



No.16: May 1997

# ACAI Newsletter

Association of Church Archivists of Ireland

## ASSOCIATION AGM - 1997

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held in Milltown Park, Dublin 6 on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April. Forty-two members out of a membership of 113 attended.

The business meeting received reports from the chairman, secretary and treasurer. Marianne Cosgrave, chairman, thanked all who had contributed to the progress of the Association over the year and, with reference to the *Newsletter*, appealed to members to submit contributions for publication in future issues. Sr Marie Bernadette O'Leary, secretary, reported on the activities of the Association over the year. She made particular mention of the events which had taken place: the June outing to the Rock of Cashel which included a visit to the archives of Rockwell College, Cashel Folk Village and the Bolton Library, the summer course held at Mercy International Centre in which nineteen members participated; visits to the National Gallery (October) and the Genealogical Office (November); Sr Katherine Butler's paper on the Quaker Community entitled *Friends in Dublin* (February); presentation on researching and writing Parish histories by Rev John Canon Crawford and Rev Frank Kelly PP (March). Sr M Baptist Meany, treasurer, explained the various transactions over the year which resulted, thanks to her careful management, in maintaining the Association on a sound financial footing.

All six executive members were re-elected and a proposal to raise membership subscription to IR£10 from 1998 was adopted.

The morning paper presented by Mr. David Davison, Dublin Institute of Technology, Kevin Street entitled *Identifying and Caring for Different Photographic Types* was very helpful for members struggling to deal with this difficult aspect of their work. In the afternoon Rev Tomás Ó Caoimh, Chairman of the Ecclesiastical Commission of the Heritage Council, outlined the history of the Council and Ms. Frances McGee of the National Archives of Ireland presented a very practical paper dealing with the storage and exhibition of archival documents entitled *Planning an Archives Service - Matters for Consideration*.

It was a full programme but there was, of course, some time to relax and renew acquaintances - a much valued aspect of every AGM.

The day concluded with reflection and prayer led by Sr. M. Baptist Meany.

M.S.

## ACAI Executive 1997-98

### President:

Ms Marianne Consgrave, St Anne's Convent of Mercy, Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin. (01) 2783674

### Vice-President:

Dr Raymond Refaussé, Representative Church Body Library, Braemor Park, Rathgar, Dublin 14. (01) 4923979

### Secretary:

Sr Marie Bernadette O'Leary, Sisters of Charity, 'Caritas', 15 Gilford Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4. (01) 2697833

### Treasurer:

Sr M Baptist Meany, Presentation Mission House, Lucan, Co Dublin. (01) 6280305

### Members:

Dr D A Levistone Cooney, The Manse, Adare, Co Limerick.  
Sr Dominique Horgan, Dominican Sisters, 38 Iona Road, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

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## Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to all who contributed to this edition of our Association's Newsletter. The next issue will appear in October 1997. Your articles, letters, reports, comments would be gratefully received by the co-ordinating editor, Mary Smyth, St. John of God Brothers, Provincial Curia, 'Granada', Stillorgan, Co. Dublin.

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## *Annual Conference of the Religious Archives Group of the Society of Archivists*

The annual conference was held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1997 at Regent's Park College, Oxford with a general theme of church and classroom. The morning session took an inter-denominational look at the provision of education by religious bodies and institutions, focusing on the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sarah Duffield, archivist of the National Society of the Church of England for the Promotion of Religious Education spoke about the work of the National Society to 1870. Father David Lannon, archivist, Salford Diocesan Archives discussed the records of Roman Catholic Education and Tim McQuiban, Director, Wesleyan Methodist Studies Centre, Westminster College, Oxford, described sources for education in Methodism.

In the afternoon we were brought back to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century with a session on two databases currently being developed in specialist repositories. Two archivists from the School of Oriental and African Studies described the introduction of CAIRS, a computer aided information retrieval system. Despite some teething problems, including a tendency of the system to crash at the sight of square brackets, the archivists have found it to be an effective and efficient storage and retrieval tool. At £41,000 the cost is prohibitive. However, CAIRS are working on a standard off the peg system for sale to archives generally at a much reduced price.

The Royal College of Physicians introduced a different retrieval system, ADLIB, a library and collections management software package devised by Information Systems Ltd. The College has an extensive library and collection of artefacts as well as an archive and they required a system that could accommodate all three applications. They felt that ADLIB was the system most appropriate to their requirements and their archivist, Geoffrey Yeo, expressed satisfaction with the package, and particularly the after-care provided by Information Systems Ltd.

The Conference ended with tours of the Angus Library, Regent's Park College and/or Pusey House Library.

