



TIR NA NOG

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Anyone may become a member of the Australian Celtic Association by paying the Treasurer the sum of \$8.00 per year.

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THE AUSTRALIAN CELTIC ASSOCIATION

A non-political, non-religious organisation formed to promote the study of Celtic art, history, culture and languages in Australia.

SECRETARY:- Vivian Clare,
42 Pilgrim Street,
Footscray, 3011

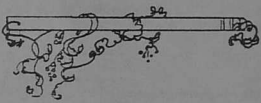
LIBRARIAN/EDITOR, TIR NA NOG:-
Colin Ryan,

Please see announcement below.

Treasurer:- Faye Shaddon,
24/137 Brighton Road
Elwood, 3184

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Secretary, Vivian Clare, requests that, until otherwise notified, members wishing to attend monthly meetings should henceforth do so at 42 Pilgrim St, Footscray. Meetings will be held at 7.30 p.m. on the second Friday of each month.



Language Teachers

Gaeilge (Irish) Colin Ryan

Cornish Study Group

Contact Bill & Doris Dedrick for information about the next meeting.

Phone 557 3139

PLEASE NOTE that the Editor has a new address: 17 York St, North Fitzroy, 3068. Telephone 481 3270.

CELTIC CARDS

Ada Markby produces a range of Celtic greetings and gift cards. 6 different designs in greetings cards and 10 in gift cards are printed in black on white or coloured card. The white cards are then painted in 2, 3 or more colours. Prices depend on the size of the card and how much of it is hand-coloured.

Ada has offered to sell her cards directly to CLA members at wholesale prices.

Her prices are as follows:-

- Multicoloured greetings cards \$2 each
- 2 or 3-coloured greetings cards \$1 each
- Hand-coloured gift cards \$1.50 per packet of 5
- unpainted gift cards 12¢ each

For small orders enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope (at least 4in by 5in for greetings cards).

For large orders add 10% to the cost of your purchase to cover postage and packaging.

Write to:- Ada Markby,
R.M.B. 193, Talbot, 3374

SAMPLE:



Congratulations to Stephen Amos on his success in the first grade of the Cornish Language Board's examinations. An article by him in Cornish (with an interlinear translation) can be found on page 9.

It is reported that Channel 0/28 has purchased a Welsh drama series, though we have no information as to when it will be shown. One hopes that it will be the first of several. Material in Irish has already been shown on Channel 0/28, including a film called "Poitin" by Bob Quinn. Viewers are advised to keep an eye out for an earlier film of his, called "Cacineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire", based on an 18th century lament.

It seems very likely that a course in involving the Irish language will be available at the University of Melbourne next year, probably as part of its Continuing Education Programme. Further details will be made known as they become available.

A fragment of a waulking song from the Isle of Harris.

Ma dh'innseas mi 'n fhlirinn
's ann tha 'n aoigh air mo leannan:
gura deirge do ghruaidhean
na'n rós air a' mheangan,
gura guirme do shúilean
na'n driúchd air an fhaillinn.
Mo cheist sealgair donn na h-eala,
'n dóbhrain duinn 's an laoiigh
bhric bhallaich
's an ròin léith an cois na mara.

If I may tell the truth
my love is very charming:
your cheeks are redder
than the rose on the briar,
your eyes are bluer
than the dew on the new-grown
branch.
I seek the brown-haired hunter
of the swan,
of the brown otter, the dappled fawn
and the grey seal at the sea's edge.

A traditional poem from Ireland.

Is trua gan mise i Sasana
agus duine amháin as Éirinn liom
nó amuigh i lár na farraige
in áit a gcailltear na mílte long

an ghaoth agus an fhearthainn
bheith 'mo sheoladh ó thoinn go toinn
is, a Rí, go seola tú mise
san áit a bhfuil mo ghrá 'na luf

I would I were in England
and one from Ireland with me
or out in the midst of the ocean
where ships are lost in thousands

with the wind and the rain
driving me from wave to wave
and, King of Heaven, drive me
to the place where my love lies down

ANNOUNCEMENT

On Friday 19 October, at 8.00 p.m., all those interested are invited to a discussion of Welsh literature (e.g. the Mabinogion) as treated by modern writers. The venue is Vivian Clare's house, 42 Pilgrim St, Footscray.

There will be a talk and discussion on the topic "Modern Poetry in Irish" on Tuesday 30 October in Room 7, YWCA, 489 Elizabeth St, at 8.00 p.m..

