

APPRECIATIONS

Christopher Lynch (1925-2013)



It is entirely appropriate that the life and work of Christopher Lynch, who died on 21 September 2013, should be marked in this journal. Christy was a distinguished former President of the Thomond Archaeological Society, serving in that office for five years (1987-91). During his term of office he initiated and assisted in the organisation of many of the Society's activities. His particular interest was the protection and conservation of heritage buildings. Prior to this, in the years 1971-5 he was a dedicated and hard-working Honorary Secretary of the Society, organising the lectures and particularly the outings during that time. He was one of the Vice-Presidents from 1976 to 1986 and from 1992 until his death.

Christy was born in 1925, one of three boys and two girls of a small dairy farmer who lived in a thatched two-storey house close to Ennis. From his youngest days he undertook many farm chores, such as haymaking, turf cutting, milking cows and delivery of milk to the creamery. Little did he anticipate that this knowledge and experience of country life would be of such great benefit to him in later life when he became so totally involved in the creation and operation of Bunratty Folk Park. His childhood interests were hurling and visits to the cinema in Ennis.

The excellent primary and secondary education, which he received in Ennis, equipped him very well to get a clerical appointment at Shannon Airport in 1947 with the newly established Sales and Catering Organisation headed by Brendan O'Regan. His personal skills and personable approach were quickly recognised as great assets to the organisation. Among the challenging assignments which he undertook during his career were the running of a supermarket in Shannon town and most significantly the management of the newly-restored Bunratty Castle in 1958. In the latter role he was the key person responsible for the setting up of medieval banquets in the castle and subsequently in the supervision and construction of the Folk Park. His remit later extended to Knappogue and Dunguaire Castles. He was a leading member of Brendan O'Regan's creative team

and made a major contribution to heritage tourism in the Shannon region. In 1973 he was elected Chairman of the Historic Irish Tourist Houses Association. He published an authoritative, illustrated History and Guide to Bunratty Castle as part of the Eason's Irish Heritage Series in 1984 and also wrote a descriptive guide to the Folk Park. After his retirement and up to the time of his death he was secretary and an active member of the Bunratty Castle and Furniture trusts. He was also a member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, serving as Vice-President for Munster (1989-91), the Folk Life Society and Irish Georgian Society.

Christy met his future wife, Noreen Enright when they were work colleagues at Shannon Sales and Catering. They married in 1953, had three children and had fifty-four years of happiness until Noreen's death in 2007. He took great pride in his three daughters and later on in his grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by Geraldine, Catriona and Aileen, as well as his brother Donal, sisters, Phoenie and Sr Cecilia LCM, grandchildren and extended family.

An audio archive on his career was published in 2009 by Shannon Heritage (www.shannonheritage.com) and a copy is available for reference in the Clare County library in Ennis. Christopher Lynch was a gracious and friendly man with great skills in customer service, judgment and leadership. May he rest in peace.

Cian O'Carroll

I f
of
L
m
In
th
m
La
ca
inc
ma
me
in
Ca
in
sig
no
Mu
his
pro
the
in l
the
pio
Lin
for
in l

Laurence (Larry) Walsh (1949-2013)



I first met Larry shortly after his arrival in Limerick in 1977 to take up the part-time post of Curator of Limerick Museum. It was a difficult assignment and the negative attitude of Limerick Corporation towards the museum was highlighted by the nature of the appointment, suggesting that running the city's museum was not worthy of a full-time post. Indeed there was at that time no museum: the entire collection previously on display in the Carnegie Library in Pery Square had been dismantled and put into storage to create more space for the library. More than two years had elapsed without any progress so that Larry's arrival at least offered hope and was seen correctly as one positive outcome of the campaign which the Thomond Archaeological Society had mounted to deal with the indifference and neglect hitherto shown.

