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Front Cover: St Peter's Church, Monkwearmouth.
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The Society was founded in 1974 to foster interest and promote research into the history of the Catholic Church in North East England – a geographical term which is interpreted generously. A yearly programme of talks and outings is arranged. The present annual subscription to the Society is £6 individual (£10 joint) which includes a copy of its annual journal *Northern Catholic History*. The Editor welcomes offers of articles for future editions. Details of the availability and price of back issues can be obtained from the Editor.

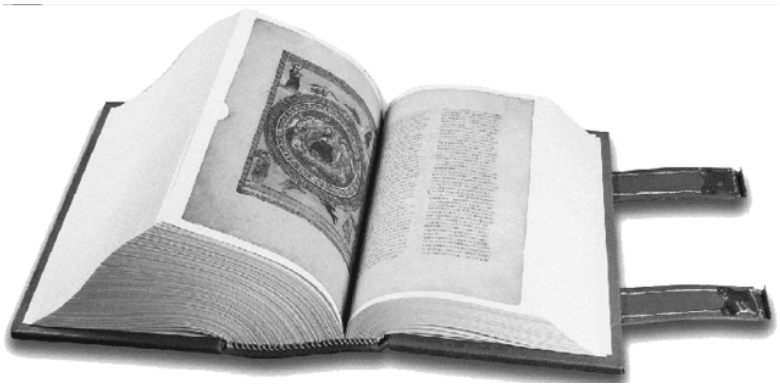
NORTHUMBRIA AND TUSCANY IN WORLD HERITAGE

E. M. Makepeace

The World Heritage Site bid by St Peter's, Monkwearmouth, and St Paul's, Jarrow, has been shelved for the moment because of a prevailing opinion that these are 'just two churches in the North East of England'. Similarly, when a group of students from a secondary school from the Tuscan village of San Salvatore on Monte Amiata visited Sunderland a few years ago, and twinning with Sunderland and South Tyneside was suggested, it was declined, despite important fourteen-century-old connections with Monte Amiata, probably because it would be more opportune to twin with somewhere up-and-coming, in China say.

The Codex Amiatinus, the oldest extant copy of the Vulgate, was copied in the scriptorium of the monasteries of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. The Vulgate, Jerome's scholarly translation of the bible reaching beyond the Greek to the Hebrew sources, is the basis of the scriptural text we use today. Three copies of the bible were commissioned by Benedict Biscop's successor Abbot Ceolfrid in 692AD. This date has been established because the double monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow secured a grant of additional land to raise the two thousand head of cattle needed to produce the vellum (calf-skin). The codex was completed during Ceolfrith's abbacy, c. 690-716AD, when Bede was a young man, and it was no doubt used by him. Physically, the codex is enormous – five-stone in weight and comprising 1,030 folios of vellum each measuring about twenty by fourteen inches. It is one of the great books of the world with a

> history which in various ways seems to epitomize, with a directness and subtlety that nothing else does, the achievement here [in Jarrow] and indeed more widely in [the] Northumbria of Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrith. [1]



In 716AD Ceolfrith retired and, intending to spend his last days in Rome, he left England (with eighty companions) taking one of the three copies with him as a gift for Pope Gregory II. However, he died on 25 September at Langres in Francia during the journey and he was buried in the church of the Tergemini. According to Bede, some of his followers took the codex on to Rome, to fulfil Ceolfrith's wishes.

There is evidence that by the ninth century the codex may already have been in the Abbey of San Salvatore, Monte Amiata, founded after 15 May 742.[2] According to tradition it was constructed on the orders of the Lombard King Ratchis of Friuli, between 745-747AD, even though it was in the territory of his rival, King Desiderius of Tuscany. It is one of the oldest monasteries in Tuscany and in the Middle Ages it was an important station on the Via Francigena, the pilgrim route from England and northern Europe to Rome. In 1035 the church was built and consecrated by order of Pope Bendict IX and in 1228 the monastery was taken over by the Cistercians. 1300 was a Jubilee year and there was a boom in pilgrimage, but during the fourteenth century, pilgrimage began to decline. Bandits roamed southern Tuscany and the Black Death came to the area in 1347-8. To protect themselves from the warlike Aldobrandeschi clan, the monks put themselves under the protection of Siena in 1378. Siena, in turn, was incorporated into the Medici state in 1559 after suffering great privation over the previous two decades. In 1587 Pope Sixtus V decreed that the codex be taken to Rome, as part of the counter-reformation, but after his death it was returned to the abbey in 1592, by the monk Marcello Vanni.

There it remained until the monastery was suppressed by Grand Duke Leopoldo II in 1783, and most of its treasury and archives were removed to Florence. The codex was originally placed in the Palazzo Vecchio and later moved to the Laurentian Library, where it was given the name Amiatinus after the monastery it had come from. It was highly prized by the Tuscans who mistakenly believed it to be a seventh-century Italian work, a gift of Peter, a Lombard, to the abbey. Ceolfrith`s original dedication to Pope Gregory had been crossed out and a dedication from the said Peter put in its place. In the nineteenth century its Northumbrian origin was rediscovered by G. B. Rossi and verified by the Cambridge professor Mort, who worked with Bishop Westcott of Durham.

Another abbey on the Via Francigena in Tuscany having strong links with north-east England is Sant`Antimo, in the province of Siena, near Montalcino. Its foundation dates to the time when Charlemagne (768–814AD) was marching south to Rome to be crowned emperor by the pope. His troops were struck down with plague at Monte Amiata and Charlemagne vowed that if they were returned to health he would build an abbey to God’s glory; a medicine prepared by the monks of S. Salvatore su Monte Amiata cured the soldiers. A historian of the seventeenth century speculated that Pope Hadrian I gave relics of Ss Sebastian and Anthimus of Rome to Charlemagne, and he donated them to the abbey, hence its dedication. The abbey’s connection with the north-east is through Alcuin of York, an English scholar, ecclesiastic, poet and teacher. He was born around 735AD and became a student at the church in York during the golden age of the Northumbrian King Eadberht and his brother Bishop Ecgbert. Egbert had been a disciple of Bede and he encouraged Alcuin to follow the tradition of learning that Bede had begun. The York school became a renowned centre of the liberal arts, literature, and science and in due course the scholarly Alcuin became its headmaster. In 781AD, he was sent to Rome to petition the pope to raise York to an archbishopric. On his way home he met

Charlemagne and, at the emperor's invitation, he became a teacher at the Carolingian court, where he remained into the 780s and 790s. Charlemagne sent him back to England to seek out one of the sister volumes of the codex around the time the Vikings raided Lindisfarne.

There are therefore important historical connections between the Northumbrian monasteries of St Peter and St Paul and the Tuscan monasteries of San Salvatore and Sant`Antimo. A twinning of Sunderland and South Tyneside councils with the Province of Siena would bring this link alive and recover something of Bede's contribution to the scholarship of Europe during the so-called 'dark ages'. It would also demonstrate the wider European relevance of north-east England.

The Via Francigena

References

[1] [R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford, *The Art of the Codex Amiatinus*, The Jarrow Lecture, 1967, p. 2.]

[2] (R Corvini, *Abbazia del Ss Salvatore al Monte Amiata,* Monaci Cisterciensi, Abbazia Ss Salvatore, 1997, p61)

BISHOP CUTHBERT TUNSTAL AND CHRISTOPHER CHAYTOR

A. I. Doyle

An address I gave in 1993 on 'Tunstal the Survivor' as one of a series on saints and bishops in the sees of Northumbria, at Evensong in the Tunstal Chapel of University College, Durham, by invitation of its then chaplain, the Revd Charles Yeats, was published in 2002.[1] The address was based on the admirable biography of Tunstal [right[2]] by Charles Sturge.[3] Because of the occasion I skirted gently around Tunstal's acceptance of Henry VIII's Supremacy over the Church, despite his previous support of Queen Catharine of Aragon and his friendship with SS John Fisher and Thomas More. Although the article on Tunstal by Dr Richard A. Lomas, published in the last issue of this journal,[4] mentions Tunstal's 'high competence in the most advanced learning of his day', he does not discuss his close relations with the circle of humanists such as Erasmus and More, admittedly mostly in the 1520s before he came to Durham. I myself regret that I did not relate a most revealing episode of local interest from an appendix in Sturge's book.[5]

In December 1539, a few weeks before the surrender of Durham Cathedral Priory, Christopher Chaytor, the bishop's Registrar of the consistory court, was on his way to London, when one Cray, 'a man moche inquisitife', an agent of Thomas Cromwell, the king's chief minister following the resignation of Sir Thomas More as Lord Chancellor in 1532, forced his company on him and engaged him in conversation. Cray reported that Chaytor said he had saved bones of relics (from Tynemouth Priory) from the royal commissioners taking their silver mounts. Chaytor also said that Tunstal, 'knowynge the inconstancye of the kinge', had avoided a plot to make him Lord Privy Seal in place of Cromwell. They then 'fell into communycacon of lerned men', and Chaytor 'dyd commende unto me the lerning of Sir Thomas More and ffyssher'. Cray marveled that 'they were so farre oversene to dye in that opynyon'.[6] Chaytor replied that 'Of truth they did yt even as theyr conscyens dyd lede theym'. He added that Tunstal,

> my lorde and master was of the same iudgment wyth theym and had studied and written owt a protestacon of his mynde bothe concerning the dyuors of my lady dozer, and the supremycye of the bysshop of Rome, in the which he was

determined to have stonde; and at such tyme as Master More and the bysshop were arrested one Burton, one of my lorde my masters servaunts, came to theym, and Master Moore seyd to hym, "Burton, howe doth my lorde yor master? Wyll he not come se us? We loke for hym here with us."

"I cannot tell," seyd Burton, "I know not my lords mynd in that poynt."

"By my faith," quod Master Moore, "if he do not, I thynke he shall do more wisely, for he may do more good hereafter".

Chaytor was examined personally and he signed a statement corroborating what Cray had reported, though generalising on the inconstancy of princes and amending More's reply to Burton: if Tunstal 'lyve he maye doo more good than to dye with us'. He also stated that when Tunstal 'came to London and my lord of Westmorland seased his goods at Awkland, then my lord recanted his saings'. So though we have it all at third hand there is no reason to doubt Tunstal's position. Chaytor attributed Tunstal's conforming to the threat to his possessions, but it was more probably the thought of his head. And what Sir Thomas More is said to have said rings true of his generosity and scrupulosity in not leading others to lose their lives.

Chaytor continued his career as Registrar to later bishops of Durham, doing service to the Duke of Somerset (1547-52) under Edward VI, and as Surveyor of crown properties in the north for Queen Elizabeth[7] thus accepting the royal supremacy as Tunstal himself did until his final refusal in 1559. Chaytor bought Butterby, on the river bank below Croxdale, from Lord Lumley in 1566, and in 1589 he gave Butterby to his second son, Thomas. Chaytor died, aged 98 in 1592, and his magnificent memorial is still to be seen on the wall of the north aisle of St Oswald's parish church in Durham [left].

In his will of 1592 Chaytor made bequests to the then bishop and other members of the church establishment, and Miles White, a cathedral choirman, strongly suspected by the bishop, with good reason, as a Catholic sympathiser, who retained his post into the seventeenth century. And it is also ironic that Thomas Chaytor in his diary 1612-1614, which was bought a few years ago by Durham University Library,[8] records that he was threatened with the loss of the registrarship by the then bishop because his second wife Jane, daughter of Sir Nicholas Tempest of Stella, was a recusant. Thomas died in 1618 but his widow lived till 1666 and was buried at St Oswalds.

Notes and References

[1] A.I. Doyle, 'Tunstal the Survivor', *Northern Catholic History* no. 43 (2002), pp. 3-8.

