre to a fine art for local history. Sainthill was born in England and through his uncle in London came to know many high-ranking officials in the British Museum. His life in Cork was centred on the wine trade. His is one of the many examples of wealth and culture derived from the fortunes of shipping and overseas trade. His first antiquarian interest was in coins and he produced several papers for private circulation. Like James Roche and John Lindsay he was a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine* to which Richard Caulfield and Richard Rolt Brash would also contribute. He spent many happy hours with his coin cabinet, helped Crofton Croker in compiling his *Fairy Legends,* was a friend and early patron of Maclise, a chronicler of the Old Countess of Desmond, a member of the South Munster Antiquarian Society and a frequenter of Bolster's bookshop. His aptly-titled Spanish stew of literary works, *An Olla Podrida*, was printed in London in 1844 and a second edition in 1853. He was a typical gentleman antiquarian with wide-ranging interests. A popular figure in the political and cultural life of Cork, he mixed the energies of a collector with the desire to enrich the mind through antiquarian endeavour.

Another gentleman of means was John Lindsay who was connected by marriage as well as being a friend of Sainthill. He earned the accolade of being 'one of the foremost numismatists of the century . . . in all of Europe'. Between 1839 and 1868 he published eight books in Cork on the subject. He was a graduate of TCD, and had a great love for archaeology. As a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine,* a member of the British Archaeological Association, of the Irish Archaeological Society, a corresponding member of the Syro-Egyptian Society, an honorary member of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and member of the South Munster Antiquarian Society, he added greatly to the avenues of influence and contact which provided encouragement and aid in the careers of Richard Caulfield, Crofton Croker and Richard Rolt Brash. Though a colleague, however, the career path of John Windele did not work within the same structures. The influence of the two other principal figures of this first generation pointed the direction for Windele. They were businessman Abraham Abell and Fr Matt Horgan.

ABRAHAM ABELL, PEDESTRIAN PAR EXCELLENCE

One wonders how best to remember or indeed describe Abraham Abell: manager of the Cork Savings Bank with cats purring and jumping



ABRAHAM ABELL

across his desk; the student of Philosophy; the Victorian romantic antiquary who saw the tower at Red Abbey as being a fitting residence; the pragmatist who slept with two skeletons to overcome fear; the man who strapped up one leg to prevent tiredness distracting him from late night study at his rooms in the Royal Cork Institution; the lover of walking who walked a mile for every year of his age; the enquirer on Ogham and round towers in the company of Fr Matt; the host of early antiquarian meetings; the scientific searcher in pursuit of practical knowledge.

The early decades of the nineteenth century saw a plethora of short-lived learned societies come into being in Cork, celebrating a perceived age of enlightenment, a wave of new technologies, new wealth, new social structures, new cultural definitions, new measurements and a new clockwork philosophy of life and time. From a conglomeration of short-lived attempts and randomly-published reports emerged the Cork Literary and Scientific Society in 1820. It linked together elements of the Cork Society of Arts and Sciences (1782), the Cork Library Society (1792), the Cork Literary and Philosophical Society (1804), the Cork Scientific Society (1809), the Philosophical and Literary Society (1813). A tree with many roots, its trunk has a hundred and seventy one years of growth rings today while its strongest offshoot commemorates its own one hundred years of existence.

Abell was actively involved with these early societies, though his energies appear to have slowed down in later years, much to the frustration of the younger John Windele. In his earlier years Abell was a founder of the Scientific and Literary Society, a founder of the Cork Cuvierian Society, Treasurer of the Cork Library, member of the Royal Irish Academy, member of the Irish Archaeological Society, member of the Camden Society and of the South Munster Antiquarian Society. On the reverse of a portrait of Abell, Windele in an obituary (1851), wrote of him:

> To his zeal and that of his chosen confreres in this pursuit we are indebted for the first collection of Ogham inscriptions (now deposited at the Cork Institution) ever made in Ireland.

