

CHRIST THE KING

INTRODUCTION

In May 2015, dlr Lexicon's Local Studies Department was contacted by Jeremy Kenny regarding an archive of information relating to the Christ the King sculpture by the much celebrated sculptor Andrew O'Connor (1874-1941), now situated in the grounds of dlr Lexicon.

Jeremy's grandfather Edward J. Kenny and his father Edmond A. Kenny were instrumental in the preservation and eventual installation of this sculpture at Haigh Terrace in December 1978. Edward J. Kenny was a solicitor and kept extensive files outlining the gestation and context of the project and these files add a great deal to what was to become an intriguing story of cultural and clerical politics spanning almost half a century from the early 1930s to the late 1970s. It was in Edward's backyard of his house on Rochestown Avenue that the sculpture was stored for many years due to a stalemate situation regarding its proposed location. Jeremy and his cousins recall playing on the sculpture in the garden during those years.



Father and son, Edward J. Kenny and Edmond A. Kenny c.1950s.



At the unveiling of Christ the King, December 1978 from left: Councillor Tony Finucane, Dáithí P. Hanly, Dr Martin O'Donoghue TD, Mr David Andrews TD, Edmond Kenny and Barry Desmond TD

The Kenny family donated this important archive of files in June 2015 which contains letters, newspaper cuttings, booklets, receipts and photographs that will be of substantial interest to art and cultural historians and indeed the general public. Following a preliminary meeting with colleagues in UCD's James Joyce Library in the summer of 2015, it was agreed that this archive could be the focus of a mutually beneficial partnership between dlr Lexicon and UCD School of History MA in Archives and Records Management Programme.



Not long after the sculpture was unveiled in 1978, the Christ the King sculpture and the National Maritime Museum, New Zealand, quickly fighting and then been transferred to the Christ the King sculpture.

Edmond Kenny, Cathaoirleach Councillor Betty Coffey, Dáithí P. Hanly, O Chuan go Sliabh V1,n! (Summer 1995)

This exhibition and the online version, created by the UCD students serve to highlight the material contained in this archive. Undoubtedly there is ample scope for further scholarly research with the wide-ranging material contained in these files.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have happened without the dedication and professionalism of the team at the MA Archives and Records Management, Dr Elizabeth Mullins (Director) and Dr Julie Brookes (Lecturer). They coordinated the work of the MA and MLIS students whose names are listed on a separate dedicated panel. A special thanks to Emanuela Aioanei for her extensive work on this project. The staff in the Digital Library at UCD provided invaluable assistance on digitization and on the online exhibition. Thanks to Julia Barrett, Audrey Drohan, Daniel Montes and Orna Roche from the Digital Library, also to Dr John Howard, Librarian, Carmel O'Sullivan, Associate Librarian and Ursula Byrne, Head of Development and Strategic Programmes at UCD's James Joyce Library.

With grateful thanks to Mairead Owens, County Librarian, Nigel Curtin, Local Studies Librarian, Kenneth Redmond and Ciara King from the Arts Office, Olivia Hearne, Richard Howlett and Gary Wall of Concept2Print, Brendan Watters of Conservation Solutions, The Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery, The Irish Photo Archive, The Irish Times and The National Gallery of Ireland.

Last, but certainly not least, thanks to Jeremy Kenny and the Kenny family for their generous donation of the Christ the King archive which forms the basis of this exhibition.

CHRIST THE KING

THE KENNY FAMILY

This exhibition is made possible due to the generosity of the Kenny family who donated an important archive of files relating to the Christ the King monument in June 2015. As is evident from the range of panels on display, Edward and his son Edmond played a pivotal role in the story of Christ the King. This panel gives further information about the Kenny family and their connection with the Kingstown/Dún Laoghaire area.



Kenny family group in the grounds of Páirc na Coille, Rochestown Avenue. Edward is standing, 2nd from the left and Edmond is standing, 6th from the left. It was in the back garden of this house that the Christ the King monument lay for several decades

WILLIAM PETER KENNY (1818-1904)

The first Kenny to arrive in Kingstown was William Peter Kenny, originally from Raheenleigh, Cullohill, Durrow, Co. Laois. William married Angela Sheridan and they bought a house on 4 Eblana Avenue which they ran as an 'Eating House' with a racquet court at the rear. He expanded his business and eventually owned four public houses, 108 Upper Georges Street, Kingstown, and three others in Dublin. His family home was at Beechmount, Mount Merrion. They had five sons and two daughters; Edward, Vincent, Joseph, William, Jack, Nora and Angela.



EDWARD JOSEPH KENNY (1879-1971)

Edward was educated at Blackrock College and trained as a solicitor. He lived in 7 Crofton Terrace, Dún Laoghaire with his wife Teresa (née Farley). He bought another house on Rochestown Avenue with 10 acres called Páirc na Coille (today it is the Sefton Estate). Edward and Teresa had eight children. His practice was based in Eustace Street and was called Sheridan Kenny. Edmond was born on the 11th June 1918 in Crofton Terrace, shortly after his mother had enjoyed a walk on the West Pier!



EDMOND ANTHONY KENNY (1918-2010)

Edmond was also educated at Blackrock College and, like all his uncles and brothers, he became a chartered accountant. He married Ruth Vigne McDaniel and they had six children. Their first home was in 2 Waltham Terrace, Blackrock. However with a growing family of three and another on the way in 1962, Edmond bought 7 Crofton Terrace from his parents and moved back to the seafront house of his birth. Edmond followed in his father's footsteps and worked tirelessly to find a suitable site for the the Christ The King Monument. In 1978, he was successful with the help of the Dún Laoghaire Borough and a dedicated committee.



Edward and Edmond Kenny c1950s



This rare image shows three of Edmond's children playing on the sculpture in the back garden of Páirc na Coille in the late 1960s with Peter at the apex, Sara on left and Jeremy on right.

CHRIST THE KING

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL OF HISTORY, UCD

The MA Archives and Records Management, taught in the School of History in UCD, is the entry-level professional qualification for archivists and records managers in Ireland and globally. UCD's programme has an international reputation and has long-standing accreditation by the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland).

The MA programme qualifies students to care for and provide access to the historic and future memory contained in a range of records, from medieval manuscripts to born digital material. The curriculum provides students with practical knowledge based on a strong theoretical foundation. Collaborative projects with practitioners, such as the Christ the King project, are key to the ways that students learn to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice.



Emanuela Aioanei with Local Studies Librarian Nigel Curtin in the Local History Study Room.



Emanuela Aioanei working on the Christ the King archive in dlr Lexicon's Local History Study Room.



