

History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland Conference

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Abstract Booklet

Faithful Companions of Jesus travelling from Liverpool to Canada in 1883 by kind permission of the British Province FCJ

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Margaret Beaufort Institute
and is supported by
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Abstract Booklet

Notes and abstracts in Conference Order

THEME I : MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE CONVENT

Dr Charity Scott Stokes: Clare Hall, University of Cambridge

Charity Scott Stokes has been working for the last three years on women's Books of Hours. Her book *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England* will be published by Boydell and Brewer in April 2006. In collaboration with Chris Given-Wilson, she is also working on an edition and translation of an anonymous Latin chronicle of the fourteenth century, "Chronicon Anonymi Cantuarensis".

Books of Hours in the Medieval Convents

The prevailing view of the books of hours as a lay persons book may need to be revised, at least as far as women's books in England are concerned. Several surviving fourteenth and fifteenth-century books of hours were made for nuns, or belonged at one time to a nunnery. For example, the Amesbury Hours was made for the Fontevrault Benedictine nuns of Amesbury; Agnes Hykeley's Hours for a nun whose name is known but not her order; the Aldgate Abbey Hours for the Franciscan nuns at Aldgate, London; Syon Abbey for the Brigittine nuns. The Malling Hours was made for the Benedictine nuns of Malling Abbey in Kent, who also briefly owned the Tanfield-Neville Hours. An analysis of material from David Bell's *What Nuns Read* (1995) shows that female religious houses, or individuals in those houses, owned books of hours, breviaries, and missals in approximately equal proportions. This suggests that the importance of books of hours to these nunneries may have been as great as that of their formal service books, the breviary and the missal. The present paper outlines the contents of the nunnery books of hours, and considers similarities and differences between these books and those belonging to laywomen, especially with regard to texts and music.

Janet Jones: Birkbeck College, University of London

Janet Jones is a PhD student at Birkbeck College, London. Her thesis, which she hopes to complete next year, is entitled 'The Nunneries of London and Its Environs, 1200-1400'.

Dorters and Dovecotes: the development of a medieval nunnery

Using information and examples from six medieval foundations, this paper aims to analyse the physical development of a 'notional' post-conquest urban nunnery. Commencing with a brief description of the distribution and topography of the foundations in relation to the City, the water supply, transport and acreage required, the paper will argue the probability of an initial church structure as the nucleus of the foundation, and describe the subsequent reorganisation of that structural space, determined in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by the liturgical requirements of the convent and in the fourteenth century by the growth of lay chantry provision. In conclusion it will examine the function and arrangement of sacred and secular spaces within the nunnery precinct with particular emphasis on the design and proportion of the sacred spaces and the use of the secular spaces to provide financial and

material support for the nuns. The presentation will be accompanied by plans and illustrations.

Dr Marilyn Oliva: Marymount College Fordham University, New York

Marilyn Oliva's doctoral thesis was a study of 'The Convent and the Community in the Diocese of Norwich from 1350 to 1540' (1991). She has published *The Convent in Later Medieval England* (Boydell and Brewster 1998) and, with Roberta Gilchrist, *Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia* (UEA Press, 1993). Her latest work *Charters and Household Accounts of the Female Monasteries in the County of Suffolk* will be published by Boydell and Brewster. Professor Oliva is also Editor of *Medieval Prosopography*.

The Visual Culture of Later Medieval English Nuns

Over the past fifteen years we have seen a welcomed and necessary increase in critical studies of medieval nuns. Sally Thompson, Brenda Bolton, Claire Cross and Roberta Gilchrist, just to name a few, have examined evidence about post-Conquest convents, studied founders and patrons of various monastic foundations for women, and turned a critical eye to the material culture, as expressed in architecture, of nuns' houses. Gilchrist especially has utilized gender as a category of analysis with interesting if controversial results for the growing awareness of these religious women and what their lives might have been like. Additionally, several monographs have been published of nuns' cartularies – records that illuminate tenures of landholding, the identities of benefactors, and sometimes details about specific household arrangements.

One area of study about late medieval English nuns, which remains untouched, is the visual culture of their monasteries. While literary scholars have looked at devotional literature for signs of spiritual culture within the houses, no one has yet looked at what visual aids or decorations inside the monasteries – wall and window hangings, furniture, cloth coverings of benches, and bedding, for example – contributed to the visual culture of the cloistered interiors. Utilizing fifteenth- and sixteenth-century inventories, I would like to look at the details of decorations and furniture that these documents provide to examine the visual culture of later medieval English convents, and to suggest some ways that it might have tied into the devotional material nuns were reading, listening to, and commissioning. In addition to using these overlooked sources, this paper will illuminate an otherwise unknown aspect of monastic life for women in England, and will also suggest that medieval English nuns' lives were more dynamic than previously thought.

