

**British Federation of
Notre Dame de Namur
Associations**



St. Julie News

2017

FEDERATION CONFERENCE WEEKEND SEPTEMBER 2017

This was my first Federation Conference. I was impressed with the venue, Hinsley Hall, which looks very grand set in its own grounds. The reception staff were friendly and helpful; everywhere was spotlessly clean and well looked after. Checking into Conference went smoothly and Bernie Shaw welcomed me as a new member. Coffee, tea and cake were available all afternoon in the lounge so people were able to relax and meet up with old friends.

Lorraine Platt encouraged us to join in the Pilates class. She had been worried that only a few people might be interested but nearly 30 ladies turned up. The exercise was for all abilities. When we all warmed up together I realised I wobble a lot! There was lots of laughter as many of us hadn't done these exercises before. You could choose to do chair based or floor exercises. I tried the floor and was managing well until "The Plank" - I am now certain that the heaviest part of my body is my derrière. I could not lift it off the floor. One lady on the floor next to me said she was 86 years young. She did all the exercises brilliantly but I was so relieved to see "the Plank" had defeated her too. We both had a rest and admired the athletes around us.

There was lots to buy - special cushions with the Notre Dame Badge (courtesy of Margaret Dolan), craft and knitted goods (Bernie Shaw and Christina Wood), Notre Dame Calendars (Louise Enderby), the Raffle (Mary Lewis) and the Tombola (Margaret Bradbury). I won a bottle of wine on the tombola which was enjoyed at dinner. Lesley Freeman had a queue of people waiting for a hand massage. Everyone who had a massage commented on how much they enjoyed it and how relaxing it was. After dinner, we had a session of Circle Dancing led by Irene Casey. I thoroughly enjoyed this. It was great fun and gave me a new respect for the celebrities who take part in '*Strictly Come Dancing*'. My brain understood what was supposed to happen but my feet were very slow to get the message. Gradually we all succeeded and the last dance we did felt very spiritual. Some ladies said they enjoyed watching, even if they couldn't take part.

There were plenty of chances to chat with old friends. Some ladies I hadn't seen for 54 years and yet they still seemed the same as my memory of them albeit the odd grey hair or laughter line.

The next day we went to Pontefract. Margaret Dolan led the tour and gave us many informative facts about the town such as why we call licorice '*Spanish*'. We returned to Hinsley Hall for lunch. The meals were all self-service and the quality was excellent with vegetarian options. After Sister Margaret gave us a very interesting talk about the roots of the Notre Dame Order and how it has spread today. The next item on the agenda was the AGM and then Evening Prayers in the Chapel.

After dinner we had a singsong led by the visiting nuns which we all enjoyed. We had some good harmonising and I should imagine that Mrs Kirk (Manchester) and the music teachers from the other schools would have been proud of our enthusiasm if not always our accuracy. However, at Mass the next morning, I heard some beautiful voices singing the Salve Regina. Wonderful!

Thank you to all who helped and particularly thanks to Lorraine the Conference Secretary who was calm, unflustered and caring to all of us.

This was my first time at conference and I have every intention of coming again next year

Mary Wallis

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM OF THE BRITISH FEDERATION OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR ASSOCIATIONS, SEPTEMBER 2ND 2017

My second year as President began with the 2016 Annual conference held as usual at Hinsley Hall in Leeds in September and before the AGM a cheque for £5,000 was presented to Sister Agnes Nelson for the charity SPRED. The conference was attended by 39 delegates and was an overwhelming success thanks to Lorraine's excellent organisational skills. We had lots of positive feedback especially about the singing nuns! A more comprehensive account of the conference can be found in 2016 St Julie News.

In November I attended the annual Mass held for the deceased members of Notre Dame in Manchester, which was followed by lunch and a sing-song, and of course the obligatory raffle and tombola, all good fun and an excellent fund raising event.

The March Executive meeting saw the committee hosting the council meeting, which is held every three years. All Association presidents and past presidents are invited to the meeting which is followed by lunch.

In April I joined a group from Manchester in a three day pilgrimage to the Heritage Centre in Namur, with Sister Margaret Walsh as our host. There were 13 people in the party (including two husbands) and we all had a truly wonderful time, mixing the spiritual with the social. The Heritage Centre really is a special place, so inspiring and well worth visiting.

I was invited to Northampton's annual dinner in April; it was a great day, especially seeing so many familiar faces. We had a lovely meal and I was made to feel very welcome.

The following weekend, in May, I attended Southwark's AGM; again it was lovely to see familiar faces and people who for various reasons cannot attend conference any more. The guest speaker was Dame Colette Bowe, who is a former Notre Dame pupil. It was another really enjoyable day.

Manchester's St Julie's Day Mass in May was another successful day, followed in July by the annual strawberry tea. Apart from the strawberries and gorgeous cakes there were lots of stalls selling a variety of goods, plus the usual raffle and tombola. Everyone enjoyed the day with proceeds going towards the charity.

