



No.17: October 1997

ACAI Newsletter

Association of Church Archivists of Ireland

From the Chair..

1997 has seen a number of very encouraging initiatives in the area of professional development within the archives profession in general and for church archivists in particular: the publication by the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church of *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives*, and the subsequent visit to Ireland of Archbishop Marchisano, President of the Commission, to launch the document and to lend encouragement to archivists; the publication by the Irish Region of the Society of Archivists of *Standards for the Development of Archive Services in Ireland*, a practical primer for archivists; the launch by Ireland's Heritage Preservation Foundation of the Father Nolan Fellowship in Modern Archival Management, open to anyone working in a religious archive in Ireland.

These initiatives provide an opportunity for members of the ACAI to increase their knowledge of the principles of archival theory and practice, archival management, appraisal and acquisition of archives, arrangement and description, preservation, and access issues.

One of the functions of the ACAI is to provide continuing opportunities for professional development that meet the needs of its members. To this end, we need input and direction from our members. We need to know what the membership requires. Take for example, the question of access which has aroused considerable discussion within the Association in recent times. Is it now time for the ACAI to examine issues around access, including the research clientele, facilities for researchers, charging for access or reproductions, access to

unlisted collections, sensitivity or confidentiality of records, protection of privacy, levels of access, administration of access, security of records? Should we consider the possibility of formulating guidelines on access for our membership?

Marianne Cosgrave

Our Newsletter

ACAI members are scattered the length and breadth of Ireland and some are further afield. For the many who are unable to attend meetings or outings organised by the Executive, the *Newsletter* is the principal means of communication with fellow archivists.

We are very grateful to those who contributed to the current issue and to those who regularly share their views, knowledge and experience with us. They keep *ACAI Newsletter* alive.

We would encourage others to join them in contributing to the *Newsletter* so that it can continue to achieve its objectives of communication and support. Articles need not be long, 100-500 words is a good guide. So please give it some thought!

The next issue is due May 1998. Your articles, letters, reports, book reviews, comments and tips drawn from your own experience will be gratefully received by Mary Smyth, Co-ordinating Editor, Provincial Curia, St John of God Brothers, 'Granada', Stillorgan, Co Dublin.

Training Day in Oral Archives

Friday, June 20 was a wet day with bleak streets beneath a murky sky. A good day to work indoors!

Shortly before 10 a.m. ten of us assembled at the Jesuit Communications Centre, 36 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin. After a quick cup of coffee we were introduced to our team: Fr. Alan McGuckian, S.J., Director of the Centre, Sr. Marie Stewart who helps in producing religious programmes for local radio, and Tom Munnely, a folklore specialist from UCD.

After a brief sketch of the work of the Irish Folklore Department (in which names like Séamus Ó Duilearga and Seán Ó Súilleabhain popped up) Tom drew a distinction between three topics which, while belonging to different genres, have much overlap. They are:

- The record of the past as it actually happened - the hard facts of history
- The story of the past as seen through the lenses of memory - oral history
- The aggregate of myths, popular beliefs, legends, etc., which we call folklore.

Underlining the fact that it is usually older people who have the past in their keeping he asked: 'How many people under thirty could darn a sock or churn butter'. The threat of technology is causing a way of life to disappear faster than ever before. The same is true of religious life. How many Sisters under thirty could make a bandeau or a guimpe or a dimity? The past is disappearing into oblivion unless...

Guided by our team we quickly learned that recording oral history is a skilled task. A few warnings were issued! Number 1: **Prepare.**

- Know the context, i.e. historical background
- Go armed with questions
- Remember there are three people at the interview: the interviewer, interviewee and the tape (which is blind!)
- Be subservient to your interviewee. Don't tire...and don't bore!
- Become aware of traps...usually of your own making!

After a session devoted to preparation for interviewing we were introduced to the recording equipment. Alan, Marie and Tom shared the task. We were initiated into the mysteries of a *Marantz* taperecorder

plus *Sennheiser* headphones plus microphone. The rest of the day was devoted to practical work.

Because the number was limited to ten we each got a chance of being both interviewer and interviewee...and then we were rounded up for playback and review. Excellent training! Alan issued a last warning: 'Label your tape. An unlabelled tape is a lost tape'.

We were each given a present of our own tape, and a last cup of coffee. The general consensus of the group was that it was a marvellous day. Mile buíochas to a splendid team. Thank you Alan and Marie and Tom.

Sr M Baptist Meany PBVM

Automatic Fire Suppression Systems

Halon is no longer permitted to be installed in fire suppression systems (although existing halon systems may be retained) but a satisfactory alternative seems to be FM200. This, unlike halon, is ecologically friendly, unlike CO² has a low toxicity, and requires little more storage space than halon.

