



ACAI NEWSLETTER

ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH ARCHIVISTS OF IRELAND

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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At the time of writing I have not long returned from a tour of Scotland. I had not intended to go, and was not sure that I wanted to go, but a friend was unwilling to go on his own, offered to do all the driving, and pressed me to accompany him. So I went, and as usually in such circumstances received more from the experience than I had expected. Indeed I am still being enriched by the recollection of it all.

I had been in Edinburgh before, and indeed, had worshipped in the High Kirk of St. Giles on the previous occasion. Oddly, I found it smaller than I had remembered. But increasing familiarity is all too apt to have that effect: things and people begin to appear smaller than we first thought them. Perhaps we need to be careful of our way of looking at them.

But that wasn't what I set out to write. Since my last visit a new organ has been installed. It is a magnificent modern instrument, and I bought a couple of compact discs which have enabled me to appreciate its tone, its power and its range. I do not doubt that it is a valuable addition to the worship of that ancient sanctuary. But as you walk about the cathedral, it does stick out like a sore thumb!

Recent additions to other old buildings struck me that same way, and I am very familiar with the argument that great cathedrals and churches have been continually undergoing repair, alteration, extension and adaptation through the centuries, and each century has introduced the current styles alongside the old. There is a sense in which every ancient place of worship is a sort of patchwork. But for many centuries the changes of style arose out of what went before. They were different, but it was possible, and still is possible, to see the continuity. The problem with the twentieth century is that its radicalism has reached the point of iconoclasm. There is no continuity; change is violent.

I am sure there is a challenge there for archivists. Change must come; it was the Lord himself who said, "Behold, I am making all things new" (Revelations 21:5). The preservation and use of the old records can help sift the helpful change from the destructive.

Blessings on you.

Dudley.

STRANDS FROM A TAPESTRY

Mary O'Byrne OP

Dominican Publications Dublin 2001
295pp. pbk.

One of the remarkably successful stories of Irish emigration is that of the Argentinian Irish, a very high proportion of whom rapidly became wealthy, and the owners of estates as large as Irish counties. It was one of these Argentinian Irish, Mrs. Marcela Duggan de Schoo Devoto who, in the late 1960s invited the Dominican sisters in Galway to commence work in Argentina. Mary O. Byrne tells their story with enthusiasm, and eminent readability.

If one were to suppose that it was a fairly simple matter for a small number of sisters to establish work under the patronage of a wealthy family, one would be quite wrong. An amazing assortment of difficulties confronted the Dominicans as they entered this new field of work.

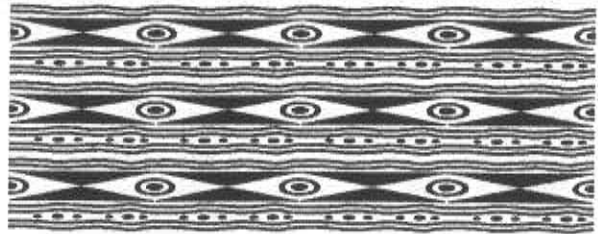
In the first place they were English speaking nuns from a convent in Galway. Geographically Argentina was at the other end of the earth; culturally it was every bit as distant. The first task the sisters had to accomplish was the learning not only of another language, but of a completely different life style.

Once they were in Argentina they found themselves under another pressure. There was a crying need for nuns to work in the parishes where people lived in destitution, with all the economic and moral problems that that entailed. The vocation of the Dominicans, however, was to education, and they had been trained as teachers and administrators of schools. Here then was a crisis of vocation. Should they be loyal to their tradition, or did the need constitute a call to undertake something different? While all of this was exercising their minds in Argentina, the Order at home in Ireland was considering a major reorganisation. That would affect the relationship of the sisters in Argentina to their mother houses in this country.

As if this were not enough, the world in which they moved was under crisis. These were years of constant political upheaval in Argentina, as government followed government with bewildering rapidity, and fear walked the streets. The Church too was under strain, coping with the changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council.

In spite of all of this, the Irish Dominican work in Argentina did more than survive, it flourished. How it did, and who were, under God, its guides and supports is a story which Mary O'Byrne tells in a simple, direct style without excessively pious flourishes. The quiet faith of the sisters registers all the more convincingly for that. This is another success story, worth telling, and worth reading.

D.L.C.



THE BOLTON LIBRARY.

Sr. Rosario Ryan.



The library was founded before 1744 by Theophilus Bolton, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Cashel, who also

built the Cashel Palace and brought the first public water supply to the town.

Though Bolton was founder, the library's greatest treasures came from the collection of Archbishop King of Dublin. He was Bolton's mentor and was said to have been

the most learned and widely-read man of his time. After King's death, Bolton acquired the bulk of his benefactor's library. Bolton himself died in 1744, having bequeathed his library to the diocese of Cashel "for ever".

