

Friends of Caroline Chisholm

NEWSLETTER

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Dr Carole Walker's tenacious research has, once again, turned up important historical evidence about Caroline Chisholm's life. Starting with a snippet in Mrs Chisholm's well-thumbed *Scrapbook*, Carole eventually went on to locate a *Home News* report of her 1852 speech that included the snippet and other new information, as recounted in Carole's article in this issue.

Major biographies link Caroline's decision to become a Catholic to her 1830 marriage to Archibald. Her *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry goes further, imputing the decision to his being 13 years "her senior and a Roman Catholic". The *Home News* report is clear: at the age of 16, Caroline "had persuaded" herself she "ought to declare [herself] a Roman Catholic by conviction". With her usual thoroughness, she had thought long about the matter, as she had about "relieving human suffering" and persevering in the "purpose" she had set herself, not allowing

any fear to dissuade her nor a tear to be shed, as related in the *Home News* report.

The report of Mrs Chisholm's speech puts to rest some of the recent unfounded speculation about her familial upbringing and homelife. Caroline stressed indebtedness to her mother and acknowledged, in a revealing aside, the formative influence of Legh Richmond. He was an Anglican minister whose Evangelical writing and preaching were greatly admired early in the 19th Century.

Carole's informative article leaves open such questions as to when Caroline became a Catholic, whether she did decline confirmation in the Anglican Church, and whether the influence of the Rev Richmond was through his stories for children alone or that along with his local preaching. Let's hope that Carole's researches continue and that they further enlighten us, answering these and other questions.

New Research on Caroline Chisholm

In December, 2020, Dr Carole Walker emailed to the editorial team the following account of her latest research findings. Carole is the author of *A Saviour of Living Cargoes — The Life and Work of Caroline Chisholm*. This well-researched academic biography is, thankfully, still in print (see details in footnote 2, page 4).

Firstly, I hope that all the readers of the *Friends of Caroline Chisholm Newsletter* are managing to stay safe and well in these very uncertain times. Here in the UK we are in another lockdown, not quite as stringent as the first lockdown, but nonetheless we are not getting out much. One of the better things to come out of the Covid 19 pandemic is the time to catch up on all the things you had wanted to do but never had the opportunity because of too many other commitments.

A Tantalizing Snippet in the Caroline Chisholm Scrapbook

I always promised myself I would one day look for the newspaper article of which there was only a snippet in amongst the rather chaotic but wonderful collection of newspaper articles and memorabilia in the Caroline Chisholm scrapbook.¹ The incomplete cutting gave a hint as to the date, but no information with regard to the paper in which the article appeared. It was a report on the occasion of a banquet given by Mr Wyndham Harding on board the *Ballengeich* before it sailed. Caroline Chisholm responded to the toast to her:

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“I rise as a wife and mother to acknowledge the toast my friend Mr Harding has given. And I will take this opportunity of mentioning one or two facts in my life which may be interesting as showing how I was led to the task in which the greater part of that life has passed. The idea of life being a task leading when well performed, on to the expressible happiness of heaven, I learnt at the knee of Legh Richmond when a mere.... “

Here the torn scrap of paper finished. You can understand how tantalising that snippet was and why I so desperately tried to find it. It has haunted me ever since.

It is about ten years since I completed my book on Caroline Chisholm² and slightly longer since completing my Doctorate thesis. Try as I might at that time I could not find any record of reports of the banquet. There were papers that mentioned the banquet, but no record of Caroline Chisholm’s response to the toast. Technology has moved on apace since then and I hoped that I would now find what I wanted. I did indeed. There is a whole raft of new newspaper cuttings concerning Caroline Chisholm online. In amongst new newspaper cuttings released by the British Newspaper Archive in March 2020 are several under the banner of *Home News - A Summary of European Intelligence for India and the Colonies*.³

Home News of Saturday 2nd October 1852 reports Mrs Chisholm’s Speech in full. The paragraphs I was particularly interested in read:

“I rise, as a wife and a mother, to acknowledge the toast my friend Mr Harding has given. And I will take this opportunity of mentioning one or two facts in my life, which may be interesting, as showing how I was led to the task in which the greater part of that life has been passed.”

