

Brendan Bradshaw

Editor, 1979–1994

Even earlier there had been conversations in Walter Ullmann's rooms, but the first clear recollection I have of our collaboration is the fog. One foggy day sometime in 1978 the University Press kindly took us out to Clowes at Colchester and the two of us peered interestedly into whirring printing machines. They really were still whirring, as recently as 1978. Brendan looked worried. What worried me was Brendan's scarf as he stooped solicitously into the engines in his best bedside manner. What worried us both, we both discovered on our return, was what we were supposed to do before the engines started up.

In the authentic 'Go out and govern New South Wales' tradition of the trade no one had given us any instructions of course. Taking over from Clifford Dugmore, whose journal the *Journal* was, it wouldn't have been right to ask anyway. Also, our first task was to edit the top secret presentation number for CWD, learning copy-editing as we went. (Later this labour was borne by Cynthia Postan, who was a saint.) Throughout this difficult period Brendan (hereinafter cited as BIB) kept his head.

Writing about our collaboration, as I am delighted to have been asked to do, turns out to be a quasi-autobiographical exercise. This comes as no surprise. During the twelve years of our collaboration on what a former editor of *JTS* would surely have described as our 'noble enterprise' it is fair to say that we never had a cross word – which is perhaps what Professor Collinson had in mind in 1992 when he complimented us in my own obituary (this *JOURNAL* xliii. 2) on not having been very exciting over the previous dozen years, or words to that effect.

Not that 'words to that effect' were ever good enough for BIB whose attention to the typescripts with which he was particularly concerned was legendary. Worrying away at what the author had really meant to mean was his forte. At our 8.30 p.m. meetings (6.45 p.m. according to the Limerick meridian) there were always particular problems for consideration, the whereabouts to be established of articles which either were somewhere *en route* between us or had become becalmed with readers, the make-up of the next issue and the issue after that to be decided. Then we might stray into discussion of other matters and of people we both had an interest in – the *Journal*, important as it is, not being absolutely *the* most

important thing in the world after all. And then back to business. How to strike the right balance – aware as we were of the ever-imminent danger of being set upon by the representative of whichever period of Christian history currently believed that it was being Done Down. And then talk about our own work, with mention of BIB's own distinguished scholarship on Irish issues and British aspects of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries characteristically held back.

It will be for others to pronounce on our joint custody of the torch of ecclesiastical history, so far as the *Journal* represents it, through the 1980s. It certainly created a great deal of smoke, did that torch, fed by the mountains of paper that arrived by every post. The rate at which articles came in was indicative of a religious revival. The true explanation of course was more prosaic. Over the last decade journal editors have borne much of the brunt of the government's funding policies for universities. In the late 1970s, by contrast, the editing of a learned journal could still be thought of as an ideal activity for the odd idle hour, as a form of light relief almost.

As in this case it quite often was. We had many happy evenings, occasionally enlivened by a further communication from the people in Paris who persisted in addressing us as the 'Journal of Ecclesiastical Sisters', apparently in the expectation of something importantly nunnish eventually happening, and only one serious set-to with the Board, or part of it. We also, year after year, gave thanks for Mrs Mary Mitchell who, as we often reflected, really ran the *Journal*, and who if truth were told deserved more editorial acknowledgement than either of us.

But although we considered publishing an editorial, in the event we never did. Professor Collinson in his kindly way gently chided us for not having done so. So far as I can now remember, our sense was that there was never anything sufficiently important happening in ecclesiastical history to justify our troubling Professor Collinson or the *Journal's* readers at large with our thoughts on the matter.

My recollection is that it was BIB who determined discussions of this sort. His priority was always to ensure a steady stream of scholarly and readable articles buttressed by a back-end of interesting reviews. Publish and be blessed. The length of the shelf is his memorial: two and a half feet of blue covers extending from 'The early years of Netley Abbey' to 'The Church of England and the law of divorce'. The *Journal* owes Brendan Bradshaw an enormous debt.

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