Next year, 2018, is the 90th anniversary of the BFNDA and to recognise such a milestone in our history, the committee decided to produce a calendar to commemorate the occasion. The credit for the majority of the hard work in making the calendar goes to Louise and our thanks go out to her, she has done a brilliant job. I would also like to thank all the members who sent photographs and data for inclusion. Copies of the calendar are now on sale.

It is heart-warming to see the number of paid up members of the BFNDA has remained more or less static this year instead of decreasing as has been the trend in recent years, with quite a few new members, let's hope this augurs well for the future.

I would now like to thank all the people who have helped in any way to make this conference possible. These include the committee, who are all excellent in their individual roles and work so well together as a team - Father Chris, for continuing to be our Chaplain and Sister Jo, for looking after us so well when we have our meetings in Liverpool. Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank the Association Presidents and Direct Members Convenor for the sterling work they do to keep the associations thriving and of course, yourselves for your continued support of the Federation - long may it last!

Bernie Shaw – President

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP 2016-2017

According to Capitation Fees Paid

Association	Number of members
Battersea £60.00	20
Direct Members £171.00	57
Manchester £258.00	86
Northampton £540.00	180
Southwark £312.00	104
Totals	
£1,341.00	447

Number of members is based on capitation fees received at £3.00 per person. Most Associations have greater numbers than the above but as subscriptions are paid into the Federation throughout the year we can never get the numbers absolutely correct.

SPRED CHARITY SEPTEMBER 2017

Brought forward	£5,007.30
Paid to the Charity	(£5,000.00)
Federation 2016	£412.00
Direct Members	£737.00
Manchester	£915.00
Northampton	£1,500.00
Southwark	£500.00
Others	
- incs £338 from calendar sales	£408.00
Balance at 1 st August 2017	£4,528.30

BATTERSEA NOTRE DAME ASSOCIATION

Battersea still meets twice a year in the Lounge at the Church of The Sacred Heart in Wimbledon. We continue to share memories of school days and update others on our interim activities, family developments, etc. Some of us also attend Notre Dame Southwark reunions on or around St Julie's Day. Apart from that, we have organized nothing extra this year.

Mary Davey

MANCHESTER NOTRE DAME ASSOCIATION

Manchester now has a membership of 93 members.

Our year began in March with the now traditional Afternoon Tea at John Rylands Library, Manchester attended by 30 members. Afterwards there is the opportunity to join a conducted tour of the lovely neo-gothic building or to wander around the library, the exhibition and the shop yourself.

The St Julie Mass in May at Our Lady of Grace in Prestwich was well attended, and the sing song in the Church Hall very much enjoyed. The raffle and handicraft stalls helped to pay for the delicious lunch and increase our funds – the raffling of a beautiful hamper made by Lorraine Platt creating a lot of interest.

In July we had our Summer Fair; the weather was a little kinder to us this year than last, and the refreshments and stalls were very much appreciated – again contributing to our funds.

The BFNDA Conference at Hinsley Hall is becoming the place to be in September for Manchester members – 13 of us this year with many more showing an interest for next year already following the glowing reports on Facebook by those who went. So much laughter!

We are now planning the November Mass for deceased members and staff at St Anne's, Crumpsall. It will fall on November 11th this year, so our sing song will no doubt feature many World War 1 favourites.

We are very sad in Manchester because of the loss of a very dear and much loved Committee member, Stella McHugh, who supported and worked for the Association for many, many years. She will be very much missed.

On a happier note, we now have a new Manchester President, Margaret Dolan. She is already doing a wonderful job – I think we all agree that she is an excellent choice.

The Manchester Facebook Group continues to go from strength to strength. This year, again, many groups have had their own little reunions and enjoyed renewing friendships. The membership is now 264!

We look forward to adding to this number and to continuing our friendships.

Judith Maher

NORTHAMPTON NOTRE DAME ASSOCIATION

Early September 2016 saw eight of our members enjoying a weekend at Hinsley Hall and meeting up with many old friends. Towards the end of September we held our tea party with approximately 26 members attending and in December we had a Carol Service with the Weston Favell Singers performing beautifully and singing community carols as well.

The March meeting was a disaster with the room double booked and us being in the body of St. Gregory's Church for a talk "Mind Over Mountains" by myself – least said about that disaster the better!

The 30th April saw us back at the Marriott Hotel where we reverted to holding our A.G.M. alongside the Annual Lunch. Once again we seated 96 members; we also invited husbands, partners and carers to join us and some took up the offer. We were pleased to welcome, as our guests, the NNDA Chaplain, Msgr. Tony McDermott and the BFNDA President, Bernie Shaw. Those attending voted overwhelmingly to hold the A.G.M. alongside the dinner in the future as many travel for this event and it is their only opportunity of joining us.

Once again we have been able to support the BFNDA President's charity "SPRED" and this is all down to the generosity of our members, so many thanks to them.

The 16th May saw our annual St. Julie Mass being held in St. Gregory's Church this year, led by Msgr. Tony McDermott. We were able to have refreshments in the Church Rooms afterwards and our thanks go to Fr. Andrew Behrens for allowing us to use the church for this event.