The collection was originally housed in the Archbishop's Palace. During the 1798 Rising militia troops occupied the palace and many books were damaged. The Church Temporalities Act suppressed several Archbishopsrics including that of Cashel and, at the instigation of Archdeacon Henry Cotton (1824 - 1872), the present Chapter House was built in the Cathedral grounds to house the books.

The basis of the library is Bolton's collection of about 12,000 titles with works from the dawn of printing and earlier manuscripts and a subject range encompassing architecture, science, medicine, mathematics, history, literature, controversy, law, philosophy, humour, politics, prayer-books, bibles and theology.

There are some twenty titles prior to 1500; these include the spectacular Nuremburg Chronicle (1493) and our oldest printed volume, the *Speculum Historical* by Vincent of Beauvais, printed in 1473 at Strasbourg by Adolf Rusch. There is some illumination in this volume and, apart from patches of mould discolouration, the book is in good condition.

The manuscript collection is small. The oldest is a little 12th century volume in 13th century binding of deerskin over oak boards. Its contents include music, mathematics, calendrical tables and Romulus' version of Aesop's Fables. There are two other volumes of manuscripts from the era before the advent of the printing press Irish. manuscripts include Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*.

After Archdeacon Henry Cotton's death the fortunes of the library began to decline. The resources of the Church of Ireland had been seriously depleted by dis-establishment. Some 800 books were sent to Marsh's in Dublin for safe-keeping, and, during the early part of the 20th century,

the books remaining in Cashel were much neglected.

Then in the mid 1940's, the prospects grew steadily righter.

1946: Robert Wyse Jackson became Dean of Cashel and sought help for the library.

1961: Dean Charles Wolfe made further efforts to raise money for the library by selling selected books, mostly duplicates. Thanks to his efforts, a heating system was installed and display cases provided. Dean Wolfe also employed a cataloguer.

1984: Dean David Woodworth was offered help from three sources: American Irish Foundation, The Jefferson Smurfit Group, Guinness Peat Aviation.

The help came in the form of instalments for book conservation, the purchase of computer and office equipment and the complete renovation and remodelling of the building with the installation of new furniture, heating system and humidity control to the highest contemporary standards.



Collection of antiquarian books from 12th century manuscript to mid 18th century. Among items on display are the Nuremburg Chronicle, Caxton printing, medieval maps, altar silver from 16th to 20th centuries. Home of the smallest book in the world.

Sources:

- *The Bolton Library* by Norman Lund
- Tipperary County Libraries at Cashel and Thurles

**THE MARY AIKENHEAD CENTRE
- A FOOTNOTE.**

Seamas S. de Val

In the March 2002 issue of ACAI Newsletter (No. 26) the ACAI chairman pens a review of Donal F. Blake's book on the Servant of the Poor, Mary Aikenhead, in the course of which he says of the newly opened Mary Aikenhead Centre that 'a fine modern building adjoins the original 18th century house which the order bought from the Society of Friends (Quakers) in 1845'.

Coincidentally, as the Newsletter arrived, I was reading a book entitled *A Christian Philanthropist of Dublin - a Memoir of Richard Allen*, written by Hannah Maria Wigham and published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, in 1886.

Richard Allen was born in 1803 of a Quaker family. His father ran a drapery shop at No. 22, Upper Bridge Street, Dublin, but had a large dwelling house at Harold's Cross, then outside the city. This was 'the original 18th century house' referred to in DLC's review quoted above.

Perhaps readers might be interested to learn a little of Richard Allen's long and eventful life, spent in works of charity for the poor and deprived. In 1826 he married Anne Webb and continued working in his father's shop until 1830 when he opened a drapery establishment of his own at 52 High Street. Richard and Anne went to live at De Vesci Lodge, Monkstown, in 1826, and removed to Brooklawn, Blackrock, in 1847.

Richard Allen interested himself in every movement for the benefit of mankind, and much of his energy was expended in efforts to combat slavery in the United States. He was secretary to the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society. Many years later, at the age of eighty, he was able to visit America and see at first hand with satisfaction the conditions in which the now liberated slaves were living.