Sr Honor McCabe OP

Honor McCabe is a member of the Cabra Congregation of Dominican Sisters, Ireland. She lectures on Spiritual Theology, mainly at The Priory Institute, Tallaght, Dublin and contributes to the Distance Learning programme on Spirituality of that Institute. She is the author of *A Light Undimmed*, the story of the Irish Dominican convent of Bom Sucesso, Lisbon which will be published in the near future.

Art Reflecting Spirituality: Cabra Dominicans of Lisbon, Portugal and their role as patrons

At certain periods in their history, the nuns of Bom Sucesso were patrons and collectors of works of art. Their purpose was primarily to contribute to the worship of God. Whatever they commissioned was a reflection of their spirituality. The most active period was from 1645 to the early years of the eighteenth century. This was partly due to the many financial donations received at this time. The then prioress, Magdalena da Silva Menezes inherited a considerable sum of money from her deceased brother's estate which enabled her to begin construction of

the church, the octagonal design of which is an architectural masterpiece. She was also supported in this work by her close friend, the Queen of Portugal, Dona Luísa de Gusmao. Many of the paintings in the church - a very large painting of the four evangelists and twelve paintings of scenes from the Song of Songs - are attributed to the Court painter, Bento Coelho da Silveira. In the early years of the eighteenth century the adornment of some side-chapels was possible due to bequests from an exiled Irish bishop and a Portuguese priest, both of whom had lived in the chaplain's house in the Bom Sucesso grounds.

Dr Andrea Knox: University of Northumbria

Andrea Knox teaches History and Women's Studies at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne. Her teaching ranges from the medieval and early modern periods to modern feminist history. Andrea has published articles in the journals, 'Criminal Justice History' and 'Quidditas', and has chapters in two recent edited collections, *Twisted Sisters: Women, Crime and Deviance in Scotland since 1400*, and *Irish Women and Nationalism*. Her current research is focussed upon Irish women migrants to Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Mary Magdalene and La Divina Pastora: Irish Migrant Nuns in early modern Spain and their art collection

First wave Irish female migrants to Spain played a crucial role in the religious and social infrastructure of the country. Irish nuns established convents, schools and despite cloister rules played a significant part in the bureaucratic and notarial roles. Irish Nuns were also entrusted with the organisation of charity. Paintings, sculptures and other icons commissioned by Irish sisters that were displayed in the chapels and beaterios reflected upon the perceptions of poor and disenfranchised women and would appear to reveal a broad range of views of women rather than the impoverished women as victims.

This paper will explore the types of art commissioned and used by Irish Nuns with their ritual life in a country they had migrated to for religious and political reasons.

Sr Angela Slattery IBVM: University of Melbourne, Australia

Angela Slattery, a Loreto sister, lives in Melbourne, Australia. She has worked extensively in remote cross-cultural regions of the country in the field of education, pastoral ministry and spiritual direction. Presently she is involved in Formation within her community and is studying at the Melbourne College of Divinity, (affiliated to the University of Melbourne), writing her thesis for an MA in Spirituality.

The Painted Life of Mary Ward: Visualising Authorial Voices among Women Religious in the mid-seventeenth century.

The paper addresses three questions concerning the visual representation of the life of Mary Ward (1585-1645) commissioned shortly after her death. First, what was the significance of the painted life-cycle of Mary Ward in terms of the authorial voices of women religious? Ward's friends commissioned (c.1645-1660) this cycle of over fifty paintings shortly after her death when papal authorities had actively suppressed her Institute and the group was mostly disbanded. Second, what were some significant themes in the life of this innovative Yorkshire Recusant woman who desired to found a religious order for women equivalent to the Jesuits in lifestyle and mobility? Though she spent much of her life on the Continent, she frequently returned to her homeland with missionary zeal said to be equivalent to that of 'six Jesuits'. Finally the *Painted Life* presents a construct of Ward's life. When examining the iconography of selected paintings, how might the visual evidence enhance both oral and written sources?