[2] The oil on oak panel portrait of Cuthbert Tunstal as an old man reading what, from its size and velvet binding with gilt clasps, was probably a book of hours rather than a breviary or New Testament. The turned open page begins 'In illo tempore dixit J…' which is clearly an extract from a Gospel but that is quite normal in some books of hours. It was probably painted in the reign of Queen Mary: a duplicate, possibly the original, of one at Greatworth Manor (attributed to Hans Asper) reproduced by Sturge opposite p. 341 but without his hands and rings. The added inscription was taken to mean 'Thomas More Angliae Cancellarius' and was so labelled and previously recorded when I saw it in the Musée Granet at Aix-en-Provence, to which it had been given in 1860. I corrected the attribution in a note in *Moreana*, November 1964, p. 112.

[3] C. Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal, Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator,* 1938. Sturge had been an outstanding schoolmaster in Sunderland.

[4] 'Cuthbert Tunstal 1474-1559, Bishop of Durham', *Northern Catholic History,* no. 53 (2012), pp. 3-9. It is without references but was presumably based largely on Sturge.

[5] Sturge, Appendix XVI, pp. 369-372.

[6] This was after their execution for refusing the Oath of Supremacy in 1535.

[7] R. Surtees, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham,*4 vols 1816-1820, II, pp. 110-111.

[8] Add. MS. 866.

THE BENEDICTINES OF NORTH-EAST ENGLAND

J. T. Rhodes

The best-known historian of English monasticism, David Knowles, wrote:

> For almost exactly a thousand years (530–1530) the social, cultural and religious life of Europe was influenced by the monastic order … for five of those centuries (c.530–1500) monasteries of a single type, the traditional Benedictine type, predominated and formed reservoirs of literature, learning and spirituality for the world.[1]

That was the traditional Benedictine view for centuries,[2] as was the assumption that the rule followed by Augustine and the other monks from Rome when they settled at Canterbury in 596 was the Rule of St Benedict.[3] But it was not quite as simple as that. It took many centuries for an authoritative version of the Rule of Saint Benedict to emerge and even today in the English Benedictine Congregation [hereafter the EBC] there is no uniform application of the Rule. It is St Wilfrid who is credited with introducing the Rule to his monasteries of Ripon and Hexham when he rebuilt them in the 670s;[4] shortly afterwards Benedict Biscop, who had accompanied Wilfrid to Rome, founded Wearmouth (672) and Jarrow (682). According to Bede, Biscop told his monks that the Rules he gave them

> were not the result of my own untutored invention. No, all I found best in the life of the 17 monasteries I visited during my long and frequent pilgrimages, I … have handed on to you[5]

but he did make mention of 'the Rule of the great St Benedict'. Of course, St Benedict's Rule was itself indebted to earlier rules, especially the so-called Rule of the Master.[6]

As a result of the Scandinavian (793–4) and Danish invasions of 867–70 monastic life in the north-east came to an end. Taking the body of St Cuthbert with them, the Lindisfarne community fled west before returning to settle at Chester-le-Street about 883 and then moving on to Durham in about 995. In the course of more than a century the community evolved; they retained many of Lindisfarne's customs but were no longer a monastic community.[7] In 1071 Walcher, first Norman bishop of Durham, constituted them secular canons, while longing to re-introduce full monastic observance to Durham. Very soon afterwards full Benedictine life was restored to Jarrow (c.1074–5) and Wearmouth (c.1076–8) from the reformed monasteries of Evesham and Winchcombe. In 1083 the bishop of Durham, William of St Carilef, brought twenty-three monks from Wearmouth–Jarrow to Durham where they renewed their professions and their vows of stability.

At the priory's dissolution on 31 December 1539 there were sixty-six monks as well as servants and schoolchildren. In the new order of things Prior Whitehead became dean, twelve of the monks prebendaries, and twelve more were appointed minor canons, at a lower salary. On the pay roll there was also a schoolmaster, a choirmaster, a deacon and subdeacon, sixteen lay singing men, ten choristers, eighteen scholars, eighteen almsmen, and two vergers, porters, sacristans, cooks and

barbers; twenty-seven monks were pensioned off, some obtaining benefices in the 'new' church of England; few of the ex-monks married.[8] There was considerable continuity: many of the personnel were the same, most of the land holdings were retained, charitable works were maintained and perhaps, above all, the majestic buildings continued to tower above the river Wear. However, after the Elizabethan settlement of 1559 and in the course of the Queen's unforeseen long reign, much did change. Like Bishop Tunstal, most of the prebenderies refused the Elizabethan oath of Supremacy though a small majority of the minor canons took it. The new dean, Whittingham, and the new bishop, Pilkington were both thoroughgoing Protestants.

Some things that had remained at the Cathedral, were quietly removed: notably books that had been used by the monks; Dr Ian Doyle has tracked their movements and explained how they probably came into the hands of the Tempest family of Holmside, Stanley and Stella, many of them eventually reaching Ushaw. He notes that by 1700 Jane Tempest had succeeded her brother at Stella and had married Lord Widdrington; Benedictines were chaplains at Stella over many years, the first being Dom Bennet Wilson from Satley in Durham.[9] In addition to survivors like the books, the past was actively remembered in writings such as *The Rites and Ceremonies of the Monastic Church of Durham* and the *Origin and Succession of the Bishops of Durham*, both of which circulated widely in manuscript (often together) during the early seventeenth century, as did *The Life of St Cuthbert* written by the Protestant Robert Hegge in 1625. The *Life* was printed in 1663, *The Rites* in 1672 but the *Origin and Succession* not until 1779.[10] Bede had been translated for Catholic readers by Thomas Stapleton and was available from 1565.[11] Not only did memories live on, people did too: former monks like Dr William Todd until 1568 and George Cliffe who lived on until 1593; the choirmaster John Brimley died in 1576 having survived involvement in the Rising of the North[12] which the lay-clerk Miles White, who held office until 1603, also witnessed.

The religious life, as monk, friar or nun, was proscribed in England from 1559; anyone who wanted to pursue such a vocation had to go abroad. Men who wanted to become Benedictines went direct to a Spanish or an Italian (Cassinese) monastery; some went via one of the English seminaries, especially from Valladolid or Rome.[13] An early Durham entrant was a convert, Samuel Kennet of the Coxhoe family, who was ordained in Rome in 1589, returned to England as the missionary oath required but in 1600 went back to Rome and was professed as a Benedictine in 1603, although it is not known where. William Johnson, also from Durham, was one of five students who left St Alban's College, Valladolid in 1599 to enter St Martin's Compostella. Others were received when already ordained and on the mission in England. Two such missioners were Vincent Sadler who had been ordained at Rheims in 1592 and Edward Mayhew ordained at Rome in 1569, both were professed to the Cassinese Congregation on the mission in 1607. Towards the end of that year they met with an aged monk, Sigebert Buckley, who had been professed at Westminster by Abbot Feckenham during Mary's reign. Buckley formally 'aggregated' Sadler and Mayhew into the old English congregation of which he was deemed to be the last survivor, thereby transferring to them all the rights and property of the medieval Benedictines

in England. In fact, this aggregation had no legal force, and it also upset the previous negotiations between the Cassinese and Spanish as they moved towards unity. The EBC did not come into being until 1619.[14]

Meanwhile, monasteries for English Benedictines were being founded: St Gregory's, Douai 1606, St Laurence's, Dieulouard in 1608 and St Edmund's, Paris in 1615. One of the earliest north-easterners to be professed at St Laurence's in 1610 was Bede Merriman from Witton-le-Wear,[15] while the Hartburn brothers from Stillington, Durham, were professed 1614 and 1617 for St Gregory's; Cuthbert Hartburn appears to have been a somewhat restless and controversial character. Placid Hartburn had been ordained at the English College, Douai, in 1609 and was on the English mission before he entered; at the Chapter of 1625 he was one of those delegated to compile the statutes and ceremonies for the nuns of Cambrai. The earliest Northumberland man to enter was Thomas Swinburne, professed for St Gregory's in 1625.

The majority of north-easterners headed for another monastery, Lamspringe near Hildesheim, which had been ceded to the English by the Bursfeld Congregation in 1643.[16] Of the fifty-seven men from Northumberland and Durham professed as Benedictines up to 1800, over half were professed at Lamspringe;[17] it was much safer for them to sail from Newcastle or Hull, rather than risk the journey through England to the Channel ports. A Durham man, Hilarion Wake, professed at Douai in 1639 was one of the founding fathers of Lamspringe[18] and Wilfrid Selby also from Durham was elected the community's second abbot in 1651, a position he promptly resigned into the hands of Pope Innocent X, which meant that his successor, Placid Gascoigne, could claim papal appointment, a bargaining chip he used not only in the volatile political surroundings of Lamspringe, but also against his own Congregation, by claiming that he was appointed abbot for his lifetime. There was also a Selby fund at Lamspringe set up by the Selby family of Biddlestone to educate young men such as Joseph Story from Northumberland and Godric Swinburn from Durham who became prior 1792-1797. Presumably Gregory Selby from Yardhill, Northumberland, was also educated on that fund; he was professed for Lamspringe in 1726 and from 1737 almost until his death in 1759 he was missioner to the Erringtons at Beaufront.

Geographical and family connections were significant for the English Benedictines, as they were for all recusants.[19] There were localities where Benedictinism almost seems to have been catching! Walworth Castle, home of the Jenisons several of whose daughters entered Cambrai, was only about five miles north of the Withams at Cliffe with Eldon and Woodham another seven miles north from Walworth. It was from Eldon that Bede and Placid Hutton entered Lamspringe in 1713 and 1714.[20] Bede Hutton returned to the mission in the north in 1731and by 1735 he was complaining that Lord Widdrington had paid him no maintenance at Blaydon; he then seems to have moved across to Cumberland, returning to Hesleyside in about 1747 where he died in 1756. His brother, Placid, worked in the north-west, but shortly before his death in 1755 he gave £100 to the northern province to assist Catholics around Woodham, close to Eldon, and another £100 to assist the comparatively new mission of Birtley.[21] A string of families with

Benedictine connections stretched northwards and north-eastwards from the Radclyffes at Dilston, to the Erringtons at Beaufront, to the Riddells at Swinburne Castle, to the Shaftoes at Bavington to the Swinburnes at Capheaton, to the Thorntons at Nether Witton, each only four to seven miles from the other[22] and other branches of these families, as it were, thickened the mix: Swinburnes at Hamsterley, Erringtons at Ponteland, Riddells at Fenham and Gateshead. Many of the families maintained Benedictine chaplains: Capheaton had nine Benedictine chaplains from 1727-1788 and the Northern Provincial was often based there; the Erringtons at Beaufront had Benedictines for nearly a century from the late seventeenth century.[23]

Family connections were complex and multi-layered, as anyone who has tried to disentangle the family trees of families such as the Swinburnes and the Widdringtons knows all too well. The Witham family of Cliffe might be a case in point. The family produced six secular priests; of three brothers: George became Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District in 1716; Robert became president of the English College, Douai; Christopher stayed home at Cliffe, presumably as their chaplain; and a sister, Dorothy, became an Augustinian canoness in Paris.[24] In the next generation Dorothy and Mary entered the Paris Augustinians and the son of one of their nephews,[25] George, after a couple of chaplaincies became chaplain to the branch of the Salvin family at Burn Hall while a sister, Frances became a nun with the Augustinians at Louvain. The family also produced a fair crop of Benedictines: Michael (Roger) Witham was professed for St Gregory's in 1637, dying in 1657 (his sister-in-law was a Collingwood). It is not clear where the others fit into the family: Bede (William) Witham from Coken Castle, Durham, professed for St Gregory's in 1649, was missioner at Cliffe; Thomas Witham was professed for St Gregory's in 1685 and spent the last three years of his life, 1726-1729, as missioner at Stella but somewhere in between he found time to copy out Dom Anthony Batt's translations of the works of Ludovicus Blosius, over two thousand pages;[26] James (Wilfrid) Witham was professed for Lamspringe in 1715 and was twice prior. And two Withams became Benedictine nuns at Paris, Maura dying in 1700 and Christina in 1740, having served eight years as prioress.

