

Appendix 1: Detailed list of correspondence MS 813/2/1

This section consists mainly of a run of 38 miscellaneous letters received by Kerr from a single correspondent (/2/1) between 1908 and 1946; and one undated item. In a couple of instances draft responses in his own hand remain on the file.

The correspondence is organised chronologically (in cases where there were more frequent correspondences with the one person, such letters have been grouped together as separate correspondence files (items /2/2-2/7) for which the description is provided in the main handlist above. Significantly few of the items here were received by Kerr once he became a bishop, and reflect earlier parts of his clerical and publishing career.

Indeed, the collection of miscellaneous items of correspondence forms but a small corpus of the likely correspondence he would have received during his life, and much of it is from well known public figures of the day (lay and clerical) which Kerr must have decided to keep as they meant something in particular to him, but also amusing, almost trivial and often critical items from parishioners and others mostly in relation to disputes at parish level which may have felt he needed to keep for the record. Whilst small, this collection provides a fascinating window to Kerr's thinking and the nuance of his identity as both Unionist and Church of Ireland cleric.

1. Part of letter from [James Owen Hannay] The Rectory, Westport, Co. Mayo, to 'My dear Mr Kerr'.
17 July 1908

Hannay was rector of Aughaval (Tuam) 1892-1913, and appears to have been a near contemporary of Kerr's, born 1865, ordained in 1888, and certainly matched him in intellectual capacity. He wrote and published extensively, mostly under the *nom de plume* of George A. Birmingham. This first one of two letters from him to Kerr reveals they are having an intellectual debate about two key matters and opens with 'It is well worth thinking out points of difference if its only for the value of putting out other people's point of view'. The two hot topics are comments on 'S.L. M's Ode to the B.P' which may be the Bishops of Ireland, for it follows with Hannay's scathing views on the attitude of the bishops of the Church of Ireland towards money, and secondly his views on imperialism which he disliked, 'and the British Empire in particular'. There are interesting comments about Ireland.

2. James O. Hannay, The Rectory, Westport, Co. Mayo, to 'Dear Mr Kerr'.
9 September 1908

Hannay thanks Kerr for his 'most kind view of my Spanish Gold' [published in 1915] a publication that has galvanised some 'reputation' among his fellow country men, and even the English about whom he 'was doubtful' which Hannay finds 'most satisfying'. There has only been one unfavourable review of it by 'one Scot'.

3. Edward Carson, 5 Eaton Place, London S.W. to 'Dear Mr Kerr', Rev W.S. Kerr, the Rectory , Banbridge, Co. Down, Ireland' with stamped and franked envelope.

19 December 1915

Carson confirms that Kerr's statement about his views on 'War Temperance legislation' in his letter is 'accurate' and that 'any suggestion that I am or have been hostile [to such legislation] is absolutely untrue'. He goes on to outline his role in the recent discussions in the House of Commons on the Immature Spirits Bill, 1915, and how he resents a statement made that 'Ireland's chief industry is the production of drink' which in his mind 'is an insult to those important industries in the North of Ireland which are at present doing so much for the production of ships and munitions so necessary for the defence of the realm'.

- 3a Printed and probably related item to the above letter entitled 'A Few Words on Temperance', being a leaflet produced by the Church of Ireland Temperance Society which has a lead feature to explore the question: 'Is Drink Ireland's Main Industry'

Undated [1915]

4. Note from John B. Armagh [Most Revd John Baptist Crozier, Archbishop of Armagh 1911-20] to 'My dear Mr Kerr'.

7 February 1916

Thanks Kerr for an article which he finds 'splendid' if 'far too flattering', so perhaps reference to a personal profile. There are also brief references to family members.

5. Edior S. Mills, Organist and Choirmaster [Seapatrick parish church], Banbridge, to 'Revd W. S. Kerr B.D, and churchwardens', addressed 'Revd Sir and Gentlemen'.

27 March 1916

In this brief letter Mills regrets to complain about the insolence he has received from the sexton [not named] in relation to lighting up the chancel for choir practice.