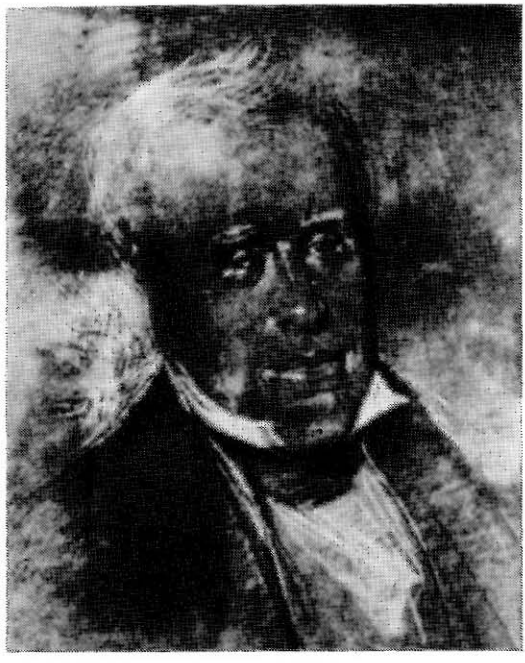
Among the many other comments concerning him from Windele and others are: he had a morbid antipathy to writing; he was a numismatist, collector of ancient relics, rare and curious books; he oscillated between philosophy and antiquities, a virtuoso and an oddity, devoted to mental improvement; he assisted with exploration of the Round Towers and thereby succeeded in educing new views of the object of these 'Cruces Antiquarriorum'. Windele quotes a much-loved tale of Abell's strange behaviour on first encountering a tumulus which he visited at Currabinny hill and proceeded to personalize by rolling about

on it to make the sign of a cross. Windele was frequently displeased by Abell's attitude to field monuments, and apart from an incident quoted below, he records that Abell's name will be found scratched or inscribed on many ancient monuments from Youghal to the Blaskets.

Abell's scientific curiosity, his pursuit of practical knowledge, is indicative of the more formal educational developments taking place within the city during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. This was expressed most forcefully in efforts to establish an institution of university status. These began when Revd Thomas Dix Hincks started a series of classes c. 1803 and, having established himself with local societies, a gradual social consciousness of the benefits of a local college of higher learning took root at a building on the South Mall. What they required by 1831 was 'a collegiate establishment . . . in which the middle classes may obtain, on cheap and easy terms, a scientific and practical education, intermediate between the elementary system of the grammar school and the more expensive and higher institution of the University'. In 1832 a suitable public building (the former Custom House) was granted to them, but their original intention of being able to confer degrees 'after enlargements of staff and premises' had now lost the glint of optimism. The further deterioration of the Royal Cork Institution, though partly because of financial restraints, is seen as being largely due to a lack of public support for its more serious scholarly objectives. MacSweeney and Reilly (1957, 22-36; 77-94) in describing its progress during the 1830s state that it became 'more a club than a school', that it provided 'public intellectual entertainment rather than recognised professional or technical training'. According to them 'the Cuvierian Society was established to prevent a waste of library, collections, and of energy, vision and pioneering enthusiasm of which its work had been an expression'. Though a failed forerunner of the Queen's College, Cork, it provided a transient highlight in the history of learned societies within the city and embedded traditions of place, association and time which would outlive itself.

FATHER MATT OF THE ROUND TOWERS

In 1817 at the quiet hamlet of Waterloo near the village of Blarney a new parish priest took responsibility for the building of a church without a belfry. The dedication stone, in line as much with his love for the Gaelic language as with Blarney's court of poetry, was a characteristic expression of Fr Matthew Horgan. Doubtless its laying was accompanied by ceremony and pomp. Such would take place again in 1836 when with the assistance of Abraham Abell the foundation stone for a round tower was laid in the grounds of the church. On an important local social occasion, over thirty gentlemen present — among whom were Cork literary figures and antiquarians — would retire to Fr Matt's house to dine after the events. Such social gatherings in the company of Fr Matt stimulated an awareness of the cultural heritage of Gaelic Ireland, discussions of diverse antiquarian matters and, for the architect's eye, the expression of Irishness in architectural design concepts. This fascination with early Irish architecture would generate a considerable amount of published material both textual and graphic during the years to come, from members of the South Munster Antiquarian Society and its successor, resulting in books, articles in antiquarian journals and in the *Irish Builder*. The association of ideas welded by such discussions and the acknowledgement of a living past in folklife had a powerful influence on Crofton Croker as a folklorist and on Daniel Maclise as a historical artist. Visits to Fr Matt provided rich pickings for thought and artistic expression, as in 1832 when he invited Crofton Croker and Maclise, both on holidays from London, to a barn party



FR MATT HORGAN
(*From photo taken 1839*)

for local parishioners on All Hallows Eve. The scene was subsequently recaptured by Maclise in a painting of this name exhibited first in 1833.

