

## BOOK REVIEW

***King's Inns Barristers 1868-2004* edited by Kenneth Ferguson, (Dublin, The Honorable Society of King's Inns in association with the Irish Legal History Society, Dublin, 2005) xiv + 446 pp.**

In his Introduction the editor explains that the present work is intended to be a continuation of, and companion to, the Irish Manuscripts Commission's *King's Inns Admission Papers 1607-1867* published in 1982. This description, and the title, might suggest to the casual reader that it would not repay further study as its contents are confined to details of those admitted to King's Inns between 1868 and 2004. Such a deduction would be sadly misplaced and would be to forgo the opportunity to consult an impressive work of scholarship which contains a mine of invaluable and fascinating biographical information relating to some six thousand individuals, as well as a substantial quantity of historical information which throws much light on the Irish Bar in the years before it divided into the two bodies which now exist in the two jurisdictions in Ireland.

*King's Inns Barristers 1868-2004* is divided into three parts. The greater part consists of the Alphabetical Index of Barristers' Memorials, 1868-1968. These entries have been compiled from the records of King's Inns by Mrs Julitta Clancy, M.B.E., an archivist and indexer by profession, assisted by Mrs Margaret Connolly in the later stages of the project. Each entry gives the date of birth and the names and addresses of the parents of each subject, details of his or her University degree, the date on which they were admitted as a student, and the year and term of their call to the Bar. Biographical annotations have been added to many entries by the editor. The effect of their combined efforts is to provide a veritable treasure trove of information of enormous value to historians and commentators in the future, to browse amongst which will be a source of endless fascination for the casual enquirer.

A few examples from two pages selected at random may convey a sense of what is to be found in this section. Between pages 146 and 147 we find illustrations of the familial, almost dynastic, involvement of so many in the law. There are entries for distinguished members of the judiciary in the form of F.G.O. Budd, a judge of the High Court and then of the Supreme Court, and his son, the present Mr Justice Budd, a judge of the High Court. Here too we find others active in public life, such as James Aloysius Burke, called in Trinity term 1916 and who became an M.P., T.D. and minister for Local Government; and James Michael Burke, a Cuman na nGael T.D. between 1933 and 1936. An entry on the opposite page illustrating a different political tradition is that of Francis Henry Browning, joint author of *Local Registration of Title in Ireland* who was second in command of the Irish Association of Volunteer Training Corps, and died on Easter Monday 1916 when his unit came under fire near Beggar's Bush Barracks. We learn at page 81 that as President of the Irish Rugby Football Union he had been a leading organiser of recruitment for the forces in Dublin, and a prime mover of the Pals battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a unit commemorated in *The Pals at Suvla Bay* by Henry Hanna KC (the title page of which is

reproduced at page 80). The 'Pals' suffered heavy casualties at Gallipoli in 1915 when three of the five members of the Law Library who had joined were killed. Another entry on the same pair of pages is that of Robert Burgess, who died in France in December 1915. We also learn that John Owen died from influenza contracted whilst learning Irish in the Basket Islands, and that John Alphonsus Burke, who, despite being a Brooke Scholar, "took a teaching post in England and never practised". These and other, perhaps less familiar, names tempt one to make further enquiries about the subjects of these entries. What was the history of Chevalier John Burke J.P. who was living in Corporation Street in the centre of Belfast when his sixth son Fitzstephen Burke was admitted a student in 1906, but had migrated to the more salubrious surroundings of Strandtown on the outskirts of East Belfast by 1915 when his fourth son Arthur Ulick was admitted? What prompted Arthur Ulick, four years older than Fitzstephen, to follow his younger brother to King's Inns nine years later in 1915?

Entries such as these demonstrate the range and detail of the information contained in this section of *King's Inns Barristers*, which not only makes this an invaluable reference work, but a rich seam of material for those who wish to pursue further research into the background of those called to the Bar during the period covered by this work, and their subsequent careers.

The Alphabetical Index only extends to 1968, a date which it is explained "emerged by accident" because this section of the work was completed by Mrs Clancy in 1998, and represented the observance of a 30 year "interval in according access to records". However, the gap from 1968 to the present day is partly filled by the next section which consists of the names of those included in each call to the outer bar from 1868 to 2004; to the inner bar from 1880 to 2004, and a catalogue of judges and law officers. These lists are also of great value, as they contain much information not readily available elsewhere. Thus we find not just lists of judges and law officers in the Irish Free State and Ireland, but a list of King's Inns-educated judges and law officers in Northern Ireland and England. It is clear that a conscious effort has been made to include information about those who held judicial office in Northern Ireland after 1921. Sir James Andrews LCJ, Lord MacDermott LCJ and Babington LJ appear amongst the many photographs. In this section one also finds such diverse information as a list of the peerages and baronetcies conferred on judges and law officers, and a description of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland's Levée in 1900 identifying the judges who appear in the group photograph at page 442, as well as a list of the auditors of the Law Students' Debating Society of Ireland 1860-2005 compiled by the Under Treasurer, Mrs Camilla McAleese

The third section of the work, and that which will have the greatest attraction to the general reader, consists of two essays which precede the Alphabetical Index, and, taken together, effectively comprise a monograph of just over 100 pages on the Irish Bar over the century from 1868 to 1968. The first, shorter, essay by Professor Niall Osborough deals with four aspects of the history of King's Inns up to the reduction in its jurisdiction by the formation of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland, two of which are the entry of women and the events which led the Northern Committee of Benchers of King's Inns to set up their own Inn. The latter study throws new light on a topic that has been neglected in the past, although it relies heavily on the minutes of the

Benchers of King's Inn, and so the Northern side of this unhappy episode remains to be told.

The second essay by Dr Ferguson is entitled 'A portrait of the Irish Bar, 1868-1968', and a few of the 17 sub-headings must suffice to convey the breadth and depth of learning displayed. 'Lord Justice Fitzgibbon'; 'The Law Library'; 'The barrister M.P.s of the Irish Party'; 'The Bar and the Troubles'; 'The new order and the rise of the Sullivan clan, and 'The complacent years' are amongst the subjects that are dealt with in the 85 pages which make up this essay.

The Benchers of King's Inns are to be congratulated on publishing what will be recognized as a major contribution to the history of the legal profession in Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one that complements recent publications in this field such as *The Four Courts: 200 years* (1996), and *The Law Society of Ireland, 1852-2002 Portrait of a Profession* (2002). *King's Inns Barristers 1868-2004* is a handsome, well-produced, volume with many attractive illustrations, although the essays by Professor Osborough and Dr Ferguson deserve a general index, and the volume would also have benefited from an index of names. However, one suspects that this would have significantly increased the size, and hence the cost, of the volume. Priced at a modest 30 euro, plus 10 euro post and packing (which is not charged to personal callers), it represents remarkable value, and enquiries should be made to the Librarian, King's Inns Library, Henrietta Street, Dublin, or on line at [publications@kingsinns.ie](mailto:publications@kingsinns.ie).

***Mr Justice Hart***