UCD's MA Archives and Records Management class 2015-2016 on a visit to Marsh's Library.

The MA Archives and Records Management class comprises an international cohort of students with a variety of academic backgrounds and life experiences. The programme is ideal for both recent graduates and those seeking a career change. It is also ideal for individuals with advanced academic degrees seeking a professional qualification. Since programmes for the education of records professionals were first established in UCD in the 1970s, successful graduates have found work in a range of archives, libraries and corporations in Ireland and globally.



UCD's MA Archives and Records Management class 2015-2016 on a visit to dlr Lexicon.

Thanks to Dr Elizabeth Mullins, Director and Dr Julie Brookes, Lecturer in MA Archives and Records Management plus the following students, including some from UCD's Masters in Library and Information Studies who worked on the Christ the King project: Emanuela Aioanei, Daniel Ayiotis, Emma Doran, Elizabeth Dowling, Cillian Fearon, David Gunning, Linda Hickey, Shannon Hiday, Maria Lesslie, Thomas Lonergan, Rosarie Lordan, Liam Maguire, Sinéad McDonald, Meabh Ní Chonchubhair, Niamh Ní Charra, Grace O'Brien, John Robinson, Barbara Scally, Erin Sterling, Katharine Tingle.



CHRIST THE KING

A STORY OF A SCULPTURE

Christ the King was originally known as the Triple Cross. Andrew O'Connor entered the Triple Cross in a competition held by the French for a Monument to the Dead of the Great War. O'Connor was awarded the Legion d'Honneur for the Triple Cross and it was first exhibited, in plaster, at the Paris Salon of 1926.

Following the 1925 Encyclical Letter which instituted the Feast of Christ the King, the announcement was made by the Dún Laoghaire Committee that Andrew O'Connor was the Committee's choice of sculptor. Eventually, the sculpture was cast by Alexis Rudier in a Parisian foundry, just before the outbreak of World War 2.



The sculpture is 18 feet high and weighs approximately three and a half tons. The three scenes depicted on the tall bronze pillar symbolize three distinct aspects of Christ's life—desolation, consolation and triumph. A shrouded, weary Jesus, crucified on the cross, the heavy canopy symbolizing the day of gloom and despair; the resurrected Christ with arms outstretched; and Christ pulling clear of his bondage and emerging to greet his followers. These scenes follow clockwise around the mast of the pillar, the arms of the cross dividing them. The sculpture narrows to angular sheets of bronze until the large bronze plaques which form the lower section.

The inscription is included in Irish, English, French, German and Spanish. The final plaque lists the Trustees from 1931 and 1974 and also lists the Members of the Council of the Borough of Dún Laoghaire for 1976

There is appropriateness also in the name of the place where the monument is to be erected. It was formerly, and is now once again, known as Dun Laoghaire, from one of our native pagan kings, in whose time St. Patrick brought the Faith to Ireland; then for a period it was named, after another king, 'Kingstown'; henceforth it is to be associated with Royalty in a new and infinitely more exalted way, as if to show that all potentates, be they pagan or Christian, native or otherwise within the four seas of Ireland, must ever bend the knee to Jesus Christ, 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords.' M. Toher, CC.

ART.
The Greeks and the supreme beauty of material things.
The Middle Ages and its mysticism.
The austere splendour and majesty of the great Italians.
The charm, moderation and feminine beauty of the French.
But an Irish monument must have other things—faith, emotion, passion; intensely expressed.
In general form? The Cross; symbol of Irish faith.—The form common to all Irish art from the earliest times to our own days.
There is neither front nor back to this monument, but the story of the faith of a people unfolds itself around the Tree of Life.
The crucified Son of God; alone, abandoned in the shadow of the rent curtains of the Temple; symbol of the desolation and long suffering of the Irish people.
Jesus, gentle and compassionate, bound to the Cross, but looking far out offering consolation and hope to those unhappy and helpless in their misery.
Christ The King—Triumph of the Faith which for fifteen centuries has inspired and guided unwaveringly His people in the firm belief that in His good time Christ, with justice and charity, would rule the world.
ANDREW O'CONNOR.

Alexis Rudier
Fondeur PARIS

Rudier was based at Malakoff in Paris.

TRUSTEES OF THE
CHRIST THE KING MONUMENT
MR JOHN M. DEWITT
MORRISGABLE WALSHE
ANDREW J. KEOGH
MR ANTHONY A. DEWITT
EDMUND A. KENNY
DARTIE P. HANEY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
BOROUGH OF DUN LAOGHAIRE
1976

Base of Sculpture, listing Trustees and Councillors

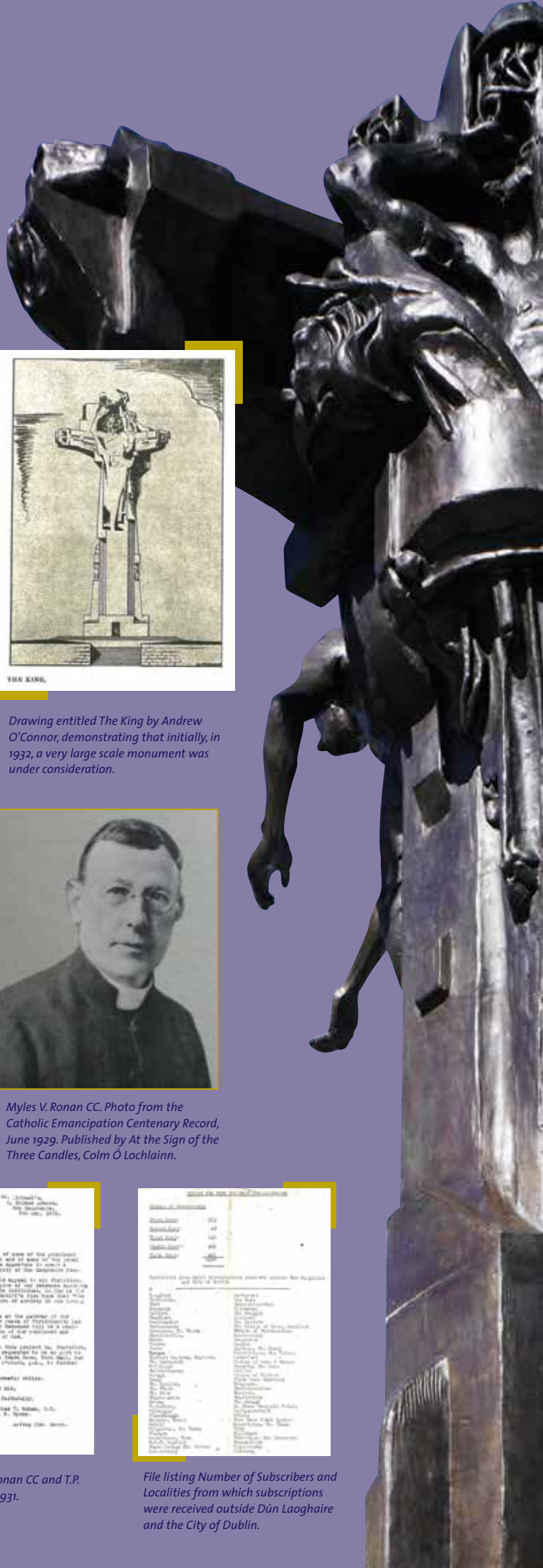
'But an Irish monument must have other things: - faith, emotion, passion; intensely expressed. ANDREW O'CONNOR

