

British Federation of Notre Dame de Namur Associations



Saint Julie News
2020



President's Report

My second year as President began at the AGM/Conference weekend at Hinsley Hall from Friday, 30th August to Monday, 2nd September 2019. Forty-one members attended. The previous year some members had enquired about the possibility of staying over until Monday to make travelling on public transport easier. A dozen or so members stayed the extra night.

The weekend followed a familiar format with most members arriving on the Friday afternoon and there was time for socialising, gentle Pilates, a singsong and a quiz and parlour games. On Saturday, there was a coach outing to Wetherby; mercifully the rain held off until we'd arrived back, but for the second year running the coach driver managed to get lost. However, we arrived back at Hinsley Hall in good time for lunch.

Before the AGM Sister Annette Sullivan gave a very interesting and enlightening talk about Nigeria in general and, in particular, Ogwa where we hope to build a girls' secondary school as our current charity. I then chaired my first AGM as President at the end of which there was a lengthy discussion as to the need for our website and indeed for computers at all. It was announced that we are to give £5,000 to the charity this year, channelling the money through the Provincialate rather than writing a cheque.

This was followed by evening prayer, led by Sr. Jo Threlfall who gave a short talk on the history of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and their work in Africa.

The evening dinner was again a splendid affair, during which Patricia White gave a splendid memoir of her visit to Rome for the Canonisation of St. Julie in 1969. She included not only the Canonisation itself but memories of a first trip abroad for a fifteen-year-old and included several amusing anecdotes. This was followed by a talk by Margaret Dolan about the BFNDA Committee's trip to Rome fifty years later, last June.

On Sunday, there was Mass in the Chapel followed by lunch and goodbyes to those of us who were leaving. Those staying an extra night had a guided walk, afternoon tea and watched a film in the evening.

In September, Sr. Margaret Walsh who was our liaison Sister with the SND Order moved to Glasgow and left our committee. We thank her for her service and welcome as her replacement Sr. Jo Threlfall who will be known to many of you.

In October I attended (with my husband) the rededication of the Sisters' cemetery in Northampton. The Northampton Association had raised a phenomenal sum in order to restore and renovate the cemetery and the work has been carried out beautifully. The ceremony was attended by about eighty people and we were very fortunate that for the duration of the ceremony the rain held off.

Many of you will remember Margaret Lawton, President of the BFNDA 1988-1991 and archivist for many years. Margaret died in December and I, along with three other committee members and past President Veronica Miles

attended her funeral on January 13th at Boarbank Hall at Grange-Over-Sands. Former staff and pupils from Notre Dame Leeds also attended, so Notre Dame was well represented. Boarbank Hall is the home of the Canonesses of St. Augustine and the Requiem Mass took place in their chapel where Margaret had attended Mass. The nuns run a warm and welcoming guest house and three of us stayed the night before to be sure of being on time for the funeral. I had not visited Grange before and it is certainly a beautiful spot.

On a much happier note, I was invited to the Manchester Association's annual Afternoon Tea which took place at the end of January. The Manchester members gave me a warm and generous welcome, even meeting me at the station and escorting me to the Midland Hotel and pointing out some of the sights on the way. The tea itself was splendid and I enjoyed it enormously. I had never been to Manchester before but I found it a vibrant and friendly city and I will certainly go back.

With modern technology and courtesy of our chaplain, Rev. Chris Thomas, it was possible to hold an AGM, via Zoom. In order to keep numbers manageable, it was decided to invite only the BFNDA Executive and the Presidents and Secretaries of each Association. The main business included the ratification of the appointment of Lorraine Platt as President, to take over in 2021. This of course, leaves a vacancy for the position of Conference Secretary. There will also be a vacancy for Treasurer. Nominations will be very welcome.

We were also shown a presentation about Ogwa, Nigeria, where with the help of our charitable donations, the Sisters are building a secondary school. They have begun clearing the ground using local volunteers. This year, we are to give £3,500. For obvious reasons, all fund-raising events and Notre Dame gatherings have been cancelled this year which means that we have not been able to raise as much money for the charity. However, the Sisters in Ogwa received a legacy of £4,000 from Maureen Mills who many of you will remember as Chris Thomas' Auntie Maureen. If you would like to give a donation, please send it to the Treasurer, Ms. Louise Enderby.

As I write, things are beginning to look bleak again, with COVID-19 cases increasing again and with local lockdowns across the North, students confined to their halls of residence and the prospect of more restrictions across the country. I hope and pray that you are keeping safe and well and that in 2021 we will be able to hold our usual AGM/Conference weekend.

Diane Donovan

*'Every day of our lives, ask the Blessed Virgin Mary,
our loving Mother to protect us.'
St Julie Billiart*



Conference Secretary's Report

Sadly the BFNDA conference weekend had to be cancelled this year due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Do you remember Jim Bowen on Bullseye? When the contestant lost he would say "Look what you could have won". Then he'd show them a speedboat or a caravan and they would pretend to be happy.

We didn't have any speedboats or caravans but we did have a great weekend of entertainment planned. If the conference weekend had gone ahead these are just some of the things that we would have had.