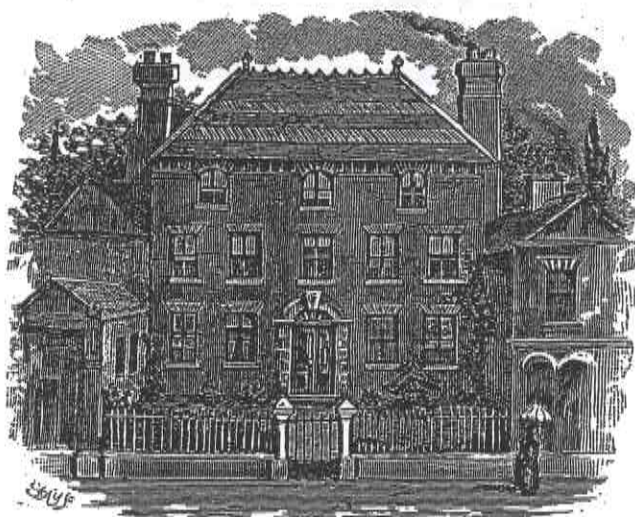
He was also keenly interested in the temperance movement. For this reason he became a close personal friend and staunch supporter of Father Theobald Mathew, OFM.Cap. Father Mathew had incurred serious financial debts in his efforts to promote temperance. By 1844 these amounted to £7,000! Richard Allen promised to help him in every way possible, a promise which elicited a reply from Father Mathew in which he wrote 'Since I was first privileged to become acquainted with you, you were dear to my heart, and this feeling is now enduringly cemented by gratitude.'

From the year 1839 Richard and his wife Anne frequently travelled to the continent on holidays, to France, Germany Italy, and Switzerland, and Richard wrote long and detailed accounts of their journeys which were published in papers such as the *General Advertiser*. Anne died in 1868, but the following year Richard travelled to the Holy Land on a camping holiday. He describes sitting under the shade of a tree in the plain of Bethlehem, reading the account of the birth of our Saviour from the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Warfare and violence being so hateful to the Friends, the outbreak of war between France and Germany in 1870 was a heartbreak to Richard, but the Society did its utmost to help in a practical way the noncombatant victims, and this was to bring him personal tragedy. A group of the Friends, including Richard's own nephew, Henry J. Allen, went to Metz where they distributed food to the almost starving inhabitants. Henry was stricken with smallpox and was seriously ill. Richard and Henry's sister, Ellen, went to Metz to look after him, but there Ellen herself became infected and Richard caught erysipelas which deprived him of the sight of one eye. The young man recovered, but poor Ellen died. On his return home, Richard was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honour by the French government.

Richard married a second time in 1873 a young woman named Mary Ann Marriage who had been engaged in works of charity

amongst the destitute of London and had founded schools for the children of the poor. They spent their honeymoon in the north of Italy. Both continued their work in the Society of Friends, visiting London every year helping in the 'missions' established in the city by the Society of Friends, and attending the annual conferences and other meetings, in spite of Richard's advancing years. Although feeling unwell, Richard attended the annual conference in London in 1885. He improved somewhat on his return to Dublin, but went to his eternal reward on 19 January 1886.



The house at Harold's Cross in 1803
(illustrated from *A Memoir of Richard Allen*).



**A VISIT TO MOUNT MELLERAY
HERITAGE CENTRE.**

Sr. Baptist Meany.

On Saturday morning at 8.15 a.m., July 20, I walked by the Liffey down to the

Custom House to find, happily, Sr. Marie Bernadine O'Leary already waiting with the coach in readiness. The journey to Melleray was a joy, for our chairman, Rev. Leviston Cooney proved a splendid guide, lighting up the journey with flashes of insightful comment on features of the route.

As the coach drove up the avenue to Melleray we were delighted to see Uinseann Ó Maidín O. Cis. standing on the top step of the entrance, in full Cistercian habit, with a big welcome. It was symbolic of the hospitality and warm welcome we experienced throughout the day whether in the Chapel, the dining room or – the goal of our travels – the Heritage Centre.

The Heritage Centre is stunning in its sheer, austere simplicity and ability to sweep one back in time. Except for the electric lighting and audio visual equipment it could have been built a thousand years ago. The 15 wedge-shaped panels are a lovely colour contrast to the dark stone but it is their captions which drew me. Scripted in Irish, English or Latin they propel one through the ages.

Number 1: "In the beginning was the Word" bridges the gap between the early days of monasticism and the coming of the Cistercians to Ireland.

Panel 3: "An Screathán, sliabh lom scéirdiúil, ach is breá le Dia cúnamb". (Scrahan – a wild, bare mountainside! But God loves a helping hand!) brings us to Cappoquin where the monks, with the help of the locals, were to transform that bare, wild mountainside into forested slopes and cultivated fields, while Number 4: "In nomine Domini", marks the real beginning in Melleray – with these timeless words Fr. Vincent Ryan, expelled from France by the French government in 1831, opened the door of the cottage which was to be home to the monks until they built their first monastery in post-Reformation Ireland. Incidentally the whole story is compellingly told in a slim 19 page document called *The Renaissance of*

Cistercian Life in Ireland by Fr. Uinseann, available at the Centre.