6. Letter from the Commissioners of National Education, Dublin, to the Reverend W. S. Kerr, B.D., Seapatrick Rectory, Banbridge, Co. Down.

16 November 1916

Brief letter reporting that a Higher Certificate has not been awarded to Mr Thomas Strange, Principal Teacher of the parish school.

7. Revd Burton Trimnell Turney, The Rectory, Newport, Co. Mayo, [Rector of Burrishoole (Tuam) 1909-21] to 'Dear Sir'.
22 November 1916

Thanking Kerr for his letter and following up how displeased he is with 'some of our bishops' who 'are secure and they don't seem to care a bit how their men under them suffer'. The root of his angst appears to be low income and heavy workload for parish clergy and the lack of support they receive from most, although not all, diocesan clergy. He describes how his efforts to start a correspondence in the *Church of Ireland Gazette* have come to nothing. The 14-page letter reveals Turney letting off steam and providing graphic information about life in a Church of Ireland rectory at this time, the difficulty of travelling around a large parish of 'over 100 square miles in extent', and a general lack of morale. He also reveals his thoughts on individual bishops of the day, most of whom get a swipe: 'Our bishops sit in glory and easy in motors, carriage and Palaces, big pay helps to eat and drink, and the poor devils who are the front line people may have only which the bishops servant wd turn up their noses at if they were asked to eat it'.

8. Warre B. Wells, Editor, *Church of Ireland Gazette*, 61 Middle Abbey Street Dublin, to 'My Dear Sir'.
9 December 1916

This letter reveals that Kerr was intending to resign his connection with the *Gazette*. The Shebna column [see section /4 below] did not continue after 1916, and so it seems that the fears expressed by Wells in this letter may have in fact been borne out afterwards, and it does not appear that Kerr continued to write his articles, and indeed his only contributions to the *Gazette* remaining on the file afterwards were letters of protest (see section /5).

Although Wells describes himself as 'imparted of Nationalist sympathies' he respected that Kerr was 'a Unionist of moderate views', and thus regarded that they were both 'in the same political category'. The letter goes on to reveal much about the dilemmas facing the Church of Ireland at this time to keep itself removed from politics and yet remain united. Wells repeats the view of the Archbishop of Dublin that 'the Home Rule Act being on the statue book, there is small prospect of getting if off again, and that if Home Rule is to come, I think that the interest of the Church, of the Unionist party, and of Ireland generally require that there should be no [absolute?] division between Ulster and the rest of Ireland'.

He urges Kerr to reconsider and that he might suspend his resignation 'pending an early meeting of the Board of Directors' when the meeting will reconsider the policy of the *Gazette* given the fact that 'a considerable section of Church opinion in Ulster is clearly out of sympathy with it'.

9. Pencil and hastily written ‘pencil line from the train’ by John B. Armagh [Most Revd John Baptist Crozier, Archbishop of Armagh 1911-20] to ‘My dear Mr Kerr’.
16 January 1917

The Primate refuses ‘under any conditions for his ‘photograph to appear in the Irish Churchman’. The context appears to be the manner in which the new commentary paper on church affairs conducts its business, with the archbishop regarding it as a ‘gross insult to the Primate of all Ireland’, adding that ‘Few things have given me more pain or caused me deeper anxiety for the future of our Church than this startling [?] new church paper...’. The rest of the letter reveals how the archbishop has ‘striven hard’ to meet the danger of ‘a growing and terribly serious hiatus between the Church in the North and South’, and ‘took strong steps in the matter’ in relation to the *Church of Ireland Gazette*: ‘I got the Directors to meet and take advice and they unanimously decided (so they told me) on a concise policy which has altered completely – as any one can see the tone of the Gazette for some weeks past. Wiser men than I see in the future the awful danger of divided aims and interests in one small Church of Ireland’. He concludes with his views on ‘the new paper’ as ‘the chief and most dangerous weapon to promote & foster and consolidate division’. Admitting that the issue ‘makes me almost despair. God help us and keep us from what would wreck our Church as no outward attack could, he ends saying he cannot say much more ‘but my Heart is very sore’.