**THE VIKINGS
IN IRELAND**

In the Irish gallery of rogues the Viking has always had a place: a predator and killer, the smoke of his burnings rising behind him as he boards a longship whose figurehead snarls a welcome. But the Viking is not the rogue he was. He has become fashionable. Scholars have shown him to have been as much a creator as a predator. They remind us that the roving Northmen founded the maritime towns which linked Ireland to Europe and that they had an incalculable influence upon Irish art.

Pirates they certainly were. Their ships first appeared in Irish waters in 837, fast, shallow of draught and built of flexible overlapping planks. A new technology had appeared, a new efficiency; and soon the smoke was rising. These men were Hebridean settlers, speaking the dialects of Norway. Ireland was fatally easy of access, with rivers and lakes which brought them to its heart. Monasteries were plundered and the countryside harried.

The Irish annals record all this with astonishment and woe; but they also record that in the thirty years before the first Viking raid the Irish themselves, in their petty wars, surpassed the Northmen as destroyers of Church property, and that even monasteries assailed each other on occasion. And the Northmen were to find many allies among the Irish lords, always eager to best a neighbour.

But in time the invaders settled. Their first fortified settlements were built in 841, one of them at a spot known then to the Irish as Dubh-Linn, the dark pool on the Liffey. For piracy was only one of the various Viking avocations; in Scandinavia and Scotland they were farmers, and trade absorbed them everywhere, especially in Ireland, where their ships sailed from small walled towns like Dublin, Wexford and Waterford. Each of these was a little kingdom, whose inhabitants took Irish conclusions, borrowed Irish words and in time became Christian.



The Vikings differed greatly from the Irish in speech, less so in dress, and least of all in their homes. Viking women wore a long linen shift and over it a woollen dress secured at the shoulders with matching brooches. No belt was worn. A cloak kept out the cold, and in time shawls became fashionable. Men wore linen shirts and trousers, the latter of varying cut, and a long belted tunic, supplemented by a cloak when appropriate. Both men and women wore shoes and ankle-boots of leather, and they shared a taste for rings and brooches. Irishwomen wore a linen shift and their menfold a long shirt and narrow trousers. The hooded cloak, secured by a brooch, was popular with both sexes.

Like the Vikings, the Irish favoured houses of wattle-and-daub (wickerwork plastered with mud or dung), with a hearth in the centre. The smoke escaped where it could, there being neither chimney nor windows.

We have seen that the Irish Norse were town-dwellers, and their biggest town was Dublin, its plank-covered lanes separating close-packed houses, many with an outhouse and a well. The trades had no quarter of their own, and the smith, the brewer, the metal-worker, the cooper and others each lived where he could. There was a diversity of smells, some of which we would find it hard to live with, and the scattered ordure of man and beast. The earthen embankment which was the city's first defence was replaced in time by a stone wall. In the early period no Viking city had wharves: ships were drawn up on a beach and loaded with the aid of a gang-plank.

The success of Viking settlement was due to superior military and maritime technology, the latter being perhaps the more important, as know that Viking ships came in many sizes and fulfilled a variety of functions, but all were built to a single successful design: a long keel over which flexible overlapping planks curved to a high stem and stern, a single sail with simple but efficient rigging and a full set of oars. To this were added an iron anchor, a bailer, a gang-plank and a wind-vane. Equally adapted to wind or oars, these vessels, with their fine lines and shallow draught, traversed rivers as easily as oceans. The mobility they conferred was enhanced by the Vikings' use of horses once ashore.

In battle their main weapon was the sword, with a beautifully made blade and a highly decorated hilt. Equally effective was the axe, supplemented by spears for throwing or thrusting. Long-bows were used and, on occasion, armour-piercing arrows. Only the wealthy could afford mail shirts; most made do with the ornate but ill-protected helmet (never encumbered by horns) and a round wooden shield.

The Irish were proficient seamen but possessed no great fleet to repel the invaders. Nor were they politically united, a situation partly due to kin-based social structures that encouraged local and family loyalties at the expense of others. Their weapons were sword, spear and sling, their defence a round wooden shield. It seems they wore no armour. But their disunity made a single decisive defeat difficult, and it did not hinder their being formidable opponents.

