

CORI / ACAI Workshops 2016

Workshop 1: Developing and Managing a Religious Archives Service

Saturday March 5, Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, Dublin 3

Dr Elizabeth Mullins, School of History, University College
Dublin



Proposed Workshops Arising from CORI Survey 2015

1. Sorting your Archives
2. Oral History
3. Digitisation
4. Employing an Archivist
5. Advisory Boards
6. Policy Development
7. Collaboration going forward
8. Furthering a Research project/ area

Workshop 1: Developing and Managing a Religious Archives Service



CORI / ACAI Workshops 2016

- May 2016 ACAI AGM Advocating for your Archive
- June 2016 Representing Archives: Description and Digitization
- September/October 2016: Access and Oral History
- October/November 2016: Telling the Story – Writing the Religious History of Ireland
- 2017: Dealing with Artefacts and Conservation, Managing your Current Records and Legislation.
- Feedback – suggestions / comments



Developing and Managing a Religious Archives Service

Session 1:

'Developing an Archives Service: Deciding What Records to Keep'

Dr Elizabeth Mullins, School of History, University College Dublin

'Writing an Archives Policy'

Clare Brophy, Irish Franciscan Archives



'Developing an Archives Service: Deciding What Records to Keep'

- How do you establish intellectual control over the holdings in your archive?
- How do you decide what kind of records are worthy of long term preservation?
- How do you develop a policy to deal with the future acquisition of material?



In the context of religious archives...

- Getting intellectual control means:
- Understanding the history of your community and its main administrative structures, activities, values etc, - thinking about change
- Knowing the kinds of records your community created historically and is creating currently to reflect these activities.
- Knowing the kinds of records and collections that are in your archive
- Identifying what has been written about recordkeeping



What kinds of records are normally produced in a religious archive context? The kinds of records that should or could be in your archive...

Typical collections:

- The founders
- Administration of the Province - Leadership
- Communities and Houses
- Properties owned – Legal material
- Individual Religious – personal papers
- Kinds of Activities or Works - Orphanages, Schools, Nursing Homes, Hospitals, Intellectual Endeavours etc
- Additional private donations etc.



Identifying what has been written about recordkeeping...

- Religious Framework:
- Sisters of Mercy – custom / guidebooks

- Statutory Framework:
Rules and Regulations for Certified Industrial Schools
(1869)



Evidence of Record Keeping: School Life St Aloysius Industrial School, Clonakilty

- Judicial and Criminal Statistics of Ireland, 1873, Form 2
- Register Entry for Child for August 1876-August 1880



'Sorting Your Archive' – What principle underlies how you organize the records into groups?

Typical collections:

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- Individual Religious – personal papers
- Kinds of Activities or Works - Orphanages, Schools, Nursing Homes, Hospitals, Intellectual Endeavours etc
- Sorting your archive....



An archival fonds (collection) is:

The whole of the records, regardless of form or medium, organically created and or accumulated and used by a particular person, family or corporate body in the course of that creator's activities and functions.

General International Standard Archival Description, 2nd Edition (2000)



The principle of provenance

- The basic principle that records/archives of the same provenance must not be intermingled with those of any other provenance; frequently referred to as "respect des fonds".

<http://www.ciscra.org/mat/mat> - Multilingual Archival Terminology

- <http://www.learnaboutarchives.ie/index.php/component/content/article/23-explore-your-archive/281-university-college-dublin-storybox>



Typical collections in a religious archives context....

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- Kinds of Activities or Works - Orphanages, Schools, Nursing Homes, Hospitals, Intellectual Endeavours etc
- Missions
- Additional private donations etc.

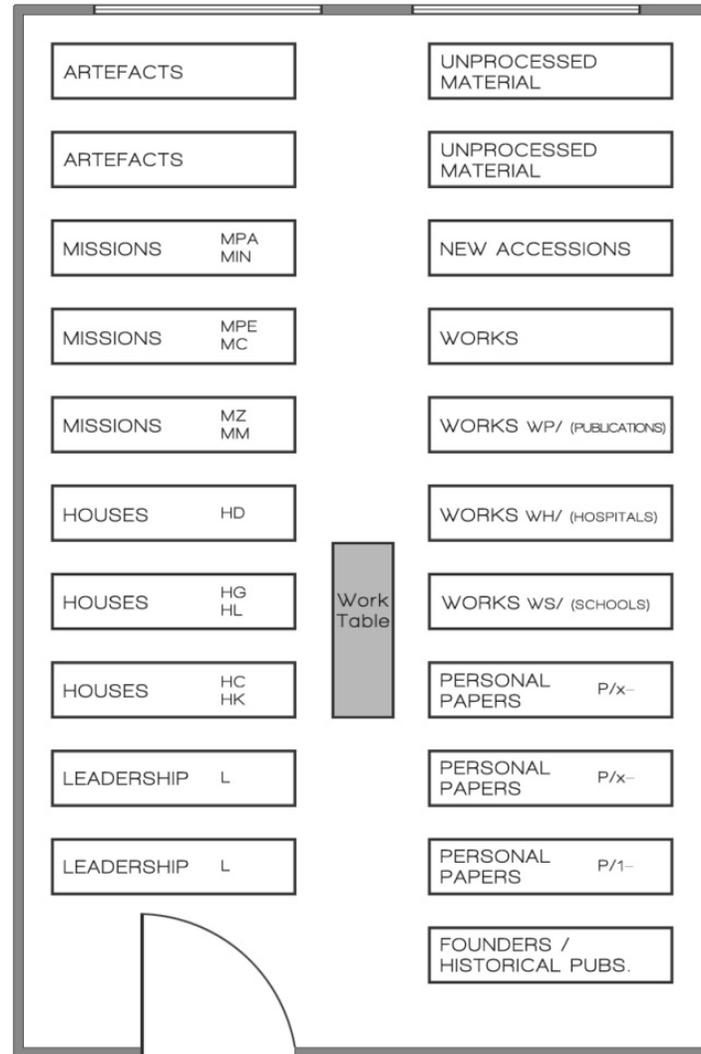


Link between intellectual and physical control = Roadmap = 'Sorting your Archive'

- Organizing your strongroom space
- Starting to give different collection groups numbers
- Creating a framework for locating material and for retrieving it.



