



**CATHOLIC RECORD SOCIETY**  
*British Catholic History*



*Newsletter no.3: Spring 2020*

**A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL, PROFESSOR BILL SHEILS**

I would like to introduce myself to you as the Chair of Council, though not before thanking Judith Champ for her work as Chair for the past couple of years. These were very busy years for the Society with digitisation of our Record Series volumes, the development of a new website (of which we are very proud), and significant changes to the structure of Council and the distribution of its responsibilities. Judith led on many of these as well as guiding us effectively, but her service to the Society goes back much further, as I am sure you know. It is in no small measure thanks to her efforts on our behalf that the Society is in such good shape.

As a recently-elected member of Council I am a little daunted to be following where she has led. My own work focuses on Catholicism in early modern England and, having started life as a historian of Puritanism, I am especially interested in interconfessional relations in that period. I also have an active interest in the posthumous reputation of St Thomas More. It is disappointing not to be able to welcome members to the annual conference in 2020 in my own home base of York, but I look forward to doing so in 2021 and, in the meantime, to working with the Council and Officers to keep the CRS flourishing.

*Bill Sheils*

**A MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR JUDITH CHAMP, DSS**

I am delighted that Bill Sheils was able and willing to step into the role of CRS Chair at short notice last autumn, and I am very grateful to him and to the other members of Council for coping so generously with my decision to step down at that time. This was, unfortunately, a result of poor health and exhaustion, leading to an inevitable decision to step back from a number of commitments. I do plan to continue to support CRS, as I have done for the past forty years, and to be more involved again in the future. In the meantime, I send my good wishes to all members of the Society and continue to hope that it goes from strength to strength.

*Judith Champ*

**SOCIETY NEWS**

**Digital CRS Record Series.** In earlier newsletters and at last year's Conference there have been progress reports on the digitalisation of the CRS Record Series. It is very exciting to report that 79 volumes, going back 115 years, are now freely available via the CRS website. Access them at [www.crs.org.uk/publications](http://www.crs.org.uk/publications); click on Publications, scroll down—and click again! This is a real milestone for the Society, and additional volumes will be added at intervals.

**Digital Access to British Catholic History** has been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with Cambridge University Press to take it forward at the present time. Access will be via the CRS website in a newly-created Members' Restricted Area.

## FROM THE SECRETARY

It only seems like yesterday that many of us were at Carmen Mangion's book launch at Birkbeck; what a few weeks it has been. It was no small decision to cancel this year's Conference when so much planning had already gone into it, but events have since demonstrated that it was the right one. All is not doom and gloom, though; we have already secured a booking at the Bar Convent for 2021, and so we look forward to seeing you there. I am looking into ways in which we may organise this year's Annual General Meeting, which would normally have taken place in York. The Charity Commission will no doubt form a view in due course, and so information on that necessary piece of business will follow.

Council remains active, and we intend to do our very best to keep as much of our work going as possible during these wilderness days. To that end, we particularly wish to continue to support the research of scholars in our field, and will be able to make some small research grants of up to £1000. It may be that in this exceptional year applications for the purchase of research materials, rather than for travel, would be appropriate. Please distribute this information in your networks; applications setting out details of the materials sought, the wider research topic, and intention to disseminate research outcomes should be sent to Professor Bill Sheils ([bill.sheils@york.ac.uk](mailto:bill.sheils@york.ac.uk)) by 1 July with the names of names of two referees. Decisions will be reported to applicants by 31 July.

I can only hope that this Newsletter finds our you and your families safe and well, and not too frustrated by the present conditions. I encourage those confined to quarters to access the digitised Record Series as explained above; there is of course also the Facebook page, where members continue to share pieces of interest. Without students or tourists Oxford is simultaneously desolate and beautiful, but I will be glad when this is over and the students have returned. Nevertheless, there is blossom on the branches, and the tulips are beginning to show; signs of hope abound! A very happy Easter to you all.

*Serenhedd James*

## NEWS OF MEMBERS



**Dr Marie Rowlands.** Congratulations to Dr Marie Rowlands on the award of the *Bene Merenti* Medal for her services to Catholic History. Dr Rowlands is Emeritus Research Fellow and a former Head of History at Newman University, and has been a committed member of CRS for many years. In the words of the citation, 'her research and publications have changed our perception of the role of laypeople, particularly women, in fostering the life of the Catholic community in this country and in educating the young in the centuries following the Reformation.' Marie is currently working on an article focusing on Catholic education in England in the period 1791-1840. *Dr Rowlands was presented with the medal by Professor Judith Champ in February, seen here with Fr Cecil Rogerson, parish priest of Our Lady and St Brigid's, Northfield.*

**Dr Carmen Mangion.** The Society was well represented at the launch of Dr Carmen Mangion’s new book, *Catholic Nuns and Sisters in a Secular Age: Britain, 1945-90* (Manchester University Press, 2020). More than 60 colleagues and friends from across academia, religious congregations, and members of the archives confraternity gathered at Birkbeck, University of London, on 28 February for an evening introduced by reflections on Carmen’s book from CRS members Dr Susan O’Brien and Dr Alana Harris. The book identifies how the lives of Catholic nuns and sisters were influenced by both religious and secular social movements; drawing on interviews with some eighty women religious it examines a range of themes including youth culture, post-war modernity, the voluntary sector, and the women’s movement.