In 1832 also Fr Matt was busy on a project to demonstrate a concept which perhaps resulted from a fusion of three facets of his scholarly mind — architecture, Gaelic studies and antiquities. Now at the age of 57 and with considerable experience derived from visiting early church sites, a repeal of a penal law prohibiting belfries on Catholic churches provided him with an opportunity. Fr Matt had been responsible for the construction of a second church within his parish in 1822. This was at Whitechurch and it was here that he proposed to build his first attempt at a round tower. His need for funding and for influential support led to the appearance of an advertisement circulated in 1832 to various groups in Cork. It refers to 'a belfry or anchorite tower' which is one of the 'remaining vestiges of Erin and there may be a merit in initiating the plan for its great durability and use as a belfry, though neglected for years after all the opinions of antiquarians concerning them'. In June of the same year the belfry was finished and styled in a newspaper report 'the Anchorite or Round Tower of Whitechurch'. The term anchorite has an interesting association with the progress of antiquarian interests in Cork. Many trips by Fr Matt and Abell, including Windele and others in later years, had provided the pleasure of attempting to experience the past through its remains. The fascination with the distinctiveness of these towers led to much speculation and argument both locally and nationally. In Cork prior to 1830 yet another mysterious club existed known as the Anchorites Club and it is perhaps here that Abell, Fr Matt and Windele hotly debated the questions of origin and use. That these questions were not settled to Windele's satisfaction and that Fr Matt still had doubts on the question of a multi-purpose use for them after the Whitechurch tower and the subsequent tower at Waterloo were built led in time to the greatest antiquarian debacle of the South Munster Antiquarian Society. After that it was perhaps best to find a new identity within the Cork Cuvierian Society, which emerged in 1835 as a unifying body for the natural science, literary and antiquarian groups in the city.

DWELLING AT CROSSROADS

In 1833 George Petrie who, following his father's influence, began his career as an antiquarian and topographical artist, was awarded a prize and the gold medal of the RIA for an essay on round towers in which he attempted to clarify thinking on the questions of origin and function. This was to become the definitive work. Greatly expanded and encompassing developments in subsequent years, it was finally published in 1845. As it is not the purpose of this paper to describe the lengthy

discussion therein on the activities of the South Munster Antiquarian Society, suffice it to say that while the question could have been settled by the activities of Fr Matt, an obsession — perhaps partially due to Abell's influence and partially to having culled too much from travelogues in Bolster's bookshop — led Windele to write some of the most damaging letters of his career to Petrie who subsequently published them in his book. Windele's use of excavation to search for evidence of a sepulchral use for round towers, and the widespread effect of this pursuit on so many of these monuments in the south may appear with hindsight today to have been most unfortunate. Given the number of ringforts, souterrains and tumuli also excavated, however, these activities were not out of context. Whereas Petrie's belief that explanation should not be sought through digging for evidence, given the capacity for scientific interpretation of such evidence at that time, it is reasonable to state that Windele and his colleagues did not have the same degree of awareness as Petrie had. Though to some extent their activities may have left us a nightmare of confused stratigraphies, particularly in Cork sites, it is well to remember that it was in this context and place that Pitt-Rivers in the early 1860s also pushed his spade. Windele would not have seen his activities from this point of view; indeed he objected strongly when Abell recommended to a farmer at Dunderrow in 1848 that he pull down a ringfort. To Windele, 'Abell had no genuine antiquarian spirit'.

