

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY

NEWSLETTER

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Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Sydney meetings and program for 2024

This information is correct as of 31st January 2024, but changes can occur.

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
18 February	The woman of many names – Jane Hawthornthwaite	Br Rory Higgins FSC , Writer, historian, teacher and missionary
17 March	Our Catholic Heritage – St Patrick’s Cemetery	Judith Dunn OAM , Vice-President, “Friends of St Patrick’s Cemetery” (Parramatta)
21 April	Behind the scenes of Mother Teresa’s visit to Australia in 1981	Dr John Whitehall , Paediatrician, Western Sydney University co-organiser of the Saint’s visit here
19 May	St Patrick’s Estate, Manly – then and now	Fr Brian Lucas , National Director: Catholic Mission Australia
<i>The Annual General Meeting of the Society (and elections) will immediately precede this May session, at 1:15pm</i>		
16 June	Sevenhill – a living archive	Dr Julie Thorpe , Independent scholar and historian
21 July	Crossing the Tiber: Australian Anglican clergy converts to Rome from the 1840s to the 2000s	Dr David Hilliard , Formerly: Associate Professor in History, Flinders University, Adelaide
18 August	The decline of Australian Catholic intellectual life	Gerard Windsor , Novelist, essayist and review Author of The tempest-tossed Church
15 September	Catholic-mindedness in the Catholic doctor: the Sydney Catholic Medical Guild of St Luke: 1933-1935	Dr Anne Thoeming , Independent Scholar and former member of the ACHS Council
20 October	The St John’s College Act of 1857 - the legal antecedent and historical context	Kyle Oliver , Barrister at Law, Sydney
17 November	The Guild of St Pius X – its people and achievements in the liturgical; of Australia from the 40s to the 70s	Patrick Kirkwood , Formerly: Head of ABC RELIGIOUS Programs (Radio and TV and DIRECTOR, Catholic Audio Visual Centre, (Homebush, NSW))
7 December	Annual Mass and Christmas Lunch	St Mary’s Church and Ron Dyer Centre, Ridge and Miller Streets, North Sydney

Location, time and contact: Sunday afternoons at 2.00pm (unless otherwise stated) in the Crypt Hall of St Patrick’s, Church Hill [corner of Harrington and Grosvenor Streets. Admission is free and does not require membership of ACHS, but a donation is welcome. **Visit the ACHS website**

<http://www.australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au> for diverse information and features. **Members should note the earlier starting time on 19 May.**

NOTICE OF THE 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ACHS

1:15 PM ON SUNDAY, 19 MAY 2024

Crypt Hall of St Patrick's at Church Hill [Grosvenor Street], The Rocks.

- **The Agenda:**
- **Minutes of 2024 Annual General Meeting**
- **President's Report**
- **Treasurer's Report**
- **Election of Office Bearers for 2024**
- **Items of business and motions of which due notice had been given.**
- Agenda items must reach the Secretary by Friday 19 April 2024.

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED FOR COUNCILLORS

All positions on the Council are declared vacant at the AGM. Positions: President, Vice Presidents (2), Secretary, Treasurer, Councillors (up to 7). Nominations must be in writing, signed by the nominee, nominator and seconder who must be financial members of the ACHS and received by the secretary prior to the meeting.

President's Message

I have recently added to my long – and ever-growing – pile of partially-read books. This time it is Fintan O'Toole's personal history of modern Ireland, we don't know ourselves, "modern", here, being defined as since he was born on 16 February 1958. That title is a reminder of the often-forgotten fact that we are all living through -- and, indeed, making -- history through our lives and activities. Nevertheless, we often need to be reminded of that truth and of the importance of the study and research of history (which is, often, best understood at some temporal distance) as well as the very existence of such organisations as ACHS.

O'Toole depicts the Ireland of the time of his birth as torpid (morbid, really) and desperately in need of political, cultural, societal and economic change and revivification. There was an unhealthy alliance between the aged secular government and the Church (John McQuaid, who has been controversially described as the co-author of the Irish Constitution, so close was his relationship with de Valera, the Prime Minister, had been the powerful Archbishop of Dublin since 1940); there was severe censorship; and an anti-business official policy. Worst of all, the country was losing an unsustainable proportion of its educated young people through emigration, notably to the USA and Britain.

