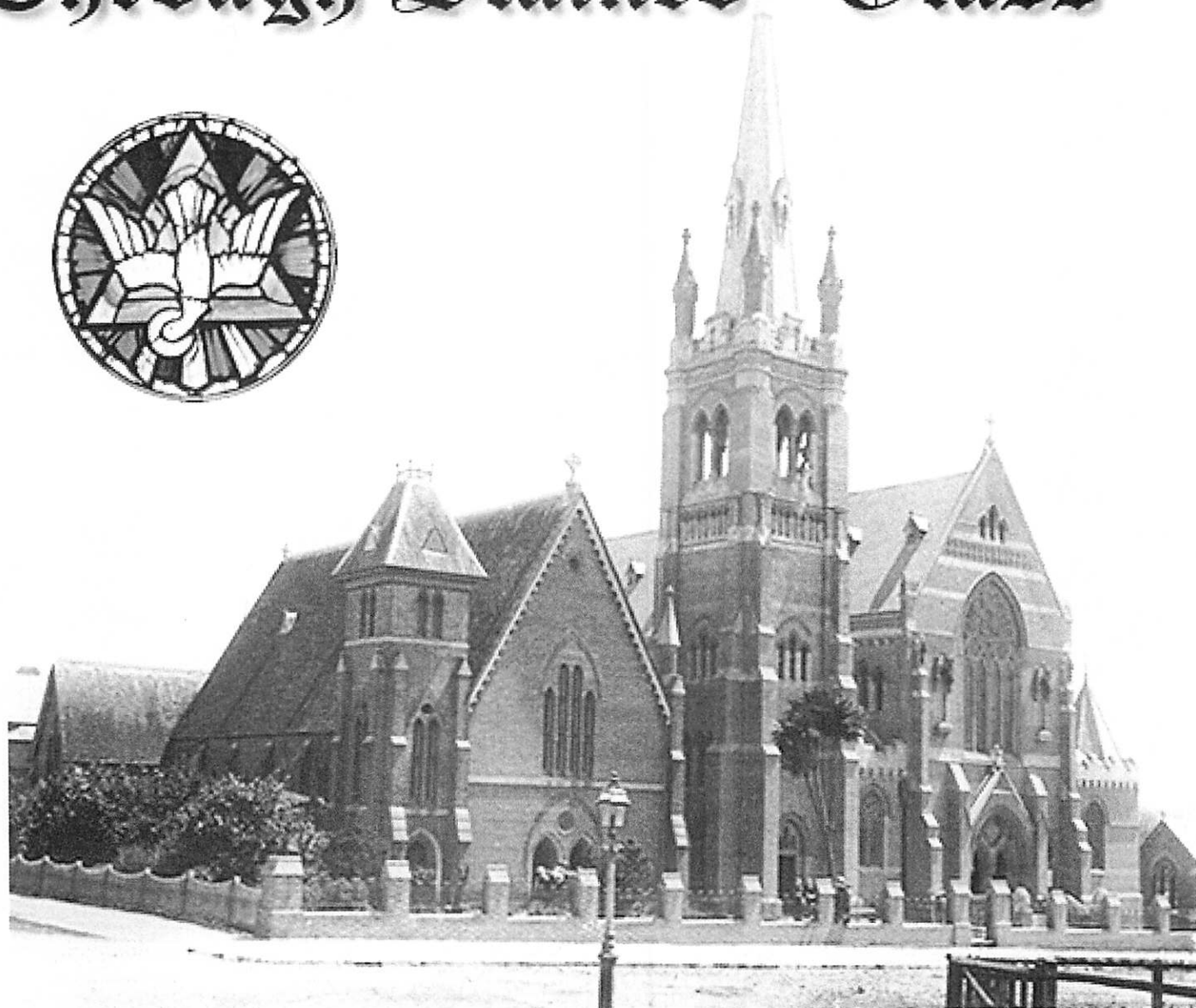


Through Stained Glass



A Compendium of Donor Artefacts

Including:

First Sts Mary & Joseph's Cathedral Armidale 1872-1912

Sts Mary & Joseph's Cathedral Armidale 1912-2003

St Joseph's Church Uralla 1882-1967

First Catholic Church Uralla 1861-1882

Catholic Church Rocky River 1856-1861



By Roy I Wright

Concise History of the Armidale Parish

In the early eighteen-thirties, pastoralists arrived to settle in and around the district, but it was not until 1839 that Mr G J McDonald named the settlement "Armidale". As Catholics started to settle in the New England Area, priests from Singleton and Maitland to the south, and from Ipswich to the north, came to minister to them.

