



2010 : A YEAR OF HISTORICAL CELEBRATIONS

As 2010 draws to a close, it is time to reflect on this year's significance in Australian history. In an impressive array of cultural events, we celebrated the Centenary of the foundation of the much loved Mitchell Library and acknowledged the enormous financial and cultural legacy of its Founder, David Scott Mitchell, which made it possible.

In March, we began the celebrations of another significant event, the Bicentenary of the arrival in Sydney of Governor Lachlan Macquarie and his wife, Elizabeth. Their early role in shaping Australian society was recognized in a wide variety of celebrations throughout the year. Australian Catholics have a particular reason to honour Macquarie, who laid the foundation stone of the first St. Mary's Chapel in Sydney on 29th October, 1821. This issue includes an article by Mr Richard d'Apice, A.M., about the trowel presented to Governor Macquarie for that event.

Throughout the year, the canonization of Saint Mary of the Cross, Australia's first Catholic Saint, was

celebrated in a diverse range of well publicized events. Sister Jan Tranter, rsj, contributed an article for this issue about a less publicized event on 23 May: the opening of the Father Woods Park at Penola, where the story of the Sisters of St. Joseph began. On 3 August, the Honourable Tim Fischer, AC, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See, also visited Penola as part of his role in the pre-canonization preparations. On his way back to Rome, Mr. Fischer addressed The Sydney Institute on 2 September, 2010 to launch a new edition of Dr. Anne Henderson's excellent 1997 publication, *Mary MacKillop's Sisters: A life Unveiled*. Mr. Fischer's address entitled, *Mary MacKillop: the View from Rome*, and Anne's response can be heard on The Sydney Institute's podcast at: www.thesydneyinstitute.com.au

Also in this issue, Members are fortunate to read the personal reflections of Sister Antoinette Baldwin, rsj, who attended the Canonisation.

Patricia Jacobsen, ACHS, Newsletter Editor

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

- Date:** Saturday, 11 December, 2010
Time: 12 noon
Location: The Catholic Club, renamed The Castlereagh Club
99 Castlereagh Street, Sydney (Between Park and Bathurst Streets)
Cost: \$45 per person (includes lunch and drinks)
Guest Speaker: Dr. John Carmody will speak on the topic "*Perceiving Christmas through its Wrappings*".

Booking is essential and the last day for reply is 4 December, 2010.

Please complete and return the enclosed booking form with a cheque payable to Australian Catholic Historical Society to : ACHS, PO BOX A621, SYDNEY SOUTH 1235

2011 LECTURE PROGRAMME

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are held at St. Mary's cathedral College Hall and commence at 2.30 p.m.

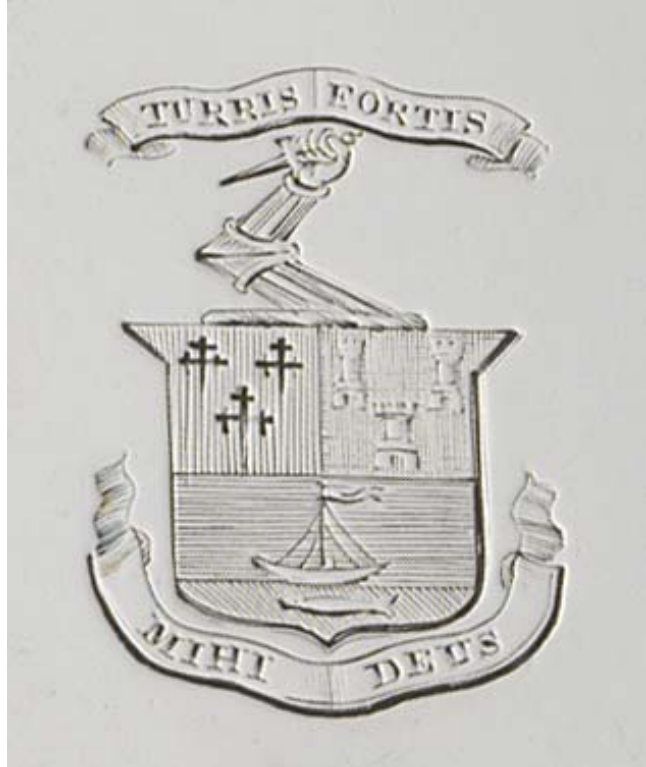
| Date | Speaker and Topic *(Actual title to be decided.) |
|--------------|---|
| 13 March | Cliff Baxter, Knights of the Southern Cross * |
| 10 April | Alison Healey: " <i>The Grail – 75 Years: an international women's movement and the Australian Church</i> " |
| 15 May | David Bollen, Institute of Counselling* |
| 19 June | Sr. Margaret Ghosn, " <i>Marionite settlement and Institutional development in Australia</i> " |
| 17 July | Anne Henderson, " <i>Faith and Politics: Dame Enid Lyons</i> " |
| 14 August | Vince Crow, " <i>Secular and Religious Firsts of Haberfield</i> " |
| 11 September | Excursion to Mary MacKillop Place, 7-11 Mount Street, North Sydney, NSW – Chapel, Museum, Talk |
| 9 October | James Dominguez, Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta * |
| 13 November | Jane Carolan, Catholic Church Insurance Centenary* |
| 10 December | Christmas Lunch. Venue to be advised. Speaker, Father Jim Boland, " <i>Religious Services at Sydney Olympics</i> " |