Whereas one might have expected brothers to precede sisters in going abroad to enter the Order, or Benedictine chaplains to promote vocations, that was not necessarily the case. The Radclyffe sisters from Dilston entered Cambrai in 1653; their brother Ildephonsus being professed for Lamspringe in 1669, and Elizabeth Shafto of Bavington was professed at Cambrai in 1653 but Celestine Shafto not until 1672 at Lamspringe.[27] Similarly with the Swinburne girls from Capheaton: five entered Cambrai between 1677 and 1705 but the first Benedictine chaplain at Capheaton seems to have been Dom Cuthbert Farnworth who did not arrive until 1727. It is not surprising to find siblings entering the same house: the Blakey brothers and the Scott brothers from Northumberland, the Hutton brothers and the Wilson brothers from County Durham, all to Lamspringe; two Chillton sisters of Newcastle to Brussels and three Haggerston sisters to Pontoise. But other relatives might go their different ways: Dorothy (D. Agnes) entered the Benedictines at Cambrai, but her older sister had gone to the Poor Clares at Gravelines and her younger sister

entered the Benedictines at Pontoise while a brother became a Jesuit; Dorothy Fenwick of Bywell entered the Benedictines at Cambrai but her nieces became Augustinians, while the Radclyffe sisters had aunts who were Poor Clares at Gravelines and nieces who were Augustinians at Louvain. The Benedictine Placid Haggerston[28] had three cousins nuns at Pontoise, two uncles who were Jesuits and another a Franciscan. Bede Merriman had a relative who was a secular priest.

Some monks from the region held office either within their own community or in the Congregation. Priors of Lamspringe from Northumberland or Durham included Dom Dunstan Hutchinson, Dom Joseph Riddell, Dom Bede Newton,[29] and Dom Godric Swinburn. Dom Anthony Ord was prior of St Gregory's and Dom Maurus Shaw was superior of La Celle 1768-1790, a dependency of St Edmund's. The north-easterner who rose highest in the Congregation was a Durham man, Wilfrid Selby or Reade (who had refused the abbacy of Lamspringe). He was professed for St Gregory's in 1620; at the Chapter of 1629 he was ordered to compile lessons for the English saints.[30] More significantly, he was appointed the first English Benedictine procurator at Rome where he lived for the rest of his life. One of his tasks was to obtain papal confirmation of the cathedral priors who had been appointed by the 1629 Chapter to underline the perceived continuity between the EBC and the medieval English Benedictine houses. In this he was successful and ever since the EBC has appointed cathedral priors to the pre-Reformation Benedictine houses of England: Dom Henry Wansbrough of Ampleforth was installed prior of Durham in 2009. Selby's main achievement was to secure the Bull 'Plantata' from Pope Urban VIII in 1633. Described by Lunn as 'a kind of blank cheque from the papacy to the English monks' it gave them huge liberties and validated their claim to the pre-dissolution Benedictine priories.[31] Grandiloquent though it was, the Bull bore no relation to reality and conferred no real powers. In 1645 Selby was appointed President of the Congregation but remained in Rome, where he became entangled in attempts to stabilise the financial position of St Gregory's College, intended as an international Benedictine house of studies; at his death the EBC had to take over the debts he had incurred, which were compounded by his successor's building programme.[32] Selby's network of connections and his knowledge of Rome made him useful to the English court and government:[33] the role of the knowledgeable continental agent was one assumed by many Benedictines over the years.

It has to be admitted that there were some rotten apples among the monks from this region as well. William Johnson, a graduate of Salamanca, and an early profession at St Martin's, Compostella, was among the rebels who refused to accept the union of the Italian-Spanish-English monks in 1619, and unlike most of the others he remained obdurate until his death in 1663. He was also accused of refusing to hand over the property of another monk who had died and again, he would not surrender. Another early troublemaker was Samuel (Bartholomew) Kennet who frequented Coxhoe and Newcastle; he was a problem to Archpriest Birkhead because of his conflict with local seculars over the oath of allegiance[34] and also for allegedly chastising his female penitents on their bare buttocks.

According to Dom Gerard Sitwell,[35] it was a Northumberland monk, Laurence

Fenwick of St Gregory's, who precipitated 'the greatest crisis that the English Congregation has ever passed through'. He was elected President in 1717 in the wake of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion, which raised questions about the degree of Jacobite support in the Congregation and other issues such as monastic discipline, the structure and the financing of the Congregation. With the general support of the missioners in England, Fenwick sought some kind of accommodation with the government and even with the Vicars Apostolic, and he wanted to give the Congregation a more unified structure in its organisation and finances – according to Sitwell, Fenwick 'was obsessed by money' and sought to acquire it throughout his career. Since his support was based in England where the missioners were, he attempted to have the next General Chapter of 1721, scheduled for Douai, moved to London. There followed many letters, much manoeuvring and decrees from Rome; the Chapter *was* held at Douai and Fenwick was not re-elected. Only gradually were the wounds healed and the rebels reconciled; but not Fenwick, he died in a debtor's prison in 1730.

Benedictine monks were expected to spend some time on the mission in England, though not all of them did so.[36] Some seem to have headed for, or been directed to, a particular place, so there was a succession of Benedictines in Durham in the seventeenth century.[37] More often they came as chaplains to Catholic families, with a few north-easterners returning to the region such as Benedict Wilson from Co. Durham to serve the Tempest family at Stella, Bede Halsall from Northumberland to the Erringtons at Beaufront and Andrew Whitfield born in Hexham and described as 'long a missioner to the Radclyffe family'; some thirty of his letters on spiritual matters survive addressed mostly to a 'dear child'; perhaps one of the Radclyffe sisters?[38] Patrons could be demanding: the Riddells of Swinburne wanted sobriety,[39] regularity and objected to 'a fat unwieldy man' with whom it would be unpleasant to have to travel.[40] In addition to ministering to the spiritual needs of his patron, a chaplain might find himself with other duties, such as looking after the house in the family's absence or cleaning and stocking the fish ponds.[41] Like other recusant priests, he might be required to act as tutor to sons of the house;[42] Dom Cuthbert Farnworth accompanied several of the Swinburnes abroad on versions of the Grand Tour.[43]

Moving as they did between their continental monasteries and England, monks were perhaps most useful to their English patrons when they were abroad. One of the most used and useful was Dom Augustine Walker. Professed for St Edmund's in 1743, he came onto the mission for just three years, 1750-1753, to the Swinburnes of Hamsterley Hall.[44] In 1753 he returned to Paris as prior and three years later he moved to Rome where he served as Procurator, being made President in 1777, a post he held for the rest of his life; his last years were spent as vicar to the nuns at Cambrai, being imprisoned with them and dying at Compiègne in 1794. In 1777 John Errington of Beaufront asked Walker to procure for him plans for a chapel 'of the Gothick construction'.[45] Other correspondents kept Walker up to date with all the local gossip. Mary Swinburne[46] wrote to him from Durham in 1782, not long after he had visited the area, with news of the local Catholic families, incidentally revealing

how very interconnected they all were. She had recently seen Mrs Silvertop of Minsteracres; had heard that the Charlton family of Hesleyside was going abroad to board at some convent; wondered about possible marriages involving Middletons, Constables, Crathornes and Giffords and gave news of the Trevelyans, Withams and Radclyffes. The Croxdale family (the Salvins) were all well, although the squire had been seriously ill after Walker left, but had now recovered. Three months later she is writing to Dom Thomas Welch in Cambrai who is due to visit Durham, asking if he could bring back three dozen cambric handkerchiefs and adding that Mrs Throckmorton, Miss Gifford, Mrs Chomeley, Miss Englefield and the Corby family 'have bid a lasting adieu to England.'[47]

In April 1785 the Croxdale squire, William Salvin, senior, wrote to Augustine Walker in Paris (actually he had gone to Cambrai) telling him that his son had been at college in Liège for five years but to little effect; he now wishes to place the boy in a French academy in or near Paris and wants to know the rates of suitable academies as well as the cost of dancing and fencing masters. His son is obviously never going to master the 'dead' languages, so he wants him to learn French and acquire some of the graces he so palpably lacks. The father is obviously concerned to do the best he can for the boy, but notes that he does have seven other children to provide for. The correspondence continues for two and a half years, from which we learn a good deal about the son's behaviour, and recognise that what Papa Salvin is seeking above all is 'gentility'. In 1787 the boy became ill and Mrs Salvin was frantic for news from Walker; interestingly, the medical receipts from his doctor M. Cozette and bills from his fencing master and for his rental have survived among Walker's papers since all bills were paid through him.[48] In addition to the business aspects of the correspondence there are personal notes: about the squire's gout, greetings from Mrs Salvin and Mrs Swinburne, and comments on the severity of the early frosts and the flooding of the river Wear. The wayward son actually made a good marriage and fathered six boys and seven girls; the eldest, Catherine, entered the community of English Benedictine nuns from Paris who were by then, 1828, at Cannington (they moved to Colwich, where they remain, in 1836); she was Prioress 1860-1866 and died in 1872.

So, what happened to the nuns? No more than the monks did every nun drop dead or melt away at the Dissolution. 'Twixt Tees and Tweed before the Reformation there were just three Benedictine convents at Neasham on the Tees, Lambley and Newcastle on Tyne. Lambley was dissolved in 1537, Newcastle with eleven nuns and Neasham was not dissolved until 1540 and as late as 1553 seven Neasham nuns were still drawing their pensions. Thereafter, as with the men, if a girl wanted to enter religious life she had to go abroad. Until 1598 her only option was either to enter the Bridgettines of Syon who had gone into exile as a community for the second time under Elizabeth and moved five times to various places in the Low Countries before settling in Lisbon in 1594, or to enter a 'foreign' monastery, such as the Augustinians of St Ursula's, Louvain.[49] However, in 1597

> The Lady Mary Percy daughter to the great earle of Northumberland, with many other persons of quality… at Brussels… began to think of leading a religious life

> and erecting a monastery… they soone resolved uppon this great worke; and to undertake St Benedict his Rule and Holy order.[50]

An English nun who had been professed at St Pierre's, Rheims, in 1581 was brought in as first abbess together with three other experienced nuns to guide the twelve English postulants. Jesuits had been involved from the beginning of the foundation and the first spiritual director, although a secular priest, was sympathetic to them.[51] A number of the nuns wanted 'real' Jesuit direction, however, and the community became seriously divided but it was also outgrowing its accommodation and to satisfy both these demands filiations were made to Ghent in 1624, then to Boulogne 1652, Pontoise 1658, Dunkirk 1662 and Ypres 1665.[52] The disturbances at Brussels do not seem to have deterred north-easterners from entering; one wonders whether they knew about the state of the community? Renata and Etheldred Smythe, daughters of George Smythe of Esh, entered in 1612 and 1616, Marie Eure in 1623[53] and several others later.[54] A Maire from Durham and a Haggerston were professed at Ghent, but the Haggerstons preferred Pontoise where three were professed, together with two more Smythes from Esh, two Claverings, a Riddell from Fenham and a Selby from Durham.[55] Dame Etheldred Smythe's case was most unusual: having entered Brussels in 1616 she remained there forty years holding various offices in the community but, wanting 'to lead a more retired life' (perhaps an oblique commentary on the more active Jesuit–type spirituality of Brussels), with great difficulty she obtained permission to enter the small English Benedictine Convent in Paris, where she led 'a most exempler Life' for her remaining six years.[56]