Fr John Rigney from Singleton was the first Catholic priest to minister to people of Armidale, visiting in June 1848, and returning in September that year for the blessing and opening of the Catholic Chapel, Armidale's first Catholic church. Following in the footsteps of Father Rigney was Dean Lynch of West Maitland, making his first visit to the district a few months later.¹

The "Chapel", as it was commonly known, was erected on land belonging to Mr Patrick Kennedy adjacent to a small farming property owned by John Donnellan, both early Catholic settlers.²

Tradition concerning the Chapel would have it described in cruciform design and of wooden structure measuring 25 ft x 18 ft (5.49m x 7.62m). Surveyor J J Galloway in his first survey of Armidale reported a small portion of the building projected into one of his proposed streets – later appropriately named Chapel Street.³ It was not until 1869 that Armidale's first bishop, the Right Rev. Timothy O'Mahoney, was appointed. With such appointment, and his installation 25th March 1871, the Chapel then technically became Armidale's "First (Pro) Cathedral" until its eventual replacement by the brick and stone structure less than twelve months later, in 1872 [See Image No 1].

During its existence the Chapel was enlarged. Father Timothy McCarthy (affectionately known as Father Tim) was appointed first resident priest in Armidale Parish in 1853⁴ (a full ten years before Armidale was declared a Municipality),⁵ and remaining in office until 1862. The Chapel remained until after the opening of the first Catholic cathedral in 1872, when it was demolished. The front vestibule of O'Connor Catholic College now occupies the Chapel site.

The original residence (presbytery) was in a small slab cottage with a bark roof, located at the north-eastern corner of Rusden and Taylor Streets, Armidale. When Mr Joseph Daly donated a ten-acre block of land adjacent to the Chapel, a more permanent presbytery named "Florence Court" was constructed for Father Tim, who selected the name, which "appealed to his boyish imagination".⁶

Other clergy to reside at "Florence Court" over time were Fr Edmond Walsh, Fr John Thomas Dunne, Dean John T Lynch, Fr Doyle (later Bishop of Lismore), as

¹ J. Farrell, *Looking Back, Getting Started*, "The Armidale Express", 19 June 2002, p.10.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

⁴ J.P. O'Connor (comp), "Through the Century 1853-1953. Armidale Catholic Centenary Celebrations", Souvenir.

⁵ J. Atchison, "Our Cathedral: A Gift from the Past. A Treasure for the Future" unpublished manuscript.

⁶ J.P. O'Connor (comp), *op.cit.*

well as two bishops: Bishop Timothy O'Mahoney⁷ and eventually Bishop Elzear Torreggiani.⁸

"Florence Court" also referred to as 'The old Bishop's House', became home to the Patrician Brothers who established the first Catholic College for secondary boys in 1889. The college closed in 1897 when the Patrician Brothers withdrew from this diocese.⁹

"Florence Court" also tenanted by the De La Salle Brothers, was demolished in 1940¹⁰, but the stately elm trees planted by Father Tim were retained, and still stand to this day.

The PARISH OF ARMIDALE dates from when Father Timothy McCarthy commenced his pastoral mission. He arrived in Armidale towards the end of September in 1853, having left Port Jackson in August. Papal approval to the erection of the CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE (Pope Pius IX) was given much later on 9 November 1862, and it was a further ten years before the first Cathedral of Sts Mary and Joseph was erected on land at the corner of Dangar and Barney Streets. This Cathedral was opened on Friday 2 February 1872, Feast of The Purification, and stood on this site until completion and opening of the new Sts Mary and Joseph's Cathedral, alongside it, in October 1912.¹¹ [See Images 2,3,4,6].