Saint Mary's Chapel Presentation Trowel

In 1821, Governor Lachlan Macquarie laid the foundation stone of Saint Mary's Chapel on the site of the present cathedral with a trowel presented to him by Father John Therry who described it as *"this humble instrument (which, undervalued as it may be by the supercilious and the unscientific, will not be contemned by any who have studied and patronized, as your Excellency has done, the sciences and useful arts)"*

The upper side of the blade of the trowel bears Macquarie's arms, crest and motto with the colours shown by the Petra Sancta method of hatching which accords exactly with blazon of the arms engraved on the gold watch and the inscription "The Capt. Gen. Governor & Commander in Chief, Vice Admiral, and Commander of the Forces in and over the Territory of New South Wales and its Dependencies. His Excellency Lachlan Macquarie Esq. Major General in the Army &c &c &c. Used this Instrument at the Ceremony of laying the first Stone of the first Catholic Chapel erected in the said Territory on the 29th day of Oct. A.D. 1821"

Engraved at the base of the blade on a raised Masonic



Courtesy Mitchell Library R328 a649004

triangle within the names of the "three lesser lights" (wisdom, strength, and beauty) is the signature of the convict silversmith, engraver and Mason, Samuel Clayton, above which is the letter G, representing Geometry and God the Architect and above it the all-seeing Eye of God, all well known Masonic symbols.

Macquarie's response was recorded by an observant altar boy, Columban Fitzpatrick:



Courtesy Mitchell Library R328 a649002

The Governor wiped the trowel with his handkerchief, and put it in his bosom, saying "You must know Mr. Terry, that, although I never laid the first stone of a Catholic church before, I am a very old mason; and I shall keep this trowel as long as I live, in remembrance of this day, and I wish you and your flock every success in your undertaking."

It is a matter of conjecture whether Father John Therry meant Masonic symbolism as a compliment to the Governor or did not see it or whether it was added later.

© Richard d'Apice 2010



Governor Macquarie Presentation Trowel 29 Oct. 1821
Courtesy Mitchell Library R328 a649001

The Opening and Blessing Of Father Woods Park, Penola on 23 May 2010

On Pentecost Sunday, 23 May, 2010, about 400 people gathered at Penola for the Opening and Blessing of Father Woods' Park as *a place of pilgrimage, prayer and contemplation*. The local Gartner family donated the land and initiated and carried out the Park project with the support of Woods family members, the Mary MacKillop Centre, Knights of the Southern Cross and Parish Pastoral Council. Many visitors, including Sisters of St Joseph and the Woods family travelled long distances to join locals for the day. The Park is on the Riddoch Highway 19 km from Penola. Its striking feature is a series of large sculptures carved from trees by chainsaw artist, Kevin Gilders.

