

From the Archives.

Stoicism in the face of tragedy.

At Easter 1940 Mother Ediltrude returned from Scarborough. She was there when the war broke out and it was thought that she should remain there for some time as most of the nuns of St. Winifred's were evacuated. During the summer term there was a considerable increase in the number of pupils. The register showed more than a hundred names. Sixty three of these were Preparatory School children. Early in this term Mother Mary Gertrude came to us from Scarborough. Later M. Celine left us to replace her in Scarborough.



The 3rd May, Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, was the 25th anniversary of the Foundation of the Convent and on account of the war the jubilee was celebrated in a very quiet manner. The Superiors of Croydon and Sanderstead with their assistants were invited and the nuns who had been dispersed to convents in the south also returned for the occasion. We had Solemn High Mass and Benediction at which six priests were present. We had as grand a dinner as possible in the School Hall and all did their best to make the day a very happy one although we missed the congratulations of our dear Reverend Mother General and also of the Superiors of our Belgium houses. Many old pupils came for the Mass and offered us their congratulations. After this all went on quietly for a time until bad air raids commenced. For six weeks we tried to sleep in our air raid shelter but this was simply impossible on account of the London guns and bombs falling around us. One night there was terrible crash near Forest Hill Station. Many homes were destroyed and all our windows blown out on the garden side. On September 30th, 1940 at 2.30am came the climax. A bomb gave a direct hit and our lovely little High School was in a moment completely destroyed. We had worked so hard to bring it up to date in modern lines but its

loss is nothing when compared to the death of three dear Sisters. On the same day the members of the community were dispersed to other convents. Our dear new Reverend Mother Mary Columba, appointed Superior only five weeks before, was wonderful through all, so calm and brave, and all our sisters were admirable. Our dear Lord sent us another big cross in Reverend Mother's serious illness but thank God she is better. All we want now is to return to our dear little convent which has undergone so many trials. Surely God has something in mind for it in the future and He will give us the courage to make a fresh beginning.

The 3 sisters who died were Sr. Lucille Lapière, Sr. Dymphna Durnin and Sr. Frances Robertson. May they rest in Peace.