

EXCHANGE - ECHANGE

PROVINCE DE L'EUROPE DU NORD * NORTHERN EUROPEAN PROVINCE

<http://www.rscm-pen.org>

July/August 2017



PLATINUM JUBILEE



Sister Dolores Carroll



Sister Celine Murphy

DIAMOND JUBILEE



Sister Kathleen McCartan



Sister Eileen Purcell

*The jubilees are being celebrated on
22 August 2017
Congratulations to all of you!*

Máire Bríd/Madame Albert/Aunt Brigie was an intelligent, gifted woman, artistic and a poet.

She was a teacher, but more than that, she was an educator. Years ago she introduced children at primary level to reading and set up a lending library in her class...lending out books at a penny a week to raise money to buy more books.

Having grown up in Windgap, County Kilkenny, in the heart of the country, she loved nature and appreciated everything that sprouted from the earth. She knew how to preserve things like gladioli bulbs....and hoped they wouldn't be thrown away again ... having been mistaken for withered onions. I confess that I did throw them away once.



Máire Bríd enjoyed a joke even if it was a little risqué....appreciating that everything was part of life. Her great love for her family was well known. She loved watching and entertaining her grandnieces and nephews.

She served the Institute in many places and capacities. She entered in Béziers, came back to Ferrybank as a young professed and was encouraged by Mother Odile to help the new novices – Betty (Comerford), Thérèse (English) and Immaculata (Fielding) - in the new Ferrybank novitiate. Of course, according to Betty, they didn't pay a blind bit of notice to her. She lived in Newsham Drive, Liverpool, in the north of Ireland, and served on the Provincial Council and on the International Commission studying the new constitutions of the RSHM. When Máire Bríd wanted to come off that Commission Mary Milligan said to Brid McGrath (the Provincial) “Don't let her do that. She is the only one doing any work“.

She loved her ministry in the parish of Ballyfoyle, County Kilkenny and was in her element sowing seeds, making jam and walking the countryside finding God everywhere and in all things.

The last verse of Patrick Kavanagh's poem “ Ploughman “ would describe Máire Bríd brilliantly :

*“I find a star-lovely art
in a dark sod.
joy that is timeless! O heart
that knows God.”*

Thank you

The Madonna House Community would like to say thanks to all of you who supported us at the time of Sister Máire Bríd's death by your attendance at the removal and burial and /or by masses and prayers at that time. We appreciated your thoughtfulness and kindness and you will be included in our prayers.



We would like to sincerely thank all of you who were so kind during the recent bereavement of our mother, Mary Gough. We were grateful that so many of our RSHM sisters, especially those who knew our mother, could be present at the wake, removal and funeral. Your presence and support were very much appreciated. Thank you also to those who phoned, wrote, sent Masses and prayed for us all during this time, both in the NEP and from around the Institute. It is good to be part of two families – our own and the RSHM family - at times like this. Many thanks on our behalf and on behalf of our family.

Catherine and Mary Gough.

Dear Sisters

I want to thank you all most sincerely for your prayer and support expressed through emails and cards during those last weeks. The family really experienced the power of prayer and join me in this thank you to you all. Josephine my Sister in law is holding her own in spite of many infections. My brother in law Christy is recovering from the stroke thanks to speech and walking therapy. My niece Mary is still counting on your prayer as she battles in court in relation to her two children.

My deepest gratitude to you all.

Love Bernadette

Chères Sœurs

Un grand merci pour votre prière pour ma famille en ce temps difficile. Ma belle sœur Josephine se maintient malgré quelques infections et Christy récupère sa voix et sa marche. Merci bien pour vos prières et pour vos marques de soutien.

Bernadette

Many thanks to all the Sisters for your support and prayers at the time of Bridget's death. The family wish to join us in thanking you for your Mass cards and sympathy cards, phone calls, e-mails and letters. It was a sad time for all of us as a family, but your sympathy and kind words were a great strength to us.

Mass will be offered for your intentions with love and gratitude.

Gertrude, Teresa and Catherine McCarthy.

