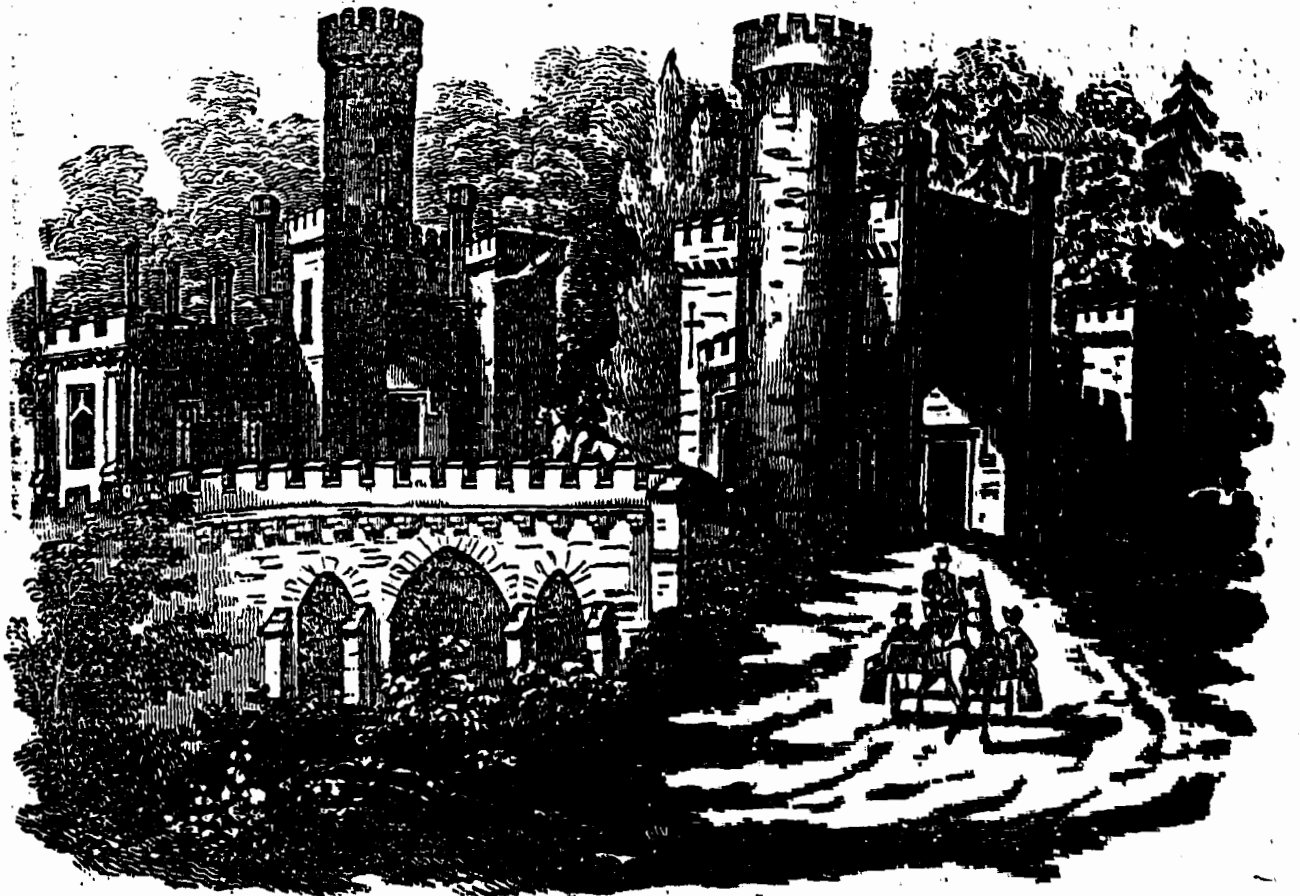


Old Waterford Society

DECIES

XXVII

AUTUMN 1984



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Autumn 1984

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COVER

Engraving of towered bridge on avenue leading to Ballysaggartmore "castle", one of the extravagances of Arthur Kiely-Ussher. First published as the title page of the Dublin Penny Journal, 13th December 1834. (see also page 4).

E D I T O R I A L

The retirement (again!) of the present editor presents the opportunity to review (once more!) the evolution of DECIES. In January 1976 we started with a "Pilot Issue" comprising five sheets of stencilled paper stapled together. While the following issues, growing progressively bigger, acquired card covers, the craft of editorship was learned more slowly, the hard way and through mistakes. By number XIV, however, various editorial options had emerged and were outlined in the editorial of that issue. These, and a restructuring of editorship were put to the A.G.M. of the Old Waterford Society in 1980. The result was an Editorial Committee on which the previous (and present) editor was to serve ex-officio.

Over the following four years the members of the editorial committee took turns at editing (the previous/present editor finding himself once more doing likewise) and met from time to time to co-ordinate policy. By 1982 it had become apparent that by concentrating on academic research we were losing popular appeal. Attempts were made to rectify this by improving presentation and making more generous use of illustrations. An active policy was also pursued of promoting local researchers and of helping them to present and annotate their researches in conformity with the standards of an academic publication. The question increasingly arose, therefore, whether DECIES was being published for the benefit of active historians (i.e. those of us involved with universities in research projects) or for the greater number of people whose interest in history was more casual. Failing to reconcile the two, the Editorial Committee came up with the compromise which was outlined in DECIES XXV, Jan. 1984. This was then put to the A.G.M. in April and effectively rejected, with the Editorial Committee being asked to reconsider its proposals.

The Editorial Committee met the following week. Expressing their regret at the rejection of their recommendations, five of the seven conveyed their inability to remain actively involved. In expressing their good-will towards the future of DECIES the members drew up a memorandum, based on their editorial experience, outlining the functions which editors have been performing and suggesting a six-fold division of labour. This was conveyed in writing to the 1984/'85 Committee of the O.W.S. .

The present editor was among the resignees but to facilitate transition he offered whatever help might be required with the September '84 issue - and wound up editing it! This therefore is the end (definitely!) of an involvement with DECIES stretching over twenty seven issues. However, change is to be welcomed with the opportunities for new directions to be pursued. Yet there are regrets for the things that remain unfinished. The urgent importance of collecting that most fragile of sources, oral history, has been stressed over various issues, but to date, insufficient has been done. The question of an index must also be considered. Then there is the Survey of historical monuments, the first portion of which was published in DECIES XXIV but pressure of work, time and space has dictated continued postponement of publishing the other material collected. All such material will be passed on to the (as yet) unselected permanent editorship of future DECIES.

To our replacement(s) we of the previous issues express our best wishes. While we offer no prescriptions we reiterate the irony expressed in many editorials - i.e. that issue after issue appears without any acknowledgement or comment from the vast majority of members. Editors have therefore been working in the dark. Perhaps now that a change of editorship is taking place members of the O.W.S. may take the opportunity of making their views known about the type of publication they would like. Out of that, hopefully, a vibrant consensus policy will emerge towards a readable and relevant DECIES.

Des Cowman.

