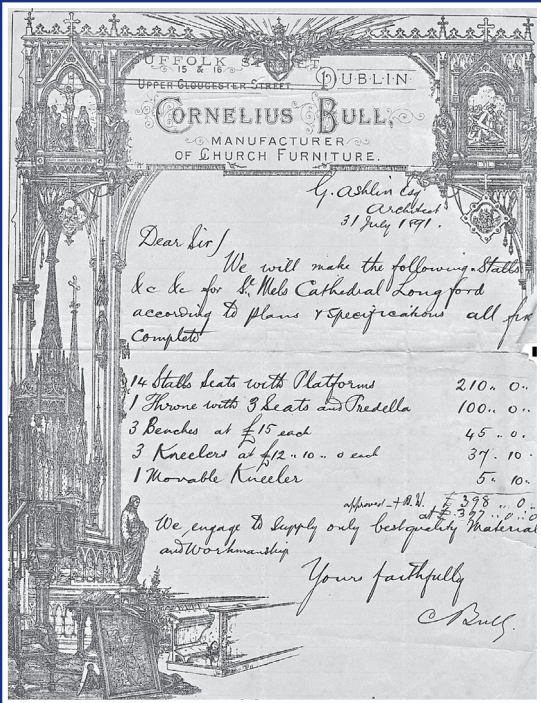
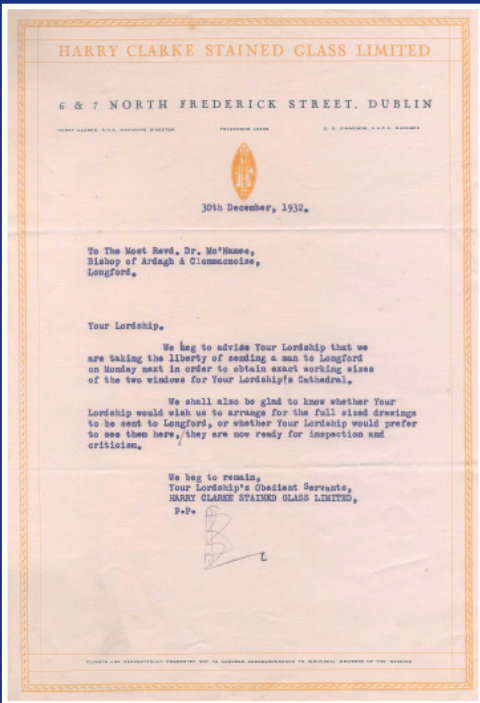




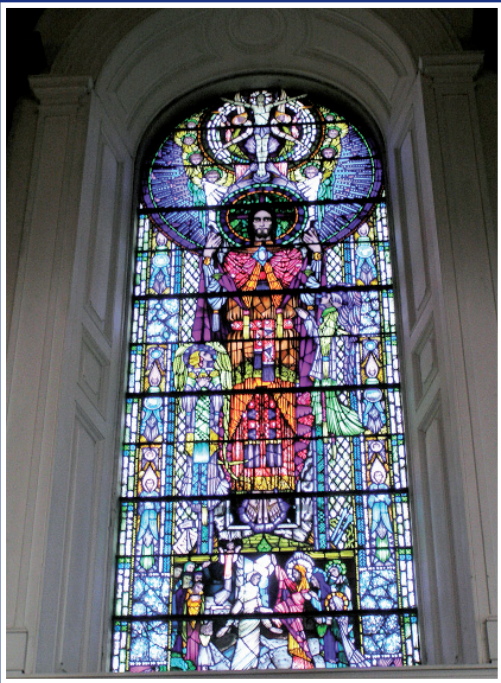
Treasures



Sanctuary receipt, 1891.



A letter from Harry Clarke Stained Glass Ltd.



