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## EDITORIAL NOTES

Ever fearful lest the journal should depart from its original concept or be mistaken for simply an historical periodical, the patient reader is gently reminded that *Catholic Archives* is primarily concerned with describing the archives of the Roman Catholic Church in all their diversity, and with promoting the objectives of the Society itself, namely the care and use of such archives, both to the organisations which created them and to historical research generally.

In the past the archives of the Church have perhaps been regarded as of interest only to historians of the Church itself, and their potential relevance to the history of education, welfare, health services and other topics, let alone national themes, has largely been ignored by scholars. Historians 'worth their salt', it is said, will always find their sources. But, even if this were true, all archivists in charge of documents kept as historical evidence surely have a duty to publicise them, and to encourage research. If Catholic archives have been and still are neglected by researchers, it is even more important for religious archivists to be outward-looking. They could, perhaps, circulate lists of their archives more widely, publish articles, attend conferences, and the like.

The views that Catholic archives provide relevant, even essential, evidence in many fields of research and that Catholic archivists should play a more active role than heretofore emerge from several articles in this issue. Both Dr Susan O'Brien and Professor Donal McCartney show how historians have almost totally neglected the contribution of women's religious congregations in the history of education, welfare, social and cultural life. It is by no means fair, however, to blame historians. They cannot work without tools, and it is the job of archivists to provide these. Professor McCartney, reflecting on the respective roles of the administrator, the archivist and the historian,emphasises that the work of the individual archivist is critical. Such recognition by an eminent historian should encourage religious archivists beavering away on their own, though Dr O'Brien's broad research spanning differing religious congregations reminds them that they live not in separate little boxes but in a wide historical world. In 1981, Dom Mark Dilworth wrote that 'the fundamental role of the Scottish Archives was to show that the historiography of Scotland is incomplete unless our Church is seen as a constant factor', and now he suggests that the Church 'must have a presence and play a part in all constructive human activities', and he sees Columba House as 'spear-heading the Church's involvment in one area of the cultural and academic scene'.

In November 1987, Fr Dolan, our Vice-Chairman, presented the Pope with copies of *Catholic Archives.* In response the Pope conveyed his cordial thanks and wished 'to encourage the work being done by the Society in preserving documents and in making the history of the Church in the United Kingdom more widely known', and he gave members of the Society his apostolic blessing.

The Memorandum on Parish Records submitted by the Society to the Bishops' Conference in November 1988 and the very encouraging response arc published for the record. All the contributors to this issue arc warmly thanked, and similar articles arc earnestly solicited for future editions.

R.M. Gard, *Honorary Editor*

# THE ARCHIVES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF DUBLIN

David C. Sheehy

From Tudor times to the relaxation of the penal laws in the latter half of the eighteenth century, anyone holding the office of Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin had to possess courage in abundance, exercise discretion, and, on occasion be fleet of foot. In the wake of the Reformation in Ireland and with the later turbulent upheavals of the Cromwellian and Williamite eras Catholic episcopal organisation in Ireland suffered severe disruption. For an archbishop or bishop, keeping records was a difficult if not a dangerous undertaking.

During spasmodic periods of persecution in the 17th and early 18th centuries, bishops, living on the run, understandably destroyed such papers as they possessed to protect themselves and those sheltering them. On occasion, episcopal papers themselves were the object of searches by government agents and commercial priest-hunters so as to aid the prosecution of their creators under the penal code. In 1713, for example, the then Archbishop of Dublin, Edmund Byrne, was ordered by the Lords Justice and Council to be apprehended and committed to jail and his papers to be sealed up and sent to the Council offices. An agent's search was shortly thereafter reported thus:

> **The messenger went to Byrne, the cooper's, in Francis Street, to search for the Titular Archbishop Byrne's papers and upon his going into the house found Byrne, the Cooper lying by the fireside in the gout. The messenger searched the whole house but found no papers except some old accounts of Hoops & Barrells and having enquired of the Cooper when the Titular Archbishop was in his house, he was positively affirmed he was not within his house these seven years past.**[1]

The priest catcher was nothing if not persistent and Byrne was finally caught and arrested five years later. However, when the trial was held the following year the prosecution case was allowed to fall for lack of evidence, even though Byrne's identity as Dublin's so-called 'Titular Archbishop' was known to the authorities. The easing of international tension had dampened down another temporary 'popish' scare. With the penal laws being increasingly resorted to only as measures of popular control in times of crisis, the authorities were often embarrassed as in the above instance by the activities of opportunistic priest-hunters who for personal gain sought to implement the penal code much too vigorously for official liking.

Catholic prelates and their flock in Dublin, were, in the eighteenth century generally tolerated. Indeed, so safe a haven was Dublin for Catholic bishops that early in the century a number of country bishops sought temporary refuge there when threatened with persecution in their native dioceses. Tolerated

though Roman Catholic archbishops of Dublin in the eighteenth century may have been, the fact that they continued to believe they were potentially under threat militated against the survival of archival records which might otherwise prove incriminating. In addition to losses induced by penal restriction, other factors leading to the loss of episcopal papers would have included natural disasters (such as fire, flooding, etc.) and the passing of those papers into family hands on the death of an archbishop.

In all, Dublin Diocesan Archives holds no more than 150 items covering the reigns of twelve archbishops from 1800 to 1770. Few originals survive, the remainder being Roman-authenticated copies of the eighteenth century and transcripts. Two charters are the sole inheritance from the period prior to 1600. By contrast, the nineteenth century is marked by the steady accumulation of archival material reflecting the increasing confidence and assertiveness of the Roman Catholic Church in Dublin and throughout Ireland. With a permanent administrative base sited at Archbishop's House at Drumcondra in 1890, this trend continued into this century. Indeed, the rate of record creation has sharply increased since 1940. The result has been the creation over time of a diocesan archive of major significance for the study of ecclesiastical and secular history in Ireland.

The holdings of the Archives can be divided up according to a number of record series: diocesan chapter records; archiepiscopal papers, papers of bishops; records of the Irish Hierarchy; papers of priests and laity; and records of colleges, institutions and organisations, both secular and clerical. This article will mainly be concerned with describing the papers of successive archbishops.

### *Records of the Diocesan Chapter*

Diocesan Chapter records date back to the early eighteenth century and are the oldest diocesan records of a systematic nature to have survived. They are preserved in bound volume format. The first volume, titled *Liber Decanatus* /, contains records of Chapter business as first set down by the Rev. Denis Byrne in 1729, when Dean of the Chapter. Volume II begins in the year 1770 and brings the records down to 1862. Additional records kept by the Chapter's secretary and treasurer are also preserved.

### *Episcopal Papers*

JOHN CARPENTER, 1770-1786. John Carpenter was the first archbishop who felt free to keep records on a consistent basis, though, with enforcement not always matching enactment in the latter stages of the penal era, it may even have been safe for his immediate predecessors to have done so had they but realised it. In any event, it is thanks to Carpenter that the earliest diocesan records of a systematic character, those relating to the Metropolitan Chapter, have survived.

Carpenter's correspondence and other material has been preserved in bound volume format. A letterbook contains copies, in his own elegant hand, of the archbishop's correspondence with the Holy See, with Irish and foreign bishops and with priests and laymen (1770—83), in addition to copies of letters of his predecessors, transcribed by Carpenter for reference purposes. These letters cover such subjects as episcopal appointments in Ireland, Irish colleges abroad, disorders in the dioceses of Armagh and Dromore, the dissolution of the Jesuits in Ireland, the Test Oath of 1774, clandestine marriages and the feasts of Irish saints.

Carpenter's papers reflect the caution and uncertainty of an administration not quite sure how safe it was to operate openly in its contemporary environment. For example, it was standard practice in the 17th and 18th centuries for the Papal Nuncio, then resident in Brussels, to retain the originals of Roman documents sending copies only to the bishops in Ireland. Even in Carpenter's time almost all the letters from Rome and even from the Nuncio remain only in the form of transcripts in the archbishop's hand. It seems to have been his practice not to retain the originals. The same applies as already noted to key documents inherited from his predecessors.

As an instance of his caution. Carpenter, in a letter to the Nuncio dated May 1772, sets out the danger of sending a report on his schools to the Holy See, and in a letter dated May 1776 he warns the new Nuncio to address him as a private person — as Dr Carpenter living in Usher's Island (Dublin). [2]

On his death in 1786, Carpenter's letters, though not his Register, passed into the hands of his nearest relatives, the Lee family. So also did the bulk of the papers of his successor, Dr Troy, who was also related to the Lees. It wasn't until the end of the last century that all this valuable material was returned to diocesan custody. In the case of one important item, that, unfortunately, was not to be the end of the story. Carpenter's volume of instructions and admonitions to his clergy and laity and various notes, all in manuscript and bound in one volume, disappeared from the Diocesan Archives during the 1950s and its whereabouts is unknown. [3]

JOHN TROY, 1786-1823. The deposit left by Archbishop John Troy is modest in size but wide-ranging in content. Again largely preserved in bound volume format, Troy's papers touch on such topics as Defenderism, the Catholic Committee, Catholic Relief Bills, the United Irishmen, the Rebellion of 1798, sectarian outrages, Irish colleges abroad and the foundation of St Patrick's College, Maynooth. Troy's important correspondence with the Holy See, in particular, sheds much light on such issues as relations between the Catholic Church and the civil power in Ireland, the education and training of priests, doctrinal error, devotional practices and Gallicanism. Further elaboration of these and other issues can be found in Troy's letters to and from his agent in

Rome, Dr Luke Concannon OP. Indeed, a notable feature of Troy's papers is the survival of copies of some of Troy's replies to letters received. Correspondence files in collections of private papers usually consist only of incoming letters.

DANIEL MURRAY, 1823-1852. Though the papers of Archbishop Daniel Murray are more numerous than those of his two immediate predecessors combined, it is the considered opinion of Mary Purcell, who listed them, that they do not represent the full record of his episcopate. However, they do illuminate an administration marked by self-effacing endeavour and by notable achievements in the areas of education, public health and missionary activity. The picture that emerges from Murray's correspondence is of a mass of people, in the lower socio-economic strata, struggling to survive in the face of endemic poverty, disease and squalid living conditions in the city of Dublin. Particularly striking are the letters associated with the Great Famine (1845—52). These contain heart-rending accounts of the horrific impact of the famine on rural parts of the south and west of Ireland, and document the archbishop's role as a raiser and distributor of funds from all over the world for famine-relief through the ecclesiastical network.

A notable feature of the Murray Papers are the Visitation Returns for parishes and schools. These were submitted every five years or so and on the basis of the information they contained, or lack of it, the archbishop would decide to visit the more problematic parishes. Rural parishes in the archdiocese predominate in this category as city parishes could be kept under the close scrutiny of the archbishop. On occasion, such as at the onset of the Great Famine, for instance, Murray would request speedy reports from parish priests on conditions in their localities and on the basis of these and other reports he was able to divert relief funds to the hardest hit parts of his diocese, or, as tended to be more the case, to other dioceses in Ireland.

PAUL CULLEN, 1852-1878. Cardinal Paul Cullen, who made such an impact upon Church and State affairs in Ireland and elsewhere, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, is represented by a large collection. His papers have 'suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' as has been detailed elsewhere. [4] The vast majority of his papers have survived, however, even if some of them have had to be repatriated to Dublin this century from as far away as Australia! Of coure, those papers relating to his career at the Irish College, Rome, are to be found in the College archives in Rome.

The material in Dublin consists of papers from Cullen's archiepiscopal administrations in Armagh (1849—1852) and Dublin (1852—1878). Amongst the latter are important documentation relating to the famous O'Keefe law case (1869—1876), notes and memoranda from the First Vatican Council (1870), and correspondence delineating the establishment of John Henry Newman's Catholic University of Ireland and its administration by his successor as Rector,

Dr Bartholomew Woodlock. Other topics of interest which feature in the Cullen Papers include the Irish battalion in the papal service (1860), Cullen's family and background, Irish colleges abroad, and the Fenians. Cullen's correspondence with Propaganda Fide shows his influence with regard to the appointments of bishops in Ireland and throughout the British Empire, whilst the letters from Dr Tobias Kirby, the long-time Rector of the Irish College in Rome, indicate that the Cardinal was kept abreast of the latest happenings in the Eternal City.

Printed copies of Cullen's pastoral letters, manuscript drafts of sermons and six damp-press copy letterbooks containing copies of outgoing letters (1855—1878) round off an impressive collection.

EDWARD McCABE, 1878-1885. Cardinal Edward McCabe by contrast with his illustrious predecessors and successors is represented by a modest collection. His administration was short and undistinguished, but his papers allow researchers to follow the continuities in policy from the reign of Paul Cullen in whose shadow McCabe dwelt.

WILLIAM WALSH, 1885-1921. Like his predecessor but one, William Walsh has left a very substantial deposit of records. Walsh's administration, spanning the eras of Parnell and de Valera, is the longest in Dublin's diocesan history since that of Dr Troy. Besides a correspondence of over forty thousand items, the Walsh collection encompasses Visitation Returns, accounts, a good set of *Relationes Status,* printed copies of pastoral letters, a set of pamphlets reflecting the archbishop's wide range of interests, Walsh's published works and literary materials. In addition, the Walsh Papers contain materials associated with the promotion of the Causes of the Irish Martyrs and records of the Dublin Commission established under the Irish Universities Act of 1908 (1908—1911).

BYRNE TO McNAMARA, 1921-1987. Edward Byrne (1921-1940), John Charles McQuaid (1940-1972), and the late Drs Dermot Ryan (1972-1984) and Kevin McNamara (1984—1987), have all left increasingly larger collections reflecting the growth of the Dublin archdiocese, both in structural terms and in terms of prestige and influence, and the attendant, expanded and increasingly more sophisticated bureaucracy.

In summary, the Archives to date, holds the papers of ten archbishops between 1770 and 1987 and some scattered remnants of their predecessors. These collections are divided into three classes: general correspondence files, records generated by the diocesan bureaucracy, and private office material. The largest class, the correspondence files, have traditionally been arranged chronologically and under fixed headings such as bishops, priests, laity, colleges, etc. Amongst the papers of twentieth-century archbishops, file titling reflects the detailed interaction between the Diocese and the newly established State, and the more recent flowering of diocesan bureaucracy to undertake specialist tasks.

The remaining series of records held by Dublin Diocesan Archives may be briefly described:

*Papers of Bishops*

Besides the papers of archbishops, the Archives is home to a small number of collections or parts of collections of bishops, whether auxiliaries of the Dublin archdiocese, other Irish bishops, or Irish-born bishops in missionary fields. These include papers of Dr Nicholas Donnelly (1880—1920) ,[5] auxiliary bishop of Dublin and historian, of Dr Patrick Moran (1866—1874), Bishop of Ossory and later Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney, and some letters of Dr Edward O'Dwyer (1888-1913), Bishop of Limerick.

*Papers of Priests and Laity*

There are deposits from eight priests of the diocese, half of whom served as secretaries to archbishops. In the case of the latter, their papers directly complement those of their masters. Particularly important are the papers of Archdeacon John Hamilton (1823—1860) who served as secretary to Archbishop Murray. Hamilton effectively administered the diocese during Murray's frequent absences and, as a consequence, series of correspondence are interwoven amongst his papers and those of his archbishop.

A small number of collections of lay persons include the papers of an Irish-born officer in the British Army in India in the nineteenth century.

*Records of the Irish Hierarchy*

The pre-eminence of the Archbishop of Dublin amongst his episcopal peers in Ireland in the nineteenth century is illustrated by the presence of two volumes of minutes of meetings of the Irish Hierarchy. The first volume, entitled *Meetings of Bishops,* is not strictly a minute book but contains agendas of meetings, lists formal resolutions and gives summaries of decisions taken at meetings held between 1829 and 1849. The second, more orthodox volume, entitled *Acta Conventuum Episcoporum Hiberniae,* contains minutes of meetings held in 1882 only.

*Colleges, Institutions and Organisations*

A myriad of collections of varied provenance come under the above heading. The Woodlock Papers, for example, include both the correspondence of Dr Bartholomew Woodlock as Rector of the Catholic University (1861—1879), in succession to John Henry Newman, and a portion of the administrative records of the diocesan seminary, Holy Cross College, Clonliffe (1859—1954), as well as the records of the O'Brien Institute (1885—1950), an orphanage for boys administered by the Christian Brothers, under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

Finally, there is a collection of records entitled 'Catholic Proceedings'. This collection is an amalgam of the surviving records of three nineteenth-century lay Catholic political organisations: The Catholic Board, the Catholic Association, and the Loyal National Repeal Association. These records consist of the records of the secretaries of these respective associations with which Daniel O'Connell, the champion of Irish Catholic agitation during the first half of the nineteenth century, was so closely associated. The last of the secretaries, T.M. Ray, handed them over to the O'Connell family who much later presented them to Archbishop Walsh for safe keeping.