The Brussels community and the houses founded from it had had nothing to do with the Benedictine monks.[57] But in about 1621 the EBC decided to establish a community of nuns under its own authority and direction and free from episcopal control. On 1 January 1625 seven choir nuns and two lay sisters were professed at Cambrai. As at Brussels, and this time from Brussels, three experienced nuns were borrowed to guide the fledgling community,[58] but since their spirituality was not congenial to their new charges, an EBC monk, Dom Augustine Baker, was rapidly brought in to provide spiritual guidance.[59] Over the years many north-easterners came to Cambrai: an early arrival was Rebecca Browne from Durham as a laysister in 1624. Some came in family groups: two Radclyffe sisters from Dilston in 1653, three Kennet sisters from Coxhoe, Durham, two in 1681 with another in 1697, three Thorntons from Netherwitton in 1723, four Jenison girls from Walworth Castle between 1688 and 1720, four Widdringtons between 1683 and 1725 and five Swinburnes from 1677 to 1717. However, by no means everyone came to Cambrai with the intention of becoming a nun. There were two distinct groups who did not enter on arrival. The first were the pensioners who had been received from as early as 1625 and who must have brought a reasonably steady income to the community. These included girls as young as nine[60] although the majority were teenagers, and they usually stayed for three or four years. During that time they were presumably taught a devout life style and appropriate subjects such as spelling, arithmetic, geography, history, French (since the Cambrai library list includes many volumes which look like school books on these topics), needlework, for which the nuns were

famed, and probably some music[61]. Many of these pensioners returned home and married. Mary and Elizabeth Jenison, who went to Cambrai in 1713 returned home to marry the Hutton brothers of Woodham;[62] Anne Swinburne of Capheaton returned to marry Nicholas Thornton of Nether Witton, while her sister Catherine became a nun at Saumur; others, like the Forcer girls from Old Elvet, Durham, returned home but remained unmarried. Older girls may well have arrived at Cambrai to try their vocation. Interestingly, Elizabeth Collingwood from Eslington, Northumberland entered in 1677 with her maid, Anne Batmanson from Ushaw; Elizabeth 'went away' but her maid stayed and was professed as a lay sister.[63] Some gentry women actually entered as lay sisters, perhaps because they lacked the funds for their dowry or out of humility. Mary Percy 'of ye noble family of ye last earl of Northumberland' entered as a laysister in 1629 taking the name of Sister Hilda; she was the 'laysister of Cambrai' identified by Dom Justin McCann as copyist of many of Augustine Baker's works.[64] Dorothy Fenwick, 'a gentlewoman borne of a good family in Northumberland' also entered as a lay sister in 1660; we have already met her nephew, Dom Laurence Fenwick.

In addition to pensioners, older women sometimes came to lodge at Cambrai.[65] Jane Widdrington was about thirty-eight when she came to Cambrai in 1699, having been a maid of honour to Queen Catherine of Braganza at the court of Charles II. Although the Catalogue states that she came to 'lead a retired life in this our monastery with her sister D. Agnes' she was never professed. However, she left 'a monument of her piety' in the form of a mortuary chapel, which cost her £100 sterling. As with pensioners, the rental these lodgers paid would have been very welcome, but it was also unpredictable. Gifts and bequests were similarly appreciated. Alathea Swinburne who was professed at Cambrai in 1707 founded a daily Mass 'and did many other things for ye conveniancy & advantage of ye Convent'. Bequests could be significant: Lady Elizabeth Radclyffe, mother of two nuns at Cambrai, gave £900 during her lifetime to help establish the convent with an annual donation of £54 and a further £50 at her death. But enclosed communities actually relied on the dowries brought by their entrants: Cambrai required £400 minimum; in the 1670s the Dunkirk Benedictines wanted £500[66] and Micktilda Smythe from Esh, professed at Pontoise in 1663, brought a dowry of 5,000 livres (but perhaps that covered her sister as well, who was professed two years later) and even Joanna Widowfield from Lamesley, Durham, professed as a lay sister at Pontoise in 1686 brought a dowry of £50. In Cambrai's case dowries were usually invested in England, which meant that when England was at war with France or Spain and during the Civil War, transfer of funds became impossible and the nuns suffered accordingly. The situation became so dire in the late 1640s that a filiation was made to Paris in 1651-1652. Always a smaller community than Cambrai, the only north-easterners to enter (apart from Dame Etheldred Smythe from Brussels) were two Witham girls.

Since a professed nun did not leave her cloister, communities were dependent on outside contacts for their existence. Confessors, vicars and chaplains were crucial since they were intimately involved in the life of the community but also able to

'come and go'. Relatives and family connections were also important and letters, of course, were not 'enclosed'. Some correspondence between the Abbess of Cambrai, Christine Hooke, and the President, Dom Augustine Walker survives. She asks his advice about all sorts of things including investments, the looming threat of the Revolution and tells him of their own penury and their confessor's ill-health. But she also wanted his advice about a Miss Fenwick who had been out of the convent for nearly a year and proposed returning, against the will of most of the community who had got up a petition to that end to the confessor. Unfortunately the surviving correspondence does not tell us what happened over Miss Fenwick.[67] Monks were also instrumental in recruiting women for the cloister. Dom Peter Salvin, who came from Thornton Hall, near Darlington, served as chaplain to the Benedictine nuns in Paris for eight years, coming from and returning to the mission where he was instrumental in 'directing' three girls towards the Paris community.[68] Monks also escorted girls from their homes to the continent, where they often arrived in regional groups, such as at Cambrai on 8 November 1660: Dorothy Fenwick, Mary and Margaret Errington, or 17 July 1677 which brought two Swinburne sisters, Elizabeth Collingwood and Anne Batmanson, both groups from Northumberland.

Just as Benedictine monks and nuns survived the Dissolution, so, despite the upheavals caused by the French Revolution, confiscation of goods, imprisonment and destitution, most communities made it back to England though having to lead a somewhat insecure and peripatetic existence, until finding permanent homes again. The Smythe family of Esh played a significant role. Sir Edward was a former pupil of St Gregory's and a fund to educate youths had been established by a previous Sir Edward at St Laurence's in 1714, so there were family connections to both Douai and Dieulouard.[69] One of his houses, Acton Burnell, was currently unoccupied and so the remnants of the St Laurence's community and a few monks of St Gregory's were able to find temporary shelter there, before going their separate ways: St Laurence's eventually to Ampleforth and St Gregory's to Downside. It was, of course, the same Sir Edward Smythe who initially offered the lease of Flass Hall to the returning Douai collegians, an offer which for some reason was never taken up, and he eventually sold the land at Ushaw for the college.[70] After the Revolution, St Edmund's, Paris, regrouped in Douai with a school until expelled by the French government in 1903 when they settled at Woolhampton. All three monasteries continue to serve parishes. The Cambrai nuns were brutally evicted from their convent in October 1793 and taken to Compiègne where they were imprisoned under very harsh conditions until April 1795. Dame Mary Bernard Haggerston from Northumberland had been professed at Pontoise but came to Cambrai when Pontoise closed in 1786. She was one who survived the imprisonment and made it back to England but died at a relative's house shortly after their return in 1795. After a couple of temporary homes the Cambrai community settled at Stanbrook, Worcestershire, in 1838, moving to Wass, North Yorkshire, in 2009.[71] The Brussels – Ghent community settled at Oulton in Staffordshire in 1853. The Paris Benedictine nuns were initially imprisoned in their own convent and then in the Chateau of Vincennes before returning to England in 1795 and, after lodging in Dorset and then Somerset, they

settled at Colwich in 1836, returning to the EBC in 1926.[72] As a footnote, it is interesting to see how keen Durham Cathedral and Westminster Abbey are nowadays on embracing their Benedictine heritage and there are, of course, many Anglican Benedictine communities.[73]

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

ARCR A. F. Allison & D. M. Rogers, *The Contemporary Printed Literature of the English Counter-Reformation between 1558 and 1640*. Volume II: Works in English (Aldershot, 1994)

CRS Catholic Record Society publications.

Information about individual nuns can be found on the website <whowerethenuns> and for monks <plantata>

Notes and References

[1]. D. Knowles, *Saints and Scholars* (Cambridge, 1953) p. 1

[2] S. Cressy, *The Church History of Brittany* ([Rouen] 1668), Book XIII, part III, chapter 2; C. Reyner, *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia* (Duaci, 1626).

[3] *The Rule of St Benedict in Latin and English with notes*, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, 1981) pp. 118-119; H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to England* (New York, 1972) p. 70; Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, Book I: 26 makes no reference to any particular Rule.

[4] Eddius Stephanus, 'Life of Wilfrid', chs 17, 22 in *The Age of Bede*, ed. D. H. Farmer (Harmondsworth, 1988); *The Rule of St Benedict*, *ibid*; Mayr-Harting, *op. cit*. pp. 156-159.

[5] Bede, 'Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow', ch. 11 in *The Age of Bede*, *op. cit.*

[6] *The Rule of St Benedict*, *op. cit*. pp. 77-90.

[7] D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 1950), p. 165 and more generally, ch. 9.

[8] D. Loades, 'Monastery into chapter: Durham 1539-59' in *Studies in Church History*, Subsidia 12, ed. D. Wood (Woodbridge, 1999) pp. 315-35; G. Moorhead, *The Last Office* (London, 1988), chs. XI - XIII.

[9] A. I. Doyle, 'The Library of Sir Thomas Tempest: its origin and dispersal', in *Studies in Seventeenth-Century English Literature, History and Bibliography*, eds. G. A. M. Janssens & F. G. A. M. Aarts (Amsterdam, 1984) pp. 83-93, and 'The printed books of the last monks of Durham', *The Library*, ser. 6, vol. X, (1988) pp. 203-219. A. Rounding, 'The tradition of Catholicism in Stella during the seventeenth century' *Northern Catholic History* 38 (1997) pp. 28-38.

[10] A. I. Doyle 'Catholic Traditions in later sixteenth and seventeenth-century Durham' unpublished paper read before the North East Catholic History Society in 1984.

[11] *ARCR* II, 733-5.

[12] Moorhouse, *op. cit.* pp. 246-249.

[13] A. C. F. Beales, *Education Under Penalty* (London, 1963) pp. 124-125; D. Lunn, *The English Benedictines*, *1540-1688* (London & New York, 1980) pp. 16-23.

[14] Lunn, *op. cit*. ch. 4.

[15] Professed at St Laurence's he transferred to St Gregory's where he died in 1614; he had a brother, Michael, a secular priest, G. Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests*, vol. 2 (Great Wakering, 1975).

[16] *Lamspringe, an English Abbey in Germany 1643-1803*, Saint Laurence Papers VII (Ampleforth, 2004).

[17] Out of 57 men, 28 entered Lamspringe, 20 St Gregory's, 5 St Edmund's and 2 St Laurence's.

[18] *Lamspringe, an English Abbey* p. 173.

[19] Lunn, *op. cit*. p. 189.

[20] *CRS* 13 (1913) p. 64. One wonders whether Placid Hutton might have escorted Mary and Elizabeth Jenison to Cambrai in 1713.

[21] G. Scott, 'A brief history of the Birtley mission and parish' *Northern Catholic History* 35 (1994) pp. 38-47.

[22] The Widdringtons at Widdrington Castle a further 10 miles north east.