BEREAVEMENTS

Our sympathy is extended to:

The Sisters of the EAP on the death of Sister **Eamonn Harpur**, RSHM, on 11 May 2017. Sr Eamonn was 91 years old and in the 69th year of her Religious Profession.

and Sister **Amy Pomponio**, RSHM who also died on 11 May 2017.

Sr. Amy was 85 years old and in the 65th year of her Religious Profession.

May they rest in peace



The Millenium Group Gathering in Penmaenmawr 2 – 5 May 2017

We were 17 in this year's Millenium Group Gathering and, as usual, there was a warm welcome, splendid hospitality and good food a-plenty for us all in dear 'old' Pen. The weather, too, was kind and Pen's lovely grounds were a riot of colour.

Once again Bernadette rose to the challenge of providing spiritual input. The first day we reflected on and shared on a collection of beautiful quotes on the Golden Years. They were apt, thought provoking and they will provide much 'food for thought' in the days ahead.

On our second day Mary Jo McElroy gave an impassioned plea for the saving of planet earth. She presented her work and leadership of the Institute's Plan for the JPIC Network of Priorities for 2017 – 2020. This was a monumental task but it gives us all, as individuals, communities, provinces and the Institute clear guidelines on how we can make a difference to the future of the planet, no matter how small. Thank you Mary Jo.

We were blessed to have Mass each day. Father John, a priest of Salford diocese, was having a few days 'reflective time' before celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination. We remembered and prayed for those who had died since our last gathering and those who were unable to be with us.

Of course we had our free time and the good weather was a bonus. We were able to 'sally forth' to the beach for chats, cuppas and ice creams and for some retail therapy or, perhaps, just relaxing with friends. It was a great time to be together, to remember with THANKFULNESS and look forward with HOPE.

Thank you Kathleen for accompanying us during these days. Your presence was much appreciated. Thank you to the Pen community including the happy 'girls' – Amy, Paul and Dash. Pen is a truly blessed place.

Aline



The Enlarged General Council Meeting in Noddfa May – June 2017



Participants at the EGC

Back row L to R:

Sisters Philippa O'Sullivan (GC), Isabel Cipriano (M), Rosamond Blanchet (GC), Terezinha Cecchin (B), Ana Helena Andreão (B), Florence Muuka (Z), Ellen O'Leary (NEP), Maria Aparecida Moreira (Gen Treasurer), Isabel Grangeon (P), Catherine Patten (EAP), Joanne Safian (Gen Sec)

Front row L to R:

Mary Jo McElroy(Translation), Christine Partisano, CSJ (Facilitator), Mary Genino (GC), Maria Emília Peliz (GC), Joan Treacy (WAP), Ursula Canavan (NEP), M. do Rosário Durães(Translation), Kathleen Buckley(NEP),

Reflections on the EGC experience from the Provincial Council



What stands out for me is the generous, warm- hearted welcome and hospitality of the Noddfa community which was a pleasant backdrop to all our deliberations. It was indeed a graced time during which we were conscious of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, moving us towards consensus on various issues, not least of which was the delicate question of our Mother House.

I appreciated the beautiful prayer services, liturgies and para-liturgies and the joyful, celebratory times we spent together, enabling us to know one another better and appreciate our different nationalities and cultures. I feel we can now move forward with greater confidence and awareness that we truly are “one body for mission”.

Ursula

The highlight of the EGC for me was meeting the Sisters from the different provinces and hearing their stories. Now I see them as friends and not just names on paper. This created a great spirit of togetherness and a feeling of 'one Body for Mission'. I sensed a consciousness among the Sisters that our Mission/structures thrust should always be 'vision driven' rather than just 'crisis driven' and hence there was a feeling of exploring the 'what if' in these uncertain times. I think this created a certain dynamic energy in the group. Overall, an enriching experience which was further enhanced by having the meeting in Pen where warmth and hospitality is always in abundance.