The varied holdings of Dublin Diocesan Archives are of interest to a wide range of researchers. The major task at present is to catalogue and list all this material so as to make it available to researchers. Enquiries concerning the Archives may be sent to the Diocesan Archivist, Archbishop's House, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

NOTKS

1. Dublin Diocesan Archives (D.D.A.) I 16/1 (75).
2. D.D.A. 1 16/2 (85).
3. tor a description of this item and its contents see Curran. Michael J.. 'Instructions. Admonitions etc.. of Archbishop Carpenter. 1770—1786' in ***Reportorium Novum.*** Vol. 1l. No. 1, pp. 148-71.
4. See Sheehy, David (".. 'Dublin Diocesan Archives: an Introduction', in ***Archivium Hibernicum.*** XL11 (1987). p.41.
5. Dates hereafter given in brackets in this article refer to surviving papers and ***not*** to dates of appointments.

[Ed.] David Sheehy is the Dublin Diocesan Archivist.

# ORIGINS AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE HOLY GHOST

Sister Anne Marie Davies DHG

The Congregation of the Daughters of the Holy Ghost had its beginnings within the context of the Breton Missions of the 17th and 18th centuries which were aimed at instructing in the Faith the people in remote rural areas.

*Jean Leuduger* (1649—1722) whom we look upon as our Founder, had for a few years been a co-worker of the great missioner, Father *Julien Maunoir SJ,* and on his death in 1683 succeeded him as 'Apostolic Missioner' in the eastern part of Brittany.

The two nineteenth-century biographers of Jean Leuduger, l'Abbe Tresvaux [1] and Sigismund Ropartz,[2] claim to have based their account on the *Vie manuscrite* written in 1723 by one of Jean Leuduger's fellow missioners. Unfortunately, this first-hand document has disappeared without trace.

L'Abbe Tresvaux writes:

> **Monsieur Leuduger lived only for God and for his neighbour. And it is to his love for the poor that the diocese (of Saint-Brieuc) is indebted for a congregation of charitable Sisters known in Brittany by the name of 'Daughters of the Holy Ghost'. It was in 1706, during the episcopacy of Mgr Fretat de Boissieux that this useful society had its beginnings.**

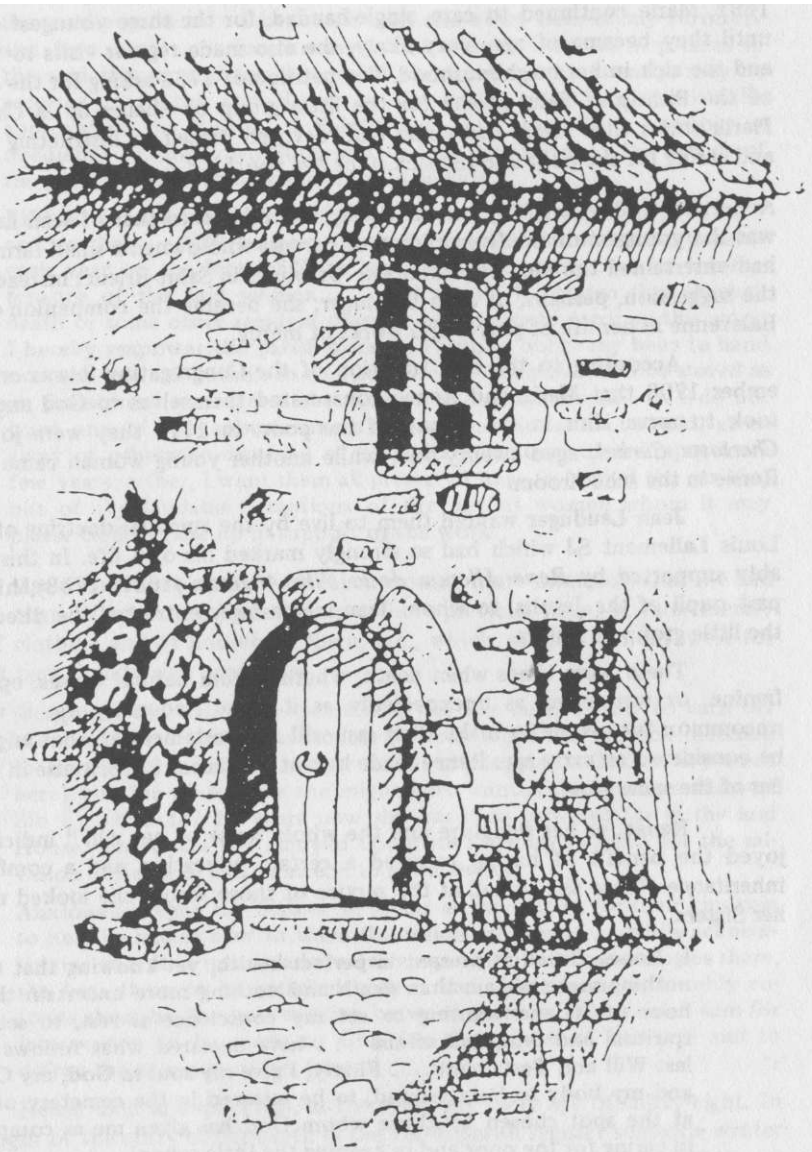
The earliest document extant concerning the foundation of our very first community is an act of purchase, dated 23 February 1712.[3] It records that 'Jean Leuduger, prestre, DocteurenTheologie et Scolastique de l'eglise-Cathedrale de Saint-Brieuc' with money given by an anonymous benefactor purchases a little house in the Legue (the port of Plerin)

> **. . . to be owned by Marie Balavenne and Renee Burel, and after their death by the women appointed by the parish priest of Plerin . . . with responsibility for the education of little girls and for the care of the poor, the sick . . .**

The wording clearly indicates Jean Leuduger's intention of laying the foundations of a charitable society which would outlast the initial core group formed by Marie Balavenne and Renee Burel.

Who were these two women destined in the order of Providence to be the first of a long line of Daughters of the Holy Ghost?

*Marie Balavenne* (1666—1743) was a widow. Of her early life nothing is known for certain other than that her mother died ten days after Marie's birth. In 1692 Marie married a widower with five children, (it was not unusual



La Maison de la Charité, in The Légue (Plérin), 1712

in those times for a woman to devote herself in this way). After his death in 1697, Marie continued to care, single-handed, for the three youngest children, until they became of age. Very likely, she also made regular visits to the poor and the sick in her neighbourhood. The petition of 1733 asking for the approval of the Bishop of Saint-Brieuc for the little group of Soeurs de la Charite de Plerin states that Marie Balavenne had 'devoted herself to instructing children and caring for the poor and the sick *since her youth'.* [6]

*Renee Buret* (1682—1720), whose family was related to that of Jean Leuduger, was the youngest of the five children of parents who owned a small farm. Renee had entertained the idea of joining the Ursulines in Saint-Brieuc; instead, and at the suggestion, perhaps, of Jean Leuduger, she became the companion of Marie Balavenne in her life of prayer and works of mercy.

According to the oral tradition of the Congregation it was on 8 December 1706 that Marie and Renee consecrated themselves to God and undertook to serve Him in the person of the poor. In 1710 they were joined by *Charlotte Corbel,* aged twenty-one, while another young woman came to help Renee in the schoolroom.

Jean Leuduger wanted them to live by the spiritual doctrine of Father Louis Lallement SJ which had so strongly marked his own life. In this he was ably supported by *Rene Allenou de la Ville-Angevin* (1687—1753), himself a past pupil of the Jesuits, to whom Jean increasingly entrusted the direction of the little group of Sisters.

These were times when death, whether from natural causes, epidemic, famine, or war, came as unexpectedly as it came frequently. So it was not uncommon for people to make their last will and testament at what might now be considered an early age. Renee made hers at Pentecost 1718, Marie in December of the same year.

Renee, as her signature and the whole tenor of her will [4] indicate, enjoyed the benefit of having received a certain education and a comfortable inheritance. These she placed at the service of those whom she looked upon as her Sisters.

> **I, Renee Burel, at present in perfect health, yet knowing that there is nothing more certain than death and nothing more uncertain than the hour of it, and wanting to set my conscience at rest, to settle my spiritual and temporal affairs . . . have declared what follows as my last Will and Testament . . . Firstly, I give my soul to God, my Creator, and my body to holy ground, to be interred in the cemetery of Plerin at the spot chosen by those whom God has given me as companions in caring for the poor and in keeping the little school . . .**
>
> **Secondly, I will that after my death an octave of Masses be celebrated by the parish priest and the other priests of Plerin to pray God for the repose of my soul . . .**

**Fourthly, for the maintenance and upkeep of our little House and for the public good . . . I bequeath each and every item of my furniture and furnishings . . . for the use of the women who live at present in the said House, and for the use of those who, subsequently, may be received in to the said House by the parish priest, acting with the approval of the Bishop of Saint-Brieuc, and who living together in obedience to their own Superiors, devote themselves to the service of the poor and to keeping schools for little girls . . .**

**Fifthly, I bequeath from the total estate I inherited from my father and mother . . . 20 bushels of wheat, Saint-Brieuc measure, payable each year on the feast of Saint Michael in perpetuity . . . for the sustenance of the said women . . . and should it happen that through death or some other accident there be no women to carry on this work, I hereby empower the parish priest of Plerin to oblige my heirs to hand over the said 20 bushels to be distributed to the poor or to be stored as an investment to increase the income of the said House . . . I do not want any of the appurtenances of the said House to be sold, given away or otherwise disposed of, should the House remain empty for a few years; rather, I want them all preserved so as to further the carrying out of the laudable intentions of the devout women whom it may please God to raise up in support of the work.**

Marie Balavenne's will ' reveals a woman more aware of what she had received than of what she had to bequeath — precious little, in fact, merely items of clothing and of household linen, etc., which, she pointed out, were for the most part already well used. She

**recognizes that for some years now she has been unable to earn her keep, and that having no income or possessions she is much indebted to Renee Burel and . . . (other names missing as the Ms. is very worn here) but for whose care she might have wanted for the necessities of life . . . that for 12 years now she has been provided for in the said House, where she has enjoyed complete freedom to work for the salvation of her soul and to attend to good works . . .**

**Anxious to repay her Sisters, in so far as she is able, for their kindness to her she makes over to them the following items . . .; while acknowledging that it is not an adequate repayment of all that she owes them, she begs them to be satisfied with it and, what is more, humbly entreats them by the love existing between them to raise a small sum for intercession to be made to God for the repose of her soul and to defray the expenses of her funeral . . .**

Renee died in June 1720, at the relatively early age of thirty-eight. In the margin of the entry of her death in the Plerin parish register someone wrote: 'L'une des Soeurs de cette paroisse, Granum Sinapis'. Marie lived until 1743 and witnessed the growth of this mustard seed.

In the year following Renee's death a young woman who had tried her

vocation in Carmel and had been obliged to leave because her physical constitution was too frail for the rigours of the Carmelite way of life, knocked at the door of the little House in the Legue. Her name was *Marie Allenou de Grandchamp,* she was related to Monsieur Rene Allenou, now parish priest of Plerin. Her arrival, followed soon after by that of *Louise Desbois,* brought the numerical strength of the little group of Sisters to four. They numbered just eight when, in 1729, they received a request from Claude Toussaint Marot, Comte de la Garaye, to send some Sisters to help him in his charitable work at Taden in the neighbouring diocese of Saint-Malo. Soeur Marie Allenou and Soeur Louise Desbois were sent there in response to this appeal.

In 1733 Monsieur Allenou, who after the death of Jean Leuduger in 1722 had succeeded him as director of the 'Soeurs de la Charite de Plerin' (as they were then known), decided that it was time to set their society on a sound juridical basis. In March 1733 he had a document drawn up before the 'Notaires Royaux et Apostolique de Saint Brieuc, Filly et Perrier'. [6]

It was a three-fold request addressed to Monseigneur Louis Francois Vivet de Montclus, Bishop of Saint-Brieuc, asking him to approve:

> the stated sources of income and the possessions on which the Maison et Ecole Charitable de Plerin depended;
>
> the appointment of persons associated with it;
>
> the establishment of a novitiate.

Under the second heading we read:

> **May it please you, Monseigneur, to appoint and approve as 'principale Maitresse' of the said school, the worthy woman Marie Balavenne who since her youth has devoted herself to this activity and to the care of the sick, to the great benefit of the parish; and may it please you to appoint as her companions and assistants in running the school and in caring for the sick**
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | **the worthy woman** | **Charlotte Corbel** |
> | **Demoiselles** | **Marie et Ste Angelique Allenou** |
> | **the worthy women** | **Louise Desbois** |
> | | **Marguerite Quemar** |
> | | **Janne Silvestre** |
> | | **Mathurien Le Barbier** |
> | | **Marguerite Battas** |
> | | **Mauricette Majol** |
>
> **all of whom have distinguished themselves in carrying out these works of charity both in this diocese and in that of Saint-Malo.**

In his reply the Bishop wrote:

> **. . . desirous of promoting, in so far as with us lies, and of ensuring the**

**education of girls and the relief of the poor in our Diocese . . . We hereby authorize and ratify the above-mentioned 'Contrat de Fondation' . . . We approve as 'principale Mattresse' the worthy woman, Marie Balavenne to whom we have given, and do give, as companions to support her in the education of young girls and the care of the sick in the said parish of Plerin [Names as above] . . . trusting, as we do, in their zeal and their ability to carry out this service. . . . We authorize the said 'demoiselles et filles' to select other women for training/formation by them . . .**

**Given at Saint-Brieuc in our Episcopal Palace on 24th April 1733**

Between 1729 and 1778, communities were established in each of the then existing dioceses of Brittany: Saint-Brieuc, Saint-Malo, Nantes, Vannes, and Quimper. As the various acts of foundation indicate, these communities were established in response to appeals from members of the nobility and of the Parlement de Bretagne who were anxious to make provision for the spiritual and temporal needs of their tenants, (the Parlement having refused to implement the Royal Edict of 1698 requiring the establishment of a school in every parish and the levying of a tax to pay the teachers' salaries).

A petition addressed to the Chancelier De Maupeou by 'les Soeurs de la Maison de Charite de Quimper pour obtenir des Lettres Patentes' affords a brief description of the way in which most of these eighteenth-century foundations were made, and states the link between them and the 'Mere-Maison' in Plerin:

**The Filles des Ecoles Charitables are under the jurisdiction of the Bishops; they serve the needs of the people free of charge . . . This, Monseigneur, is how, until now, their establishments have been made: Members of the nobility, zealous for the relief of the poor who are sick and for the instruction of their children, call the Sisters into their respective parishes, addressing a request to the Bishop of Saint-Brieuc in whose diocese their 'Mere-Maison' is situated. The nobleman provides them with a dwelling and a yearly pension of 50 ecus per Sister. The number of Sisters sent from Plerin, where they are trained in pharmacy as well as in teaching, is usually three ...** [8]

Once the little society had received the formal approval of the Church and its growth seemed assured, Monsieur Allenou, yielding to a call to work in the missions overseas, left in May 1741 for Canada where a fellow-countryman, Henri Marie du Breil de Pontbriand, had just been appointed Bishop of Quebec.

His departure was felt as a great loss by the Sisters in Plerin. He did not forget them, however, and as the letters he addressed to them testify, he continued to take a fatherly interest in their life and work.

The long letter which he addressed to them on the octave day of All Saints 1748 is of particular interest as being his spiritual testament to his 'Very

dear daughters in Jesus Christ'. After exhorting them to gratitude to God for their calling and to fidelity in the practice of what was enjoined on them by their Rule, he continues:

> **Love the poor and the sick, ease their suffering in every way you can for they are the living image of Christ in his suffering .**
>
> **Give of yourselves without reserve in instructing the children entrusted to your care for the sake of Jesus Christ ... make them perfect in his holy love so that they may enkindle the fire of this love in all the homes of your parish.**
>
> **But in order to do this — you yourselves must burn with the same holy love. [9]**

Words that re-echo the very first ones of their Rule:

> **Since they must be filled with love in order to fulfil their obligations, the women who are received into this House shall honour as perfectly as they can the Three Adorable Persons of the Blessed Trinity, but they shall have a special devotion to the Third who is the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father and of the Son ... ' o**

When the French Revolution erupted in 1789 *Soeur Catherine Briand* was the Superior General of the seventy-one Sisters which the Congregation then numbered. All of them were to suffer, in one way or another, from the anti-clericalism and hatred of the Revolutionaries: they were expelled from their Houses, they were imprisoned, and their possessions were confiscated.