[23] The first recorded was Bede Addy from Durham, professed Lamspringe 1655, †1705. His signature occurs in W. Oughtred's *The circles of proportion*, London 1632, which subsequently came into the possession of the English Benedictine nuns in Paris (Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine A 12470)

[24] G. Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests* vols 3 and 4 (Great Wakering, 1976-1977); J. Kirk, *Biographies of English Catholics in the eighteenth century* (London, 1909) pp. 252-254.

[25] Others, George and William died, perhaps as students at Douai, John at Lille.

[26] Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine MS 1121-1122; which was once in the library of the English Benedictine nuns in Paris, see my 'The Library Catalogue of the English Benedictine Nuns of Our Lady of Good Hope in Paris' *Downside Review*, forthcoming.

[27] There is some confusion about the Shafto brothers: Allanson has them both of Northumberland; Bellenger has Placid of Durham (presumably Whitworth) but Gillow, editor of the Cambrai records, *CRS* 13 (1913), has both as brothers of Elizabeth.

[28] Professed for St Gregory's 1708, †1716, he had the use of Howard's *Sacred Poeme… of … S. Marie of Aegipt*, Doway 1640, *ARCR* II 459, copy at Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine 11090 copy 2; M. B. Joyce, 'The Haggerstons: the education of a Northumbrian Family' *Recusant History* vol 14: 3 (1978) pp. 175-192.

[29] Later chaplain at Beaufront and briefly at Dilston.

[30] Allanson states he also wrote a life of St Scholastica c1661, a defence of Pope Boniface VIII, on the claims of Gerson to be author of *The Imitation of Christ* and that he assisted Cajetan in his edition of the works of St Peter Damien, perhaps Paris 1642.

[31] Lunn, *op. cit*. pp. 110 – 112.

[32] Lunn, *op. cit.* pp. 170-171.

[33] Lunn, *op. cit*. pp. 121, 126-127.

[34] 'Newsletters from the Archpresbyterate of George Birkhead', ed. M. C. Questier, *Camden* fifth series, vol.12 (1998) pp. 77, 107-108, 120, 131, 133, 157 and more generally M. C. Foster, 'The Kennetts of Coxhoe: Catholic gentry in County Durham, c.1614-1715' *Northern Catholic History* 24 (1986) pp. 3-21.

[35] G. Sitwell, 'A crisis of authority in English Benedictine History, 1717-1721' *Recusant History* vol. 16 (1983) pp. 221-303; G. Scott, *Gothic Rage Undone* (Downside Abbey, 1992) pp. 51-63.

[36] It looks as though the Lamspringe monks Basil Bradshaw of Esh, Dunstan Hutchinson from Northumberland and Willibrord Wilson from Durham did not come on the mission.

[37] Bede Gaile (a relative of Mrs Alice Haggerston), 1625; Bede Helme, 1632, †1636; John Hutton, 1632; Gregory Hungate and Placid Hartburn who was from Durham c.1633 and Benedict Constable 1677-1681.

[38] Lille, Archives départementales du nord 20 H 10, pp. 341-432, 510.

[39] Dom Stephen Hodgson from Durham was repeatedly moved on and eventually dismissed for drunkenness (Allanson).

[40] G. Scott, *Gothic Rage Undone,* p. 93.

[41] Scott,' The Benedictines in the North East', *Northern Catholic History* 32 (1991) p. 37.

[42] Scott, *Gothic Rage Undone,* pp. 183-187.

[43] Anne French, *Art Treasures in the North: Northern Families on the Grand Tour* (Norwich, 2009) pp. 37, 39. Cuthbert Farnworth professed St Laurence's 1702, †1754.

[44] G. Scott, 'A monk's view of the Durham coal industry in 1750', *Northern Catholic History*, 15 (Spring 1982) pp. 3-12.

[45] Scott, 'The Benedictines in the North East', p. 34.

[46] Probably the daughter of Thomas Swinburne and his wife, who were both aged about 60 in 1767, with a daughter aged 15, living in Old Elvet: *Durham Returns of Papists 1767*, vol. 2, ed. E. S. Worrell, *CRS*, occasional publication 1 (1989) p. 17.

[47] Lille, archives du nord, 20 H 62.

[48] Lille, archives du nord, 18 H 9.

[49] P. Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees on the Continent 1558-1795* (London & New York, 1914) pp. 377-385; for Domincans pp. 413-415.

[50] Quoted at C. Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2003) p. 8.

[51] He was Robert Chambers, chaplain 1599-1628, who translated *ARCR* II 130, cf 112.

[52] Guilday *op. cit*. pp. 256-283; Lunn, *op. cit*. pp. 198-202.

[53] Two years later her sister was one of the first to enter Cambrai and a copy of Cressy's *Exomolgesis*, 1647 (Clancy 261) now in Shrewsbury Diocesan Archives, was apparently given to her by the author.

[54] An Errington and a Mechtilde Dabord from Durham whose mother might have been the widow Clare Deborde aged 72 recorded as living in Old Elvet in 1767, *Returns of Papists*, *op. cit*. p. 18.

[55] *CRS* 17, miscellanea X (1915) 'Registers of the English Benedictine Nuns of Pontoise'.

[56] *CRS* 9 (1911), pp. 338-339.

[57] A rare exception was Dom Bernard Palmes in about 1649; he subsequently took on building work at St Gregory's College in Rome, which landed the Congregation with serious debts.

[58] Dame Frances Gawen had been one of the Brussels foundresses; Dame Pudentiana Deacon who translated St Francis de Sales (*ARCR* II 165) and *The Mantlet of the Spouse*, Colwich MS 44 and Viviana Yaxley, who was the only one to return to Brussels in 1650, although her sister, Margaret, entered Cambrai very soon after its foundation 1624 and a John Yaxley was chaplain at Cambrai cathedral 1624-30, G. Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, vol 2.

[59] Lunn, *op. cit*. pp. 202-217.

[60] Mary Horton 1701, Mally Butler 1708, Betty Middleton 1711.

[61] The inventory of 1793 records a spinet and a harpsichord.

[62] G. Scott, 'A brief history of Birtley Catholic Mission and Parish', *Northern Catholic History* 35, (1994) pp. 38-47 and his 'The Benedictines in the North East in the eighteenth century', *Northern Catholic History* 32, (1991) pp. 40-42.

[63] She probably copied a translation of Blosius' 'Solace' and part of 'The Interiour kingdome of Jesus Christ in soules' attributed to John Evangelist of Balduke in a manuscript dated 1679 at Ushaw College, XVIII.D.7.6.

[64] See my edition of the Paris nuns' library catalogue, *Downside Review*, forthcoming.

[65] Also in 1674, Dowager Mrs Hall with three servants, her daughter being the current abbess and in 1693 the Lady dowager Crosland.

[66] Walker, *op. cit*. pp. 31-33.

[67] Lille, Archives du nord 18 H 39

[68] Peter Salvin professed for St Gregory's 1632, *CRS* 9 (1911) pp. 349, 376-377; see also the Paris catalogue nos 7, 87, 145, *Downside Review* forthcoming, and Lille, Archives du nord 20.H10, fol 471ff. Note: the 3 nuns were later involved in trying to rescue Ypres, *ibid*. p 379; among other monks active in encouraging girls towards religious life were Doms Benedict Jones, Price and Maurus Corker, the latter continuing his spiritual direction of nuns by letter, see Dame Benedict Rowell, 'Abbot Corker & the Nuns. Letters from Lamspringe', chapter 8 in *Lamspringe: An English Abbey in Germany*, *op. cit*.

[69] C. Almond, *The History of Ampleforth Abbey* (London, 1903) pp. 243-249.

[70] D. Milburn, *A History of Ushaw College* (Ushaw College, 1964) pp. 30-31, 72-74, 83-86.

[71] Benedictines of Stanbrook, *In a Great Tradition* (London, 1956) pp. 30-60; CRS 13 (1913) pp. 14, 20-38.

[72] 'A sketch of the history of the Benedictine Community now residing at St Benedict's Priory, Colwich, Stafford', *Ampleforth Journal* 11 (1905) pp. 343-360; 12 (1906) pp. 51-74, 287-303; 13 (1907) pp. 21-33, 344-353.

[73] The annual *Benedictine and Cistercian Monastic Yearbook* lists all those who follow the Rule of St Benedict in Great Britain and Ireland and their overseas foundations.

FOUR RADCLIFFE LETTERS

The first three letters are from the Ushaw College Radcliffe Mss 85-6 and are published with permission.

1. Dorothy Radcliffe to Sir Edward Radcliffe

Cambray Octo: th18 1662

Most Hon[d] Father

This bearer Francis will give you a better account of all things concerning our journey than I can do by writing. You will know by him that we arrived on Michelmas Eve at Cambray where I was very joyful to see my two dear sisters[1] & most civilly and kindly entertained by the Revd Lady Abbess[2] and the rest, but I had indeed a very great apprehension of their strict observance that I should not be able to continue in it, but yet being desirous to stay a while in some other place that was less strict. I was by Mr Stapleton[3], the Revd Lady Abbess and my sisters advised to make a trial at the Monastery of the English Nuns at Gaunt,[4] to which place I went where finding they were not willing to receive me in respect of my age, I returned to Cambray with more desire to be with them and earnestly desired the favour to be permitted to stay there at least until I did hear from you, or be otherwise disposed of by your order and now they have pleased to receive me into the house a tabler with much courtesy and great respect to yourself and Mother and I am glad to see myself in so good a place, but Dear Father before I pass further I think it my duty to let you know what my resolution and disposition is and indeed was when I took leave of your self and my H[d] Dear Mother though I did not acquaint you with it as I ought to have done for which I humbly beseech your pardon since I could not but know by your last words to me that you were ignorant of it.

The truth is I came not upon any true vocation to religion or my own inclination to that course, but rather by the suggestion of others and indeed I was the sooner induced to it by a desire of change of the place of my dwelling so that finding myself in these difficulties and understanding by persons here of judgment and experience that a vocation from God is absolutely necessary for the going through with the difficulties of Religion, I had little hope to persevere in it if I should undertake it seeing in my self so great a want of it, and this being known to my Revd Lady Abbess though at my return from Gaunt I had really a desire to enter amongst them as a tabler, for a while, they made a difficulty to receive me in, on such conditions, having never before admitted any on such terms, but by my earnest entreaty I was at length received into the house, where I am at the present upon promise to let you know how I stand disposed which indeed is not be religious unless it shall please God to inspire into my heart other desires than as yet I have.

My humble petition to you therefore is that you please to consider that it is not likely I shall be able to continue any time in this uncertain condition without much trouble to myself and this good company to whom I am so much obliged that I cannot but be very sensible of many inconveniences they may suffer in respect of me, and again I so much apprehend my return to Dilston that it will be very hard for me to resolve

upon it. I beseech you humbly therefore that I may understand from you as soon as you can (that if I should not be able to continue here) whether upon my return you would be pleased to place me some where to my content and I hope my marriage shall be such as shall be to the satisfaction of you both and the rest of my friends.

Francis can inform you what charge and trouble I have already put this company to which I am confident according to your charity and noble mind you will take order to satisfy with convenient speed the house being in such want as he can tell you.

If it shall please God to give me a true vocation to this course of life I shall esteem it a great happiness to remain here but if it be otherwise I shall acquaint you with it in time convenient. In the interim humbly craving your daily blessings with my continual prayers for your good healths, I humbly take my leave and rest.

