

HISTORIOGRAPHER'S REPORT¹

When future historians consider the experience of the Church of Ireland in the early decades of the twenty-first century they will inevitably study the impact of the Covid 19 virus. Many of the consequences of this pandemic have yet to be identified and researchers will find that while its effects in Ireland, as globally, were catastrophic for many people and institutions, a *new* normality emerged, benefitting from technological innovations that to some extent made possible a degree of 'business as usual' unforeseen until very recently.

The Church of Ireland Historical Society, while having to abandon its customary annual visits to the Armagh Robinson Library and Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin, held its scheduled conferences by Zoom. Likewise, the journal *SEARCH* held its April 2021 colloquium by Zoom, though the spring issue appeared in print.

Publishers tell of the impact on their output that resulted from the difficulties that scholars experienced in accessing source material. Nevertheless, WJR Wallace's *The churchwardens' accounts of the parishes of St Bride, St Michael Le Pole and St Stephen, Dublin 16663-1702* (the ninth volume in the 'Texts and calendars series', edited by Raymond Gillespie and published by Four Courts Press in association with the RCB Library), appeared in 2020.

Likewise, 'The Braemor Studies Series', produced by Church of Ireland Publishing in association with the Theological Institute, previously edited by Susan Hood and now by Bryan Whelan, has also maintained its programme, while APCK continues to publish its pamphlets on Church of Ireland topics (over twenty titles have already appeared).

The destruction of the Treasury of the Public Record Office in Dublin at the outset of the Civil War in 1922 led to the loss of much archival material that had heretofore been in the custody of the Church of Ireland.

However, 'Beyond 2022', a major government-funded initiative as part of the marking of the Decade of Centenaries, is a project to reconstruct the destroyed collections including the records of the Established Church. The RCB Library is a collaborator in this enterprise and digitization has been undertaken on several of the Library's manuscripts. Research is also being conducted on the Christ Church Deeds, a victim of the 1922 disaster, which are among the most important sources for the history of medieval and early modern Ireland.

¹ As this report could not be included for approval at the March meeting of the Standing Committee, it is not presented as an appendix to report of the Standing Committee.

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Details about the 'Beyond 2022' project can be found on www.beyond2022.ie. Similarly, since March 2021 the 11,000 biographical entries in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, which is managed by the Royal Irish Academy, can be found by visiting www.dib.ie. And for details of recent (and other) publications relating to the Church of Ireland consult the Royal Irish Academy Library Online.

Dr Kenneth Milne