Armidale Diocesan Bishops from 1869 to 2003

- 1 Irish born The Right Reverend Timothy O'Mahoney was consecrated First Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Armidale on 30 November 1869 in the Cathedral at Cork, taking up his appointment 25 March 1871. He resigned in 1877.
- 2 Dr Elzear Torreggiani of Italian birth was consecrated bishop 25 March 1879 in Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Peckham, England. He arrived in Melbourne in November 1879, taking up his appointment as Second Bishop of Armidale two weeks later. He died on 28 January 1904, aged 73.
- 3 Irish born Patrick Joseph O'Connor DD, Third Bishop of Armidale, was consecrated coadjutor bishop in Armidale on 3 May 1903, giving him right of succession to Bishop Torreggianni upon the death of his predecessor. Bishop O'Connor died 15 July 1932, and he is interred in the present Sts Mary and Joseph's Cathedral. His crypt is before the Marian altar.
- 4 Irish born Dr John Aloysius Coleman DD, Fourth in succession, was consecrated bishop in Armidale on 8 September 1929 - the occasion of his 42nd birthday - having been appointed coadjutor bishop from 31 May 1929. His death occurred 22 December 1947 and he is interred in the present Sts Mary and Joseph's Cathedral. His crypt is before the Sacred Heart Altar.

⁷ De la Salle College, Armidale, Golden Jubilee 1906-1956 p.9.

⁸ E.J. Doody (comp), *The Story of the Diocese of Armidale, New England, Australia*. unpublished manuscript, 1968, p. 204.

⁹ J. Farrell, *op.cit.*

¹⁰ De La Salle College, *op.cit.*

¹¹ J.P. O'Connor (comp), 1953, *op.cit.*

- 5 Bishop Edward John Doody DD, Armidale's first Australian born bishop, was Fifth in succession. He was consecrated bishop in Brisbane 22 April 1948, and installed at Armidale later that month, on the 25th. Bishop Doody is buried in the southern grounds of the present Sts Mary & Joseph's Cathedral, on the site of the first cathedral.
- 6 Bishop James Darcy Freeman DD was consecrated bishop 24 January 1957 and appointed to Armidale 6 December 1971. He resigned as Sixth Bishop of Armidale (1968 to 1971) to take up office as Archbishop, and later as Cardinal, in Sydney.
- 7 Bishop Henry Joseph Kennedy DD was consecrated bishop in Sydney 23 November 1967 and appointed to Armidale 6 December 1971. As Seventh Bishop from 1972 to 2003 he accepted medical retirement in 1991. Emeritus Bishop Kennedy died 3 September 2003 in this Sesquicentenary Year of The Parish of Armidale. His burial crypt is adjacent to Bishop Doody's, on the site of the first cathedral.
- 8 Bishop Kevin Michael Manning DD was appointed Eighth Bishop of the Armidale Diocese on 26 April 1991. Then on 10 July 1997 Bishop Manning transferred to assume his appointment as Bishop of Parramatta, NSW.
- 9 Early in 1999, Belgian born, and ordained priest in South Africa, Rev Dean Luc Julianus Matthys, accepted his appointment from St Patrick's Cathedral Melbourne to Armidale. He was consecrated Ninth Bishop in Sts Mary & Joseph's Cathedral on 14 May 1999.

The decorative plinth supporting the statue of St Peter located in the present cathedral grounds, which oversees Bishop Doody's grave, is a remnant from the first cathedral, which previously stood on this site.¹² Bishop Henry Kennedy (DOD 3 September 2003 – in this Sesquicentenary Year of The Armidale Parish) was buried in this location, adjacent to Bishop Doody's grave, following official obsequies on Wednesday 10 September 2003.