Eventually new, largely unsatisfactory, premises were allocated and Larry, now permanently appointed but without staff or adequate resources successfully oversaw the move and installed the collection with flair and inventiveness in the series of small rooms in John's Square where it was to languish for another twenty years. On its transfer to Castle Lane, the role that Larry had played was indicated by the enormous increase in size and range of the collection, which now has over 55,000 items. Of particular significance was the acquisition of a splendid collection of Limerick silver objects, now numbering more than 150 pieces, an achievement recognised by the award of the Museums' Trust Special Award in 1981. Sadly this has now had to be put into storage as history has repeated itself with the effective dismantling once again of the museum to provide space for artificial recreations considered more important than the display of the genuine artifacts of the city's history and heritage. In addition to his outstanding work in broadening the size and range of the collection, Larry's other major achievement was the meticulous catalogue which he compiled, digitised and placed online: the latter a pioneering achievement for a local authority museum in Ireland.

In addition to his day-job in the museum, his voluntary and dedicated work on the Old Limerick Journal, initially helping and advising his friend Jim Kemmy and later as editor for ten years, made a major contribution to the history of the city. Indeed, it was to be in history rather than archaeology that Larry produced his most significant scholarly

publications. In particular, his articles and introductions to a variety of primary source documents in the special 1690 Siege edition of the OLJ were of major importance. His meticulous scholarship and interrogation of sources led him, for example, to discover that the 'true and perfect diary of the siege of Limerick' attributed to Samuel Mullenau was not, as had been previously accepted by all historians, a genuine account by an observer but merely a propaganda document compiled in London and published under a pseudonym. Another important revision was his demonstration that the popular assertion that Limerick was the first city in Ireland to be given a charter, and that it elected its mayor ten years before London, was incorrect ('The Mayoral Myth' in D. Lee (ed.) *Remembering Limerick*, 1997). In addition to other articles in various issues of OLJ, he published an illustrated pamphlet *Historic Limerick: the City and its Treasures* (1984) and with Jim Kemmy *Limerick in Old Postcards* (1997).

In an ideal world, though, Larry would probably have been a full-time archaeologist. This was the subject he specialised in after taking his B.A. degree in Geography and Archaeology in UCD in 1971 embarking on a research M.A. on the siting and distribution of megalithic tombs in Waterford and South Leinster. He successfully completed this study in 1975, the leisurely pace of which was both testament to, and resulted from, his insistence that every detail be checked and that nothing be written unless it was of the highest scholarly standards, a trait which he was to demonstrate and live by throughout his career. He worked on a wide range of excavations during his student and post-graduate days and in his early years in Limerick excavated the important medieval church site of Kilrush on the NCR.

This interest in archaeology led him to join the Thomond Archaeological Society after his arrival in Limerick. His early experience of the Society was less than ideal due to the well-intentioned but unfortunate campaign of one of our then high profile members, which might well have cost him his job. This had the positive outcome of Larry deciding to serve on the committee, initially perhaps largely to safeguard his position, but ultimately to the great benefit of the Society. During his twenty-eight years of unbroken service on the committee, he offered sound advice when it was sought and provided valuable background briefing and information to enable more effective and useful decision making. In addition, he lectured to the Society and conducted many enjoyable and informative outings over this long period. His innate reticence was always overcome in the convivial post-committee socialising in Fennessy's pub where by closing time his was usually the dominant voice. Indeed one could always sense his unease if lengthy meetings seemed to be about to eat into the time available for such gatherings. Those who travelled with him on our overseas trips were also privileged to see this convivial side of Larry's personality which his shyness often concealed to others.

My friendship with Larry, reinforced by our mutual interest in archaeology [on whom indeed I often relied to keep up to date on excavation results and new interpretations] and my involvement with the Society and the Old Limerick Journal was strengthened by getting to know his supportive wife, Lenore Fischer and their daughters Bella and Jen, in whom he took such pride, and enjoy a warm welcome and generous hospitality in their home in Castleconnell.

The lines from Othello about having 'done the state some service' have perhaps been debased in recent times by over use and inappropriate application but they can without question be applied to Larry Walsh's contribution to the Thomond Archaeological Society, Limerick Museum and indeed the city in general. One hopes that they do indeed 'know it'.

Liam Irwin