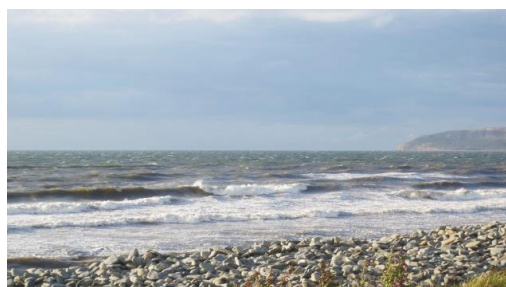
Kathleen

The EGC was originally scheduled to take place in France but for various reasons was transferred to Noddfa, This was made possible by the Team there, who generously “juggled” other commitments in order to facilitate us. It was my first time participating in this event so being in our “own place” I felt contributed to making it a memorable occasion. Another contributing factor was the time of the year - the celebration of the feast of Pentecost - during the meeting which we felt brought an outpouring of the spirit on all our deliberations.

Our Facilitator was Sir. Christine Partisano CSJ who has worked with our Leadership Team in Rome for many years. She was very tuned in to our charism and spirit and gently nudged us forward to live “our mission with new eyes and new heart” as we strive to live through our present reality and move towards “One body for Mission.”

I am grateful to the Pen community for their wonderful hospitality and welcome and to each of the participants at the meeting for the open and honest dialogue that was so good to be part of. An old Irish phrase “ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine” sums up the experience for me. (Impossible to translate the exact meaning but somehow captures the feeling that we all need the support of each other to survive!)

Ellen





I so enjoyed reading about other sisters' ministries in the last copy of *Exchange* that I felt moved to share about my new ministry as co-ordinator of the *Global Network of RSHM Schools*!

I was appointed co-ordinator last year. My work, along with being on the boards of the four Marymount schools in Europe, entails various meetings and a considerable amount of travel – often to some rather lovely places!

Up until 2015 the *Network* had comprised the Marymount Schools plus schools from other provinces who wanted to join them. It was at the EGC meeting in 2014 that agreement was reached to develop a global network that would involve all schools founded by the RSHM, who were interested in accessing their heritage and the global dimension of education. My brief was to begin the process of facilitating the development of this new network.

The *Global Network of RSHM Schools*, now in its second year, includes schools from almost all of our Provinces: the EAP and WAP, Portugal, Brazil and the Zambezi Region, as well as schools from Colombia and Mexico that were originally founded by the RSHM. At present the NEP does not have member schools, but hopefully, when our schools realise that the *Network* is a fantastic resource they will become interested in joining.

The co-ordinating committee, which has representatives from the various geographical areas, has written the *Network's* mission statement and terms of work. The inaugural conference is due to be held in June in Bogota, Colombia, and Sr. Rosamond will attend and address all participants. The *Network* has also developed a website : <http://www.globalnetworkofrshmschools.org/> Please do look at it and get a sense of what the *Global Network* is about.

It costs nothing to belong to the *Global Network of RSHM Schools* – any school founded by the RSHM, that shares our history and tradition and wants to simply know more, is invited to log into the website and learn about other schools across the world who share our heritage. Conferences are held every two years and meetings of head teachers at various times - all are completely optional.

The *Global Network* is simply a tremendously rich resource for our schools to tap into. Please do tell any school you know about it and invite them to go online and see all that belonging the *Global Network of RSHM Schools* would offer them and their pupils.

I am delighted to have been invited by the general council to do this work, as education is something I feel very passionate about.

Mary Jo



Members of the Co-ordinating Committee.

From left to right: Andrea from Rome; Guilherme from Brazil; Sue from Colombia; Sarah from London; Margarida from Portugal; Concepcion from New York Philippa from the General Council and me.

Summer reading!

SOME MEMORIES OF THE “OLD” NUNS IN PENMAENMAWR. *Aline Leonard*

I was a ‘young’ nun in Seafield during the 1950s and 60s. Yes, in Seafield, we were ‘young nuns’ forever. The highlight of the summer was our two weeks holiday in Pen. At that time there was a resident community of elderly sisters who had to accommodate us during the month of August. This, I might add, they did graciously.

My earliest recollections are of Mother Marcella McGrath and Mother Clare Mulcahy who were both bedridden and lovingly cared for by two ‘angels’, Connie and Sebby (Mother Concepta McNeill and Mother Sebastian O’Gorman). Each morning, before we went to the shore or up into the hills, we visited the ‘Mothers’ to say Good Morning. Luckily for them, our visits were in small groups, since we had no idea then what it was like to be old. We’ve all learned a lot since about that.