Before being expelled, along with her community, from the 'Mere-Maison' of Plerin, Soeur Catherine read out to those enforcing the expulsion order a formal protest, the text of which is now in the Archives Departmentales of the Cotes-du-Nord. In it Soeur Catherine reaffirmed:

> **. . . our main House here in Plerin and all our other Houses established in the former province of Brittany are Houses of Charity in which our Sisters . . . strive every day to relieve the suffering of the poor and the destitute . . .**

and she challenged:

> **Article 2 of the law of 18th August 1792 suppressing all religious congregations grants formal exception to charitable establishments such as ours. Sheer humanity and compassion for the sufferings of the poor . . . provide an even stronger argument in favour of our being allowed to continue.**
>
> **And so the order that drives us out of our House has mo tives other than the enforcement of the law and concern for the public good. Whatever these motives may be, we must perforce comply with the order. We declare however, that we leave our House only because we are forced to do so. We leave under protest and invoking our rights . . .**

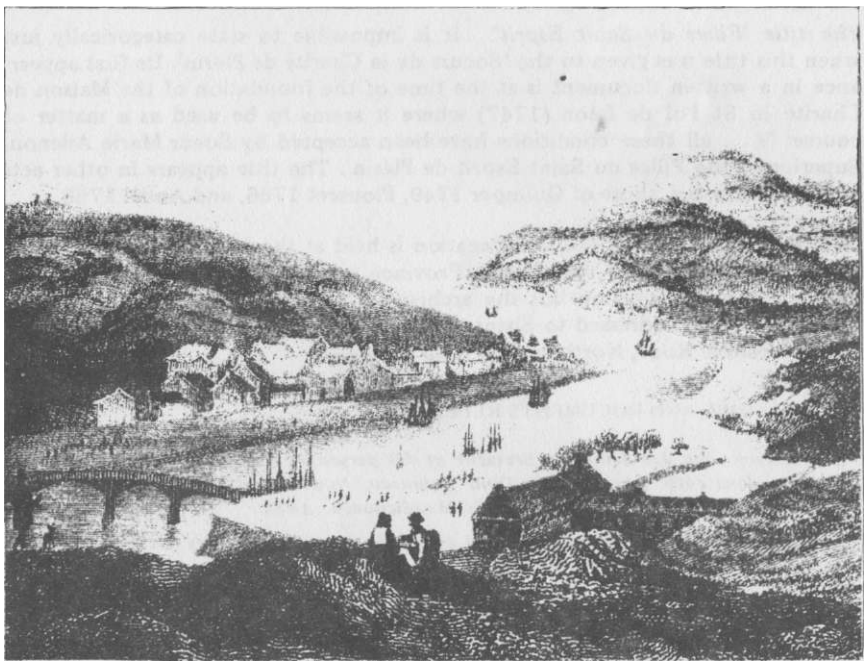
**At Plerin, 15th January 1793.**

**Signed** **Catherine Briand**
**Marie Quintin**
**Perrine Keraoult** [11]

Sadly, twenty-two Sisters took leave of their Superior and of each other before dispersing; the House became the property of the Mayor of Plerin. It was restored to the Sisters in 1800. Elsewhere, the House from which the Sisters were expelled remained irretrievably lost to them.

When at length it became possible for Religious to reassemble, only 25 of the 71 Sisters the Congregation numbered in 1789 found their way back to the 'Mere-Maison' at Plerin in 1800. Not a few had died during the intervening years, one of them, imprisoned at Nantes; others remained in the homes where they had been sheltered during those years and continued their charitable works from there.

The tree sprung from the 'Granum Sinapis' had bled yet it had remained standing and its still vigorous sap would produce fresh growth in the new era that was dawning for the Congregation and for the Church in France.



The Legue, c.1800

## NOTES

*Our oral tradition.* **Among the Sisters who reassembled after the Revolution there were one or two who had lived in community with Marie Allenou who, had lived with Marie Balavenne for more than twenty years. It is on the recollections of these Sisters that our oral tradition is based and it is incorporated in the history of the Congregation prepared by Soeur Marie-Julie Pouliquen. [12] Her untimely death in 1860 prevented the publication of her work but her valuable manuscript was made available to l'Abbe Lemercier who, in 1888, published the *Notice sur la Congregation des Filles du Saint Esprit.* [13]**

*The Rule of Taden.* **Relying on the oral tradition, Sr Marie-Julie Pouliquen affirms that in the year 1706, the year in which Marie Balavenne and Renee Burel consecrated themselves to God, they received a Rule drawn up for them by Jean Leuduger and approved by the then Bishop of Saint-Brieuc, Mgr Fretat de Boissieux. Unfortunately, this primitive text has been lost to us.**
**The oldest version of our Rule still extant is the one known as the 'Rule of Taden' because it is a copy, made in 1729 for the Sisters who were going to the new foundation at Taden, of the 'Reglemens de la Maison de Plerin', a text which, in its final form is the work of Monsieur Rene Allenou who in his 'Lettre-—testament spirituel' (1748) wrote: 'These are the last instructions of your Father, of him who drew up your Rule . . .'**

*The title 'Filles du Saint Esprit'.* **It is impossible to state categorically just when this title was given to the 'Soeurs de la Charite de Plerin'. Its first appearance in a written document is at the time of the foundation of the Maison de Charite in St Pol de Leon (1747) where it seems to be used as a matter of course: '. . . all these conditions have been accepted by Soeur Marie Allenou, Superior of the Filles du Saint Esprit de Plerin'. The title appears in other acts of foundation, e.g. those of Quimper 1749, Plouaret 1766, and Andel 1768.**

**The General Archive of the Congregation is held at the Mother House in Saint-Brieuc. The Archive of the English Province is held at Northampton. It is not open to public inspection but the archivist is willing to respond to enquiries. These should be addressed to Sister Anne Marie Davies at The Provincial House, 103 Harlestone Road, Northampton NN5 7AQ.**

### PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS RIIERRED TO


1. Iresvaux, ***Vie des Saints de Bretagne er des personnes d'une eminente piete qui ont vecu dans cette province par Dom Lobineau. Nouvelte edition, revue, corrigee et auymentee par t'Abbe Tresvaux.*** Paris. Mequignon. J.. 1838.
2. Ropartz, ***Portraits Bretons des XVII et .Y I III siecles d'apres des documents inedits.*** L. Prud'homine, Saint Brieuc, 1857.
.l. Act of purchase of a house in the Legue in Plerin. February 17 12. Archives Depart mentalcs des Cotes-du-Nord. 14. Minutes de M. Hamon. Notaire.
4. I estament manuscrit de Renee Burel. 17 18. Archives des lilies du Saint I- sprit (A.F.S.E.), 3A2 —b.

5. Testament manuscrit de Marie Belavenne. 1718. A.E.S.E.. 3A1—b.

6. Actes des Notaires Royaux et Apostoliques. 1 illy et Perrier: 'Acte d'approbation de la Maison et Ecole Charitable de Plerin 1735'. A.F.S.E.. 5AI.

7. Various Actes de Fondation. A.F.S.E.. B-9G 1-17.

8. 'Supplique adressee au Chancelier De Maupeou pour obtenir des Lettres Patentes en 1772 par les Soeurs de la Maison de Charite de Quimper'. A.F.S.E.

9. 'Lettre ou testament spirituel de M. Allenou de la Ville-Angevin a ses filles'. 1748. A.E.S.E. 2A2-C.

10- Regie de Taden: 'Reglemens generaux et particuliers de la Maison des Soeurs de la cliarite de la Maison de Thaden, en conformite des Reglemens de leur Maison Principale'. A.E.S.E. 4 A 1.

11. 'Protestation ecrite de Soeur Catherine Briand, 1793'. Archives Departmentales des Cotes-du-Nord.

12. Sr Marie Julie Pouliquen, 'Cahier manuscrite relatant l'histoire de la Congregation de 1706 a 1850. et redige en 1859-60". A.E.S.E. . 8A. bis. 1H.

13. Lemercier, ***Notice sur la Congregation des Filles du Saint Esprit, 1706-1850.*** L. & R. Prud'homme. Saint-Brieuc. 1888.

# THE STONYHURST ARCHIVES

The Rev. F.J. Turner SJ.

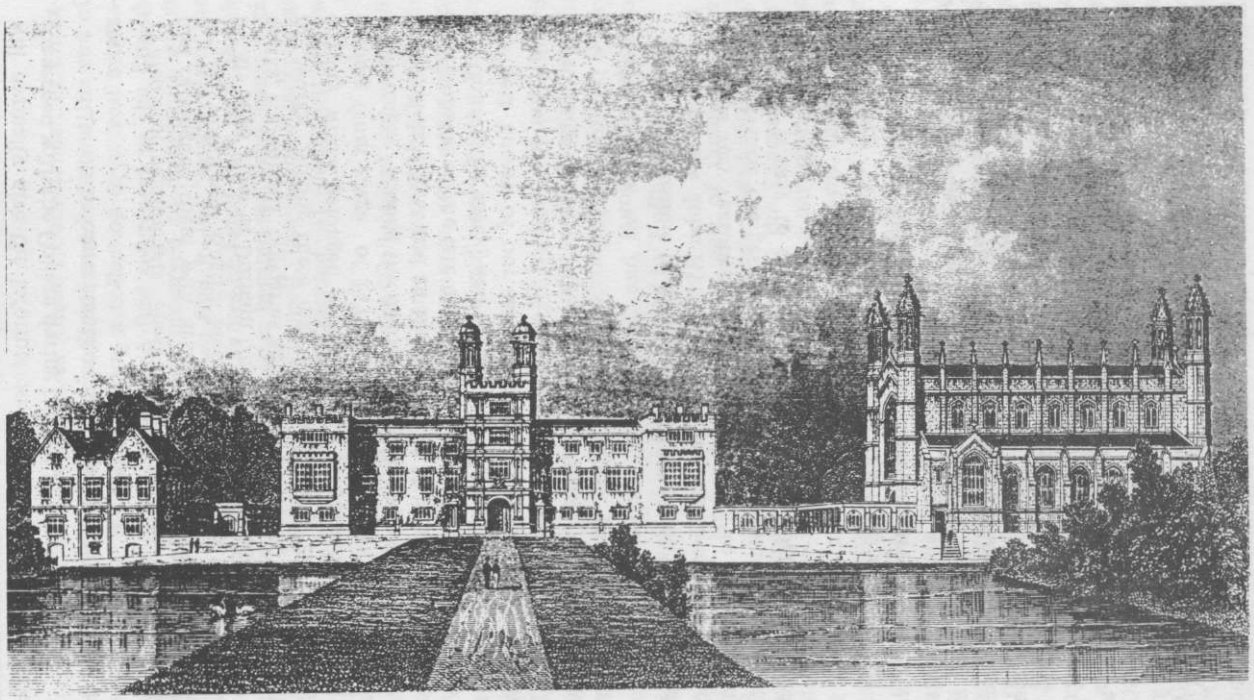
## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origin of many of our manuscripts is obscure, for we do not know where they came from and why they arrived at Stonyhurst. Until comparatively recently, records were often kept inexactly or not at all; there are tantalising gaps due to physical causes, human frailty or sheer lack of interest. For the purposes of history and arrangement, it will be convenient to begin with the year 1794. In this year the College, founded by Robert Persons on the Continent, came after many vicissitudes to its present home. The Society of Jesus had already suffered the blow of suppression; the school had been forced to move from St Omers to Bruges, and then once again to Liege, and now to the north of England. Much was lost by confiscation, much by the hurried migration under the threat of the advancing Revolutionary armies. The wonder is that so much survived. Even that part of the library which was brought from the Continent was housed in a building uninhabited for forty years and in many places no longer weatherproof. The first call was for the accommodation not merely of a body of ecclesiastics who could no longer call themselves Jesuits, but of a number of boys of different ages who had loyally followed the College in its uprooting.

## CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVES

The year 1794 is also a dividing line in the contents of the archives. Before this date we find 1) a collection of medieval manuscripts brought over from the Continent or acquired by gift; 2) a number of very important documents of the recusancy period, concerning Jesuits, secular priests and laymen; 3) documents surviving from the time of the Shireburns who had built and lived in Stonyhurst; and 4) a precious but all too small group of documents relating to the College in its days on the Continent. After 1794 are 5) documents concerning the period leading up to Emancipation; 6) documents connected with the history and administration of the school (an ever-growing number); and 7) a miscellaneous collection, irritating and fascinating, but where the archivist, egged on by the desire to 'clear up', must remind himself that what are the trifles of today are the historical evidence for the future.

For the practical purposes of those engaged in research, the list in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, even though published a century ago, is a useful guide. This has been recently checked and a new edition is being prepared in which it is hoped that fuller references



STONYHURST COLLEGE, c.1890

will be given. Meanwhile, the original edition remains substantially reliable, and will normally give the information desired. This does not include documents concerned with the College during the last hundred years.

It will be convenient to group the manuscripts under the headings given above.

1. *Medieval manuscripts.* These number just over eighty. The late Dr Neil Kerr had catalogued them with descriptive notes just before his death, but his text for this volume of English Medieval Manuscripts has been checked and revised by Mr Alan Piper of Durham University. The greater number of these are service books, e.g. missals, breviaries and books of hours, together with a few devotional works. Among these may be mentioned a York missal of the fourteenth century which belonged to the church of Tatham in Lancashire, and a missal coming from Liege of 1472 which has the prayer for the feast of the Blessed Charlemagne. Among the devotional works we have a manuscript of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost and an Exposition of Haymon on the Gospels and Epistles, *De Tempore* , of the late thirteenth century, which belonged to Whalley Abbey, only four miles away, and which was presumably rescued at the suppression. The best known of our early manuscripts is the eighth-century Gospel of St John from the tomb of St Cuthbert at Durham, and now on long loan to the British Library. There are also some historical manuscripts, most notably the first volume of Froissart's *Chronicle,* which was presented by the 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour.

It is possible to obtain microfilms of the smaller items but this has to be done by the John Rylands Library at Manchester. The charge made by the Rylands is very reasonable, but it is necessary to insure the manuscripts, and nowadays such charges are heavy. It is often better to visit the Library personally. It is easy to obtain permission to photograph a few pages, provided a flash is not used.

2. *Recusancy.* This comprises perhaps the most notable part of the archives. The best known and most quoted collection are the seven volumes marked 'Anglia'. The first five volumes contain letters and documents from 1580 to 1680, arranged in chronological order, the last two are later additions to the same period, and carry on the collection for another hundred years; the last document is dated 1785. Originally, the series consisted of nine volumes, but in 1921, volumes 8 and 9 were exchanged with Westminster Archives for a volume known as 'Grene's Collectanea B'. However, in 1960, a photocopy was taken of these two volumes, but the result is not so successful as it would have been had the photography been undertaken later.

This collection contains important letters, especially from the Jesuits who were working on the English mission, for instance, Frs Persons, Walpole, Gerard, Blount, Holtby and William Weston, as well as those from such

important figures as Cardinal Allen, the Archpriest Blackwell, and Richard Verstegan.

Another important series is known as 'Grene's Collectanea'. Fr Christopher Grene was English Penitentiary both at Rome and Loreto at the end of the seventeenth century. He set about making a collection or at least a transcript of all the documents in which he could find references to the English martyrs. In this way a copy has often been preserved of documents which would otherwise have been lost. Sometimes we find in the 'Anglia' series the original of which he has made a copy. The volumes he listed as A to P, that is the last letter that is recorded. The volumes later became scattered; some, such as A, seem to have been divided up by Grene himself. The volumes under some letters have either ceased to exist to been again divided. At Stonyhurst are the Volumes B, C, M, N, P.

As these documents, both 'Anglia' and the 'Collectanea' are very frail, a xerox or photocopy was taken of all of them some years ago, and kept in the archives at 114 Mount Street, London. Therefore, anyone who wants copies of either the 'Anglia' or 'Collectanea' documents should apply to the Province Archivist at that address.

However, very many of these documents have been printed either in the CRS volumes or in Foley's *Records of the Society of Jesus.* Another group has been published by Fr J.H. Pollen in *Acts of the English Martyrs,* a very valuable collection now unhappily out of print, and the autobiographies of John Gerard and William Weston have been published by Fr Philip Caraman. [1]

3. *Shireburn Documents.* Numerically the greater part of these, consisting largely of legal documents, such as indentures, conveyances and legal papers of apparently unending disputes have been deposited at the Lancashire Record Office at Preston. We have retained those which have a particular interest for the College or locality, such as the charities of the Shireburns, the foundation of an almshouse (now rebuilt and flourishing), the local school (still a Primary School for Hurst Green), some account books and inventories.

4. *Documents connected with the College during its time on the Continent.* A11 this material has been worked over carefully. It forms the basis of Fr Chadwick's book, *From St. Omers to Stonyhurst,* but it may be of interest to pick out certain items. First, a transcript of the St Omers 'Custom Book', or as we might call it nowadays, Rule Book. The original was lost when the Louvain library was bombed, and this is therefore the only known copy. One item is of especial value; at St Omers, music played an important part, and at the front of this Customs Book is a list of the instruments and something is said of their use and grouping. A recent request for a copy of this document relating to music came from Yale. It is probably well known to historians of music in England. Another item is the manuscript version of a number of plays performed by the boys, and

there are also a few playbills. There is a considerable collection of Latin verse, some of this is for formal occasions, such as the greeting of important people, but much has every mark of being composed for pleasure. On the scholastic side the three subjects of music, drama and classics formed the basis of the curriculum. There are also the account books, some of which have been acquired comparatively recently. These supplied much of the information for Fr Holt's volume, *A Biographical Dictionary of the St Omers and Bruges Colleges,* published as number 69 in the CRS series. Lastly, under this heading may be mentioned transcripts and microfilms from the Royal Archives at Brussels. On the suppression of the Society many books and papers were carried off by the civil authorities; much was undoubtedly lost, but a certain amount made its way to the archives in Brussels. There are five volumes of transcripts made about a hundred years ago and written in a clear and easily legible hand. About twenty years ago they were in many cases compared with the originals, and where necessary corrected.

