

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY

NEWSLETTER

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Annual General Meeting: Sunday 21 March 2021

President's Report: Dr Carmody spoke briefly to his written report of which copies were available. He thanked all for the support he had received.

Treasurer's report: Dr Hughes had supplied printed copies of the audited accounts. She spoke briefly about some of the expenses and that income had exceeded expenditure, due largely to an increase in donations.

Election of Council: The following members were nominated, seconded and were elected unopposed.

President: John Carmody. **Vice Presidents:** James Franklin, Howard Murray

Secretary: Helen Scanlon **Treasurer:** Lesley Hughes.

Councillors: Geoff Hogan, Odhran O'Brien, Anne Power, Anne Thoeming and Christine Riley.

ACHS Chaplain: Sr Helen Simpson continues as Chaplain and is ex officio on Council.

Report on ACHS Journal: Prof Franklin mentioned issues related to the publication of the Journal which has delayed its printing and publication. Members who had paid the 2020 fees should have received a copy recently.

Appointment of Councillor: At its meeting on 10 April 2021 the ACHS Council appointed Dr Janice Garaty as a Council member to fill a vacant position. This complies with the ACHS Constitution which authorises the Council to fill Council vacancies. Janice had previously been a councillor.

REMINDER: MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Payment of ACHS membership fees for 2021 were due on 1st April 2021 and must be paid by 1 July 2021. Application/Renewal forms were included in the envelopes with the February 2021 ACHS Newsletter. A form is also be available on the ACHS website. NB Fees remain the same as last year.

Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Program for May to July 2021

This information is correct as at 22 April 2021, but changes may occur.

Sydney Meetings

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
16 May	The Catholic clergy – prisoners of history	Fr John Crothers Formerly PP Peshurst and Peakhurst and author of The Clergy Club
20 June	'Biblical history in the novels of Dickens	Dr Jennifer Gribble Honorary Associate Professor Department of English, University of Sydney
18 July*	Historical perspectives from the newly formed collection of rare books and manuscripts at the ACU.	Mr Hugh Myers Special Collections Advisor Australian Catholic University (Sydney)
15 August	Cathedral Follies: the 1950s project to build a vast "Brutalist" cathedral at New Norcia and similar failures in Brisbane and Liverpool. What is the future of cathedrals?	Dr John Challis. Former Dominican theologian, Head of the ABC Science Unit and International Relations Executive, ABC

***In the February 2021 Newsletter the date of the July meeting was incorrect. The correct date is 18 July.**

Location, time and contact: Sunday afternoons at 2.00pm (unless otherwise stated) in the Crypt of St Patrick's at Church Hill [Grosvenor Street], The Rocks. Admission is free and does not require membership of ACHS, but a donation is welcome. **Enquiries to Dr John Carmody**, President ACHS: jjcarmody@gmail.com

Further information: ACHS website. [<http://www.australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au>].

Melbourne Chapter of the Australian Catholic Historical Society

Meeting dates: 7 June, 6 September and 8 November

Time and Location: 2pm in Lecture Room 1 of the Yarra Theological Union, 98 Albion Road, Box Hill.

Contact Matthew Beckmann, OFM. Email address: mbeckmann@franciscans.org.au

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 21 February 2021.

Presenter: Dr Stephen McInerney Poet and Executive Officer The Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation (Sydney).

Topic: Les Murray's sacramental poetics

When the Australian poet, Les Murray, died in April 2019, I was determined that the next year's ACHS program should include a session devoted to him. This was not only because he was a great writer who was repeatedly (and rightly) referred to as a deserving Nobel Laureate – he was a critic and anthologist as well as a poet – but because I firmly believe that such creative people (poets, painters and composers) are just as integral to our history as wars, politicians, business people and explorers.