The speed of the change -- the creation of that "modern" Ireland was blindly swift, almost in defiance of history's time-scale. To understand it properly, I must read the entire book.

Which brings me to a further important matter: the desperate situation which confronts ACHS and the fact that I certainly have no wish to preside over a moribund organization or to pass such a society on to somebody else. I am strongly of the view that the primary obligation of every administration is to secure the succession. The fact that ACHS is an organisation of volunteers is no excuse and that fact does not allow us to escape from that existential reality. Nor does our age. For my entire Presidency I have attempted to exhort everyone to accept the responsibility to recruit new members AND to volunteer for Council membership and for service as office bearers. I have abjectly failed in that leadership imperative. We are now at a crisis-point. Our Treasurer, Dr Hughes, simply cannot continue in that role, though -- with amazing generosity -- she has filled those responsibilities, in an "acting" capacity during all of 2023. And our ever-diligent Secretary, Helen Scanlon, cannot be expected to carry on, indefinitely. My own current health will not allow me to give ACHS the attention that it deserves.

I say all of this, not to exaggerate our importance, but to emphasise the inescapable reality of the crisis that confronts us. In the absence of sufficient nominations at the AGM in May of this year, I will feel obliged, in honour and duty, to move that -- in the terms of our Constitution -- ACHS should be, forthwith, wound up.

John Carmody, President

Report of Sydney Meeting on 19th November 2023

Topic: A panorama of Australian religious poetry through reading it

Speaker: Dr Stephen McInerney

Dr Stephen McInerney's presentation to the Society on Les Murray, soon after that great poet's death, was so deep and moving that I was determined to get him back as soon as possible. However, when I hinted at something on Australian religious poetry, he demurred: he was not ready, Stephen humbly insisted, to write a major paper on that topic.

Still, hope springs eternal. Therefore, I proposed an alternative — aware that two important anthologies have been published on this topic in fairly recent years (edited by Les Murray and Kevin Hart). I suggested, instead, an experiment along the lines of "A panorama of Australian religious poetry through reading it". Stephen agreed and so it happened last November, when he read and spoke a little about the poems and their creators.

His choices were diverse and all of them were profound and incredibly thought-provoking. Most important of all was the amazing effect on the ACHS audience. Actors and musical performers often say that audiences are all different and that one can readily tell when a powerful impact has been made.

That happened on this occasion. I have never previously, after *any* of our outstanding sessions, seen so subdued — even stunned — a group of people: it was plain that they had been very deeply affected, and moved, by what they had just heard and experienced. The presentation concluded with one of Stephen's own works which he included at my implacable insistence, because I knew that he has a big and thoroughly justified reputation as both a poet and a thinker about the spiritual (as if these are distinct activities): Socrates declared, "It is God, himself, who speaks and addresses us through those sacred persons, the poets."

Stephen's choices were:

Lesbia Harford, "Summer Lightning";
A.D. Hope, "Ode On the Death of Pius XII";

James McAuley, "Because";
Judith Wright, "For One Dying";
Francis Webb, "Five Days Old";
Peter Porter, "An Exequy";
Robert Gray, "After Heraclitus";
Kevin Hart, "The Gift";
Noel Rowe, "Resurrection";
Stephen McInerney, "While Children Died"

Stephen read a number of Australian poems that could be considered religious. The list is below. The podcast of his reading is available on the Podcasts and Videos page,

<https://australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/history-resources/podcasts/>