First Cathedral, Armidale

Bishop O'Mahoney, first Bishop of Armidale, appointed Dean Lynch Vicar General of the diocese. Monsignor Lynch was commissioned to arrange for the building of this cathedral. A reference to the bishop's intentions was recorded at a later time.¹³

"His first care was to erect a decent Cathedral of brick and stone, 102 feet by 32, the foundations of which had been laid in accordance with his instructions by the Administrator on December 8, 1870, and which, under the invocation of our Lady and St. Joseph, was dedicated by

¹² Armidale Parish. *A Walk Through The Cathedral- Guide to the Cathedral Church of Sts Mary and Joseph, Armidale*, leaflet.

¹³ The Catholic Press, 7 May 1903, P19, col c:

*Archbishop Polding on February 2, 1872, in the presence
of the Bishop of the diocese and of the Bishop of Bathurst"*

Mr Joseph Daly donated £300 to purchase suitable land closer to the centre of town and a decision was made to purchase land from Thomas Bryan Fitzgerald on the north-western corner of Dangar and Barney Streets, Armidale.¹⁴

Dean Lynch laid the foundation stone of the first cathedral on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December 1870.¹⁵ This stone was placed over copies of "The Freeman's Journal", "The Armidale Express", "The Armidale Telegraph" and a Latin record of the occasion¹⁶. It is worthy to note granite for the foundation stone was brought from Uralla.

Clergy from as far as Grafton, Tamworth and Inverell joined with the Armidale clergy and lay people in a procession to the site of the new cathedral. On that morning Dean Lynch donated £100 to the building fund and during the day a further £252/13/8 (£252.13s.8d) was duly laid upon the foundation stone. Mr Alexander Smith was successful tenderer to build for £1,845. This amount was grossly underestimated, as the final cost of erection rose to £3,500, and tragically brought about insolvency for the local builder.¹⁷

The cathedral, of brick construction and a shingled roof, was duly opened on the Feast of the Purification, Friday 2 February 1872 [See Images 4, 6]. The choir from the district was accompanied by Miss Cunningham playing Bishop O'Mahoney's "fine harmonium". It was estimated 500 people attended, of whom one fifth were not of the Catholic faith.¹⁸

Over time as more Catholics came to live in Armidale, this cathedral became too small. To enlarge the building was not a practical option, so Bishop O'Connor, as a memorial to Bishop Torreggianni, decided to build a new cathedral on the adjoining block of land. As a mark of this affection, parishioners subscribed generously towards this momentous project.

The first cathedral remained standing until demolition soon after the opening of the second cathedral. Building materials were utilised in the construction of a hall at St Mary's Primary School, facing Jessie Street, Armidale.

Stained glass windows were reserved and installed in the new church at Bundarra, St Mary of The Angels, when constructed in 1914. These are four paired panel three-quarter length windows installed behind the altar, and there are 14 full-length windows located in the nave of the church. These 18 windows are without dedication plaques or inscriptions.¹⁹ [See Image No 17].

Of further interest: in St Mary of The Angels Church Bundarra is an ecclesiastical cathedra constructed from cedar. Could this be the First Bishop's 'throne' – for ceremonious use by Bishop O'Mahoney? [See Image No 25]



¹⁴ J. Farrell, *op.cit.*

¹⁵ J.P. O'Connor, *op.cit.*

¹⁶ L.A. Gilbert, *The Armidale Album*, p.153.

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ "The Freeman's Journal", 14 May 1914, p.19.

Second Cathedral, Armidale

As far back as the time of his consecration as Coadjutor Bishop (3 May 1903) it was evident to Bishop O'Connor the first cathedral would require enlargement, or be replaced with a new cathedral on the adjoining block of land.

Due to impracticality of enlarging the first cathedral, Bishop O'Connor decided to engage gifted architect Mr John Francis Hennessy (Sheerin & Hennessy, Architects of Sydney), and Mr George Frederick Nott, (prominent Anglican layman and prestigious local builder) to undertake construction of the new edifice; the cathedral to be dedicated to the memory of Bishop Torreggiani.

In consultation with the builder Bishop O'Connor decided to extend the length of Sts Mary and Joseph's Cathedral beyond the original plans drawn by John Francis Hennessy,²⁰ necessitating an additional set of triple windows in the clerestory - an increase from seven to eight on each side.