*Marianne Cosgrave*

*... in the area of Church archives there is still a need to acquire, whenever possible, a management mentality conforming to modern technologies.*

*The Pastoral Function of Church Archives*

## *The Heritage Council: Seminar on Ecclesiastical Heritage & Survey of Churches in Ireland*

The Heritage Council was established on a statutory basis in July 1995 and one of its responsibilities is formulating policy for the protection of the cultural heritage including documentation.

The Heritage Council organised a seminar on ecclesiastical heritage in Kilkenny Castle on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1997 to mark the launch of their survey of churches in Ireland. Speakers at the seminar included architects and conservators, who addressed a range of subjects including caring for stonework, maintenance of church buildings, good housekeeping, the care and maintenance of stained glass and the preservation of ecclesiastical heritage.

The main focus of the seminar was the survey of church buildings. The ecclesiastical working committee of the Heritage Council sponsored the development of the survey which has the aim of documenting each church building. The first step launched on 5<sup>th</sup> February is to make a basic inventory of the ecclesiastical building stock. The next step is to document the collections within these buildings. The final stage is to make plans and policies for the protection of these buildings and their collections. The first phase involves the completion of two forms for each building: firstly a recording form and secondly a questionnaire. Details of the survey and forms are available from Beatrice Kelly or Patrick Matthews of the Heritage Council, Kilkenny (Tel: 056-70777).

*Marianne Cosgrave*

## *The Chinese Batch - Sources*

(*The Chinese Batch* deals with the establishment and early history of the Maynooth Mission to China, placing it in the wider historical context of the early 1900's. For the benefit of ACAI members interested in the modern Irish missionary movement its author, Fr. Bernard Smyth SSC, who is an experienced archivist and historian, has kindly submitted the following on his main sources)

### 1. *THE GALVIN LETTERS/PAPERS*

Galvin was a prodigious letter-writer and the relevant letters begin in 1912. They reach a climax in 1952, in a long letter from Hong Kong, describing his arrest by the Communists and his expulsion from China. An edited version of his letters (1912-27) has been circulated privately among Columbans. In effect, Galvin's Letters/Papers orchestrate the genesis, birth, growth, and expansion of Columban missionary work in China, 1912-52.

### 2. *THE BLOWICK LETTERS/PAPERS*

These include:

a) A six part account of the foundation of the Columbans, written, apparently, not later than 1923 and so practically contemporaneous. John Blowick presented this material, 225 pages, under six heads: Beginnings of the Society; Difficulties: The Irish Bishops; The Province of Cashel; The Committee; and Letters.

b) Diary (March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1920-January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1921) of his journey around the world. The purpose of this journey was to install the first Columbans in China. After China the voyage took him to the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and the U.S.A. The copy available to this writer ends on Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup> 1920, with the ship sailing from Honolulu to Vancouver. From the diary, however, we know that, after a visit to the U.S.A., John Blowick crossed the Atlantic, disembarked at Le

Havre and went to Rome, returning to Ireland on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1921. He gave the total mileage as 41,174 miles.

c) In 1968 John Blowick gave a series of talks to Dalgan students. These, taped at the time, were typed later and the typescript runs up towards 70 pages. The typescript, as is normal with the spoken word, is sometimes confused and confusing. But the typescript still has an impressive degree of accuracy for a man then 80 years old.

In many ways John Blowick was unhappy with the turmoil in the church after Vatican II. But, through the turmoil, there still shines the vision he shared with the first Dalgan students in 1918: a band of missionary brothers and sisters, seeking to live, in spite of constant failures, the missionary vision first articulated in John's gospel, Chapters 13-17.

### 3. *CLEARY/O'DWYER LETTERS/PAPERS*

The files of Patrick Cleary/Michael O'Dwyer are also essential matter for any researcher into Columban history."

The main sources are in the Central Archives, St. Columban's, Grange Road, Donaghmede, Dublin 13. Tel: 01-8476647. (Fr. Patrick Crowley, SSC is archivist.)

*Bernard Smyth SSC*

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*The Chinese Batch. The Maynooth Mission to China 1911-1920* by Bernard T. Smyth is published by Four Courts Press, Dublin. Pp 128 and index.

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## VISIT TO VATICAN ARCHIVES

(Fr. Layden was in Rome for a meeting of Spiritan archivists representing several European countries)

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1996 our group arrived at 3 p.m. sharp for our appointment with Monsignor Charles Burns, a Scotsman (and most senior Vatican archivist with over 30 years experience). He was awaiting us and took us immediately by lift to the top of his domain. There were a number of rooms up there which he showed us and which were of great historical interest. There were drawings or frescos on the walls dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century showing Rome as it was then and barely recognisable outlines of now famous buildings. There was an "all-seasons" room and an astronomy room. I tried to take a few photos, but we were ushered out to balconies where we got views of the Vatican and of Rome which I have never seen on postcards.