10. William Wallace [curate of Sepatrick, Banbridge, Co. Down but who also served with the Church Army in France], to ‘My Lord Bishop’ [Rt. Revd Charles Frederick D’Arcy, Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, 1911-19]. The letter must have been passed on by the bishop to Kerr.
1 May 1918

The letter relates to his formal resignation of his curacy in protest ‘due solely to the inaction of the Irish Bishops in not voluntarily organizing their dioceses for war service’. He fails to understand why the Irish bishops did not follow the action of English bishops ‘selecting the most suitable for service with the forces and other national work’.

The letter reveals that Wallace’s relationship ‘has always been of the happiest’ and he should be sorry to leave him, knowing ‘it is the work demanded of him in connection with the “Irish Churchman” that is the trouble, not the parish work itself’.

11. Letter from ‘A subscriber’, Banbridge, to ‘Dear Sir’.
20th or 22nd May 1918

This letter provides a graphic insight to cultural and social change in a provincial Irish town in the final year of the First World War. A protest from an anonymous woman parishioner to her rector, ‘to draw your attention to

this Ladies football club' it must have given Kerr some amusement for him to keep in his letter file alongside those from the Primate of All Ireland, and Sir Edward Carson. The language used therein provides another window on local cultural life. The correspondent warns:

'if you have not already heard about it under Heaven's what is this town going to turn to young Girls are going completely out of their latitude all winter going to dancing classes and Balls and spending their night from 12 o'clock until 5am in the morning out the roads with boys carrying on most rationally'.

She concludes with a proposal for all the clergy of the town, 'even the R.C. clergy' so as 'to this put an end ... before it gets to [sic.] much of a catch'.

1. A. R. Ryder, The Rectory, Dunmurry, Belfast [Revd Alexander Roderick Ryder, rector of Drumbeg 1888-1918, died 1919] to 'Dear Mr Kerr'.
26 August 1918

Brief letter in which Ryder thanks Kerr for his 'very kind reference to me in your Diocesan Notes in the *Irish Churchman* in a recent issue', commenting he is the 'only one who has thought fit to encourage my work for 30 years in one parish'.

13. William Smyth, Huntly, Banbridge [probably of W. Smyth Linen merchants] to 'Dear Mr Kerr'
20 December 1918

Follows up last week's interview with details of the work record of a particular individual whom he describes as 'one of the worst workers and worst time keepers we ever had'.

14. Draft of letter in Kerr's hand, Rectory, to 'Dear Mr Smyth' [Appears to be the same Smyth as above]
12 February 1919

In this draft Kerr is defending four articles published in the [Banbridge] *Chronicle* and states he is shocked to learn that 'any one imagined I meant there were any Banbridge firms acting inhumanly. No such intentions ever dawned on me'. However, he continues his articles were to 'counteract the Socialist interest which is more prevalent than I think you imagine'. The letter concludes with Kerr's almost trademark desire to disagree agreeably: 'Even though we have to disagree about certain things I would not like you to think me guilty of attacking any one anonymously'.

15. William Smyth, Huntly, Banbridge to 'Dear Mr Kerr'
15 February 1919

Smyth thanks Kerr for his letter [as above] and enclosed cutting which he carefully read, and assures him he now 'quite understood what you intended

your articles to show ... I am fully convinced that there is a far more socialist unrest in this neighbourhood than I had any notice of.

16. [?] Sutton, Ben Eden Park, Antrim Road, Belfast to 'My dear Kerr'
12 March 1919

Thanks Kerr for returning volume, which he says was most unnecessary to post commenting 'these are hard times for the majority of fixed incomes'. He then mentions he saw a recent 'Ey. Tel' [*Belfast Evening Telegraph*, forerunner of the *Belfast Telegraph*] 'and of course at once spotted the leader as yours'. He compliments Kerr's style of writing: 'you marshalled the salient details very concisely and readably but I see allowed precisely no embroidery'. He then goes on to discuss more generally the failings of 'mere journalism'.