I was delighted, therefore, when Gerard Windsor (a significant writer, himself) strongly recommended that I approach the poet and scholar, Stephen McInerney, and that he promptly agreed. Regrettably, the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic intervened and that early part of our 2020 schedule had to be cancelled. But I was pleased to be able to reschedule his presentation as the “curtain-raiser” of our 2021 season on 21 February, even more so when he showed so brilliantly that the wait had been wonderfully worthwhile. I am certain that Les, himself, would have been just as enthused as our attendees were!

Dr McInerney began with an intellectual framework which cogently established the profound link – so tellingly important in Murray's poetry – between poetry and religion. This was music to my ears because I have long argued that art is a deeply moral activity. Amongst other thinkers, he quoted Matthew Arnold as writing that the strongest part of religion was the “unconscious poetry” of its rites and rituals and he mentioned that even

the agnostic English novelist and philosopher, Iris Murdoch, thought that art and poetry fill the void left by sacraments and prayer in an “unreligious age”.

Murray, himself, had converted to Catholicism in his early 20s at the time when he married his fellow-student Valerie Morelli, who had been born in Europe. Part of the genius of his writing was to transform the ordinary – university lectures, trees, the freedom of wearing shorts in summer into the numinous and transcendent. Dr McInerney made this clear in quotations from his interviews and essays as well as from the poetry itself, such as “the sacramental is the body, it's the mystery of embodiment [and] words form a body called a poem,” or: *Religions are poems. They concert our daylight and dreaming mind, our emotions, instinct, breath and native gesture into the only whole thinking: poetry.*

In fact, Dr McInerney said that Murray had advanced “an idea of the poet as a priest, an offerer of sacrifice,” the poet going as far as asserting, “This quasi-priestly work of poetry is Christ, for me; it's His life as I can live it by my efforts.”

This presentation was, as Gerard Windsor observed during the discussion time, literary insight of a rare and exciting kind. ACHS was unequivocally privileged to be offered such exalted thinking – it was a unique amalgam of the literary, the philosophical, the historical and the spiritual. We can all boast to our grandchildren that we were there to hear it. *John Carmody (President)*

Melbourne Meeting Monday 1 March 2021:

Presenter: Fr Matthew Beckmann, OFM.

Topic: Patarine Patterns

Matthew Beckmann OFM provided a fascinating paper on the Patarines of Milan, a group who have slipped entirely off the historical radar. The Patarines emerged in an age of general revival of energy in Western Europe around the turn of the first millennium. The well placed and significant city of Milan was no exception. Long practice meant that the one who preferred as Archbishop needed numerous patrons, a financially expensive operation. Guido of Velate (d. 1071) sought to recoup this financial outlay by, in his turn, selling benefices under his jurisdiction. Widespread disapproval took shape in 1057 when one Landolpho held a meeting, accusing the Archbishop of simony. For his part, the Archbishop refused to meet the dissidents whom he called ‘patari’ (literally ‘dressed in rags’). The discontent took a more vigorous expression when one Ariald, a deacon,

expressed public disapproval of the Archbishop at the Chrism Mass. (Later found dead he was declared a saint by popular acclaim). In the ensuing widespread uprising all clergy were banished from the city. The Patarines kept alive Christian life through preaching, prayers service but the city (and surrounding areas) had no Mass or sacraments. Yet the dissidents were supportive when Pope Stephen IX appointed a committee of enquiry comprising Anselm of Baggio (later Pope Alexander II) and Hildebrand (later Gregory VII) whose name is given to the general reform movement. Peace was eventually restored but the uprising shows the deep lay hostility to simony, and a corresponding sense of reverence for the ‘mysteries’ celebrated at the heart of Christendom. A lively discussion followed Matthew's fascinating paper.

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 21 March 2021.