A warm welcome awaited us on Friday at Hinsley Hall in Leeds with coffee and biscuits in the lounge and comfortable accommodation in single en-suite rooms. For the more energetic there was to be a session of Pilates or Zumba before dinner. The licensed bar would have been open (and busy) during the prize quiz and parlour games. Everyone had the choice to either take part or watch. There was always a lot of fun and laughter.

On Saturday we usually have a morning coach drive. This year we'd planned to go to Harrogate where we would have had morning coffee at the famous Betty's Tea Rooms and return in time for lunch at Hinsley Hall. On Saturday afternoon we always have the AGM. This year we would have been welcoming Sr Josephine Threlfall and some of the sisters of Notre Dame who were going to bring us up to date with the work of the sisters in Nigeria. Hinsley Hall has a

beautiful chapel where we often have Saturday evening prayers.

The Saturday evening conference dinner is always a special occasion with excellent food and wine, good company and an after-dinner speaker. Veronica Whitty was going to talk to us about some of the remarkable women that she had met in her life. Her talk was entitled:-

‘How to make God laugh- Tell Him your Plans’. Yes, enough said.

We had plans for walks to Queen’s Wood in Headingley and along the Meanwood Trail, afternoon tea and an award-winning feature film. Fr Chris Thomas was going to say the Mass on Sunday outside in the beautiful garden (weather permitting) followed by a group photograph and Sunday lunch.

It was all not to be. I know how disappointed you all were, as was I. I hope you all keep safe and well and look forward to the time when we can all be together again, with friends old and new, as children of Notre Dame.

The date of the **conference weekend in 2021 is 3rd-6th September**. That is when we can do it all again, this time for real.

We ask St Julie and Notre Dame de Namur to pray for us.

Lorraine Platt

Website report

I have added two more schools to the Schools and Associations page namely Blackburn and Wigan

They both await permission for photos which are copyrighted

In both cases I relied on bits from the SND booklet Jubilee and what I could get on the internet. Some of the blogs out there contain misinformation about certain matters so I had to be careful. In the case of Blackburn however I struck gold. A former pupil of Blackburn Notre Dame and also former secretary of Blackburn ND Association, Eileen Tomlinson, compiled a collection of photos and videos about Blackburn Convent, a copy of which is held by a local historical society 'Cottontown'. I had a lovely chat with a lady from Blackburn library who also is also ex Blackburn Notre Dame and I have put a link to the video on their site. The video 'Stepping Back In Time' is quite long but it will strike a chord with those who have seen their old school raised to the ground.

I also came across a local poet George Hull (1863-1933) who appeared to have been educated by the Sisters as a child. I have added a link to a copy of his poem 'Ode to a Sister of Notre Dame' with another 'Our Lady of Blackburn' which may, from the content, have been written during the first World War.

I am now starting on Birkdale and Teignmouth so any information would be welcome.

Thank you Northampton Association for your optimistic future events.

I have also tried to add Facebook links (where they exist) for the benefit of any Old Notre Damian who 'does Facebook'!

The website still gets a few queries from or about former pupils. Where possible I try and involve their old Association if it still exists. I was able to get Margaret Dolan involved with a recent query. I do check the list of Direct Members but this has so far never been helpful. Occasionally the information required is of a kind beyond our remit and I suggest they try the Sisters. I am not sure how grateful they are for that!

I haven't done much about the privacy issue. I am hoping that when we get back to something approaching normal, it may be worth trying to contact people again. Bing doesn't show a picture of my house but publishes my address and telephone number and a map showing where it is! They have a section where you can tell them if their information is incorrect. I do this at frequent intervals but so far to no avail.

I have twelve more months to sort this out.

Mary W Lewis

'Don't dwell on the difficulties; the good God is there to help you.

*Show God your good will'
St Julie Billiart*



Meeting of the National Board of Catholic Women AGM June 2020

I participated in the Zoom AGM on Saturday, 27th June 2020 of the NBCW. The opening prayers led by Caroline Sharnock celebrated the lives of some of the great female saints of the church.

Under 'Matters arising' it was noted that work on the Strategic Plan is still ongoing, but progress, largely owing to the pandemic, has not been as fast as had been hoped. The worsening of domestic violence under the lockdown was noted as a matter of great concern.

The revised constitution was ratified along with revisions to Standing Orders. It is hoped that there will be much better communication between the National Board and its member organisations.

There was a short discussion of the possible reasons for the Union of Catholic Mothers and the Catholic Women's League decisions to end their membership of NBCW. This is a sadness and it was felt some feedback was needed. A newer organisation 'The Catholic Mothers' Network' which has a growing membership on Facebook, was brought to the attention of the meeting and it is hoped that this group will join the NBCW.

Celia Capstick stated that the new National Board pamphlet on domestic abuse is to be published shortly. She mentioned also that in "Amoris Laetitia" Pope Francis had stated that victims of such violence should find welcome in the church.

Regarding the current concern with racial issues, Yogi Sutton

said that we should 'Unmonochrome' the National Board and it was agreed that we should investigate ways of making the NBCW more diverse and inclusive. Abbot Hugh recommended a letter written by Archbishop John Wilson, of Southwark on the subject of racial issues.

A vote of thanks was given to Margaret Clark, President for all her hard work, especially in setting up today's meeting.

