

Death Of Professor S. P. O Riordain

The death occurred in Dublin yesterday of Professor Sean P. O Riordain, M.A., H.Dip. in Ed., Ph.D., Professor of Celtic Archaeology at U.C.D since 1943 and before that holder of the Professorship at University College, Cork, for seven years.

The late Prof. O Riordain, whose reports on the variety and classification of excavation "finds" from many parts of the country are regarded as being of first-class importance in the domain of Western European archaeology and pre-history, was a native of Monkstown, Co. Cork.

He was called to training at the De La Salle College, Waterford, after he had left the national school in Cork and worked for a time at Haulbowline. While there he passed his final examination to qualify as a primary teacher in the first division.

He took his B.A. at University College, Cork, in 1928. Higher Diploma in 1929 and in 1930 his M.A. in Archaeology with first class honours.

TRAVELLING STUDENTSHIP

In 1931. he was awarded a travelling studentship in archaeology and spent the next two years chiefly in Britain, Switzerland and Germany, working in museums and on excavation.

He took his Ph.D. degree at University College, Dublin, in 1938 with a dissertation on "The Halbert in Bronze Age Europe", which is one of his best-known publications.

He was for two years assistant in the Antiquities Division of the National Museum, and in 1936 was appointed to the chair of archaeology in Cork.

WORK AT LOUGH GUR

In a career which extended over thirty years, the 52-year-old professor's most important excavation work was on the habitation sites at Lough Gur in Co. Limerick, one of the most notable sites ever investigated in Western Europe.

He also carried out extensive excavations at Tara (where his "finds" aroused considerable international interest), in Kerry and in different parts of Cork.

In addition to his research and the duties of his chair, this brilliant Cork scholar undertook the hon. secretaryship of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society while at U.C.C., and his work for this long-established body gained for him the high esteem of its members.

Under his capable editorship its "Journal" was recognised as one of the leading Irish cultural publications and the material which he presented to the public through its medium covering, as it did, a very wide range of subjects, including history, economics, archaeology, folklore, etc., was justly regarded as primary authoritative source for all such interests relating to Munster.

Besides these activities, he was general editor for the series of works published by the Cork University Press in the early forties under the title of "Historical and Archaeological Papers".

After he went to U.C.D., he became well-known as a speaker on the B.B.C. and Radio Eireann.

FLUENT IRISH SPEAKER

He was a fluent Irish speaker and was once secretary of the Cork Co. Committee of An Fainne.

His passing will, indeed, be a great loss to University College, Dublin, and to archaeology in Western Europe as a whole.

He is survived by his wife, the well-known sculptress Gabrielle Hayes, one son and one daughter.

SOCIETY'S SYMPATHY

At a specially convened meeting of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society yesterday, Mr. D. O'Donoghue, M.A., who presided spoke in feeling terms of the late Dr. O'Riordan. He recalled his early association with Dr. O'Riordan and paid a high tribute to his ability, energy and scholarship.

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