“The idea of life being a task leading when well performed on to the inexpressible happiness of heaven, I learnt on the knee of Leigh [Legh] Richmond when a mere child. And I remember myself after this, in my childish play, playing with boats of walnut-shells, as removing the separated members of families across the sea to rejoin each other in a foreign country. And I also distinctly remember putting a Wesleyan preacher and a Roman Catholic priest in the same shell, as being part of my play. My notions on these points must have arisen from the practice of my mother of letting me stop in the room when neighbours called, some of whom were travellers, and men of thought, and talked of missions — missionaries then beginning to be a topic of conversation. These ideas continually haunted me as I grew up. And I had the advantage of a mother, to whom I owe whatever energy of character I have; for it was her constant maxim to me, never to shed a tear, or allow a fear to turn me from my purpose.”

“My mind also spontaneously turned to religious speculation; so that I had persuaded myself, at 16, that I ought to declare myself a Roman Catholic by conviction, and decline to be confirmed according to the ritual of the Church of England, in which I had been bred up. Shortly after this, I engaged myself to the bond of marriage. The man to whom I was betrothed was an officer in the Indian Army....”

I thought the full report would give me more detail of Legh Richmond, but the article gives us no more information than that contained in the snippet in the scrapbook. My earlier researches concentrated on Legh Richmond’s⁴ life and his appointment to the ministry at

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Turvey in Bedfordshire in 1805, which is close to the town of Northampton. In 1814 he was appointed chaplain to the Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria. Legh Richmond was definitely Anglican with a very keen interest in Bible Societies. He often preached at the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts and particularly at meetings of the Bible Society, and Auxiliary Bible Society. Anniversaries of the institutions were held in Northampton during the period of Caroline's informative years. Legh Richmond preached sermons at these celebrations. He was also one of the first clergymen to found a village Friendly Society, whereby small amounts of money paid by the poor regularly would ensure payments during ill health when unable to work. Legh Richmond wrote several stories about country folk. These tales were originally published by the Christian Guardian between 1809 and 1814 and were then published by the Religious Tract Society under the title of *Annals of the Poor*.⁵ When Caroline implied she "learnt on the knee of Legh Richmond, when a mere child" she could have been suggesting that she had his works read to her, or she had read the tales herself, or that she had attended many of his lectures in Northampton, often at All Saints Church, not far from the Mayorhold where Caroline lived.

The *Home News* article may have disappointed with regard to Legh Richmond, but the comments concerning Caroline's mother, Sarah Jones, are extremely interesting. Regrettably very little is known of Sarah and I am still unable to find any further information. In the above paragraph, however, Caroline notes that "the practice of my mother of letting me stop in the room when neighbours called, some of whom were travellers, and men of thought, and talked of missions — missionaries then beginning to be a topic of conversation" very much allowed her to formulate her religious views listening to the topics of conversation. Sarah Jones had radical ideas in the education of her daughter. It is also significant that Caroline stated, "I had the advantage of a mother, to whom I owe whatever energy of character I have; for it was her constant maxim to me, never to shed a tear, or allow a fear to turn me from my purpose." Caroline obviously believed that she owed her strength of character to her mother. I would suggest that Caroline spoke of her mother with pride that she had helped shape her own remarkable life in helping others. This totally refutes recent suggestions that Caroline's mother disowned Caroline when her father died in 1814. Also, when Sarah died, Caroline was included in her mother's will with monies divided amongst the siblings.

My earlier researches were unable to find any evidence of Caroline's conversion to the Catholic faith. Caroline was 16 in 1824. Father, the Rev. William Foley was granted a licence for the [Catholic] chapel lately erected in the town [of Northampton] on the 19th October 1825.⁶ Earlier researches found that many of Father Foley's records were accidentally destroyed. No records were found in Brighton, where Caroline and Archibald spent some time following their marriage at the end of 1830.

It would have been an extremely brave decision for a young girl of just sixteen to convert to the Roman Catholic faith. Many people at that time were turning to non-conformist denominations, as they disliked the Church of England rituals. However, Roman Catholics were still feared and shunned.⁷ Caroline's words quite possibly mean that she felt she found her religiosity was more inclined to the Roman Catholic faith and that she would decline to be confirmed according to the ritual of the Church of England, the church in which she "had been bred up". Had Caroline so declined, she could still have been confirmed in the Catholic Church about the time of her marriage to Archibald. Alas, details of which decision she made remain elusive.

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This is not quite where I thought finding the report of Caroline's reply to the toast for her health at the departure of the *Ballengeich* would take me; but the research and its outcome have proved extremely interesting nonetheless, and I hope you too will have found my account of interest.