Abbot Hugh ended the meeting with prayers, which he summed up as:

Be not afraid

Be kind

Be at prayer.

To avoid an overly long NBCW report for the AGM and BFNDA Executive meetings, I circulate everything I receive from the National Board to the Executive committee soon after I receive it. For full and current information about the NBCW, I recommend their website: nbcw.co.uk

The next NBCW Meeting is via Zoom on Saturday, October 24th 2020.

Diane Donovan

'Wait with patience for the moments of the good God

St Julie Billiart



Battersea Association Report 2020

This year we lost two Battersea B.O.N.D. members. As we are a small group, there are now only four who can meet face to face.

Margaret Lumley, a member since she left school, died just after Covid19 Lockdown. Margaret had been ill for many years. During Lockdown, she could only go for dialysis treatment twice instead of three times a week. She was fortunate in having support from her niece and nephew and, later, she had help in the home. However, she tried to remain as independent as possible for as long as she could.

Margaret was admired for her determination to struggle on and be involved with B.O.N.D. even though her health was evidently getting worse. She never complained.

Margaret organized several outings for members. There was a visit to The Temple, in London, two visits with lunch to the Gentlemen's Club in Pall Mall where she worked as a receptionist well into her 70s after retiring from working in a building Society. There was also an interesting visit to Greenwich with a boat trip to get there.

Margaret showed how very good she was in organizing an AGM. We would arrive with seats placed for Mass, everything ready for the priest and for the refreshments to follow. She had the ability to do such things in style.

Margaret loved B.O.N.D. She felt proud and privileged to have been educated at a Notre Dame school and loved to hear anything about its history, about the experiences of

other B.O.N.D.s and news of those who had taught during her time in Battersea. R.I.P. Margaret.

Our other member who died very suddenly was Audrey Peters. She and Margaret met at The Lanterns in Wimbledon where they were both having lunch. Once talking, they discovered they had both been at Notre Dame, Battersea. Audrey came along to the reunions in her 80s. Audrey died unexpectedly and surprisingly as she had still been a lively and sprightly person. R.I.P. Audrey.

Mary Jean Donaghey

*'Let us go on from day to day leaving the next day in the hands of the
good God'
St Julie Billiart*



Direct Members' Association Report 2020

I begin by sending my best wishes to all Direct Members. The only opportunity for us to meet is at the annual conference, as members are so widespread – from Yorkshire to Devon. It is unfortunate that this year we have been unable to hold the conference. We are living through strange times.

The Association of Direct Members continues to flourish despite the advancing age of many of the members. Over the past three years the membership has decreased from eighty-two to sixty-one, for varying reasons, even though we have had a number of new members.

- Eighteen members have sadly died - may they rest in peace. Our chaplain, Father Chris Thomas says Mass for these, and all our deceased direct members every November.
- A number of my letters have been returned, either because the member has moved and not let me know, or because they have died but no-one has let the association know.
- Those direct members who have not paid their membership subscription for three years have been taken off the membership list.

The number of paid up members for the year 2019-20 was 51. Since September 2019 £596 has been donated to the Nigeria school project. Thank you once again to all the direct members who continue to support our charity work so generously.

Twenty direct members have agreed to receive their correspondence by email which is both time and cost efficient for me – thank you. Direct members receive two mail outs each year including an annual, up to date list of members, details of the annual conference and a copy of the St. Julie News.

I receive many letters and cards from direct members. Please continue to keep in touch. It makes my role as convenor such a pleasure.

Finally, I must mention two direct members who work tirelessly for the Federation – Catherine Byrne and Sheila Fuller.

Love to you all and God bless you all.

Lesley Freeman

Liverpool Association Report 2020

Last year, notices were put in parish bulletins in the Liverpool diocese, inviting former pupils of Notre Dame to a coffee morning with a view to re-establishing the Liverpool Association. This was held in October at Hope University with a good attendance of forty people. A further meeting was then held in January starting with Mass, celebrated by Fr Chris, at St Mary's Woolton, followed by a very sociable lunch in the church hall. These two meetings resulted in twenty six ex-pupils joining the association.

Other events were planned to take place during the summer but due to Covid restrictions, could not go ahead.

Further events will be organised as soon as restrictions allow.

Bernie Shaw

Manchester Association Report 2020

It all seems a long time ago now but these are the Notre Dame Association, Manchester events from 2019 and into 2020.

In June we had a Strawberry Tea at the house of Elizabeth Morgan in Stockport. Apart from the fantastic refreshments we had a tombola stall, Bernie's very popular crafts stall and a lovely hamper and other great prizes to raffle.

Unfortunately, the weather wasn't very good so we didn't have the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful garden but we managed to enjoy ourselves indoors and we raised £600 for the Notre Dame charity.

August was our Annual Conference at Hinsley Hall in Leeds, arranged and organised by Lorraine Platt and Margaret Dolan. It was a brilliant weekend – well attended by Manchester delegates. One of the talks was from Notre Dame Sisters Annette Sullivan and Jo Threfall about this year's Federation's charity, the proposed high school in Ogwa, Nigeria and is to be called the Notre Dame Academy. We had such a good time – can't wait for next year! Lovely to see some new faces this year and make new friends.