COMMISSIONING THE MONUMENT

AND GATHERING SUPPORT 1931-32

The first correspondence relating to the monument to Christ the King and the possibility of erecting it in the vicinity of Dún Laoghaire pier is noted in the letter dated 5th May 1931, from Myles V. Ronan CC and T.P. Byrne. They ask for a meeting on Tuesday 12th May to 'further this object'. On 9th June, a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, with the Chairman of the Borough Corporation, Mr. J.M. Devitt and with clergy and members of all political parties in attendance. The decision was made at this meeting to erect a monument to Christ the King. Minutes exist for a later meeting, dated 2nd September 1931 and those present on that occasion included the following: Mr. J. M. Devitt (in the Chair), Archdeacon Murphy, Father Ronan, Messrs A.J. Keogh, E.J. Kenny, E.J. Mallins, J. Murphy, S. Ó hUadhaigh, T. Eldon, G. Dixon, J.J. Flynn, M. Moynihan, J.J. Devlin, A. J. Sheeran, John O'Sullivan and M.P. O'Donnell. Apart from a detailed discussion on the design of the statue, the fund-raising aspect is highlighted: *'It was decided to publish a second list of subscriptions in the "Irish Independent" the following Saturday and to publish further lists at short intervals, so as to keep the matter before the public.'*

One month later on 3rd October 1931, F.W. Taylor of The Commissioners of Public Works, in a memorandum to The Reverend Myles V. Ronan CC, notes that the Minister for Finance 'would be willing to sanction a lease to Trustees for your Committee for the purpose of the erection of the Monument of the site selected by them, measuring 100 feet by 100 feet on Victoria Wharf Dún Laoghaire. The term of the lease would be 99 years and the rent 10/- (ten shillings) per annum'. They also stipulate that they should *'spare no effort to ensure complete satisfaction as to the artistic and architectural merits of the plans before building commences'*.



Drawing entitled *The King* by Andrew O'Connor, demonstrating that initially, in 1932, a very large scale monument was under consideration.



Myles V. Ronan CC. Photo from the *Catholic Emancipation Centenary Record*, June 1929. Published by At the Sign of the Three Candles, Colm Ó Lochlainn.



Letter from Myles V. Ronan CC and T.P. Byrne dated 5th May 1931.



File listing Number of Subscribers and Localities from which subscriptions were received outside Dún Laoghaire and the City of Dublin.



COMMISSIONING THE MONUMENT

AND GATHERING SUPPORT 1931-32

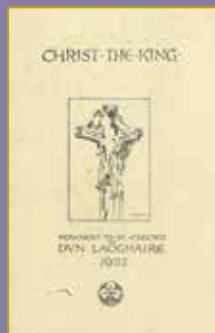
Fundraising for the monument began in earnest in 1932 which saw, not only the concert in aid of Christ the King monument, held at the Town Hall, Dún Laoghaire on Friday 22nd January 1932 but also the publication of a special promotional booklet entitled *Christ the King: Monument to be erected Dún Laoghaire 1932*. This was produced by Rev. Louis L. Potter CC and T.P. Byrne of "St. Michael's", 4 Eblana Avenue, Dún Laoghaire'. The brochure outlines the gestation of the project in the excerpt below and such was the enthusiasm for the monument, it was decided to broaden the fundraising to a national level.



Front cover and double spread programme of the Programme of Concert in aid of Christ the King Monument in Dún Laoghaire. This was held on 22nd January 1932 in the Town Hall.



Fundraising acknowledgement card for subscriptions to Christ the King Monument 1932.



Front cover of Christ the King: Monument to be erected Dún Laoghaire 1932 and double spread showing O'Connor's 'Sacred Fire' and 'Inspiration 1903'.

'The Jubilee Year of 1925 saw the publication of the Encyclical letter of our present illustrious Pontiff, Pope Pius XI, published on December 11th, which proclaimed to the Christian World the Supreme and Sovereign Kingship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and instituted the Feast of "Christ, the King" (last Sunday in October)... In the six years that have intervened since the publication of that memorable Encyclical, many Parishes in Ireland have erected statues to Christ the King in order to proclaim to the world their loyal subjection to His rule.

In the year 1931, a small but representative group of laymen conceived the idea of erecting a similar token of allegiance at the Gateway of our Nation, and the movement was initiated with the warm approval of Monsignor Walsh, Vicar General and Parish Priest of Glasthule, as well as with that of the Venerable Archdeacon Murphy, Parish Priest of Dun Laoghaire'.

'FROM CHRIST THE KING BOOKLET'.

ANDREW O'CONNOR

SCULPTOR (1874-1941)

Andrew O'Connor was a well-known Irish American sculptor and his work is on display throughout the world. Among his best-known works are the statue of *Abraham Lincoln* in Springfield, Illinois; *Peace by Justice* in The Hague; *Tristan and Iseult* in the Brooklyn Museum and *The Lafayette Monument* in Baltimore. Apart from numerous public monuments and galleries in the United States, he is also represented at the Musée d'Art Moderne (Paris), Tate Gallery (London) and there is a fine collection of his work in Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane, several of which are reproduced in these panels.



Andrew O'Connor at work in his studio. © Andrew O'Connor Archive Collection, ESB Centre for the Study of Irish Art, National Gallery of Ireland.

He was born on 7th June 1874 in Worcester, Massachusetts and was the son of a sculptor. He studied in London (in the studio of the painter John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)) and settled in Paris in the early 1900s where he was strongly influenced by Auguste Rodin (1814-1917) whom he knew. In 1906 he was the first non-French sculptor to win the Second Class medal for his statue of *General Henry Ware Lawton* (now in Garfield Park, Indianapolis) and he won a Gold Medal in 1928 for his *Tristan and Iseult*. He entered his *Triple Cross* in a competition held by the French for a Monument to the Dead of the Great War and, in 1929, he was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour for this work.