1. Held at the Museum of Victoria, in Melbourne. Accessible on line.
 2. *A Saviour of Living Cargoes - The Life and Work of Caroline Chisholm*. Available from Connor Court Publishing, Australia and Amazon UK.
 3. *Home News* was published in London from 1847 until 1896 and distributed via various overseas agents. It was originally named *Home News for India, China and the Colonies*, but by 1850 it went under the banner of *Home News - A Summary of European Intelligence for India and the Colonies*. *Home News* was part of the 19th Century 'steamship press'. It could take up to four weeks or so for the paper to reach India, its main outlet. However, the proprietors asserted that as the paper was published on the 7th and 24th of every month it would be available in time for dispatch from Marseilles and therefore "all intelligence for the reader in India" is "bought down to the latest hour". (British Newspaper Archive, Blog, 30.3.2020)
 4. 1772-1827.
 5. Such tales as: *The Dairyman's Daughter*, *The Young Cottager*, *The Negro Servant*, *The Cottage Conversation*, *A Visit to the Infirmary*.
 6. *Northampton Mercury*, Saturday, 22 October 1825.
 7. Several days of rioting in London occurred during the Gordon Riots of 1780, which were motivated by anti-Catholic feeling, which would still have been prevalent during Caroline's teenage years.
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The *Home News* report which is the subject of Dr Carole Walker's article is reproduced as an attachment to this issue. The orphan lines at the end of the report have been added at the bottom of the PDF version. In her reported speech, Caroline Chisholm referred to "the Church of England, in which I had been bred up". Though it may sound strange to modern ears the expression "been bred up" has a literary lineage. It was used in the Mary I section of Goldsmith's *History of England*, 18th edition, 1842, page 156: "Mary was strongly bigoted to the popish superstition, having been bred up among churchmen". Queen Mary was Henry VIII's daughter by Catherine of Aragon. She attracted the appellation "Bloody Mary" for her failed attempts to restore the realm to the Old Faith. The term was not used in Goldsmith's popular history.

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The www.mrschisholm.com website was unavailable during December, 2020. It was not hacked. The explanation is much more prosaic. The annual fee for the site's Wordpress software was missed. It has now been paid, and the site was fully restored in mid January.

the distribution of a pocketful of stars, garters, and other matters of more substantial value. The late Duke was Commander of the Forces, Field Marshal in the British army, Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Foot Guards, Colonel-in-Chief of the Rifle Brigade, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Constable of the Tower, Commissioner of the Royal Military College and Military Asylum, Ranger of Hyde-park, and Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Hants. A blue ribbon of the Garter and a red ribbon of the Bath are also vacant by the death of the Duke; in addition to which he held the Chancellorship of the University of Oxford, and was Master of the Corporation of the Trinity House.

In our generation, no public character has been written about so much as the Duke. Southey and Sir Archibald Alison have done all that literary panegyrist and rhetorical historians could do to popularise the exploits of Wellington. In some of our military memoirs, addressed to the readers of light and "interesting" literature, graphic pictures of Wellington are to be found; and fiction in our military novels has been profuse in depicting his manner and his style of living. Biographies by Sir T. E. Alexander, Captain Moyle Sherer, Mr. W. H. Maxwell, and many others, have from time to time been addressed to the public;—but we repeat that, hitherto, by far the best and most expressive character of the Duke of Wellington has been written by himself. To Lord Mahon—whose functions may now, we suppose, be considered as begun—the world must look for a complete and authentic biography of the man, Arthur Wellesley:—the warrior already lives in the pages of Napier.

It is an interesting fact, that, when the first passages in the Peninsular campaigns were severely criticised in Parliament, a young man, the son of a manufacturer, defended them again and again with admirable talent and great readiness in debate. This was the late Sir Robert Peel:—whose epitaph the Duke of Wellington lived to speak nobly and touchingly in the House of Lords. The characters of these two men were often misunderstood and their motives mistaken. It will fall now to the task of the same pen to record in biography the vicissitudes of the popularity of both. Literary history furnishes us with no other instance of so interesting a legacy as the bequest of the Wellington and Peel papers to Lord Mahon.

The vacancy caused in the Chancellorship of the University by the Duke of Wellington's death has caused much stir already at Oxford. A meeting of the resident members of Convocation was held with indecent haste within a few hours after the news arrived, when several names were brought forward and canvassed. To the Earls of Derby and Shaftesbury and the Duke of Newcastle, have since been added Lord Rosse, the Earl of Carlisle, and the Earl of Ellesmere; and it has excited some surprise that no one thought of Lord Mahon, his Grace's literary executor. A requisition was finally adopted in favour of Lord Derby.