An important part of Autumn for us, of course, is our annual get together at St. Anne's Church, Crumpsall. The Gathering had a Christmas theme again this year and members were greeted with a glass of Prosecco and mince pies. There was a sale, Bernie's (now famous) handmade goods; a Christmas Hamper raffle and our usual raffle; a delicious lunch – plus – of course – our little sing-song including our School Song. A

high spot of the get together was Lorraine's Zumba session dancing to 'She Wears Red Feathers on her Hula hula Skirt'. Everybody joined in and really enjoyed the experience.

We began our Notre Dame social year 2020 in style on January 31st with Afternoon Tea at The Midland Hotel. It was so well attended that we needed three tables! Diane Donovan, the Federation President, made the journey to Manchester to join us – it was a really lovely afternoon.





Like everyone else we were soon brought up short with the news of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. It will come as no surprise to you all to know that our May Mass was cancelled. We were very sad about this, especially as Marcie Fox was going to try to get her choir (recently seen on TV) to do a little sing song for us and we were very much looking forward to this. Obviously we do not know when we will be able to renew our social activities. The priority was and still is, to stay safe. As soon as the government guidelines allow, and we feel confident to do so, we will pick up where we left off and welcome all our members, old and new to our events. We are missing our Notre Dame friends.

Margaret Dolan

Northampton Association Report 2020

The Northampton Association has continued with its annual programme of events: a social meeting in March and June, usually comprising a guest speaker, a September tea party and Christmas entertainment in December. In May we hold our St. Julie Mass and in April we hold our AGM and annual lunch.

The AGM is the biggest event of our year when we seat between 80 and 90 members – our paid membership annually is approximately 160. These numbers will decline over the coming years I am sure.

As with every other Association our events were curtailed in March this year with the onset of the COVID pandemic restrictions: our AGM and lunch, booked for April, was cancelled and the reports for the AGM were sent to all members by post. All further scheduled events to date have been cancelled. We are keeping in touch with our members with extra, interim newsletters and look forward to being able to meet again as soon as circumstances allow.

During these last four years the committee has been really busy with the work of refurbishing the Cemetery of the Sisters in Notre Dame Mews Northampton. The cemetery is the property of the Borough Council but, together with them, the Association has, as mentioned in last year's St. Julie News, refurbished and/or replaced all the crosses, raised the height of the surrounding walls and railings, whilst retaining the original Victorian railings, and installed two information boards – one a short history of the Sisters in Northampton

and the other a plan of the graves depicting the names of all the sisters buried there. On Saturday 12th October 2019 a service of rededication was held at the cemetery - this was very well attended. Guests included the Lord Lieutenant, the Mayor, several councillors, Sr. AnneMarie Niblock, Sr. Rosemary, Sr. Margaret Wears, (all SND), Patricia White, President Southwark Association and Diane Donovan, B.F.N.D.A. President and her husband. The service was conducted by Monsignor Tony McDermott, our chaplain. Our thanks go to the local Friends who allowed us to use their Meeting House for the day.

Sadly, at the reception held afterwards, we said goodbye to Monsignor Tony who was retiring, partly because of ill health. Due to the tight schedule of priests in the diocese we do not have a dedicated chaplain but have an arrangement with Canon Mark Floody of Northampton Cathedral for provision of our St. Julie Mass in May.

And so we continue.

Margaret Bradbury

Southwark Association Report 2020

This is going to be a very brief report because essentially we have nothing to report.

Like everyone else the current national situation has had the effect of stopping us in our tracks this year and as a consequence we were unable to host our annual events and all face to face committee meetings were cancelled. Our

annual St. Julie's Day celebrations were initially postponed and then cancelled and our proposed programme of theatre visits has been put on hold indefinitely.

However, the members of our committee have had the opportunity to hold a meeting via Zoom which was almost as enjoyable as being in the same room. It was certainly great fun to be able to catch up with one another and discuss our thoughts and ideas for next year and we have another Zoom meeting scheduled for next January.

Whilst there is no certainty that we will be able to host a physical AGM and St Julie's Day in 2021 I would like to reassure our members that we are making plans in the hope that we may be able to do so, and if not we may have to consider a Zoom meeting with our membership in 2021 as an alternative.

In the meantime the committee are busy putting together an end of year news sheet for our members. We hope that this will help to keep us in touch with our valued association members.

Finally we were sad to hear the news of the recent death of Mary Smith (nee Gates), a past pupil of Southwark Notre Dame in the 1940's. Mary was born in 1931 and passed away in October 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/oct/18/mary-smith-obituary>

Take care and stay safe. With all good wishes to you all.

Patricia White

Notre Dame High School, Northampton Those Were The Days

Even as a small child I knew of the School and Convent, as I lived with my parents in the centre of the town and a few times a week my Mum would attend morning Mass with the Sisters.

I arrived at the School in 1972 from a Preparatory School run by Notre Dame Sisters - like many of the older daughters of my parent's friend's. Luckily the majority of my Prep school friends came too and we amalgamated with girls from the other Catholic Primary School in Northampton - St Mary's. Initially it was intimidating - such a massive building with endless corridors and floors and so many older girls. Although it was in the town centre, there were large gardens, including the Sister's Cemetery, a Salle, Gymnasium and a huge Hall with a stage, alongside a Chapel and accommodation for the Sisters.



