

Kilkenny Group Visit Bruges

The members of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society had the privilege of visiting Bruges under very special conditions—their activities there were arranged by Mr. Walter Ager.

All the wonderful sites were visited; the Beguinage, the Hospital of St. John; the Church of San Sanreur; Notre Dame; and the Holy Blood; the museums of Grunthhose and the Potterie and for relaxation and social gatherings no less than four civic receptions were given in honour of the Kilkenny group.

The Burgomaster of Bruges, Gestel, Ostend and Veuvre offered welcome and hospitality which were really appreciated.

VISITS TO HISTORIC PLACES

The restoration of the Castle of Lauvre, which had been empty for 100 years, was compared with the restoration of Roth House and much interest was derived from the comparison. Lauvre is near Ghent, and Mr. Ager had warned the group not to omit it. In Ghent itself, a visit to the university museum under the guidance of Professor Siegfried von Laet and his charming assistant, Paule, was a great privilege.

The procession of the Holy Blood in Bruges, of St. Godeliex in Gestel and of the Penitents in Veuvre were described and eagerly listened to. These form part of the lives of the towns literally thousands take part and have been performed for more than 500 years. They are an act of faith and are dressed and acted with reverence. The first two processions are very beautifully costumed but the Penitents in Veuvre have sack cloth and a hood and noglamons and look rather like dark brown Klu Klux Klan.

The last day of the outing was spent in Brussels and from it was visited Louvain where again the group was received and made warmly welcome — this time by the Rector of the Franciscan college, V Rev Father Conleth. It was, indeed with feelings of awe that everyone looked on the grave of Owen Roe's wife and Dr. Lynch and Dermot Browne.

FLIGHT OF THE EARLS

Here in 1607 Hugh O'Neill and Hugh O'Donnell stayed en route for Rome during the flight of the Earls. Here, too, in a quiet green courtyard with a walnut tree in the middle, lie

Michael O'Cleary, John Colgan and many more famous Irishmen. No grave stones mark their resting place, but, perhaps, that would be unnecessary so deeply are their memories sunk in the hearts of Irish people.

The Library of Louvain, now rebuilt for the second time was viewed with great interest. After 1918 Germany, by the Treaty of Versailles, was bound to rebuild it; after 1945 American money and generosity came to the rescue, but nothing whatever remained after either war. Louvain has a population of 36,000 of which 20,000 are university students.

MOLING AND KIERAN

On the last morning of the trip a visit was paid to the Library in Brussels and there was examined, very briefly, the wonderful life of St. Moling and the Codex Salamancus which contains 46 manuscript lives of the Irish Saints in Latin and whose six pages of closely written script are devoted to St. Kieran of Saigher — our own Kieran.

CANICE

In 1853, John Butler, second Marquis of Ormonde, issued on October 11 from Kilkenny Castle a life of St. Canice transcribed from Un's Book in Brussels. Naturally, our members were anxious to see Codex and were interested too, and paid tribute to the writing.

ST. MOLING'S BOOK

The book of St. Moling is an Irish manuscript beautifully and legibly written in very black ink. It is 8 vo. and the Codex Salamancus in quarto — both on vellum. Only a short visit was possible to see the wonderful Irish relics but short as it was it was stimulating and demonstrated the strong bond that bound Belgium to Ireland in the past and that, perhaps, this visit of the Kilkenny group has strengthened even today.

Our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Ager.

PIKES DISCOVERED — 1867

Yesterday morning a man in the employment of Mr. James Shirley, Garrynaman, Kells, accidentally discovered nine pike heads concealed in a drain on his master's land. Mr. Shirley at once communicated with the Kells police, who took charge of the weapons. The pikes, although a little rusty had obviously been recently made.