The Viking established their first fortified bases in 841, one in Louth and the other on the Liffey. Other settlements followed, and towns appeared: Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and, in the west, Slimerick on the Shannon. From the 850s on both Danes and Norwegians found their way to Ireland, to quarrel with each other or be drawn into the local Irish wars. There were reverses. The Norse were expelled from Dublin in 902, but returned in 917, only to suffer another defeat in 980. But Dublin prospered in spite of all, for it was there that the great western trade-routes met - linking Scandinavia, western Europe and the Atlantic islands - and from about 997 had its own mint, issuing silver pennies with the name of Sitric Silkbeard. Through Dublin passed honey and furs, wine and walrus ivory, soapstone and spices, fine weapons and fine cloth; and many slaves, the victims of war and a trade which the Church condemned in vain.



These little Viking kingdoms were politically important for a time. Dublin's sway extended into Wicklow. But they could not forever resist the Irish in their hinterland, and Irish kings became their overlords, rural masters of a crowded world which spoke of weights, measures and wooden ships. Into the Irish language came such words as "margadh" (market), "anna" (ounce) and "bád" (timber boat). The Norse did not renounce all hope of making Ireland their own and the struggle came to a crisis in 1014 when an army of Irish led by Brian Bóroinua met a Norse army with its Irish allies at Clontarf (Cluain Iarain - "the meadow of the bulls") near Dublin. Brian's son won. The Norse remembered their defeat as a catastrophe, the smashing of a great hope. Yet the towns stayed as they were, and Sitric, king of Dublin, reigned for twenty years more.

We have seen something of the economic significance of Viking settlement, but the effect on Irish art was more striking still, resulting in a splendid hybrid which flowered in manuscript and metal. To the Celtic spiral and sense of balance were added the interlacing, elongated beasts of northern art. In the 11th century a new Viking style, now known as "fingerwork", came to the fore. It was characterized by graceful lobes and tendrils, and a trial piece in this style found in Dublin almost exactly matches a design on an Irish boat-shrine, "An Catabach", of the late 11th century. An elegant development of this, the Urnes style, left Irish excursions in the Cross of Cong and the Shrine of St Manchan, both of the 12th century.



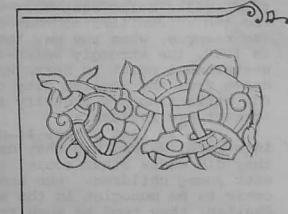
The Viking era in Ireland may really be said to have ended in 1170, when both Dublin and Waterford had been taken by the Normans and held against a fierce counter-attack. King John granted these towns and others royal charters; they lost their Scandinavian character and became the Anglo-Irish cities, proud of their independence, that they so long remained. As much Irish as English was heard in them, but they owed their first loyalty to the Crown.

The Norse, for all they destroyed, gave gifts to Ireland whose value remains; an urban tradition, a link to Europe and their own art; and, of course, their share of the blood which flows in Irish veins today.



Is aicher in gaeth in-nocht,
fo-fúasna fairrge findfhoit;
ní águr réimn mora mind
dond laechraid lainn ó Lothlind.

Bitter is the wind tonight, it
tosses the ocean's white hair; I
do not fear the wild warriors
from Norway, who course on a
quiet sea.



THE LANGUAGE IN WALES

by Ian Llyfni

To many of our fellow Celts the language situation in Wales must seem healthy and an inspiration. Admittedly there are many thousands of people, mostly of the younger generation, who actively campaign on behalf of their cultural inheritance. Admittedly there are over half a million people in Wales (or 19% of the population) who can still speak the language, and a similar number who live outside Wales. This proportion of 19% was the result of the 1981 census, comparing favourably with the 21% of the census 10 years previously, as it was the smallest percentage drop in the number of Welsh speakers this century.

One would imagine that there would be a real opportunity of reversing the trend by the next census. The number of people learning the language in the more Anglicised parts of Wales tends to suggest that there is a distinct possibility of this happening. Indeed the most Anglicised county of all, Gwent, did show a slight increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the period 1971-81. The number of pupils being sent to Welsh-medium schools, mostly by English speaking parents, is a bit of a modern phenomenon in Anglicised Wales. There is a constant call among the public for more of these schools. However, these joyous facts have a gloomy shadows cast upon them. It is a fact that in these areas, the number of Welsh speaking children, although rapidly increasing, is still small compared to those who do not. As a consequence Welsh is still very much a minority language and very rarely used outside school hours by those who speak it. For the language to flourish it must be used in all situations and for all occasions. It unfortunately appears that it must first become the majority language in any certain area for this to occur.