This was but an introduction! We went through the archival reading room, for all the world like a school study hall with rows of desks for researchers. There were none today as the Archives were closed. This is the custom it seems on the day before a Church holiday. The next day was Corpus Christi.

The first rooms we visited were used, obviously, as offices as well. The office desk, with an occasional computer, seemed oddly out of place, being dwarfed by the surrounding solidly built and highly ornate cupboards. And stacked in there, almost casually it seemed, was the beginning of our written Christian history. The earliest documents went back to, I think, the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Monsignor had obviously prepared for our coming. He had left out for our study the occasional bound volume and, with a marker, had isolated what he wanted to draw to our attention. There is no national archive anywhere to match this collection. Monsignor has given 34 years of his life to preserving and making available these papers to researchers. He has 35 assistants. There should be 300, he said, if the money was available.

We proceeded on our way. We came to the beginning of the main collections. Did I hear him say there was more than 100 kilometres of shelving? Certainly there was one room with 40! An incredible sight. All steel. Row upon row of upright bound volumes. I was admiring the handiwork in one room which seemed to have a somewhat sophisticated system of shelving. Monsignor was not at all happy with it. "Don't let them pawn that kind off on you," were his words. This back-to-back system could be prised apart in sections and appeared to make a good use of space. However, it left the bottom innermost files

almost impossible to extract. One room appeared to have an acre of still empty shelves. And there was the embargoed area of recently acquired material awaiting the moment when it too can be opened to researchers.

*...what we did see was a wealth of material which brought to life before our eyes the history of the ages.*

One could only surmise how so much could have survived down the centuries. The archives followed the Pope into exile in France, and came back with him. Much was lost. Constant watch has to be kept even now for evidence of decay and remedies taken to stop it. We didn't have time to visit the repair or restoration facilities. Nor, indeed did we see the catalogue system which makes this vast treasure available to researchers, nor the calligraphy room either. But what we did see was a wealth of material which brought to life before our eyes the history of the ages. Letters of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, letters to Spain and Portugal from the Pope dividing the world between these two super-powers of the day. A letter excommunicating Luther. Voltaire of French Revolution fame was there. The nice tidy hand of Lucretia Borgia. The official papers of the Council of Trent and the easily read signature of St Charles Borromeo. That, too, of St Bernadette Soubirous, who, someone said, could neither read nor write. For my benefit Monsignor brought out a letter from Saint Oliver Plunkett. There was much more besides.

"I must show you this before you go," said Monsignor, two hours after we first met him. He opened a press in a wall with concealed lighting which illuminated what was very evidently a very official document. Hanging from it (but supported so as not to stretch the parchment) were countless seals both oval and round. These were the seals of noblemen and bishops who had been invited or "gently persuaded" as Monsignor put it, to sign Henry VIII's petition for an annulment of his marriage.

By the way, did you know that the cord attaching the seal to an official Vatican document can warn you of its contents? If the cord is of hemp, you might be receiving something of a reprimand. But if it is of gold and silk you can relax. It bears good news.

The bustling Roman crowds on our way out seemed totally out of place. Only the Swiss guards should have been allowed!!

*Leo Layden CSSp*



## A VOICE FROM THE PAST

*The Bible in Ireland* is the title of a learned article contributed by the Rev. E. J. Quigley to *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* of 1930. Heavy going, much of it, but, like the curate's egg, it can be very good in spots. In the section dealing with manuscripts I found the following:

'The work of a scribe was fatiguing and wearisome. Highly were they praised and prized. But they were human. Hence in their scribings they added little personal notes. In Biblical manuscripts at Munich & Wurzburg, made by Irishmen, we read: *quia tribus digitus scribitur et totus membrus laboret*:

*Three fingers only hold the reed,  
but every member toils indeed.*

(This from H. White's *Old Latin Biblical Texts*, No III, p.9)



Another scribe wrote, 'I am weary today from head to foot', another, 'Twenty days to Easter Monday, and I am cold and tired, without fire or shelter.' Another, who had been copying the Passion of Christ wrote: 'I shall remember Christ, that I am writing of thee, because I am so tired today, Sunday evening.' Yet again: 'Author of eternal life, help me,' 'Mid-day, dinner time,' and 'Oh Holy Virgin, my chest,' wrote others. On a June morning in Mayence, an Irish scribe working for Marianus Scotus (1086) wrote: 'I have written this book for love of the Scots all, that is the Irish, for I am Irish myself.' Combining the sublime with the ridiculous yet another wrote:

'Jesus, mercy,  
Mary, help,  
For Cutt, my dog,  
Is a perilous whelp.'