5. *Documents from the first relaxation of the Penal Laws up to Emancipation.* Three collections call for notice: (a), a collection of letters and other documents by Fr John Thorpe. Fr Thorpe was for some time Minister of the English College at Rome, and later Penitentiary at St Peter's. These are supplemented by (b), a collection of Excerpts made by Fr Thomas Glover who was stationed in Rome, which have a bearing on the restoration of the Society of Jesus. When the ex-Jesuits settled at Stonyhurst the College received papal approbation by a rescript of Pius VI in 1796. Stonyhurst thus became a rallying point for the surviving priests. This resulted in (c), a collection of letters which concerned both Stonyhurst and the men whose hopes were raised by the oral restitution of the Society in 1803 and the formal restoration in 1814. After Emancipation, the headquarters of the newly reconstituted province was moved to London.

6. *Documents concerned with the history of Stonyhurst.* Much of this matter necessarily has a rather narrow application, but in this ever growing collection there is not a little of wider interest. First, we can trace the many difficulties which beset the growth of the school, its shifting fortunes and uncertainties. A careful examination will disabuse the enquirer of the notion that Stonyhurst was a school predominantly for the sons of the Catholic country gentry. Early in the nineteenth century a Prefect of Studies began a report with the words, 'Since the majority of you are going to enter upon a career in commerce . . .'. The Journals and 'Logs' show how difficult it was for Catholics to rid themselves of the atmosphere of penal days. Much of this evidence has recently been collected in a duplicated volume by the Senior History Master, Mr Thomas Muir. Another book, but printed, and based on this evidence is *The Stone Phoenix* by Mr Andrew Henderson.[2] It is written in a lighter style and includes the more amusing incidents but it depends on careful study of the sources. Throughout

penal times, but increasingly in the nineteenth century, Catholics were faced with the problem of what we should now call Tertiary Education. Of necessity during the 17th and 18th centuries higher education was almost confined to those who were studying for the priesthood. But with the opening of schools in England and exclusion from the universities the problem became acute. At Stonyhurst an attempt was made to solve it by establishing a post-school course for those known as 'Lay Philosophers'. Fortunately, these 'Philosophers' themselves kept an official Diary which, equally fortunately, has been preserved. It is on this manuscript evidence that a book has recently been published by Henry Sire with the title *The Gentlemen Philosphers.* [3]

7. *Miscellaneous.* Here we have an amorphous, exotic and wayward monster; it straggles beyond system or category; it has something of the air of an Old Curiosity Shop, where junk and objects of value jostle one another, and last year's junk becomes tomorrow's jewel. How did we acquire a book of recipes and an envelope with scraps of paper on which are written remedies for diseases? There was published in the school Magazine about a hundred years ago an article entitled 'Rummaging in our Archives'; it could have gone on for many an issue. Here you will find an entry, 'News of the Battle of Waterloo, boys turned out of schools', an account book with the entry 'Rat Account'. Apparently l' jd was paid for each rat caught, the price of a pint of beer — in a bumper year there were over a thousand rats. Hair-cutting cost again l'.'sd and the whole school was trimmed at one go. There are writers who are sensitive, and writers, sometimes in high places, who are philistines. As FrThorpe would have described it. it is a 'farrago', but the byways are often more refreshing than the motorways.

Anyone who wishes to consult or ask about the archives should write to The Archivist, Stonyhurst College, Blackburn BB6 9PZ. Yes, write, please, and not telephone.

NOTKS

Much of this article is based on one written by Fr Turner, the College Archivist, for ***North West Catholic History.*** Vol. 12. 1985. It has. however, been amplified by including more examples. Though the Stonyhurst archives and library are closely connected both physically and for working purposes, so that one supplements the other, it seems best to keep the two departments separate.

|. l'liilip Curanian SJ. ***John Gerard. The Autobiography of an Elizabethan.*** London. 1951; ***William Weston. The Autobiography of an Elizabethan.*** London. 1955: John Hungerford I'ollen SJ. ***Acts of English Martyrs hitherto Unpublished.*** London. 1891.

2. Andrew Henderson. ***The Stone Phoenix, Stonyhurst College. 1794 1K94.*** Worthing. 1986: T.K. Muir. ***Stonyhurst through Documents. 1774 1944.*** duplicated copy. .Ird edn.. I 988.

3. H.J.A. Sire. ***Gentlemen Philosophers, Catholic Higher Education at Liege and Stonyhurst. 1774*** /y/A. Worthing. 1988.

# 10,000 NUNS: WORKING IN CONVENT ARCHIVES

Susan O'Brien

This is an important occasion for me and I am grateful for the invitation to occupy the 'user's slot' in the programme and talk to you about my work.

My research is into active, apostolic congregations of women working in England in the nineteenth century. Obviously, this is a huge subject and I will try and explain how I started, how it has developed over the past four years, and where it is going in the immediate future. It might be helpful to state at the outset that, because it is post-doctoral research, there are no deadlines apart from self-imposed ones and that the work has to be fitted in around a full-time lecturing job and, consequently, proceeds fairly slowly. The intention is to write up the findings and interpretation in a series of articles over the next few years for publication in academic journals and the first of these will appear in the autumn. [1] Eventually, I hope these will form the basis for a history of nineteenth-century female congregations.

The brief I was given for this paper focussed my mind not so much on the history of any particular congregation or aspect of nineteenth-century female religious life, but rather on the underlying reasons for undertaking the research in the first place and the stages and processes involved to date. Three questions, then, form the basis of what follows:

A. What is the state of the history of women's religious congregations in England?

B. How does a historian, who is working from the 'outside' (i.e. not as a religious) find his or her way into the subject and into the archives?

C. What particular aspects and questions am I concerned with at present and what kinds of archival materials am I using to find answers?

A. Let me begin with some bold statements about the state of our knowledge about active women's congregations since their establishment in England. Women religious have been, and still are, invisible to the historian's eye. This may come as a surprise to those whose archive shelves are groaning under the weight of biographies and memoirs telling of the lives and activities of Victorian women religious, or with institutional histories written at various points since the later nineteenth century. But this is essentially family history and it has been perfectly possible for congregations and their friends to have written, collectively, an enormous amount without this in turn having impinged on the knowledge and understanding which the outside community of scholars has.

So far it has not even impinged on those who have published histories of the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, let alone those concerned with women's history, the history of education, or of welfare work.

Women religious were a vital work-force to the newly established Catholic Church in England. Without them one of the primary policies of the bishops — the provision of a separate schooling system — could never have been carried out. Nor could the Church so easily have sustained a separate identity for its people 'without the provision of a whole set of other services and institutions (e.g. asylums, orphanages, homes for the elderly, a wide range of health care, industrial schools, reformatories, hostels) most of which were established and staffed by women's religious congregations at a minimum cost to the Catholic community. Nineteenth-century Catholicism would have been something quite different without the infrastructure provided by women religious. Yet nowhere have I encountered an historical interpretation which puts the sisters at the heart of the experience of nineteenth-century English Catholicism. [2]

If the sisters are not visible, other than as shadows, in the history of their own institution, perhaps it is less than surprising that they are invisible also to social historians. You may search in vain in the many recent histories of girls' education to find a mention of the convent boarding- and day-schools which flourished. [3] The same is true of recent work on female philanthropy and welfare work. We are not entitled to view such omissions as a conspiracy. The separatist tradition of the Church goes a long way towards explaining this state of affairs. If the historians are not themselves Catholic, if the historians of the Catholic Church do not offer them suggestive research material, if they do not regularly come across references to archival material, they turn to other sources. Moreover, for those women's historians interested in the ways women developed greater autonomy, Catholicism is perceived as unrewarding territory.

Despite what I have said, there is one aspect of nineteenth-century conventual history which has attracted the attention of several scholars and resulted in a number of specialist studies — that of anti-convent sentiment/fantasies and the attempt to legislate in Parliament for convent inspection. [5] Such has been the impact of this line of enquiry that the editors of a recent collection of essays on the Irish in Britain noted: 'It was the nuns, rather than the Irish who were, if the thrust of recent research is to be believed, the most unpopular single group in Victorian England.'

Only more specialised studies closely based in archival materials can provide a corrective to the state of our present historical understanding. Although there are recent and scholarly works by sisters, it is unlikely that any member of a congregation would attempt a work which went outside her own congregation. I believe that it would be useful, in the first instance, to have a work of synthesis on nineteenth-century congregations, something which could establish a framework and draw out the patterns. Such studies exist for France and for

the United States, and there are slighter studies now published on Quebec and Ireland, [7] I suspect that not until there is a history which provides an overview and analysis of the scene as a whole, will other historians, whose interests may be education, nursing, or single women, or the Irish in Britain, feel able to integrate the activities and experience of women religious into their study. That, at least, is the philosophy and rationale behind my work.

B. But how does an interested historian who is not a religious get to know about the congregations and their archives? I can only give a personal answer to this question and reveal the less than elegant processes of my research. Published scholarship has the effect of making research and its outcomes appear inevitable, tidy, and coherent but I suspect my experience of groping towards a new subject, in which accident played a large part, is not uncommon.

I am a social historian whose particular interest is in religion and the dynamics of the relationships between people, Church structures and the larger society. My other major interest has been in the relations between the sexes and in women's experiences in particular. The route I travelled to get to nineteenth-century nuns was circuitous and tells a good deal about how 'invisible' the subject was to me too.

For three years I taught history at La Sainte Union College in Southampton, and during the last two years there I was hunting for a research subject that brought together my interests. A number of false starts were made, with leads that petered out. It wasn't until several years later, when I had left LSU, that I realised the subject had been literally under my nose. What actually led me to realise that this was 'my' subject was more by way of revelation than rational historical deduction! It came on a family holiday to Kent in late March 1984. We spent a good deal of the time huddled around the fire taking refuge against the cold, reading old magazines left in the cottage. In desperation my husband went out to a second-hand bookshop and returned with a present for me — *The Life of Cornelia Connelly, 1809—1897.* I stayed up all night until the last page was turned. Why had I never heard of this remarkable woman? What more was there to know about the Society of the Holy Child Jesus? What had historians had to say about nineteenth-century sisters? Back at college, a library computer search revealed that, as far as the computer's history data base was concerned, nuns did not exist.

But how could one find out more? In September 1984 I wrote to the Provincial of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus to ask whether they had any materials on their foundress and, if so, could I come and look at them? With hindsight I know how naive this question must have seemed to a congregation which had spent years gathering all the available evidence on their Foundress for her Beatification Cause and had just put together a three-volume *Positio.* But the Society was generous and did not make me feel my ignorance. Instead,

I was made welcome. The archivist, Sister Winifred Wickens, gave of her expertise but was also wise enough to let me grow into the materials in my own way. In that archive, and talking to Sr Winifred over several visits, I groped towards seeing just how big and important a subject this was. The archivist, for this historian, was vital to the success of the undertaking. I look back with awed astonishment on the fact that my tentative initial foray should have been to a congregation whose archives were already highly organised, open to scholars, and whose archivist was Treasurer of the Catholic Archives Society. After all, the chances of hitting the bull'e-eye first time were at least 90 to 1 against. . .!

In the space of about nine months my research focus developed from Cornelius Connelly and the Society to women's active congregations in nineteenth-century England more generally. This happened as I began to try and place the Holy Child in a chronology of women's congregations working in this country, to see it in perspective. I wanted to know how many other congregations there were already by 1846 (the date of the Society's foundation), how many were native to England, how many and which were from France, Belgium, Ireland, and how and when did they come to England. These were only basic questions, but there were no basic answers in readily available form. A letter to the Catholic Record Society enquiring if they knew of such a chronology produced a reply saying how useful it would be if I were to produce one. Gradually, using such compilations as John Murphy's *Terra Incognita,* Francesca Steele's *Convents of Great Britain,* Peter Anson, and various directories, I began to do so. The list comprised date and place of foundation, name of founder, date of first English house if from abroad, geographical location in the nineteenth century and the works undertaken by the congregation.

All this work, which is a continuing process, was necessary before I could begin to make a selection of congregations for more detailed study. Because there were some ninety congregations in existence in the nineteenth century I needed to have rudimentary information about them all before I could draw up criteria for selecting a few. In the first instnace, I decided to concentrate on English congregations — a pragmatic decision which also made good historical sense. From the relatively small group which this left I chose five on the basis of date of foundation, size, geographical spread, and nature of apostolate. I was fortunate in being able to use Sr Winifred as a referee to vouch for my serious intentions, but I was nonetheless fearful of receiving a 'rejection' from these congregations. In the event, I once again struck gold in the archivists and archives of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Poor Servants of the Mother of God. (Two of the five congregations did not feel able to grant my request for access but, fortunately for me, I was already well under way by the time this happened. It did not deter me as it might had it happened at the outset.) With Sr Winifred's encouragement, I joined this Society and the two conferences which I have attended have proved invaluable to the progress of my work.

When I look back on the last few years and the process sketched out above, what stands out clearly is the fact that I started out in ignorance and the archivists were my teachers. They not only made the archives intelligible but they gave me invaluable insights into their own congregation, and into the way in which the congregation sees its own past. Not only is each archive different but, as I learned, the charism of each congregation is unique and a 'tangible intangible'. Perhaps archivists have imbibed the charism in large doses by virtue of their closeness to origins, I don't know. But it came to me initially and unconsciously via the archivist.

C. Finally, I want to say something about the way in which I approach and use the archival materials. Before I get to an archive I make it my business to have read whatever published material is available on the congregation, either in my own collection or at the Catholic Central Library, or perhaps from the congregation itself. Usually, I ask the archivist if I may first make a preliminary visit of a day or two, to be followed by a longer visit. The purpose of the preliminary visit is twofold. On one level it is about people. I want to establish a good working relationship with the archivist who, in turn, needs to know that she can trust me not only with the actual materials, but also with the history of the congregation. These are, after all, family papers. The other object is for me to assess how much material there is and its nature and type. Obviously, this is made much easier where the archives have been listed, but even where this is not the case I can use my knowledge of the typical categories in an interrogation of the archivist! By now, although I am open to what the archive has to offer, I have a number of specific questions in mind when I start. These questions have arisen out of immersion in the total holdings of a few archives and provide a way of moving forward systematically. They should not be seen as a definitive list or a closed approach.

Here is what I am interested in at the moment and the materials I use in the archives:

1. Who were the sisters? This requires one to deal with large numbers of individuals about whom very little is recorded. The aim is to build a profile of nineteenth-century women religious *as a group.* The approach is, therefore, statistical and requires a large sample — 1 am using about five thousand. The major sources are the registers of all types — postulants, novices, professed sisters; individual vows; necrologies or obituaries; convent annals. The amount of information varies enormously from congregation to congregation, as does the extent to which records were compiled in a systematic way. At one extreme I have found the highly organised card index system of the Society of the Sacred Heart which includes every woman who took first vows in the English Province. At the other extreme there might only be a series of lists, often overlapping and with omissions, from which a register has to be 'reconstructed'.

Within these sources there is usually a certain minimum of information — name of parents, date of birth, place of birth, of baptism, of entry into the convent, of vows, and of death. From this it is possible to work out how old women were when they entered and whether the age of entry changed over time or between congregations; what proportion were converts and in which period; what proportion left before clothing and before and after final profession; the life-expectancy of sisters compared with women outside the convent; the ethnic composition of the congregation at various periods; whether there are links between particular parishes, priests and convents for recruitment. However, it is also possible from even this rather limited data to look for kin relationships within congregations — sisters, nieces, cousins, aunts (although there were always more relationships than a name search reveals).

From all this information a fascinating picture begins to build up and can be augmented in the fuller records by information about educational level, dowry, employment before entering. The more notable or senior members, and often the earliest sisters, are often quite carefully recorded, but the great number are more anonymous. All the information available is extracted on to a form I have devised for the purpose and later will be put on to disc and thus form a data-base. During the next year I would expect to write an article — 'Who were the nuns?', based on this research.

2. Another area of interest, and one which is quite different, is that of the relationships between superiors and local priests, and between a superior and a bishop. In many cases, congregations were introduced to England or to a particular diocese by an individual priest or bishop. What were his expectations? How did they compare with the expectations of the superior? How did the subsequent development of the congregation match and mesh with those of the diocese? What images and ideas did the men of the Church have about women religious and how far did these accord with, or conflict, with the realities?