Therefore, let us now turn our sights to those areas where Welsh is the language of the majority. These areas are usually in the Western half of the country with several isolated packets of resistance to Anglicisation existing elsewhere. In these areas non-Welsh speaking children soon learn the language naturally, although very often their parents do not. However the economic depression of recent years has put great pressure on the traditionally native language areas. This is brought about not by depopulation as in the past, but by mass immigration, mostly from England. With unemployment rife, several English families feel that at least, even if unemployed, they can live in a beautiful and peaceful environment. As a consequence, they sell their houses in the English cities and move into rural Welsh-speaking Wales. The new roads being built East-West across Wales (note, not North South to link the two extremities of the country) further exacerbate the situation. For example, when the new "North Wales Coast Expressway" is completed in 1990, the strongly Welsh-speaking community of Aberdaron at the Westernmost point in North Wales will be a mere one and a half hours drive from the English city of Liverpool. Whilst undoubtedly necessary for attracting new industry and job opportunities, these new roads also attract new residents.

In past years, it used to be the elderly English who moved into rural Wales, and they caused no great linguistic problems, although they did cause other social problems. Nowadays it is families, often with young children, who are the immigrants. Welsh children on the whole, cease to be monoglot in the age range 5-7, so being fairly fluent in English, they tend to turn to that language if their group of friends includes an immigrant child. That child will undoubtedly hear enough Welsh to learn the language thoroughly, but a mental pattern will have been set up for life, that is, that there is no need to speak Welsh as the native people are only too willing to speak his/her language. This problem of immigration is certainly a much bigger threat to the Welsh language than the better publicised problem of holiday cottages and second homes.

6.

Happily there does seem to be ever-increasing awareness among the young Welsh of the problem, although the older people often seem oblivious to what is happening around them. There does seem to be developing a system of linguistic apartheid, where separate Welsh and English clubs and associations exist, where Welsh and English speakers gather in separate groups at social events and gatherings. Indeed villages within a very short distance of each other are developing separate linguistic trends. For example, the village where the writer resides had a 98% Welsh speakers out of a population of 3000 at the 1981 census. On the other hand, another village, just three miles away had 40%. It is due to this factor that you have strange linguistic anomalies such as the strong Welsh-speaking community in Glynceiriog, just three miles from the English border (there are some actually across the border in the Shropshire area of England) However, in Abersoch, just 15 miles from the Westernmost tip of North Wales, and within the Dwyfor District Council area, where 96% of the population speak Welsh, very few of the local residents have any knowledge of it.

In conclusion, it must be noted that the 1981 census showed that of the under five age group, the future generation of Welsh speakers, and parents, only 10% had Welsh as a first language. However, we refuse to be despondent. The example of the people of Glynceiriog, the brave bastion of Welshness amidst a sea of Anglicisation on their border, shows the Welsh speaker to be, even if endangered, at least a very resilient species.

A fragment of a Scottish Gaelic love-song.

Dh'fhalbhainn, dh'fhalbhainn, shìbh- lann fhéin leat,	I would go, I would go, I would travel with you,
rachainn leat tromh chuan na h-Eireann, far am bi muir ard ag éirigh,	I would go over the Irish Sea with you, where the sea rises high,
luingeas a' losgadh ri chéile; rachainn leat do chùl-taigh dhùinte	where ships fire upon each other, I would go with you to a closed room apart
far a faighinn modh is ùmhlaichd, ruighleadh gu tric air an ùrlar	where I would find a mannerly welcome, many a reel being danced on the floor
aig pìob bheag na feadan sìbhlach, aig pìob mhór na feadan dùmhail,	to the small pipes of the graceful music, to the great pipes of the deep notes,
clàrsach bhinn 's a cruinn 'ga rùsgadh.	and the sweet harp being tuned.

7.

FIONN, THE SON OF UALL (2)

Having eaten the Salmon of Knowledge, Fionn bade farewell to his friend and teacher Finegas, and set out for Tara, seat of the High Kings of Ireland. He arrived at court early in September, during the great festival of Samhain. At this time, every third year, all the lesser kings and nobles of Ireland gathered in Tara to pay homage and taxes to the Ard Rí (High King), and to make laws for the government of the country for the next three years. The business was followed by ten days of feasting and merrymaking. The Ard Rí at that time was Conn of the Hundred Battles. He presided in the great banqueting hall called the Teach Mí Chuartha, his nobles and chiefs seated around him according to rank. The Clann Morna were in a place of honour, as befitted their reputation as fierce fighters. At Samhain no man was permitted to raise a sword or to speak a word in anger against another.

