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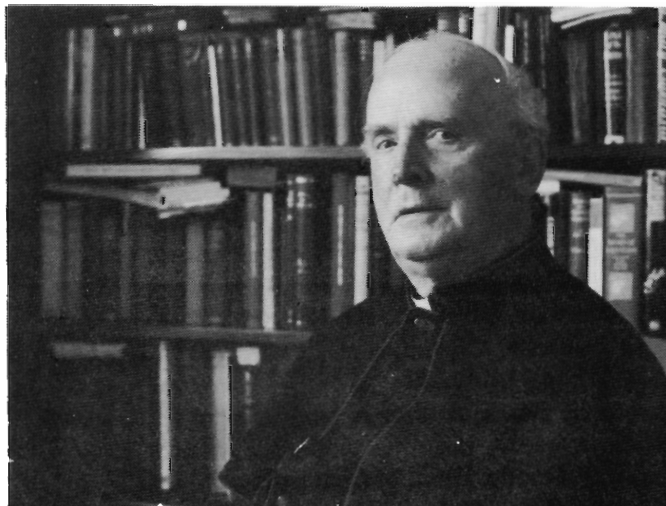
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Obituary

Canon Martin Ryan (1911 — 1988)



Etienne Rynne

Many years ago Canon Ryan told me that, quite apart from the sacred ministry of his vocation as a priest, the three main interests in his life were the archaeology and history of his county, the Irish language, and the game of hurling. It was through the first of these interests that I got to know, respect and admire over twenty years ago an extraordinary man whose friendship, convivial yet scholarly conversation, sharp wit, enthusiasm and unfailing hospitality are all now memories to be treasured.

Born in Silvermines, the youngest of a large family, he remained a staunch North Tipperaryman all his life, despite many years spent in counties Offaly and Clare, the latter a place for which he quickly developed an abiding *grá*. It was fitting, therefore, that he should have spent the last dozen years of his life in Lorrha, not only surrounded by the many fine prehistoric monuments of the region but actually living within the Early Christian foundation of St. Ruadhán — of which he claimed to be able to trace the ancient monastic vallum curving through the grounds of his residence, while within a stone's throw were two eight-century High Crosses, three outstanding medieval church buildings and an important Norman motte built in 1207.

Canon Ryan's contributions to the study of Ireland's past were many and varied, and will, no doubt, be recorded elsewhere. In Tipperary he will be remembered for his many fascinating writings in the *Nenagh Guardian*, for the part he played in the founding of the County Tipperary Historical Society (of which he was a Committee member) and above all for the active way in which he encouraged archaeologists and others from all over Ireland and abroad, to visit and study the ancient places and field-monuments of his beloved county — with particular reference to Lorrha.

Widely known and respected, he played an active role in the Thomond Archaeological Society (as a Committee member for some years), in the Shannon Archaeological and Historical Society, in the Clare Archaeological and Historical Society (as Chairman of their annual Conference for many years), and in the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland (Vice-President for Munster from 1986). He was also well known at conferences and outings abroad, including the Isle of Man, where he assisted at an excavation and Scotland.

Is ró-dhéanach anois againn dó, fairíor, a guidhe “go mairfidh tú an céad”, acht ní gá a rá go mairfidh sé na blianta fada i gcuimhne scoláirí agus mhuintir a pharóiste, agus, bígí cinnte de, i gcuimhne agus i bpaidreacha a cháirde uile. Sonas Dé lena anam.