At the end of June we had a talk by the local hospice – Cynthia Spencer Hospice- this was well supported and we were able to make a donation to their funds.

26th September saw app 40 members enjoying our annual tea party, when we get together for a chat over a cup of tea and sandwiches and cake. It seemed a very happy meeting so we hope our members will return next year.

Wendy kindly volunteered to be secretary to the committee at our meeting last September and I am grateful to her for doing this. My thanks go to all of the committee for their hard work in keeping the Association running.

My thanks go to all who continue to support the Association by continuing to be members and to support the events which take place during the year – we are still the largest Association, by membership numbers, in the country.

Margaret Bradbury

SOUTHWARK NOTRE DAME ASSOCIATION

It is time for another annual report from Southwark Notre Dame Association and I suspect that like many of you I am really beginning to wonder where the days, weeks and months disappear to lately. And so, once again as this year draws to a close, this is a brief review of SNDA since our report in 2016.

We signalled the end of another year with our Mass for the deceased held in November each year at St Georges Cathedral, Southwark. This Mass provides us with a welcome opportunity

to remember those friends and past members of staff who are sadly no longer with us. Coming, as it does towards the end of the year, and just before the celebrations for Christmas begin in earnest, it is a space for some quiet reflection in familiar surroundings amongst friends of many years. Once again many of those attending went to join members of the committee for lunch at the Riverside Café and a hearty meal went down very well with much chatter and laughter.

Our St. Julie's Day celebrations and AGM took place on Sunday May 7th and we were privileged to welcome Dame Colette Bowe along as our Guest Speaker. Dame Colette is currently Chairman of The Banking Standards Board and she gave an interesting presentation of her own life and career and her time spent at Notre Dame Liverpool. It was a lively and informative account of a woman who has achieved much in her professional life but who was equally at home recounting memories of her days as a student. Following Dame Colette's presentation our Chaplain, Fr. Rudolf, celebrated Mass for our members and was once again assisted by Geraldine Hine who provides the musical accompaniment for our chosen hymns. Another delicious lunch provided by the school catering team went down very well and our day continued when we were joined by some of the current students who offered their services to show people around the familiar but changed building and facilities. We brought the day to an end with afternoon tea and a raffle and waved cheery goodbyes until next time.

Since our celebrations in May, a trip to the theatre in August to see a production of 'An American in Paris' was arranged and enjoyed by many and we now look forward to bringing the year to an end with another gathering of members at our November Mass on Saturday 18th November, once again to be followed by lunch.

Notre Dame Ladies (otherwise known as The Notre Dames) continue to take part in the regularly held Westminster Cathedral Quiz Nights and on occasions have had some notable successes. These evenings are great fun and always include a hearty fish and chip supper.

We have continued to offer our support for the school in Southwark and once again were pleased to present a small bursary prize to one of last year's leavers. It gives our members a great deal of satisfaction to know that our efforts, although modest, are able in some small way encouraging the recipient to continue her education onto the next stage.

We are now looking forward to another year of friendship and 2018 is a very special year for SNDA, as alongside the BFNDA we will celebrate our 90th anniversary. We hope to be able to mark this special year in some way and hope that as many as our members as possible will be able to join us for St Julie's Day celebrations on Sunday March 18th 2018.

In closing I must extend my sincere thanks to all of those who give of their time so freely working as committee members. Whilst we all enjoy ourselves I am ever mindful of those ladies who put so much effort into arranging and organising our various events. On behalf of the members and the committee of SNDA I would also send our appreciation and thanks to Sister Anne-Marie Niblock for her invaluable cooperation throughout the school year. Sister Anne-Marie's support has allowed us to continue to use the school facilities for our meetings and of course for our annual celebrations. Alongside Sister is her team, Janet in the office, with whom I exchange many emails and who ensures that we are being taken care of whilst in the school, the onsite services team who each year along with the reception staff and catering team turn out and help us throughout St Julie's Day. To each and every one of them we send a huge thank you – it is they that help us to continue to be able to enjoy SNDA in the way that we do.

Patricia White

DIRECT MEMBERS ASSOCIATION REPORT

First of all, thank you to Mary Lewis for acting as Direct Members' Convenor until I was able to take over in November 2016. Sheila Fuller and Mary are a hard act to follow. I am enjoying my new role and responding to the many letters and cards I have received, since I sent out my first newsletter last December, is a pleasure.

For the year 2016-17 we had 55 paid up members. At the moment there are 82 names on the mailing list and, so far, 50 members have paid their subscriptions for 2017-18. Donations to our charity, SPRED, total £566 since 1st December including £75 from former Liverpool members and £100 from the former Sheffield Association. Thank you to all the Direct Members who continue to support our charity work so generously.

The support for our celebration calendar for 2018 means that I have distributed 32 to direct members, and the feedback is excellent.

Two of our members have died, Sharon O'Driscoll and Patricia Holmes and also former member Dorothy Woods. May they rest in peace. Our chaplain, Father Chris Thomas, says Mass for our deceased direct members in November and, in May, a Mass for all our intentions.