Details of FM200 may be had from Chubb Ireland Ltd, 2 Stillorgan Industrial Park, Blackrock, Co Dublin.

Raymond Refaussé

C.A.S. Conference 1997

St Joseph's College, Upholland, Lancashire was the venue, and Valerie Bonham the first speaker. Valerie shared with us the fruits of fourteen years research in the archives of a group of Anglican Sisters - the Community of St John the Baptist of Clewer - one of the first post-Reformation religious communities founded in the Church of England. Valerie's touch was light as she retraced her trawl through the Aladdin's cave of the Clewer archives with its bulky notebooks and bulging tin boxes, and her terse admonition to the Sister who asked just how much of the stuff she could throw away: 'Nothing! All wonderful original material!' That 'wonderful material' crystallised in a trilogy just published: *A Joyous Service* subtitled *The Clewer Sisters and their Work*; *A Place in Life* - a detailed study of the Clewer House of Mercy; and *The Sisters of the RAJ* - a story of the Clewer Sisters in India.

The foundress was Harriet, seventh child of Sir Edward O'Brien of Dromoland, Co Clare. Her way to religious life was by a detour! Married to Charles Monsell at twenty-eight and widowed at forty, Harriet dedicated her life to God as she knelt beside her young husband's coffin. She was to be 'the greatest gift of the Church of Ireland to the Church of England'.

The work to which she gave her life was the rescue of women enmeshed in the spiral of poverty which so often led to prostitution and drink. Her Sisters did not take vows - at least not publicly. Why? Within the Church of England there was, in the 1850s a fear of Rome - the Oxford Movement had seen the secession of Newman and a host of others. The taking of vows might be seen as the thin edge of the Roman wedge! Happily, the ecumenical movement of the 20th century changed that.

A few quotes from Harriet's directives reveal much. On planning: '*Do not plan your life. Plans are God's not ours ... I never settled what I was going to do but all was gradually unfolded to me, step by step*'; On community: '*Don't let the sparkle out of community*'; On goals: '*Make the revealing of the mind of Christ the one aim of your lives. Remember that the Rule is a dead rule unless you do*'.

Our second speaker was Anna Hardman from the Lancashire Record Office. She gave a succinct overview of the RC records there, covering every

facet of Catholic life: a) Genealogical; b) Recusancy; c) Family and Estate.

Parish registers, either in original or microfilm form are the main source of the first though, due to destruction during persecution, few pre-date the 17th century. Re recusancy, Anna listed some interesting legal strangle holds. Catholics' lands were confiscated if they failed to conform. Between 1754 and 1877 all catholic marriages were required to be registered in the Anglican Church. Recusants had to pay double tax!

The L.R.O. holds much more, including such treasures as the works of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Augustine W Pugin.

The apex of the conference - to which we looked forward with intense eagerness - was the address by Archbishop Francesco Marchisano. Significantly, it was on the feast of the first Vatican emissary to England, St Augustine of Canterbury, that they came to us with the stirring manifesto from John Paul II: *Archives are a vital part of the Church's modern mission* - vital because in a society smothered with ephemera, a lack of historical information leads to a superficial interpretation of events.

He grounded his concerns in the Incarnation, focusing on Jesus' words: '*Do this in memory of me*'. We must, he urged, transmit that memory by word and action - for the story of the Church is the story of the workings of the Holy Spirit. *Handing on* is the stance of the Christian and of the archivist.

Imperatives strewed his talk: Put archives at the service of evangelisation! Conserve but also put to use! Store but also display! Have outreach programmes! Use modern technology! Join forces so that the Church be one body! And ending with the clarion call: Let the cultural heritage of the church become a primary vehicle of the New Evangelisation!

I came away with the most challenging words I had ever heard as an archivist ringing in my ears. This scrap does not do justice to the Archbishop's inspiring talk and warm personality but his visit to ACAI will, when in print, remedy the imbalance. Too bad! No space to tell of our visit to the Talbot Library with its sizeable collection of Irish material from 17th and 18th centuries, or St Walburge's Church with its echoes of York Minster and Notre Dame - both in Preston, or of David Sheehy's illuminating and moving set of slides on the Irish Famine .. and much more ... but no space!