The feast was about to commence when the King noticed a young man standing alone at the back of the hall. He called to him and asked him his name and business. The young man replied that he was Fionn the son of Uall; and the Clann Morna were speechless. Here was the man they had hunted in vain for so long, in their grasp at last, and they could not lay a finger on him. And it was next to them that the King invited him to sit.

But that night the Ard Rí was troubled. Every year at Samhain his arch-enemy the Lord of the Sí (i.e. of the Fairy People), from Tír na nÓg, sent a powerful magician to attack Tara. And this year it was said that the most skilled of them all, Aillean Mac Midhna, was being sent to destroy Tara and the King for good and all.

The Ard Rí rose and asked for a volunteer to defend him and Tara that night. No man answered, for even the most valiant feared the magic of Aillean Mac Midhna. Then Fionn stood up.

'Ard Rí,' he said, 'what reward do you offer to the one who will defend you and Tara tonight?'

'Anything within my power and within reason,' said the King.

'And what sureties do you offer?'

'I myself will stand surety with all the nobles of Ireland.'

'Done,' said Fionn. 'I shall defend you.' And he left the hall.

Fionn had with him a spear called the Biorgha, studded with thirty rivets of the finest Arabian gold; and the man who held this spear would not fall asleep no matter how tired he was, nor would the spear ever miss its mark. With this spear Fionn waited in the darkness, and in the hour before dawn he heard music of the greatest sweetness. It was the magic music of the Sí, and Fionn knew that Aillean Mac Midhna was nearby. A deep drowsiness came upon him; but he grasped the spear and was instantly awake.

The music ceased, and Aillean Mac Midhna, thinking that all mortals were asleep, spat a fierce blue flame from his mouth towards Tara. But Fionn, using the magic he had learned long ago from the Druid Women in the Slieve Bloom mountains, caught the flame in his cloak and diverted it into the earth, where we are told it reached a depth of 26 spans! Aillean, frustrated, tried again; but once more Fionn caught the flame. Now Aillean was frightened, and he fled, with Fionn pursuing him. Just as Aillean reached the entrance to Tír na nÓg Fionn cast the Biorgha with all his might. It struck Aillean and he died.

Fionn severed the magician's head and bore it to the Ard Rí on his spear. As his reward he requested the command of the Fianna, which the Clann Morna had usurped after the murder of Fionn's father. The Ard Rí agreed; and to the Clann Morna was given the option of being exiled from Ireland forever or submitting to Fionn's leadership. Wisely they chose to serve Fionn.

And that is how Fionn became leader of that illustrious army the Fianna. And that is how the long feud between him and the Clann Morna ended. And to give them their due they served him faithfully and well, making the Fianna the most renowned and respected fighting force in the land.

ÁINE SZYMANSKI

8.

Below is an extract from "Cill Aodáin", a poem by the blind poet and fiddler Antoine Ó Reachtabhra (1784-1835), better known in English as Raftery. His songs are still sung, and this one celebrates his native place, Cill Aodáin in the west of Ireland.

Anois teach an earraigh beidh an lá 'dul 'un síneadh, is tar éis na Féil' Bríde ar dód mo sheol, ó chuir mé i mo cheann é ní stopfaidh me choíche go seasfaidh mé thíos i lár Chontae Mhuigheo. I gClár Chlainne Muiris a bhéas mé an chéad oíche 's i mBalla taobh thíos de thosós mé ag ól, go Coillte Amach rachad go ndéanfadh cuairt mhíosa ann i bhfogas dhá mhíle go Baile an Tí Móir. Fágaim le huacht é go n-éiríonn mo chroí-se mar d'éireodh an ghaoth nó mar scaipeas an ceo nuair smaoiním ar Cheara nó ar Ghail- leang tá thíos de, ar Sceathach a' Mhíle nó ar phlántaí Mhuigheo. Cill Aodáin an baile a bhfásann gach ní ann, tá sméara is sú craobh ann is meas ar gach sórt, 's dá mbeinnne 'mo sheasamh i gceartlár mí dhaoine d'imeodh an aois díom agus bheinn arís óg...	Now with spring's coming the days will stretch out and after Bridget's feast I'll raise my sail, for now that I've thought of it I'll make no halt till I stand down in the midst of County Mayo. In Clár Chlainne Muiris I'll be the first night and 'tis in Balla north of it that I'll start drinking, to Coillte Amach I'll go for a month-long visit within two miles of Baltimore. I swear and I promise that my heart shall rise as the wind rises and the mist is dispersed when I think of Ceara or of Gaileang to its north, of Sceathach a' Mhíle or the plains of Mayo. Cill Aodáin is the townland where all things grow, there are blackberries there, raspberries and all kinds of fruit, and were I standing in the midst of my people age would leave me and I would again be young...
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AN STERENNOW/THE STARS