Self Portrait in marble by Andrew O'Connor, inscribed and dated A.O'Connor 1940. © Collection: Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane. (Item 878)



Portrait of Roderic, Andrew O'Connor's son wearing a cap. It was to be part of 'Le Débarquement' (The Arrival) Monument, which was an unexecuted project for a war memorial for Washington D.C. O'Connor worked on the project from 1918 to 1931. The portrait is in marble and the date label is 1939. © Collection: Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane. (Item 874).



Portrait of Andrew O'Connor's wife Jessie Phoebe Browne in bronze. c.1904-1914. Jessie was O'Connor's chief model for numerous sculptures, both male and female, in bronze, plaster and marble. © Collection: Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane. (Item 867).



Andrew O'Connor in a Studio with a cast of the Christ the King monument featuring the image of Desolation, Christ crucified on the cross beneath a heavy canopy symbolizing the day of gloom and heartbreak. From Christ the King brochure, 1932.

O'Connor was married to Jessie Phoebe Browne and they remained in France until the outbreak of war in 1914. During this period, their four sons Hector, Owen, Roderic and Patrick were born.



ANDREW O'CONNOR

SCULPTOR (1874-1941)

Andrew O'Connor was always proud of his Irish background and contemporary critics found his work inspired by 'that strange celtic romanticism with its vivid dramatisation of life that is so typically Irish' (S. Vincent writing in 'The Studio' magazine, 1937). He visited Ireland regularly and was known to be living and working at Leixlip Castle in the 1930s. He died on 9th June 1941 in his home at 77 Merrion Square.

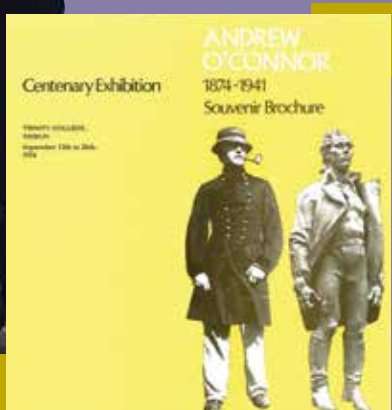
In the year of the centenary of O'Connor's birth, an important exhibition was held in Trinity College Dublin from 12th-26th September 1974. Photographs of the Triple Cross/Christ the King, in addition to a 24 inch high maquette in plaster were on display at this exhibition and the hope was expressed by all who saw it that this great work would soon be erected in Dún Laoghaire. Andrew's wife Jessie died on 19th February 1974 a few hours after the birth of his great grandson, Andrew. Three generations of the O'Connor family can be seen in the photo on this panel when the plaque at 77 Merrion Square was revealed on 11th September 1974.



Dr James White (centre), Director of the National Gallery and a Director of Dublin Tourism, who unveiled a plaque at 77 Merrion Square to Andrew O'Connor. Also present were Patrick O'Connor, son on right and Andrew O'Connor, grandson and Andrew (six months old), great-grandson on left. Published Wednesday 11th September 1974, photograph by Kevin McMahon. © The Irish Times



General Jean Lafayette is a reduced model of O'Connor's Lafayette Monument, commissioned by the Board of Estimates of Baltimore. It was commissioned in 1918 and a plaster model completed in 1922 when O'Connor was still living in Paxton, Massachusetts. The monument was erected in Washington Place, Baltimore in c.1929. O'Connor described it as 'not only [as] a memorial to the distinguished French Officer... but a monument to romance, beauty and vitality'. © Collection: Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane. (Item 1709).



Andrew O'Connor 1874-1941 Souvenir Brochure. Centenary Exhibition held in Trinity College, Dublin September 12th to 26th, 1974.



Memorial plaque to Andrew O'Connor on the wall of 77 Merrion Square, unveiled on 11th September 1974.

STATUE'S ARRIVAL IN IRELAND

AND REACTIONS TO IT

1948-51

'It is a personal view of a gifted artist, but a nightmare, a foolish representation, that may suit the fancy of some futurist artists of Montmartre but shall be a scandal for good, plain, Catholic people ... I find it too, very ugly'. **COUNT BIVER OF PARIS**

Myles V Ronan notes in a letter to 'Eddie' dated 30th November 1948 that he had received a letter from Count Biver of Paris, expressing his concern re O'Connor's statue of Christ the King. Count Biver was the author of a book on Père Lamy, a Parisian mystic.

A variety of opinions regarding the artistic merit of Christ the King monument emerged and these panels demonstrate the passion felt on both sides of the debate amongst art experts and architects, politicians and lay people and above all, the clergy. Some commentators found it too modern or even ugly for their taste. In 1949, the sculpture was still in Paris and a delegation consisting of Liam S. Gogan (Member of the Art Committee, Municipal Gallery and Keeper, Art Division, National Museum), Sean Ó hUadhaigh and architect James William O'Sullivan, representing the Christ the King Committee inspected the sculpture. They prepared detailed reports dated 24th and 25th February 1949.

They described it as 'his crowning work, after a life of considerable and highly regarded achievement'. They gave an appraisal of his influences, Rodin (with the figures 'so to speak, "drawn" out of the art material'), possibly El Greco and the "Jesuit" sculpture of the 17th century, with its use of 'the dramatic, to combat the decline of Faith' and also the romantic, nationalist oeuvre of the late Oliver Sheppard. They refer to the influences of Irish shrines such as the diocesan shrine of Clogher and O'Connor's awareness of ecclesiastical Christian antiquities in the National Museum in Dublin. They note in their report that 'Much will depend on the adequacies of the siting and the character of the substructure and other subordinate items. They should not be allowed to diminish interest in the grouped figures by excessive detail or ornament'. Their opinions were endorsed in a letter from Fr Alphonsus O'Farrell C.P. of Paris- the Irish Province of the Passionist Order, dated 6th February 1949, quoted on adjacent panel. Fr O'Farrell had resided in Paris since 1939.



Meanwhile, difficulties arose over the transportation of the statue back to Dún Laoghaire from Rouen and many months passed and numerous letters exchanged over such topics as the weight of the monument, the packing, insurance, export permit from the French Government and road transport from Rudier's foundry in Malakoff, Paris to the quay at Rouen.

'As a resident in Dún Laoghaire for over 60 years, I know of no site for this Monument to compare with that occupied at present by the Obelisk erected in 1823 to commemorate the landing in Ireland of George IV, whose character was trenchantly dealt with by Byron and Thackeray. This particular site, if it could be obtained, would most effectively mark the actual point of entry into Ireland with the seal of our religion as a Catholic Nation'

JAMES WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN, ARCHITECT, 25TH FEBRUARY, 1949.