This last I found enlightening and consoling. Last summer a stray and wounded cat adopted me. It

had been the victim of some cruelty, but was young and very friendly, obviously a pet. My own inexpert ministrations were tolerated with absolute patience, but professional assistance proved necessary. This too was accepted without protest, and a long process of healing followed, much of it a series of repeated beginnings. No owner could be found, nor anyone willing to take a gift, no matter how cheerfully offered. Pus remained, quietly content, recovering its vigour, learning to eat "common food", even scraps, a model of friendship through the golden days of an Indian summer. It, though, betrayed one, not inconsiderable, weakness. Though patently a house cat, it had never been house-trained! This pleased no one, and many a sentence of banishment was decreed. Only feline friendship remained unimpaired, only Pangur's fur unruffled. Though a Christian for three score years and more, a religious for fifty plus, I never once thought of bringing my ire and my distressed feelings to the light of the Scriptures. Without knowledge of the past we are maimed, not ourselves only, but our pets too.

*Linus H Walker*

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### *Help Needed*

Fr Hugh Fenning OP, St. Mary's, Tallaght, Dublin 24, would be glad to hear from any member whose archive contains letters from John Connolly, bishop of New York (d. 1825), or from the famous preacher, Tom Burke OP (d. 1883). An American graduate student is currently writing Burke's biography.

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## Letters to Father General

*Condensed version of an article that appeared in the Irish Jesuit in-house journal Interfuse.  
Grateful acknowledgements to its editor.*

The book before me, a gift in 1888 from the rector of Stonyhurst, is one of the treasures of the Irish Jesuit archives. It is a collection of documents, almost all originals, ranging from 1576 to 1698. Except for one or two they are written by non-Jesuits. Nearly all of them are letters to various Generals of the Society from Mercurian to Gonzalez.

The first letter is dated the last day of January 1576 from St Malo in Brittany. The author asks Mercurian for a spiritual director for himself and his family. He pledges himself to the Catholic faith even unto death, acknowledges his debt to the Society of Jesus and laments that the only benefit the Society has had from him is the cruel death in his service of one of its members. This is a reference to Edmund Daniel, one of the three Irish Jesuits who, it is hoped, will be beatified in the not too distant future.

The letter is written by a secretary or scribe but at the top in the author's hand Jesus and Mary are invoked as 'spes nostra' and the letter is signed in large strong script right across the page: 'Jacobus mauricii desimonie de geraldinis'.

Three years later James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald brought his Jesus and Mary banner, a papal legate and a pathetically small force to Kerry, fought his crusade for a month and died on Shannon-side.

About twenty years after Fitzmaurice's letter Irish exiles present a formal petition to Pope Clement VIII about the religious situation in Ireland. A big worry is the establishment of an impressive college near Dublin for the propagation of Protestantism. They ask that Jesuits be sent to Ireland to counter the Trinity threat. This letter is important in Irish Jesuit history in that it helped to initiate the remarkable and indeed heroic 'third mission' that lasted from 1598 to the suppression of the Society in 1773.

We move on to the complicated 1640s. Charles I, losing the war against his parliament, sent the Catholic Earl of Glamorgan to negotiate with the Catholic Confederation. Glamorgan writes to Caraffa from Limerick on October 22, 1646.

'I write to Your Paternity at the express command of the King of Great Britain.' With this fanfare, guaranteed to make even the most laid-back Father General sit up and take notice, that distinguished Kildare man Peter Talbot begins his letter of November 17, 1654 from Cologne on behalf of the man to whose star he had hitched his wagon: King-in-

exile Charles II. Charles wants the Pope to know that he is favourably disposed to Catholicism and Catholics and protests against the anti-Charles propaganda in Rome.

Here is a letter to Oliva from that good friend of the Jesuits, Oliver Plunkett, in Italian in a strong untidy script from Armagh on January 30, 1673. He is full of praise for Father Stephen Rice and his educational work. He finishes in style: 'Oliviero Armarnano Primate di tutta Hibernia', the 'tutta' probably reminding him of his brother in Dublin who had his own views on the subject.

The brother in Dublin was Peter Talbot. He had left the Society because of his devotion to Charles II and had become archbishop of Dublin. Still on friendly terms with the Society, he writes on December 29, 1673 from Paris, whither a wave of persecution at home had swept him. He asks Oliva to help the Church in Ireland by reinforcing the Jesuit mission.