The day began with Mass at St Joseph's Church with Fr Paul Gardiner SJ presiding, assisted by Fr Frank Brennan SJ. Later all gathered at the Park for a lively programme of talks and entertainment. The opening speaker, Mary Cresp RSJ, referred to Father Woods' inspiration through Sisters met in France, his meeting Mary MacKillop and of the Park as *a place where we hope people will come with open hearts to meet each other and their God. Who knows what potential lies here?*

Fr Frank Tenison Brennan SJ spoke of Fr Woods' work with indigenous people and the impact he had on his own grandfather, who named his son, "Tenison", a name which was passed on to Fr Brennan. Other speakers included Chris Goudey, donor to the Mary MacKillop Centre of a large collection of marine fossils named by Fr. Woods. Margaret Muller spoke for the world expert on caves, Dr. Elery Hamilton-Smith, who was personally inspired by Fr Woods. Mark Braes, Mayor of Wattle Range Council, spoke of the impact of Mary and Julian on education; Michael Gartner told the story of the Park; Colin Woods spoke on behalf of the Woods Family.

Between the talks we enjoyed the Brass Sextet of Mount Gambier Tenison Woods College, the choir of Mary MacKillop Memorial School, and Pam Walker, OAM, singing her composition, *Ride, Julian Ride*, based on Fr Woods' ten years in Penola.

After lunch, Peter Gartner and Neil McLean, re-enacted the arrival on horseback of Fr Woods and Adam Lindsay Gordon, with Adam reciting his latest poem for his priest friend. The Manager of Naracoorte Caves World Heritage purchased Helen Woods' portraits of Julian and Mary. Archbishop Philip Wilson then unveiled and blessed the sculptures, assisted by representative

groups. The sculptures portrayed Fr Woods as geologist and botanist, the indigenous and the pioneering people among whom he worked, and finally, the largest, most powerful sculpture, Fr Woods preaching the Word of God, with Mary MacKillop and children nearby.

There was communal involvement in every element of the occasion, the preparation of the grounds, the entertainment, catering and the multiple raffle prizes. There was a strong sense of communal identification with the event. As one person standing beside me commented: *"I'm not a Catholic and I'm not from here, but I cannot get over the impact the man had. He was only here for ten years."*

Sister Jan Tranter, RSJ

See: <http://www.abc.net.au/local> and <http://www.mackilloppenola.org.au>



Wooden sculpture: Father Tenison Woods, Mary MacKillop and Children by Kevin Gilders. Courtesy Sister Marie Hughes, rsj

Reflections of a Sister of St Joseph in Rome for the Canonisation of Mary MacKillop

There was, and still is, something dreamlike about the whole Roman experience, something surreal and unbelievably wonderful. Yet it was real, the experiences were tangible and concrete and the divine and the human, the sublime and the ridiculous, the ceremonial and the irreverent blended magnificently. Everyone who had any contact with media has heard, viewed or read of the Canonisation. It seems fitting therefore to reflect on the less tangible aspects of the events in Rome, the learnings and the insights born of wonder and new experiences.

I had never been to Rome before and no amount of watching, talking and reading could really prepare me for rich cultural and religious heritage of that city. Eight thousand Australians invaded Rome for the canonisation of our young country's first saint and from the eclectic, electric blend of cultures, backgrounds and behaviours of so many Australians in the Vatican City three main themes emerged for me:

- The importance of story, heritage, ritual, symbol, and rites of passage
- New expressions of appreciation for Religious life in the Australian Church / society
- The spirituality and faith of young Australians.

Story and Heritage: With Israel, Rome holds our Catholic Faith and Christian traditions in history, architecture, geography and story. To be there is to appreciate our faith and our genesis anew. Despite all the fallibilities of our Church, the apostasies and the scandals through the ages, to be in Rome is to have our belief strengthened and renewed. One asks 'why' when there is so much in Rome, in riches and lifestyle, in culture and practice that is foreign to our Australian way of life and to all that we espouse. Perhaps the answer is found in the common and corporate expression of faith as people from all over the world converge in shared belief.

One of the requirements for Canonisation is the telling and retelling of the story of the Saint. For us as Sisters of St Joseph and indeed as Australians, Mary MacKillop's story is our story. We resonate with her and recognise her in each other. In relating her story, we retell our own story.