In fairness there was a world of difference between the intellectual development and career of Petrie and that of Windele. Had the Royal Cork Institution achieved its original ambition things might have been different. As it was, Windele was resigned after 1845 to an amateur career recorded in field notes, manuscript translations, a few publications and bric-a-brac of local scholarship. His encouragement, guidance, influence and support, however, formed a lasting achievement in his native city. Meanwhile Petrie, eleven years his senior, went from illustrating topographical guidebooks to exhibiting at the RHA, becoming its librarian in 1829, was elected a member of the RIA in 1828 and a member of Council in 1829, took specific responsibility for developing the antiquities collection of the Academy, came to know Thomsen and Worsaae, and took charge of the Topographical Department of the Ordnance Survey along with O'Donovan and O'Curry. In the world of publishing, he founded the *Dublin Penny Journal* with Caesar Otway in 1832, to which Crofton Croker and Windele contributed. By this time Windele's desire to see *Bolster's Magazine* flourish had given way to failure leaving him with a mistrust of any such venture for the future. There is perhaps a little more than irony in the final chapter of the round tower escapades of Windele, Fr Matt and Abell signified in the completion date broadly displayed as 1845, midway up the Waterloo tower and visible from the Cork to Dublin railway line. It also exists on the final resting place of Fr Matt, not at the base of one of his round towers as originally intended but within the church at Waterloo.

JOHN WINDELE TAKES TO THE STAGE

A closer look at Windele's career gives an interesting insight into literary ambitions and the nature of antiquarian activity during the first half of the nineteenth century in Cork. Illustrative material occurs in *Bolster's Magazine* and in Windele's field notes. In both sources a little of his personality shows through as it was at different stages of his life. Canon P. Power, second professor of Archaeology at UCC and a discerning collector of locally-printed works, desposited his set of a short-lived magazine (1826-30) published by Bolster in the University library in the early part of this century. In a note in this *Journal* for 1939 he records that he

acquired the set from a nephew of John Windele. Windele, who was about twenty-five years old when the magazine began publication, was its editor. To a large extent it was the product of a specific group of individuals connected in various ways with the bookshop which was an open club for the intellectually-minded within the city. In Canon Power's view it was 'almost certainly, the most considerable and ambitious provincial magazine of purely literary character ever produced in Ireland'. Generally contributors were anonymous but Windele's set has some of their names inscribed. Among them are Jeremiah J. Callanan the poet, Revd Horatio Townsend, and also John Windele. During the years of its publication the titles of Windele's contributions are indicative of a rounded interest in history, antiquities, folklore, folklife, topography and literature — A wake in the Irish Highlands, Irish County Histories, Origins of the O's and Mac's, A letter from the Mountains, O'Connor of Carrigafoyle (a legend), Gougane Barra, Origin of the Red Shanks, Callanan's Poetry, Dr. MacSlatt in the West, Auto-Biographical Pilgrimage etc. Windele frequently used the pseudonym Thristmagistus MacSlatt when writing about the adventures of himself and two colleagues, MacRinco and the Rev. MacFunnel. Their excursions to various parts of the county and on into Kerry provided material for a series of articles by Windele much to the enjoyment no doubt of Abell and Fr Matt. They certainly were antiquarian pilgrims and one suspects that much of the field recording done at this time formed the core of his most successful publication, *Descriptive Notices of the City of Cork and its Vicinity, Gougane-Barra, Glengariff, and Killarney . . .* which first appeared in 1839. The demand for subsequent editions in later years is a fine tribute to his efforts. In this context one is reminded of the return of S.C. Hall with his wife to Ireland and the research done for their tour books to which Windele contributed. One also thinks of the many guide books produced by Guy's printing house later in the century when it occupied the premises which was formerly Bolster's bookshop. The concept of holidaying, tourism, hotels and Bianconi cars, followed by the railway, all contributed to a rising market within the British Isles for information of this kind to suit the aspirations and rising ambitions of the middle classes. But these pilgrim tours of Windele and his associates were also a source of shared reminiscences and of jocular fellowship. This is perhaps best expressed in Fr Matt's long poem, *Cathair Conri*, edited by Windele and finally published in Cork in 1860, which concerns a visit to a cashel in Kerry in the company of Abell and William Willes, the artist of the South Munster Antiquarians.

Windele showed great optimism in the introductory article of the first issue of *Bolster's Quarterly Magazine* when it appeared in February 1826. He appears to dream of an invisible college centred on the magazine with the words:

> The first number of the Magazine of Ireland must speak for itself — though we do not flatter ourselves that it will start into life armed against every shaft — we trust, like the myrtle which Minerva presented to Athenians it will strike deep root and gather round it the founders of a new academy.

