

***Irish Historical Studies* move to publication by Cambridge University Press**

During the past decade, the advent of electronic forms of publication has presented challenges for scholarly journals. In 2008 the international archival specialists, JSTOR, in cooperation with Queen's University, Belfast, produced the first digital library of core resources on Ireland, which included *Irish Historical Studies*. At the same time, the *I.H.S.* management board decided to make available to subscribers digital copies of back numbers (subject to a 'moving wall' of five years).

While this has worked very successfully, a new challenge has now arisen, in the form of 'Open Access' (OA). Prompted by the escalating costs of subscription to scientific journals, governments across Europe have decided that the results of any research supported out of public funds, in whatever field, should be freely available to the public. The intention is that by 2020 all such publications will be OA compliant.

Both the Irish and UK definitions of OA require unrestricted online access to text. The crucial issues here are those involving internet search functionality and the provision of links to full texts. It is not enough, say, simply to scan in and post a PDF image of the text concerned. Full online publishing – perhaps involving providing text in multiple electronic formats, certainly involving the embedding in each article of a unique number for reference purposes, known as a Digital Object Identifier, and so on – poses particular (and expensive) challenges to individual scholarly journals.

Faced with these challenges, in 2013 the management board of *I.H.S.* decided to invite proposals for publication from a number of not-for-profit publishers with experience of OA compliance. A key issue was a commitment on the part of any prospective publisher to editorial independence. After long and serious consideration, the board has decided that Cambridge University Press possesses both the scholarly credentials and the level of technical support that will enable the journal to achieve full online publication (while of course continuing to publish in hard copy), and also to meet the challenges of Open Access. We also took into account CUP's established commitment to Irish history, and its very successful publication (in hard-copy and online) of the Royal Irish Academy's *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. Accordingly, as from issue no. 155 (May 2015), *Irish Historical Studies* will be published by CUP. This important decision has been taken in order to secure the long-term future of the journal as the leading scholarly periodical for Irish history.

The partnership with Cambridge will allow for simultaneous print and online publication of *I.H.S.* for the first time, and this will be available to all subscribers. The change will see a modest increase in the rate paid by institutions. In respect of the subscription rate for individuals, it has proved possible to retain them at the current low level (£40/€50/\$65: or student rates at £20/€25/\$32), by means of maintaining their management through the *I.H.S.* board. All individual subscribers will be deemed to be members of one or other of the two societies (the Irish Historical Society or the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies). Whether institutional or individual, both sets of subscribers will receive print copies, as before, as well as online access to the *I.H.S.* archive, current issues as well as back numbers, including those since 2010. Individual subscribers have been contacted by Cambridge about setting up online access once your renewal has been processed. If you have already

renewed your individual subscription for 2015 via Cambridge, that will be honoured. If not, payment of individual subscriptions can be made online at <http://www.irishhistoricalstudies.ie/subscriptions.php>. Queries concerning individual subscriptions should be addressed to: info@irishhistoricalstudies.ie.

The board is extremely grateful to the Ulster Historical Foundation, which has printed the journal since 2004, for a most fruitful relationship. We look forward with confidence to a similarly beneficial relationship with Cambridge University Press.