Sr M Baptist Meany PBVM



Congregation of Christian Brothers ST MARY'S PROVINCE

In April 1996, at the Annual General Meeting, we heard a call from Dr Raymond Gillespie of the Department of Modern History, Maynooth, to make our archival collections more widely known through 'what might be loosely described as publication'. This call has been affirmed in the recently published *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives* where the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church reminds us that while the material in our archives is primarily at the service of the community which produced it, in time it takes on a universal dimension and should not be precluded 'to those who can take advantage of it in order to know more about the history of the Christian people, their religious, civil, cultural and social deeds'.

Responding to this call and in the hope that some of our holdings may be of interest to the members of ACAI, I have prepared a description of the archival collections of St. Mary's Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers.

The request of the Superior General, Br Edward Ferdinand Clancy (1888-1969) to divide the Irish Province into two distinct Provinces, (the second Province, St. Mary's, to comprise the communities in the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Armagh and Tuam, plus the communities in the Archdiocese of Dublin, situated on the north of the river Liffey) was granted by the Holy See on March 17th, 1956. The archives contain material which relates to the history, evolution and administration of the Congregation, along with material relating to St Mary's Province. The holdings include the following:

⇒ Copies of the Rules and Constitutions (1832-1996) with modifications; Acts of Chapter - General and Provincial

- ⇒ *The Christian Brothers' Educational Record 1887-1990* contains information about developments in the Congregation. Its publication was discontinued in 1991, chiefly because of several other publications, such as: *Congregation; Inheritance; Edmund; Alpha; Globelink; Studies; Wellsprings* ... where articles such as those formerly printed in the *Educational Record* can now be published in the above listed publications. Copies of Province Newsletter
- ⇒ Bound Volumes of *The Necrology 1891*, containing biographical material on deceased brothers
- ⇒ *The History of the Institute* - Vols. I, II and III - assembled by Br Baptist Doyle about 1956 from articles in the early volumes of the *Educational Record*. Started by Br Dominic Burke and continued by others, and since increased by an additional volume - Vol. IV, treating of withdrawals, closures, new foundations and new ministries written from an historical aspect
- ⇒ Material dealing with the cause for the Beatification of Edmund Ignatius Rice, Founder of the Christian Brothers
- ⇒ Theses, books and poems written by the Brothers
- ⇒ Bound volumes of the *Our Boys* and the *Gael Og*
- ⇒ Material relating to Chapters - General and Provincial and Assemblies
- ⇒ Minutes, Decisions and Correspondence of Provincial Councils 1956 -
- ⇒ The record of the Province administration covering mainly Schools Administration, Pastoral Care and other Corporate Ministries, Overseas Missions, Special Province Projects, Development Planning and Educational Development
- ⇒ Correspondence of the Superiors General (incomplete) 1880s-1920s
- ⇒ Community annals and records relating to the establishment and development of houses in the Province
- ⇒ Annual Statements of Account, (Bound Volumes) 1956 -
- ⇒ Admissions Registers of postulants and novices from 1886-1968 (incomplete)
- ⇒ Classified Returns of the Pupils attending the Christian Brothers' Schools (1956-1989)
- ⇒ Reels of film, audio and video tapes; along with photographs, maps and plans.

The archives of St. Mary's Province are housed at the Provincial Curia, 274 North Circular Road, Dublin 7.

Desmond J Brown

Diocesan Archives Kildare and Leighlin

The documents and *munimenta* of our Church Archives are, according to Paul VI, to be treasured as 'the footprints of Christ'. Now that a new Vatican document on archives has been published it may be well to attempt some description of what remains to Kildare & Leighlin by way of *written record*. Before the Bishops chose Carlow as a place of residence little was preserved. In fact, up to quite recent times it was not easy to say what remained of the papers of successive bishops, or to find any particular non-current record. That began to change when Fr Tom McDonnell and Dr Tom McGrath went to work on sorting the mass of papers brought from Braganza to the present repository. Painstakingly they worked through thousands of documents, placing together under each bishop's name what seemed to belong to him, arranging manuscripts, typescripts and printed papers. The essential tidying-up done, they went on to prepare an Ms catalogue of the entire correspondence of Bishop James Warren Doyle, the famous *JKL*. For this last they opted to follow the chronological order of the papers, and that arrangement has provided a foundation for much of the work since attempted, especially where the owner's filing system could not be established.