He also asks him to support Father Ignatius Brown and the plan to open an Irish Jesuit college in France. Peter had a special interest here: the endowment for the college was being put up by Catherine Braganza, queen-consort of the now enthroned Charles II: it was surely Peter who suggested the idea to her. The desired college was opened in Poitiers in 1674 and became an important outpost of the Irish Jesuit mission. One hundred and forty years later what had been salvaged out of the endowment by the exiled and suppressed Jesuits went to the purchase of Clongowes. To return to the Paris letter: in the postscript there is this gem of name-dropping: 'the King of England and the Duke of York in letters personally written by them have commended me to the Most Christian King and they urge him to provide me with a position suitable to my standing (beneficio caractere meo digno)'.

Peter Talbot was absurdly charged with complicity in the so-called Popish Plot and died in Dublin Castle in 1680 after receiving sacramental aid from his fellow-prisoner Oliver Plunkett. The King of England became a Catholic on his death-bed in 1685: Peter no doubt helped from heaven. The Duke of York became James II and lost his kingdoms but kept his faith and his title of King.

On September 15, 1698 from St Germain en Laie where he had his court he writes to Gonzalez concerning the appointment of a rector of the Irish College in Rome. James would prefer an Irishman to be chosen. He thanks the General for his friendship and prayers. The language is French, the style regal ('We'), the script copperplate. The conclusion is in a clear inelegant hand: 'votre bon amy Jacques R'.

So ends this remarkable record of a momentous era.

*Stephen Redmond SJ*

*DUBLIN DISTRICT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH  
IN IRELAND  
EXISTING RECORDS IN LOCAL CUSTODY*

*An Archivist's Prayer*

Almighty and Eternal God,  
you are the Lord of the  
past, the present and the  
future.

Hear our prayer, who care  
for the archives of churches  
and communities.

Grant us the help of your  
Holy Spirit so to preserve  
the records of the past, that  
their study in the present  
may inspire your people to  
build for the future under  
your divine providence,  
through Jesus Christ our  
Redeemer.

(Prayer composed in 1994 by the  
Rev. D. A. Levistone Cooney)

During 1992 I was asked by the Dublin District of the Methodist Church in Ireland to compile a catalogue or list of the existing records remaining in local custody within its district. Working on this project, on a part time basis, it was finally completed in 1995. The Dublin District encompasses the approximate geographical areas of Counties Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford, (although for the purposes of completeness, I included the extinct Societies and Circuits of Counties Louth and Meath).

So many re-alignments of Circuit boundaries have taken place during this century, I soon found that I should expect at all times to find the records for one Circuit area amongst the records of another, e.g., Wexford records in Wicklow, Clontarf records in Lower Abbey Street (Dublin) and Skerries records in Newry.

The completed lists are divided into records of Societies (chapels) and Circuits, with each being ascribed a reference number. Thus, the records of Centenary Methodist Circuit can be found in list M.C.01/1-12.<sup>1</sup> However, the records of Blackhall Place Methodist Chapel (Society) can be found in list M.S.14/1-08.<sup>2</sup> At present the lists run to twenty-two Circuits and forty-one Chapels; the earliest record dating from 1791.

After the accidental disposal of some records held in Lower Abbey Street Methodist Church, during 1993, Centenary Methodist Church, which shares Christ Church, Leeson Park, with the Church of Ireland, generously agreed to provide a safe home for the non-current records from the various Circuits and Chapels in the District. This is in Wesley House, which is in the same grounds as Christ Church. So far the records of Centenary, Clonliffe, Clontarf and Sutton Chapels and of Centenary and Clontarf Circuits have been transferred. It is expected that the remaining material will be transferred in the early part of 1997.

No specific policy has as yet been established regarding general public access to the material; it is likely that each Circuit will have to decide what will be available to researchers from the material it deposits. However, for the present, enquiries should be made through either Mr. Ernest Armitage, 58 Woodley Park, Dublin 14 or Mr. Steven ffearry-Smyrl, 98 Fisherman's Wharf, Dublin 4 (A.C.A. I & I.S. A. member).

*Steven ffearry-Smyrl*

<sup>1</sup> M.C. - Methodist Circuit

<sup>2</sup> M.S. - Methodist Society

**ASSOCIATION FOR MANUSCRIPTS  
AND ARCHIVES IN RESEARCH  
COLLECTIONS (AMARC)**

AMARC is the successor to the SCONUL Manuscripts Group and seeks to promote the accessibility, preservation and study of manuscripts and archives in libraries and other research collections in Great Britain and Ireland. It brings together curators and researchers and all who share a scholarly interest in this field.

AMARC holds meetings twice a year and recent topics have included cataloguing medieval manuscripts; 20<sup>th</sup> century literary manuscripts; maps; security; exhibitions and loans. A newsletter is issued to members twice a year.