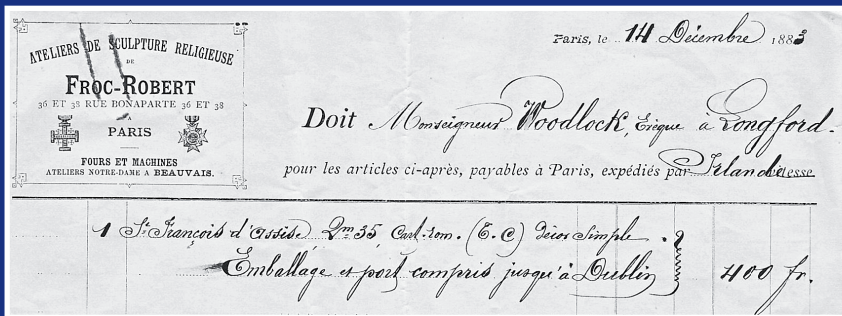
One of the Harry Clarke Studio stained-glass windows.



Our Lady's Altar.



Blessed Sacrament Altar.



St. Francis Statue receipt, 1883.

artefacts in the collection was St. Mel's Crozier, the Bell of Fenagh, the reliquary of St. Cailin of Fenagh as well as the later medieval Crozier from Limoges, France. These objects rooted in Ireland's Christian heritage are a powerful connection to our shared past.

One of the most eye-catching items in the museum was the collection of vestments and mitres, ceremonial robes and headaddresses worn by past bishops and priests. These vestments were richly decorated with coloured embroidery and gold thread which would glimmer in the candlelight during Mass. Other objects of interest to individual parishes throughout the diocese included the collection of ceremonial trowels. These richly-decorated trowels were used during the ceremonies held for laying the foundation stone of a new church, and indeed the trowel used during the ceremony for St. Mel's in 1840 was still in the museum. The museum was home to a remarkable collection of wooden Penal crosses. The Penal Laws, (17th century - 1829), caused the Catholic Church in Ireland to go underground. Penal crosses were used by priests in their ministry and their small size meant that they were easily carried around and hidden during times of extreme religious prosecution. Also in the collection were 5 altar stones which would have served as altars for outdoor Masses.

There were a number of other, more personal items in the collection. Everyday objects such as wooden milk noggins, even pats of "bog butter"; butter wrapped and buried in the acidic soil of the bog to preserve it. Some objects had a wider interest, including the uniform for Chevalier Joseph Higgins Sheeran, a Knight of the Golden Spur of St. Sylvester; a button from the uniform of Dr. Huggins from his service in the Battle of Waterloo (1815) and a delicate Easter 1862 book-marker, donated by the grand-niece of Oliver Goldsmith. These personal tokens sum up the personal affection for the Cathedral held by the people of the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, regardless of religious background.

Stained Glass

The majority of the windows were of simple patterned-coloured glass. There were a number of important stained glass windows, including two by The Harry Clarke Stained Glass Studio located in the transepts, on either side of the sanctuary. These windows, constructed of stained glass in deep, rich colours, repre-

sented the Blessed Virgin and the Sacred Heart, surrounded by hosts of angels and smaller narrative panels. As the windows date to the 1930s, it would appear that they may not have been by Harry Clarke himself, who died in 1931, but his influence is strong in the design and the windows display the excellent craftsmanship which the Studio was famous for.

Despite being damaged in the fire, thankfully it is likely that these can be fully repaired and returned to the Cathedral in the future.

Altars and Statues

St. Mel's Cathedral had a fine collection of beautiful statuary. All of the individual plaster statues were made by renowned Parisian sculptors, Froc-Rob-

ert, in the 1880s. Remarkably, two statues survived; ironically these were the figures of St. Mel and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The marble altars were carved by other equally skilled craftsmen. The original high altar was by local sculptor Joseph Farrell, whose father, Terence, carved for the beautiful angels that adorn the walls of the Cathedral. Another

noteworthy altar is the magnificent Pieta altar, by George Smyth.

Museum

St. Mel's Cathedral was the home of the Diocesan Museum which housed the majority of the precious historical artefacts owned by the Diocese. The majority of these artefacts were religious objects, but there were

many other curiosities in the museum including objects from around the world, sent back by missionaries and others for the benefit of the diocese. Many of these items were destroyed by the fire, but others managed to survive and are currently being conserved and restored through the National Museum.

The most important