To date, the papers of Bishops Keefe, Delany, Corcoran, Doyle, Nolan, Haly, Walsh, Lynch, Comerford, and Foley have been catalogued and those of Bishop Matthew Cullen are now being processed. Of the parish clergy just one, Mons M J Murphy, has been dealt with, and he only because his surviving papers consist of hundreds of letters from Bishop Foley. The acid-free files containing these numbered documents are held in archival-quality containers which are themselves coded and indexed. A glance at the catalogue shows where a particular document is stored, and allows its immediate retrieval. The first thing an enquirer needs to know is whether the Diocesan Archive holds *anything* relevant to his subject, and here the catalogue saves much searching, and, more importantly, preserves documents from needless handling. Enquiries from Ireland and elsewhere come to us frequently. Within the last few months we have had researchers from Scotland and France. Applications deal with everything from parish affairs to world events. The attitudes of the Irish Bishops to World War One, the Church and the Republican Movement in Ireland, miraculous healings, the Famine, clergy involvement in the Land War, Bishop Foley's work as Commissioner for

National Education, all are topics which brought us visits. I sometimes recall the first application with which I had to deal. It asked for the names of the Carlow men who enlisted with the Brigade of St Patrick in defence of the Papal States. The enquirer was sure that Bishop Walsh would have preserved just such a list. Similarly, it is often taken for granted that any notable event or epoch in a parish will have been recorded and the account preserved in the diocesan archives. In fact, parish records are perhaps the most scanty of our holdings. For instance, the Tullow file for the entirety of Bishop Cullen's episcopacy holds just one document, and that a letter from *the curate*. Only a few weeks ago I was highly perplexed when a disappointed enquirer, a professional interested in a Kildare parish, cried at me: 'But what about *the three altars?*'. What, indeed, about the Adm, the D.E., the entire membership of the local church?

We would of course be delighted to have, and to care for, parish papers which are no longer current. Everything from registers to posters, billheads, old letters, out-of-date agreements, or even disagreements. Many such relics will in the near future be in danger of being mislaid or even destroyed with the advent of electronic technology and of instant aural and visual communication. Parishes, groups, individuals, all can help here. The trouble is an old one, that the concerned are few and the philistines many.

A word about enquiries. While we always do what we can to help those who wish to trace the *vestigia Christi* in our midst there are limits to what we *can* do. First, it has to be stressed that the archives are *Church property*. We are neither a public library nor a centre of open research. Permission to consult the archives must be obtained, usually in writing, from the Diocesan Chancellor. A visit can then be arranged with me, and if the catalogue indicates the possibility of information I will provide access to the relevant document. Our catalogue remains, as yet, incomplete and access can be given only to documents listed therein and not later in date than 1926, the year of Bishop Foley's death. A few other conditions, having to do for the most part with safety of holdings and with the right of reproduction, have also to be observed. Finally, because of constraints of time and of resources, we cannot deal with postal or telephoned enquiries.

Linus H. Walker

The Celtic Monk

Archival Science is not an invention of this age and one never knows how and where one's work will be appreciated. In 1991 I completed the text of *The Celtic Monk* and it appeared in book form just before last Christmas. Our newsletter editor has asked me to give an account of my work for this issue, giving some idea of the background and method followed.

Many years ago I wrote an article, part of a series of essays for an Italian publication, which essay was last published in *Cistercian Studies*, a periodical produced by the Order. One of the board members of *Cistercian Studies Series* recommended that the entire collection of documents be published in full by them. The reasoning behind the suggestion was that as these 'Rules' were not generally available, a collection in book form would present them to a wider public. It must be borne in mind that the latest translation of any of them dated from 1910 and they had never been brought together in one book. The task appealed to me, indeed I only wanted an excuse to undertake it.

The documents are primarily works of spirituality and devotion, yet the student of history will learn from them much of the social patterns of life in Ireland as lived in the 7th to 10th centuries. The sources are manuscripts in the National Library of Brussels (these were formerly in the collection of the Irish Franciscans of Louvain), Trinity College Dublin, Irish Academy, Bodleian of Oxford, while one containing part of a homily, is to be found in the Municipal Library of Cambrai France. The language of the material is Old Irish and being no expert in this area, I was forced to rely very greatly on the published editions of the documents and on the *Dictionary of Irish Language* published in Dublin by the Academy. The task entailed much work, but it was not without its rewards. In the Dictionary many examples are given of the use of words, and many marginal comments from the manuscripts are quoted. Herein lay the source of much enjoyment as many of the references, spontaneous remarks of the scribes, gave rise to much merriment. For example in the notes on the Rule of Cormac Mac Ciolanáin it is said of one bishop that having lost a battle 'he threw his crozier behind a bush and ran away'. Another says 'here I am abandoned by all except my dog'.

The oldest extant document from the early monastic period dates, to the best of my knowledge, from around 680. It is called *The Alphabet of Devotion* and is attributed to Colmán Mac Beognae a monk of Lismore or perhaps a native of the district. The text is to be found in 18 different manuscripts, not necessarily independent, which testifies to its popularity not merely among the monks and clergy but also with the laity. It is above and before all else

a treatise on spirituality, though not written in the structured fashion such as would be the practice today.