Presenter: Dr Mark Dunn Freelance historian and author of *The Convict Valley* -the bloody struggle on Australia's early frontier. **Topic:** *The Intimate Frontier: Aboriginal and settler interactions in the colonial Hunter Valley.*

The principal focus of Mark Dunn's presentation was the interaction between white settlers and Aboriginal people

in what is now the Hunter region of NSW. Mark stated that “*The history is complicated, with awful violence*

happening alongside personal connections, friendships and co-operation”

In 1790 five convicts (John Tarwood, Joseph Sutton, George Lee, George Conoway and John Watson) escaped from Sydney by boat, heading north and landing on a beach north of what is now Newcastle. They assimilated with the local Worimi people, learnt the language, took wives and fathered children. Some years later in 1797 Lt. Shortland sailed to the area and discovered the escaped convicts, returning them to Sydney except for Sutton who had died. Mark mentioned a number of other incidents including another trip by Shortland going up to Port Stephens and on his voyage back he investigated Newcastle harbour, “*discovering both the seams of coal in the cliffs and the Hunter River flowing into it*”. Subsequently the merchants of Sydney sent boats to the area for coal and timber.

Mark went on to give detailed accounts of the European occupation of what is known as the Hunter Region. The various groups included convicts sent into a penal settlement, free settlers, colonial officials, troops and mounted police. He provided some details of the interactions between the Europeans and Aboriginal people in the valley, including the names of those who worked with the colonists. One was Bungaree from Broken Bay who accompanied various British officials and explorers and assisted them in communicating with Aboriginal

people they encountered. Bungaree also accompanied Matthew Flinders in circumnavigating Australia.

As settlers increasingly occupied Aboriginal land, tensions grew between the two groups and violence soon followed. Aboriginal attacks were most often targeted against specific settlers or estates; however retaliation by the settlers was often indiscriminate and resulted in many deaths. Mark mentioned many incidents of Aboriginal men women and children being killed.

As the number of settlers grew significantly, so too did their occupation of the land. Large numbers of sheep and cattle that were introduced, further separating the Aboriginal people from their Country and disrupted their traditional use of it.

A series of questions followed which enabled Mark to clarify and expand some of the points he made. One of the points he covered in answering a question was that the colonial administrators were aware of the different beliefs etc. of Irish and English convicts and settlers and the need to manage and reduce the risks of possible conflicts. It was also mentioned that the first Catholic Church was not established in the Hunter Region until the mid-1830s. Mark also stated that his family were descended from convicts sent to the Hunter region.

(Geoff Hogan with the assistance of Mark Dunn)

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 18 April 2021.

Presenter: Honorary Assoc. Professor Paul Lancaster Menzies Centre for Health Policy, University of Sydney

Topic: “Answering the call”: Sydney's Irish Catholic doctors in the Great War.

As Paul Lancaster noted in his introduction, history is a means for us to understand the past, and it also helps us to appreciate the present and the role the past has had in shaping it. Biographies about people enhance our knowledge of the past. In looking back at our own ancestors, professional associates, or others who have enriched our world, we have a better view of the complexity of their lives, and the challenges they faced, and we perhaps have inherited. Lancaster acknowledged this when he explained how he came to this topic through his own Irish family connections, and his biography of Dr. Norman Gregg in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. The Great War was the great connector for this chosen group of Australian doctors, and their connections with Ireland also linked them.

Lancaster’s data and narrative showed the importance of St. Vincent’s Hospital and the University of Sydney as training grounds for his cast of Irish Catholic Doctors who, he reminded us, were all Australian born. Two, Roger Hughes and Bryan Veech, died during or soon after the war while the others survived beyond World War 2. Some went on to become medical specialists after their WW1 experience: Norman Gregg became an ophthalmologist; Denis Glissan, an orthopaedic surgeon; Patrick O’Shea a psychiatrist; and James Duhig from Queensland, a pathologist. After he returned from war,

Herbert Moran published an article on the treatment of septic compound fractures which was based on his war experience, yet he soon after specialised in cancer treatment. They all answered the call regardless of the strong anti-conscription stance of many Australian Irish Catholics. The editor of the *Australian Medical Journal* strongly supported conscription, calling it a “duty”, but some, like Moran, saw the decision as one of individual conscience. Like other doctors throughout the war, Moran continued to call on Australians to “sign-up.” His call was to ensure reinforcements, including doctors, were available to replace the dead and the wounded, and to relieve the exhausted.