Correspondence is by far the most useful single source for exploring these questions, and not all of the relevant material is in convent archives. Much of this material needs to be 'de-coded' because the relationship between the sisters and the men of the Church was unequal and often complex. A good illustration is the correspondence from Father Gaudentius Rossi CP to Mother Mary Joseph Prout (foundress of the Cross and Passion Sisters) in the 1850s. The congregation has only eight letters written by Mother Prout and, as a consequence, the large number of letters written to her, mostly from Father Rossi, form a crucial element of the archive. Rossi's letters are often highly critical of her conduct and leadership but, given the other evidence about the history and development of the congregation, cannot be simply taken at face value. They need to be read with the same degree of critical awareness that historians would bring to any correspondence and I would like to illustrate this by sharing with you one of Rossi's letters and then to contextualise and interpret it. (Omitted

here but see Note 8.

3. The internal relations, daily life and ethos of a convent or congregation constitute a further rich area for research. What kind of leadership did superiors provide? Under what conditions did the sisters live and work? How were decisions made and communicated? What were the relationships with laity? Basic sources here in addition to the superiors' correspondence are the constitutions, •the custom books (and the ways in which these were amended over the years); the annals; individual reminiscences and biographies; and the records of the work which the sisters undertook. There are also those materials which reflect the spiritual life of the congregation — retreat notes, records of special services or prayers, the spiritual reading of the sisters. This is a research area where almost all sources are grist to the mill but, alas, one rarely gets anything directly generated by the ordinary sisters. As I work in the archives and occasionally spend time with older sisters I cannot help wishing that more had been done by way of oral history with the oldest sisters over the past ten years. Perhaps some of you will be inspired to develop such a project and add immeasurably to the archive in this way. [9]

D. *The future of the research.* This is a research project which stretches out ahead as far as I dare to look and there is far more than can be managed by any one person. I have been very fortunate in obtaining a Nuffield Foundation Research Grant which provides for staffing replacement and thus enables me to spend the twelve months from July 1988 full-time on archival research and writing. During this period it is my intention not only to explore the archives of several more English congregations, but to move on to a number whose mother house was originally in France, Belgium and Ireland.

NO I KS

1. S. O'Brien, 'Terra Incognita: The Nun in Nineteenth-Century t.ngland'. ***Past and Present: a journal of social historians.*** No. 12 1 (forthcoming November 1988). I would be happy to send an offprint to anyone who would like one at a cost of t1.50 to cover printing and postage.

2. The relevant chapters in G.A. Beck's ***The English Catholics. 1850 1950*** (London. 1950) still provide the best overview.

3. See. for example. J. Burst yn. I ***'ictorian Education and the ideals of Womanhood*** (1980): J. Burstyn. 'Women's Education in England during the 19th c: A Review of the Literature 1970-76'. ***History of Education.*** Vol. 4. No.l. (1977); S. Fletcher. ***Feminists and Bureaucrats: A Study in the Development of Girls' Education in the 19th C (I9S0):*** D. Gorham. ***Girls Growing L'p in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*** (1981); F. Hunt ed.. ***Lessons for Life: the schooling of girls and women. 1S50-1950 (***1988). For a recent study of a Catholic educator and education see J.P. Marmion 'Cornelia Connelly's Work in Education 1848-1879' (Ph.D. thesis. University of Manchester. 1984).

4. F. Prochaska. ***Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*** (1980): M. Vicinus. ***Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women. 1S30-1920*** (1985).

5. W.L. Arnstein. ***Protestant versus Catholic in mid-Victorian England: Mr Neivdegare and the .Xuns*** (1982) is the most recent and contains a good bibliography of various works.

6. R. Swift and S. Gilley. eds.: ***The Irish in the*** I ***'ictorian City*** (1985). p.8.

7. C. Clear. ***Xuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*** (Dublin. 1987): M. Danyvvlevvycz. ***Taking the l eil:*** ,4fi ***alternative to marriage, motherhood and spinsterhood in Quebec. 1840-1920*** (Toronto. 1987): M. Ew ens. ***The Rule of the Nun in Nineteenth-Century America*** (New York. 1978); Anthony lahey. 'Female Asceticism in the Catholic Church: A Case-Study of Nuns in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century' (Ph.D. thesis. University of Illinois. Urbana-Champaign. (1982): C. Langlois. ***l.a Catholicisme ait feminin. Les congregations francaises a superieurs an xix siecle*** (Paris. 1984).

8. The text if this letter and a discussion of the relationship between Mother Mary Joseph Prout and l ather Rossi can he found in my forthcoming article, referred to in Note I.

9. To get the best out of interviews, careful planning is required. A useful way into the method is Paul Thompson's ***The*** l ***oice of the Past*** (1978) and back issues of the ***Oral History Journal.***

*Editorial note:*

**This article is an abbreviated version of a talk given at the annual conference of the Society in May 1988. Dr Susan O'Brien is Senior Lecturer in History, The College of St Paul and St Mary, The Park, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 2RH. She is able to act as a supervisor for M.Phil, and Ph.D. research degrees on any aspect of the history of women's congregations. Students would be registered with the Council for National Academic Awards, and geographical location does not matter, provided arrangements can be made for regular supervision.**

# THE HISTORIAN AND THE ARCHIVIST

Donal McCartney

One thing is very evident about nineteenth-century Irish society — that is the pervasiveness of religion. In few centuries in the modern era did organised religion play so large a part in the life of the nation as it did then. The most tangible evidence of this was to be seen in the great expansion that took place in the building of churches, schools, diocesan colleges, seminaries, hospitals, convents, monasteries, orphanages, asylums and other institutions. During Dr Murray's term as Archbishop of Dublin (1823—52), ninety-seven new churches were built in the archdiocese alone. The *Catholic Directory* claimed in 1844 that within the previous thirty years 900 Catholic churches had been built or restored throughout the country. This activity continued under Murray's successor, Dr Cullen (1852—78). With this expansion in buildings the number of nuns and clergy also dramatically increased. Nuns multiplied eightfold between 1841 and 1901 despite a halving of the population in the same period.

Take the number of convents alone that were established. Even the bare statistics hint at a phenomenal growth and development in a relatively short span changing the architectural face of the Irish urban landscape. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were eleven convents. By 1851 there were eighty-nine. A period of explosive growth begins from mid-century. In the decade following 1851 the number of nunneries nearly doubled to 161. Twenty years later, by 1881, another hundred had been established bringing the number to 260. By 1921 the expanding number had reached 430. In independent and partitioned Ireland the rate of increase continued to quicken until by 1985 there were 882 — that is nearly ten times more than that in 1851. The number of religious orders for women had increased from 6 in 1800 to 35 by 1900.

This meant a most impressive number of nuns — many of whom came from the same families, so that it is almost possible to talk about ruling religious dynasties. Take, for example, the family of the famous controversialist, Fr James Maher P.P. of Carlow-Graigue. During one of those periodic anti-Catholic outbursts in nineteenth-century England a parliamentary Bill was introduced into the House of Lords in the 1850s which proposed to send inspectors into convents because of a rumour that persons were being detained there against their will. Fr Maher gallantly defended the convents and their inmates against the charges. In this spirited defence, Fr Maher admitted that two of his own sisters, eighteen of his nieces and a large number of other near relatives were nuns (in Ireland, England and America). Maher belonged to a particularly influential religious dynasty in the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin — his nephew was Archbishop Paul Cullen, Ireland's first Cardinal, whose nephew in turn was

Archbishop Moran, Australia's first Cardinal. Or take the local and perhaps more normal case of James Ryan of Ryan Brothers, Cloth Merchants of Patrick Street, Limerick. He was a good-living man who had the reputation of having brought the Christian Brothers to Limerick, and of hosting a French emigre priest, and the famous Fr Thayer who collected funds to bring the Ursulines to Boston. Ryan had four daughters, three of them joined the Ursulines in Boston. The fourth sister was married to a William Querk, a Dublin merchant. Mrs Querk (or Anne Ryan) was left a widow in her thirties with four children. She had helped to bring the Ursulines to Limerick and she later joined them and became Mother Ursula. Two of her daughters joined her and the third joined her aunts in Boston. Her only son became a Jesuit. All eight (four sisters and the four children of one of them) had ended up in religion. And this was not uncommon in Irish families. It is this sort of sociological development that accounts for the tremendous growth of convents in the 19th and 20th centuries. Think, then, of nearly nine hundred nunneries alone in Ireland today, each of them generating its own archives. Here we have an extremely rich collection of source material for the religious, cultural and social history of Ireland.

Now that organised religion is coming to have less influence on society, historians and others are becoming more aware of its significance for the recent past. And as they do, there is one group of commentators (not to call them enemies of Irish Catholicism) who totally and irrationally exaggerate the evils done to Irish society by bishops, in particular, and by religion generally. Sometimes, even those who might be called friends of Irish Catholicism completely underestimate or trivialise the benefits that the Church and religion have conferred on the Irish people. All — friend and foe alike — are agreed about the huge importance of the role that religion has played. It is in this setting, and in either case, whether hostile or friendly, that the need for the religious archivist who has preserved the record of the detailed and fuller picture becomes all the more obvious. It is also in this setting that the need for the historian, armed with the sources provided by the archivist, to probe beneath the superficial and the sensational, becomes all the more urgent.

Three main categories of person are concerned with the kind of document that is produced in an institution such as a convent. These are the Administrator, the Archivist and the Historian.

Whether he or she is a public servant in central or local government, or a secretary of a semi-state body, or public institution, or of a private commercial or industrial concern, or a religious superior — the administrator is always tempted to get rid of those non-current records which are considered to be of no further use or value for present and future administrative needs. And where storage is a real problem the temptation is to destroy those records altogether where no alternative suggests itself. Where the decision is left entirely in the hands of the administrator the sacredness of the documents does not

necessarily enter into consideration. Only the trained archivist (not even the historian, much less the administrator) is competent to advise on record-appraisal and selection for survival. And the archivist should be involved at all stages, advising on records-management while the documents are still current, and looking after them when transferred to his care.

The archivist's main function is to care for the non-current files and records and to index, list, describe the archive in his care so that retrieval of information becomes easy. To do his job properly he has to assert his independence (of the historian and the administrator); he has to draw attention to himself and his importance (by exhibitions, etc.); he has to advise on records management; he has to seek out records relating to his particular archive (Rome, diocesan, missionary, educational, charitable, sociological, etc.) and he has to interest the historian in his work (A.R.A.I, could, for example, provide a register of religious archives for Irish History Departments in the universities, or for U.C.D.'s Archives Department) and University History Departments, for example, could provide for the A.R.A.I, a list of graduate researchers using this material, or researching copies that could benefit from the use of religious archival material.

What the historian greatly appreciates on his visit to the archivist is to be presented with a good descriptive list of the material in the particular archive. Such lists are available for some of the collections in the U.C.D. Archives Department. A glance through a finding-aid where each item is described (including individual letters) will tell immediately whether it is necessary to plough through a box of correspondence. Where the archive is relatively small, or the number of archivists relatively abundant, such descriptive lists are easier to make. The very rich Dublin Diocesan Archive presents a different problem. Here you are dealing with literally thousands of letters in, say, the Cullen or Walsh papers. And although the categories to date into which such a mass of letters is divided — Bishops, More Important Priests, Priests and Nuns, and Laity, and boxed in individual years — is a very useful one, it will be some time yet before each individual letter is indexed and described. Meanwhile, the historian working on a theme like education, has to work his way through all of the correspondence so as not to miss anything of importance.

The historian of nineteenth-century Irish Catholicism to date has concentrated, like, for example, Emmet Larkin, on ecclesiastical power-play (just as historians in the past concentrated their efforts on kings, and diplomats and politicians and generals, and on the exercise of military, diplomatic and political power). As secular historians have now turned much of their energies over to the investigation of social, economic and cultural as distinct from political history, so too the religious historian must give more and more of his attention to the sociological and cultural aspects of the history of religion in Ireland: to the kind of person who joined the religious life, to the kind of life that was led, to the work that was done at local and regional level, to the practices that were followed and beliefs that were held and taught, to the impact that was made.

to the manuals that were studied, to the regulations that were imposed, to the prayers that were said. In this kind of history of religion on the ground and in the inner life of an individual the much-prized letter from Rome, however sensational it may appear, is of far less value and significance than the well-thumbed copy of the *Imitation of Christ,* or the old disintegrating Catechism that was once used in the school, or the once much-loved holy picture with its long-forgotten prayer on the reverse side.

The folk-park and folk-museum have become a part of our social history. The preservation of an old convent, with its old library, its old pictures on the walls and its old statues, its material remains of old scapulars and medals and other objects on the sideboard, would be every bit as valuable to the historian's work and to the community's heritage.

But as we all know, there are historians and historians; and all of them with an increasing interest in the Religious Archives. At a period in history when secular women appear to have had little recognition on record kept of them, nuns did exercise a great deal of authority in hospitals, schools, orphanages, etc. They had an outlet for talents and energies and careers that seem to have been denied to their wedded and secular sisters. Even the modern feminist, therefore, sees virtues in the nun and tends to regard her as a nineteenth-century feminist prototype — abjuring men and male company, devoted to her career, and caring for her less well-off sisters and their children and attending to the miseries created in and by a man-ordained society. And what's more, at a time when secular women are largely invisible in history because of the absence of records dealing with them, the convents have locked away in their archives, records of their activities and of the girls they catered for. Much of the history of women in nineteenth-century Irish society is in the Religious Archives and in the care of the religious archivist. Even from the standpoint of secular history, the religious archivist controls a precious source, and bears in consequence a tremendous responsibility.

How much of all this should be made available to the general public? Should there be open access? Take, for example, the question of confidentiality which arose at a conference of the Dublin Commissioners appointed under the Irish Universities Act 1908:

> *Chief Baron Palles:* **I don't think the Commission has any intention at present of publishing anything you say here, so that you can speak confidentially to us, and perhaps that will enable us to know your mind and a great deal more . . .**
>
> *Mr Starkie:* **I am glad my remarks are not going to be published — I don't think the Chair of Education in Trinity College is very valuable. We have Professor Culverwell lecturing probably 500 students in the year in circumstances which don't make the instruction very valuable; it is more like a public meeting, and I think people go there for curiosity — I think the advantage to the students is very problematical.**

> **. . . when the Chief Baron asked me how many Professors of Pedagogy I would like to have, that is another matter — the fewer, the better from my point of view.**
>
> **. . . The reason for that opinion is perhaps because the Professors of Pedagogy I have met were very little use.**

The confidential comments were printed in a Government paper only two years later for anyone in Trinity College, Dublin or University College, Dublin to have a good sneer at. My prying eye has now been reading the comments. I am not interested in researching it and keeping it to myself. I have just broadcast the matter to you and that's what the historian does.

Confidentiality is a very real problem. There is every reason why convent or private documents should be kept from — on the one hand — the sensationalist, from the journalist who wants to sensationalise or exaggerate or relate a story out of context; and on the other hand the publicist, for example the feminist who merely wants to use the material, again out of context for his/her own special and controversial end. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the bona fide historian, interested only in establishing the historical truth, from others interested in sensationalism or propaganda. But the effort is worth making.

The fuller the records, the more they are bound to reveal the human side of the convent — the power struggles, the avarice, the personality clashes, the pettiness, the prejudices, the dislikes, the jealousies, the coldness, the cruelties, the sins that are part of all human nature. These can be no worse than what is revealed, in, for example, the correspondence of nineteenth-century Irish bishops. We must not create the impression that monasteries and convents will not bear the light of day. Convent records will also reveal what the irreligious and cynical Voltaire appreciated:

> **Perhaps there is nothing grander on earth [he wrote] than the sacrifice that the weaker sex make of beauty and youth, often of high birth and fortune, to comfort and console in the hospitals the mass of human misery, the view of which is so humiliating to human pride, and revolting to natural delicacy. The people separated from the Church of Rome have but imperfectly imitated a charity so generous.**

What I am suggesting is that there is a great deal in the Religious Archives to be proud of; that they have nothing to hide or be ashamed of. And in any case if the complaints levelled against a religious institution are big enough, or if the scandal alleged against an individual religious is serious enough, you may be quite certain that correspondence and reports associated with the allegations will have ended up on the bishop's desk or in Rome and consequently are, or will become, accessible to researchers in these archives. So why not make the full picture available in the first instance in the particular institution's archives since they can't be hidden from view for ever?

It is a commonplace that saints are not easy to live with. Martyrs could be even more difficult than saints. Take an example I have come across in Sr Dominick Kelly's *History of the Sligo Ursulines.* Sr Marianne Moloney at twenty-three, after three years in the convent, wished to leave the Sisters of Charity in Dublin and join the Ursulines in Waterford where she felt seclusion would be greater and more to her liking. For this she had the approval of her spiritual adviser. The annalist described her as of 'a cavilling turn of mind.' 'She would argue upon the rules and discuss every order of obedience' and gave 'a good deal of trouble.' Permission to leave for another Order 'was readily given' (gasp of relief in the annalist's pen can be almost heard!) — thus forestalling the dismissal that 'would have been inevitable had she not entirely changed her conduct (of which her unbending character gave little hope)'. One can hardly believe that Mother M. Aikenhead was writing about the same person in her perhaps suspiciously immediate response to a request from the Ursuline Superioress in Waterford for a report on Sr Moloney's character. Mother Aikenhead wrote that the Sister had consulted an enlightened ecclesiastic by whose advice she had been guided in the entire affair. Since her entry she had been considered a person of sense and talent. 'She has always been exact in the observances, seemed addicted to prayer, spiritual reading, etc. And in regard to her temper, I have heard those who were in constant intercourse with her (in our Novitiate) remark hers was imperturbable.'