One of the most interesting of the documents is the *Rule of Tallaght* which may be described as the journal of an archivist or keeper of records. In it the writer noted what he observed of life in the monastery and his impressions of visitors to it, both clerical and lay. Thus we learn from it that many monks were accustomed to drink beer and in this connection we have the rather humorous incident of the difference in opinion between Maelruain of Tallaght and Dubhlitir of Finglas, regarding the beverage.

One section of the book is devoted to a selection of poetry from this early period in our history. The copyists were given to inserting not only notes in the margin, but verses of poetry and even short poems. Thus a monk wrote on a cold night

Thy side half-bare
Half cold thy bed!
Thus shall with Christ
Thy praise be said.

Again we have the words of a monk writing in his cell near the sea

The maker of all things,
The Lord God worship we:
Heaven white with angel's wings,
Earth and the white waved sea.

The translation and compilation of *The Celtic Monk* was a joy to me from many aspects, not least from that of an archivist. The compiler of the *Monastery of Tallaght* had no idea that his work would be appreciated in 20th century Ireland and indeed overseas, and who are we to say that our work in the field will not be appreciated by those who come after us.

Uinseann Ó Maidín OCR

The Celtic Monk *Rules and Writings of Early Irish* *Monks*

is available from the translator
Fr Uinseann Ó Maidín, OCR
Mount Mellary Abbey, Cappoquin
Co Waterford

Hard-back £25 Paper-back £15
Postage extra.

The House of Mercy Baggot Street

Its story from the records

The concept of the House of Mercy sprang from Catherine McAuley's vain efforts to get safe lodgings for a harassed servant girl in Coolock. To help, protect and train such girls became an obsession with Catherine to come to fruition only when William Callaghan's legacy allowed it. As early as 1824 she had put the case to Father Blake in Westland Row parish and, at his suggestion, had begun the building in Baggot Street which opened in 1827.

In a letter soliciting alms for the project Archbishop Murray wrote: 'Young women of good character, who have employment yet not sufficient means to provide safe lodgings are invited to the house at night as to their home'. Catherine soon found that if she were to save the girls from tramping the streets by day she must give them board as well as bed. At first thirty young women were taught needlework and general housework and given religious instruction but soon sixty were accommodated as space and furniture allowed. The House of Mercy was a weighty charge for the Sisters. The annual charity sermon, bazaars, and later on, concerts, helped to finance it. One, at least, of the girls showed no gratitude, refusing to lower her shouting at recreation in the yard and saying, 'What a fuss! I thought the house was built for us and not for them,' when Mother McAuley appealed for quiet to spare the dying Sister Elizabeth Harley.

Perhaps even more than the school Mother McAuley always had the interests of the House of Mercy girls at heart. In 1840 she built a laundry thinking it would provide steady revenue and suitable employment for them. Always their religious instruction was paramount for as she says in her Holy Rule 'where a religious woman presides peace and good order are generally to be found'. She was always careful of the health of the girls 'on which these poor girls' future prospects depend'. Two periods a week were devoted to teaching the three Rs and accounting. The Sisters were required to learn the most efficient and economical method of doing the works so as to train the girls as well as possible. The Sisters became almost specialists in plain and fancy needlework and were sometimes rivalled by the girls. In the Victorian and Edwardian eras the garments of both men and women abounded in tucks and pleats. Particularly in the pre-sewing machine days the girls spent hour after hour on this intricate needlework. They were equally well-trained in laundry which required particular attention to the same tucks and pleats, as well as to

cravats, high collars and embroidered tablecloths. The training given in the House of Mercy was unique, turning out girls who were dependable and hard-working.

The House of Mercy in Baggot Street was the first of a great number of such Houses in Ireland, nine in English cities and a number in America. During the Sisters' first year in New York they provided lodgings and found work for 1,217 girls driven out of Ireland by the Great Famine. Hundreds of girls travelling from provincial towns to America stayed in Baggot Street while waiting for their passage, usually by steerage, to the States. Convents in Ireland referred emigrant girls to Houses of Mercy in American cities. Sister Josephine Warde in Cork was particularly active in doing so. Archbishop Hughes of New York said in his Pastoral Letter 1854 that the Sisters of Mercy during the years 1849-54 had done a work of charity unparalleled in the United States. In St Louis over a five year period, on average 1,000 girls annually were placed in employment. All the working girls were admitted freely and given opportunities to become self-supporting.