One cannot help wondering if the fortunes of the Royal Cork Institution at this time and the want of support for a scholarly journal provided the spark for this venture. However, after four years it ceased publication, having achieved a considerable distribution span with outlets in Dublin, Belfast, Waterford, Limerick, Oxford, Cambridge, York and Paris. It was also distributed by 'Clerks of the Road'.

TALES OF THE ROAD

In the later years of the nineteenth century those who remembered the South Munster Antiquarian Society defined two principal

ideological battlefronts on which their 'fame' was founded. The first of these was the round tower controversy after defeat in which they seem to have retired gracefully in 1845. The second however proved a victory, though alternative claims to the prize existed. This controversy surrounded the decipherment of Ogham. Again Abell and Fr Matt were early into the fray. A collection of Ogham stones was created in the Royal Cork Institution, echoed in the Stone Corridor at UCC today, though the stones are not all the same. Windele's home at Blair's Castle became famous for his Ogham stone library. Dr Graves would present a paper to the RIA in February 1848 'on a general method of deciphering secret alphabetic writings'. He did not accept the Book of Ballymote or other Irish manuscripts as a basis for translation but had devised his own *schema.* Writing sometime before 1876, Richard Rolt Brash, one of the later generation of Cork antiquarians and one who brought this achievement of the South Munster Antiquarians to its climax in his posthumously published corpus *Ogam Inscribed Monuments of the Gaedheil . . .*, stated:

> I have no desire to deprive the R.R. Dr. Graves of the merit of an independent discovery as regards this word [mac, maqi etc.,] yet in justice to my late friend the Rev. Matthew Horgan P.P. of Blarney, I feel it is my duty to place on record the fact that in the year 1845 he placed before the Cork Cuvierian and Archaeological Society a translation of the Lomanagh inscription in which he gives their true values to the characters forming this word.

Brash says of Windele that 'assisted by a few kindred spirits, he commenced a series of explorations in those counties [Cork and Kerry], from about the year 1830 down to a short period before his death. He devoted all his spare time to examining the remotest districts of these counties, not only in search of Ogam inscriptions but for the purpose of noting and sketching all objects of antiquity within his reach . . .'. Of their Ogham-hunting, Brash notes Windele's discovery of a stone at Coolowen sometime before 1834 and in that year a trip with Abell to north-west Cork to 'discover' St Olan's cap at Aghabulloge, the Dallaheana and Glounagloch stones. In 1838 a party consisting of Windele, Abell, Horgan and William Willes visited and explored the barony of Corkaguiny and other districts in Kerry with the result that Windele added



OGHAM STONE AT BALLYCROVANE (1976)
(*Photo: Lee Snodgrass*)

twenty new inscriptions to his list. They returned there in 1848. Inscriptions were recorded during these field trips, 'digging' was also done, 'soundings' were taken in ringforts using iron bars and souterrains were searched for. Moments of frenetic activity, of excitement and overheated tempers could occur, all part of the holiday atmosphere of the investigative tour!

DIARY OF AN ANTIQUARY

Lest the reader be left with the impression that such tours make dry and uninteresting reading, the diary nature of Windele's field notes (see Sources) provides many enjoyable glimpses of travel and of the Cork countryside during the middle years of the nineteenth century. In 1842 a visit to Gougane Barra 'which we were desirous to show our feminines' consisted of sleeping at Macroom and the following day hiring one of the Macroom Stage Coaches. They stopped at Ballingeary for lunch and then proceeded, 'some of the party walking before the vehicle'. On a walking trip in 1848 to Dunderrow near Kinsale he noted 'at half-way house we saw progress made in the construction of the Bandon Railway in the neighbourhood', and in 1856 he records travelling by rail to Upton when visiting Cashel hillfort. Walking roads and 'rude beaten tracks', travelling in Bianconi cars and stage coaches, seeing the countryside from a train window, all enriched the experiences, the minds and the field notes of the South Munster Antiquaries. Examples of the printed resources they carried with them are encapsulated in the following vignettes:

1842. [Before beginning to dig at Suighe Finn they] had leisure before operations commenced to read over Surgeon Wilde's interesting account of the opening of several tumuli in Ireland . . . which was to make us *au fait* in our proceedings . . .

