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Early Dublin-printed almanacs (seventeen



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*Early Dublin-Printed Almanacs.*

*E. R. m'Clintock Dix.*

*Dublin 1918.*



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Early Dublin-Printed Almanacs  
(Seventeenth Century).

A PAPER

READ BY

E. R. M'CLINTOCK DIX, M.R.I.A.,

AT A GENERAL MEETING HELD ON MAY 11TH, 1918.

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## EARLY DUBLIN-PRINTED ALMANACS (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY).

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ONE of the earliest kinds of small books which were printed when printing first came into this country was the "Almanack." It is alleged that there was an Almanac for Ireland made by a person named Wm. Farmer, and printed in Dublin in the year 1587. The evidence for this is based upon an addendum to be found in certain copies of Sir James Ware's "Writers of Ireland." Also in "The Anthologia Hibernica" (vol. i, p. 50) there is a reference to this Almanac as having been printed here in that year, but unfortunately no copy of the Dublin edition, if it was ever printed here, is now extant. About five or six copies of this Almanac, however, are extant in England, each of which has a London imprint, although the Almanac refers to Ireland on the title-page, but not in the imprint, and gives the latitude and longitude of Dublin.

However, Wm. Farmer, the maker apparently of this London Almanac, did draw up, and get printed in Dublin, another Almanac a good many years later—i.e., in 1612—which he called the "Prognosticall Almanack." This one was a little larger in form than other Almanacs usually were. It was an octavo in size, and I read a paper before the Royal Irish Academy, describing it, in the year 1912. The paper was printed in their Proceedings in 1913. I exhibit a facsimile of the title-page which was reproduced to illustrate that paper. Where this Almanac is at the present moment I am not able to state. This Almanac is the earliest *extant* one printed in Ireland. I will quote from my paper on it. [Vide R.I.A. Proc., vol. xxx, Sec. c.]

The next known or extant Almanac is one compiled by a man named Patrick True, and published in Dublin in 1636. This I

have in my possession, and I am very pleased to produce it here to-night for examination by the members of our Society. I also contributed a paper about this Almanac to the Royal Irish Academy, and from it I will quote some particulars. [Vide R.I.A. Proc., 1916, vol. xxxiii, Sec. c.]

The next Almanac (the third) of which there is any evidence of its having been printed in Ireland was one printed in Waterford in 1646. Unfortunately, no copy of it is extant or even a fragment of it. It is known only by a pamphlet which was brought out by John Booker for the purpose of attacking its contents and reviling the unnamed and unknown author of it.

Before going further I ought to mention that, of course, the chief authority as regards Almanacs in Ireland was the late Mr. Edward Evans, whose work on the subject is well known to all Irish book-lovers. That work is now only to be acquired in second-hand book shops or at auctions. Mr. Evans's references begin with the Almanac of 1587, but those of 1612 and 1636 were not known to him when his book came out in 1897.

I will now refer to other Almanacs in chronological order, and they will all appear, with some bibliographical details where extant, in the annexed list. Where any of these Almanacs appear in Mr. Evans's book, I will pass them over very briefly, leaving the student of the subject to refer to that work.

Accordingly, following this plan, I simply refer next to Ambrose White's "Almanack and Prognostication" for the year 1665, and to a similar work in the following year, 1666, by M. Harward. Of the former one copy is known to exist, and is preserved in Trinity College Library. Of the latter I do not know of any copy, nor does Mr. Evans in his work state where he got the particulars he gives of Harward's "Almanack." These rare little Almanacs often get into private hands, and are then buried and hidden where one cannot get access to them. One would wish they could be all deposited in some public library.

The next year in which we find an Almanac is 1679. It was compiled by Patrick Plunkett, and is described as a "New Almanack." It is not referred to in Mr. Evans's work, and I



might mention that I had the good fortune and great pleasure of discovering the fragments which remain of this Almanac in the binding of an old book in the National Library some years ago. Evidently this old Almanac had been made use of to pad out the cover of the other book. These fragments form two imperfect copies, now properly bound, and are deposited in the National Library. The printer was Benjamin Tooke. The Almanac was a 16mo. What the full number of pages or leaves contained in it were is not known. There are only surviving eight leaves, or sixteen pages.

Then, in 1681, two years later, there is to be found in Marsh's Library, amongst the Cashel collection, one of Lilly's "Strange and Wonderful Prognostications" for that year. This is a very small item, and contains only eight pages. Perhaps the Almanac has been detached from it and lost, as in some cases the Prognostication has a separate title-page, as you will see is the case with the Almanac for 1686, which I produce here to-night. Lilly was an English Almanac-maker.