The combination of such a gifted architect and a superb craftsman builder, drawn together by a

"practical and far-sighted bishop, (has) proved decisive for cathedral architecture in the north, and heralded a structure worthy of the better traditions of church architecture".²¹

The illustrious architect John Francis Hennessy (1853-1924) was born in Leeds, Yorkshire. He migrated to Australia circa 1880. During the cathedral construction he was President of the Institute of Architects of NSW. In 1912 his only son Jack Hennessy (1887-1955) joined the firm of Sheerin & Hennessy, which subsequently changed to Hennessy & Hennessy. The highly esteemed contractor George Frederick Nott (1865-1940) was born at Breeza Plains, northern NSW, the eldest son of William Randolph, also a builder, and Mary Ann (nee Northey).²²

Cardinal Patrick F Moran, Archbishop of Sydney laid the foundation stone on 5 February 1911. At conclusion of proceedings Bishop Patrick O'Connor opened a subscription list with a donation of £1,000 and a further £1,200 from clergy of the diocese. Other gifts brought the total to £5,000.²³

"The Armidale Express" Friday 27 September 1912 reports the Sunday:

"proceedings for opening and dedication of new cathedral would commence with Mass at seven a.m., a further Mass at 8.30. and several private ones during that morning. The blessing, both of exterior and interior of the cathedral would commence at 11 a.m., followed by a solemn Pontifical High Mass. "As an overflow gathering is expected, a special mass will also be celebrated in the old cathedral at 11.30."

The new cathedral was opened and dedicated on 6 October 1912 by Archbishop Michael Kelly of Sydney (The Metropolitan for the Armidale Diocese), assisted by His Grace Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane, their Lordships Bishop O'Connor (Armidale), Gallagher (Goulburn), Murray (Cooktown), and Monsignor O'Reilly (New Zealand) - to name a few of the attending clergy. The new enlarged

²⁰ Author, *sic*.

²¹ J. Atchison, *op.cit.*, unpublished manuscript.

²² *ibid*

²³ Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.154.

Cathedral of Sts Mary and Joseph, costing £28,000²⁴ was "opened free of debt" on 6 October 1912 (that is with moneys pledged for its erection).²⁵ Bishop O'Connor revealed the last £100 promised had now been received.

"The Armidale Chronicle" of 9 October 1912 reported further on the cathedral opening

"---arrival of special trains from Quirindi and Glen Innes. The Quirindi train brought 600 people, of which 300 came from Tamworth alone, whilst 500 came in the Glen Innes train. The train coming up from Quirindi was so crowded that many people were left behind at Uralla and motor cars went back for them." The article goes on to state "The spire of the building towered aloft rearing skywards the flag of Ireland and the Union Jack".

Undoubtedly Saint Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, would smile down on such endeavours!

However the flags described were not the first flags flown from the tower of this construction as evidenced by A White Flag flown by construction workers as a message to the building foreman that the structure is complete with roof, etc. and as a sign he should "shout" drinks all round for the workers [!] - a building workers' tradition of that era. [See Image No 13].

This cathedral is of Gothic Revival design with the metal cased spire reaching to a height of 150 ft from "pavement". The roof structure is of Welsh slate and supported by 14 interior Pyrmont stone columns. Interior dimensions given: 14 ft 6 in x 5 ft, plus sanctuary of 32 ft x 35 ft.²⁶

The Vesting Sacristy (formerly Ursuline Nun's Chapel) is to the north of the sanctuary. The Work Sacristy to the south houses the Bavarian Altar and security strong room. It is worthy of note St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, completed and opened later, is said to be five feet less in width than Sts Mary & Joseph's, Armidale. Gothic windows in the cathedral exceed 100 in number. The cost of these magnificent stained glass windows was £2,200. Numerous artisans (some unknown) were engaged in construction of the original windows.