1848. Near Ballintubber we turned off for Dunderrow by a vile old road, much of which we had to walk, until we approached the church itself. Here we paused to examine this building, of which we have some exaggerated description in Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary*.

The publication of the six-inch Ordnance Survey maps for Cork in the mid-1840s was a major addition to their resources. Discussing the source of the Lee at Gougane Barra in 1842 when the surveying for Cork was underway Windele commented: 'of course, the map of the Ordnance Survey will give it and then we shall know'. By 1848 they were using it to locate many sites of which they were previously unaware. Both before and after the appearance of the map local sources of information were of great importance. During their visit to Gougane Barra as they walked in front of the stage coach on a hot and sultry day the road was 'crowded with the peasantry, homeward bound after Mass'. Entering into conversation with some of them they were 'fortunate to learn of another cromlech'. In 1848 at Dunderrow they interviewed an old seanachie in the landowner's household on the meaning of the townland name. In 1856 after inspecting Cashel hillfort they met the parish priest who invited them to partake of refreshments. Searching for a tumulus at Kilmaclenine in 1843 a countryman who accompanied them stated that about twelve years before a parish priest from Buttevant had opened a ringfort and a 'moate' nearby which 'he first heard of . . . in Paris'. As they travelled about the county they learned of many other private, unrecorded diggings; some they heard of by chance, others they were asked to monitor. When the field party was large they quite often formed into groups and this was also done during excavations. Quite often the local landowner or parish priest would join in providing and directing local workmen. Local superstition did not deter any of these people from digging. The results were rough plans and sketches, access and site location details,



ANTIQUARIES OF THE 1860s AT KILCREA
Photo: Wm England (Radio Times/Hulton)

descriptions of the excavation based on the clock (most digs lasted but a few hours) as they discussed the local version of the site name, threw away corroded pieces of iron, measured in paces, rooted around removing soil and stones, finding a souterrain or two on occasion and perhaps an ogham stone. These processes continued in use up to the early years of the present century and provide a striking contrast with the period and subsequent tradition of Seán P. Ó Ríordáin.

THE GAELIC DIMENSION

Whitechurch, where Fr Matt built his first round tower was also notable for its school of Gaelic poetry. A famed poet and scribe of this school was Míchеál Óg Ó Longáin. He died at the age of 71 and John Windele attended his burial in Whitechurch in 1837. Windele's association with Gaelic scholarship was by no means peripheral. Unlike many of his contemporaries he went beyond the consciousness of the topographer as he sought to understand the culture of which the antiquities were an expression, and the importance of Fr Matt's influence on him should not be underestimated. From the Ogham cipher to the translation of early manuscripts he progressed, these pursuits absorbing the best of his talents. It is recorded that he was 'a constant patron of the Irish scribes, . . . for whom he further obtained employment by inducing his friends to get them to transcribe ancient Irish manuscripts'. An example illustrating this occurs in the catalogue of the National Exhibition held in Cork in 1852. In describing the Irish antiquities section Windele records that 'Thomas Hewitt and Tooker exhibited several manuscript volumes of Irish literature written in beautiful but modern hand'.

THE SUCCESSORS

Born in 1817, Richard Rolt Brash, Cork builder and architect, joined the South Munster Antiquarian Society at an early age. The two abiding themes of the society found expression through his pen and in a sense his two books, one on the architecture of ancient Ireland, the other on ogham stones, are a summary of the work of his older colleagues. His list of society memberships and periodical contributions show direct influences established by Sainthill, Lindsay, Croker and Abell as much as his field-work reflects Windele and Fr Matt. Brash and Richard Caulfield rise to prominence as Windele leaves the stage in 1865. During this time the Kilkenny Archaeological Society to whose journal they contributed becomes the Kilkenny and South East of Ireland Archaeological Society. Claiming the title The Society of Antiquaries as they had done in 1842 in their attempts to incorporate members from other counties was no longer feasible for the South Munsters. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, in British academia an awareness and an outline definition of the importance of antiquarian studies began to emerge. Some saw it as an extension of classical studies, others as a focus on national identity. Gradually, professorial chairs came to exist, perhaps more specific to individuals than to the discipline. Without too much stretching of the imagination or of present-day definitions, Richard Caulfield, in all but in name, was Cork's first and only Professor of Antiquarian Studies. Caulfield's appointment as Librarian of Queen's College Cork in 1876 provided a foothold for antiquarian studies in the new world of Cork academia and even though the conditions for creating a chair of Archaeology and of Irish History would not present themselves until the following century, the library's collections in these areas did grow substantially. It is interesting to see the extent to which this field of scholarship found a niche for itself through the library profession; notable examples are James Hardiman of Galway, Revd Todd and Richard Hitchcock at TCD, Petrie at the RHA.