Yn hanter cleth an norvys, yn whre tus mor Phoenician (morenek del hevel)
In the northern hemisphere, Phoenician sailors ("morenek" apparently) used
lewvas aga gorhollyon a dhywar an Ors Le Hag y whre tus mor Greca lewvas a
to steer their ships off Ursea Minor, and Greek sailors used to steer
dhywar an Ors Vur. In lesow cleth, ny whra sedhy nefra an sterennow ma y'n
off Ursea Major. In northern latitudes these stars never set in the
ebren nos.

Orth etek degre warn ugans a'n Soth, yma an Ores Vur a ugh an gorwel a
At thirty eight degrees south, Ursea Major is above the horizon
vys Kevardhu dhe vys Methaven mes y whelyn-ny byth an Ors Le. Pella dyghow,
from December to June, but we never see Ursea Minor. Further south,
yma Car Arthur usy poran ughel y'n ebren soth a vys Kevardhu dhe vys
there is Bootes, which is quite high in the southern sky from December to
Gwynkala.
September.

9.

Pan dheth tus mor cleth dhe'n gesva y'n hanter dyghow an norvys, y wholsons When northern sailors came to the southern hemisphere they sailed y'n fogo noweth a ster. Y tallethsons lewyas a dhywar an Grows Dhyghow ha'y into a new cavern of stars. They began to steer off the Southern Cross and hevarwedhyon. Its pointers.

Dhe re an esesygyon australys, an sterennow ma yu Yaraandoo (le an wedhen To some of the Australian aborigines these stars are "yaraandoo" (place of lujeck gwyn) hag an Mooyi (deulagas an Cockatoo gwyn). Yn Araby gelwys o an the white gum tree) and the "mooyi" (eyes of the white cockatoo). In Arabia Grows Dhyghow "An Tylda". the Southern Cross was called "The Tent".

Gwell yu gans an enesygyon australys kevarwedha gans aga elgeth ha ny The Australian aborigines prefer to point with their chin and not to gevarwedha gans aga bys a rag, kyn kevarweth tus moyha gans an bys a rag. point with their forefinger, though most people point with their forefinger. Dhedha, "poyntyng an ascorn" yu mollethy den. Ytho yma agan lavar "Gorra an To them, "pointing the bone" is to curse someone. So there is our phrase bys war nebonen".

"pointing the finger on someone". Bytegens an Gevarwedhyon a boynt wor' tu ha'n Grows Dhyghow. Nyns yu However the Pointers point toward the Southern Cross. It is not gonvedhys mars usyas Sen Jowan y vys hag ef ow kywethla ha gans marth an known whether Saint John used his finger when he mentioned honourably and On a Dhew. Mes yn Golowan yn Breten Vyghan yma pardon a Sen Jowan a'n Bys with wonder the Son of God. But at the feast of Saint John in Brittany there a dhesev y whruk ef. Bytegens an gologogyon a yl gava an bys may is a pardon of Saint John of the Finger which assumes he did. However the fo gorrys warnedha. stout-hearted can forgive the finger that may be put upon them.

Dres hemma yma'n Chambours a'n Soth may fuf an dor herwyth an sesons Beyond this there are the Rooms of the South through which the earth moves kehar del gerdhyn-ny dre jambours chy. An Chambours ma a ve dyberthys in accordance with the seasons as we walk through a house's rooms. These gans an gologogyon goth rak redya an ebrun soth. Pub chambour rooms were divided by the ancient augurs to read the southern sky. Each room yu yndan wel ughella an chywarden. Ynter an re ma yma'n Helghor, is subordinate to the overseer's higher view. Among these there are the an Ky Mur, an Dowrhergher hag erel, pup onen ow cul gwynth ken rag Hunter, Canis Major, the Water Carrier, etc., each doing a different job for an chywarden. Yn chambour an helghor, ny welyr oll an whel cref yn the overseer. In the hunter's room one does not see all the hard work in the chambour an dowrhergher. Yn nebes sesons ha lesow an Kelghor ha'y gun water-carrier's room. In some seasons and latitudes the Hunter and his dogs a hevel bos ow kerdhes war an gorwel soth. seem to be walking on the southern horizon.