A quirky, wry humour flashes unexpectedly from some to the panel captions. Panel 8 solemnly proclaims: "Ní chothaíonn na briathra na bráithre" (Talk will not support the community) – a motto which seems to have been taken seriously by the community for they did everything from opening a limekiln to digging rocks, from breaking stones to building a monastery. Among the community were stone masons, farmers, builders ... and even a nailmaker from Tralee who "forged all the fastenings used in the construction of the monastery". In the exhibition Case, near the entrance door, is a selection of his nails and bolts.

There are priceless other items in the Centre ranging from Ogham Stones to an illuminated copy of the psalter. But the overall impression which the visit made on me was that, in some indefinable but powerful way, this Heritage Centre with its lovely title *Buaille na gCuimhnte* (The Courtyard of Memories) was a living answer to Pope John Paul II's plea "make your archives an instrument of evangelisation" Well done and congratulations!

SUMMERCOURSE

Introduction to Archives

Sr. Cecilia English.

On June the 24th sixteen people gathered in 23 Herbert Street to participate in a week long course organised by A.C.A.I. The group were from different religious Congregations in Ireland, England, Africa and the U.S.A. All had one aim in mind, to learn the technique of working at preserving our heritage, through Archive Management.

After welcoming the group Rev. Dudley Levistone Cooney, Chairman of the A.C.A.I. gave us an outline of what Archives really are. One way of looking

at Archives is 'what happened', and 'what people think happened'. The material we collect can be interesting and entertaining but it must be factual. He also said it is very important to go back on our sources, and the gap between history as it is, and as it is presented in popular tradition, be closed. As Church Archivists we are giving Glory to God, the Lord of the Past, Present, and future.

We had excellent speakers during the week. Kerry Holland, Archive Department in U.C.D. in her talks, stressed the importance of Archives - they are a nation's resource, documents of historical evolution, also the identity and spirit of a Congregation emerges in the documents. They also protect the rights and interests of the Congregation and its members and clients. In the course of the week she went through the many areas in the work of at the Archivist - Acquisition, Appraisal, Accessioning and methods of Documents Description. While it might all appear very technical to us, once we started the work this would all become clear to us and we would be filled with enthusiasm as time went on.

Mr. Seamus Helferty, Archive Department U.C.D. gave us some very valuable information on the Handling and Preserving of Records. Ms. Marianne Cosgrave, Mercy Congregational Archivist, opened up to us the Circular Letter of the Pontifical Commission for Cultural Heritage of the Church, published by the Vatican in 1997. In it, it is pointed out that leaders or Congregations had the responsibility of preserving the heritage of their Orders, and passing it on, because it not only belongs to them, but to the world. Other speakers came from the Irish Architectural Archives, Irish Film Institute, and the Librarian from St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, and shared with us the work they do.

We were invited by Seamus and Kerry to visit the Archives Department in UCD.

The visit was very much appreciated by the group, because it gave us a better understanding of all the theory we had got in the lectures. The Staff in the Department made us very welcome, and a lovely afternoon tea was enjoyed by all. The Sisters of Mercy, in the International Centre in Baggot Street, also gave us a tour of the Foundation House of the Sisters of Mercy and the Archive Department there. The visit there concluded with afternoon with tea and a chat with the Sisters living in the house. Our thanks to both of these for their hospitality.

In concluding this short resume of the week, I know the group would like me to say Thank You to the A.C.A.I. for organising the course, and being present each day to keep things moving smoothly. Our thanks also to the Sisters of Mercy in 23 Herbert Street who looked after us so well each day, in providing lunch and refreshments. The week was very worth while, and thanks to all the speakers who shared their knowledge and experience with us.



Dear readers,

There was a mistake in the numbering of the May issue of the Newsletter, which was listed as number 26 instead of 25. For purposes of continuity, I have listed this issue as 25/27 so that there will no gap in the records. Sorry for the slip! – Ed.

ACAI EXECUTIVE.

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SECRETARIA STATUS

The Supreme Pontiff
POPE JOHN PAUL II

has appointed as a Consultor of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, for a period of five years,

Sister DOMINIQUE HORGAN, O.P.

who is hereby informed of her appointment.

From the Vatican, 4 June 2002

Secretary of State

Congratulations to Sr. Dominique Horgan, O.P. on her appointment as consultor to the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church. Dominique has been an enthusiastic member of the ACAI for many years and has shared her time, talents and experience generously with us. This appointment is a great honour for Dominique and indeed for Ireland, and a well-deserved recognition of both her skills and great work as an archivist. We wish her every blessing and success.

