

Lorna G. Barrow and Jonathan M. Wooding (eds), *Memory and Foresight in the Celtic World: Perspectives from the Late Medieval through Modern Periods*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2020; ISBN: 978-1-743-32715-9; vi, 285 pp.; paperback.

This volume is the nineteenth in the Sydney Series in Celtic Studies. It has thirteen chapters and commences with editors Lorna Barrow and Jonathan Wooding's "Introduction: Wishful Returns and Futures Foreseen," a survey of the contents of the book. The first substantive chapter, Sybil Jack's "Fable and Fiction in the Creation of Contemporary Beliefs about the Past on Scottish Life," is a study of the Highland parish of Laggan, the home of James Macpherson of Ossian fame (or notoriety). The letters of "Anne McVicar, Mrs Grant, who was for over twenty years resident in the parish as the wife of the minister" (p. 24) are a fascinating source for their somewhat idealized view of Highland life and the range of legend and folkloric practices they contain. A different type of Scottish life is the subject of Tessa Morrison's "Robert Owen and Villages of Unity and Cooperation: A New Concept of Urbanism," which considers the ideas of Owen (1771-1858), the utopian socialist and founder of the cooperative movement, to build ideal villages to house the poor and improve their lot in life.

The next chapter, Cairns Craig's "Celticism, Science and the Mnemonic Universe," argues that the Romantic and occult Celtic poetry of James Macpherson's Ossian and of William Butler Yeats was not in opposition to science and in fact became constitutive element of Scottish and Irish modernity. Attention shifts to Wales and the role of language in Welsh identity, with Will Christie's "'One foot in Wales and my vowels in England': The Welshness of Dylan Thomas." Christie discusses the role of sound in Thomas's poems and their unusual uses of vocabulary, as well as his family background, in particular his radical Unitarian great-uncle, Gwilym Marles, and concludes that, while writing in English, Dylan Thomas was a wholly Welsh poet. Chapter 5, "Irish Lexical Memory: Irish Words in English-Language Texts, 1800-2016," by Dymphna Lonergan, continues this interest in language by analysing the English impact on Irish speakers and the modifications of Irish English that resulted from the different grammatical structure of Irish. Some well-known Irish words, such as gombeen and banshee, are discussed. A five-page glossary of Irish words appearing in English writing is supplied.

John Kennedy's "Remembering the Celts: Celtic Designs on Modern Coins" is a fascinating illustrated study of coins featuring Irish characters and motifs, such as Cuchullain, the Brian Boru harp, the Brighter Boat, St Brendan, and generic Irish medieval manuscript art designs. Isle of Man coins also feature various Celtic crosses and St Patrick, while the French ten-euro coin has depicted both Vercingetorix and Asterix the Gaul. This delightful and entertaining chapter was a highlight for this reader. The next chapter is "Scottish Soldiers in Fifteenth-Century France: Remembering an Early Scottish Diaspora" by the late Elizabeth Bonner, a key figure in Scottish studies in Australia. Here she examines an under-studied aspect of late medieval Scottish history. Chapter 8 is James Donaldson's "Memories of a Celtic Past: Challenges to an Old Culture on the Changing Scottish and Australian Frontiers of Life," which opens

with the impact of the Battle of Culloden in 1746 and traces the groups of Highlanders that emigrated during the nineteenth century, and the decline of the Gaelic language. The last section deals with the memory of a Highland past in colonial New South Wales. “‘To the Land of My Praise’: Memories of Hugh Boyd Laing” by Katherine Spadaro is about the contribution of a Gaelic speaker to the infamous Dictation Test, which under the various legislation that collectively made up the White Australia Policy, was implemented to keep non-English speakers and non-Whites out of the country.

Chapter 10 is Val Noone’s “Nicholas O’Donnell on the Origins of the Munster O’Donnells” which discusses the visit of O’Donnell, the Melbourne based leader of the United Irish League, to Adelaide in April 1909, in which he castigated some descendants of Red Hugh O’Donnell (1571-1602) of Donegal. This was a quite shocking public statement, but Noone demonstrates that Nicholas wrote later of his reasons for rejecting this genealogical connection. Richard Reid’s “‘Dark and rude and strange ...’: Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran and the St Mary’s 1904 Fair” also focuses on the early twentieth century and covers the key role of Cardinal Moran in public Catholic ceremonial, including the Fair mentioned in the title and the 1901 St Patrick’s Day Procession in Sydney. Anne-Maree Whitaker’s “Remembering Easter 1916: Australian Links to the Irish Rebellion” opens with the fact that the Easter Rising was reported in the Australia press a day after it appeared in the *Times* in England. Whitaker reviews a range of publications on the subject and discusses figures associated with the rebellion with Australian connections.

The final chapter is Jeanette Mollenhauer’s “Dancing Bodies, Living Memories: Irish Immigrants in Sydney” which resonated with my childhood, in which learning Irish dancing at schools in Sydney (where the presence of Irish teaching nuns and local parish priests was influential) was a big part of being a child of Irish Catholic background. Mollenhauer evokes the costumes that featured typical Irish art motifs and adornments such as replica Tara brooches, and makes reference (inevitable, really) to the *Riverdance* global phenomenon. This edited volume is interesting and enjoyable to read and indicates that research into Celtic topics is alive and well in Australia. It will be of interest to scholars and students of Celtic Studies, and to non-specialist readers with an interest in family history, Australian migration and church history, and Celtic cultural practices. The standard of the contributions is high, and the people and cultural trends discussed are both entertaining and relevant. I recommend it warmly to libraries and scholars alike.

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