Brash was not the only Cork architect to

record and publish on early Irish architecture. In the second half of the nineteenth century Arthur Hill produced a series of high-quality architectural drawings accompanied by photographs of Kilmalkedar Co. Kerry, Templenahoe at Ardfert, Cormac's Chapel at Cashel and Ardfert Cathedral. We now see an interesting trend whereby comprehensive works and professional drawings are being published. However, such resources were not readily accessible to the general public. Privately-circulated monographs, contributions to the *Irish Builder,* the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology,* British archaeological journals etc., all created a diffused repository for what was ultimately a resource for local knowledge. On the other hand, the paucity of writing by many members of the South Munsters and the lack of publication of many of Windele's and Caulfield's manuscripts with their subsequent dispersal at auction or deposition in Dublin became a source of major concern. Though individuals like Robert Day and Cecil Woods did what they could to keep such material in Cork, the devastating effect of auctions on the libraries of Cork's nineteenth-century scholars was glaringly evident by the end of the century. As the Cuvierian Society had originally provided a single channel for the various streams of intellectual curiosity regarding the landscape, its past and its people, in its breaking up during the 1880s it again unleashed them. Such areas as geology, botany, and the casual observation of field antiquities found continuation in the guise of the Cork Field Club while the struggling efforts of the Cork Archaeological Society attempted to keep alive the dying dreams and achievements of earlier years, but public awareness had to be reinvigorated. In this, perhaps the brightest and most dedicated student of Windele and Caulfield was Robert Day. Most particularly it was he who brought the records of the activities and achievements of the Victorian pilgrimage to the pages of the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society.* Sadly, however, after his death, his library was also dissipated under the weight of the auctioneer's hammer.

THE FRUITS OF THE PILGRIMAGE

The information resource which they compiled was in two parts. It existed in textual form which encompassed written records along with their own writings. It also existed unwittingly in the artefacts of the past. In a global sense what they collected was a dual-media knowledge base, the repository for which was split into two distinct cultural institutions, i.e. libraries and museums. Antiquarian information has followed the same path as most other core subject areas though it has done so more slowly because of its cultural rather than pure scientific or economic orientation. Collecting the information resource began with individuals with private collections. A sizeable proportion of both the textual information and the artefactual information on Cork's past gathered during the nineteenth century has been lost. Lost in this context means generally inaccessible to the knowledge seeker either because of dispersal to institutions and other places or because of poor cataloguing and lack of publicity. Though the concept of centralization and consequently of national collections has been recognized since early in the nineteenth century, today's scenario falls far short of original intentions, particularly in the area of museums and exhibitions. This is not how it was intended to be.

To understand something of how they saw the functions of collection and display of artefactual information, two exhibition catalogues can be used to provide snapshots of Cork collecting during the nineteenth century. Exhibition catalogues and auction catalogues are a helpful means of gaining insights into the holdings of private collections. Many societies encouraged collectors either to personally show items at meetings or allow a member of the