O'Sullivan comments on Gogan's report and considers the potential site for the monument, and the most suitable base for it, concluding that it would be a 'National disaster' if the opportunity is lost for acquiring Andrew O'Connor's 'greatest work' for Dún Laoghaire.

STATUE'S ARRIVAL IN IRELAND

AND REACTIONS TO IT
1948-51

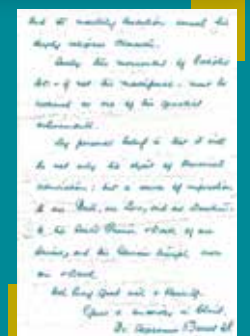
Meanwhile, back in Ireland, discussion continued over the potential site for the installation of the sculpture. On 23rd April 1949, in a letter to Hector O'Connor, Seán Ó hUadhaigh states that 'it was unanimously decided, upon the motion of Very Revd. Dr. Myles Ronan PP, seconded by Councillor George Dixon, that we would go on with the erection of the Monument as soon as possible in the People's Park, Dún Laoghaire'.

However, following the sculpture's arrival in Dublin, it was offered to the Corporation of Dún Laoghaire for erection in the Borough, but due to an objection made by the Parish Priest of Dún Laoghaire, its installation was deferred indefinitely. In view of this unexpected problem, it lay for sometime in two packing cases in the People's Park, Dún Laoghaire. It was subsequently brought to the Archbishop's house in Drumcondra where it was temporarily set up for examination by John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin. He was clearly unimpressed by the fact that he had not been approached either by the artist or by the organising committee and he swiftly dismissed the viewpoint of the 'unknown priest' Fr. Alphonsus O'Farrell in Paris.

'Surely this monument of Catholic Art – if not his masterpiece – must be reckoned as one of his greatest achievements. My personal belief is that it will be not only the object of Universal Admiration: but a source of inspiration to our Faith, our Lord, and our Devotion to his Sacred Passion & Death of our Saviour, and his Glorious triumph over sin and death'.

FR. ALPHONSUS O'FARRELL, 6TH FEBRUARY 1949.

By the early 1950s, there was no sense that this situation would be readily resolved and the sculpture was removed for safe keeping to the back garden of Edward J. Kenny's house at Páirc na Coille on Rochestown Avenue where it remained for nearly 30 years.



John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin. Copyright Irish Photo Archive item 121-1712 <http://www.irishphotoarchive.ie>

Archbishops House
Drumcondra
Dublin NE3

7th April 1951

Dear Mr Boyd

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter in which you state that the Organising Committee of the Monument to Christ the King at Dún Laoghaire has been informed that I desire to discuss the design of the monument with the Promoters.

I fear that the statement is scarcely accurate. I was called in by the City Manager and Chairman of the Dún Laoghaire Borough, and in courtesy to their request agreed to see the Organising Committee.

It interests me to learn that the monument as designed and cast was never approved nor even commissioned by your Committee.

It interests me much more to read that the Committee, being anxious to have the monument comply with the principles of art laid down by the Church, sent some persons - among them an unknown priest, to view the statues. It does not seem to have occurred to your Committee that it was the Archbishop of the place in which the monument was to be erected who, in Canon Law, is alone competent to give an imprimatur to what purports to be a sacred figure or set of figures.

I regret very much to have to say that at no stage of the proceedings was I approached by the artist or by the Organising Committee.

In deference to the wishes of the City Manager and the Borough Chairman, who very courteously called on me, I should be willing to meet you and the members of your Committee, but I should be grateful if the date could be later than the 18th inst.

I am

Yours very faithfully

John C. McQuaid
Archbishop of Dublin etc.

P.R. Boyd, Esqr.

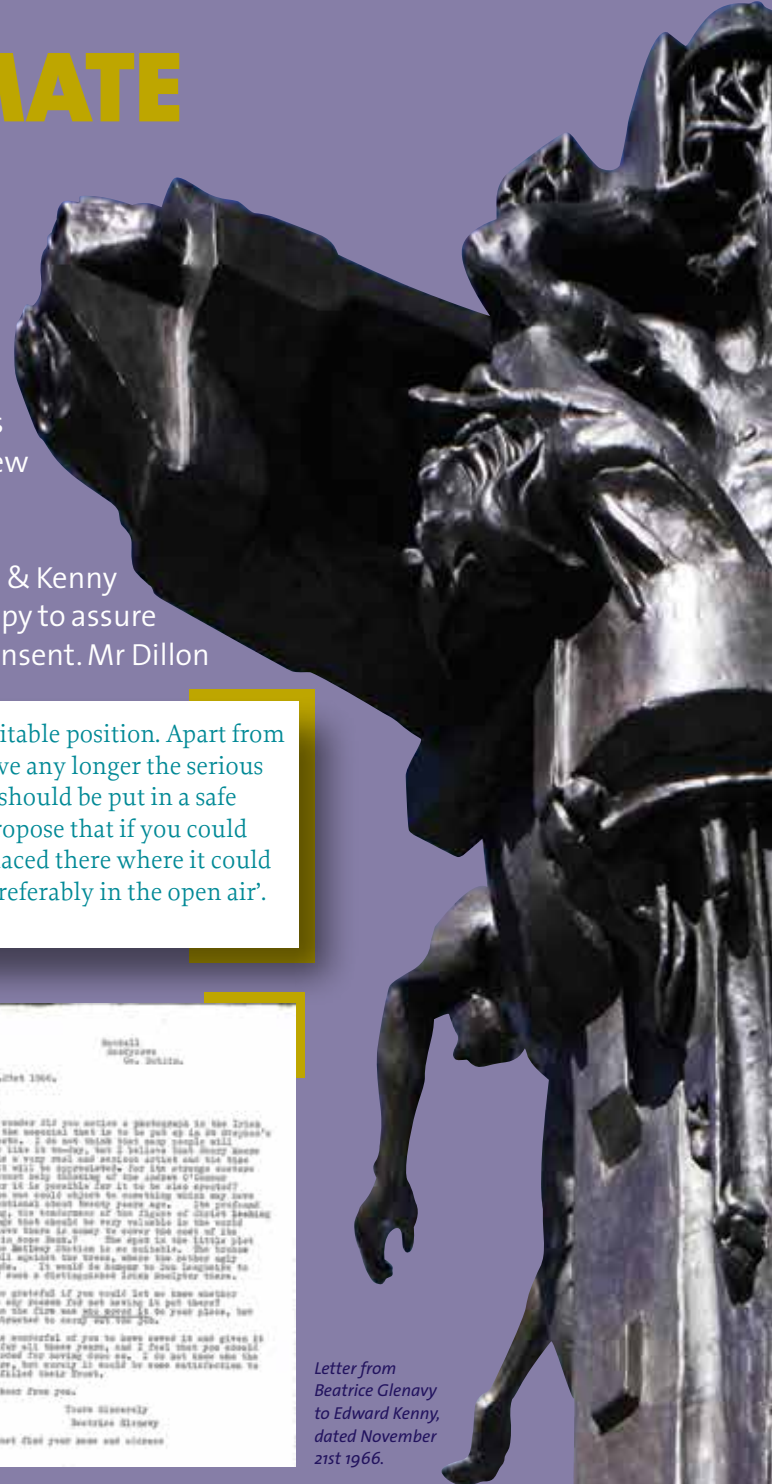
Saml,
Newtownpark Avenue
Blackrock

Letter from the Archbishop of Dublin to Mr Boyd, dated 7th April 1951.