Music has always been an important part of our lives as Josephites. Until the 1970s we formed large choirs and often sang in Latin. With falling numbers and changes in the Church much of that was lost. We even, perhaps unwisely, translated some of our traditional hymns into



Mary MacKillop circa 1880. (Used with the permission of the Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph)

English. They are no longer the same. It was with joy that many of us dusted off the hymn books and relearned the Latin for the Canonisation ceremony. This is not advocating the Latin Mass, nor is it a retrograde step; it is rather a reclaiming of the musical traditions of our past.

Symbol: As religious we abandoned our habits long ago. Our Josephite symbols are our emblem and our ring. For this occasion we adopted teal Pashminas as an identifying feature. By the second day in Rome lots of people especially the other Australian Pilgrims knew who we were. We wore the teal and our Josephite emblems with pride.

The image of Mary MacKillop on the Vatican was extremely emotive. As one approached St Peter's Basilica along the Via Conciliazone the five images of the Saints-to-be were clearly visible. Mary MacKillop was on a light background so she stood out. To see her there brought more than one person to tears.

Ritual and Rites of Passage: For all Australians in Rome there were three formal rituals – the Vigil, the Canonisation and the Thanksgiving Mass. For the Sisters of St Joseph there was a fourth event – Morning Prayer and a Reception of Welcome with the Ambassador Tim Fischer. Each of these marked the occasion in its own way, and each had its place, tracing Mary MacKillop's passage from Blessed to Sainthood. The Vigil I will speak of later in the context of young people.

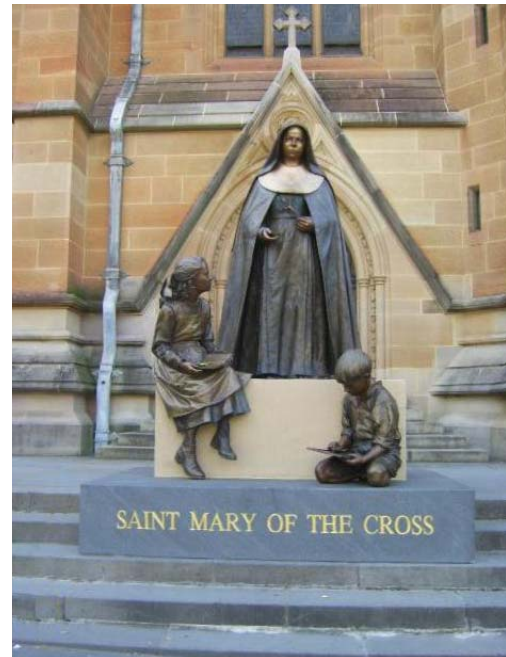
Canonisation: Something as significant as a

Canonisation demands solemnity. In the Catholic Church we are familiar with vestments, music, incense and ritual at significant events and all these marked this event as solemn and special. The Papal procession, the Cardinals, Bishops (including those of the Eastern Rites), Priests and acolytes all ceremonially vested, the candles, bells, music and incense created a sensual memory of the occasion. Even the most uninformed onlooker would be left in no doubt that something important and solemn was occurring. We were asked to be silent during the ceremony and even the Australians complied – until the very end of Mass when Mary's name was mentioned for the final time and everyone cheered. They tell me the Pope smiled, but I did not see that.

Thanksgiving Mass: This was an Australian event, solemn enough but joyful and celebratory at the same time. The magnificent Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls became Australian for the day. It was wonderful to celebrate with our Cardinal, Bishops and Priests and other Australians. There were reunions and surprise meetings and an uncharacteristic demonstration of national pride.

Morning Prayer: The Sisters of St Joseph were not all staying in the same hotel, did not travel together and did not all know each other. It was important that we gather as a total group for prayer. This formal prayer in the Methodist Chapel was followed by a reception hosted by Tim Fischer Australian Ambassador to the Vatican. It was attended by the bi-partisan Parliamentary Committee – Kevin Rudd, Julie Bishop, Barnaby Joyce and Ursula Stephens and was an exercise in collaborative and congenial politics. Mary MacKillop is good at bringing people together.