THEME II: AUTHORIAL VOICE

Guest Speaker: Dr Barbra Mann Wall: Purdue University Indiana

Barbara Wall holds a BSc in nursing from the University of Texas at Austin, an MSc from Texas Woman's University, and a PhD in history from the University of Notre Dame. She has developed and taught several history of health care courses and is currently an assistant professor at Purdue University School of Nursing. She has written numerous articles on catholic sisters and their contributions to the culture and economy of the United States. Her book *Unlikely Entrepreneurs: Catholic Sisters and the Hospital Marketplace, 1865-1925* was published this year by Ohio State University Press.

Textual Analysis and Authorial Voice of Catholic Sisters

The paper aims to address the question of historical authority by describing an alternative methodology for academic research. This involves a critical reading of texts that looks beyond a work's surface to see its contents as a form of argument with certain presuppositions. A case study, comparing the writing of Florence Nightingale with those of Catholic sisters will be used to address how and in what context Catholic sisters constructed a distinct type of nursing during the mid- and late- nineteenth century. It will be shown that they each had strong but different moral and religious models which informed their actions.

Katherine Harper: University of York

Katherine Harper is a postgraduate English literature student at the University of York. She is completing an MA on the work of Frances Taylor, and in October will be starting a PhD. This will focus on Taylor as the centre-point of a literary circle that included Lady Georgiana Fullerton, members of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, Taylor's sister, Charlotte Dean, and Cecilia Caddell.

The Literary Work of Frances Taylor, foundress of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God.

Women religious produced a rich body of literary work in the nineteenth century, but this aspect of their lives has been significantly under-researched. This paper will consider the literary production of one such woman religious: Mother Magdalen Taylor, foundress of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, who has been the subject of a great deal of biographical study, but very little literary criticism. Taylor was a prolific writer, producing a novel; short fiction; juvenile fiction; spiritual and meditational texts; biography, and a huge volume of articles and short stories for the Catholic Press. She also worked as an editor, publishing work by such illustrious writers as John Henry Newman as well as encouraging members of her family and her Sisters to write.

Taylor's literary career predated her life as a religious, and continued until her death. She left a diverse collection of literature of which this paper will provide an overview, looking at the main (and sometimes surprising) themes of the texts, Taylor's influences and sources, and the writing's place within her wider work with the poor. It will also briefly consider the larger literary circle of which Mother Magdalen was a part.

Dr Kate Stogdon rc: University of Manchester

Kate Stogdon is a member of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle and is based in London. She completed her doctorate on Therese Couderc this year (University of Manchester) and is now preparing her material for publication. Kate is also a staff member on the Ignatian Spirituality Course which trains spiritual directors in the Ignatian tradition.

Surrendering the self in the service of ‘the work of God’: Thérèse Couderc, founder of the Cenacle Sisters.

Together with Père Etienne Terme, Thérèse Couderc co-founded the ‘Congregation of Our Lady of the Retreat in the Cenacle’ in 1826, in the southern Ardèche region of France. The sisters committed themselves to the giving of spiritual retreats according to the method of Ignatius of Loyola. Canonised as a saint in 1970, central to the declaration of Thérèse’s sanctity was an evaluation of her as the epitome of humility. This representation has been under-girded by her own writings (in particular the texts of *se livrer* and *acte d’offrande*) as well as the assessments made about her by contemporaries and subsequent interpreters. The tendency to link notions of humility, surrender and women’s capacity to make ministerial contributions can disturb those with feminist sensibilities. However, through an attention to both Thérèse’s language and practice of surrender the influences that informed it and the context in which she performed it, I reveal how her faith practices expanded rather than just reinforced the roles stipulated for Roman Catholic women during the nineteenth century. I point out the vital importance to her of what she called ‘the work of God’, arguing that it provided her with a yardstick by which to make her decisions and facilitated a creative disjuncture with her self-effacing language. I highlight the important role played by the seventeenth-century ‘French School’ and the sixteenth-century ‘Spiritual Exercises’ on her spiritual formation and locate in them the source of a productive tension between the surrender understood as self-abnegation and her commitment to following the purposes of God, whatever the cost. Through the radical surrendering of self this ‘work of God’ took centre stage, serving to transform Thérèse, her sisters and the mission they carried out.

Elaine McDonald IBVM: Mater Dei, Dublin City University

Elaine Mc Donald is member of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters) and a graduate of the Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. She worked as a teacher at second level for a number of years before completing a Masters in Religious Science at Mater Dei. In 2002 she received a scholarship from Mater Dei to undertake doctoral research; her research is concerned with the educational legacy of Mary Ward, foundress of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In January of this year she presented a paper on Mary Ward in Trinity College, Dublin at the conference *New Research in Irish Feminism*.