YEARS OF STALEMATE

Following decades of uncertainty, attempts were made to break the stalemate with ecclesiastical authorities and develop plans for the installation of the monument. These panels highlight the period from 1966-76 during which time momentum gathered to find a solution to the impasse. As local support increased and clerical opinion towards the statue softened, arrangements were made to establish a permanent home for Andrew O'Connor's work.

In 1966, Patrick O'Connor, the sculptor's son asked Sheridan & Kenny if he could have the sculpture himself and he would be happy to assure the Archbishop that he would never erect it without his consent. Mr Dillon



'I feel that this sculpture should no longer be left in such an unsuitable position. Apart from the indignity offered to such a sacred subject I have no wish to have any longer the serious responsibility of having it on my property. I am concerned that it should be put in a safe place where it can be properly viewed by the public. I therefore propose that if you could find a suitable position for it I the National Gallery, it should be placed there where it could be seen as a work of art of historic interest in a dignified setting, preferably in the open air'.

OCTOBER 1968 FROM E.J. KENNY TO JAMES WHITE OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

TD suggested selling the sculpture to Patrick for £1 seeing as the 'Ecclesiastical Authorities' would never approve of this work. He added that 'They are fully within their rights in banning a work of art on theological grounds. (They would however be in error if they banned it on artistic grounds)'. Meanwhile, in January 1966, Dr Monk Gibbon recounted that he had received a letter from the Private Secretary of His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, Most. Reverend John Charles McQuaid, in which he states that "The Archbishop has no concern with the O'Connor Sculpture".



Letter from Beatrice Glenavy to Edward Kenny, dated November 21st 1966.

Fellow artists joined in the discussion as noted by Beatrice Glenavy's letter to Edward Kenny in November 1966. The Trustees, for their part were keen to make progress and Dáithi P. Hanly suggested to the Trustees that the sculpture should be placed temporarily in the National Gallery of Ireland where it could at least be viewed by the public. Edward Kenny wrote to Dr James White, Director of the National Gallery in November 1968 but no final decision was arrived at at this point. The matter was raised again in 1970 when the same proposal was made in a letter to the Governors of the National Gallery but Dr James White in a letter dated 8th February 1971 regretted that 'the scale and size of this figure makes it quite impossible for them to accept it on loan'. They were at pains to point out that they were deeply impressed with the high artistic quality of the work and urged the Trustees to find a suitable site for it out of doors as soon as possible.



Photo of celebrated artist Beatrice Glenavy who lived in Rockall, Sandycove who championed the sculpture and pleaded that it be given the recognition and public audience it deserved. Copyright Irish Photo Archive Item B205-572. <http://www.irishphotoarchive.ie>

YEARS OF STALEMATE

From the late sixties, there was definitely a softening of ecclesiastical attitudes towards the statue.

Dermot Ryan, who had been appointed to the post of Archbishop of Dublin in 1971, appeared to want to draw a line under clerical interference in the project as is evident in his letter below.

The newspaper cutting notes that the journalist brought Sarah Churchill to see the statue and she called her subsequent volume of poems after O'Connor's abandoned sculpture. Her poem, dated 4th September 1968 alludes to Edward Kenny:

He is a solicitor

Custodian of the Unwanted Christ

That lies among the grasses and the weeds



Sarah Churchill visited the garden where Christ the King lay and called her book of poetry *The Unwanted Statue and other poems*. It was published in 1969.

Over the years, various approaches were made to the Trustees requesting either to purchase or to erect the sculpture. Offers to purchase were made from a number of interested parties in Ireland and the United States. A request was made to exhibit it in the Music Department of University College Cork where, in 1968, they planned to host an Exhibition of Sculpture by Irish Artists, organised by Cork Sculpture Park Committee from April to September 1969. In October 1974, a request was received for Sandymount and Merrion Residents' Association to erect it on the seafront in the Sandymount area. All such requests were refused by the Trustees.



Letter to the Very Reverend Christopher Mangan. P.P. from the Archbishop of Dublin. 18th December 1974.

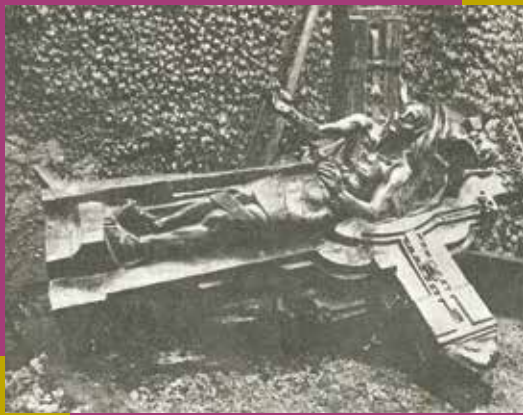
On 30th August 1976, the Christ the King Committee Trustees received the news they had waited over thirty years to hear; the Borough Council had approved their proposal for the erection of Andrew O'Connor's sculpture in Dún Laoghaire.

