Participants gathered June 8th and 9th for the annual History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland Conference for the presentation of over twenty-five papers addressing the theme, ‘Women Religious, Mission and Movement’. The conference was kindly hosted by Digby Stuart College at the University of Roehampton. Papers were grouped together by theme with about three presentations per session and time for questions after each session.

The first day began with a warm welcome by Conference coordinators, Caroline Bowden and Sara Charles. The first session, ‘charism’ engaged participants immediately; after hearing from Patricia Harris about the current works of the sisters of Mary Ward’s institute who ‘found what needed doing and did it’, Margaret Susan Thompson, who shared research about the adaptations made in the United States as sisters relocated from their European Foundations, and Leonardo Rossi, who discussed the refoundation of the Ursulines in the nineteenth century (via zoom), a lively discussion emerged among participants with a special interested in the distinction between lay and choir sisters in various congregations. Session Two was dedicated to exploring enclosed convents and external contacts in the medieval period with an emphasis on women of influence that were unusual for the time in which they lived. Sara Charles presented on the life of Leoba and her influence on the early Christian movement in Germany through the lens of her hagiography, *Vita Leobae*, and Virginia Bainbridge considered the royal and noble ladies who were patrons and nuns of Syon Abbey. The morning continued with the third session, focusing on war and hostile environments encountered in the missions. Paul Shaw presented eyewitness accounts of religious sisters practicing nursing during the Crimean war, and Ruth Ferris gave a detailed description of the first foreign visitation to the Loreto IBVM mission houses from 1902–04.

Following the lunch break, the day continued in two parallel sessions, one on Missions and Education, featuring Maria Patricia Williams who discussed the Montessori Method from 1909–60, Geraldine Noonan, focusing on La Sainte Union Des Sacres Coeurs and educational needs in Ireland from 1863–1930, and Dierdre Raftery and Catriona Delaney, who demonstrated use of both archival and oral sources in their research on the evolving mission of the RSCJ community in Ireland. Simultaneous presentations were held about missions and vocations led by Ana Jelnikar, Barbara Vesey, and Victoria Pearson. The group reconvened to hear a plenary address by Carmen Mangion demonstrating the mission work of peace taken on by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace through ‘justicizing’ their ministries during the period of 1960–90.
A very full day concluded with the presentation of legacy awards to the co-founders of HWRBI, Carmen Mangion and Caroline Bowden, in recognition of their stalwart contributions to the history of women religious. The commissioning editor from Boydell & Brewer, Peter Sowden and Bronagh Ann McShane presented a session full of practical tips for how to get scholarly work published, followed by an exciting book launch celebrating McShane’s book, *Irish Women in Religious Orders, 1530–1700: Suppression, Migration, and Reintegration*, as well as a lovely dinner that afforded participants time to socialize with old friends and make new ones.

Day two of the conference continued to explore mission by addressing instability and change in the first session of the day. Kristof Smeyers presented on the return home of martyrs of Shanxi, specifically St. Almandena and Zuster Marie Adolphine. Karen Hanrahan presented Irish oral histories of women who left religious life, and Jane McBride, who summarized her oral history project with the Belgian missionary sisters, the Zusters van de Jacht, whose congregation was formed specifically for missionary work. The morning break included a visit to the Sacred Heart Archives led by archivist Barbara Vesey, before the second session of the day reconvened to focus on educational ministry. Helen Knight presented data on the secondary education for Catholic girls in English in government funded schools from 1870–1920, Caroline Lesemann-Elliot presented on music education in convent schools and disability at English convents in exile with specific emphasis on the organ, and Melissa Ursin demonstrated how the ministry of education evolved through analysis of the Constitutions the Sisters of the Presentation in San Francisco from 1809–1993.

The afternoon sessions engaged concepts of vocation, mission, and networks, featuring Araceli Rosillo-Luque and Brian Heffernan, whose research on the Discalced Carmelites in early modern Portugal and the twentieth-century Dutch missions respectively complemented one another and created engaging dialogue among participants, and Anselm Nye provided an overview of the ways in which the English Dominican Sisters in Norway endeared themselves to their missionary community. The day concluded with William Barham’s reflection on the rise and decline of the Grahamstown Sisters, Brian Casey’s presentation on the Franciscan missionaries in Kasaba and Singapore from 1946–62, and Rocio Suaraze Vallejo, via zoom, who presented on the duties of nuns in Visigothic Hispania. As a bonus, Paul Shaw, archivist to the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, generously led a tour the following day to sites around Roehampton associated with women religious.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity for dialogue and meaningful discussion about mission and movement, engagement in archival and oral history research methods, and time to explore emerging
scholarship in a community that is deeply committed to the work of telling the often-overlooked stories of women religious.

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