The records of the House of Mercy in Baggot Street continue from 1866 to 1947. Girls from all over the country found refuge there and stayed from one to four years. Most girls were sixteen or seventeen, a few, marked twelve or thirteen, were sent to school. The girls were mostly recommended by nuns or priests and when trained they generally went to work as servants: house maids, kitchen maids, parlour maids, between maids and wards maids (no lady's maids). Others worked as laundresses, cooks, receptionists, portresses, messengers, shirt makers, book folders, children's nurses or 'were bound to dressmakers'. Some did nursing in England or went to USA. One girl entered the Convent of Mercy in Brisbane, another in Bathurst, and one in each of the Convents of Mercy in Athy, Arklow, Carysfort, Hull and Derby. One girl entered the Dominican Convent in Cabra and another entered the Ursuline Convent in Waterford. Dublin hospitals employed the girls: the Royal Hospital Donnybrook, Baggot Street Hospital, Jervis Street, the Meath and the Mater Hospital. In general the reports of the girls were good or very good, some excellent and a few 'lazy', 'giddy' or 'obstinate'. Stress was laid on good character - one girl was sent home for stealing. Among those who hired the girls were the O'Connor Don, Mrs de Valera, Buswells Hotel and Blackrock College. Efforts were made to choose the most suitable post for each girl, mindful of Mother McAuley's comment that 'many leave their situations not so much for want of merit as for want of capacity to fulfil the duties they unwisely undertook'.

Due to changing economic and social conditions the House of Mercy petered out in May 1971. In 1942 Archbishop McQuaid of Dublin asked that certain rooms in the House be given to girls emigrating to England or USA whose travel arrangements entailed spending a few nights in the city before getting their places on the ships. This continued until the 1960s. In the 1950s the Register shows that young children were looked after while their mothers were in hospital so as to enable their fathers to go to work.

Finally a hostel for working girls replaced the House of Mercy in the 1970s. The dormitories were divided into cubicles and other improvements were made. The girls were employed in the lower echelons of the Civil Service and in other poorly paid posts. Cheap and safe lodgings were provided in Baggot Street and Sister M Lourdes, in charge, kept a motherly eye on the social life of the girls who, coming from all parts of the country, might be dazzled by the bright lights of the city. In general the girls remained for a year or so in the hostel until they could afford flats, either on their own or with one of the new friends they had made. This lasted until 1987 when new plans were in the making for Baggot Street.



Now the final phase of the House of Mercy approaches when the welfare of women at risk will once again be the target.

Sr M Magdalene Frisby RSM

Women's History Project

The Irish Association for Research in Women's History is currently undertaking through the Women's History Project, a survey of historical documents relating to the history of women in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The work of the project can be divided into two parts. First, an island-wide survey will be carried out to identify the location, extent and condition of sources for women's history. The results of the survey will be presented in computer format and an edited version will be published in book form. Secondly, the project will focus on particular collections of documents and facilitate greater access to them for researchers through the generation of detailed lists and published editions.

The survey will involve the compilation of a list of archival institutions, private and public organisations and individuals who are known to have or may have relevant papers in their custody and the sending of a questionnaire to these institutions and individuals asking them to provide details of the papers in their possession. Project staff will follow up the responses to the questionnaire.

When complete this survey list will act as an inventory of sources that are in existence and will shape the research agendas of scholars and researchers for years to come.

There are four staff engaged in the project: the Director, Dr Maria Luddy; two archivists and a researcher, Dr Jean Agnew, Ms Sarah Costley and Ms Catherine Cox. They would be very interested in any information relating to manuscript sources on women in Irish History, particularly sources which may not appear in any printed or published guides.

Information can be sent to:

Women's History Project
73 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.
Tel: 01-6615225 Fax: 01-6623832
e-mail: whp@indigo.ie



City of Cells

On Saturday, 27 September a group of 40 including about a dozen ACAI members toured Kilmainham Gaol guided by Mr. William Peters. Built in 1796 with an east wing extension in 1862 many of the 215 cells are 6' x 8', designed to accommodate one prisoner. According to the principles of the great prison reformer John Howard, the high windows ensured that prisoners were not distracted by what they saw outside. It was hoped that raising their thoughts to the sky - and to God - they would emerge miraculously reformed. That was the plan; the reality was somewhat different. Almost from the beginning the gaol was over-crowded and in 1849 as a result of the famine, as many as six adults occupied a single cell. Between 1796 and 1924, when the last inmate, Eamon de Valera, left Kilmainham, 100,000 men, women and children had been imprisoned there. While the majority were detained - and indeed some executed - for ordinary, sometimes petty crimes, a large proportion were political prisoners and it is these prisoners who make it famous in Irish history.