In 1683, John Bourke, described as a "Philomath," produced his "Hiberniae Merlinus" for that year. This also came into my possession, and I am able to produce it here. The National Library will be its ultimate destination. This particular copy is interleaved, and is very interesting in this way, because it contains little notes by some of its former owners. It is printed partly in red ink. It is nicely bound, so that it would appear that some one of its owners, possibly the first, valued it. It contains a list of the Highways of Ireland, the Fairs, Markets, Eclipses, &c., as well as a list of the Chief Governors. It also contains an Interest Table, Term Table, and so forth.

Bourke brought out a similar Almanac in the following year, 1684, a copy of which is in the Gilbert Collection in the Dublin Municipal Library. He was not, however, the only producer of an Almanac in this year; for Patrick Plunkett, who was the compiler of an Almanac in 1679, brought out in the same year as Bourke, i.e., 1684, his "New Almanack," a copy of which is also to be found in the Gilbert Collection.

Bourke produced his "Almanack" again in the year 1685, and of this three copies are extant: one in the Royal Irish Academy, one in the Gilbert Collection of the Dublin Municipal Library, and one in private hands. In this year also, 1685, there, for the first time, appeared an Almanac by a rather well-known character of the time in Dublin, John Whalley. He called his Almanac "Vox Urani." It is a little 16mo of twenty-four leaves, printed by Andrew Crooke, and a copy is to be found in the Dublin Municipal Library (Gilbert Collection). He appears to have brought out another Almanac in the following year, which he called "Syderus Nuncius." Two copies of this are known to exist: one in the hands of our member, Mr. P. J. M'Call, and the other in the Dublin Municipal Library. Probably he continued to publish them, but Evans does not mention the next one, 1691, this time called "Mercurius Hibernicus." Mr. P. J. O'Reilly has, or had, a copy of it. This Almanac was repeated in the following year, 1692, by Whalley, and a copy is to be found in Trinity College.

Then, in 1694, or, perhaps, at the end of 1693, there appeared an "Astronomical Almanack," produced by two men, Andrew Cumpsty and John M'Combe. Our authority for this item is Mr. Evans; and I may mention that I have indicated by the letter "E" in the annexed list such of the Almanacs particulars of which, or reference to which, are to be found in Mr. Evans's book.

The Almanacs for 1679 to 1684, five in number, are not mentioned by Mr. Evans in his book. That for 1691, in the possession of Mr. O'Reilly, is not mentioned by him either. So these are additions to our knowledge of the subject, and valuable accordingly.

We come down now to the year 1695. Here, on the authority only of an advertisement printed by Richard Wilde on the back of a sermon, we find that Sir Samuel Moreland published in Dublin, through Wilde, a "New Almanack," for the year 1695. There is also an allusion in Mr. Evans's work to an Almanac published in the same year by Andrew Cumpsty, but I do not know of any copy of it being in existence.

Again, in a book printed by Sir William Wilde, in 1849, dealing with the mental condition of Dean Swift at the end of his life,

there is a reference made to an Almanac for the year 1696, printed in Dublin by Richard Wilde (the printer already mentioned), the compiler of which Almanack was John Whalley.

Then we have Mr. Evans's authority for an Almanac printed in 1697 by A. Cumpsty alone.

It will thus be seen that of the last five items mentioned no single copy is extant, or at least on record.

We now find in 1697 John Whalley publishing his "Advice from the Stars," a copy of which is in the Dublin Municipal Library, to which reference is made by Mr. Evans.

On the authority of Mr. Evans, we learn that, in 1699, another copy of Whalley's "Mercurius Hibernicus" was printed; and also in the year 1700 Whalley brought out his "Advice from the Stars." Whalley at this time had become a printer, as it is stated that this Almanac was printed at "the author's Printing House next door to the Fleece in St. Nicholas St."

I hope these particulars may be interesting, and may lead to careful search for further copies, or to the discovery of others. Then a new edition of Mr. Evans's work should be published, and would be a fitting memorial of his painstaking and useful labours.

Almanacs continued to be printed in increasing numbers throughout the following century; and it would be very interesting and instructive if some of our members would carry the subjoined List further, and note particulars of such information as may be available as to such copies as are known to still exist. They would then find that Almanac-making was not confined to Dublin, but that this art extended to Cork and Belfast, for example.