Over five hundred University of Sydney medical graduates, including eight women, served in the war effort, and were remembered the University’s publication, *Book of Remembrance of the University of Sydney in the Great War*. A searchable database based on this book has been developed and is available for public view. Many of the graduates were young and single, and while some were educated at Catholic schools, not all were. The selection of male doctors chosen by Lancaster for his presentation were all Irish and all Catholic. Their parents and grandparents were part of the Irish diaspora, convicts and free settlers, who found success in Australia through their own efforts. Lancaster’s slides captured the essential

elements of their individual service and medical lives. Gregg, who was a keen cricketer, was awarded a Military Cross for his attendance while under heavy fire, on war wounded; Robert Taylor, who worked at St. Vincent's Hospital, was from Northern Ireland and was mentioned in despatches. James Duhig worked in field ambulances and general hospitals and later became a notable pathologist and influential agent in the development of the University of Queensland medical school; while Patrick O'Shea from Sydney battled tuberculosis and the after-effects of shellshock, now called post-traumatic stress disorder, and shifted from surgery to psychiatry. Denis Glisson, an Australian Army Medical Corps member, became a pioneer orthopaedic surgeon in Australia.

We don't know how many of these men had the chance to visit Ireland while on periods of leave during the war, and today we might wonder if they had visited, what they would have made of the country given the relative prosperity of their Australian lives. Lancaster visited Ireland in 2019 and was delighted in what he found about the country, and his own family.

Further information about these doctors is available at the University of Sydney database. See: <https://heuristplus.sydney.edu.au/heurist/?db=ExpertNation&ll=Beyond1914> Some are also listed in the Australian Dictionary of Biography: <https://adb.anu.edu.au>
(Anne Thoeming Councillor)

Dr Perry McIntyre: Australia Day Award

Congratulations to Dr Perry McIntyre who became a Member of The Order of Australia (AM) for "significant service to history preservation and genealogy organisations". This award was announced in the 2021 Australia Day Honours List. Perry is a member of the ACHS and for many years was a member of the ACHS Council and organised an event for the Society at St John's College at Sydney University while she worked there. Perry is a member and held leadership positions in a number of historical and genealogical associations including the Great Irish Famine Commemoration Committee.

Death of Bishop Bede Heather

Bishop Heather died on 25 February 2021 at the age of 92. He became an Auxiliary Bishop in Sydney in 1979 and was appointed as the first Bishop of Parramatta in 1986. Sadly during his time as Bishop of Parramatta a fire destroyed much of the Cathedral in 1996. Bishop Heather retired in 1997. After his retirement he lived on the Central Coast of NSW for many years. May he rest in peace.

Death of Cardinal Cassidy

Cardinal Edward Cassidy, died in Newcastle, Australia, on Saturday 10 April 2021 aged 96. He was born in Sydney in 1924, entered St Columba's Seminary in 1943 and was ordained in 1949 along with Edward Clancy who later became Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney. Fr Cassidy transferred to the Wagga Wagga Diocese and served in Yenda. In 1953 he entered the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy and later studied Canon Law at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. He entered the Holy See's diplomatic service and held various positions in many locations. In 1988 he became Substitute of the Secretariat of State for General Affairs and later was President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and President of the Commission for Relations with Judaism. In retirement he lived in the Newcastle area. May he rest in peace.

Death of a number of ACHS members.

Brother Alan Bradstreet, a Christian Brother, died late last year. He was a Councillor for many years and was our Archivist when we had a space to store archives.

Margaret Zucker died in March last year. Margaret had served on the ACHS Council for many years and in 2008 gave a presentation to the Society on *The Catholic Church and the Stolen Generation in the Kimberley*.

Peter Golding died on Good Friday this year. He was an accomplished journalist and author. He wrote biographies of J.J. Cahill and Jack McEwen. Peter made a presentation to the Society on J.J. Cahill and regularly attended meetings.

May they rest in peace.

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