- Lesbia Harford, "Summer Lightning"
(<https://allpoetry.com/Summer-Lightning>)
- A.D. Hope, "Ode On the Death of Pius XII"
(<https://allpoetry.com/Ode-On-The-Death-Of-Pius-The-Twelfth>)
- James McAuley, "Because"
(<https://allpoetry.com/poem/14373234-Because-by-James-Phillip-McAuley>)
- Judith Wright, "For One Dying"
- Francis Webb, "Five Days Old"
(<https://overfondofbooks.blogspot.com/2010/12/5-days-old.html>)
- Peter Porter, "An Exequy"
(<https://www.blueridgejournal.com/poems/pp-exequy.htm>)
- Les Murray, "The Mouthless Image of God in the Hunter-Colo Mountains"
- Robert Gray, "After Heraclitus"
- Kevin Hart, "The Gift"
(<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/dec/21/featuresreviews.guardianreview19>)
- Noel Rowe, "Resurrection"
(https://www.poetryinternational.com/en/poets-poems/poems/poem/103-808_5-RESURRECTION)
- Stephen McInerney, "While Children Died"

John Carmody, January 2024

Christmas Mass and Lunch on 9 December 2023

Speaker: Diana Carmody

Unfortunately, the day was marred by an exceptional heat wave, and quite a few of our members sensibly remained at home. However,

those who came were inspired by Fr Brian Lucas's words at Mass in the stone church in the Jesuit parish of St Mary's North Sydney followed by

lunch in the refreshing air conditioning of the Ron Dyer parish centre. A busy working bee on the Friday evening had prepared the room, decorated the tables and set out the glasses. On the Saturday morning Lesley Hughes and Helen Scanlon collected the splendid fruit platter, and tasty sandwiches and set out the drinks. All seemed very happy and liked the idea of the light lunch. A working bee after lunch washed up and tidied the room. Many thanks to all those members who helped.

The speaker following lunch was Diana Carmody, who has been a social worker at the children's Hospital both when it was in Camperdown and at Westmead. She spoke about the way the hospital made its own, immensely regrettable contributions to our national "Stolen Generations" legacy and the enduring problems of "Inter-generational Trauma." Children from country areas were often sent to the hospital without a parent by the Far West Charity. When they recovered, they were not returned to the parents, in the belief that the parent care was not good enough. The children were placed with white families or in orphanages. Parents, particularly first nation people, are still very reluctant to leave a child in the hospital least it disappears. The past traumas left memories deeply held.

"Dr Donald Hamilton's history of the RAHC — *Hand in Hand 1* — makes absolutely no mention of Indigenous patients, on the other hand, despite seeming "sanitised" (like many such institutional books), *125 years of care: the Children's Hospital at Westmead*, does give a hint. It says: "Following the first National Sorry Day in 1998, the Hospital acknowledged that in past years it may have played an unwitting part in the 'Stolen Generation' some Aboriginal children were admitted to the Hospital before being discharged to non-Aboriginal families."". Diana added that really it should state **most not some**.

Diana knows of a grandmother currently visiting her sick grandchild whose own child had died in Camperdown 35 years previously and because she lacked funds for burial had no idea what became of the child's remains. Possibly it was buried in the hospital grounds.

Diana spoke too about her efforts in organising a memorial plaque to commemorate these stolen children on a memorial wall at Camperdown. This was done in May 2023.

Helen Scanlon, January 2024

Cardinal Manning and the Origins of Rerum Novarum

English Cardinal Henry Manning (1808-1892) was probably a major inspiration for Pope Leo XIII's groundbreaking Catholic Social Teaching encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, argues writer Russell Sparkes in this week's *Tablet*.

"Conventional wisdom holds that *Rerum Novarum* was a response to European campaigns for social reform from great aristocrats such as Bishop von Kettler in Germany and the Comte de Mun and the Marquis de la Tour du Pin in France" who argued for "a return to some kind of medieval guild system," Sparkes observes. This is just a small piece of the review summary of the *Rerum Novarum* and its origins if you would like to read further click on the link: [Cardinal Manning and the origins of Rerum Novarum \(cardijnresearch.org\)](http://cardijnresearch.org) it will take you to piece written by Stefan Gigacz

ACHS History Project:

In support of the ACHS History Project, could any members with biographical information for former councillor and archivist Shirley McGlynn please contact Odhran O'Brien, the current honorary archivist, at secretaryachs@gmail.com

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