Most H^{d} Father
Your most dutiful child
Dorothe Rattclyffe

[1] 7 June, 1653. 'Entered Mrs Clare Radcliffe (in Religion called Dame Bridget) aged of 22 and her sister Mrs Ursula Radcliffe aged of 20, daughters of Sir Edward Radcliffe of Diulston in Northumberland, Baronet; sisters to the first Earl of Derwentwater.' They were both professed in 1655. Clare died 11 August 1681 and Ursula died 30 October 1689; they were buried in the same grave. Cf. J. Gillow (ed.), 'Records of the Abbey of Our Lady of Consolation at Cambrai, 1620-1793', Catholic Record Society, Records vol. 13 (1913), pp. 48, 72.

[2.] Catherine Gascoigne (1600-1676), of the family seated at Parlington Hall, Yorks.

[3] Revd Dr Gregory (Benedict) Stapleton (1623-1680) OSB, Prior of St Gregory's, Douai. He was of the family seated at Carlton Hall, Yorks.

[4] The Benedictine Abbey of the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady at Ghent (f. 1624.)

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2. Dorothy Radcliffe to Sir Edward Radcliffe

Honrd Dear Father

I have now made trial of myself how I could like to take the same state my two dear sisters with so much comfort and satisfaction leads their lives in, but this course is so extremely contrary to my inclination that it is impossible ever to have any content in it, or to comply with the obligation of so strict and holy and institute not haveg at all a vocation that way. Therefore I do with all humility I am able recommend myself to your fatherly care and providence, whose prudence I am confident will not blame me to leave that life wherein I should not only be unhappy through discontent while I live, but hazard my soul by undertaking that I have not strength nor grace to perform.

Dear Father I beseech you consider me and take care for me as your poor child and as I am the weakest in natural parts, so in greatest necessity of your particular assistance and providence for me and when I speak with you I hope to give you full satisfaction concerning my proceedings. God knows how glad I would have been to have given content to my Most Dear Mother but not being able to do it formerly I leave it should be the same which would much afflict me and therefore I humbly entreat you will please to place me either with my sister Tunstall[1] or where else in

your prudence (to which I will always stand) you shall please to place me who am and every will remain

Most Dear Father
Your Dutiful and obedient
Child till Death
Dorothey Rattclyffe

[1.] Mary Radcliffe, wife of William Tunstall of Wycliffe, North Yorks.

*

3. Clare Radcliffe to Lady Elizabeth Radcliffe

Cambray, April 8th 1663

Most hond Dear Mother

My sister Dorothy great desire of returning back from hence has kept her in much sadness of mind and perplexity and of late more and more for that she has never heard from my father since she came having writ to him humbly her mind and desire about it which grieves her so that she can take no rest nor comfort in anything and want of sleep and melancholy has so oppressed her makes her in a very sad case. Our doctor says that nothing he is able to do can do her good but to let her have her content of mind which dear Mother I am sure you would think convenient if you did see her as she is here though truly all care has been taken every since she came to content and comfort her both my Revd Lady and the rest with compassion and kindness to her as she herself I doubt not will assure you of but she not having the inward desire from God which only he can give to live so solitary a life as this is which to us is the greatest consolation and happiness that can be is most tedious and grievous to her

Wherefore it is thought fit by all here that she return speedily for fear of further inconvenience and harm to her head by want of sleep and grief of mind My good Lady has taken the greatest care that is possible to provide a fit person for my sister's comfort this journey and my Sr Ursula and my self humbly desire your Ladyship's care for her content find by herself would be to live with my Sister Tunstall and I hope that may be with my Father's and your liking, most humbly beseeching your daily blessing and your favourable min ilnes of this house where I assure you there proceeding towards my Sr Dorothy has been with much care of her great respect to my father and yourself I remain ever

Your most dutifull child

Clare Rad.[1]

[1] In the event, Dorothy did not take the veil. Whether that was because her father, Sir Edward, acquiesced or because she was released from any obligation at his death later in the year, is not known. At any rate, according to one family pedigree, she was 'living unmarried 1668', presumably in England. Another pedigree says she was the 'wife of – Massey, of Co. Chester; presented as a recusant by the Churchwardens of Corbridge in May 1681'. Cf. F.J.A. Skeet, *The Life of James Radcliffe* ... (1929), facing p. 180.

*

4. A.R. to Margaret Allgood.

This extract is published for the first time with the kind permission of Mrs V. Allgood; the erratic spelling has been modernized and the text broken into paragraphs. The introduction is by Douglas W. Smith who transcribed the letter.

On 13 April 1716, some six weeks after the execution of James Radcliffe, third earl of Derwentwater, for his part in the Jacobite Rising in October 1715, a lady in London wrote to a friend in Northumberland. We do not know her name – she simply signs herself *A.R.* The recipient of the letter was Margaret Allgood, daughter of the Rector of Simonburn in the North Tyne. The letter would have been of intense interest since her family had been legal advisers to the Radcliffe earls. Indeed, her brother Lancelot, of a similar age to the third earl, had been among the local gentry who initially agreed to join the 'Fifteen but he got cold feet which prompted Derwentwater's bitter comment:

> You see what we have brought ourselves to by giving Credit to our neighbour Tories as Will Fenwick, Tate, Green and Allgood. If you outlive this misfortune and return to live in the North, I desire you never to be seen in conversation with such Rogues in Disguise that promised to join us and animated us to rise with them.

How much, then, must Margaret have been affected? Did she feel uneasy at the family failure to support the Rising or did she find relief that they had adhered to the established order and secured their estates from forfeiture? Her nephew, another Lancelot, became a loyal subject of King George, M. P. and High Sheriff of Northumberland, and he was knighted in 1760. By that time any Jacobite sympathies the family might have retained had vanished, even though Margaret married into the very Catholic and Jacobite family of Widdrington.

Quite apart from this background, however, the letter, gives valuable corroboration of details to be found in other sources reporting the earl's execution. But more than this, there is an immediacy to the account for it comes from first-hand knowledge, as the mysterious A.R. affirms; in fact from the priest who ministered in the prison cell the day he faced execution. Because of this it is worth reproducing the portion of the letter that gives us a glimpse into the earl's mind on the eve of his execution as well as the account of the execution itself.

> [To] Mrs Margaret Allgood
>
> At Newham
>
> April the13th [1716]
>
> … it is expected [King George will leave] for Hanover in 3 weeks; you'd say the reason of his going is for him to join in alliance with Dutch and some other princes but some people are of opinion that the real reason he has not a mind to be here when the Gentlemen are to suffer because he

won't be in the way ~~to be importuned in the way~~ to be plagued with such importunity as he was for ye Lords, how many will die God knows but some fancy since the K is resolved to go a great number will suffer in his absence, for to be sure he'll leave the prince and Lords justices full power to act as they'd think fit…

I fancy you'd wonder to hear Ld. Ch. Murray is a prisoner yet in Lancashire. A Lady told me who is a correspondent of the Ld. Molyneux's daughter who can believe anything after it proves a mistake of his Lordship's escape.

I fancy you would be surprised with the Apparition in the sky which has served mightily here for discourse, the Lady Pilkinton at eleven o'clock at night thought she saw as it were 2 Armies engaged in a river of Blood betwixt them but that she might not be deceived sent for some more ladies who were likewise witnesses of it.

I see a letter from a march in Liverpool which said that the man that quartered the Gentlemen died suddenly & that there was frightfull sights seen in the room, he asked his wife what they were she said Angels come for him, he told her he did not like them they were black ones; & the same letter added that when Dear Mr C [Collingwood ?] & the rest that day were executed that a presbyterian standing by said he could as well see them hanged & quartered as so many dogs upon which a serjeant with his halberd knocked him down & the next day the man died:

The Lord Darwentwater's children went through the town 3 weeks ago my Lady has taken a house at Kensington [Kennington] though she thought to have lived at Dilston but whether the government would not suffer her or her friends advised her Ladyship against it I can't learn; but am informed that King George promised her when she went with her petition if her husband would make a discovery of the plot he would give him his life, she told him her Lord was above being an informer:

the Ambassador's priest who came along with him to Dilston told some of my Aquaintance that the morning his Lordship was executed he went to pray with him & found Lord Widdrington in tears, so began to talk pious things to him thinking be received the dead warrant upon which Ld D—r with a singular air said no Sir tis I am the happy man; he told him he knew not what it was but God Almighty was so favourable to him that he felt no trouble to leave even his Lady & Children which was most Dear to him but died with pleasure;

the night before my Lady was with him & when the priest went to him he expected to have seen him in a dismal way but found his countenance not changed, he told him his Lady had been there & that they prayed together;

the Lords were several of them much troubled for his Death & some of them whom he would not name offered him upon a discovery or going to

Church he should save his life, he told them he had given too much scandal in pleading guilty & would tamper no more to save a life he would freely part with rather than hazard his soul; after this he came to the priest & told him he had now a small sacrifice to offer for his sins;

the executioner received his pardon before he came to the scaffold & was in the deepest affliction mortal could be in, he wept as though he would have broke his heart & before he gave the fatal blow whispered something in his Lordship's ear; in fine their was scarce a dry eye in the company, he prayed in several places as he came to the scaffold & when he put off his black velvet coat & periwig there had like to have been quarrels about who should have them; one took them up as soon as he laid them down at which his Lordship smiled;

the Lord Kenmure give his son a great many blessings & told him if ever he drew a sword against his lawful prince James the 3d & the 8th he wished them all to turn to curses …

my service attends your Good family at Newham

& I am always yours most sincerely A.R.

There was a pretended funeral for the earl in London but in fact the remains were taken to the house of a surgeon, Mr. Metcalfe of Drury Lane, of a Catholic and Jacobite family of Guisborough. Here it was asserted that Lady Derwentwater sewed on the head of her 'dear Lord' but a tradition in the Metcalfe family is that the surgeon performed the task as well as extracting the heart which, according to the wishes of the earl, was to be sent to the English nuns in Paris. Several miraculous recoveries were attested at this time by those hoping to be cured by touching the body. The remains were then taken north by the coachman Dunn to the family vault in Dilston Chapel. It was during a pause at Sunderland Bridge near Durham that a great display of the Northern Lights appeared with resplendent streams of all colours hanging like a delicate curtain for almost an hour. The coffin lay in the chapel vault at Dilston until 1874 when Lord Petre, descendant of the earl, had it transferred to his family chapel at Thorndon Hall in Essex; the earl's coat and wig are preserved at Ingatestone Hall. The earlier Radcliffe coffins were re-interred at the front of the Catholic Church in Hexham.

The heart of Derwentwater was long a treasured relic of the English nuns until the Seige of Paris in 1871 when the small vault containing it was broken into and it disappeared. One account suggests it was interred in a nearby cemetery. Again the Ushaw manuscript in reporting this history expresses the hope that it may yet be hidden somewhere and that 'The chest with its sacred contents may yet be wonderfully preserved.' 'Cor ad cor loquitur – Heart speaketh unto heart', continued the manuscript. The heart of Derwentwater speaks to the heart of us all.

A NORTHUMBRIAN MEMORIAL TO POOR CLARES

Olive Tewick

The Catholic Registers of the chapel at Haggerston Castle have entries relating to a number of 'Poor Clares of Rouen' who died between 1805 and 1807 and who were buried in the churchyard of Ancroft parish church where a headstone to their memory was erected. This raised the question why should French nuns be buried there, but it transpired that, with the exception of the Hagan sisters, the nuns were, in fact, mainly Lancastrian. The general history of the Community has been written in *Recusant History*[1] and in an earlier edition of *Northern Catholic History*[2] and it is therefore unnecessary to repeat it here.