New appreciation of Religious Life: Religious have become somewhat invisible in Church and Society in recent years. We sometimes prefer it that way. Without habit or uniform and with fewer numbers we are seen less in our schools and hospitals. Our emblem and ring are not readily identified by all. In country parishes and in some organisations and ministries we are often known, appreciated and recognised; but sometimes not. Since Vatican II other lay people within the church can undertake many of the roles previously held by Religious and the unique place of Religious Life within the Church, the 'life form' as described by Sandra Schneiders has become less recognisable, understood and appreciated for what it is. Indeed in some cases we are seen as competitors for positions. Readily identifiable in Rome we were recognised and welcomed, generally by Australians, but by other groups as well. People knew who we were and what we stood for. The telling of our story in the lead up to the Canonisation also meant that more people knew and recognised who we were and where we minister. They acknowledged our association with Mary MacKillop.



St. Mary of the Cross, (St. Mary's Cathedral, Sculptor: Louis Laumen, 2010)

It was both humbling and surprising.

The Faith and Spirituality of Young People: The Vigil was orchestrated and led by students, Alumni and staff from Australian Catholic University. In drama, prayer and song they told the story of Mary MacKillop. When one saw and felt the sincerity of the ACU students, and the seriousness with which they approached the event one could never doubt the depth of spirituality in these young adults. Similarly with the prayerfulness and participation of the school students at the Masses one could not but experience a surge of pride and of hope for our future as a Church and Nation. They enjoyed Rome as only the young can. They also prayed as the young do with hope and optimism with the world in front of them.

In summary: Being in Rome for the Canonisation of Mary MacKillop was pure privilege. The Vigil, the Canonisation itself and the Thanksgiving Eucharist at St Paul's Outside the Walls were obviously the highlights of the experience. Being with, praying with and sharing the wonder with other Josephites from all over Australia, NZ and around the world was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Meeting with other pilgrims, leading the Walking Tours in the footsteps of Mary MacKillop and handing out Pilgrim Packs made me extremely proud to be an Australian in Rome at this time. But, beneath all that, with the memories and the sense of joy, are the personal, communal and national insights that I have brought home with me. I am proud to be Australian, proud to be a Sister of St Joseph and optimistic about the future of our Church, Congregation and Society.

Antoinette Baldwin rsj

August 2010 Lecture

“Extending the Historical Perspective on Australian Catholic Education”

Mr. Brian Croke, Chairman of the Catholic Education Commission, NSW (the “CEC NSW”), and his colleague, Mr. Crichton Smith, delivered a most informative two-part account of the Commission’s historical data collection projects. Both speakers referred to the lack of accessible sources for a comprehensive history of Australian Catholic Education and demonstrated, electronically, the emerging capacity of digital technologies to provide new solutions to that problem.

Croke explained that the presentation was prepared as a memorial to the scheduled speaker, the late Dr. Denis Davis, who made a significant contribution to Australian history. Dr. Davis’ last project on the impact of the 1930s Depression was to be the subject of his scheduled talk to the Society. When Dr. Davis sought information from the CEC NSW for that project, the Commission became acutely aware of its own limited historical sources and resolved to address that problem.

The Mary Mackillop enterprise 1900



Courtesy Catholic Education Commission (NSW)

Croke began his presentation by screening an electronic map of Australia, showing the impressive number of Australian schools opened by Mary MacKillop and her Sisters of St. Joseph by 1900. He went on to provide strong statistical evidence of Catholic Education’s current contribution to Australian education. (For example, 20% of current students now attend Catholic schools.) While acknowledging that education has featured in the histories of individual schools, religious orders and educators, Croke suggested several important, but neglected, aspects of Australian Catholic Education history. He argued that it is time to expand the story beyond the last definitive history of the subject: Brother Ronald Fogarty’s **Catholic Education in Australia 1806-1956**.

Croke referred to the proliferation of accessible on-line digital images of Catholic schools, students and teachers and demonstrated how such images are extending the historical perspective on Australian Catholic Education. He screened several digital historical images of Catholic schools to demonstrate how images can be “read” as visual historical texts, and not merely used for illustrative purposes. He argued that Brother John Luttrell’s excellent, well-researched cameo history: **St. Mary’s to St. Catherine’s - Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Sydney 1836-2000** was a rare example of the effectiveness of that methodology.

