



**TIPPERARY HISTORICAL
JOURNAL 1993**

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ISSN 0791-0655

The Skehan Index of Clergy: a revised edition

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The Index of Clergy of the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly was compiled during the 1960s by Fr. Walter Skehan, former parish priest of Loughmore, at the request of Dr. Thomas Morris, then archbishop of Cashel and Emly. In scope and detail the Skehan Index is probably unrivalled in Ireland as a record of diocesan clergy, and is a fitting monument to many years of diligent historical research. Fr. Skehan died on 9 September, 1972.

The Index consists of some 1,700 biographies of the clergy of the archdiocese. There are also occasional, but valuable, entries for the pre-1704 period. All the Cashel priests who registered in 1704 are included. In addition, there is substantial, though not fully comprehensive, treatment of the clergy of the archdiocese during the 18th century. The Index is complete for the period since the beginning of the 19th century.

The entries in the Skehan Index include biographical details of the clergy and their ministry in the various parishes and institutions of the archdiocese. Although some entries are understandably limited in scope, the general quality of the biographical material is remarkably comprehensive and enlightening. A particularly valuable feature of the Index is its extensive reference to source material.

In compiling the Index Fr. Skehan was able to draw on the labours of a number of earlier priest chroniclers and historians of the archdiocese. However, for the greater portion of the extensive research which was involved in the compilation of the Index credit must go to Fr. Skehan himself. As a researcher he was both critical and painstaking. Moreover, at times his personality is reflected in some entries — especially those of his contemporaries and acquaintances!

The Skehan Index was originally presented on typed index-cards which are retained in Archbishop's House, Thurles. Recently Dr. Morris has updated the Index by adding entries of priests who have died since 1972. He has also computerised the entire material and has had it professionally printed, with entries presented in alphabetical order. A copy of this new revised printed presentation has been deposited in the County Library, Thurles, where it is available to *bona fide* researchers and scholars.

Users of the Index should, however, note that all the material in the Skehan Index is the copyright of the Cashel and Emly Diocesan Trust Limited.