I suppose there is nobody more infuriating to the Mistress of Novices than the unbending character who is always imperturbable, talented, addicted to prayer and exact in the observances, while questioning their reasonableness and function. On the other hand, Mother Aikenhead may well have been one of those Superiors who had learned how to be economical with the truth. She may well have sincerely believed that the spiritual level of both convents could be raised by the departure of an individual from one institution to another. Whatever the real situation was, Miss Moloney did not last long in the Ursulines in Waterford either. There, her conduct was described as 'very unsatisfactory and may injure the novitiate.' It was decided that she should not continue her novitiate, but that she might remain until she could obtain admittance into some other convent. She desired and 'demanded' to be admitted to the Ursulines in Ennis to continue her novitiate. After hearing the pros and cons, the Ennis Chapter, by a majority in a secret vote, agreed to give her a trial. She paid £500 dowry and the expenses of her novitiate £40 p.a. Here she was eventually professed and ten years later her name headed the list of pioneers selected for the missions in Demerara, British Guiana, where she died after three years in dire poverty and hardship. The local doctor wrote to the bishop: 'These ladies are not ill, they are starving.' Let's hope that the spirited Miss Moloney had found at last the seclusion she had looked for, in her white martyrdom in South America.

Let me try to summarise what I've been saying. The history of religion

in 19th and 20th century Ireland is receiving ever more attention from the historians. The archives of religious institutions will have a central role to play in this development and will come more and more into demand. It is being recognised that these archives are a very important source not only for the history of individual institutions or for the history of religion in the narrow sense, or even for the history of women in Irish society, but they are also an invaluable source for the general social and cultural history of Ireland.

The three classes of person immediately interested in the Religious Archives are the Administrator, the Archivist and the Historian. And while each has to be independent of the other, the three have a common interest in co-operating closely together to make sure that the best possible care and the best possible use is made of these collections.

Confidentiality is, of course, a difficult and sensitive issue. Administrator, Archivist and Historian should talk more to each other about the matter and between them draw up the regulations governing their use. My feeling is the fuller the record and the easier the access to it, and the more honesty, openness and truth, the better it will be all round and for all concerned.

The work of the individual religious archivist and of the Association of Religious Archivists is critical and essential. I congratulate each of you and your Association on the work that has been done and is being done. And I can only encourage you to even greater efforts in the future.

*Editorial Note*

**This article is the text of a paper read by Donal McCartney, Professor of Modern Irish History, University College, Dublin, at the annual conference of the Association of Religious Archivists of Ireland in April 1988.**

# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE:
# REFLECTIONS OF A DIOCESAN ARCHIVIST

The Rev. Anthony Dolan

Last September (1987) at the Society's Council meeting, we began to make plans for this year's (1988) Conference. We agreed to ask Canon Robert Carson, who had recently acquired a couple of rooms for archive use in the Pope John Paul Centre, Middlesbrough, to share with us his thoughts on how he envisaged the development of the premises.

Unfortunately, several months after agreeing to give this talk. Canon Carson died rather unexpectedly. At fairly short notice, it was decided that I should fill the gap left by his death.

This bit of background is important because it will determine the tone of this talk. I envisage this paper as providing an opportunity for us to share ideas. It will not be a case of me providing you with a blueprint along the lines such as: *this is what we in Nottingham have done, are doing, plan to do, and the rest of you would be well advised to follow our example!* I shall be putting forward some ideas in the hope that you, in return, will suggest some ideas to us.

Recently, I decided to do a bit of checking. I discovered that, of the 116 parishes which currently make up the Diocese of Nottingham, no less than 52 were listed in the 1888 edition of the *Catholic Directory,* in other words, they are more than one hundred years old.

From this I conclude that half the parishes of the Diocese have, should have, did have (before they were lost, mislaid, sold, given away, destroyed, or pinched by us) some records of considerable historical interest. In fact, at the present time, we hold registers and other documents which we have collected from thirty-three parishes, not all of which parishes are, however, more than one hundred years old.

We are talking about *building for the future.* Building work, if it is to endure, must be systematic. It must also be well-planned and carefully executed, otherwise it will not last. It is perhaps not inappropriate that we ask ourselves in this context certain basic questions, viz.:

A. For *what kind* of future are we trying to build?

B. *What* are we trying to build?

C. *How* are we going about building it?

A. *For what hind of future are we trying to build?*

We can sometimes get the impression — at least our Assistant Archivist

not infrequently does — that our *raison d'etre,* our main purpose in life, is to create a heaven on earth for ancestor-hunters. But this is not — or should not be — our purpose. If it happens as a by-product of our work, well and good; something is achieved by way of fostering goodwill.

I would suggest that we are trying to build in such a way that:

i) the relevant material we hold is readily available to those individuals and organisations who have the right, the need, or the permission to see and make use of it; and

ii) we know where other potential archive material is, who is responsible for it. and what is likely to happen to it when whoever is currently responsible ceases to be so or loses interest.

### B. *What are we trying to build?*

The cynic might suggest that we are trying to build a vast collection of correspondence, since answering letters takes up a disproportionate amount of the time I spend on archive work.

We are, I would suggest, trying to build a collection of appropriate documents and artefacts and a system of interchanges of information regarding other relevant documents and artefacts which we do hold, and to do this for the purposes I have indicated.

It seems to me that we have a tremendous responsibility in this regard. Archivists are the custodians of the future, insofar as they preserve the records of the past and make them available for generations to come. We have a responsibility to ensure that 'things' do not get lost, damaged, destroyed, or end up in the wrong hands. If we take the Incarnation seriously, then we have a sacred task. As is stated in the memorandum of our recent Working Party, the material we hold 'can be seen as a record of God's grace in action in the local community'.

### C. *How are we going about our building work?*

I would suggest six ways:

1. By agitating from time to time for more adequate premises and/or equipment.
2. By a process of education.
3. By public relations exercises.
4. By sheer hard and often monotonous work.
5. By collecting (deliberately or accidentally).
6. By seeking information concerning the present whereabouts of documents and artefacts.

1. By agitating from time to time for more adequate premises and/or equipment.

One has to be a little careful about this — not too often and then with a toothpick rather than a sledgehammer. One might suggest to one's superior: 'I've just visited the archives of the Sisters of Y (or the Diocese of Z). I thought ours were good but you should see what they've got in the way of . . .'. Occasionally, one might have to say: 'I know you're the boss, but it becomes increasingly difficult to work under these conditions'. We have to let our superiors know we are content but not complacent. (Don't forget: it's also important to get around the bursar or financial secretary — it takes a very strong-minded superior to stand up to a resolute bursar!)

2. By a process of education.

Who needs to be educated?

a) We do. This is true, whether we are trained archivists or amateurs. No one has ever finished learning.

b) Our Superiors (Provincials, Abbots, Bishops)

In some cases, including our own, this may hardly be necessary; in others, it may be so. Not all of you may be as fortunate in this regard as we are.

c) The clergy.

It is a fact that most of the parish clergy in this country are so burdened with administrative work that they cannot be blamed for not showing much interest in old books, letters, etc. If they haven't the time, the inclination, or the energy to care for such things, they need to be pointed in the direction of those of us who have at least the inclination, if not always the time or the energy.

There is one parish in my own diocese where, in the late 1960s, the incoming parish priest had a bonfire of old books including some valuable records from the early nineteenth century or before. Clearly, he needed educating if he wasn't already beyond it!

I am glad to say things are improving. More and more, priests are tending to contact me to ask what they should do with items of historical interest which they find in their parishes. My usual response is: 'don't do anything at all until I've been over to see them.' This approach seems to pay off.

I sometimes think I would like to be in the position where, when a priest dies in office, I'm called in before the undertaker or, at any rate, before the funeral. For all sorts of things can disappear during an interregnum. Once I had a lucky stroke in this regard. We received the usual notification of the death of a parish priest in one of the older parishes and were asked to let the priest-in-charge know whether we proposed to attend the funeral. I rang up and said: 'I will come to the funeral, concelebrate, stay for lunch and then clean out the

presbytery.' I did all of this! Some three-and-a-half years later, the successor to that parish priest rang me to ask for a copy of the plan of the church drains; it was one of the items we had 'removed' when his predecessor died. Had we not done so, it might have disappeared anyway.

In another parish, I called in to see the priest. (His predecessor had given me quite a lot of documents including some registers from the late eighteenth century.) I was on my way to a meeting and almost missed it since, every time I stood up to go, he offered me another register. What archivist can resist a temptation like that?

But things are not always as easy as this. In November 1981 I suggested to one parish priest that he ought to close his death register and give it to me for the archives. Even though the book was only half full, it had been in use for a century and was in poor physical condition. The hint was not taken nor was an identical suggestion made by the Bishop when he came on Visitation. I tried several more times and, eventually got the register in October 1986, four years and eleven months after my initial request! Sometimes tact and patience are called for!

d) Religious.

Several congregations of religious sisters have been founded in the Diocese of Nottingham and/or long-established in it. Some of these, e.g. the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, the Corpus Christi Carmelites, the Presentation Sisters, have made use of the material in our archives and, in one case, have contributed to our secondary sources. Mount St Bernard Abbey gave us a copy of a quite unique record, the video of the exhumation (part of the preliminaries to beatification) of the body of Fr Cyprian Tansi.

There is sometimes a problem regarding parishes run by religious communities as to how much material there belongs to the institute and how much to the Diocese. I think I know the theoretical solution but I haven't quite resolved the practical aspect. Perhaps tact and patience are called for here too.

e) Laity.

One of the benefits of the relatively new sport of ancestor-chasing has been that more and more people are acquiring a sense of history. Part of this sense of history is an awareness that today is the basis of tomorrow, that the records we keep, the artefacts we preserve, will provide the material for future generations of historians, sociologists, genealogists, etc.

But how do WE go about educating the laity with a view to building for the future?

Over the years we have used various methods. These have included:

i) Writing articles for our diocesan year book under headings such as: 'The

Church in Lincolnshire'-a briefoutline'(1983),'The Mansfield Deanery' (1984), 'A load of old rubbish' (1984),'Leicester Deanery 'A" (1986). and 'The Buxton Deanery' (1987).

ii) Giving talks on archival matters to groups such as: Ilkeston Catholic Ladies' Group, an antiquarian circle, and Junior classes at St Thomas' Primary School, Ilkeston.

iii) Preaching 'historical' sermons, for example: St Mary's, Glossop: parish centenary (1982), Our Lady's. Bulwell: church golden jubilee (1985), and Ashbourne: church centenary (1988).

Occasionally, an off-the-cuff remark produces an unexpected reaction. At a Knights of St Columba meeting in March 1988, I said, rather facetiously in reply to a question, that —as archivist — I have jurisdiction throughout the diocese. Some weeks later, one of those present at that meeting rang me and offered me the minute book of the now-defunct Nottingham branch of the Catholic Transport Guild!

3. By public relations exercises.

This, although it can be rather time-consuming, I believe to be very important. It can be done in a number of ways, for example:

i) by replying in a friendly way to people who write to us, especially if they are non-Catholics chasing their suspected Catholic ancestors;

ii) by asking people who seek information from us for personal, professional or parish reasons to let us know if they come across anything interesting and/or to send us a copy (for which we offer to pay but - so far — have never been asked to do so!) of whatever they may happen to produce. This approach has brought in, among other things, some useful details on earlier Bishops of Nottingham, as well as an article on a priest of the diocese who later joined the Redemptorists.

iii) by contacting local record offices and keeping them up-to-date with details of registers we have acquired from their area.

4. By sheer hard and often monotonous work.

This is where our Assistant Archivist comes into her own. Without her unremitting, systematic expenditure of thoughtful energy, our archives would be in a state of primeval chaos. She acts as a kind of demiurge. Over the past nine years, she has filled many shoe boxes with meticulously written index cards. I couldn't begin to guess the number of files whose contents she has sorted, stamped and listed. Future historians will owe her a very great debt.

As yet, we have no possibility of cross-indexing. This is one reason why we are hoping — in the not too distant future and with the help of a suitable database — to put at least some of these records on computer.

5. By collecting (deliberately or accidentally)

Since I last gave a paper to this Conference (1982), we have collected quite a number of documents and artefacts. In April 1988 we removed from Cathedral House two boxes containing untold treasures. Although we have listed the contents of these boxes, we have not yet had time to study them.

The closure of St Hugh's College, Tollerton, two years ago has resulted in our acquiring more than thirty volumes of Catholic Record Society publications and various other reference books. (We keep a lookout for books to add to our library, something we believe to be very important.)

Quite a number of parish histories have come our way as have registers from a further nineteen parishes. A series of invaluable scrapbooks on a wide range of subjects was left to us by a parishioner of St Joseph's, Sutton-in-Ashfield, who died in 1986. This remarkable collection includes five volumes of press-cuttings on the progress of Vatican II.

We have also been given half-a-dozen mitres but, as yet, we have no croziers to go with them!

I have already told you how, by accident, we acquired the minutes of the Catholic Transport Guild. An even more remarkable thing happened at the beginning of 1986.

I had written to a certain priest asking if he knew the whereabouts of some early registers from a parish where he had once served. He didn't but — for good measure — sent me a baptismal register (beginning in 1843) from another parish he had left fifteen years earlier! The man concerned has since died and I hate to think what might have happened to that register had I not got hold of it in time.

A few months ago, I was contacted by someone who had been involved in the beginnings of our diocesan catechetical commission and was given a lot of documentation on the origins of this body.

6. By seeking information concerning the present whereabouts of documents and artefacts.

But what of the future?

I have already mentioned the hope that we will shortly begin to put some of our records on computer.

As I said earlier, we need to know where various potential archive records are likely to be. It is not necessary that we have everything ourselves even if we had space to store it and time to list it.

Looking to the future, in April 1988 I sent out a questionnaire to thirteen diocesan departments/commissions, e.g. Liturgy, Justice & Peace,

Tribunal, Cathedral Chapter. Four simple questions were asked:

Who keeps the records?
Where are they kept?
What records are kept?
Date of earliest record?

The results were quite interesting but the information needs updating.

One needs also to expand this search for information. I have already made an attempt at this by getting some of the older priests to identify people and places on old photographs. It would be useful to ask older priests, religious and lay people to record their recollections on tape if they are unable or unwilling to commit these to writing, but we have no plans to do this at present.

As an archivist — but not as a parish priest! — I lament the demise of the practice (which seems to have been fairly widespread) whereby each parish priest was required to fill in a detailed questionnaire prior to the bishop's official Visitation. We have quite a number of these and they make interesting, and occasionally entertaining, reading. For example, in reply to the request 'Give the names, occupations and addresses of eight principal Catholics', the priest at All Saints, Glossop, wrote in the 1890s, 'There are not eight!' Some of the questions asked — even many years ago — have a quite contemporary ring. Priests in Hexham & Newcastle were asked (no date given) 'Is care taken at all times to exclude profane music?'

What I am proposing to do (hopefully in the autumn of this year if the Bishop approves) is to write to all headteachers and to parish priests of at least the older parishes asking them to supply me with information about potential archive material they hold. (See note below.) I don't know what my chances of getting replies are, but the exercise would be interesting and, hopefully, useful.

That, in essence, concludes what I have to say. I would emphasise once again that I welcome any ideas you may have which might help us develop or correct ours.

*Editorial note*

**This article is the text of a paper read by Fr A.P. Dolan, Archivist of the Diocese of Nottingham, Vice-Chairman of the Society, at the annual conference at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, on 31 May 1988. Fr Dolan also circulated copies of a questionnaire on parish records with an associated circular letter to parish priests, and a questionnaire on school records with an associated circular letter to headteachers. Copies of these may be obtained from Fr Dolan, whose address is The Presbytery, Our Lady & St Thomas of Hereford, 17 Nottingham Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 5RF.**

**For a description of the Nottingham Diocesan Archives, see A. Dolan, 'Nottingham Diocesan Archives', in *Catholic Archives,* No.3, 1983, pp.9—19.**

# NEVER THROW AWAY OLD RECEIPTS! : AN ELUSIVE CORK CARMEL, 1873-1884

Sister M. Angela Bolster

## INTRODUCTION

My first awareness of the existence of Carmelite nuns in Cork in the late nineteenth century came from certain items in the Diocesan Archives which I here present by kind favour of Bishop Michael Murphy. They include a) a letter from Bishop Thomas Furlong of Ferns, 20 December 1872; b) an entry in Dean Dominick Murphy's Typescript Annals of the Diocese, 9 March 1873; c) a *Relatio Status* or Five-year Report on his diocese by Bishop William Delany, 1875; d) a set of receipts indicating sums of money accredited to Mother Gabriella, Carmelite Convent, Cork, 1875 to 1879; e) chaplaincy appointments in an old Register of Clerical Changes dating from 1833.