Membership may be personal (£10) or institutional (£30) and details may be had from Dr. Bernard Meehan, Keeper of Manuscripts, Library, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

*Raymond Refaussé*

**THE GENAEOLOGICAL OFFICE AND  
MANUSCRIPT ROOM AT KILDARE  
STREET**

The Office of the Chief Herald used to be housed in the Castle but is now in Kildare Street, in the building of the old Kildare Street Club. Here a group of Church Archivists met on a bright Saturday morning last autumn, and enjoyed an introduction to Heraldry given by a very knowledgeable expert. He told us that the Herald's Office is the oldest Civil Service in Ireland, dating back to the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century when the first Irish Heralds were appointed by the English sovereign. We heard of the origins of Heraldry when the great military leaders fought in armour that concealed their identity. Badges or 'arms' worn on their shields or pennants identified them to their followers, and helped Heralds to identify bodies after the battle.

In an illiterate society symbols were of great importance.

When the Wild Geese went to France, the Irish Herald went with them and established a good trade making heraldry for the emigré Irish. Such arms, belonging to noble families may only be used by direct inheritors. Today it is possible, at a price, to be granted arms; this is largely practised by Corporate bodies rather than individuals. Our Presidents have all received their personal arms. President Mary Robinson was presented with arms by the Chief Herald in January 1997.

The Heraldic Museum is full of interesting items and very well worth a visit.

From here, the group of Archivists was taken in charge by librarian, Catherine Fahy, who shepherded us through the work rooms of the Manuscript Department of the National Library. Here manuscripts and family papers are stored, catalogued, indexed and when necessary, restored. The visiting archivists were greatly interested in storage methods, quality and source of holding boxes, and in our guide's comments on the problems of sorting and cataloguing material. Manuscripts held in the Library include literary manuscripts from Yeats, Edgeworth, Shaw and Joyce; papers include Estate collections from families such as Ormonde, Monteagle and Inchiquinn. FAS workers with library experience are involved in cataloguing material. The library holds some 5,000,000 items, and an almost insuperable backlog of work awaits attention. It is now the policy of the Library to make unsorted material available to readers, so long as they are well supervised.

A visit to the conservation laboratory introduced the visiting Archivists to a massive book press and to a board chopper which is part of the process of making custom built cardboard boxes as required. We examined a restored map, safely encapsulated in plastic; nothing is ever stuck!

Looking to the future, the OPW is now building a new conservation area at the rear of the Library. Through the windows we could see men and machines toiling in the earth.

We are very appreciative of the time that was given to our group of Archivists, who greatly enjoyed their morning in the Genealogical Office, and behind the scenes in the National Library.

*Verity E Murdoch*



## *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives*

Vatican City (February 2, 1997)  
A Personal Reflection

This is a very welcome document indeed. It bears the signature of Archbishop Marchisano who consulted many experts in the field of archives before the final draft was written. Some readers of this *Newsletter* had the privilege of meeting the Archbishop in the course of his discussions.

Let me here express thanks to the members of the Executive Committee of ACAI for providing us with copies of the document at our recent AGM.

This is not the place for a detailed discussion but could I highlight some of the points of the document which, for me, were significant.

- There is a lot of emphasis on the importance of diocesan archives in the organisation of the Church. They are expected to give a headline to all the rest of us. *"The correct organization of the diocesan historical archive can set an example to other Church entities and organizations present in the territory."* One can but hope that this Circular Letter from a Pontifical Commission in Rome will reach all corners of Ireland!
- The letter carries added weight in that it has recourse to Canon Law to bolster many of its arguments. It comes as a surprise to many of us that Canon Law has so much to say on the subject of archives.
- There is an appeal for openness and the promotion of historical research. *"In time (archives) assume an universal destination because they become the heritage of all of humanity."*
- Many of us, at least of an older generation, are reluctant to face the complexities of computerisation. We are not spared! *"... in the area of Church archives there is still a need to acquire, whenever possible, a management mentality conforming to modern technologies."*
- We can all become absorbed in the care of our own particular archives. This document reminds us there is a wider field of concern and one where perhaps the ACAI could become involved. There are archives *"belonging to groups and associations of faithful, past and current ones, like confraternities which played a special role through the ages and for the work of charity: those of hospital and school institutions, those of missionary communities through which the apostolate of Christian charity has materialized"*. One can think of many such groups in Ireland with no resources whatever to preserve their records beyond the interest of some dedicated individuals.

One last point. In the light of the appeal made at our AGM by Father Tomás Ó Caoimh of the Heritage Council for an overall assessment of the place of archives in the culture of our nation, I would like to think he will be very much heartened by the support for his position in this latest Church document. In Chapter 2 we find this statement: *"... there is a widespread belief that historical archives of ecclesiastical entities are also part of the national heritage even if they remain autonomous"*. And again, in Chapter 4: *"... an attitude of disinterested openness, kind welcome and competent service must be taken into careful consideration so that the historical memory of the Church may be offered to the entire society"*.