Soul Jacob po an Forth Lethek yu dhe lyes genesyk australys avon Jacob's Ladder on the Milky Way is to many an Australian aborigine a river ow tenewy dre vro segh ha ster golowys ynyr y eghen a dhons dhe'n flowing through dry country and constellations in it are species that come to dowr rag eva. Soul Jacob yu kemyn dhe'n dheu hanter an norvys. the water to drink. Jacob's Ladder is common to both hemispheres.

An ster soth yn dhe vur les ha martesen y hyllyn omresa dhedha kepar The southern stars are very interesting and perhaps we can align ourselves del reas an veyn vras dhedha yn termyn us passyes. Worteweth an sum a hevel to them as the megaliths aligned to them in time past. In the end the sum bos re dhe nep myster rag an Les Kemyn. appears to be an alignment to some trade for the Common Benefit.

Stephen Amos

TELEVISION

The Year of the French.

Some issues ago "The Year of the French" was said to be due for a showing by ABC television. It duly appeared; but it was not the drama series that some (including the present writer) had been expecting. Instead, we had a panorama of modern France, a study of individuals in every kind of occupation. It was enjoyable, and it was pleasant to see that one of the programmes was devoted to a Breton priest in a remote western parish who was fighting to save the language he had spoken as a child.

It appeared there were two series with the same title. The other was shown rather later on Channel 4-28, a co-production of French television, Channel 4 in Britain and Raidio Teilifis Eireann. Based on a novel by Thomas Flanagan, it was set in Ireland in 1798. It was the story of a rebellion, one in which the French took a hand, zealous for liberty and eager to see English resources diverted.

The novel describes the event from many points of view. The rebels, the victims, the landlords, the English, men of good will and bad, all speak with their own voices. Such a technique is ill-adapted to television, which is more serial in character; and in this case certain compromises were made.

The series was ambitious, with three languages and a large cast. If the measure of an historical series is the degree to which it gives the feel of another world, "The Year of the French" was not always successful, particularly in the beginning, but it was to compensate for this with episodes of considerable power. Particularly memorable was the final episode, grim with images of defeat and culminating in a hanging; an ending, however, which conveyed the stubbornness of the defeated and an ultimate hope.

English, Irish and French were the languages used. In 1798 Irish was the language of three quarters of the population, and in Mayo (the seat of the events here depicted) few spoke anything else. Alas: the impression given by the series was that the opposite was true. It sometimes seemed, when Irish was heard, that Dublin had strayed to Connaught, and even the pivotal character of Owen McCarthy, poet, rake and master of the Irish tongue, was shown to have a perverse preference for English. This is not a trivial objection. Language is a key to culture and history, and there was an opportunity to depict the Gaelic world of the majority as it really was, a world quite separate from that of the Ascendancy and possessing traditions of great particularity. What we were given, on the whole, were scraps of Irish thrown in for flavour. The novel itself, though written in English, conveys this particularity with much greater force.

The blame for this must lie with RTE, which has consistently neglected its obligations. I fear we must wait in vain for series or features in the Irish language. The means are there, but not the will. An example of what might be done is furnished by Channel 4 in Wales, but such examples are not well received across the Irish Sea.

BOOKS

Easy Lessons or Self Instruction in Irish. Canon Ulick Bourke.

EXERCISE XXVII

1. C'ia ra ann riu? 2. Ue-r. 3. C'ia eura? 4. Seannur Ua Dhuir. 5. Tarrn arcead a Seannur, re bo beata; riu rior agur dean do coinnab. 6. J' mair lrom so b-beruim cu oirpneice. 7. J' para an la o by curra agur meiri nom an las' n' n'as, a b-beruim; agur so beiriu leac ra b'hoib (gladness) omu anoir so b-beruim-de amro le ceile — curra a'is a b-beruim omu agur eil a'is reas na curre; agur me-r. a ra ann ro, ann r'acra na r'ne zan rior zan liabhad. 8. Oe, a'uram ont, na coru'is so luac riu, bo mo h'olab; ro, re r' cur' nam a r'ab, a marab r'ium. 9. So beiriu n' (for n' b-beru) me-r. a marab r'is; ac' ed me a r'ab na r'ure; ra r'ior agur so b-beru an an-omul agur n' lab'ac'ob (I shall not speak) focail eile ann bo h'olab (in your praise). 10. J'ar r'ab'ur me (as I have said), n' r'ac' o b'ur-de le ceile a'is ont (going) ann r'iole 'nuar' b'ur-de a cead o' a'cur'ur; beannab Oe le n-a onum. N'ar r'ubal curra so leor de 'n' domab o r'iu? 8. Subb'ol; a ra agur r'iora le r'ac' a'is zan n'p

It must be admitted that "Easy Lessons in Irish" is not a recent publication. The copy in my possession is dated 1865, and we may assume that the work is now out of print. At point the reader might inquire why it is necessary to review it at all. Why say not suffice; one must add historical, philological and cultural interest.

