



“Is Cantwell smiling at Maureen Hegarty?”

Sean O’Doherty

AT the end of a most interesting Lecture at Kilfane, on the House, the Church and the Proud Cantwell, the Society sprung a surprise on the speaker, Miss Maureen Hegarty, by making her a presentation of a silver pendant — a bitter sweet occasion, sweet because it was a well deserved tribute, but it also marked the resignation of a most worthy Hon. Secretary.

Maureen became Hon. Secretary in 1964 just as the Society was poised on the great Rothe House adventure. She saw the house bought, restored and opened, a matter of no small correspondence. We were honoured by the visits of two Presidents, Eamon De Valera and Erskine Childers — and it was her lot to arrange their visits. A fraternal visit from Meaux saw her again to the fore.

The correspondence of the Society grew enormously in that period and it was most capably attended to.

But our capable Secretary had other arrows in her quiver. She made herself a master of the history and structure of Jerpoint Abbey, and it is unlikely if a more knowledgeable guide to that ancient pile can be found. Her booklet on Jerpoint, published in 1970, is out of print; likewise the edition of the Old Kilkenny Review on the same subject. Clara and Kilfane also saw her scrutinising their past.

With her broad knowledge she combined wit and good sense, and her talks in Rothe House and on outings and her articles in this Review were always models of clarity and erudition. Her facility was such that even Minutes — so dreaded by Committees — were succinct, and if not brief (which was not her fault, much business is dealt with) were painless to listen to.

The Committee greatly regrets her resignation. We have lost a most able administrator and officer, so when the occasion of her Talk came up at Kilfane we made a small tribute in appreciation of her long service. The Presentation was made at the feet of the Long Crusader on whose career she had dwelt with sympathy and understanding hence we ask: “Is Cantwell smiling at Maureen Hegarty?”