*Leo Layden CSSp*

## *CHRIST CHURCH DOCUMENTS SERIES*

Two more volumes in the Christ Church Documents Series, which is a prelude to the publication of a full scale history of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin in the year 2000, are planned for 1997.

In the late spring/early summer *The Chapter Act Book of Christ Church, Dublin, 1574-1634* edited by Dr. Raymond Gillespie, Senior Lecturer in Modern History, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth and Visiting Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, 1996-97, will appear. This is the earliest chapter act book in Ireland and contains basic material not only for the history of the cathedral but for charting the progress of the Reformation in Dublin.

An edition of the cathedral's registers of baptisms, marriages and burials from 1710 to 1900, to be edited by Dr. Raymond Refaussé, Librarian and Archivist, Representative Church Body Library, Dublin, is planned for the autumn. It is hoped also to re-create the records of burials from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century from entries in the proctors' accounts.

Two volumes have already been published by the Four Courts Press, Dublin. They are as follows:

*The Proctor's Accounts of Peter Lewis, 1564-1565.* Ed. Raymond Gillespie. 1996. ISBN 1-85182-218-6. £25.

*Account Roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin, 1337-1346* edited by James Mills. New introductions by James Lydon and A. J. Fletcher. 1996. ISBN 1-85182-238-0. £25.

*Raymond Refaussé*

*Historical memory constitutes an integral part of the life of the community. The knowledge of all that which witnesses the succession of generations, their know-how and their actions, creates a sense of continuity between past and present.*

*The Pastoral Function of Church Archives*

## **Riverston Abbey** **Dublin 7**



Riverston Abbey, the new estate situated off the Navan Road Dublin 7, takes its name from Lord Riverston. In naming this new estate the builders were anxious to acknowledge and maintain in some way the memory of the presence of the Dominicans in the area and the fact that they had owned the land for years. From a number of suggestions made by the present writer Riverston was selected and duly approved of by the Dublin Corporation.

There is little known about Lord Riverston as the family was outlawed. They had a title but little else. They lived on their uppers like the other outlawed Irish Catholic gentry. Of the first Lord Riverston we know this:

*"Thomas Nugent, of Passas, Co Galway was appointed Privy Seal, 12 September 1685, of Council, learned in the law to James 2, and 23 April 1686, Sir Richard Reynell's successor, as one of the Justices of the King's Bench... by patent dated by the King at Dublin, 3 April 1689, was created Baron Riverston, in Westmeath; but the title being conferred after the King*

*abdicated the English Crown is not allowed in this kingdom."* Quoted in Lodge.

In 1680 he married Mariana, only daughter of Henry, Second Viscount Kingsland. They had three sons and five daughters. By 1690 Lord Riverston was indicted and outlawed for being engaged in rebellion against King William.

The connection with the Dominican nuns occurs through the 'school' set up in Channel Row. The Dominican nuns had come to Dublin from the Galway nunnery in Cross Street in the Spring of 1717. They were led by Mary Bellew, daughter of Sir Patrick Bellew of Barmeath, Co Louth. They took up temporary residence in a small house in Fisher's Lane, on the north side of the Liffey, in the parish of St Paul. The nuns disguised themselves as dressmakers and were known as 'Mrs Bellew's family'. After six months they moved to Channel Row to a convent vacated by the Irish Benedictine nuns of Ypres, in Belgium (Kylemore Benedictines). Not much is known of how they lived in those dangerous times. From account books we know they were poor. Lecky, the historian, complained of the laxity of the Penal Laws and mentions specifically the 'famous chapel in Channel Row' where the music is so fine it attracts even Protestants.

In Channel the nuns took 'parlour' boarders, most of whom came from the upper tier of the Irish Catholic gentry. In 1725 the nuns had twenty boarders among whom were two daughters of Lord Mayo, two of Lord Riverston (these could have been either the daughters or granddaughters of the first Lord Riverston), one each of Lords Kenmare, Dunsany, Netterville, Trimleston. These Lords were all outlawed and had nothing but their titles and loyalty to the Catholic faith and cause.

In the graveyard of Monasterboice there is a grave stone which indicates that there is a townland still in existence called Riverston.

