



ACAI NEWSLETTER

ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH ARCHIVISTS
IRELAND



No. 28 APRIL 2003

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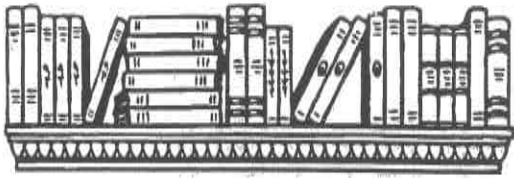
FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Most of us stop from time to time to ask how we are doing. Your committee has been doing just that. At the last few annual meetings you have been kind enough to tell us that you think we are doing a good job, and we most certainly do not question your sincerity, but we do believe that we can only do well if we keep asking how we might do better.

All of which brings me to the point that the Committee has decided to write to all the dioceses, Catholic and Protestant, giving them a brief account of what we have been doing, and asking them to feel free to avail of any assistance that they think we could give them. This is inviting response from people who may or may not already know something of the Association. We look forward with interest to what answers we shall receive.

I am more and more convinced that the care of archives should be in the hands of dedicated and understanding people. Those who are engaged in the Church's daily ministry of evangelisation, pastoral care, and education are under constant pressure to deal with the demands put on them by the present work, and may often feel that the keeping of records is an interruption. I have reason to believe that many of them are only too happy to know that there are others, like us, who will give the records the care that they need. In one of his letters to the churches he had planted, Paul has some interesting things to say about the parts of the body (1 Cor. 12). Which part is the archivist? The memory?

Every good wish as you keep the Church's memories green!



BOOK REVIEWS.

'that could never be'. A Memoir. Kevin Dalton with Patrick Semple. Columba Press Dublin 2003. 192pp pbk £8.99: £12.99

The title of this book is taken from a lady's perfectly reasonable response to a lad in his teens, who had informed her that one day he wanted to be a clergyman. It was perfectly reasonable because he had no family background, has spent almost all of his life, up to then, in two orphanages, and had only a sketchy education. The lady overlooked two factors. One was the determination of the lad himself, when he was strongly motivated: the other was God. For the last twenty years the lad has been rector of one of the largest parishes in the Dublin conurbation.

Feeling unable himself to write the story, he told it to another rector, who put it into book form, and one must compliment Patrick Semple. He may have done the writing, but to those of

us who know him the voice that comes through these pages is the authentic voice of Kevin.

Nobody else could so combine stubborn determination and humility. Neither, perhaps, could anybody else be so disarmingly candid.

Kevin is a shrewd observer of human nature, a talent nurtured in the mixed experiences of orphanage life. He sees people clearly, and recognises the contradictions that are present in all human beings. He has met all sorts, some of them decidedly objectionable, but though he makes no attempt to conceal his dislike of the objectionable, he is remarkably free of resentment. He has been fortunate in many of his friends, and would be the first to say so, but he would also see the hand of God operating through them.

A broad churchman, it is possible to detect in what he says a mistrust of evangelicalism, and his style may well strike evangelicals as off-putting. That is one very good reason for recommending it. There can be no doubt of the real spirituality that runs through this book. It is all about the will of God and one boy's

determination to serve it. It is a very healthy experience to find that dedication expressed in language and lifestyle other than that to which we may have been accustomed.

'...the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind.'

That is why Christian devotion finds so many forms.

Dudley Levistone Cooney.



Christianity in Ireland - Revisiting the Story.

Edited by Brendan
Bradshaw and Dáire Keogh.
Hbk. 408pp. Columba Press.
€30.00.

In general, we in Ireland have a relatively poor knowledge of the history of Christianity in our own country and this volume is therefore of particular interest both to the general reader and to more serious students of the subject. The book is the result of the 1999 seminar held in Italy and whose Proceedings were published in Milan, under the title 'Storia religiosa dell'Irlanda', in 2001. The seminar had been organised by

Professor Dónal Kerr, Professor Emeritus of Ecclesiastical History at Maynooth, and he and the participants were anxious that their work should be published in Ireland, knowing only too well the lack of a suitable survey-history of the church here. Unfortunately Dónal Kerr died before completing the task, but the present editors have both updated the original and recruited additional contributors, the result taking on what must be described as a seamless whole. It is also, a fitting memorial to Dónal Kerr.

