

Hayward, (Harold) Richard

by Linde Lunney

Hayward, (Harold) Richard (1892–1964), author and singer, was born 25 October 1892, one among five sons and a daughter of Walter Scott Hayward and Louise Ivy Hayward. The family was English, but settled in Larne, Co. Antrim, and Richard attended Larne grammar school. After his marriage (1915) to Wilhelmina ('Elma') Nelson of Belfast, the couple lived briefly in Liverpool, but soon returned to Belfast. They acted with the Ulster Theatre, which Hayward thought should be developed as a commercial enterprise, but after a dispute it remained an amateur group without a proper building. With several friends, Hayward founded the Belfast Repertory Theatre (1929), hoping that the new company, with premises in the former Empire music hall, would become Belfast's equivalent of the Abbey Theatre. Richard Hayward continued to act occasionally – he was successful in the title role of 'Castlereagh' by Thomas Carnduff (qv) – and to write plays for Belfast actors; several of his one-act plays and other pieces were performed in Dublin and Belfast in the 1920s. The company ceased to exist in 1937. Hayward was also involved in radio broadcasting from Belfast at this time; he wrote short plays and talks and was co-founder of the Belfast Radio Players. In the 1930s he sang in the first indigenous Irish sound film, *The voice of Ireland* (1932), directed *The luck of the Irish* (1935), sang and acted in *The early bird* and *Irish and proud of it* (1936), and produced and acted in *Devil's Rock* (1938); he also had a small part in *The quiet man* (1952) by John Ford (qv). For many years he gave ballad recitals, accompanying himself on the harp, and recorded over a hundred traditional songs (particularly Orange songs) for the Decca label. He sometimes performed with Delia Murphy (qv), and occasionally recorded his own compositions; he published *Love in Ulster and other poems* (1922) and *Ulster songs and ballads of the town and the country* (1925). A novel, *Sugarhouse Entry*, appeared in 1936, but Hayward is chiefly remembered for his many books on Irish topography, history, and travel. *In praise of Ulster*, first published 1938, had five editions; he also wrote *Where the River Shannon flows* (1940; two further editions), *The Corrib country* (1943; one later edition), and *In the kingdom of Kerry* (1946). A series of books entitled 'This is Ireland', illustrated by Raymond Piper, including *Leinster and the city of Dublin* and *Ulster and the city of Belfast*, was published between 1949 and 1955; *Munster and the city of Cork* appeared in 1964, a few weeks before his death. Hayward was well known in Ulster literary and dramatic circles; he was director of Irish PEN and president of the Ulster Folk Song Society and the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club. In 1959 Lafayette College, Pennsylvania, USA, made him D.Litt. for services to Irish literature; he was awarded an OBE in the queen's birthday honours list of 1964, but died before it was formally conferred on him.

On 13 October 1964 Hayward was involved in a two-car collision on the road between Belfast and Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, perhaps having been taken suddenly

ill; all three people involved died. His first wife died in 1960; he married secondly Dorothy Elizabeth Gamble, who survived him, along with two sons of the first marriage.

---

Margaret McHenry, *The Ulster theatre in Ireland: a thesis in English literature* (1931), *passim* (photo); *Times*, *Ir. Times*, 14 Oct. 1964; Sam Hanna Bell, *The theatre in Ulster* (1972); G. B. Adams, 'Richard Hayward: a bibliography of his published works', *Ir. Booklore*, iii, no. 1 (1976), 50–56 (photo); Kevin Rockett (ed.), *The Irish filmography* (1996); material from the Special Collections Department of the University of Delaware Library at <http://www.gopher.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/findaids/ulster.htm> (downloaded 16 Nov. 1999); a photograph appears in the Adams article, and another is listed there