Mr Smith (a Demographer/Sociologist) used a series of electronic charts for the period 1962-2006 to illustrate how an analysis of available statistics from published sources, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (“ABS”), can be used to contextualize current perceptions of Australian education historically. The charts provided new historical insights into that period, including trends and sectorial comparisons in school numbers and students. Smith pointed out that there was credible statistical evidence in the charts to dispute popular perceptions about the relative increase in non-Government schools under recent Australian Governments. Another series of electronic charts, based on Colonial publications, such as the ABS Census and New South Wales Statistical Registers, provided further evidence of the effective use of modern technologies to achieve a greater understanding of Australian Colonial education, within the context of contemporaneous religious and social history.

Croke summarized the Commission’s four essential projects as the creation of a new searchable, expandable database of digital images for Australian Catholic schools; the identification and collection of all available historical statistical data; the development of an inventory of relevant archives collections; and the production of a Biographical Dictionary of Australian Catholic Educators. As the speakers demonstrated, digital technologies can provide new historical insights into the story of the distinctive role played since the 1820s by Australian Catholic Education in developing Australian society – its identity, culture and politics.

Patricia Jacobsen, ACHS Councillor

(For further information about these projects, please refer to Mr. Crichton Smith at Crichton.Smith@ccnsw.catholic.edu.au or Tel. (02) 9287 1553)

A History of the Catholic Bushwalking Club

Father Peter Blayney presented a most interesting talk on the history of the Catholic Bushwalking Club (the“CBC”), of which he is the current Chaplain. As Father Blayney related that history, one was reminded of the significant changes that have occurred since the CBC’s foundation in the 1940s, both within the Catholic Church and society, generally.

Father Blayney identified the Co-Founders of the CBC as Father Richard Bede Coughlan (“FRC”) and Miss Dorothy Clayton. In 1938, Dorothy joined the English St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Ramblers, a Catholic walkers’ club. After her return to Australia, she successfully promoted the formation of an Australian variant of the English Club and became its first Secretary. The walks began on 14 February, 1943 and took place in the Royal National Park, the North Shore and Glenbrook. The first General Meeting was held on 11 August, 1943 and the Constitution was approved by His Grace, Archbishop Norman Gilroy in December 1944.

On 6 December, 1944, FRC was officially appointed as Chaplain (later “Spiritual Director”) and the CBC was recognized as an official Catholic organization. FRC was an experienced bushwalker, who provided encouragement to members during his Chaplaincy (1944 - 1963). As well as describing FRC’s long bushwalking history, Father Blayney provided interesting insights into FRC’s character. He was regarded as a man of firm beliefs and principles, from which he rarely deviated, an opinion that was confirmed throughout his Chaplaincy. Father Blayney described FRC’s leadership style as directional, rather than collaborative.

Despite the fact that the CBC was formed as a Catholic bushwalking club, early concerns were expressed by FRC and Father Albert Thomas (the Director of the Lay Apostolate) that the walks may adversely affect members’ attendance at Sunday mass. That was a serious consideration at the time, when practising Catholics strictly observed their religious obligations. The problem was solved by arranging the programme so that members could attend early mass and then join the walks.

As an officially sanctioned Catholic organization, the CBC was subject to the ecclesiastical authority of the Sydney Diocese. FRC strictly adhered to the edicts of Canon Law and, on several occasions, his

canonical conscience led him to request prior Diocesan permissions for CBC actions. For example, he considered it necessary to secure the prior permission of His Eminence, Cardinal Norman Gilroy, to build a shrine to the CBC’s patroness, Our Lady of the Way, in a grotto in Blue Gum Swamp Creek, Springwood.

Given the Church’s prevailing moral teachings and the current standards of gentlemanly behaviour, it is not surprising that mixed camping was prohibited. In effect, the prohibition prevented competent female walkers from undertaking more challenging weekend or overnight walks and, as early as 1944, it was unsuccessfully challenged. Despite subsequent attempts to rescind the prohibition, it was not removed until 1955.