'I am not at all clear that I am directly involved in this project. I should just like to say that I see no reason for intervening with the proposed arrangements for the erection of the stature'. **DERMOT RYAN, ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.**

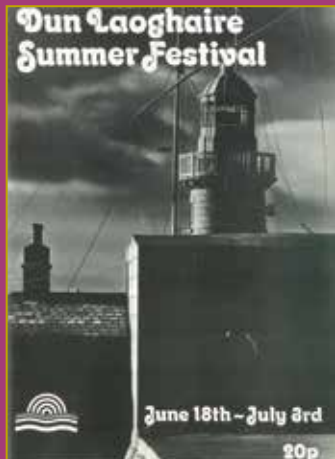
THE STATUE'S EVENTUAL INSTALLATION

From the mid 1970s until December 1978, when the Christ the King sculpture finally found its home on Haigh Terrace, there was a great deal of correspondence re the exact site. At the very outset, possible locations had included St. Michael's Wharf, Victoria Wharf, Killiney Hill and the People's Park. In a letter to Mr Herbert Unger dated 14th April, 1976, Dáithí P. Hanly describes the suitability of Haigh Terrace versus the other options. The forecourt of St. Michael's Church was ruled out as it would be dwarfed by the shopping centre and also 'being in the forecourt of a Roman Catholic church, it would be seen as being attached to that church, rather than an ecumenical monument'. Three other sites

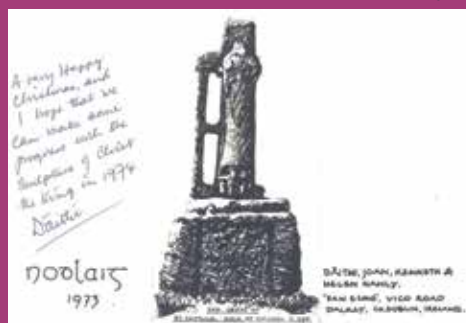
were discussed, firstly Beach Gardens, sea side of the coast road between the baths and the East Pier. This was dismissed due to a planned extension of the baths at this time. Secondly, a site near the end of the East Pier was discussed but deemed unsuitable both by Mr Unger and Mr Hanly. A third site on the sea side of the railway bridge at Crofton Road, on the way down to the old coal harbour was discussed but also rejected. Haigh Terrace was the final agreed site for the Christ the King sculpture.



Christ the King monument resting in Edward Kenny's garden in Páirc na Coille, Rochestown Avenue in 1974

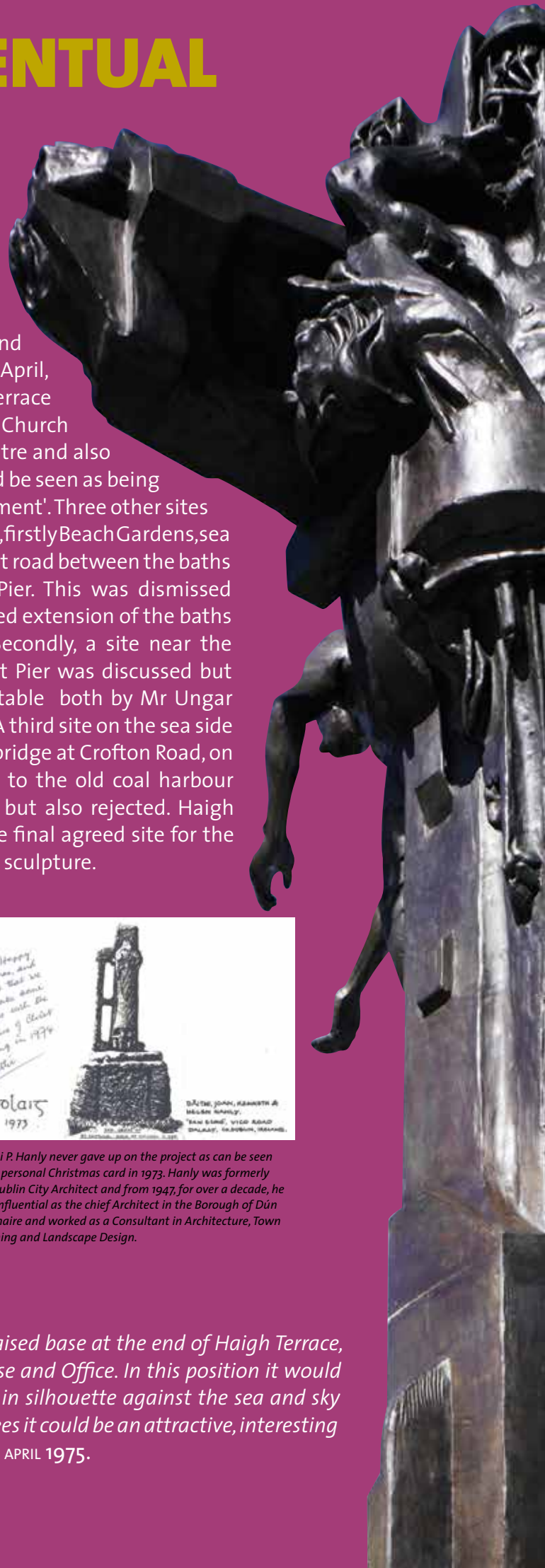


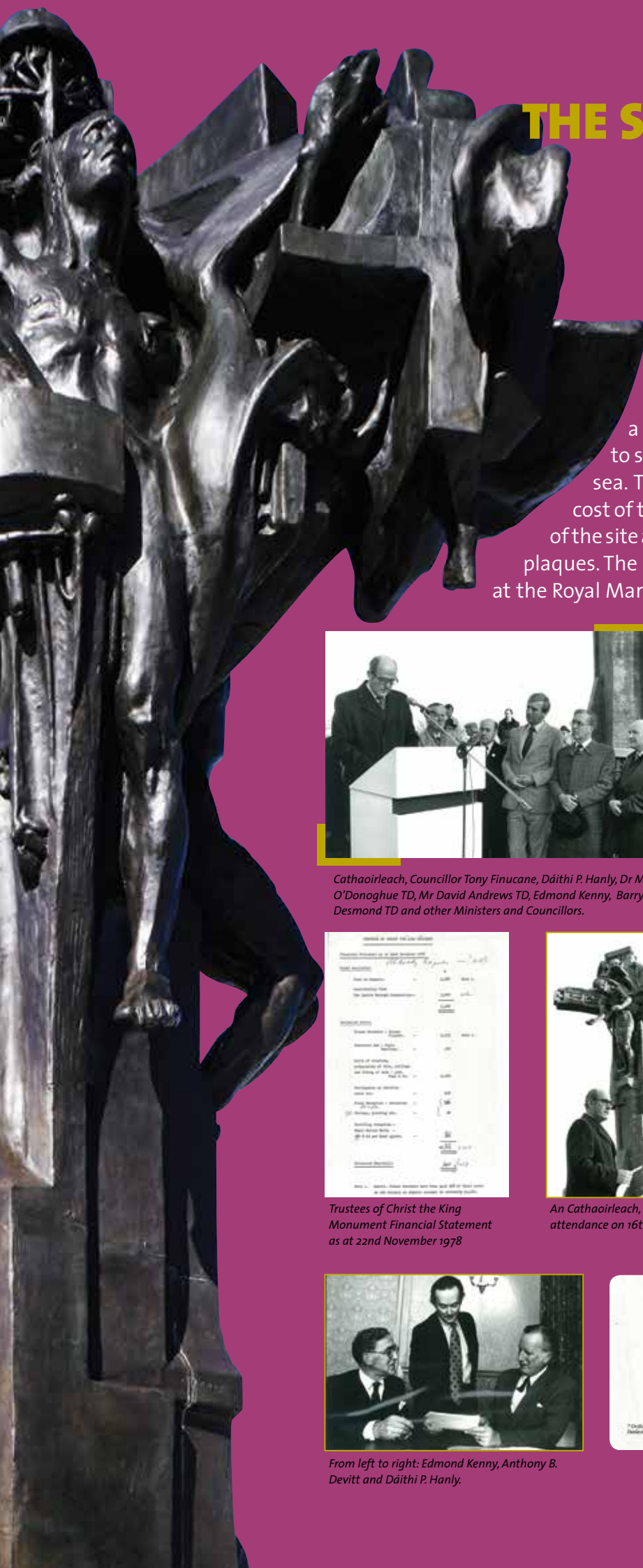
Dún Laoghaire Summer Festival June 18th-July 3rd 1977. This was the second Festival of the Borough of Dún Laoghaire. On page 13, in a feature on the monument, the author notes 'In the event it has not proved possible to have the casting assembled in time for this Festival, but the Trustees believe that its repair and erection with inscription will be accomplished next year.'