*Dominique Horgan OP*

*We can consider ourselves giants if we foster an awareness of resting on the shoulders of generations which have preceded us...*

*The Pastoral Function of Church Archives*



## REVIEWS

### *The Ursulines in Cork*

Sr Ursula Clarke, archivist and librarian, recently published *The Ursulines in Cork, 1771-1996*, a handsomely illustrated volume of 212 pages available from the Ursuline Convent, Blackrock, Cork. Hers is a creditable addition to the growing library of modern books which show how much good religious sisters accomplished during what many call 'the bad old days'. The Ursulines came first to Cork in 1771 at the invitation of Nano Nagle but did not suit the precise aim she had in view. Their form of life was too cloistered. Nano Nagle then formed the Presentation Sisters whose constitutions allowed them to teach the poor even outside the convent walls. The Ursulines and Presentation sisters were, one might say, Siamese twins who lived happily side by side in Cove Lane for fifty years. They separated only in 1825 when the Ursulines sought better accommodation at Blackrock on the banks of the Lee.

The Ursulines of Cork did not greatly expand within Ireland, though they played a significant role in making establishments at Limerick and Thurles. An early expedition to New York in 1812 was soon abandoned for lack of support, but the sisters went to Charleston in 1834 and later to Cincinnati. A certain Bishop Reynolds in those parts did wonders for their spiritual life by confiscating their property. At Cork, the boarding school at Blackrock prospered. A new day school - St Angela's on St Patrick's Hill within the city - was opened in 1887. The Ursulines also prepared girls for entry to university at a time when that was unusual. And so the story is carried on, in annalistic vein, right up to the present day. The sisters, one notices, first got a telephone in 1911. Have they ever regretted it?

Two aspects of the volume give it more than local interest. One is the fact that it was clearly written by an historian who pays due attention to the Italian and French origins of the Ursulines. In fact, long study

and reflection are evident on each page. The other is the original and useful account of Sisters Ursula Young and Borgia McCarthy, prolific and popular writers of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Has any member of the Association a copy of the *Ursuline Manual* in its first edition (London, 1824)? The Ursulines in Cork itself have no edition earlier than 1842.

*Hugh Fenning OP*

### *Standards for the Development of Archives Services in Ireland*

*Standards for the Development of Archives Services in Ireland* was launched by Dr Garret FitzGerald on 30<sup>th</sup> April at the Tailor's Hall, Dublin. The book has been produced by the Irish Region of the Society of Archivists, the professional association for archivists in Ireland. It is a response to the growth of archives services in recent years in both the public and private sectors. The standard have two objectives. Firstly, they will guide institutions wishing to establish archives services and will help to ensure that they are properly constituted and staffed, and that the range and nature of the services provided by the archivist are properly understood. Secondly, the standards are designed to support the work of the archivist by outlining what the archivist does and detailing the infrastructure required to achieve the archivist's principal commitments of managing records, preserving archives and making them available.

The standards include sections on the establishment and constitution of the archives services; the professional code and strategies of the archivist; the acquisition, appraisal, accessioning and processing of archives; the design, construction and management of the repository; records management and the provision of technical services and services to users.

*Standards for the Development of Archives Services in Ireland* will no doubt become an invaluable guide for all those working in archives. It costs IR£10 and can be ordered through bookshops or from Irish Academic Press at Gill & Macmillan Distribution, Goldenbridge, Inchicore, Dublin 8.

*Marianne Cosgrave*

## *Forthcoming ACAI Events*

### **Symposium on Irish Church Archives and launch of *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives***

**Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> May:** Archbishop Francesco Marchisano will address the ACAI and invited guests in the Royal Irish Academy, Dawson Street, Dublin 1. To mark the event a symposium has been organised and a reception to launch the Vatican document from the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives*. Speakers include Mr. David Sheehy, Dr. Raymond Refaüssé, Sr. Dominique Horgan, Sr. Thérèse Nwosu, Br. Desmond Browne, Rev. Dr. D. A. Levistone Cooney and Fr. Tomás Ó Caoimh.

*Bookings with nominal fee of £5 to Marianne Cosgrave, ACAI,  
Convent of Mercy, Booterstown, Blackrock, Co. Dublin*



### **Oral Archives Workshop**

**Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> June:** The Oral Archives training day will take place in the Jesuit Communication Centre, 36 Leeson Street, Dublin 2 commencing at 9.45 a.m. and concluding around 5 p.m. The cost for the training day will be £70 per person. There are still some places available. Those who have booked places and those who wish to make a late booking please forward payment by 10<sup>th</sup> June to Marianne Cosgrave, ACAI, Convent of Mercy, Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.



### **Summer Outing to Derry**

**Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> June:** Dr. Edward Daly has kindly agreed to guide the tour of St. Columba's Derry. As many of the sites associated with St. Columba are in Donegal, Dr. Daly has suggested that members may consider making an overnight stay in Derry or Donegal and extending their visit into Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup>. Participants will make their own way to Derry.

Those wishing to take part in the tour should notify Marianne Cosgrave by 3<sup>rd</sup> June. Details will be sent to those participating.