Tracing the history of Christianity in Ireland would be a formidable task for any one author and these essays by different authors have allowed each to concentrate on his or her particular period or area with all the clarity and individuality one would expect, while maintaining the essential thread of continuity, thus keeping the whole work in perspective. There are 23 essays in chronological order, which allow the reader to develop a picture that has best suited the Irish ethos.

The story commences with Patrician times and continues through the evangelisation of

the country, the golden days of monasticism and European mission, the Reformation and Counter Reformation, Presbyterianism, Methodism, the Penal Laws, Catholic Emancipation, the consolidation and changes in the Roman Catholic church in the 19th century, the Famine, the church of Ireland after Disestablishment and since partition, the role of Church and State in modern Ireland, the troubled state of the Roman Catholic Church in modern times, etc. There are three maps, which show the extent of the golden age in monastic settlements at home, the expansion of Irish churchmen and scholars into Europe and the various dioceses of Ireland. In addition, there is an excellent chronology of Irish History, essential in keeping the events described in the text in correct perspective.

One cannot but be impressed with the zeal and fortitude displayed by the participants, both lay and clerical, that contributed to Christianity in Ireland down the centuries. They were not always successful, or even correct, but they implicitly believed in the truth of the Word. They have left us an example that we can

only hope will be carried into the future. Without it Ireland would be a sorry place.

TM.



The Field Day
anthology of Irish Writing
- Women's Writing and
Traditions. Volumes IV (pp
1,490) and V (pp 1,710).
Cork University Press.
€250 each volume.

Launched in September 2002, by Mary Robinson at the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre, these volumes are vast tomes. They present to us more than 750 Irish women fiction writers, novelists and short story writers and women's tradition over the centuries with a cut off date of 1979. It is the cooperative venture of a team of eight main editors, assisted by a group of sub-section editors. In this respect, these volumes were edited as a collaborative process which must have made the editorial task quite a difficult one at times. Volumes I, II, and III, published in 1991, were edited by Seamus Deane of U.C.D. Together all five volumes give us a valuable literary resource and archive. DH

THE SIENA STORY.

1722-1997

By Desmond Forrestal.

Published by the Monastery
of St Catherine of Siena
Drogheda 1999.

The freshness and readability of this brief history of 'Siena', as the Monastery of the Dominican Nuns in Drogheda is known, is obvious. The skill and competence of Desmond Forrestal is well-known, but the constraints are not. For instance, he keeps the interest, the story line running without stop, in spite of the exigencies demanded by historical accuracy. This is the story beginning with the date 1644 when the Dominican Convent Galway was founded. It was in this community that Catherine and Mary Plunkett were professed in 1709. Catherine, in time, became the foundress of the Siena Convent. Throughout clarity is needed, for the background is a tortuous one, and it was necessary for Forrestal to insert a brief aside, the historic lynch-pin, on which daily and annual events were turned. Penal laws, expulsion from convents, hunted or disturbed lives or the anomaly of enclosed nuns forced to live publicly outside their convent is

the background to the story. The exile of many women and men religious in European countries where they were welcomed is clarified.

In March 1717 Catherine and Mary Plunkett were among the eight nuns chosen from the Galway community to open a Convent in Dublin. From there Catherine was sent to Brussels to the only other English speaking Dominican Convent in the world, by the Provincial. In 1721 she was recalled to open the Convent in Drogheda. It was formally recognised on 28 March 1722.

From that date the account continues until 1994 when the historic Convent was burned to the ground. The re-siting and re-opening of this contemplative Convent is actually the axis on which Forrestal's book turns.

As Cardinal Cathal Daly says in his introduction - 'The Story of Siena is indeed a glorious one'.

In all senses this is brief, but a good read.

Ann Dominica Fitzgerald op



A VISIT TO THE ARCHIVES OF KING'S HOSPITAL, PALMERSOWN.