Extra-diocesan sources brought me in touch with many members of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in this country and in Rome; hence my indebtedness to Father Phelim Monaghan and the Carmelite Sisters in Loughrea, to the Carmelite Prioresses in Tallow and New Ross and, most particularly, to Sister Teresa O'Shea, OCD, of the Malahide Carmel, whose knowledge of Carmelite history is laced with the lively good humour of the contemplative which makes her a refreshing and inspiring mentor. From Rome, Father Charles Newell, OCD, supplied me with valuable data from the Generalate Archives, while my own personal researches in Propaganda Fide uncovered some important letters from *within* the Cork Carmelite community and which I here present by kind permission of the Archivist. Finally, an important clue as to the dispersal of the Carmelites came from the files of *The Cork Examiner.*

## MADAME DE MOUSSET

In one simple sentence Dean Dominick Murphy recorded the establishment of a Carmelite monastery in Cork in the closing decade of Bishop William Delany's episcopate. Under date 9 March 1873 he wrote: 'On this day the Bishop installed the Carmelite Nuns in their temporary convent, 1 Morrison Quay, in this city.' The convent occupied the corner house once used as a coal-store by Abraham Sutton & Co., who had leased it from Messrs Beamish and Crawford. John Nicholas Murphy of Clifton listed this house as among the contemporary convents of the United Kingdom (1876). The foundress was Madame de Mousset (Mussy), in religion Mother Gabriella, who claimed to have been

professed 'by a certain Francois de Sussex, Bishop and Canon of the Basilica of Loreto': thus Bishop Thomas Alphonsus O'Callaghan to the Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites on 18 December 1886. This claim has not been substantiated, and Mother Gabriella's own correspondence indicates that she was not at all sure of the canonical status of her community with the Discalced Carmelite family. It would appear that she 'wanted continental interpretation of certain usages enforced in the — to her — *terra incognita* of Cork.'

Though Bishop Delany introduced five Sisterhoods into Cork between 1867 and 1875, there is no extant correspondence relating to the Carmelites of Morrison's Quay. However, Bishop Furlong, who apparently knew the Foundress, wrote the following on 20 December 1873 in response to a query from Dr Delany:

> **. . . MmedeMussy's [si'c] contemplated institute is to be of the same family [as the Carmelites of New Ross], but not of the same branch of it. Hers will be, I understand, of** *the 3rd Order of Carmelites* **whose special object will be the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for the purpose of thanksgiving. The idea, I believe, was originally suggested by the well-known Jewish convert, Father Hermann, who became a Carmelite Friar . . .**
>
> **Mme de Mussy seems to be a very suitable, devoted and energetic person very anxious to carry out the Carmelite Rule exactly, as in my conversation with her she always referred to the Reformed Carmel as her model. The Carmelite Convents in Dublin have a high character for the piety of the nuns and the strict and regular observances maintained in them. How far such austerity is practicable with the constitutions which young ladies bring nowadays into religion, will be for your Lordship to determine . . . But Cork is a fruitful soil, and the mustard seed planted there will soon grow into a mighty tree. From my heart I congratulate you, my dear Lord, on presiding over a city which numbers within its circuit so many and such magnificent religious institutes . . .**
>
> *The Ladies* **[Mme de Mussy and companions]** *means I do not know*

In this letter Bishop Furlong touched on the main reefs — status and finance upon which the Cork Carmel floundered. The convert-Jew referred to was German-born Hermann Cohen, a musical child prodigy, later a brilliant pianist, pupil and protege of Franz Listz and not unknown to Georges Sand. Like Ratisbonne, the Blessed Sacrament brought him to conversion (during Benediction) and he became a Carmelite Friar in France in 1847. He established a Carmelite Monastery in Kensington at the request of Cardinal Wiseman in 1862 and remained there until 1867. During the Franco-Prussian War he was assigned to minister to French prisoners-of-war in Spandau Prison where he contracted smallpox and died in 1871.

## CHEQUES AND CHAPLAINS

Bishop Delany's *Relatio* of 1875 lists nine different Sisterhoods, making a total of fifteen convents housing 281 Sisters, not including the Little Sisters of the Poor who were introduced later that year. There were twelve Carmelites in the Morrison's Quay Convent 'devoting their lives to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament'. Eighteen receipts dating from 1875 to 1879 suggest that the foundress/ superior sent out questing letters. The extant receipts came from Banking Institutes (now obsolete) in Boston, Philadelphia San Francisco and Nevada and were paid into the National Bank and the Bank of Ireland. They amount to a total of £1,562.2.10 paid over a period of twenty-three months. Time came when Bishop Delany vetoed this practice.

Chaplaincy appointments to the Carmelites indicate Bishop Delany's consideration for the nuns; a fact endorsed by a Papal Rescript of 1873 allowing them the privilege of Christmas Midnight Mass in their ow n private oratory which he had already secured for other communities in his diocese.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1872—1873: | The first chaplain was the Abbe Louis Bertrand de Metz who died in the Mercy Home on 5 December 1905 and 'who came to Cork to act as chaplain to a community of Carmelite Nuns about the year 1872'. |
| 1876—1877: | Rev. Thomas Magnier (he was appointed Parish Priest of Dunmanway in 1907 and was murdered there by the Auxiliaries in December 1920). |
| 1878 | Rev. Patrick Tracy |
| 1879 | Rev. Laurence Cummins |
| **1880** | Rev. D. O'Mahony, who apparently served for four years |
| 1884 | Rev. J. Lane |

By the time of Fr O'Mahony's appointment, nemesis was already threatening the convent.

## CRACKS IN THE CLOISTER!

Correspondence to hand leaves no doubt but that money was among the major factors which drew down on Mme de Mousset the full weight of Bishop Delany's anger. By 1879 the patronage she claimed to enjoy from Lady Londonderry, Countess Kenmare and Countess O'Hagan had been withdrawn; nor does she appear to have got any further aid from America. Then there was the recurring query — even from within the community — as to the canonical status of the community. This was compounded by Mme de Mousset's failure to appreciate the problems entailed in integrating continental customs within an alien and insular culture. Her letter of 5 May 1881 to the Carmelite Superior General in Rome reveals a build-up of misunderstandings, misrepresentations

and even of mischievous innuendos. The foundress had quite a reservoir of intemperate language which she directed against the Superior General, against the Bishop and his clergy, and against a postulant, Blanche Brett who, in turn, lodged her own complaint at Rome against the Cork Carmel.

Mme de Mousset refers to Blanche as

> **an English Protestant convert, formerly a Dame de la Sainte Union . . . today a primary teacher, who was a nun here as a postulant, was expelled from the Carmel for drunkenness . . . She refuses to admit that her mother was mad and had written to us during her postulate more than twenty letters of nonsense. This ex-postulant has affirmed that she would avenge her service . . . and is doing so under the cloak of zeal for the House of God and our conversion!**

It appears that Blanche sent Mme de Mousset an insulting telegram and created a scene at the convent door proclaiming to all 'that there were here Sisters in mortal sin . . . Our Sisters were terrified and the passers-by in the street amazed witnesses.'

For all her self-righteousness, Gabriella de Mousset *was* guilty of ill-treating her postulants. From the evidence of Mary Burke (about whom more later), we learn that she retained subjects for three years, and one postulant for seven years without giving them the religious habit. She then dismissed them, saying they had no vocation. In retaliation, they threatened to take action against her 'for taking their time and for ill-treatment', and 'they went to my Lord Bishop Delany at different times, making the above complaints ... as did the chaplain [spiritual director?], Pere Bertrand.' Why did Bishop Delany fail to heed these ominous signs that all was not well on Morrison's Quay? Why also — astute man that he was — did he accept Mme de Mousset into his diocese without verifying her references?

## CANONICAL STATUS

Mother Gabriella insisted that her community belonged to the Discalced Carmelites of the Order of St Elias and that Bishop Delany's jurisdiction over them did not alter that fact. She also maintained that they were a 2nd Order:'We *have never called our convent the 3rd Order of Carmel*' and she cited letters in support of her claims; letters which nobody saw. By1884 her thinking was hopelessly muddled, as evidenced by the following statements: 'we had no idea whether we belonged to the 2nd Order or not' ... 'it was very true to say we are members of the 3rd Order living in enclosure'. . . 'but, we are not a *Secular* 3rd Order living in community.' Factually, she was correct in her final statement. I have it on good authority that the Third Order Secular did not exist in Ireland at that time.

She was also correct in explaining why she and her Sisters took *simple*

and not *solemn* vows, the latter 'not being not at all possible either in France or in England or Ireland . . . countries which are far from protecting the religious vows of Sisters'. On the other hand, she was incorrect in claiming papal as against episcopal enclosure. The former applied only to those who took solemn vows. Despite her efforts to vindicate herself, Gabriella de Mousset became increasingly suspect in Rome and in Cork; and not solely on canonical grounds.

## THE SACRISTAN

The prescription of a Sacristan for enclosed nuns dates back to a *Motu Proprio* of Gregory XIII in 1572, in pursuance of which, St Teresa in her Alcala Constitutions of 1581 stipulated that the Sisters should have 'outside the enclosure a Sacristan (priest or cleric) or some out-servant, to lock and bolt the outside door of the Church and the principal door of the Convent'. Implementation of this prescription varied. It was literally observed in France, but in Ireland the extern sacristan was never a priest or cleric. Bishop Delany strongly disapproved of the sacristan in Morrison's Quay and he arranged for a rota of priests to perform the duties involved, much to the fury of Mme de Mousset.

> **Our insistence on having a Sacristan is annoying the Bishop of Cork [she wrote]. Consequently, having had more than 184 priests who were either mad or drunk (her favourite epithets) to fulfil the priestly functions, to administer the Sacrament of the Sick, say Mass, give Benediction etc., we think that for such priests a man is necessary who, by his age, his strength, his piety, could continue the duties of the sanctuary.**

She appealed to the Superior General in Rome 'to implore the Bishop of Cork, *not* on the basis of jurisdiction, but on that of morals, not to refuse to allow the Carmelites to follow their constitutions' on 'this matter of the sacristan. Bishop Delany's reply to Rome showed that he had no other option but to dismiss the sacristan.

## EPISCOPAL ULTIMATUM

On 24 September 1884, Bishop Delany justified his closure of the Morrison's Quay Convent on 1 June:

> **My Vicar General, Dean Neville, has learned from the Carmelite General in Rome that neither authorization nor sanction has been given to Mme de Mousset for establishing a convent of that Order.**

He listed three specific areas of dissatisfaction:

> **A certain layman, whom she called Sacristan, was too familiar in visiting and delayed too long during the day, not without scandal from within and without. Mme de Mousset collected large sums of money in this country and in America, all of which she kept for her**

**own use. She dismissed Sisters arbitrarily without reference to, or approval from me.**

Under such circumstances and following repeated and ineffective admonitions, the Bishop gave Mme de Mousset notice to quit; he forbade her to sign any more cheques or to contact any of the Irish Carmelite Monasteries. The indomitable lady made one last daring effort to obtain money in Cork, but in this too she failed.

*THE CORK EXAMINER*

Under date Thursday, 3 July 1884. we read that

> **The Carmelite Community of No.l, Morrison's Quay, Cork, beg in haste to state that their chapel is closed by order of the Right Reverend Dr. Delany, Lord Bishop of the diocese, and they would earnestly appeal to the charity of their numerous friends and associates to help them in paying the debts of the convent amounting to more than £376 (which were nearly all contracted by the expenses of the chapel), as also to help them to open their next convent, which will probably be in Ireland; otherwise, certainly in France, where several of the religious are expected, but do not intend to go until the end of September, nor before all arrangements will be made for the Irish Sisters and all debts paid.**

The immediate sequel to the foregoing was an editorial explanation on the following day to the effect that

> **We find that the paragraph referring to the above which appeared in yesterday's issue was inserted without diocesan authority. We are informed that no collection can be made in this diocese for any religious purpose without the special permission of the Bishop; and from a circular letter read on last Sunday in all the Churches of the city, we perceive that the only collection at present authorised by his Lordship is that for the new Diocesan Seminary.**

**THE CASE OF MARY BURKE**

There had to be victims of Mme de Mousset's conduct. Two letters from Mary Burke (May, September 1884) written to Rome from No.8 Marlboro Street, tell that 'on receiving those orders from his Lordship, Mme de Mousset obliged me to leave the convent and I am now thrown on the world.' Mary Burke entered the Cork Carmel in January 1874, was received on 26 April and then made a year's novitiate. 'The first six months I spent under the direction of Mother Teresa from the Carmelite Convent in Fulham in England . . . the remaining six I continued under the direction of Mme de Mousset.' After canonical examination, Bishop Delany professed her in a public ceremony

in May 1875. Mary Burke never doubted the validity of her profession and lived 'for ten years without meat, observing the Rule and cloister of Carmel. I never breathed the air, for we have no garden attached to our convent.'

She had one plea for the Bishop and one complaint against him:

> **As my Lord Bishop Delany made a mistake in professing me at the word of Mme de Mousset without having first seen her papers signed by ecclesiastical authority ... is not His Lordship bound to place me in a convent where I can preserve my vocation and my vows, as I firmly believe my vows binding before God and my conscience?'**

Bishop Delany, she said, had been aware, at least for three years, that the Morrison's Quay Convent was not duly founded; she considered it his duty 'to have communicated the same to me years ago.'

For his part, Bishop Delany regarded Mary Burke as 'a holy and virtuous woman who believes that her vows, taken in good faith, are valid.' However, the information imparted to Dean Neville (quoted above) was what counted: The foundation was invalid and consequently the Superior General refused to decide on Mary Burke's religious life, 'past, present or future'. And here all sources of information on the nineteenth-century Cork Carmel peter out. There is no record in Propaganda as to Rome's response to Dean Neville.

**DISPERSAL**

Dr Thomas Alphonsus O'Callaghan succeeded Bishop Delany in 1886. By then, all traces of the Morrison's Quay community were gone, so much so, that he addressed himself on the matter to Reverend Jerome Grotti (later Cardinal) who was Procurator General at the time of the foundation. We have no extant reply to this letter. My efforts to identify Blanche de Brett have been unavailing, likewise my efforts to verify the fact of Mme de Mousset's profession. Nor is there any verification that the novice mistress from Fulham ever came to Cork! The annals of Fulham are now in the Carmelite Monastery of Bridge Lane, London, and have been examined.

At the very least therefore, the Cork Carmel was an unorthodox foundation, and Gabriella de Mousset, at best, an adventuress. For all that, those who entered that monastery did so in good faith and though they departed as mysteriously as they came, the spiritual leaven of the 'Discalced Decade' cannot be lightly dismissed. This happened to be a decade during which privileged altars were accorded to many churches and convent chapels in the diocese; a decade which saw a tremendous growth in devotion to the Sacred Heart, in consequence of which Cork's main Confraternity of the Sacred Heart was aggregated to that of Santa Maria della Pace in Rome in 1877.

# THE SCOTTISH CATHOLIC ARCHIVES: FOUR YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT, 1984-1988

The Rev. Mark Dilworth OSB

In the porch of Columba House, where the archives are housed, a plaque informs the visitor that in 1958 the Columba Trust provided funds to establish the premises 'as a repository for Scottish Catholic records and as a centre for historical research'. This article aims at outlining the progress in these twin areas over the four years from March 1984 to March 1988. [1]

Perhaps the most important matter to record is the continued accession of material. It has been our experience that a major deposit is never made completely and cleanly at one go. The central part is first transferred, which gives the donor more space and leads to the exhumation of other sections relegated to some cupboard or attic. In a few cases, sections have been discovered in chapel-houses (presbyteries) some miles distant. It is most encouraging to know that dismembered collections are being brought together again in Columba House, even though piecemeal transfer sometimes upsets our cataloguing. Of course, it is our general policy to respect provenance and to keep separate deposits separate.

During these four years we have received deposits from Argyll, Blairs, Buckie and Edinburgh containing archival material of all three pre-1878 vicariates and the national seminary of Blairs, and even of the pre-1827 national core collection. The Buckie deposit contained minutes of the mission administrators' meetings from 1701 and a more or less complete run of the procurator's accounts from 1707. The archdiocese of Edinburgh has, very sensibly in my view, decided to avoid needless duplication of resources in Edinburgh by depositing all but its more recent files in this national institution. [2] No material comes to the national archives automatically or as of right. There has been, however, a steady trickle of smaller deposits from parishes, societies and other bodies and of compilations made by individuals. These included further files on the Papal Visit to Scotland; files of the Catholic Truth Society, Edinburgh; papers of the Grail in Scotland; files of the Lay Apostolate Council; extensive transcripts from Propaganda archives. Ordering additional shelving or metal cabinets is almost an annual event. All the same, given the present rate of change and the amount of material at risk, one can hardly be complacent.