In the Roman Catholic chapel by way of a 25 minute visual presentation we were brought through the history of Ireland from the United Irishmen through the Young Irelanders, the Fenians, The Invincibles, the Land League, the Easter Rising, to the Civil War, with the resulting imprisonments and executions in Kilmainham.

From the chapel where on 3 May 1916 Joseph Plunkett married Grace Gifford just hours before his execution and where in 1848 while it was a non-denominational chapel, William Smith O'Brien's son was baptised, we moved, passing doors marked Charles Stewart Parnell and Eamon de Valera, along a corridor of cells unchanged in over 200 years. We heard of the inmates - Alicia Kelly comes to mind. In 1839 Alicia served five months hard labour for stealing a coat. She was eight years old.

We passed the children's exercise yard where many who died are buried under its flagstones. We passed cells where political prisoners were held: Joseph Plunkett, Padraig Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Countess Markievicz, Thomas Clarke - the list goes on!

In an outside yard we saw what remains of the Asgard, soon to be restored we were told, and beside it a plaque commemorating four republicans executed there by the Free State Army in 1922.

Our guided tour ended in the stone-breakers yard where leaders of the Easter Rising faced the firing squad. It was a fitting way to end a tour of the place of bondage which has become a symbol of freedom.

From there many of us made our way to the new three storey exhibition area depicting the prison and its inmates throughout its 201 years. We were advised to allow 30 minutes to view the exhibits.

Kilmainham Gaol, which was restored by voluntary effort between 1960 and 1986 when responsibility for its maintenance was assumed by the State, is open to the public (access by guided tour only): April-September everyday 9.30-18.00; October-March Monday to Friday 9.30-17.00 and Sunday 10.00-18.00.

It is well worth a visit.

Mary Smyth



R.C.B. Library Publications

The third in the Representative Church Body Library's parish register series has been published: the *Register of the Cathedral Church of St Columb, Derry, 1703-1732*, edited by Dr Colin Thomas, Reader in Geography in the University of Ulster at Coleraine. St Columb's Cathedral, the core of which was built between 1628 and 1633, is Derry's oldest surviving building and its registers, which date from 1642, are an invaluable source for historians of the city and for genealogists. The first register, for the years 1642 to 1703, was printed in 1910, and now for the first time the second register has been published.

Register of the Cathedral Church of St Columb, Derry, 1703-1732 (ed) Colin Thomas, (Representative Church Body Library, Dublin, 1997), ISBN 0-9523000-6-0, IR/STG £9.95 (IR/STG £12.50 inc. postage & packing), 350 pp.

Available from the Representative Church Body Library, Braemor Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14.

Raymond Refaussé



Christ Church Documents Series

The third volume in the Christ Church Documents Series, which is a prelude to the publication of a full scale history of the cathedral in the year 2000, has been published by Four Courts Press, Dublin.

The First Chapter Act Book of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, 1574-1634 has been edited by Dr Raymond Gillespie, Senior Lecturer in Modern History in St Patrick's College, Maynooth and costs IR£25.

Raymond Refaüssé

A Harvest of Research

Sisters of St John the Baptist at Clewer

Following fourteen years of research in the archives of the Sisters of St John the Baptist at Clewer, Valerie Bonham has published a trilogy: *A Joyous Service: the Clewer Sisters and their Work; A Place in Life; and Sisters of the Raj*.

A Joyous Service: the Clewer Sisters and their Work (ISBN 0 9508710 1 X £7.95), 'is the first major history of the Community of St John the Baptist, Clewer, one of the earliest and fastest growing Anglican women's Communities. The author has drawn upon hitherto unpublished material in order to trace the development of the work of the Sisterhood, culminating in the present day work. Queen Victoria, Gladstone, Archbishop Tait, Bishop Wilberforce, Fr Mackonochie and other well known personalities walk across these pages.'

A Place in Life - a detailed study of the Clewer House of Mercy (ISBN 0 9508710 2 8 £10.95). 'At

a time when there is an increasing interest in women's studies and Victorian social history, this book provides an important insight into both. Here we see women in an age very different from our own, at opposite ends of the social scale - prostitutes, alcoholics, the abused and down trodden who had nowhere to go, and no one to turn to; and the ladies, often from privileged backgrounds, who in the early days of the Tractarian or Oxford Movement became Sisters of Mercy in order to minister to these outcasts.'