The author was the Rev. Canon Ulick Bourke, a cultivated and patriotic man, versed both in the classics and in the older Irish literature. He was also the author of a "College Irish Grammar"; but the present work was of a more practical nature, and certainly cheaper, as befitted a book aimed at a popular market. And just how popular was "Easy Lessons"? The edition of 1865 was the fourth in five years, each amounting to a thousand copies; and this argues a considerable demand.

Some ten years ago written Irish had high been reckoned a thing of the past, not so today; it is written, as well as read and spoken, by thousands of the growing youth — young men and maidens — in many parishes throughout Connaught. This sanguine statement, taken from the foreword, is modified by the admission that "persons who ought to encourage the cultivation of their mother tongue — if for no higher motive, for the sake, at least, of learning and scholarship — actually neglect or despise it....".

The uncase was justified. Though the reasons for the decline of Irish predated the Great Famine of the 1840s, that event was a catalyst. Some two million died of hunger or fever, and emigration, from the resort of the few, became the only hope of thousands. The utility of English had long been obvious, though not to the point of absolute persuasion; but now a psychological revolution was accomplished. In the cadences of Irish were heard poverty, starvation and disease; but in English was a promise — a golden one, especially if one's destination was America.

A few resisted, among them some scholars and priests. Canon Bourke, born in Mayo in 1829, was one of them. Most of his fellow clergy took little interest in the language, though many were native speakers. The Canon took practical steps to remedy this indifference. His "College Irish Grammar" (1856) was meant for use at Maynooth, and was followed, for exemplary purposes, by a collection of sermons in Irish. By 1887, which was the year of his death, there were societies to continue what he and others had begun, and an Irish-language newspaper, "The Gaelic Journal". None of this reversed the decline of Irish in the countryside, but it furnished the basis for a partial revival in the towns, and, indeed, for the work of the Gaelic League, which was to be of crucial importance in the formation of a national ideology.

To return to the book itself: the layout is strikingly similar to that of such grammars today. After an introductory section dealing with pronunciation there is a series of exercises, each headed by a suitable vocabulary, and with a key at the back. Translations are alternatively from Irish to English and from English to Irish. At the very end there are poems from the nationalist journal "The Nation" in praise of the national tongue - verse whose fervour does not altogether compensate for a striking absence of literary merit.

This was certainly as practical a grammar as could be had at the time. The Irish in it was based on the vernacular of Connacht, which some hope even now will become the standard speech. And the question of standards was to become a lively one, for whatever dialect one chose to write in there was no universally accepted spelling, the only model being Classical Irish, whose conventions had been established centuries before. This lack of an agreed equivalence between spelling and pronunciation meant that the purchaser of such a grammar as this would have needed the constant help of a native speaker. But oral considerations aside, "Easy Lessons" is practical to a praiseworthy degree.

Canon Bourke's name is little known today. But he, like many others, deserves some honour for his contribution to the restoration of a language which so many seemed willing to abandon. That such a willingness existed at all is a condemnation of the misrule of his country; that the tide could be turned in any way must sometimes have seemed unlikely, even impossible; and that the Canon and those like him should have persisted is a tribute to their courage or, at least, to their stubbornness. The stubborn also have their reward.

A verse from a traditional song in
Irish - "Coillte Glasa an Triúcha"
(The Green woods of Triúcha).

A chumainn is a shearc, rachaimidne seal
faoi choillte ag scaipeadh drúchta,
mar a bhfaighimidne breac, is lon ar a
nead,
an fia agus an boc ag búireadh,
an t-éinín is binne ar ghéaga ag seinm -
an chuaichín ar barr an iúir ghlais -
is go bráth bráth ní thiocfaidh an bás
'nár ngoire
i lár na coille cumhra.

My love and desire, let us go for a time
to Triúcha's fine green woods
where we'll find the trout, the blackbird
on her nest,
the deer and stag as they bellow,
the sweetest bird on branch at its song -
the cuckoo in the green yew-top -
and never, never will death come near
us
in the midst of the fragrant wood.