Every morning we attended Assembly led by Sr Julianne and her Teaching Staff, with our Head Girl and six House Captains representing the varying House teams, wearing sashes with their individual House colours. They were to be role models to aspire to.

Until then we had one teacher per year, now we had a Form Teacher whose initials defined our home classroom, and we had individual teachers for varying subjects as we moved around the school for our lessons. This was our first introduction to spatial awareness and geography !



The three years my school friends and I spent at Notre Dame were a mixture of fun, challenge, education and learning domestic skills and how to be a young lady in society - the latter thanks to our Hygiene and Etiquette Teacher. We learnt never to apply make up, or attend to our hair in public, amongst many other things. We all asked our parents to purchase the book she recommended - ' In Search Of Charm ' and I particularly remember the book advised us how to elegantly enter and exit a sports car, sadly an experience I have never had occasion to put into practice. My culinary skills remain poor - my father would often remind me in later years of the Parents Evening when our Domestic Science Teacher told him of my lumpy mash potato and solidified gravy, and I still recollect the near fatal threat I made to an electric sewing machine in our Needlework class.

Thanks to Notre Dame, friendships were made that have remained for nearly 50 years. We had some amazing teachers and unusual ones too - like the male English teacher, who went out with the Sports Mistress and had curtains in his Ford

Cortina. The significance of which was lost on us at the time! We called our teachers Mr, Mrs and Miss but for years I wondered why we called one teacher Mistress until I realised that I really didn't know how to pronounce her surname correctly. Our parents probably never anticipated that our years at Notre Dame would introduce us to the Art of Juggling - how our swimming and hockey lessons would be at the local baths or the local Racecourse and would coincide with the days we did Cookery. We travelled via a double decker bus, juggling our hockey sticks and sport bags with our cookery items in the obligatory wicker basket that everyone wanted. There were times when an occasional culinary catastrophe occurred - having met its fate on the upper deck of the bus - or in the case of cakes, consumption on the bus journey back to school.

We entered our third year knowing that the school year would end with the closure of Notre Dame in Northampton. Our Head Mistress by this time was Sister Myra Benedict. As Notre Dame had been such an established and respected institution in Northampton, with a long history, it was decided that a celebratory three day event to mark the school's closure was to be arranged. A two night Pageant would be held in the Hall with a guest list of local dignitaries as well as the local press in attendance. The whole school was to be included. My three closest friends and I - to our eternal embarrassment were co-opted to perform after our Music Teacher caught us singing in our lunch break in the Music room one day. We were singing a song he had recently introduced us to, and the room was an escape from the rain outside. He persuaded us to sing it in the Pageant and at first we were quite happy to do so. Left to ourselves we may have been ok, but after weeks of continuous repetition of Scarborough Fair, and having been split into soprano and alto, we were full of nerves, terribly self conscious and on the Pageant nights were over whelmed by such a large audience. I don't know if our voices were even audible to the audience. Even now if we hear Scarborough Fair on the radio we cringe!

Luckily the remainder of the Pageant Nights were a credit to the school's closure, with a Mass in honour of St Julie at the local Catholic Cathedral, lead by the Bishop of Northampton on the first night. Subsequent nights were 'Historical Highlights of Notre Dame School'. This included solos by much more proficient singers and the school choirs of differing years, piano and accordion recitals, recollections of School Rules of yesteryear and previous School Timetables. A photographic exhibition was set up with old photos and school uniforms. A school magazine was composed as a Memento of the School in Northampton - and we pupils were desperate to have our teachers sign our magazines as a memento for the future. In latter years my friends and I regretted that we never had the courage to explore the school building and attics, and we were horrified to see the beautiful building and Chapel destroyed and replaced by unimaginative concrete store fronts.



The last day of school was Friday July 4th - a day full of sadness, and challenge as we faced moving to a new school, in a different part of Northampton - and again amalgamating with new pupils from the other Catholic High School in Northampton. We also faced the unknown quantity as naive fourteen year olds - sharing our education with that terrible four letter word - Boys! It's only now as I write this and reflect back on those years - maybe this is why the Sisters

arranged for us to view 'A Taste of Honey' with Rita Tushingham, and also a very innocent 'Birds and Bees' film in the TV room. Ten years later as a Student Midwife I completed my education on this subject! Attending Notre Dame reinforced the values, ethics and morals that initially I learnt from my parents - I shall always have lovely memories of my few years there.