“Those dark days”: The authorial voice of Mother Michael Corcoran, Superior General of Mary Ward’s Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1888-1918).

The survival and evolution of Mary Ward’s Institute after its suppression in 1631 provides a remarkable chapter in the canon of knowledge on the history of women religious. Political and ecclesiastical pressure had increased the isolation of individual foundations of the Institute in various countries but, despite this, the original intention of Mary Ward to unify her Institute under the jurisdiction of a superior general was not lost. The union of these foundations became a vexed question during the years of Mother Michael Corcoran’s

leadership as superior general (1888-1918) of the Irish branch. In 1900 Corcoran initiated a correspondence with her Sisters on the subject of the union of the Institute; this initiative marked the beginning of one of the most troubled periods in the history of Mary Ward's Institute since its suppression.

The authorial voice that emerges through her letters gives testimony to what Corcoran would later describe as "the dark and dreary days [...] when I sometimes feared the shipwreck of our Institute." Aware that the Institute she was leading was in danger of breaking apart Corcoran asserted guidance and leadership through her letters to her Sisters. Her written words initiated a storm that few could have anticipated and it is through her written word that she must lead her Institute through the dark and troubled waters that threatened once again to dismantle Mary Ward's Institute.

Revd Dr Angela Berlis: University of Tilberg and OKS, University of Utrecht.

The Revd Dr Angela Berlis (1962) is principal of the Old Catholic Seminary, Theological Faculty, University of Utrecht. She is also a senior researcher at the Catholic Faculty at the University of Tilburg (The Netherlands). She is working on a research project about the abolition of celibacy in two Old Catholic Churches and the consequences of this for the understanding of priesthood and gender-relations. She is President of the "Women Theologians Network" in the Netherlands. Recent publications: "« Mieux que six évêques et douze professeurs... ». Amalie von Lasaulx (1815-1871) et la naissance du vieux-catholicisme allemand", in: Archivio per la storia delle donne 1, a cura di Adriana Valerio, D'Auria: Napoli 2004, 227-237 Ignaz von Döllinger – Christine von Hoiningen-Huene. Briefwechsel 1881-1890, edited by Angela Berlis & Hubert Huppertz, in: Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift 95 (2005,) 95-143

Amalie von Lasaulx (1815-72): Controversialist Sister of Mercy and her impact in Britain.

Amalie von Lasaulx (1815-1872) was a Sister of Mercy and superior of the St Johannis Hospital at Bonn. Famous because of her nursing work in the wars between Prussia and Denmark (1864) and between Prussia and Austria (1866), after the First Vatican Council she became an icon of resistance against papal infallibility. Shortly after her death in 1872 she became even more famous through biographies and biographical articles about her which were also translated into English. She never wrote a book but gained an authorial voice via quotations from her diaries and letters in these biographies. Afterwards and because of the circumstances of her death, her voice was heard even better than in her lifetime where attention concentrated on her deeds of charity. Her 'private' voice was turned into a public voice.

The paper focuses on the reception of her story in Britain. Here, her story was received not only as a life of devotion to God, but also as a weapon and a warning especially for Anglicans against ultramontanism in convents.

DAY TWO

Guest Speaker: Dr Ann Matthews: National University of Ireland, Maynooth

Ann Matthews has a doctorate of the University of Ireland, Maynooth for a thesis on 'Women activists in Irish Republican politics 1900-1921'. She is currently preparing to publish 'A history of the Maternity hospital and mother and baby home at Bessborough 1922-1986'. She teaches 'Gender in local context' at the New University of Ireland, Maynooth and at its Kilkenny campus.

The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary and their work with unwed mothers in England and Ireland

This paper, focussed on the work of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, will explain the origins of the mother and baby home movement and the concept of the term 'mother and baby home'. It will show why the mother and baby home movement was perceived as the answer to a difficult situation, why they were originally run as religious establishment (Catholic, Church of Ireland and several evangelical churches) and how a lack of proper research has given rise to current criticism which does not take into account the origins of the movement.