Hand in hand with the acceptance of material for safe-keeping goes the sorting and cataloguing of it for the benefit of researchers. The time-lag between receiving older material and making a calendar available has been kept to a minimum. Modern material has a lower priority and is listed in a less detailed way, and in any case there is a general thirty-year closure before access is allowed.

Some difficulty was offered by accumulations of material either of secondary importance or not directly relevant to the purposes of Columba House. There were also a large number of lesser deposits or collections, too small to be given their own specific coding. Four categories have been created to contain this miscellaneous material: GD (Gifts & Deposits: original documents), GC (Gift Collections), GP (Gift Photocopies: documents in other repositories), HC (House Collections: put together by us). A large collection of photographs and illustrations was also catalogued.

Two interrelated projects came to completion in 1987—88. Once the pre-1878 holdings had been calendared, each section was checked and a summary handlist put on word-processor. The print-outs, reduced to A5 size, have been distributed free to academic institutions, particularly those with students researching in Scottish history. (A few are available at cost price.) Word-processing, of course, makes it possible not only to make corrections but also to add new accessions. The calendars themselves have been put on micro-fiche by Messrs Chadwyck-Healey, Cambridge, and are available commercially. Photocopies of the calendars are also held by the Historical Manuscript Commission, London.

A word should be said on printed publications, which fall roughly into two categories: the reference library, and items which belong to the archival collections because of their relevance to the Scottish Catholic Church. The latter have grown considerably, mainly by transfer of nineteenth-century periodicals and pamphlets from Drygrange seminary. The reference library has also grown, both by gifts from individuals or institutions and by purchase, and some gaps have been filled. Two necessary activities have gone on, though neither is complete: making a card-catalogue of authors and binding periodicals and damaged books.

Ordinary library shelving is not suitable for sizeable collections of slender booklets and pamphlets. These have, therefore, been put according to category in archival boxes, where they can be quickly located. As the sorting of printed matter continued, items of no relevance to Columba House collected at each end of the scale. Ephemera (anything from concert programmes to steamer timetables) were presented to the National Library of Scotland for its embryo collection of such things. Old and rare books were taken to the National Library and will eventually become a long-term deposit there, parallel to other deposits made by the Scottish Catholic Church.

Columba House has three storeys and its potential is still far from fully realised. Two more rooms have been equipped for storage purposes. The Columba Trust, which administers the finances of Columba House, has also made benefactions from its own funds. Not only has it provided a photocopier but it has installed period furniture in the vestibule and reading-room to match the Georgian architecture. The most notable progress, however, concerns personnel. Dr Christine Johnson, who has catalogued the pre-1878 holdings, left

to work in Edinburgh's medical archives. In her place Miss Mary McHugh worked two days a week. Then, in early 1988, Dr Johnson returned to Columba House to take up the newly-created post of Deputy Keeper, full-time and permanent.

This account of the progress made by Columba House as an archival centre can fittingly end with two recent events. In May 1984, to celebrate the silver jubilee of its official opening, a reception was held in Columba House. Representatives of archives and other academic institutions in Scotland met Cardinal Gray and the Columba Trustees and saw the work being done in the archives. In October 1986, Dr Athol L. Murray, Keeper of the Records of Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Record Office, handed over to the Scottish Catholic Church the *Liber Ruber,* a pre-Reformation cartulary of Glasgow diocese, since legal evidence of its provenance and ownership had come to light. At a pleasant little ceremony in Register House, the Archbishop of Glasgow accepted it, handed over in return a receipt dated 1798, and the *Liber Ruber* joined its companion volumes from medieval Glasgow in the holdings of the Scottish Catholic Archives. The news media gave good coverage to both events.

## Use made of Columba House

The foregoing describes the efforts made and the developments in Columba House. Readers using the facilities have averaged about forty each year and fell roughly into three classes: established scholars, persons following some private line of research (e.g. their parish history), and research students. Sadly, in the present economic climate, the last group has declined. Four theses based in part on our holdings, have been accepted, and three of them published, the subjects being the Grand Tour and the Great Rebellion, Alexander Geddes (biblical scholar), Alexander MacDonell (Bishop in Ontario) and Thomas Nicolson (first vicar-apostolic in Scotland). The archives also provided material for an edition of A.W. Pugin's letters and the Historical Manuscripts Commission's *Papers of British Churchmen 1780—1940.* The number of queries dealt with, on a wide variety of subjects and made by letter, telephone or personal visit, has risen to an average of about two hundred a year.

Visitors to Columba House are welcomed, and indeed visits are encouraged (but by appointment, please!). Individuals and groups have been shown over the premises and introduced to the resources, and a talk on the history of the archives is available for groups. Its length varies according to our visitors' desires and staying-power! We have been particularly pleased by visits from newly-appointed church archivists wanting to see an establishment in working order, and from scholars exploring the possibilities and resources for some field of research. Sometimes, too, when the mountain cannot come to Mohammed, we go to see the books or papers in a religious house or presbytery and either give advice or offer safekeeping for them in Columba House. In fact,

Archbishop Winning and Fr Mark Dilworth admire the *Liber Ruber*, as Dr Murray looks on, October 1986

*Photo by Stewart Ferguson*

rescue work has been an important role of Columba House in our rapidly changing society.

One particularly interesting development has been the increased use made of Columba House's resources, as distinct from the archival holdings. The reference library is adequate in many areas, and in some aspects of Scottish history is very good. The collection of photographs and illustrations is miscellaneous but undeniably useful. Authors, editors, graphics artists and mounters of exhibitions have used these resources, as have compilers of radio and television programmes. Occasionally we are asked to advise on the correct portrayal of some religious aspect in a literary publication, for instance the confession and communion scene in Schiller's *Maria Stuart* at the 1987 Edinburgh Festival.

Parish records are not kept here and we therefore cannot do much for genealogy seekers. Columba House has, however, acted as liaison for the Scottish Record Office in its project of ingathering and photocopying Catholic parish registers prior to 1855 (when public registration of births, deaths and marriages became compulsory). Although the project is now officially completed, additional registers have continued to come to light and have been processed. This role of liaison is encouraged by the Catholic Press Office, which sometimes directs queries from the media to Columba House, and we can be called on for comment as well as for information. Press releases and interviews for press and radio were supplied on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the Blessed George Douglas' death in September 1987 and his beatification two months later.

Columba House carries on what could be called public professional liaison with institutions and bodies concerned with Scottish history and culture. Items were lent for exhibition: 'French Connections' in the Royal Museum of Scotland in 1985, and 'The Stuarts in Scotland' in the National Library in 1987. Lectures were given on our holdings: in 1984 to the Canon John Gray symposium, and on the archives of the medieval diocese of Glasgow to the Friends of Glasgow Cathedral. Articles based largely on Columba House holdings and resources were supplied for two inter-denominational projects in Church history: one on the sources of post-Reformation Scottish Catholic history, the other on Catholic worship.[3] Interviews were given for Radio Forth's ambitious series on Church history, God's *Scotland.* The role of Roman Catholic adviser was undertaken, and articles written, for a forthcoming publication by a Church of Scotland institution: the *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology.*

This summary report on the Scottish Catholic Archives over a four-year period leads me to reflect on the role of Columba House. Its primary purposes of keeping our Church's records, cataloguing them and making them available to researchers, remain unchanged. Making available our other resources and the expertise gained by experience is simply an extension of that role. In these days of conscious public relations, co-operation with other bodies and a certain amount of 'high profile' are inevitable. Being used by and for the media is

perhaps merely the partial filling of a vacuum. But active involvement in Scottish historiography and cultural activities is something deeper. In an earlier issue of this journal I wrote that the fundamental role of the Scottish Catholic Archives was to show that the historiography of Scotland is incomplete unless our Church is seen as a constant factor. [4] I would now go further. The Church must have a presence and play a part in all constructive human activities. I see Columba House as spear-heading the Church's involvement in one area of the cultural and academic scene.

## NOTES

1. An account of the Scottish Catholic Archives and summaries of earlier reports can be seen in ***Catholic Archives,*** 1 (1981), 10-19: 4 (1984). 68-69: 5 (1985). 61.
2. For a description of these archives and their catalogues, see ***Catholic Archives*** 6 (1986), 6–10.
3. 'The Counter-Reformation in Scotland: A Select Critical Bibliography'. ***Records of the Scottish Church History Society***, 22 (1984), 85-100: 'Roman Catholic Worship' in ***Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland,*** ed. D.B. Forrester and O.M. Murray (Edinburgh, 1984), 113-31.
4. ***Catholic Archives.*** I (1981), 19.

# UPHOLLAND COLLEGE ARCHIVES

J.A. Hilton

Upholland College is a magnificent building in picturesque grounds overlooking the Pennine moors and the Lancashire coastal plain. Its contribution to the formation of the secular clergy of the Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses has been described in detail. [1]

St Joseph's College, Upholland, was founded in 1883 as the senior seminary for the diocese of Liverpool, and in 1920 the junior seminary, St Edward's (formerly in Liverpool), was amalgamated with it. The College founded the parish of St Teresa's, Upholland, and provides a chaplain for the neighbouring Carmelite convent. In 1975/6, the senior seminary was transferred to Ushaw, and Upholland became the junior seminary for the Northern Province. The College buildings were shared with the Upholland Northern Institute for adult Christian education, and made available as a conference centre. In 1987 the junior seminary closed, but the College will continue to provide a home for Liverpool diocesan junior students who will study in local schools: St Peter's High School, Orrell, and St John Rigby Sixth Form College. Upholland College still houses the Gradwell Library, a collection of theology, some dating from penal times. As a result of these most recent changes, the College archives have been catalogued, but there remains a mass of uncatalogued photographic material.[2]

The most important records, covering the history of the College from its origins before 1883 up to 1940, are stored in box files. [3] These include a file on the vocations crisis of 1892. Important or sensitive materials for the period after 1940 remain part of the College's working archives, and have not been catalogued.

In addition to these files, and a couple of boxes of miscellaneous papers,[4] there is a considerable amount of material kept in note-books.[5] Much of this consists of lists and financial accounts, but there are one or two items of a formal biographical and autobiographical nature.[6] It is, however, the day-to-day material, such as the dean's and the censor's diaries, the diaries of individual priests, and a collection of Christmas pantomime scripts, that provides the best informal evidence for the history of clerical life over the last hundred years.[7]

Access to the archives is obtainable with the permission of the Director, Upholland College, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 OPZ. Photocopying facilities and residential accommodation are available from the Upholland Northern Institute.

## NOTES

1. B. I'lunib. 'The hounding lathers of the Lancaster Diocese' in J.A. Hilton (ed***). Catholic Englishmen*** (Wigan. I 984). pp.53—58: Plumb. ***Found Worthy: A Biographical Dictionary of the Secular Clergy of the Archdiocese of Liverpool {Deceased) since 1H50*** (Warrington. 1986).
2. ***ipholland Centenary*** (Upholland. 1983): M. Brooks. 'Tile C.radwell Library, Upholland C ollege'. ***North West Catholic History.*** XIV (I 987). p. I 0.
3. Archives of St Joseph's College, Upholland. 56-66.
4. ASJCU. 67-68 5. ASJCU. 1-55 6. ASJCU. 2. 3 I.
7. ASJCU, 28, 41. 42. 43, 45, 48. 49.

# MEMORANDUM ON PARISH RECORDS TO THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES, AND RESPONSE, NOVEMBER 1988

Prepared by a Working Party of the Catholic Archives Society, November 1987

The Catholic Archives Society would like to offer the following observations on the question of the preservation of parish registers. Canon Law lays down requirements for the care of parish registers in particular, but these observations also apply to other records which should be preserved on account of their administrative and historical importance.

1. The 1983 Code of Canon Law (cn. 535) requires that certain registers be kept in every parish, concerning baptisms, marriages, confirmations, deaths and any other records required by local law. This places on the parish the burden of providing suitable secure storage facilities. The danger of damage by fire, flood, theft, and similar hazards is obvious. Parish priests generally are aware of these factors and provide safe custody of their registers.

2. Apart from this requirement of Canon Law, such registers need to be kept for the following reasons. From a theological point of view, they can be seen as a record of God's grace in action in the local community. They are needed for the purpose of church administration. From a historical point of view, they can be of great interest and use in documenting the part played by the local church in the life of the community and are of increasing interest to people tracing their family tree.

3. Older registers can deteriorate through age and can more easily be damaged by use. As new registers are brought into use, the storage of the older registers becomes more of a problem if, for example, the safe can no longer hold them all. The Code of Canon Law (cn. 535, t 5) prescribes explicitly that older parish registers be preserved diligently.

4. For these reasons, several bishops have already arranged for such registers to be placed in the safekeeping of either a diocesan archive or a local record office. The Society is happy to commend this practice. Such storage can help the physical preservation of the registers. The practice of making copies of the registers first and then using these copies (e.g. photocopies, microfiche, microfilm, transcripts) rather than the originals for subsequent administrative purposes can prevent further damage.

5. Once these registers have been removed from the parish, the question of their accessibility arises more acutely. Although such registers contain confidential material, the Church - for the reasons quoted in paragraph two —

has a long-standing positive tradition of allowing access wherever possible. The early work of the Catholic Records Society is transcribing registers and the publication of numerous parish histories bear witness to this. The Working Party recommends that all registers so deposited be made freely accessible after the lapse of one hundred years from the date of the individual entry. This is in line with official practice on census returns in England and Wales.

6. Of the various methods of copying records, we would recommend microfiche and microfilm for the following reasons. They are more durable, easier to store, use and copy, and are difficult to tamper with.

**7.** The question now arises how such copies might be made. Dioceses could make or commission their own. Some local record offices might be willing to do this for a diocese. The Genealogical Society of Utah (an offshoot of the Mormon Church) would probably welcome an invitation to carry out this work. For further observations on this last possibility, we refer to the Appendix to this Memorandum. No matter which method is chosen, we would stress the vital importance of the diocese maintaining copyright and controlling conditions of access.

This Memorandum was submitted to the Bishops' Conference in November 1988. The Bishops' response is recorded in the following Conference minutes:

BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES
November 1988 Meeting

*Parish Records and Microfiche*

a) The Bishops' Conference commends the practice of entrusting older parish records and registers to an established church archive or local record office for safe keeping.

b) The Conference endorses the recommendation of the Catholic Archives Society that these old registers be made freely accessible after a lapse of one hundred years.

c) The Conference also endorses the Society's recommendation that these registers be microfilmed but leaves to each diocese the decision about accepting the offer made by the Genealogical Society of Utah.

24 November 1988

## THE CATHOLIC ARCHIVES SOCIETY CONFERENCE, 1988

The ninth annual conference, held at the High Leigh Centre, Hoddesden (Herts), on 30 May - 1 June, attracted sixty-one members, the largest attendance so far, and two new members were enrolled.

The conference was opened by the Chairman (*Miss Judith Close*) on the evening of 30 May, after which Dr Susan O'Brien spoke about her research in the archives of women's religious congregations, the text of which is printed in this issue.

A lively talk by *Fr Anthony Dolan* (Vice-Chairman) on his experiences as a diocesan archivist opened the proceedings of the conference's only full day, 31 May. (This talk is also printed in this issue.) *Mrs J. Segal* (Conservationist, Bodleian Library) then spoke on the conservation of books and papers and gave many useful tips on handling, storage and simple repairs. The spiritual highlight of the conference was the Mass at midday, concelebrated by Bishop James O'Brien, who welcomed members to his diocese, and eight priests. The customary afternoon expedition this year was to St Alban's Abbey, where members were welcomed by the archivist, given a guided tour, and treated handsomely to tea. During the evening, members' saw a video on archive listing prepared by the Liverpool Archives Unit, and then divided into discussion groups led by *Fr Wilfrid Gandy* on library back-up for archive work, *Fr Frank Bulliuant* on the use of Vatican archives, *Frs Frank Isherwood* and *David Lannon* on the use of computers, while diocesan archivists had their own small meeting.

After Mass on 1 June, there was a useful exchange of various views in the traditional 'open forum', and this was followed by the annual general meeting. The Chairman *(Miss Judith Close)* reviewed the previous year's events, which included, *inter alia,* an increase of membership to 212 (apart from over one hundred separate subscribers to the journal), meetings of diocesan archivists in both the north and the south, the preparation of a memorandum on parish records for submission to the Bishops' Conference, and the honour of two members, *Fr Francis Edwards SJ* (former Chairman) and *Fr Anthony Dolan* (Vice-Chairman), being presented to Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the beatification of the Eighty-five Martyrs in November 1987, at which Fr Dolan gave the Pope copies of *Catholic Archives* in a specially prepared box. The officers then gave their reports and were duly thanked for their work, especially *Sr Rosemary Bayne* (Conference organiser), and elections were held. The President (Bishop B.C. Foley) graced a very successful conference with his presence, and final plaudits were accorded by *Dr Leslie Parker* (first Chairman).

A full report of the conference is given in *CAS Newsletter, No. 10, Autumn* 1988. The 1989 conference will be held at Upholland Conference Centre, Skelmersdale (Lanes), from 30 May to 1 June.