Eleven Direct Members spent the weekend at Hinsley Hall, Leeds for our annual conference at the beginning of September and we were joined by two more on the Saturday afternoon. I was pleased to put names to faces and to meet up with everyone.

I shall continue to attend the Executive Meetings in Liverpool on behalf of Direct Members and raise any issues which may affect the association.

I send you all my good wishes for 2018.

Lesley Freeman

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY JOAN!

July 8th 2017 was a beautiful, sunny afternoon and Church Walk, Great Billing was gaily decorated with streamers to celebrate the 100th birthday of Joan Bollins (née Middleton). At half past four Joan was wheeled out of her cottage and was helped to cut her birthday cake as glasses were raised to wish her a very, very Happy Birthday.

Joan was inundated with cards including a special one from Buckingham Palace. Her daughter, Patricia, said afterwards, that each day they opened one or two of the cards and talked about the people who had sent them.

As a young girl taking part in a parade down Church Walk Joan had looked over to the cottages and told her friend 'I shall live in those cottages one day' – and so she did, moving there with her husband in 1955!

A number of Northampton Notre Dame 'Old Girls' were there to join in the celebrations. As we were about to leave the party I said 'Well done Joan, carry on' not being quite sure what to say next, then quick as a flash she added '.... regardless!' Joan certainly hasn't lost her delightful sense of humour.

A GREAT DAY!!

Jose Sear



MANCHESTER TRIP TO NAMUR

Mandy & Pauline



Bienvenue from Namur ~ April 2017

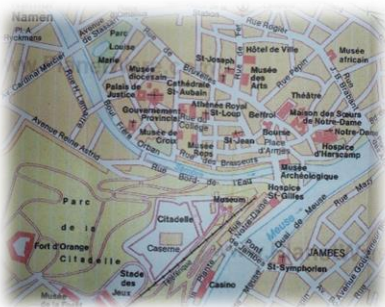
We arrived in Brussels to a 'Simpsons' sky and were soon on our way to Namur, which, contrary to some of the travellers' opinions, is not in France. The front of the convent is quite an impressive building, though on first impressions rather small. We were soon informed that it took up most of the block and comprised of three schools and an infirmary. After lunch, we visited the 'old chapel' in which is located the Heritage Centre. One is first struck by the silence and then by the magnificent vaulted ceiling. The history of the order from foundation to present day is presented in pictures and text; our

intrepid leaders introduced us to much of this and then left us with time to experience and reflect. As the day progressed we met many of the nuns who live in the convent one of whom, Sr. Honorine, recounted her journey from the Congo to Namur. The day ended with a gathering at a local cultural centre. Although we had been promised torrential rain, day two greeted us with brilliant blue skies and brilliant sun. We took a reflective visit back to the Heritage Centre where we pondered some of St Julie's words and silently absorbed their strengths.

A stunning reliquary way round the maze of of it. The morning ended ventured out into the town number of coffee shops, first house which is now quadrangle garden which cathedral, a rather impressive building of Gothic appearance.



dominates the front of the centre and as you wind your information you suddenly find yourself standing in front with Mass in French in the 'new' convent chapel. As we of Namur one is struck by its tranquillity and the amazing cake shops and chocolate shops. We found our way to the education offices. It is beautifully preserved with a was once the children's playground. Later we visited the



The streets in the centre of the town are cobbled with small beautifully presented shops with many, MANY dedicated to the worship of chocolate. One building which dominates the horizon is the fortress, Fort d' Orange Citadel. For such a small town the fortification is rather impressive. Apparently Namur was quite a strategic site in medieval times being at the intersection of the Sambre and Meuse rivers [geographers in the group!]. We braved the 1:1 climb until we reached the visitor centre. Some of the group took the tour and were impressed by the local history and archaeology. The rest of us gratefully collapsed

into the "little train" and took the easy option back. We managed some retail therapy too, returning with gifts of chocolate!

Our accommodation was on the top floor of the convent. The rooms were previously used by the sisters, but the community is much smaller now. A welcoming touch were flowers and chocolates in our rooms and one room had been designated as a rest room with biscuits, wine, tea and coffee provided by our "intrepid leader" Sr Margaret Walsh who catered fabulously for our every need. We took meals in the convent dining room with the community, they were most welcoming and the menu was fabulous.

Impressively although the community is rather small in the present day the sisters were excitedly telling us about their participation in an up-and-coming international conference which they were hosting.

Although we only spent 48 hours there we packed a lot into our trip. And with our final goodbyes ringing out we set off; some via a very busy Brussels' airport to home and some of the more intrepid travellers heading off to Germany.



PERU 2016 - JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

Lesley Freeman (nee Godber)

Notre Dame Leeds 1957 – 1964

On 1 June 2016, at the age of 70, I left England to spend three months living in Villa El Salvador, Peru, a shanty town of half a million people, together with my 20 year old Spanish grand-daughter, Beatriz, as part of a volunteering project run by the Sisters of the Cross and Passion.