*"Legend has it that over one million bricks were used in the building of the cathedral", but it is hard to prove such statements because most of what is known about the construction process is anecdotal.*²⁷

Such bricks are identifiable as local 'Armidale Blue', and it is known all timber work, including cedar pews, was constructed at Mr Nott's saw mill and joinery then located on the corner of Allingham and Rusden Streets, Armidale. Original cost of solid cedar pews £20 each; total cost of seating £550.²⁸

During construction the tradesmen and labourers engaged by Mr G Nott were under the watchful eyes of himself and Mr Duncan Davidson, a Clerk of Works from Sydney:

²⁴ "The Freeman's Journal", 10 October 1912

²⁵ "The Freeman's Journal", 24 September 1914, p.27

²⁶ "The Freeman's Journal", 10 October 1912.

²⁷ J. Atchison, "The Armidale Express", 9 December 1997.

²⁸ "The Freeman's Journal", 17 September 1912.

Clerk of Works	Duncan Davidson of Sydney
Foreman	Bill Fletcher of Newcastle
Apprentice Carpenter attached to foreman:	Alan McShane
Bricklayers:	Randolph Nott (in charge)
	Ernie Skinner
	Silas Burton
	Gerry McShane
	Martin Ford
	Arthur Roberts, and others
Labourers:	Peter Murray
	Bill Barry
Plasterer:	[?] Bowen of Sydney
Steam Winch:	Jock Nicholls
Plumbing sub-contractors:	From Sydney and Newcastle (contentious at the time)
Marble work by:	Italian craftsmen.

Whilst I am unable to locate a record of injuries sustained by workmen during the building phase, it is known one person, a Mr Noble, suffered a serious accident in falling from the north-eastern spirelet of the tower.²⁹

At time of the cathedral opening seating accommodation provided for 1,200 people.³⁰ Currently there is a reduction due to rearranged seating, allowing for regular use of the extra organ and inclusion of musicians to the front of the southern congregational nave. Current utilisation of the main organ and choir gallery is generally reserved for major ecclesiastical ceremonies.

Solemn Blessing of the Cathedral was delayed until Friday 12 December 1919 when the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Bartolomeo Cattaneo could officiate, following installation of the marble altar.³¹

Some Replacements/Additions To Cathedral Interior Since Time Of Opening:

Marble replacements for carved timber Side Altars

Marble replacement for carved timber Pulpit

Marble surface to Reredos (Bishop Coleman's initiative, completed by Bishop E Doody. Construction by Gamble & Dreelin, Marble & Terrazzo Merchants, Redfern NSW)

Centenary Shrine – Our Lady of Fatima, enshrinement 24 May 1953: Bishop E Doody

Stained Glass Windows in Baptistry: circa 1954/5, an initiative of Bishop E Doody.

Shroud of Turin Image in tabernacle section of Sacred Heart altar:
Bishop E Doody

Air-lock Doors at Entrance Vestibule

Carpets in the Nave, and from the altar rails, up the Sanctuary steps leading to the high altar

Altar Rail Gates, [now cedar-framed], beneath Front Altar (post-Vatican II):
Bishop L Matthys

Ambo: Bishop L Matthys

"The National Trust of Australia (NSW Division) classified the building structure of Sts Mary and Joseph's Cathedral Armidale

²⁹ J. Atchison, *op.cit.*, unpublished manuscript.

³⁰ "The Freeman's Journal", 10 October 1912.

³¹ "The Freemans Journal", 24 September 1914.

*on 31 May 1976. It was gazetted 29 March 1977 and proposed for listing in the register of the National Estate under the Australian Heritage Act 1975, then was subsequently entered on 21 March 1978."*³²



The Administrator and Pastoral Council of the Cathedral Parish sincerely thank Mrs Clare Wright for permission to publish on the refurbished website "A Concise History of the Armidale Parish". This chapter comes from the book "Through Stained Glass" by Roy L Wright. (2003 The Printery University of New England). Roy & Clare, long time parishioners of the Cathedral parish, spent years researching the book. The historical introduction is a concise and reliable account of the parish story.

³² J. Atchison, *op. cit.*, unpublished manuscript.