Further down the corridor was Mother Vincent Foley. She walked with a pronounced limp, which gave us ample notice of her approach. She was very quiet, but there was always a kind word for us all. We were told that she had been Head of the Girls’ Industrial School at Blackrock, near St Helen’s, Lancashire.

Sister Christine McNamee reigned supreme in the kitchen. She was a wonderful cook and always had big helpings of food for the ‘starving’ young nuns. On some days, before we could escape, we would peel ‘thousands’ of apples, knowing that her delicious apple pies would await us on our return.

Sister Canice Butler had her room on the top floor. She was always pleased to see us and get all the Seafield news. I still have a vivid memory of her bright, twinkling, mischievous eyes. Further along the top corridor was Mother Gabriel White. She was always very ‘correct’ and, as we all knew, had been Novice Mistress in Béziers for many years. She was kind to us, but on occasion, could be quite ‘prim’. Then she would encourage us to be more careful in our observance of the rule. I came in for more than my fair share of ‘encouragement’ because I had been a novice in Béziers.



Outings to the shore were very popular. Here we would have picnics and ‘dips’ in the sea. Sometimes Mother Patrick (Pat McKee) would accompany us on these outings. When we were all in the water for a ‘dip’ she would paddle up and down at the water’s edge, barefoot, and in full habit, waving her walking stick, calling, ‘face land, Madame, face land’, much to the amusement of any passer-by. Thankfully, we didn’t drown.

In the middle 50s Mother Agatha Holohan was Superior in Pen. She became very sick and was bedridden. We visited her, too, after breakfast, to say Good Morning. I remember well the day in August 1955 when her two sisters, Mothers Baptist and Stanislaus, came to see her. Needless to say the house had been ‘transformed’! After being formally introduced to them we disappeared into the hills. The following day the two Reverend Sisters quietly departed.

Mother Patricia Manning was another great character. She always wore Clarke’s sandals, dyed black, and would often ‘sway’ her way (she had a swaying gait) down to what became the forbidden library, near St. Seriol’s Church. She had read all the books in the big glass fronted case in the Breakfast Room, now the Conference Room, and so ventured further afield to gain further knowledge ‘in the art of living’ since this is what books teach us! Of course we hadn’t read all the books in the big cupboard and what a great treat it was to be able to read in bed before lights out.

'Proddy', Mother Providence O'Donovan, was a great soul who inspired us with her great zeal for spreading the love of God. She taught 'catechism' to the children of Pen parish, even though she was very deaf. She died during the night of 3-4 August 1959. The 4th was the day of the changeover of the holiday groups. I'm sure she enjoyed all the fuss!

A great lady there was Mother Thérèse Boyle, who always 'sallied forth' with great dignity. She was always correctly dressed and carried her black reticule. In the 60s the resident community in Pen moved to Shalom where we didn't see as much of the old nuns. I'm sure they had more peace but we did miss them. Looking back now, with the wisdom of years myself, these great women had so much to teach us. Many of them lived life 'creatively' in a restricted era and it could be said of them that they lived life fully at all ages and stages, despite the limitations. May all these dear souls who have gone before us, rest in peace.

ON THE FIFTH DAY by Jane Hirshfield

(Submitted by Anne Murphy)

On the fifth day
the scientists who studied the rivers
were forbidden to speak
or to study the rivers.

The scientists who studied the air
were told not to speak of the air,
and the ones who worked for the farmers
were silenced,
and the ones who worked for the bees.

Someone, from deep in the Badlands,
began posting facts.

The facts were told not to speak
and were taken away.
The facts, surprised to be taken, were silent.

Now it was only the rivers
that spoke of the rivers,
and only the wind that spoke of its bees,
while the unpausing factual buds of the fruit trees
continued to move toward their fruit.

The silence spoke loudly of silence,
and the rivers kept speaking,
of rivers, of boulders and air.



In gravity, earless and tongueless,
the untested rivers kept speaking.

Bus drivers, shelf stockers,
code writers, machinists, accountants,
lab techs, cellists kept speaking.

They spoke, the fifth day,
of silence.

