

APPENDIX K

HISTORIOGRAPHER'S REPORT

More than most churches of the Anglican Communion, the Church of Ireland has reason to attach importance to the historical context in which it finds itself. To use the term 'Church of Ireland', and not to have some understanding of the complexity of Irish history is to be prey to grave misconceptions as to our own self-perception, and to be ill-equipped to confront comments that are historically untenable.

Such hazards are especially likely to be encountered at times of public commemoration as we approach the centenary of what was possibly the most critical decade in modern Irish history, the years from 1912 to 1922. Andrew Scholes's *The Church of Ireland and the Third Home Rule Bill* (Irish Academic Press) is especially pertinent in this context. It is to be expected that the events of that crucial period will be widely commemorated and this is not necessarily to be regretted, for we in Ireland live in political systems that reflect an historical continuum more strongly than is to be found anywhere else in these islands.

Commemorations can have positive results if rather than entrenching long-standing attitudes, they cause us to reflect more deeply on cause and effect, and, above all, if they lead us to some understanding of positions other than those to which we are most comfortable. The marking of anniversaries as diverse such as those of the Great Famine, the 1916 Rising and the Battle of the Somme have promoted greater understanding and have thus improved community relations to a degree that could scarcely have been anticipated. Much of the credit for bringing this about must go to the participation of historians trained in the tradition of the renaissance in the study of Irish history that emanated from the Irish universities in the 1930s and not least from the Queen's University of Belfast. It would therefore seem appropriate that the Church of Ireland should take a keen interest in whatever forms of commemoration are proposed in the coming years and some thought is being given as to how best that interest might be expressed. Nor should we overlook anniversaries that relate to the wider church, a notable date being that of the appearance of the Authorised Version of the Holy Bible (1611), which will be marked by a small exhibition in the Treasury of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin and will doubtless be observed elsewhere.

As ever, the past year has seen the publication of several books devoted to, or especially relevant to, our understanding of the Church of Ireland's past and indeed of the social environment in which the Church subsists. Adrian Empey's *The proctors' accounts of the parish church of St Werburgh, Dublin 1481-1627* is the fourth volume in the texts and calendars series published by Four Courts Press in association with the Representative Church Body Library. Like the ten titles in the Library's parish register series, these volumes make available to the scholar and general reader primary source material that would otherwise be virtually inaccessible. *Medieval Dublin X* (ed. Seán Duffy) as well as containing a chapter on

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medieval St Michan's, also lists the contents of all the volumes in this series, many of which have seminal articles on the Dublin cathedrals. Henry A. Jefferies's *The Irish Church and the early Tudor Reformation* provides fresh insights into a subject that will forever be of compelling interest to Irish historians. Kenneth Milne, *The Dublin liberties, 1600-1850*, one of the latest of the Maynooth Studies in Local History (ed. Raymond Gillespie), deals with the four Dublin manorial jurisdictions, three of which were ecclesiastical. A title of special interest to church musicians with competence in the Irish language is Liam Mac Cóil's *An chlairseach agus an choróin: seacht gceolsiansa Stanford*, ('The harp and the crown: seven Stanford symphonies'), an erudite treatment of Charles Villiers Stanford, son of the Church of Ireland and a towering figure in the musical world of his day whose settings still enrich our religious experience and were sung at the liturgical welcome for Pope Benedict at Westminster Abbey in September 2010. This year also saw the publication of the paperback edition of *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, a history*, first published in 2000, and which had been out of print for some time.

It is appropriate that I should record with sadness the death of the Rev Canon William Neely, who must be credited with the foundation of the Church of Ireland Historical Society. Its flourishing state today, under the leadership of Canon Adrian Empey, is a fitting memorial to Canon Neely's commitment to the promotion of what he rightly considered to be a part of our heritage that furthers our self-understanding and shapes our contemporary attitudes.

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