All my adult life I had wanted to experience life in a developing country and, in my late 60s, decided that it was not to be. God, however, had other plans! What a privilege to share my life in Peru with my grand-daughter and two amazing nuns, Clare and Maeve.

Villa El Salvador is built on enormous sand dunes to the south of Lima. It is a relatively young "invasion" inhabited by indigenous Peruvians who have come from the jungle, the Andean mountains and poor coastal areas, looking for a better life for themselves and their families. Most people live in very poor conditions, many without bathrooms or running water. The homes are often just shacks. All the water is contaminated. There is very little work, no benefits of any kind, unstable family life and many young pregnancies. Many people are in debt, unable to pay back the money they have borrowed simply to live. The Sisters hand out money or food every day.

However, everyone lives for the day. Life is full of parties and the joy of many children. There is a sense of unity, community and welcoming within the local church. We lived in Sector 13 and Father Cecilio, the priest in our area, looks after three churches, Nuestra Senora de la Paz (Our Lady of Peace), Santa Rosa (St. Rose of Lima) and San Ignacio (St. Ignatius). La Paz, as it is known, needs a new roof. We got rather wet during Mass one Sunday.

The local medical centre, Centro Medico Parroquial San Martin de Porres, is funded and run by the Catholic Church. Beatriz, who had completed three quarters of her nursing degree last summer, spent

every morning working in the medical centre and made wonderful friends. She spent her afternoons helping the first year teachers at a nearby Catholic school "Fe y Alegria". Education is of paramount importance and the majority of children now go to school.

My time was spent much more simply. I tried to support Clare and Maeve, who are both older than me, taking my turn with the cooking and cleaning at the convent. Shopping for fruit and vegetables in the local market was an experience in itself! It was winter in Peru, very humid, cold and no sun. I spent two mornings providing hand massage, at the Centro Medico, for people waiting to be attended to. Alejandro came to practise his English on Monday afternoons. I spent three afternoons each week with Maeve at the church community centre supporting the services for older people. Elderly vulnerable adults come together to socialise, do craft work listen to Peruvian music and have a hot meal. I soon became part of the kitchen team of Julia, Hilaria, Maria Flores, Simona and Felicitas.

Best of all I spent two mornings at the Cenaculo orphanage playing with the babies. This gave the young women, who live with them, a break. How I still miss them!

This account is simply a practical outline. I cannot explain in a few words the life changing experience of our stay in Peru, on every level.

Beatriz and I cannot wait to return, hopefully in 2018.

Thank you to Clare, Maeve and the English team of Sue Rix, Sister Eily May, and Sister Savio who spent so much time praying and preparing us for this journey in life.

Gracias Señor

NATIONAL BOARD OF CATHOLIC WOMEN

I attended the AGM of the NBCW on Saturday, 1st July 2017 at Romero House, Westminster Bridge Road. Reports of the member organisations had been circulated in advance.

After Mass and lunch we were given a talk by Abbey Hughes entitled: " In Phoebe's Footsteps: the return of permanent deacons in the Catholic Church" in which Ms. Hughes set out the case for women deacons, drawing on the history of the church from its very beginnings, through the Middle Ages and up to the present day.

A major area of current concern is the plight of refugee families who are being split up. Chris Bryant MP had won the opportunity to present a Private Member's Bill and was asking for suggestions in deciding which topic to choose. Members were asked to suggest a Bill to help refugees but unfortunately Mr. Bryant chose to present the "Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Bill".

The NBCW also collects data on human trafficking, campaigns to bring the practice to an end and tries to alleviate the suffering of victims. The NBCW tries to help those suffering from domestic violence; in fact it concerns itself with all areas of women's lives.

After the meeting I displayed the annual report of the NBCW and distributed some NBCW leaflets.

Diane Donovan

SR CATHERINE HUGHES - RIP

*Our Lady of the Annunciation Redemptorist Church, Bishop Eton on Thursday 30th March 2017
– eulogy for Sr Catherine*

It is good to be here in this Redemptorist Church of Bishop Eton. It is especially fitting as generations of Mount Pleasant students made an annual pilgrimage here to pray before the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour and to ask Our Lady's assistance for their exams. It is a place of many happy memories.

For most of us these days, keeping ourselves focussed in the present moment, in the 'here and now', isn't always easy. We readily fall into living in the past with our memories or perhaps fearing the future with all its uncertainties. Eckhart Tolle, author of 'The Power of Now', once said: "The ultimate truth of 'who you are' is not 'I am this' or 'I am that', but 'I AM'.

In her room at Woolton, Catherine had very few personal possessions. However, affixed to her wall, she had a simple hand-printed caption of Chapter 3 v 14, of Exodus - where God (Yahweh) makes known his name to Moses: I AM WHO I AM

Catherine had that hand-printed quotation affixed to her wall in 3 versions: I AM WHO I AM, then the same verse copied out in Hebrew and lastly, in its less-well known form that scholars translate as:

I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE. Obviously, it meant a great deal to Catherine.