'Early Religious such as Lydia Sellon, Elizabeth Lockhard, Marion Hughes and Mother Kate of Haggerston all play a part, as do secular women such as Elizabeth Herbert and Catherine Gladstone. Mariquita Tennant, the forgotten pioneer of the rescue work at Clewer is brought out of obscurity. But it is Harriet Monsell, Mother foundress of the Community of St John Baptist, who became the guiding force at Clewer, who is the focal point of this book. With strength of character, firmness of faith, an infectious sense of humour, a gift for listening, and a magnetism which none could resist, Harriet Monsell was one of the greatest women of her day.'

Sisters of the Raj (ISBN 0 9508710 3 6 £12.95) .

'In 1881 three Sisters (of St. John Baptist, Clewer) left England at the invitation of the British government to organise the nursing in the Presidency General Hospital, Calcutta. From this small beginning grew work encompassing several other hospitals and schools in Calcutta and Darjeeling. In 1891 the Sisters' work was considerably enlarged by the acquisition of missionary work in the Sunderbuns pioneered by Angelina Hoare.'

'Around 100 Sisters were to work in India over a period of 64 years, covering the heyday and decline of British rule.'

'When independence came the Sisters withdrew, giving their work into Indian hands. Today the Calcutta schools flourish under Indian Christian leadership, a fitting tribute to the dedication and devotion of the Sisters.'

The above quotes from the dust jacket abstracts will inspire many, in particular members of Religious Congregations of Women, to explore this most engaging study.

M.S.

ARCHIVAL SUPPLIES

The Bodleian Library of Oxford University has developed specifications for archival board and boxes as follows:

THE BOARD

- The board must have a pure kraft core which is lignin free
- A chemically stable starch based adhesive must be used
- The board must be lined on both sides with a buffered archival quality paper
- Must have a pH value of between 7.0 and 8.5 by cold extraction
- The board must have good folding qualities and mechanical strength for wall stability
- The board should have a smooth surface, minimising abrasive damage to delicate surfaces
- The board to be of two different thicknesses: 900 microns for the small boxes and 1250 microns for the larger

THE BOXES

- The boxes should be sent in flat to save costs on transportation and storage
- The boxes should be of such a design that they can be made up easily with or without wire stitches
- The boxes should have a double thickness wall in the base part for extra strength and protection, particularly when placing boxes horizontally on top of one another
- The box will be of the drop spine variety allowing easy access to contents; spine flaps to add strength and dust protection at these two vulnerable points
- Corners will be of the wide flap variety to add to wall and corner stability for long term storage, strength and stability. Wire stitching through the layered board is thought the best method of fastening
- The wire stitched must not reach the inside of the box
- The box should have no sharp edges or corners, either inside or outside.

C A Coutts Ltd, Violet Road, London E3 3QL manufactures board and boxes to match these standards. Telephone 004471 5156171 for details.



Conservation Resources (U.K.) Ltd, Units 1, 2 & 4 Pony Road, Horspath Industrial Estate, Crowley, Oxford OX4 2RD, suppliers of conservation materials and equipment has issued their new catalogue for 1997/98. The catalogue which includes pictures, technical data and price information can be obtained by telephoning their office at 00441865 747755.

For Your Diary

Briefing on Women's History Project

On Saturday, 29th November 1997 Dr Maria Luddy, Director of the Women's History Project and author of *Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century Ireland*, will brief us on the project and describe her research into the archives of women's organisations.



Visit to the Hunt Museum, Limerick

Our Executive is in the process of organising a visit to the Hunt Museum, Limerick for Saturday, 28th March, 1998. Sr Marie Bernadette O'Leary will send details to you nearer to the date.



ACAI Annual General Meeting

The 1998 Annual General Meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, 25th April. The full programme for the day will be sent to you in good time.

CAS Summer Tour of Ireland

The Catholic Archives Society tour of Ireland which took place 14-21 August was by all accounts very successful. We had planned to carry a CAS participant's account of the tour in this issue of the *Newsletter*. Unfortunately it didn't get to us in time for publication but we are confident that it will appear in the next issue.

Bears Thinking About... What?

Suppose earth's population was just 100 people and the present ratios retained. There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 Americans (North & South), and 8 Africans. Fifty-one would be women and 49 men. Seventy would be non-Christian and thirty Christian. One-half of the world's wealth would belong to six people, all U.S. citizens. Seventy would be unable to read. One would be near death, one lately born, and just one a University graduate.

(Quoted in Patrician Brothers' Aus/PNG Newsletter June 1997 from ABS, PSO Notes to Interviewers, May 1997)

At least, there would be no Antipodes! Nor probably, archives.

Linus H Walker

Greetings

Best wishes to Sr Miriam Cummins of St Louis Convent, Monaghan, a stalwart of ACAI, who is not well at the moment.