A curious fact in the life of the Duke is noticed in an Irish paper. It was the first act of his public life. He was a member of the Irish House of Commons in 1792 and '93—and he had the singular good fortune to move the address to the Crown, in answer to the Lord-Lieutenant's speech. That speech contained a paragraph about the advisability of relaxing the penal laws against Catholics, and in coming to the paragraph the young aide-de-camp was most vehement and emphatic in his panegyric on its policy. This man, in his old age, was the Prime Minister in whose administration the final measure was consummated.

A French journal, the *Constitutionnel*, speaking of the Battle of Waterloo, observes that the Duke placed his army in such a position that it could not retreat. He saw 600 officers fall around him, and 10,000 soldiers perish under his eyes. Mounted on horseback behind the English lines, in the midst of a terrific fire, his countenance calm and serene, though with an air of sadness, he replied to one of his generals, who said to him, "But, if you should be struck, tell us what is your plan?" "My plan," he replied, "consists in dying here unto the last man."

The charities of the Duke were extensive, although, having always expressed a great objection to the publication of his benevolence, it was generally supposed that he was parsimonious in his contributions to the public institutions. His private expenditure in this way may be inferred from the fact that, upon the late prosecution of the woman Stanley and her male accomplice, it appeared that they had obtained upwards of 500*l.* from him during a period of seven years. Of the hospitals and charitable institutions he was connected with, we may mention that his Grace was President of the Royal Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital, President of the Royal Maternity Charity, President of the Eastern Dispensary (Great Alie-street), Patron of the St. George's and St. James's Dispensary, Patron of the Royal Society of Musicians, President of the Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress, besides being a liberal though unostentatious supporter of many of the charitable institutions of the metropolis. He was also the oldest governor of the Charter-house (except the Duke of Buccleuch), a governor of King's College, a trustee of the Hunterian Collection, and President of the United Service Institution.

It has been discovered that the Duke of Wellington has left a will, though the contents of it as yet remain undisclosed. It is dated as far back as 1818, and was found late on Saturday night, at Coutts's Bank. The existence of this document was, we believe, unknown even to those most nearly connected with the Duke, who, though of late years he had ordered several wills to be prepared, yet could never make up his mind to execute them. The Duke appears to have always avoided the subject of his own death, and the arrangements connected with it. Those who knew him best hardly ever remember to have heard him talk of such matters, and, in illustration of this feature in his character, a curious fact may be mentioned. Every one knows that he received, in the course of his long and distinguished life, many presents of immense value, and that Apsley House is filled with a great variety of objects, the interest attached to which can hardly be overrated. This collection, as personal property, was, of course, exposed to the risk of dispersion after the Duke's death; and, with a view to its preservation, an act of Parliament was obtained, enabling his Grace, within a space of two years, to make heirlooms of such objects as he wished to see inalienably attached to his title and estates. Singularly enough, it was not till the last day of the time thus granted that he signed the documents requisite to make the act available.

In all the memoirs that have been published of the Duke, doubts are expressed about the exact day of his birth; but the point has been determined by a correspondent of the *Times*, who publishes a private letter written by the Countess of Mornington in 1815, in which she says, "In answer to your inquiry respecting my son, the Duke of Wellington, I inform you that he was born on the 1st of May, 1769."

A meeting has been held at Manchester for the purpose of considering the propriety of erecting in that city some permanent memorial of the late Duke. Sir John Potter presided. The feeling of the assemblage was earnest and unanimous, and a large sum was subscribed, chiefly in contributions of £100 each. It was supposed that before the expiration of a week the subscriptions would amount to £10,000.

At a meeting of the Board of Aldermen, held on Wednesday last, a resolution was adopted, on the motion of Sir Peter Laurie, for the appointment of a Committee of the whole Court, to co-operate with that appointed by the Court of Common Council, with reference to the funeral of the Duke of Wellington.

The whole Prussian Army has been put into mourning, by a Cabinet order, for three days, and a deputation of Prussian officers has been appointed to attend the funeral of the Duke of Wellington, their late and only Field Marshal.

At the meeting which was convened by the Heads of the University of Oxford, three days after the death of the Duke of Wellington, to take into consideration the nomination of his Grace's successor, a requisition was framed and signed by the Heads and Fellows declaring the Earl of Derby to be eminently qualified for the Chancellorship. This nomination has given much dissatisfaction to the Liberal party.

