

Archivists Meet

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Robin Scott

Loreto Australia & S-E Asia Province Archives

Our Loreto and CJ Archivists are arguably custodians of parts of the one collection as our historical roots beginning with Mary Ward are also our archival roots. Each collection is only a fragment of the whole story and the collections must be used in conjunction with one another. During my years as Province Archivist for Loreto Australia, I have often needed the assistance of other Loreto and CJ archivists to answer enquiries and to understand the Australian story. We do not often have the opportunity to meet in person, of course, but all are committed to sharing our resources.

A conference of the Historians of Women Religious in Britain and Ireland which took place in Dublin recently was the catalyst for a meeting of some, at least, of the archivists. I travelled from Australia to meet Sr. Kathleen Fitzgerald ibvm and Áine McHugh from the Generalate and Irish Province Archives and Michelle Anitra Pariag from the Canadian Province Archives. We met in York with Sr. Christina Kenworthy- Browne cj, Archivist for The Bar Convent. Here we had the opportunity to get to know each other, to share our experiences as custodians of some of the Institute and CJ collections and to hear the Mary Ward story in York. Sr. Christina was a kind host and showed us the precious treasures in The Bar Convent Collection. We were thrilled to be able to see and touch material of such age and iconic significance.

From York, Sr. Kathleen, Áine, Michelle and I travelled to Dublin. Here we concentrated on Loreto specific archival issues and were able to experience some of the places that we had heard so much about. Sr. Kathleen and Áine showed us Dublin and the St. Stephen's Green Archives where Michelle and I had the pleasure of seeing some of the collection relevant to Canada and Australia. We learnt about Kathleen and Áine's recent outreach programs and their plans for future documentation projects. In Dublin we had a great opportunity to share ideas about expanding the use of our collections and the sharing of resources. The internet and social networking seemed like one obvious opportunity for sharing our experiences and collections and ideas about the best use of the communication technology were explored.

Our time in Dublin was enhanced by the warm welcome that we received from the Loreto communities of Crumlin Road who provided our accommodation and thoughtful details for our comfort as well as the Dalkey and Gorey communities and the Provincialate sisters and staff who provided delicious morning and afternoon teas on our visits. Michelle and I were delighted to be greeted as part of the Loreto family.

Our Dublin visit culminated in the HWRBI Conference at the Dublin University where we were able to meet with historians and archivists. We had the opportunity to learn more about the current interests of historians which will help us offer relevant material from our collection to users and to learn about the innovative work undertaken by other archivists.

Michelle and I would like to thank the Irish Province for their wonderful hospitality, particularly Sr. Kathleen and Áine for whom nothing was too much trouble, and our respective Provinces for providing this opportunity. The trip has provided us with a deeper understanding of Loreto's history with experiencing the places so important in this history and most importantly, the people who are living the history.



Michelle Anitra Pariag, Province Archivist Canada, Áine McHugh, Assistant Generalate Archivist, Sr. Christina Kenworthy-Browne cj, Archivist Bar Convent, Sr. Kathleen Fitzgerald ibvm, Generalate Archivist, Robin Scott, Province Archivist Australia & S-E Asia