Imaginary archives strongroom layout



Establishing Intellectual Control – Do you have what you want in your archive?

- This allows you to understand the extent to which your archive is succeeding in appropriately documenting your past and your present for the use of the future
- What does appropriately mean here?



What does appropriately mean in this context?

- To what extent are you keeping things that don't need to be kept?
- To what extent are you not keeping things of value?
- Undervaluing people's personal papers / digital challenge- 2010 Survey of Religious Archives in the UK
- How could this influence the way that the history of your community will be written?



The Archive is important to your Story....

'....A major act of determining historical meaning – perhaps *the* major act – occurs not when the historian opens the box, but when the archivist fills the box, and, by implication, through the process of archival appraisal, destroys the other 98 or 99 per cent of records that do not get into that or any other archival box' - Terry Cook, 'The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 90,3, September 2009, reprinted *American Archivist* 2011 (pp. 511-512).



How should you approach your records – do you need to appraise them?

- Microappraisal approach – appraising one collection at a time - for houses and personal papers there are guidelines and templates for this...

- Religious Archives Group –
Archives for Beginners – Collecting

Records to Keep

<https://religiousarchivesgroup.org.uk/advice/rag/>



Society of the Sacred Heart England and Wales Provincial Archive Personal Papers Policy

- Catholic Archives Society
- Documents and Policies
- <http://lgn1304515267.site-fusion.co.uk/helpadvice/documents-policies>
- Preserving your personal papers a Guide for Owners (2014)
- <https://religiousarchivesgroup.org.uk/advice/rag/>



Personal Papers include (but are not restricted to):	
qualification certificates	unpublished writings – articles, lecture/talk notes
Birth certificates	photographs
Sacramental certificates	Artworks
vow formulae	artefacts
personal correspondence	items relating to individual ministries
Notebooks/ journals/ diaries	Newspaper clippings about individual rscj

How should you approach your records – do you need to appraise them?

- Microappraisal approach – appraising one collection at a time - for houses and personal papers there are guidelines and templates for this...
- Generally with historic material, the focus is on keeping them – often the kinds of material which has survived is quite patchy – conservative approach
- age is important – sense in which if you didn't keep this document there would be no record of the community in existence...
- Make sure you have collected everything that is there – raise awareness among the congregation of the need to flag material



What doesn't need to be kept?

- General rule: most high quality material in the least quantity, avoidance of duplicates, use of sampling to reduce bulk
- Duplicates and circulars, Commercially generated material, Press cuttings, Formation/Retreat notes etc, Rate payment receipts
- Case files – Sampling approach
- Managing Books and Libraries
- Collections not appropriate for your archive – deaccessioning material
- Guidance to trustees on the disposal of Archives
- <https://religiousarchivesgroup.org.uk/advice/rag/>



Dealing with your current records – institutional papers / personal papers

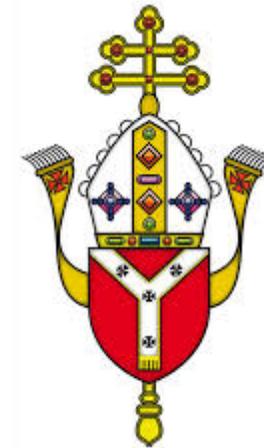
- Process of thinking about where the key records that are of enduring value are being created – what are the main activities/functions that should be documented and to what extent?
- ‘The secret to appraising records is to put a bag over them and to focus on the context of their creation’ – David Bearman cited in Cook ‘Macroappraisal
- Extent to which legislation plays a role in terms of the length of time that financial, personal material needs to be kept for – see Catholic Archives Society Publications, Archive Advice Leaflet Number 3, Retention of financial records



<http://www.catholic-history.org.uk/catharch/advice3b.pdf>

Westminster Diocesan Archives Collecting Policy

- Scope/Contents of Archive
- Motivations for Policy
- Qualifications for Acquisition
- Link with other repositories
- Decisions about artefacts/books
- Deaccessioning
- Accessioning by gift, loan
- Copyright



Acquisitions Policy – Contents?

Managing Your Archives - Archive Policies for Small Religious Repositories Religious Archives Group (2013).

- areas for active collection of material: which areas are chosen and why
- areas that will not be covered
- gaps in holdings
- decision-making responsibility
- the terms upon which material will be accepted
- which types and formats of material are accepted
- which material will be discarded or returned to any potential depositor.



Capturing less formal records of religious life? Where are the gaps?

- Edwards, Chloe R. (2012) "Documenting Religious Organizations: Theory and Practice," *Advances in the Study of Information and Religion*: Vol. 2, Article 3.
- Available at:
<http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/asir/vol2/iss1/3>
- Developing alternative record sources such as oral history – proactive collecting and documenting