In July 1795 the Community decided to repatriate to England having suffered considerable harassment following the French Revolution. The nuns travelled in groups and the Community of forty-two nuns was reunited in London early in August. They were given refuge in a house in Manchester Square where they remained until Sir Carnaby Haggerston offered them the use of Haggerston Castle. They travelled north in December, calling at the Bar Convent in York on the way, and forty-one nuns arrived at the castle on Christmas Eve.[3] They would remain in residence until 1807 when they removed to Scorton Hall in the North Riding funded by the proceeds of the sale of their Rouen premises (£1,800).[4]

The local people were mainly Catholic, being the tenants and estate-workers of the Haggerstons. They began to serve the local community by opening a school for poor children. A large porch of the castle was used as an area where local people could be given whatever help they needed. When it became feasible they started a school for young ladies. The roll never rose above eleven but the school brought useful income. These activities exposed the nuns to smallpox, from which two of then died. Indeed, ten of the Community were laid to rest in Northumberland. In chronological order they were:

Listed in the Catholic Register of Haggerston Castle:

7 June 1805. Sr Collette Clare (Helen Hoole), aged 49. 30 years in religion.

24 Sept. 1805. Sr Agnes Clare (Elizabeth Blundell) aged c.50. Parents: Richard and Ellen (nee Chadwick). Former pupil, arrived in Rouen July 1766.

22 Feb. 1806. Sr Elizabeth Clare (Elizabeth Hagan). Came from Maryland to Rouen with her two sisters.

12 Aug. 1806. Sr Martha Clare (Jane Phillips), lay-sister aged 71. Arrived in Rouen in June 1761. 43 years in religion.

23 Aug. 1807. Sr Elizabeth Joseph (Elizabeth Smith), lay-sister aged 73. 45 years in religion.

2 Nov. 1807. Sr Monica Clare (Monica Hagan).

Listed in the Ancroft parish register:

28 June 1796. Sr Mary of the Holy Cross (Mary Castel; 'Cascelles' in the register),

aged 77. 59 years in religion.

17 Jan. 1799. Sr Mary Joseph (Helen Chadwick; 'Eleanor' in the register), aged 51. Arrived in Rouen 12 July 1766, aged 13 with her father John Chadwick of Burgh Hall, Chorley, Lancs., with her cousin Elizabeth Blundell, aged 11 (above). She was the first Portress at Haggerston. On an errand for Mother Catharine Smith, the abbess, she was stricken with apoplexy and died.

20 Jan. 1799. Sr Mary Catharine (Catharine Smith: Charlotte in the register), aged 65. 44 years in religion. She arrived in Rouen from Lancashire as a scholar with her sister Julia Ann on 23 July 1749. She entered the Order in 1755 and thirty years later she became abbess, aged about 50. She was the last abbess in Rouen and she brought the Community to Northumberland and led it until her death. She was succeeded by Sr Winifred Clare (Smith) to 1820.

1 Sept. 1802. Sr Francis Joseph (Elizabeth Jackson), aged 31. 6 years in religion. Possibly a former pupil; a novice at Rouen; professed at Haggerston 1796.

Most of these nuns had been in Rouen from a young age; Mother Mary Catherine had been there for forty-six years The ages of eight of them at the time they left Rouen are known: one was in her twenties, three in their forties, three in their sixties and one was seventy-nine; she died six months after reaching Haggerston.

According to the Chronicle, an Englishman in Rouen who had given much support during the difficult times, raised a monument to Mother Mary Catherine as the last Abbess of Rouen when the political climate permitted. We do not know how long this survived, but her gravestone in Northumberland, to which the names of her sisters were added, is a monument to some brave women whose story opens a chilling window on the past.

Notes and References

[1] A.M.C. Forster, 'The Chronicles of the English Poor Clares of Rouen', *Recusant History* 18 (1986-1987), I, pp. 59-102; II, pp. 149-191.

[2] Sr M. Michael, 'History of the Poor Clare Monastery, Darlington', *Northern Catholic History* 42 (2001), pp. 44-50. The article is illustrated with a photograph of the headstone in the Ancroft churchyard.

[3] Sr Maria Magdalena (Mary Chadwick) who 'embraced a religious life with a most extraordinary fervour at the age of 33', died in London in 1795 aged 55.

[4] The Community was reduced to 29 by this time.

THE TRAVELS OF *TRIUNFO DE SAN GREGORIO*

D. Milburn

In recent months several lectures have been given at Ushaw College to draw attention to its important cultural heritage. One lecture explored the richness of its holdings of the nineteenth-century Nazarene School, based in Rome, and the lecturer defended the German artists' pious conservatism of this art by appealing to its popularity. The painting *Triunfo de San Gregorio* by Juan de Roelas spotlighted here does not belong to nineteenth-century Rome, but to seventeenth-century Spain; furthermore, it was removed from Ushaw at least twelve months before the lecture, but it is an interesting coincidence that the artist's 'pious' style also won de Roelas many admirers in the contemporary South American art and religious markets and helped to save his reputation for posterity.[1]

Even more interesting is the probability that Francesco de Zurbaran was a pupil of de Roelas. Zurbaran painted a set of twelve pictures, known as the *Blessings of Jacob,* each standing seven feet high, depicting the sons of Jacob. They were painted in the 1640s, a time when the Spanish Inquisition was trying to root out non-Christian practices. By this date, however, the painter's popularity had begun to wane, and the paintings disappeared until 1729 when, following the South Sea Bubble scandal, one of its directors sold them to a Portuguese trader. He in turn auctioned them individually in 1756. They were bought by the Bishop of Durham, at a knockdown price of £124 for them all and he hung them in his home at Auckland Castle in a special room built for them. The bishop himself was no connoisseur, but he had taken up the cause of Jewish toleration, and he was attracted by their message of tolerance, an ideal then beginning to be debated throughout Europe.[2]

Until October 2009 de Roelas' *Triumph of St Gregory* occupied a large space on the south wall of the refectory at Ushaw College, seven miles from Auckland, close by the door leading into 'Professors' Parlour', that mysterious place from which in the old days students were barred until the day of their ordination.[3] Hundreds of Ushaw alumni, myself included, had the doubtful privilege of sitting in the shadow of the de Roelas painting, gazing uncomprehendingly at the grimy canvas, wondering when such a large picture (4.40 x 2.57m) mounted in a heavy wooden frame might break from its moorings. For us its main attraction centred on the belief that it was stolen property. As to its worth, the herculean efforts required to move and transport it to Edinburgh for an exhibition of the painter's works in the 1980s led those who witnessed its deposition to guess its value exceeded the student estimates based on how much time the College painters saved when they were called on to redecorate the refectory!

Juan de Roelas is generally thought to have been born in Flanders c. 1570 at a time when the Spanish were breaking away from Flemish and Italian influences to form regional schools of their own, with two key centres at Madrid and Seville. De Roelas moved to the latter in 1613 after some time at Valladolid where he was ordained priest. He spent the rest of his life in Seville, providing himself with a regular income as chaplain to the church of El Salvador, and painting large dramatic altar-pieces for

many of the churches belonging to the city's religious orders. The quality of his pictures places him among the greatest of the Spanish artists of the first half of the seventeenth century, ranking a close third to Zurbaran and Murillo, according to some critics. He has been likened to the young Velázquez in his attention to the faces of his characters and their body language. To quote from one of the available art histories:

> Extremely popular in his own time, his innovative style introduced the spirit of baroque into Spanish painting. His painting is naturalistic, but with a transcendental quality imbued with expressive vitality which contrasts with the physical and spiritual immobility of contemporary painting. De Roelas used light, loose brushstrokes with heavy tonalities that contrast with the cool chromatic tones, derived from Mannerism, favoured by his colleagues.

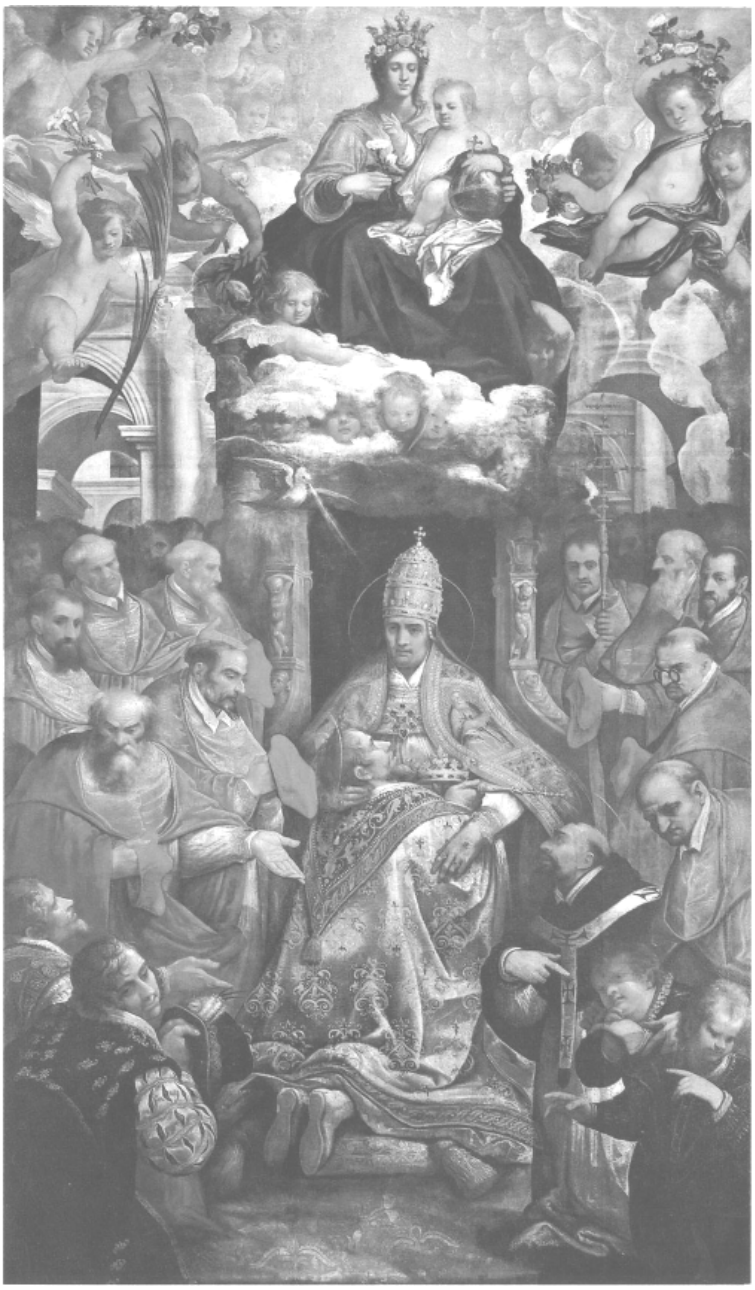
Our painting was commissioned in 1608 for the new English College dedicated to St Gregory at Seville and, like all of de Roelas' canvasses, it is not only large but very crowded. St Gregory holds centre stage. In front of him kneels the royal martyr St Hermengild who sacrifices his crown rather than capitulate to Arianism and is offered the palm of martyrdom held by an angel in the top left hand corner. The kneeling figure to the right of the martyr is St Leander, Archbishop of Seville, wearing his pallium. To right and left are the bishops trained by St Leander at his school in sixth-century Seville. The young men in the foreground might well be English students at the seminary. Opposite, St Augustine kneels in his Benedictine habit and pallium, pointing to the young men – Angles, who according to tradition were dubbed 'angels' by Pope Gregory when he saw them being sold as slaves in the Roman market, thereby instilling in him an overwhelming desire to convert this forsaken outpost on the edge of the Roman world. The men on the left hand are Ethelbert's courtiers. They wear contemporary dress, the kind of which is to be found in the 1565 version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* edited by the Douai priestly scholar Thomas Stapleton.