Born in Gillingham in Kent on April 27th 1922, Catherine was the middle child of George and Ellen Hughes and baptised Kathleen Margaret. Her elder brother Bernard was three and a half when she was born and Peter, the youngest child, was born eleven years later.

Catherine's parents, both from Stockport, were living in Kent as her father, a Royal Marine, was stationed at Chatham. The family moved to London when Catherine was seven, following her father's discharge from the Royal Marines after twenty one

years of service. At first they lived in the Strand, near Charing Cross and above Barclay's Bank where her father had got employment. By 1938 they had moved to the suburbs in Tulse Hill.

Catherine's sense of God's name: 'I AM WHO I AM' resonates, too, with her sense of 'The Power of Now' or as Pierre De Caussade described it in his book some centuries before, 'The Sacrament of the Present Moment'. Before we look at the achievements of Catherine's long and very full life, it may be helpful to situate all that Catherine was and all she did into a specific context. The key to how Catherine viewed life may very well be hidden in that beautiful Scripture text from the Book of Exodus. If you remember, Yahweh revealed His name to Moses after he stumbled across the Burning Bush on Mount Horeb. He is instructed to take off his sandals because he is standing on holy ground. Whenever we try to say words of appreciation on someone's life, we most certainly are approaching 'holy ground' and do so with a certain sense of deep awe and trepidation. It is a sacred space. A place of encounter.

Some years ago, the Theologian, Sean Fagan, wrote a modern article on De Caussade's spiritual classic and explained 'The heart of his teaching is the conviction that God's purpose is made actual for each one of us precisely in the situation in which we find ourselves at each single moment of our lives, and that purpose is one of infinite, tender, merciful and all-powerful love. Our response is to live that moment to the full'. Catherine's grasp of that truth was more than a favourite caption on her wall. She lived it day by day during her long and very full life.

Essentially, Catherine maintained a deep simplicity throughout her life no matter what she was asked to do or wherever she was asked to go.

Her immersion in each 'present moment' or 'ministry' of her life reminds us of another special moment in Scripture – that passage from the Gospels that we know as the 'Transfiguration' which took place on another mountain – Mount Tabor. Jesus took Peter James and John up a high mountain, and was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as snow. In the radiance of His glory, the disciples saw him conversing with Moses and Elijah. In essence, it was the place where heaven and earth met and Peter exclaimed "Lord, it is good for us to be here!"

Somehow, one can sense that Catherine's life reflected that joy. Wherever she was missioned and regardless of the difficulty of the task in hand, it would seem she had cultivated a lifelong habit of repeating that prayer in her heart: "Lord, it is good to be here!"

When the Second World War started, Catherine was at Notre Dame Southwark. While in sixth form there, the famous Dominican preacher and writer, Fr Ferdinand Valentine came to give a Retreat. The influence on Catherine of this Lancashire Dominican was to be far-reaching. Like Alphonsus de Liguori in Bourbon Naples, Fr Valentine was an ardent believer in encouraging groups of lay people to come together and give each other mutual support in their spiritual lives.

From Notre Dame Southwark, Catherine won a scholarship to go to university at Kings College London to read history. She went in 1940 but, owing to the War, she was evacuated to Bristol. On 1st November 1940, their family home was bombed. Luckily, there was no one at the Hughes' house that day but 6 of their neighbours were killed.

At Kings, eight women students - including Catherine, formed a lay Christian group which they called 'The Royal and Ancient Order of Pachyderms' with a simple (but demanding) rule of life and Fr Valentine, whom they called 'Old Leather' was their Director. The rule included 15 minutes daily mental prayer, a letter to Fr Valentine each month, and the 'DAC' – the discipline of the alarm clock – i.e. to rise as soon as the alarm sounded! A pachyderm, Catherine explained, is one of the classes of animals with exceedingly thick skin - e.g. elephant, rhinoceros, hippo - because, as Catherine and her friends firmly believed: 'You had to have a thick skin to continue your commitment for life'.

At age 25, Catherine decided it was time to enter Religious Life. After some hesitation as to which Congregation, she eventually settled on the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

When news of Catherine's death on 17th March became known throughout the Notre Dame world, tributes flowed in both from our own sisters and from others around the globe – those who had known and worked with Catherine over many years. Bishop Hubert Bucher of Bethlehem in South Africa called her a 'giant' among our sisters and she was but, in her simplicity of outlook, she would never have considered herself in that light.

Having entered at Ashdown in 1947, Catherine was there as a postulant and novice until 1950. She spent a few months at Battersea after her Profession and was then sent to Teignmouth for 2 years as 6th Form Mistress. In 1952, she was missioned to Notre Dame High School, Sheffield as Deputy Head but after a year she received a mission to Mount Pleasant and served there as a lecturer from 1953 – 1966. During these 13 years, Catherine had a profound and lasting effect on the students whose lives she touched and she kept up a lifelong friendship with many of them. In 1966 Catherine moved to Kirby where she lived until 1972 and where she was Head of Saint Gregory's Comprehensive School. Catherine was later to say that, looking back on her long and eventful life, probably it was in Kirby that she was happiest of all – living and working amongst its people. In 1972, Catherine was appointed Principal of Mount

Pleasant College of Education. Her vision for the future did much to lay the groundwork for the eventual merger with Christ's College and St Katharine's Anglican College into what was later to develop as HOPE University.