**Members’ Publications and News.** Please continue to send us notification of publications and news, so that we can give notice of them on the Facebook page and in the Newsletters. Information to [secretary@crs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@crs.org.uk) or [membership@crs.org.uk](mailto:membership@crs.org.uk).

### OBITUARIES

*With sadness, we note the death of two of our members.*



**The Rt Revd Daniel Mullins**, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Menevia and a former President of the CRS, died on 1 November 2019. Born in Kilfinane, County Limerick, he studied Welsh to a high level and served for many years in the Archdiocese of Cardiff—including as Auxiliary Bishop—before being appointed as the first Bishop of the newly reconstituted Diocese of Menevia in 1987. He served in this capacity before resigning due to ill-health in 2001. Bishop Mullins was a prime mover in the cause of Welsh Catholic history; he contributed the chapter ‘The Catholic Church in Wales’

in Alan McClelland and Michael Hodgetts’ millennium volume *From Without the Flaminian Gate* (London: DLT, 1999) and played an active role in the Wales & The Marches Catholic History Society.

**Fr Jerome Bertram CO** died on 19 October 2019. Fr Jerome was known to members of the CRS for his expertise in the study of monumental incised slabs and brasses—for which he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries—and for his research in the history and spirituality of the Oratory. He served as a priest in the Diocese of Arundel, at the London University Chaplaincy and at Royal Holloway, and entered the Oratory in Oxford in 1991. His publications included *Brass Rubbing in England* (1971) published when he was 21, and an edited volume, *Monumental Brasses as Art and History* (1996) for the Monumental Brass Society. In Oxford Fr Jerome oversaw the construction of two major new buildings for the Oratory; his concern for the city’s homeless population found practical expression when he became a founder member of the Oxford Poverty Action Trust.



*Bishop Mullins and Fr Bertram will be remembered at the Society’s Annual Requiem for deceased members, of which details will be circulated later. Members who become aware of other names to be included are invited to send them to the Secretary.*

## FROM OUR FRIENDS IN THE CATHOLIC ARCHIVES SOCIETY

William Johnstone, *Memory and Mission: Methodist and Roman Catholic perspectives on Archives as Tools for Evangelisation*, Catholic Archives Society Occasional Papers, October 2019, £6. Copies available from CAS at <https://catholicarchivesociety.org/advice-leaflets-occasional-papers>.

Archives are the raw materials of history. All historians, not least church historians, know this. But archivists often find it difficult to convince ‘Management’ that records of the past have value or relevance to anyone other than the historian, and although present-day Christians may find some inspiration in the lives of saints and suffering of martyrs not much is made of those members of the communion of saints who have gone before us. In setting out to demonstrate the importance of archives in the life of the Church, William Johnstone explores the teaching contained in contemporary documents and describes projects which have made use of historic documents, to challenge us to take on a new understanding of archives. *Memory and Mission: Methodist and Roman Catholic Perspectives on Archives as Tools for Evangelism* began life as the author’s dissertation for his MLitt degree in Archives and Records Management at the University of Dundee. Working with sources from both Methodist and Catholic traditions, Johnstone illustrates how much these two have in common and how their experiences can be applied across confessional boundaries. A key document in this the study is *The Pastoral Function of Church of Church Archives*, a circular letter issued by the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church in 1997. In the introduction to this document, Archbishop Francesco Marchisano, President of the Commission, wrote that ‘archives are places of memory of the Christian community and storehouses of culture for the new evangelisation’. Johnstone describes two projects in some detail: the digitisation of 153 eighteenth-century conversion testimonies preserved in the archives of the Methodist Church at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, and a study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century accounts of Catholic martyrs, preserved in Westminster Diocesan Archives. All of this is a fascinating read but it also provides concrete examples of ways in which ‘the new evangelisation’ can be carried out, turning tourists into pilgrims and the rest of us, as Pope Francis urges, into missionary disciples.

*Judith Smeaton*

## WALES & THE MARCHES CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

We are saddened by the news that the Wales & The Marches Catholic History Society is to fold. Its archives and library have been deposited at the Cardiff University Catholic Chaplaincy, under the care of CRS member Fr Sebastian Jones CO.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

These were due on 1 April. No action is required from members with a standing order for the sum of £43 (UK) or £68 (International). If you pay annually, please note that you can pay by direct bank transfer: Royal Bank of Scotland; S/C 16-00-16; A/C 11471579. Cheques should be sent to Dr Susan O’Brien, c/o The Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, 12-14 Grange Road, Cambridge CB3 9DU. *Please make sure to mark the payment clearly with your name so you can be identified from bank statements.*