The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary have their origins in France, where they were known as the Servants of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSHJM). The congregation worked with the marginalised in Parisian society opening orphanages and nursing the poor in their own homes. They also founded a placement bureau for German servant girls, and became actively involved in organising adult education for working class men and women. In 1870 some members of the order travelled from Paris to London after the outbreak of the Franco Prussian War, where they opened a house in Stratford. Through the 1870s the order grew and attracted many entrants from Ireland. The congregation set up schools in England and Scotland; and continued the same kind of work they had been engaged in, in Paris. Their work with unwed mothers came about when a philanthropist named Mary Abraham, invited them to run a house of penitence under the auspices of St Pelagia's Homes for Destitute Girls. Through this work the charity moved towards helping destitute unwed girls and women who were pregnant. The SSHJM began working with unwed mothers and their children in the 1890s. They opened the first catholic mother and baby home in England, which became an integral part of the mother and baby home movement. The Christian Evangelical churches instigated this movement in the 1880s. In 1922, the (SSHJM) arrived in Ireland at the invitation of the vice guardians of the Cork Union and opened a mother and baby home at Bessborough. By 1936, there were five publicly funded mother and baby homes in the Irish Free State, of which three were run by the SSHJM.

THEME III: USING ORAL HISTORY: THEORY AND PRACTICE

The intention is for this session to be more of a workshop in style, enabling several researchers to share their expertise in theory and practice of oral history and for delegates to have the opportunity for time to take up practices and explore them with presenters.

Theory of Oral History Method

Dr Leen Van Molle: Leuven University, Belgium

Leen Van Molle (°1953) is professor modern history at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. Her research focuses mainly on social history from 1800 to the present, especially rural history, co-operative saving and lending, and gender. She is an active member of the research group CORN (“Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area”) and president of the “Centre d’Archives pour L’Histoire des Femmes” (Brussels).

Putting theory into practice I: Using oral history for research into the history of women religious - the KADOC experience

Dr Jan de Maeyer: KADOC, Leuven University, Belgium

Jan de Maeyer (°1952), PhD in History. Professor of modern history at the Catholic University of Leuven and Director of KADOC (Interfaculty Centre for Research and Documentation on Religious, Culture and Society). His publications and research are on religion, society and art in the 19th and 20th centuries. For more information see www.kadoc.kuleuven.be KADOC has undertaken an extensive and systematic oral history project with groups of women religious.

Dr Yvonne McKenna: University of Limerick

Putting theory into practice II: the experience of Irish sisters in England and India

Yvonne McKenna's research focuses on the exploration of gendered, religious, ethnic and migrant identities of Irish religious, especially women religious through the collection of their oral histories. She was awarded her PhD by the University of Warwick in 2002 and has been an IRCHSS Government of Ireland post-doctoral fellow at the University of Limerick for the past two years. She has published a number of journal articles based on her research and is currently preparing a full monograph which will be published by Irish Academic Press in 2006.

Dr Charles Flynn: National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM).

Computer Cataloguing of an Oral History Collection using Standard Microsoft Software.

The presentation will consist of a practical demonstration of the methodology adopted to compile a ‘word search’ computer catalogue of an Oral History Collection using standard Microsoft software. The case study is that of an Oral History project conducted with Irish Missionaries however, the procedures involved could be adapted to suit any compatible undertaking.

University Affiliation; Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), Post Doctoral Fellow at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM).

THEME IV: CONSECRATED WOMEN AS MISSIONARIES

Dr Joy Frith: Queen's University, Canada

Joy Frith has taught British history and gender studies at the International Study Centre of Queen's University in West Sussex, Canada since 2000. Her PhD (2004) was for a thesis entitled "Pseudonuns: Anglican Sisterhoods and the Politics of Victorian Identity." Her current research interests include the impact of multiculturalism on the religious life in Britain.

Positioning Anglican Sisters as Missionaries in the British Columbia Wilderness

Between 1884 and 1914, a group of Anglican sisters from the Community of All Hallows in Norfolk travelled to the British Columbia interior to establish a school for Native girls. Although their primary mission was educational, the sisters soon became engaged in missionary work with both the local Native population as well as with those in remote settlements throughout the lower mainland. This paper examines the impact of the encounter between sisters and Native society upon the experiences of the sisters and the construction of their identities. As white, middle-class English women, the sisters occupied a privileged position in relation to Native Canadians and structured their identities as imperial agents within the discourses of the 'civilising mission'. Yet, through the complex and often intimate relationships they established in their capacity as missionaries, the sisters often found their identities as imperial agents challenged. The means by which the sisters negotiated their missionary role against the backdrop of government policy, Church politics and most significantly a growing empathy toward Native culture, highlights the ambiguities within their missionary identities as well as their relationship with the political imperatives of empire.

