

## **IFUI Archives Meeting – Dublin 18th – 20th June 2024**

It was with great joy that the group of Mercy Archivists, representing Institute, Federation and Union groups met up with our Irish counterparts in Dublin on 18th June. For some of us, it had been several years since we had been there, and we were all looking forward to seeing the transformation of the Heritage Centre.

On Wednesday 19th we began our meeting, and it became clear to us all, that we have concerns regarding the future storage of our archival material. Although some may think that by scanning or digitizing the items the problem has been solved, the original artefacts have still to be housed and most locations are running out of space. There was quite a healthy debate about what might be possible – but I suppose that most of us dream of a large building becoming available that could be adapted to archival needs. Archives involve many types of records that need different kinds of storage – paper, photographs, sewn items, statues and even relics.

In the afternoon we paid a very interesting visit to the Tenement Museum in Henrietta Street where the once grand houses were abandoned by the wealthy classes when the Dublin parliament relocated to Westminster and the new landlords filled the houses to overflowing with large families. This museum was still occupied by a resident right up until the late 1970s and it was very moving to see the house spread over several floors.

On our return Marianne Cosgrave, the Irish Congregational Archivist shared with us how registers of the Mercy Training College at Carysfort from 1883 – 1922 have been digitized and how one can find out a little more about the careers of individual students.

On Thursday 20th we were shown the redesigned Mercy Heritage Centre which now has a large digital screen at one end of the room where artefacts can be called up and examined in great detail. We were shown by Carla Soden the program called Preservica where she has been painstakingly inputting metadata on various artefacts in store in Mercy International Centre. It was very impressive and showed how helpful some investment in a digital tool could help us in preserving our heritage for the future.

We ended by setting our date for next year's meeting on March 19th 2025 in Bermondsey.

Sr Barbara Jeffery