MariAn Kneafsey

RIP

2019-2020

Direct Members

Margaret Lawton
Sheila Driver (O'Connor)
Joan Anderson (Judge)
Marie Caltieri

Battersea

Margaret Lumley
Audrey Peters

Northampton

Patricia O'Connor (Graham)
Sheila Hill (Berwick)
Barbara Byrne
Peggy Hill (Robinson)
Patricia Crutchley (Pasicznyk)
Teresa Horner (O'Rourke)
Muriel Neale (Jeffcoat)
Barbara Cooper (Stock)
Cynthia Rose (Woodhouse)

Manchester

Mary Graham (Austin)
Antoinette (Toni) Openshaw (Cygler)
Siobhan Duggan (MacCarron)
Mary Conway (Ritchie)
Rose Farragher (Farrell)
Ann Astwood (McDonald)
Margaret Dunne
Marie Hulse (Gadd)

Margaret Pegge (Dickinson)
Josie Lee (McGuinness)
Ann Marie Steele (Dixon)
Maureen Murray (Corcoran)
Ruby Boff (Wright)
Doris Coleman
Margaret Mary McCauley
Rita Briggs
Elizabeth Pickett (Betty Lowe)

Southwark

Mary Smith (Gates)
Carmel Denny (Marie Tisi's sister)
Rita Connolly (Denny) (also Marie Tisi's sister)
Marie Quick (Gethin)
Caroline Arrowsmith
Margaret Holyland (Lloyd)

Sisters of Notre Dame

Sr Maura O'Carroll SND
Sr Helen Mary McKeown SND
Sr Anne Eugenie Atherton SND
Sr Jane Hughes SND
Sr Joyce Barnes SND and Direct Member
Sr Stella Humphreys SND and Direct Member
Sr Doreen Grant SND



Margaret Lawton RIP

1928 - 2019

Two personal recollections by Veronica Miles President BFNDA 1991-94, former President of Manchester Assoc. & Mary Lewis President BFNDA 2009-12 treasurer BFNDA 1994-97

Margaret Mary Lawton was born in Manchester on 28TH July 1928 to Ada and Joseph Lawton. Her father was a clerical tailor and her mother a former school teacher. She had just one sibling, Raymond, who was four years younger. Her father played the organ at the lunchtime business masses at St Mary's (Hidden Gem).

She attended Notre Dame High School in Manchester and went on to read Mathematics at Manchester University. She started teaching at Notre Dame Collegiate School Leeds in the early 1950s and stayed there throughout its future incarnations as Grammar School and then Comprehensive High School. She served as Head of Mathematics, Deputy Headmistress and finally Headmistress from 1983 to 1987. She was closely involved with the Sisters and their work and that of Federation. It could be argued that without Margaret the BFNDA would have dissolved many years ago. Margaret's reputation as a 'fixer' is legendary.

Mary writes

I first met Margaret Lawton in 1955 when a couple of years into my secondary education, I joined Notre Dame Collegiate School (as it was then) Leeds as a pupil. My first impressions were of someone who did not suffer fools gladly but who had her own sense of humour. Her mathematical jokes which were greeted with groans at the time are nevertheless still remembered, as my two sisters and myself can testify. A few years later, she was very supportive when I indicated that I wished to study Maths at university. I needed to study

Mathematics and Theoretical Mechanics which was a double A level subject and I was the only one who wanted to do it!

I renewed my acquaintance with Margaret when I returned to Notre Dame Leeds to teach mathematics.

Margaret was a very private person, but I did get to know her a little better. I already knew that she was fond of music as I had met her at some of the Orchestral concerts in Leeds Town Hall when I was in the Sixth Form. Later as a colleague she would talk about various soloists and conductors that she liked. One puzzle however resides in a remark made by Professor Monica Grady, who was one of Margaret's pupils, in her Desert Island Discs interview recalling Margaret sawing on a Double Bass with the school orchestra!

She was also involved in the Mathematical Association

She was the Yorkshire Branch representative on Council for the years 1975 – 1979 and was Honorary Secretary of the MA from June 1979 until June 1991.

When I moved away from Leeds, we still kept in touch. She tried to persuade me to come to the BFNDA conferences but with a growing young family this was not easy and we always went away on holiday in late August.

Eventually, in the early 1990s she persuaded me to become a Direct member and before I had time to acquaint myself with Federation, I found myself on the Executive as treasurer. My involvement with the Maths Association was similar. I had been a member since my teaching years at Leeds and no sooner had she persuaded me to attend a Conference, I found myself sitting on one of the subcommittees!

Veronica writes

I first met Margaret at the Triennial Convention in 1982 at Christs and Notre Dame Liverpool. This was my introduction

to BFNDA as at that meeting I was elected to the Executive and became Conference Secretary. I worked closely with Margaret during the three years; her advice help and support were invaluable in arranging the conferences. Margaret became Conference Secretary in 1985 so she organised the Diamond Jubilee event also held at Christs and Notre Dame.

Margaret had taken over the role of Archivist in late 1982. Her knowledge of the work and workings of the BFNDA was remarkable. She was involved whenever changes to the constitution had to be introduced. She devoted many hours to working on the Archives in Liverpool, staying with the Sisters and enjoying time with her many friends there.

In 1995 when the Sisters celebrated 150 years in Britain, Margaret was one of the contributors to the Jubilee book which was published to mark the occasion. She also contributed to the booklets produced for the 60th and 75th Jubilees of the BFNDA. The 60th booklet was typed and set out by the staff at NDHS Leeds and printed at the University of Leeds whilst the 75th booklet was published in Ulverston. The St Julie News was at times printed courtesy of the staff at Leeds NDHS. I well remember being delegated to collect the same on one occasion!

Margaret always had her camera with her at meetings 'for the Archives' a tradition that continues.