The postponement of the funeral of the Duke, and, consequently, of the general mourning, till after the meeting of Parliament—a measure demanded on public grounds as enhancing the tribute of respect to his memory—has produced some alarm in the Manchester world. It is feared that the labour of the looms and factories in the production of fancy goods for the last four months will be thus frustrated. But considerations of this nature must, nevertheless, give way to the higher interest involved on this occasion of universal mourning.

Emigration Memoranda.

MRS. CHISHOLM'S SPEECH.

THE following interesting speech was delivered by Mrs. Chisholm at the banquet given on board the *Ballengeich*, chartered by Mr. Wyndham Harding, and despatched some time since from Southampton. The time that has elapsed since has not diminished its interest. We are indebted for the means of placing it before our readers to the *Leader*, in whose columns it appears exclusively:—

"I rise, as a wife and a mother, to acknowledge the toast my friend Mr. Harding has given. And I will take this opportunity of mentioning one or two facts in my life, which may be interesting, as showing how I was led to the task in which the greater part of that life has been passed.

"The idea of life being a task leading, when well performed, on to the inexpressible happiness of heaven, I learnt on the knee of Leigh Richmond, when a mere child. And I remember myself after this, in my childish play, playing, with boats of walnut-shells, at removing the separated members of families across the sea to rejoin each other in a foreign country. And I also distinctly remember putting a Wesleyan preacher and a Roman Catholic priest in the same shell, as being part of my play. My notions on these points must have arisen from the practice of my mother of letting me stop in the room when neighbours called, some of whom were travellers, and men of thought, and talked of missions—missionaries then beginning to be a topic of conversation. These ideas continually haunted me as I grew up. And I had the advantage of a mother, to whom I owe whatever energy of character I have; for it was her constant maxim to me, never to shed a tear, or allow a fear to turn me from my purpose.

"My mind also spontaneously turned to religious speculation; so that I had persuaded myself, at 16, that I ought to declare myself a Roman Catholic by conviction, and decline to be confirmed according to the ritual of the Church of England, in which I had been bred up. Shortly after this, I engaged myself to the bond of marriage. The man to whom I was betrothed was an officer in the Indian army. And before I betrothed myself to him, I told him I felt within myself that a commission had been given me from above, to devote all my energies to relieving human suffering, wherever the scenes of his duties might lie abroad. That, as this might interfere with his domestic enjoyment, it was right he should know before we were joined in marriage.

"He at once agreed to marry me on this condition, to which, as Mr. Harding has stated, he most faithfully adhered, and is at this day adhering: as because we found that the time was come when it was absolutely needful that a competent agent to look after the interests of the emigrants on landing in the colony, whom we had sent out in 1850 from this country, and Capt. Chisholm at once resolved to go to Australia at his own expense, and we accordingly halved our small income, and separated. In this, then, I have been favoured by Providence, as I have been in my children, with whom God has blessed us, and whose nurture and education was the only point my husband and myself had agreed to reserve before we married, as taking the first place in our plan of life. We went to India, and there I founded an institution for the daughters of European soldiers, called a 'Female School of Industry,' several of which still exist. In 1838 we visited Australia for change of air. There I found some hundred single females, unprotected, unemployed; numbers more continuing to arrive in ships; and almost the whole falling into an immoral course of life, as a necessary result. I applied myself to the task of getting these poor creatures into safety, and decent situations as servants. I met with discouragement on all hands; but I persevered, and I succeeded in my object. The governor, at length, allowed me to sleep in a small room with the girls at the Emigrants' Barracks. It was, it is true, full of rats, as I found the first night I entered it; but these I poisoned, and stuck to my post. I was thus able to get a personal influence and control over the girls. I founded a college to get them engagements in the Bush, and I got out some hundreds of girls into good places. In pursuing this object I at length found it necessary to take large parties of these unprotected girls into the Bush to procure places, and that I must accompany these parties myself. This I did for several years. The parties varied from 100 to 150 each. So I worked on for many years in Australia. I advanced much money for the conveyance of emigrants; but so honestly was I repaid these advances that all my losses did not amount during this period to 20*l.* And, under God's blessing, I was the means of procuring engagements, and of settling no less than 1000 souls, in the aggregate, before I left—a vast proportion of whom being young females, were saved from falling into a life of infamy. I shall never forget the warmth of my reception this day, and that of the health of my husband and children, whom I have bred up in the maxim

to trust to themselves, and work for themselves; and never, if they have any regard for their mother's memory, to look for Government patronage, or take Government pay." page 686 END