## LIST OF EARLY DUBLIN-PRINTED ALMANACS.

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- 1612 Prognosticall Almanack . Wm. Farmer . . . (Vide "R. I. A. Proc.," 1913, vol. xxx, c. 12.)
- 1636 Almanack and Prognostication. Patrick True . . . Dix. (Do., 1916, vol. xxxiii, c. 8.)
- N.B.—Has MS. notes.
- 1646 NOTE—There was a Waterford Almanac of 1646, but no copy is extant.
- E.
- 1665 An Almanack and Prognostication for the year . . . 1665. 8vo, of 15 leaves unpagged, with Appendix of 8 leaves and a sep. title-p. (*N[athaniel] T[hompson].*) Ambrose White . . . T. C. D., v. 00.55
- E.
- 1666 Prognostication, &c. (*John Crook, K.P.*) M. Harward . . . (Vide Evans.)
- 1679 A New Almanack for the year 1679, &c. 16mo (only 8 leaves, imperfect). (*Benjn. Tooke.*) Patrick Plunkett . . . Natl. Library. (2 imperfect copies.)
- 1681 Strange and Wonderful Prognostication, &c., for the year 1681. 16mo, 8 pp. Lilly . . . Marsh (Cashel). viii, 24 (11).
- 1683 Hiberniae Merlinus for the year . . . 1683. 16mo, 24 leaves. (*Benjn. Tooke & John Crooke.*) John Bourk, Philomath. Natl. Library. (Dix Collection.)
- N.B.—Has MS. notes.
- 1684 Hiberniae Merlinus for 1684. 16mo (3 × 5), 24 leaves. (*Benjn. Tooke & John Crooke.*) John Bourk . . . Dub. Mun. Liby. (Gilbert.)

- 1684 A New Almanac for the year . . . 1684, &c. 16mo  
( $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ ), 24 leaves. (B. Tooke & J. Crooke.)  
Patk. Plunket, Philo-  
math.  
Dub. Mun. Liby.  
(Gilbert.)  
N.B.--Has MS. memos.
- E.  
1685 Bourk's Almanac, "Hiberniae Merlinus," for the year . . . 1685, &c. 18mo, 24 leaves. (Benjn. Tooke, K.P.)  
John Bourk . . . 3 copies. R.I.A.,  
Dub. Mun. Liby. (Gilbert),  
and in private hands.
- E.  
1685 Vox Urani, or an Almanac for the year . . . 1685, &c. 12mo ( $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ ). 24 leaves. (Andw. Crook in Skinners Row.)  
John Whalley, Iathro-  
mathematicus.  
Dub. Mun. Liby.  
(Gilbert.)  
N.B.—Has MS. memos., notes, and circuit list.
- E.  
1686 Syderus Nuncius or. an Ephemeris for the year 1686. 16mo, 32 leaves ( $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ ). (Benjn. Tooke, K.P.)  
J. Whalley . . . Dub. Mun. Liby.  
and P. J. McCall.  
N.B.—Has MS. memos.
- 1691 Mercurius Hibernicus or an Almanac for the year of Christ 1691. 16mo ( $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ ), 24 leaves. (Andw. Crooke, Assignee of B. Tooke, K. & Q.P.)  
John Whalley . . . P. J. O'Reilly.
- E.  
1692 Like (Mercurius Hibernicus, &c.) for 1693. 18mo ( $5\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ ), 19 leaves. (Andw. Crooke, K.P.)  
John Whaley (*sic*) . . . T. C. D., v. 00.56
- E.  
1694 Astrological Almanac, &c., for 1694.  
Andw. Cumpsty and John McCombe. (*Vide Evans.*)
- 1695 A New Almanack for the year . . . 1695. (Containing Astrological Judgments for the weather, &c.) (Richd. Wilde, Cork Change.)  
Sir Samuel Moreland, Knt. (*Vide Advertisement only at back of Sermon.*)
- 1695 Almanack . . . . Andrew Cumpsty . . . (*Vide Walsh & Whitelaw's "History of Dublin."*)

- 1696 Almanack, printed by Dr. John Whalley . (Vide Sir Wm. Wilde on Richd. Wilde. "Closing Years of Dean Swift's Life," p. 128, notes. Dublin, 1849.)
- E.  
1697 Almanac . . . . A. Cumpsty . . . (Vide Evans.)
- E.  
1697 Advice from the Stars, or John Whalley . . . Dub. Mun.Liby. an Almanac for the year (Gilbert.) . . . 1697, &c. 12mo (6 × 6½), 20 leaves. Printed for the author.
- N.B.—Full of MS. memos. and notes.
- E.  
1699 Mercurius Hibernicus . John Whalley . . . (Vide Evans.)
- E.  
1700 Advice from the Stars, or John Whalley . . . Dub. Mun. Liby. an Almanac (for 1700). (Gilbert.) 12mo, 24 leaves. Printed at the Author's Printing House, next door to the Fleece in St. Nicholas Street. Rubricated.

NOTE.—E. Refers to Mr. Evans's "Historical, &c., Account of Almanacks, &c., Published in Ireland from Sixteenth Century." Dublin, 1897.











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