17. Mrs Jane Frayer White [widow of James White, born in Scarva St, Banbridge in 1852; married Jane Fryar in Jun 1887 & emigrated to Chicago & ran a paper company; died Apr 1919] 527 Oakdale Avenue, Chicago, USA, to 'Dear Mr Kerr'.
20 July 1919

Thanking him for his kind letter of sympathy, on her husband's death, but promising in accordance with his 'lifelong wish' to ensure that a chime of bells is erected in Seapatrick parish church in memory of White's father [who was a former parishioner].

18. Henry S. O'Hara late bishop of Cashel, Laurel Hill, Coleraine [O'Hara served as bishop 1900-1919, having previously been Dean of Belfast for one year 1899-1900. He died in 1923], to 'Shebna the Scribe', 'Dear Mr Kerr'
6 September 1919

Hopes he is not wrong in attributing Kerr's 'most excellent letter in the *Irish Churchman* of last Thursday – the 2nd on the state of Ireland signed Shebna the Scribe', which the bishop regards as 'so well and wisely set forth – both as regards the true cause of the present trouble, and alas its only possible remedy'.

As 'an old man' now in his 78th year and knowing Ireland north and south fairly well, O'Hara goes on to state that 'the only hope for the lasting peace and prosperity of our country consists in the continuation and strengthening of the legislative Union with Gt. Britain and what we have not had for the last 10 years – a government that will govern'. He hopes that Kerr's letter may be widely read throughout the Empire.

19. Letter signed simply 'Yours, Churchgoers', Banbridge to 'Dear Sir'.
October 1920

The letter objects to choice of music at a recent service, and the use of a female soloist and is uncompromising: 'our church should not be turned into a theatre or concert hall for the sake of pleasing a few of the so called aristocrats of Banbridge. Defending the girl members of the parish choir, it

warns 'don't insult them by bringing in strangers who are no use in the wide world'. It concludes hoping the matter will be resolved when the choir gets a new organist.

20. [Most Revd] Cosmo Lang, All Souls College, Oxford, [Archbishop of York] to 'My dear Sir' marked 'Private'
6 March 1922

Thanks Kerr for his letter and refers to a colleague Dr C.H.T. Lett and his suitability for a parish.

21. H.B. [Henry Biddall] Swanzy, The Vicarage, Newry, Co. Down [Dean of Dromore and Vicar of Newry 1914- 31] to 'My dear Kerr'
19 October 1922

Refers to a recent event in Newry – probably a historical lecture or meeting of some kind, in which he and the incumbent of St Patrick's [the second parish church in Newry], the Revd Samuel Melville Hankey, 1920-34 had a public, but it transpires not too acrimonious spat about which of them [Hankey or Swanzy] has the right to claim to be successor of the old vicars of Newry, and whether or not some of the relics in St Mary's church should not be in St Patrick's'. Swanzy explains that 'in view of the presence of the Presbyterians I must reply, & that the only way to do it was in the same vein of humour as his'.

The spat has clearly become more widely talked about [in the local press], as Swanzy finds himself famous, and recounts it and what was said in considerable, minute detail.

22. Wm Wallace, 35 Eglinton St, Portrush [Co. Antrim] to 'Mr dear Canon'.
6 February 1923

Formerly Kerr's curate in Banbrige, Wallace has served as curate of Ballywillan (Connor) since 1919 [see item /10 above], but as this letter makes clear is about to depart for a parish in the diocese of Hereford, in the Church of England. He complains of having 'not "fitted in" with things here recently, and laments his low salary. He has decided to go to the diocese of Hereford, 'where the Bishop is a Lib. Evang. He laments that his cousin, the late Dean Webster of the Chapel Royal in Dublin insisted that he took 'the full two years course for Div. Text' for 'in this diocese [Connor] I could have been two years higher standing by not doing so.