Another divisive issue was the exclusion of non-Catholic members, possibly, because of strident sectarianism during the foundation period. In the 1990s, growing ecumenical attitudes encouraged some members to challenge that exclusion. Others were so vehemently opposed to that proposal that the Spiritual Director, Father Frank Bendeich, sought a ruling from His Eminence, Cardinal Edward Clancy. Father Blayney suggested that the Cardinal’s restrained response that the matter should be allowed to “run its natural course” indicated a diminution of Diocesan control. The Cardinal’s response was taken as his tacit approval and the proposed amendment passed very narrowly in November 1992.

The story presented by Father Blayney showed that the CBC achieved its aims of providing its members with well organized bushwalks and pleasant social interaction. As in any organization, some problems and tensions arose along the way, but the CBC survives and its members continue to enjoy and protect the natural environment.

Patricia Jacobsen, ACHS Councillor

For further reading, see:

Jim Barrett, *Through the Years with the Catholic Bushwalking Club* (Catholic Bushwalking Club Inc., 2008)

Melissa Harper, *The Ways of the Bushwalker – On Foot in Australia*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2007

October 2010 Excursion

Visit to the Congregational Archives and Chapel of the Sisters of Charity of Australia, Potts Point

We were welcomed by Patricia Jacobsen, previous Archivist-in-Charge, and Sister Moira O'Sullivan, rsc. Sister Moira related the early history of the Sisters of Charity of Australia, which began when five Irish Sisters of Charity arrived in Sydney in 1838, initially, to work among the female convicts at the Parramatta Female Factory. In 1856 a lay committee authorised by Bishop Charles Davis and headed by Mr. J.H. Plunkett, Solicitor-General of the Colony of New South Wales, purchased a large property, "Tarmons", in Woolloomooloo (later Potts Point) from Sir Charles Nicholson for a convent and hospital to be run by the Sisters. "Tarmons" was a large villa, which had been built in 1838 by Sir Maurice O'Connell (the Commander of the New South Wales Military Forces). On 25 August, 1857, St.Vincent's Hospital opened in "Tarmons" as an eight bed free, non-denominational hospital for the sick and poor. Firstly, patients were treated as out-patients. A female in-patients ward opened on 4 November 1857 and a male in-patients ward on 5 April, 1858. The first Sister-in-Charge of



First St.Vincent's Hospital, Sydney

Courtesy Congregational Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Australia

the hospital was Sister M. Baptist De Lacy, whose correspondence with Father John Therry is among his papers in the Mitchell Library.

"Tarmons" was large and in 1858 the Sisters started a small school there. The hospital moved to Darlinghurst in 1870, leaving room for expansion of the school and the later St.Vincent's College, which remains on the original "Tarmons" site today. Mother M Francis McGuigan was school principal from 1865 to 1881 and Superior General of the Congregation from 1882 to 1920. She was buried in the splendid red brick Neo-Gothic/Romanesque chapel in the college grounds.

During the latter part of the 19th century, several well-known members of the Catholic clergy were associated with the Sisters of Charity. The co-founder of the Sisters

of St.Joseph, Father Julian Tenison Woods, gave a retreat to the Sisters *circa* 1872. In 1876, Father Angelo Ambrosoli, PIME, a Missionary from Milan, was appointed chaplain to the Congregation and held that position for 17 years, during which time he helped the Sisters to choose sites for schools in various locations, such as Liverpool, Ashfield and Edgecliff. Father Ambrosoli arranged for a sculptor in Milan, Giovanni Franzini, to carve the magnificent marble statues, which he obtained for the Sisters' chapel. He also obtained the beautiful Italian marble tabernacle for the original High Altar, which is now in the Lady Chapel.

Sister St. Jude Doyle, rsc, showed us through the Chapel, where we admired the statues and the tabernacle, as well as the lovely marble altar installed in the Lady Chapel in 1906. A most striking feature in the chapel is the later, magnificent High Altar, which was installed in 1915 as a Jubilee gift for Mother M. Francis McGuigan. Other outstanding features are the wonderful timber ceiling and the parquetry floor. The funds for the floor were donated by the American forces after World War II as thanks for the Sisters providing communion wafers to the services.

Denise Corrigan, the current Archives Manager, had set up a beautiful display of treasures from the archives: letters, diaries, paintings, photographs and wonderful objects from the past.

The visit was most interesting and enjoyed by all who attended.



Sisters of Charity Congregational Chapel, Potts Point
Courtesy Congregational Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Australia.