On the bus trip Lucan to Dublin I had often noticed the sign King's Hospital and wondered mildly what was there. On a lovely sunny day in March - you remember that beautiful week enclosing St Patrick's Day - I got the answer. A visit to the archives of King's Hospital had been arranged for Thursday March 20, thanks to the committee of the ACAI.

It was an exhilarating experience. As I walked up the avenue I saw the students on the spacious playing fields. At Reception Mrs Lesley Whiteside, the archivist welcomed us and directed us to the archives. Her office and the archives are just off the library where we sat as we listened to the intriguing story of King's Hospital.

Lesley clarified our puzzlement over the term 'hospital'. She told us that in the seventeenth century the term 'hospital' denoted a charitable institution for the maintenance and education of the needy. The school was established by royal charter in 1669 and was to be

called THE HOSPITAL AND FREE SCHOOL OF KING CHARLES THE SECOND, Dublin! The coat of arms of Charles II hangs imposingly in the entrance. That the school offered maintenance as well as free education is shown by the fact that the boys received all their clothes and were catered for during the holidays, for only those whose parents were able to care for them adequately went home on vacation.

Incidentally Lesley told us that she has a database - with 34 columns which has the name and particulars of every student who ever entered the school!! The school has been in three different locations - A. Queen Street 1675: B. Blackhall Place 1783: C. present location 1967. The present campus includes a lovely octagonal chapel as well as houses for the chaplain, the headmaster and the staff. Lesley goes home to Westmeath at weekends.

An important element of the school uniform until 1922 was long blue coat for special occasions. Hence King's Hospital was one of the BLUE COAT schools - like Christ's Hospital, London. A bound volume in the archives is titled,

THE BLUE COAT - a collection of school magazines. Lesley herself published a book in 1975 to commemorate the ter-centenary of the opening of the school. On its cover is the gold crest with the inscription: THE HOSPITAL AND FREE SCHOOL OF KING CHARLES 11 OXMANTOWN A.D. 1669.

In the archives Lesley showed us some of their treasures, including *THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER* dating back to 1721, *MEDOLIA SACRA* published in 1812 and the *PSALTER* in Irish! as well as the *CHAPEL REGISTRY* and the *PREACHERS' BOOK*. In the chapel a fine organ was installed in 1821: this was, according to one 19th century source, 'an old German instrument said to have belonged to Handel'.

Among the fine plaques was one titled 'TO THE GLORY OF GOD: in honoured memory of the boys who fell in the Second World War 1939-1945'.

Incidentally we learned that between 1675 and 1918 a total of 450 boys died in school. It is easy to forget now the toll once taken by dread diseases such as tuberculosis not to mention measles and whooping cough.

King's Hospital has changed enormously over the 330 years since its foundation.

Originally it was an all-boys boarding school where entrance was limited to baptised Anglicans, most of whom had a farming background and whose goal was apprenticeship to trades, though, by the 1880's some were graduating in medicine. In 1950 it changed from being a poor school to fee paying, and since 1971 it has been a co-educational boarding and day school. Essentially Anglican it later opened its doors to Protestant non-conformists and later to Roman Catholics. Lesley assured us that there was never proselytism at King's Hospital. Today it has 700 pupils, 350 of whom are boarders.

Until 1960 the Head was always an ordained Anglican priest. Today King's Hospital has its first Headmistress. It is a Church of Ireland school with service every Sunday and Chapel every morning, which all students must attend. It has a wide range of extra-curricular activities and magnificent playing fields.

Before I left I got a copy of Lesley's *HISTORY OF KING'S*

HOSPITAL. It is a fascinating read and lights up many aspects of Anglican education in Ireland. Thank you, Lesley. And míle buíochas for the lovely cup of tea before we left.

Sr. Baptist Meany.



NOTICE BOARD / DIARY DATES.

MNÁ AN CHREIDIMH THE NUNS REGISTER

Clare Malone, Registrar for the 'Nuns Register' project welcomes information on the Irish women who entered Religious Life during the 19th and 20th centuries in Ireland and overseas. The type of information sought is:

Name.

Date of Birth and Place.

Parents names.

Order and Date of Entry.

Religious name.

Date and Place of Death/Burial.

A brief biography would also be greatly appreciated.