He thanks Kerr for sending a reference to England, and remains 'grateful for the kindness that I have ever received from Mrs Kerr and yourself.

23. H.B. [Henry Biddall] Swanzy, The Vicarage, Newry, Co. Down [Dean of Dromore and Vicar of Newry 1914- 31] to 'My dear Kerr'
15 February 1923

Brief letter giving some family information about the Revd Robert Hignbotham, curate of Derry cathedral, which concludes with this comment: 'I visited the Grand Master's Lodge last week. The Dublin Hall is certainly very magnificent'.

24. H. MacManaway, Richmount Glebe, Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone [Very Revd Hugh MacManaway, rector of Enniskillen and dean of Clogher 1923-50
5 x 1923

Commends Kerr's writing: 'There is no man in Ireland to-day who has greater admiration for you than I have...Like hundreds of others I read week by week every word you write in C.I.G. [*Church of Ireland Gazette*]. How in the world do you make time to do it!'. Thanks Kerr for his kind wishes on his new appointment to Enniskillen, which is sought after by least 20 men in the diocese and clearly lucrative, MacManaway adding: 'worth at present £500 a year, free house and grass for two cows'.

25. We. Ferris Reg. R.B.P no 131, 5 Underwood Terrace, Banbridge, to 'Dear Sir Knt and Bro.'
1 September 1924.

This letters confirms that Kerr was a member of the Black Preceptory, lodge no. 131 Mount Carmel, in Banbridge. He is invited to attend the regular meeting on 9th September and 'explain your reasons for identifying yourself with Garden Fete in connection with Roman Catholic Church'.

26. Sarah Woods, Glenbrian, Howth Road, Co. Dublin, to 'Dear Canon Kerr'
26 October 1926

Declaring herself soon to be 88, she takes the liberty and writes with concern about the neglected state of the graveyard in Seapatrick.

27. John Robert Stroyan, Park Hill, Suningdale, Berks] to 'Dear Chancellor Kerr'
22 October 1928

Thanks Kerr for his kind letter and outlines his recent travels through Europe. His family are all well and is glad to hear that Kerr's are also.

28. Robert Hayes Jr, Newry Road, Banbridge, to 'Revd Canon Kerr, the Rectory, Revd Sir
3 January 1929

Another disgruntled parishioner, who admits letter writing is not his forte. And is vexed by seating arrangements in the church. He asks why he has been 'shifted from pillar to post (In God's House)'.

29. George Russell, *The Irish Statesman*, Editorial Office, 84 Merrion Square, Dublin to 'Dear Cannon Kerr'

The Irish Statesman incorporated *The Irish Homestead* and was a weekly journal promoting the view of the Irish Dominion League. Its first editor was Warre B. Wells, formerly editor of the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, and after the League became defunct, when it merged with *The Irish Homestead* George Russell, writer, artist, mystic and Irish nationalist, became editor. In this letter whilst he states that he sympathises with Kerr the matters concerning him are 'religious' and unsuitable for publication in the *Irish Statesman*. Russell goes on to say there are many Protestants who are good Irishmen, and there is no need to 'go back to Pope Adrian to revive controversies'. Thus, he rebuts what appears to have been a solicitation by Kerr to write for the paper:

'I need to keep good humour on the papers I edit. As it is I have many good Catholics who write for me and approve of our line. If I allowed angry responses continuously to appear I would undo all the good I am doing to promote good feeling'.

30. J. Milne Barbour, Hilden, Lisburn, to 'Dear Canon Kerr'
3 December 1929

Letter from one of the parochial nominators for the parish of Lambeg inviting Kerr to a meeting at the Office of the Linen Thread Co. Ltd. [Kerr must thus have been approached for this position, but either didn't get it or decided not to take it].