It was through Margaret's connections that BFNDA started to meet at Hinsley Hall Leeds. Council meetings have been held there as well as the conferences. Margaret was President of BFNDA 1988-91 and I followed her from 1991-94. My first AGM was held at St Hilda's College where Margaret had undertaken postgraduate studies in the 1960s. The speaker there was Dr Margaret Rayner a fellow of the College and a friend of Margaret.

During Margaret's presidency of BFNDA at the AGM held at St Martin's Lancaster in 1990, a decision was taken to allow direct membership of Federation. This led to what is now the Direct Member's Association. Margaret performed the role of Convenor for several years until handing over to José Sear.

Margaret Lawton was 'Notre Dame' and played a key role in BFNDA for so many years. May she rest in Peace

After Margaret retired, she went to live in Cumbria not far from Boarbank Hall, a few miles from Grange over Sands. She had had an association with Boarbank Hall from her early teens when she was sick, and then during her student days, helping out in Marymount, the Nursing home.

Once Margaret stopped driving too far from home, she gradually became a recluse. She continued to go to church and attend meetings of the local WI and was always ready to talk on the telephone. More recently Margaret's energy appeared to decline and she died in December 2019.

The Funeral Mass was held in the chapel of Boarbank Hall on Monday 13th January 2020.

Margaret Lawton will be remembered by Federation in so many different ways, not least for her prowess in arm twisting!

*'The good God will not leave us on the road without giving us light
and grace to guide us'
St Julie Billiart*



Mary Smith nee Gates RIP



My mother, Mary Smith, who has died aged 88, was a social activist committed to justice and peace; she always wanted to help those in need.

Born in Southwark, south London, she was the daughter of Catherine (nee Maloney) and Albert Gates, a postman, who were active locally in Labour politics. They both served as mayor of Southwark and Mary, aged 17, was the official consort when her mother was mayor.

She attended Notre Dame school in Elephant and Castle and her father found her a job in a bank, but Mary hated it and left to become an organiser for the Young Christian Workers (YCW). This was a movement established by the worker priest Joseph Cardijn, and its focus was on social justice for working people. Mary travelled the UK to do this work and made a network of lifelong friends in doing so. She also met my father, Terry Smith, who shared her Catholic faith and was a volunteer with the YCW.

Following their marriage in 1961, they first lived in south London before moving to Waterlooville, near Portsmouth, Hampshire, for Terry's work as an engineer. Mary focused on

raising their three daughters. In the early 1970s they relocated to the Isle of Wight, where Mary stood as a Liberal councillor in an “unwinnable” seat, which she won. She worked hard for the people in her ward in Ryde, which was a deprived area.

A highly intelligent woman, like many of her generation from a working-class background she never attended university. However, when she moved back to London with the family in the 90s, she studied at the UCL Institute of Education. In 1995 she gained an advanced diploma in counselling and interpersonal skills, which she then used locally in Beckenham, south London, volunteering for the Samaritans and a bereavement counselling charity.

She was an active parishioner at her local catholic church of St Edmund’s and remained committed to the cause of social justice. During this period, she was appointed to the role of justice and peace co-ordinator for the Southwark diocese.

In retirement Mary continued to actively support her justice and peace group at St Edmund’s and with her volunteer bereavement work, as well as helping to care for her grandchildren. After Terry died in 2007, and with the onset of Alzheimer’s, Mary’s world seemed to shrink. She spent her last two years in a care home.

She is survived by her daughters, Susie, Claire and me, as well as four grandchildren.

Anna Mansaray

'Stone is shaped, wood is carved, cloth is cut and character must be formed'

St Julie Billiart



Sister Joyce Barnes SND RIP



Sr Joyce was born in Blackburn on 6th December 1933. When she left school her father wanted her to have a trade so she did her apprenticeship in tailoring and continued until she was 21 years old. Joyce always wanted to be an SND and told her father at aged 21 that she was free to do so.

Joyce entered at Ashdown on 3rd October 1955. After various teaching posts in Leeds and London, Joyce did a course for teaching children with special needs. She helped one child with autism so much that he continued to send cards to her throughout her life.

In 1984, Joyce moved to St Joseph's, Liverpool and began her Parish visiting . As a proficient guitarist she led the singing and even had requests to sing at weddings and funerals.

Joyce said this made her feel part of the Parish community

Apart from a trip to help in Zimbabwe and another to deliver goods to children in Romania, Joyce devoted herself to the parish. In 1996, the decision was made to close St Joseph's.

Joyce prayed that, if they were to stay and continue the Ministry, they would get a house on the Herm Road site.

Joyce got her house!

In 2013, she moved to Birkdale and continued to be fully active, using her sewing ability and working with the homeless. Just before noon on 31st May Joyce slipped away peacefully to her heavenly home.

On Monday 1st June, after his “livestreamed” Mass from St Gregory’s in Chorley, Fr Graeme Dunn announced Joyce’s death and praised her for her Ministry. He finished by saying “Sr Joyce brought JOY to the people in North Liverpool.”

May she rest in Peace

Margaret Mary Dudley SND

'A simple soul is affectionate and attentive to the needs of others'

St Julie Billiart



The Irenaeus Project



Fr Chris Thomas
Chaplain for the
BFNDA

I often wonder to myself what those who come to the BFNDA conference every year think I do with my time. For the last twenty years I have been the director of the Irenaeus project for spirituality. During that time I and the small team we have put together have travelled extensively, speaking at conferences and running Parish missions, written lots of books and worked in our own archdiocese. For the last ten years we have developed the house we live in into a small retreat centre but now there are big changes ahead.