Catherine became Provincial of the British Province in 1978 and was active in helping to shape the Conference of Major Superiors in England and Wales. Within our Province, she encouraged educational innovation in ministries, enabling sisters to reach out and develop programmes for children and adults with special educational needs; to work with 'Travelling People' and to live and work with the poor in inner city areas. Fearless in her desire to serve the poorest of the poor, she was not afraid to take risks.

Elected as General Moderator in 1984, Catherine faced many challenges. However, her desire to serve Christ in his poorest members enabled her to rise above all difficulties. In order to strengthen programmes for newer members and for ongoing renewal in the Congregation in the spirit of Vatican II, her General Leadership gave priority to on-going Formation.

Catherine was single-minded in her pursuit of what she thought was a right and just course of action in any given situation and she encouraged others by her vision. Following in the footsteps of Julie and Françoise, she always showed a preference for the poor in the most abandoned places.

It would be fair to say that Catherine's early training and that 'development of a thick skin' when she was a student in London, all enabled her to pursue her preferential option for the poor with a steely determination. However, the 'thick skin' often concealed a loving heart which she gradually allowed herself to show more freely the older she became. On completing her term in General Leadership, Catherine had a short spell in Peru and then chose a ministry in South Africa with people living in poverty. Catherine was always 'forthright'. As one of her closest friends said "She could 'annihilate' with a glance but so too she could 'energise' . . ."

However, formidable though she was at times, Catherine had a great sense of humour. Once, at a gathering in Nigeria, she was introduced to the crowd as Sr. Catherine 'Huggies' (Hughes presented a great problem for pronunciation!).

On returning to Liverpool and the community at 266 Woolton Road, Catherine continued to inspire others during these last years of her life. She loved being close once again to her family and enjoyed spending time with the younger generations of 'Hughes'. She rejoiced also in time spent with friends. Catherine kept up her links with South Africa and also encouraged friends and Sisters to fundraise for Kroonstad. Wherever Catherine was and at every stage of her life, she settled comfortably into each 'present moment' and lived out that prayer 'Lord, it is good to be here!'

As Sean Fagan observed, if this habit of praying 'Lord, it is good to be here' is cultivated throughout life, it will be our constant support especially in difficult and painful times. Indeed, it will enable us to prepare for the big moments. When our biggest moment of all comes, the moment of our own personal transfiguration, we will be ready to welcome it. As Catherine shone with the whiteness of death and the radiance of Christ's coming, I am sure she was able to repeat in her heart, 'Lord, it is good to be here' and that she meant it as she'd never meant it before. We may be sure that her heart will go on singing it for all eternity.

Catherine, as you now rejoice with Yahweh, welcomed and embraced by He Who IS, and where time is no more, please remember us.

It is good to be here, united in Christ, and to be celebrating eternity now in this Eucharist.

With love and gratitude, we celebrate all that you have become and all that you continue to mean to your family, friends, students and Sisters of Notre Dame throughout the world.

Lord, it is good to be here..

Dorothy Woods 1914 – 2016

Dorothy passed away on Christmas morning. She was a former pupil of Birkdale and a member of Liverpool Association. Her funeral was well attended including Sr Monica S N D who is Parish Sister at St Agnes, West Kirby. She is survived by three children and three grand-children. As a shareholder of Everton Football Club, she was naturally a great supporter and attended many matches.



Mary Meads (née Kenny) 1942 – 2017

At the B.O.N.D. reunion on Tuesday, I delivered the sad news that Mary had died the previous Saturday, 21st October. Mary had been ill for some time but our reunions were one of the few things she made a tremendous effort to attend and tried to arrive early as she and the caretaker loved to chat before the meeting. She was our treasurer for many years and kept the post on regardless of her illness.

It was Mary who put me in touch with B.O.N.D. many years ago. She had been to a reunion and rang me excitedly. "They are mainly older than us," she said, "Some very old. The lovely thing is that they are the same as us, the same spirit of Notre Dame School we have. They don't even bother to check the raffle ticket numbers if someone has said they have the winning ticket!"

Mary had the kindest and most gentle nature I have ever known. She had great compassion for the homeless. She never smoked herself but would always carry a packet of tobacco with her lest she passed a homeless person who did; our annual attendance at events organized by The Passage, the Westminster Catholic organization for the homeless, was something we enjoyed together.

Mary came through many difficult times with rarely a hint of self-pity, just the determination and strength to get where she wanted to be. Mary kept in touch with many people from childhood. She made her mark with her kindness and humour, her concern for her friends. It is difficult to believe she will not still be here to share things with. Our small B.O.N.D. will certainly miss her. May she rest in peace.