31. [?] Williamson, Sandown Park, Knock, Belfast to 'The Most Revd The Archbishop of Dromore, Banbridge, C. Patrick.'
2 February 1930

Whimsical letter referring to an article in *The Whig* Feb 1st [which must incorrectly have announced Kerr's appointment as an Archbishop] the content of which shows Kerr's respected position as defender of Protestantism. It opens 'May it please your Grace' congratulating Kerr on his appointment 'to the Archdeaconry of Dromore ... I see you have been created an Archbishop – I presume as a reward for Defence of the Faith against Catholic Readers – not lay readers. Long may you reign!'

32. Unsigned letter from Tullylish Rectory, Gilford, Co. Down addressed to 'Dear Oculus Episcopi' [Eye of the Bishop]
8 February 1930

A brief letter on politics and church life which comments: 'Of course I know that the I.C. [Irish Church] does not offer a warm welcome to some shades of political thought, and like the O'Mahony, they have ceased to avail themselves of the ministrations of the Nat. Church'.

33. Frederick McNeice, The Rectory, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim to 'My dear Kerr'
5 May 1931

McNeice as rector of Carrickfergus since 1908 and archdeacon of Connor since 1926, has just been appointed bishop of Cashel, Waterford of Lismore and in this letter responds to Kerr's 'kind and helpful letter'. He appreciates Kerr's good wishes, adding that he has been 'well over thirty years ... in this diocese & have striven to do something for the Church' He remembers conversations with Kerr when they were curates, and commends Kerr for playing 'a fine part in the life of the Church' with 'ability and scholarship'. A PS refers to McNeice's little book which is soon ready [*The Church in Belfast 1778-1931* (1931)] telling Kerr 'you come into it in connection with St Paul's'.

34. Maurice Healy, 72 Courtifeld Gardens, London S.W. 5 to 'My dear Mr Dean'
22 September 1939

The writer of this letter was the son of the well-known solicitor Maurice Healy and nephew of Timothy Michael Healy (first Governor-General of the Irish Free State). After serving in the First World War, Healy chose to practice at the English Bar and had a distinguished legal career until his premature death in 1943. This long and detailed letter reveals Healy's distinctive sense of identity; his friendship with 'Protestants and Unionists' and his

'greatest admiration and affection for the Southern Unionists, so well exemplified by Miss Sommerville and her ever-to-be lamented cousin, Miss Violet Martin; and any man who desires a faithful picture of the Ireland that I first loved can find it in their fascinating pages'.

After 20 years residence in England, Healy is satisfied:

'that they are a great and generous people, and that it is as reasonable to attack the English people for what occurred in Ireland as it would be to blame the German people for what Hitler has done'.

There are telling comments and reminiscences about various characters in Irish political and legal life including Mr Justice William O'Brien; Sir William Moore; Dudley White K.C., Joseph O'Connor; Edward Carson; Desmond Chambers and others.

35. Fred G. Gibson, Irish Mission, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Church House, Belfast to 'Dear Dean'
7 July 1944

Refers to source of quotation from the *Officiorum ac Muerum* which he says he took from an article on 'Censorship' in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*.

36. J.E.P., [Rt. Revd Joseph Irvine Peacocke, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe 1916-45], Dunderry, Ballycastle [Co. Antrim]
23 March 1946

This is the only item of correspondence on file to Kerr as bishop from another bishop. Peacocke has just retired as bishop, and is writing about his 'little book' just published by Church of Ireland Printing with support from A.P.C.K. who 'would not publish it on their own'. [The book is *Peacocke of Derry and Raphoe: An Autobiographical Sketch* (1946)]. Peacocke continues that he appears on the front cover as he was at his consecration, commenting 'one may as well look as decent as possible, but the real cause of it was because that was the only photo of myself I possessed!'

He is glad to see Kerr 'hobnobbing with royalty', and hopes he will shake George VI's hand at the Lambeth Conference time in 1948'. He concludes that he is 'in the shade now' and 'does not hear much news now'.

37. Henry Head, Greenways, Chippenham, Wilts, to 'My dear Kerr'
Undated

This may have been written by the eminent neurologist, Sir Henry Head, as this is a detailed and complex letter about thought processes, aspects of father-child psychology and spiritual beliefs.