Muriel McEwan: Open University

Muriel McEwan studied history at Glasgow University, and obtained her Masters degree in history at the Open University. She is a full-time PhD student in the Religious Studies department at the Open University. Her main research interests include the role of women in Christian missions (at home and abroad) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the Deaconess Movement in the Church of Scotland.

'The Tender Loving Service of a Trained Christian Woman': the Home Mission Work of the 'Brown Deaconesses' (1888-1929)

The Presbyterian Church of Scotland 'revived' the Order of Deaconesses in the late nineteenth century. Between 1888 and 1929, 111 women were set apart as deaconesses to undertake Christian work 'as the sole purpose of their lives'. As a symbol of their vocation they were permitted to wear the brown uniform of a deaconess. The work undertaken was wide-ranging: they could be parish visitors (under the supervision of the minister and his Kirk Session), as well as home mission workers, superintendents of institutions (primarily concerned with women and children) and foreign missionaries. Some deaconesses were trained as nurses and visited the sick poor in their homes or cared for them in the Church of Scotland's own Deaconess Hospital in Edinburgh.

In this paper, I will consider the home mission work undertaken by the Brown Deaconesses during this period and assess how this work reflected the changes that were occurring within the Scottish church and in society.

Sr Maura O'Donohue MB MMM

Born in Kilfenora, Co. Clare, Maura O'Donohue is a doctor and a member of the Medical Missionaries of Mary. She has worked in hospital based medicine, public health, famine relief and other humanitarian disaster work, as well as specialising in running workshops on HIV/AIDS for almost two decades. All of this has taken her to 70 countries. She is currently engaged in the struggle against trafficking in human persons.

Medical missionary women: overcoming obstacles to professional practice in the early twentieth century.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the struggle to overturn Canonical restrictions which prevented women religious from the exercise of professional surgery and obstetrics was taken up by leaders of societies of a number of Catholic and Protestant women missionaries. Among other initiatives aimed at bringing about change, they made repeated requests to the Vatican. This paper proposes to examine their activities and influence. The paper will also comment on the influence which these actions had on the subsequent development of medical missionary societies and their response to the suffering of women in poor areas.

The Decree *Constans Ac Sedula* of 11 February 1936 finally lifted the obstacles and led to a great expansion of medical missionary activity by women from Britain and Ireland. The importance of medical missions in the succeeding decades and the thrust of women who embraced this healing ministry will be discussed.

Dr Susan O'Brien: St Edmund's College, University of Cambridge

Susan O'Brien has published articles and book chapters on social class in convents, the influence of French congregations in Britain, convent art and devotional practices, and the section on nineteenth-century women religious in the forthcoming multi-volume Cambridge *History of Christianity*. She is currently writing a history of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul in Britain from the 1850s to the present day. Susan has been Chair of the Directors of the Margaret Beaufort Institute for the past eleven years.

Coda - Missing missionaries: where are the Catholic sisters in British missiology?

British mission history has become richly nuanced in recent years, gaining greatly from revisionist studies of empire and Britain's global relationships as well as from longer standing developments in missiology. Revisionism has now begun to include a strong gender perspective. However, these developments in the historiography have not yet encompassed research into the missionary activities of Roman Catholic religious sisters from Britain. The paper will survey the existing historiography in relation to women missionaries in particular and, drawing on research into a number of Catholic women's congregations indicate how historians researching catholic communities might engage with the existing literature.

Work in Progress

Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh: Ratoath, Ireland

Memoirs of Educational Life in Ireland

Women religious have a long history of involvement in education and much statistical information is available on their significant input in Irish education. However less is known about individual educational experiences. The memoirs of Sr M Pascal a student in the early 1910s at the Sisters of Mercy Carysfort College of Education, which trained primary teachers, are revealing of her experiences. Her views on her mathematics teacher, Eamon de Valera, a future Taoiseach, (Prime Minister of Ireland), suggest that his military interests were intertwined with his mathematical passions. Sr M Pascal was unusual in that she honestly assesses in her memoir the impact of her teachers at Carysfort College of Education and the way they affected her future professional life.

Moira Egan: City University New York

Women Religious and the Cultural Impact of the Crimean War

Dr Jan De Maeyer: KADOC University of Leuven Belgium

A short presentation on the important work of RELINS – a European-wide network for the study of religious institutes in 19th and 20th Europe.