On Sunday the 2nd August it was announced that St Thomas of Canterbury in Waterloo, the parish we live in, is closing. The buildings, the church and the parish hall next to the house we already have, have been given to us. On the 9th of September we celebrated the final parish mass so now it's full steam ahead as we try and turn these wonderful buildings into a centre for spirituality and outreach which is tremendously exciting.

The development of a centre will enable us to continue to offer, what is our core work, short courses on methods of prayer and the scriptures. During the liturgical seasons of the year there will be evenings and days of prayer and retreats of various sorts. We will still be able to offer

opportunities for spiritual direction and accompaniment and will be involved in diocesan training for eucharistic ministers and other diocesan groups. We will also be available to go into Parishes and support other groups as we have done for the last twenty years. Our prison ministry will also continue.

We hope that the centre will be open Monday to Friday from 10am – 4pm for people to access a prayer space in the wonderful sanctuary area of the Church. There will be a bookshop and a coffee drop in for those in the wider community. We hope that on two days of the week there will be some professional counsellors available to chat with people

For several years' we have run a sing along for those living with dementia and their carers'. As soon as we are able that will be resumed but we will be able to offer more support through the drop in. A local GP wants to run groups to support those with mental health issues, particularly in the area of spirituality, and a part time prison chaplain hopes to establish groups for ex-prisoners who often find themselves alone when they are released from prison. It is hoped as other needs arise, we could try and respond to them now that we have the space to do so. The different rooms in the centre will be available for hire, for various diocesan, parish and other groups.

As you can imagine all this is very costly and we have almost exhausted our very kind supporters who have raised a lot of money for this project. So we have set up a small fundraising group because there are alterations that have to be made to the Church to make it fit for purpose. They are going to

pursue grants and other avenues to raise money.

So exciting times are ahead for Irenaeus. If you think you can help us in any way then call us on 01519491199 or email chris@irenaeus.co.uk



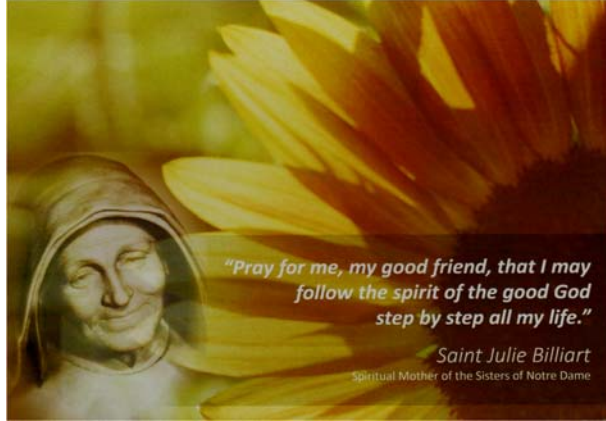
'My God, what thanksgiving can repay so many blessings!'
St Julie Billiart



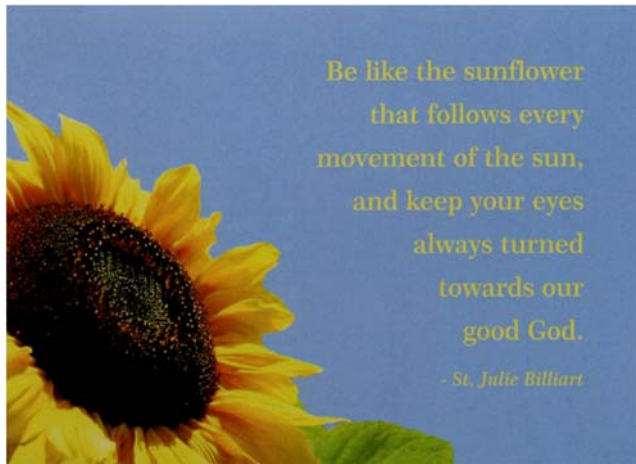
St Julie Notelets for Sale

Our usual ways of raising funds for Notre Dame charities (including Ogwa) have been severely curtailed due to the pandemic. To try and counter this we have created some St Julie themed Notelets.

They are printed on A6 card and come in cellophane packs of 6 with self seal envelopes. You may choose to have just one design or 3 of each.



A pack is priced at £3 plus P&P



**To order notelets please contact:-
Louise Enderby (Treasurer)
email lenderby53@gmail.com**

Notre Dame Cushions for Sale



Notre Dame Emblem and motto
AH QU'IL EST BON LE BON DIEU

Pictured above, the cushions are made from a royal blue linen-weight fabric with a taupe backing and a zip finish. They measure 45cm x 45cm (18" x 18").

THE CUSHION PRICE IS £17.99

Plus £3.20 P&P

Total £21.19

To order a Notre Dame cushion please contact:-

Lorraine Platt

E-mail lorraineplatt@btconnect.com

**All proceeds will be donated to the
Notre Dame Charities**

****Send a gift****

**If the cushion is a gift for a friend please
let me have your message for the gift card**