society display and comment on them in the course of proceedings. Commonly, personal collecting revolved around specific themes and it is possible to see by means of the catalogues something of the history of chance finds and of the market place for local antiquities at this time. Contributors to the Antiquities stand at the National Exhibition held in Cork in 1852 were John Windele (an ogham stone), Trinity College Dublin (St Patrick's Bell), Waterhouse, Dublin (replicas of brooches, including the Tara Brooch), Sir Thomas Deane and Zachariah Hawkes (ring money), John Windele and Herrick (portions of bronze trumpets), J. Lindsay (group of ancient bronze mazers), Revd Dr Neligan (wooden mether), Duke of Devonshire (crozier), The Kilkenny Archaeological Society (plastercast of the Kilfinane effigy), Richard Caulfield (ancient seals), Thomas Hewitt (copies by modern scribes of early Irish manuscripts), Richard Sainthill (Cork Corporation Gold Cup and a carved oak panel from a demolished Elizabethan house in Cork). There are a number of revealing strands in this list. We find the ogham activities of the South Munsters represented, we find some of the themes of personal collecting for scholarly reasons and we also see examples of collecting for reasons of social prestige or on the basis of patronage. We see evidence of an industry in replicas and we see a little of the policies of institutions and societies. What the exhibition indicates is that awareness existed of the importance of artefacts as a parallel form of enquiry to that of field studies. The subtle fusion of these ideas from the coin cabinet and the natural scientist's laboratory into the maze of creative and artistic thinking which drew alternative messages from these objects and from their functionality was a significant step in antiquarian ideology. Exhibiting became a mechanism for stating this and it is only in very recent years that drama has been restored to the dry and dusty sobriety of Victorian dark wooden cabinets. But where was all this material coming from and why did so much of it turn up during the nineteenth century?

Some of the factors were: a very large rural population working on the land, road-building schemes, introduction of mechanized farm equipment, railroad and bog drainage schemes. There was more awareness of antiquity as newspapers and penny journals brought a degree of literacy to the labouring classes. With it came a consciousness of a trade in antiquities. This trade was encouraged by collectors when the alternative could as easily be a jeweller's melting pot or a toss over the shoulder. Its encouragement is noted in the following statement from the catalogue of the Cork Industrial Exhibition of 1883:

> Many of the articles lent . . . were of much educational value to the farmers and labourers and others who visited the exhibition and who learned for the first time that stone celts and flint arrowheads, things which they had found and had thrown away as useless, had money value and were worth preserving.

TOWARDS AN ENDING TO PREFACE A BEGINNING

Strung through the paragraphs of this paper is a terminology of travel and of transport history from the horse to the coach to the carriage to the steam engine. In archaeological terms it is a typology, a journey through thought and design. Carried with it was a journey into antiquarian thought and historical time to explore a frontier beyond current understanding, to provide it with measurement and labelling. When R.A. Canon Sheehan of the Literary and Scientific Society called for the setting up of an historical and archaeological society in 1891, a new transport vehicle, the bicycle, began to make its appearance locally. In years to come it would ferry many of the pioneer members on society outings as would the automobile. A new form of journeying for a new Society and a new periodical became a reality.

In conclusion it can be said that the *Journal* they created realized a long-held ambition to have a single repository for all kinds of information concerning the heritage of both city and county. As an amateur organization the Society has been dedicated to the study of Cork's past for the benefit of its people who have been encouraged to develop an awareness and to make a contribution to this study. The pages of the *Journal* bring to us the voices of the contributors down the years, unifying old and new, past and present. Of the early members, Robert Day and Denny Lane have become legendary because of their writings and the folklore of the Society. Others among them equally deserve remembrance — such as those whose names appear in a *Cork Examiner* report of a Cork Archaeological Society meeting in October 1883 (at which Richard Caulfield was Hon. Sec.). Revd Edmond Barry, Wm Hill, Cecil Woods and Joseph Bennett would later reappear in the earliest list of members of the CHAS, the latter two on its Council. Chairman of that 1883 meeting was The O Donovan, of Lissard, Skibbereen. He died in 1890 but his son joined the CHAS in 1893 and was a Council member 1916-34. His grandson was a member from 1956 to 1968, while his great-grandson, the present O Donovan, is a member today.

Familial links of this kind and the intellectual links forged between mentor and pupil have provided a stitching of these societies. Yet another encasing bond is the continued use for Society lectures and meetings of the building which once housed the Royal Cork Institution, and in which Robert Day sat by the fire listening to Sainthill and Caulfield talk of the old days in John Bolster's in Patrick St. And it is more than coincidence that Bolster's was later the premises of Guy & Co. who brought out the first issue of the *JCHAS* in January 1892.

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