Patricia Holmes (Née Windle)

Pat Holmes (nee Windle) died in August. She was born in Sheffield and began her education with the Sisters of Notre Dame at St Marie's School Sheffield before moving onto Notre Dame High School. Her sister, Eileen, now living on Skye, preceded her there by three years.

After leaving school in 1955, Pat went on to do teacher training at Sedgley Park, Manchester and taught for a short while in Sheffield. When she married, she moved to Stevenage and then to Bassetlaw where she and her husband embarked on building their own house and having two sons and a daughter.

Pat loved dancing and enjoying the company of friends, especially those from her schooldays. She was instrumental in setting up a regular lunchtime meeting with them and writing a dossier on their lives. She had a great faith, a point which was emphasised at her funeral at St Joseph's Church, Ollerton which was attended by family, neighbours and friends including some from NDHS.

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## **Jean Dwyer (Née Walker) 1937-2016 Manchester**

Jean attended Notre Dame Manchester from 1949 to 1956 where she was encouraged in her love of music, particularly by Miss Veronica Crawford. She went on to Maria Assumpta Training College, London, music being her main subject. Later she studied at the Northern College of Music and Hopwood Hall. After teaching at various Catholic Junior Schools in Manchester she became Head of St John's in Rochdale passing on her enthusiasm for music to many pupils. She played the organ in her parish and was, for many years, in Mrs Kirk's Notre Dame Choir. Her faith and music were at the centre of her life. The people who went to Federation may remember her beautiful singing of the psalm at Mass. She always suffered from arthritis which meant she eventually had to use a wheelchair but her life became a daily trial when, with five other serious conditions, she became house bound. She was always patient and good company, teaching all her friends how to suffer in silence.

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## **Stella McHugh (née Walsh) 1938-2017 Manchester**

Stella attended Notre Dame Manchester from 1949 until 1954 and excelled in academic subjects and sporting activities. After a successful career at ICI she became a full-time mother, whilst working from home in their transport business. She joined the NDA soon after leaving school and was involved throughout her life: being for many years Treasurer of the Manchester and Federation committees, and was also Treasurer for a very active Life Group. She worked for the Ladies of Charity and was very active in her parish; in later years she was a great organiser for both, particularly in planning pilgrimages. She somehow found time to get a Masters Degree in Mathematics and was still working as a tutor up to a few weeks ago, taking a great interest in her students. She was also a finalist in the Catholic Woman of the Year. All this whilst suffering from serious, progressive rheumatoid arthritis and undergoing many operations – she taught us all how to accept pain and inconvenience without a word of

complaint, with great faith and a ready smile – a wheelchair was not going to stop Stella from active participation. Her husband Brian, her family and her friends helped Stella to get about and live her life as actively as she could: in fact Brian was an honorary NDA member! Notre Dame was well represented at her funeral where the numbers attending were testament to how many lives she touched and inspired.

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### **Eugénie Mobb (née Law) Northampton**

We record with sadness the death on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016 of Eugénie Mobb (née Law), who was a pupil at Notre Dame Northampton from 1936 until 1942. Géne, as she was always called, was one of our most loyal and long-standing members; records show that she had paid her annual 'subs' for nigh on 70 years.

Her daughter Gillian – who was also a Notre Dame girl, from 1966 to 1973 – used to attend our annual luncheon with her mother and together they graced the event as one of our several Mother-and-Daughter combos.

Requiem Mass was celebrated at St Matthew's church where Géne worshipped. A large congregation of all ages reflected how she worked timelessly with Christian commitment to support the old and the young (and, yes, their animal pets too!). This tiny energetic lady would surely be sorely missed by her parish.

Father Nicholas also spoke of the influence her school days at Notre Dame had had on Géne's life. When we attend the funerals of our one-time class mates, we notice how frequently mention is made of the lasting effects the Sisters of Notre Dame had on the girls in their charge.

As Géne was borne from the church in a great procession a crucifer led the way, carrying aloft St Matthew's magnificent silver cross which sees the light of day on only the most special of occasions. And as robed clergy and Gene's family members followed, St Matthew's acclaimed choir sang some quite heavenly music – it was not difficult to imagine flights of angels singing her to her rest.

Eleanor Howland



R. I. P.

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Mary Meads née Kenny         | Battersea   |
| Jean Dwyer née Walker        | Manchester  |
| Stella McHugh née Walsh      | Manchester  |
| Sharon O'Driscoll            | Manchester  |
| Margaret Adams née Spice     | Northampton |
| Barbara Bollins              | Northampton |
| Pam Botterill née Shankshaft | Northampton |
| Gloria Copley née Sharpling  | Northampton |
| Joy Fielder née Solomon      | Northampton |
| Joyce French                 | Northampton |
| Mary Anne Hogg née Allitt    | Northampton |
| Betty Lee                    | Northampton |
| Eugénie Mobb née Law         | Northampton |
| Hazel Yeomans née Burgess    | Northampton |
| Patricia Holmes née Windle   | Sheffield   |
| Dorothy Woods                | Sheffield   |
| Peggy Greenslade             | Southwark   |