Dáithí P. Hanly never gave up on the project as can be seen in his personal Christmas card in 1973. Hanly was formerly the Dublin City Architect and from 1947, for over a decade, he was influential as the chief Architect in the Borough of Dún Laoghaire and worked as a Consultant in Architecture, Town Planning and Landscape Design.

'It is proposed that the monument should be placed on a raised base at the end of Haigh Terrace, in Dún Laoghaire – between the Harbour Master's old House and Office. In this position it would overlook the seafront and the harbour and would be seen in silhouette against the sea and sky from George's Street. By trimming some of the shrubs and trees it could be an attractive, interesting and even inspiring addition to the area'. HANLY TO D. HOGAN. 25 APRIL 1975.





THE STATUE'S EVENTUAL INSTALLATION

On 16th December 1978, the Christ the King sculpture was eventually unveiled at Haigh Terrace, Dún Laoghaire. Following lengthy negotiations between Dún Laoghaire Corporation and the Trustees, it was agreed, by a majority, to allot £3,000 from its amenity fund to site the statue at Haigh Terrace overlooking the sea. The Financial Statement below alludes to the cost of the installation which involved the preparation of the site and the railings plus the insertion of the bronze plaques. The reception, following the unveiling was hosted at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dún Laoghaire.

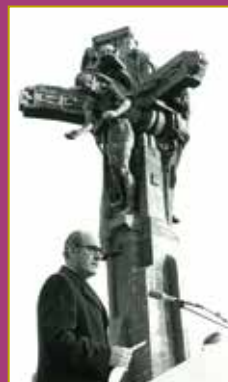


Cathaoirleach, Councillor Tony Finucane, Dáithi P. Hanly, Dr Martin O'Donoghue TD, Mr David Andrews TD, Edmond Kenny, Barry Desmond TD and other Ministers and Councillors.

The large audience in attendance included the Cathaoirleach Councillor Tony Finucane, Professor Martin O'Donoghue TD, David Andrews TD, Edmond A. Kenny, Dáithi P. Hanly, Anthony B. Devitt and members of the Council of the Borough of Dún Laoghaire.



Trustees of Christ the King Monument Financial Statement as at 22nd November 1978



An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Tony Finucane and members of the Clergy and the Council in attendance on 16th December 1978.



From left to right: Edmond Kenny, Anthony B. Devitt and Dáithi P. Hanly.



Draft invitation for the official unveiling to be held at noon on 16th December 1978.

CHRIST THE KING

RESTORING THE MONUMENT IN 2014

In May 2012, Christ the King was carefully removed from Haigh Terrace to facilitate the construction of dlr Lexicon at Moran Park. The sculpture underwent a painstaking restoration process by Brendan Watters of Conservation Solutions. Watters has significant experience in the maintenance and conservation of public artworks and period houses. Other projects have included the O'Connell Street monuments and Oliver Sheppard's Pikeman sculpture in Wexford Town.



Detail of restoration work by Brendan Watters in the grounds of Cabinteely House. PHOTO Ciara King.

The restoration process took seven weeks in all, the first six weeks in the yard at Cabinteely House. Watters described how daunting a project it was, due not only to the sheer size of the sculpture but also its advanced state of deterioration and the fact that it was lying down. He also noted that approximately 22/24 individual castings make up the entire sculpture. The first step was to erect a temporary roof over the monument to protect it against the elements while works were carried out. Then, two men spent four weeks cleaning the sculpture by hand

using bronze brushes and scouring pads. For the next stage, wax was applied with natural oil-based paints (black, brown and green). An area of 1 foot square (at a time) was heated by a special heat torch so when wax was applied, it melted over bronze covering the pores (pin holes) which, when dry, would protect the bronze. This procedure took two men a fortnight to complete. The final week was spent onsite at dlr Lexicon where a further four coats of clear wax were applied, two coats more than normal because of its maritime location.

Brendan Watters remarked on the extensive interest by the general public in the process of restoration. It has enhanced the sculpture visually, making the modelling and contours of the figure clearer and it has slowed down the oxidization process by protecting the bronze surface'.



Details from Christ the King sculpture in May 2012 in Haigh Terrace (PHOTO Ciara King) and May 2016 in dlr Lexicon.

I found it exciting and satisfying to see it come back to life as I worked on the restoration and feel honoured to have been involved in preserving this beautiful and significant work of art for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. BRENDAN WATTERS

CHRIST THE KING

RELOCATION IN 2014

This panel charts the move of Christ the King in May 2012, from the Haigh Terrace position it occupied for thirty four years since its official launch in 1978, to its temporary home at Cabinteely House for restoration and back to the western end of Moran Park on 10th June 2014.



Christ the King on Haigh Terrace in 2012 before restoration. PHOTO: Ciara King.



The original selection criteria for the site was that there should be an uninterrupted view of the monument for ships entering and leaving the harbour as well as those traversing the bay and that there should be easy approach to those who wished to visit the site on land. The sculpture was installed in a position of equal prominence to its original location and at the same height above ground level. Its new location in the heart of the reconfigured and extensively landscaped Moran Park has been chosen to reflect its cultural status and its emotional resonance for the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown community.



Christ the King installed on 10th June 2014 and in situ in dlr Lexicon 2015-16. PHOTOS: Left to right by Ciara King, Mark Granier, M.Keyes and Ros Kavanagh.