For further information contact Clare Malone, Hon. Secretary,

GSI, 11 Desmond Avenue, Dún Laoghaire, Co Dublin. Ireland.

QUERY:

Mrs. Elizabeth M Roberts (nee Sullivan), Garden Flat, Lannowerth Road, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 3AB, UK. Is seeking information on Teresa Halloran who entered a convent when she was very young at the time her mother and siblings emigrated to America, her father having been killed in an accident. She would possibly be in her late 70s or early 80s now. As a child Elizabeth (Betty) and her mother spent many holidays at 'White Barn' near Bandon, Co Cork where Teresa was born. Any information would be welcome by Elizabeth.



REMEMBER

AGM: All Hallows College,
Gracepark Road,
Drumcondra.

Saturday 10 May 2003.

SUMMER SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION TO
ARCHIVES

IN

CATHERINE MCAULEY
CENTRE

23 HERBERT STREET
DUBLIN

FROM

30TH JUNE - 4TH JULY
2003

FEE E275

E75 EURO
NON-REFUNDABLE
DEPOSIT

BOOKINGS TO BE
CONFIRMED BY 10 MAY

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONTACT:

MARIANNE COSGRAVE
CATHERINE MCAULEY CENTRE
23 HERBERT STREET
Dublin 2

TEL: 01 6387521

FAX: 016387553

EMAIL: MPLCOSGRAVE@EIRCOM.NET

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BOXES

ATLAS

PRINT AND PACKAGING
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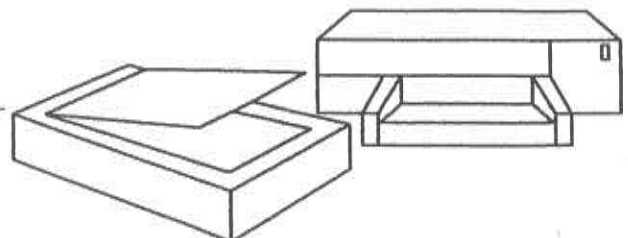
FAX: 2828245

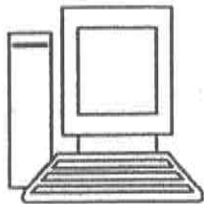
MOBILE: 0872586739

JAMES KAVANAGH
MANAGING DIRECTOR

CAR PHONE: 0882586739

This Company will have a
display of materials at the
AGM in All Hallows to
accommodate your enquiries
and needs.





USEFUL
AND
INTERESTING
WEB SITES

Irish Society for Archives:
www.ucd.ie/~archives/isa/isa-index.html

National Photographic
Archive:
www.nli.ie

Online Training Course:
www.hmc.gov.uk/focus/

National Archives:
www.nationalarchives.ie

Unesco Archives:
www.unesco.org/archivesportal

Historic Scotland:
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

General Register Office for
Births, Marriages and
Deaths:
www.groireland.ie

European Heritage:
<http://eur-heritage.com/index.htm>



ACAI EXECUTIVE

Chair:
Rev. Dudley Levistone Cooney
1 Claremont Court
Ailt an Oir
Upper Glenageary Road
Dun Laoghaire
Co Dublin
Tel/Fax: 01 2807141
Email: Levinstonecooney@eircom.net

Vice chair
Sr Dominique Horgan op
St Mary's
47 Mount Merrion Avenue
Blackrock
Co Dublin
Tel: 086 821 3115
Email: dhorganop@iol.ie

Hon. Secretary:
Sr Marie O'Leary RSC
'Caritas'
15 Gilford Road
Sandymount
Dublin 4
Tel: 01269 7833

Hon. Treasurer:
Marianne Cosgrave
Catherine McAuley Centre
23 Herbert Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 638 7500
Fax: 638 7523
Email: mpcosgrave@eircom.net

Penny Woods
Russell Library
St Patrick's College
MAYNOOTH
Co Kidare
Tel: 01 7083890
Email: penny.woods@may.ie

Sr Catherine Gibson op
Dominican Sisters
204 Griffith Avenue
Dublin 9
Tel: 01 8379550
Email: gibsonc@gcfree.indigo.ie