

Autobiography

He penned his autobiography during 1934 *Pleasant Places* that portrayed his deep pious faith along with his humour. [\[xxxix\]](#)

Sailing

Both Hannay's loved sailing around Clew Bay, it provided the backdrop for several of his later farces and adventure stories. [\[xxxix\]](#)

James O. Hannay enjoyed sailing. He had been taught the rudiments by his father & grandfather in Belfast. When he was based in Westport his financial success of his writing enabled him to purchase a boat. He bought a Dublin Bay Water Wag. (*in the frontispiece of his book The Inviolable Sanctuary Birmingham included a picture of the Water Wag*) [\[xxxix\]](#)

Demise

James Owen Hannay's demise occurred on 2nd February 1950 at his home: 187 Queen's Gate, Kensington, London. He was buried in St. Andrew's Churchyard, Mells, Somerset. [\[xxxix\]](#)

James O. Hannay's demise occurred on 15th February 1882 in London. He was aged eighty- four years. He is interred in Twynolm Churchyard, Scotland. (*His wife Ada's demise occurred on 31st January 1933*) [\[xxxix\]](#)

Quote

'My own experience is that the solitary hope we have of avoiding actual despair is a resolute determination to see the comic side of things . . . If we didn't extract food for laughter out of failure we should go under. Once let your mind get fixed on the pathetic side of the failure and you are done' [\[xxxix\]](#)

(See below Hilda Martindale)

Tributes

A memorial on the wall of James Hannay's birthplace (*now is the Administration Building of Queen's University, Belfast*) states that *James O Hannay, George A. Birmingham, Novelist, 1865-1950, Born in this house July 16th.* [\[xxxix\]](#)

Today a plaque marks his time in Delgany, Co. Wicklow with this tribute '*James Owen Hannay: Pastor, Scholar, Author who wrote as George A. Birmingham entered upon his Ministry as curate of this Parish 1888-1892.*' [\[xxxix\]](#)

A memorial bust of him in St. Patrick's Church at Mells Somerset England has this inscription '*James Owen Hannay (G. B.) 'Canon of St. Patrick's, Rector here 1924-1934.'*' [\[xxxix\]](#)

The Wiltshire Gazette dated 12th November 1936 devoted a page to the Banquet that included an excerpt from Canon Hannay's reply to the toast, '*He had taught their Mayor his Catechism.*' The paper described him as more better known as George Birmingham, the author of novels based on local inhabitants & the islands of Clew Bay.' [\[xl\]](#)

In her *As I know Him* author Hilda Martindale describes episodes that show Birmingham's sense of humour plus deep faith, his Christianity: once he wrote to her these words: '*I do not suppose it is easy*

to do good anywhere. It is certainly desperately hard in Ireland. My own experience is that the solitary hope we have of avoiding actual despair is a resolute determination to see the comic side.' [\[xli\]](#)

Further Information

James O. Hannay / George Birmingham's sixty-first publication also his last book was published following his demise during 1950. [\[xlii\]](#)

J.O. Hannay to Lindsay Crawford 29th May 1905 Lindsay Crawford Papers National Library of Ireland, Ms.11 415. [\[xliii\]](#)

James Hannay's personal papers are held within Trinity College Library Dublin. [\[xliv\]](#)

Prior to Arthur Oram's son James being elected Mayor of Devizes in Wiltshire he requested that Hannay be invited as chairman of his inaugural banquet. (*He had met Vicar Hannay as a young sixteen year old in Newport, Co. Mayo*) [\[xlv\]](#)

In recognition of James O. Hannay the Water Wag Club of Dun Laoghaire returned to Westport & Clew Bay during 2016. [\[xlvi\]](#)

A thesis on Hannay may be viewed at this link:

https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/5207/1/Eileen_Reilly_20140712074545.pdf

Numerous publications reference Hannay / Birmingham (*included below are several*):

Lottie McManus *White Light and Flame: Memories of the Irish Literary Revival and the Anglo-Irish War 1829* (Talbot Dublin)

Murray Peter *Novels, nuns and the revival of Irish industries: the rector of Westport and the Foxford Woollen Mill, 1905–1907* 1998 *Cathair na Mart* viii, no. 1 (pages 86-99)

Taylor Brian *George A. Birmingham and General John Regan: London, New York, and Westport* 1992 *Cathair na Mart* xii, no. 1 (pages 90-112)

Murray Peter *First novels and fierce controversies: George A. Birmingham, The seething pot, and Hyacinth* 1992 from *Cathair na Mart Historical Journal* xii, No. 1 (pages 113-27) [\[xlviii\]](#)

Taylor Brian *The Life and Writings of James Owen Hannay (George Birmingham) 1865-1950* 1995 (*Studies in British Literature*) (Edwin Mellen Press)

Henderson J. W. *Methodist College Belfast 1868-1938 a Survey and Retrospect volume One* 1939

Martindale Hilda *Canon Hannay (George A. Birmingham) as I knew him* 1950? (*Methodist College Belfast*) (page 87)

Gibbons John referenced G. A. Birmingham in the Westport 1982 *Cathair na Mart Historical Journal* vol 12 no. 1 (Pages 23-26)

Murray Peter February 2002 Lindsay Crawford's *Impossible Demand? The Southern Irish Dimension of the Independent Orange Project* (PDF). National Institute for Regional & Spatial Analysis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth (*Working Paper Series*) (Retrieved 15 December 2020) [\[xlviii\]](#)

Reilly Eileen PDF 1992 *An Irishman looks at his world*. [xlx]

This links lists articles re J.O. Hannay <http://geo-birmin.com/en/books.html>

These links lists all publications: http://www.ricorso.net/rx/az-data/authors/b/Birmingham_GA/life.htm / https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Birmingham

Footnotes

[xxxix] <http://geo-birmin.com/en/profil01.html>

[xl] <https://www.dib.ie/biography/hannay-james-owen-george-a-birmingham-a3791>

[xli] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Birmingham

[xlii] <https://www.dib.ie/biography/hannay-james-owen-george-a-birmingham-a3791>

[xliii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Birmingham

[xliv] <https://www.dib.ie/biography/hannay-james-owen-george-a-birmingham-a3791>

[xlv] <http://geo-birmin.com/en/profil01.html>

[xlvi] Ibid

[xlvii] Ibid

[xlviii] www.familyhistory.oram.ca

[xlix] <http://geo-birmin.com/en/profil01.html>

[l] Ibid

[li] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Birmingham

[lii] www.tcd.ie

[liii] www.familyhistory.oram.ca

[liiii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Birmingham

[liv] <http://geo-birmin.com/en/books.html>

[lv] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Birmingham

[lv] https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/5207/1/Eileen_Reilly_20140712074545.pdf