With only the title, the date of the painting and its intended home to help, several attempts have been made to interpret its iconography. In our day we have two: the first, by Martin Murphy is a development offered by the Spanish Benedictine Dom Romanos Rios. Murphy calculates it

> to emphasise the links between the churches of England and Seville. It portrays Pope St Gregory, the apostle of England, in a group which includes the local hero, St Hermengild and correspondent, St Leander, the bishop of Seville who converted the Visigoths from Arianism to orthodoxy, and ten bishop saints who belonged to St Leander's 'school' … Though these were all saints who followed the rule of St Benedict they are represented not in the Benedictine habit but in the choir dress of canons regular. It is a formally grouped and crowded canvas and is evidently composed to a programme, harmonising the themes of martyrdom, Marian devotion, ecclesiastical training and opposition to heresy. [4]

The second and more recent interpreter is Gonzalo Jose Martínez del Valle.[5] According to him the carefully constructed composition highlights the unbroken

continuity of Catholic England's faithful relationship with the papacy. Offering symbols of royal power is not Hermengild but the Anglo-Saxon King Ethelbert, during whose rule in Kent Pope Gregory had sent the monk Augustine to Canterbury to invigorate rather than re-introduce a British church which had suffered the ravages of invasion by the pagan Anglo-Saxon tribes. Both interpretations have their merits, both have their weaknesses. I leave you to choose, remembering the facts that we have: its title, its date 1608-1610, its place in the English College in Seville and, lastly, the seventeenth-century understanding of the early history of the two countries, Spain and England.



Triunfo de San Gregorio, Juan de Roelas, 1609.
El Retablo del Colegio de Ingleses de Sevilla, now in the Real y Pontificio Colegio de Ingleses de San Albano, Valladolid, España.

The English College at Seville is the least known of all the English seminaries. The best known is Douai College, not simply because of Ushaw's relationship with it, but because of its own inherent importance as the first to be founded (by Cardinal William Allen in 1568), and the main provider of priests for the English mission during the next two hundred years. But as the need for priests grew, other English colleges abroad came into being, some of them with the help of Allen himself, including Seville, for the foundation of which the English Jesuit Robert Persons must take the credit. The Company of Jesus, as it was first called, had been founded in 1540 by St Ignatius of Loyola to support the Church (in particular the papacy) in its counterattack against the new Protestantism. As a special force always ready for action, they came to the rescue of Douai College which, because of lack of space and money, had been forced to turn away applicants. Persons took on the challenge to find the necessary funding for a Jesuit-run seminary and in 1589 he opened his first, St Alban's at Valladolid in northern Spain. Its first occupants were twelve students from Douai College. Shortly afterwards he went on to open St Gregory's in Seville.

Questions about the location and timing have been asked from that day to this. Martin Murphy offers his own explanation. For long enough Seville with its nearby accessible port had attracted English traders. Commercial interests grew yearly, and by the beginning of the sixteenth century so great was the volume of traffic between Seville and England that the city Fathers decided to provide a centre to cater for the English spiritual needs. The influential Duke of Medina Sidonia offered land for a hospice which, when completed, was dedicated to St George and placed under the patronage of the Bishops of London, Winchester and Exeter. Recent evidence has shown that this lucrative two-way traffic continued well into the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. England provided Seville with cloth, grain, tin and lead in return for fruit, wine, oil and coinage. Business partnerships often proved stronger than national and religious loyalties; the Spanish hatred of Drake was shared by the city's English merchants, who nevertheless took the precautionary measure of calling themselves Irish. By 1592 Seville had reached the apogee of its fortunes as the largest city in Spain, among the top ten in Europe, and perhaps the greediest, since it was popularly known as *Don Dinero* (Master Money).[6]

It was in the English traders' hospice (deserted since the declaration of open war between Spain and England in 1588) that Robert Persons opened his college in 1591. With Cardinal Allen as patron, it quickly attracted a nucleus of English students. Critics abounded, some of them Jesuits who regarded Persons' initiative as a threat to their own schools, but by 1595 it moved to a more salubrious site to south of the city next to the palace of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia close to the Jesuit faculty of theology. Converting the existing property into a residence for one hundred and fifty students proved to be costly, but Persons thought it to be very worthwhile. Was it a coincidence that in the same street twenty years earlier St Teresa of Avila had settled a community of her nuns? At that time she knew she was taking a great risk, describing Seville as a den of iniquity. Did Persons also know the risk he was taking? By this time the winds of change were blowing: its growth towards its full capacity depended almost entirely on Spanish students and seminarists from the Jesuit college

at St Omer. Warning signs went unheeded as the building of a chapel proceeded. Completed in 1598, from 1610 it became the first home of the de Roelas painting, which, priced at 1,560 reales, was thought at the time to be expensive and overpriced.

Yet all was not well. The Seville seminary turned out to be the shortest-lived of all the seminaries founded from or continuing the work of Douai. Though officially it lasted for one hundred and seventy-five years, it functioned as an English College for just one hundred years, and took centre stage for only forty. The declining fortunes of Seville during the seventeenth century coupled with the fewness of students (mostly Spanish from the middle years) threatened its existence, with the last English student leaving after ordination in 1693.[7] Briefly occupied by the Irish Dominicans in 1710, the buildings were seized by the Spanish Government at the suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1767. The English Colleges were then merged into one at Valladolid. When it became clear that the owners of the Seville property were not the Jesuits but the English bishops, permission was granted for the transfer of seven trunks of their possessions to Valladolid, among them several paintings, including the *Triunfo.*[8]

The circumstances which led to the later removal of the de Roelas painting to England were complex. The Revd Thomas Sherburne, (*vere* Irving, the name by which he was generally known in Spain) was born to parents living at Kirkham in Lancashire. He and his younger brother William entered Valladolid seminary in 1788 after receiving their early education in the school run by the Revd Robert Banister at Mowbreck Hall. The two brothers were ordained to the priesthood on the same day in 1800. Shortly afterwards, William returned to England to help old Mr Banister and after a few months he was appointed missioner in his home parish, so to speak, The Willows at Kirkham, where in 1809 he built a chapel on land belonging to his family. In 1813 the English bishops appointed him Rector at Valladolid and he died there in 1822. Thomas had remained at Valladolid as a teacher (and soon Vice-Rector) until 1806, when he went back to England, to assist the Revd John Barrow at Claughton for twelve months before moving to Blackburn. At Blackburn he formed a firm and lasting friendship with the wealthy Squire, William Heatley of Brindle Lodge. Little did they realise just how much trouble this friendship would cause for years to come.

In 1822 the English bishops appointed Thomas Sherburne to succeed his brother William as Rector of the English College at Valladolid. Known to have an acute business sense, he was given the task of restoring its fortunes after the long misery of the Peninsula War. Thomas remained there for no more than two years (Harris says two months) thereafter returning to England to serve the Kirkham mission, as had his brother, until his death in 1854, aged seventy-five, a period of some thirty years during which he held a number of important posts including that of Vicar General. Joseph Gillow writes:

> the leading feature of his life, the one great idea which seems to have pervaded his youth, manhood and old age, was the education of ecclesiastical students. Valladolid, Lisbon, and Ushaw were supplied by him with numerous alumni from that fertile garden of the Church, the Fylde. To Valladolid he was almost a second founder. During the repeated revolutions he extended over it his

> fostering care, and before he was called to receive the reward of his labour he had the consolation of seeing it render important services to the great cause he had so much at heart. To the noble college at Ushaw, to which he was greatly attached, he handed a large sum from Mr Heatley's bequest.[9]

Let's look at one phrase of this appraisal from a man who knew the Fylde area intimately. 'To Valladolid he was almost a second founder.' To pay off its debts Sherburne poured in a lot of his own money apparently as a benefaction. Later, he claimed that he had intended it to be a loan, for which he required securities and received permission to help himself to various artefacts belonging to the College, among which happened to be the de Roelas altar-piece. Thus the second stage of the painting's journey was completed: despite its size, the picture was transported to Kirkham, where it was hung in a new chapel built by him with over £10,000 of William Heatley's money. It remained there until Sherburn's death.

'To the noble college at Ushaw to which he was greatly attached, he handed a large sum from Mr Heatley's bequest'. We need to remember that Lancashire, the heartland of northern Catholicism, had provided most of the funds to support Ushaw through its birth and infancy. Heatley had donated £1,000 in 1814, and a further sum, invested in French funds which in 1830 realised £1,930. Heatley died in 1840, but not before instructing Sherburne to continue to support Ushaw. Sherburne had always paid for the students he sent there and needed no encouragement. So we find from the Ushaw Fund Books under Heatley's name: 1843, £800 for seminary education; 1846, £2,600 for professors' salaries; also (undated) £1,000 for the same purpose.

By then, however, Sherburne showed signs of ageing, often forgetful, and probably showing the first signs of dementia, if we are to believe some reports of his strange behaviour. His critics in Lancashire grew in number the more he appeared to be answerable only to himself for these vast sums of money. In 1850 his bishop sent him an assistant, the Revd Charles Teebay. This pastoral help gave him renewed strength to resist others' attempts to get him to share Heatley's money more equitably. In his distress, the fiery old man turned to Ushaw for help, which itself had an overriding interest in Heatley's bounty in order to continue its extensive building projects begun in the 1840s. The Pugin chapel, the library wing, and hall all belong to this time. But his Lancastrian opponents also found useful allies among the bishops of the restored hierarchy: Salford, Beverley, and Shrewsbury all of whom were looking for funds to meet their new diocesan responsibilities. More particularly, adding a very serious complication to an already confused situation, several of the new bishops, anxious to be seen as truly diocesan, latched on to the Council of Trent's ruling that each diocese, as far as possible, should have its own seminary. Liverpool itself had already set a precedent, taking steps as early as 1842 to ensure that St Edward's school in Liverpool would fulfill that purpose. Naturally, these developments, so essential for the future of diocesan organisation, threatened the future of Ushaw College.

During the 1850s the storm clouds quickly gathered. On the point of appealing to Rome at the beginning of 1854, Sherburne discovered to his disgust that his enemies had beaten him to it, appealing not about the Heatley money but about Sherburne's

alleged non-payment of just over £12,000 allegedly loaned to him by the Revd Thomas Youens of Liverpool in 1841. With interest, the sum had amounted to more than £21,000. Clearly a tactical diversion, it sent the old man scurrying to Ushaw for further help. But he died in December 1854 after suffering two strokes (one as early as 1848), leaving his problems fairly and squarely in Ushaw's lap. To complete this picture in anticipation of what was to come, as a seal and a sign that he had fallen in love with an institution with which he had no direct connection – and also likely enough as a determined effort to have the last word – at his death it was found that he had left the 'residue' – almost all of his estate – 'to Charles Gillow of Ushaw College'.[10]

Years of wrangling followed as both sides tried to manipulate papal rulings to their own advantage. They fought over a 'final' verdict of April 1861 until 1864-5, when Ushaw lost on every count. Its biggest mistake seems to have been getting involved with Sherburne in the first place, for it led the College authorities to be seen as his heirs, at least implicitly. In summary, Ushaw had to return some of Sherburne's gifts: it had to make part-payment of £8,000 with interest to Dr Youens' executors; it had to recognise the right of other northern bishops to share in its government, in effect radically changing its semi-autonomous status, controlled by its president and the local bishop, into a regional seminary.

All through these turbulent years the de Roelas painting had continued to hang in the Ushaw refectory since the day it had arrived from Kirkham some time after December 1854 as part of Sherburne's legacy. Now, with the other Sherburne's gifts, it came under the scrutiny of the college's new board of bishops, which voted to return them to their respective owners. Some of the items had disappeared, others were sent back within a reasonable time, but not the *Triunfo.* As late as 1914 came the first evidence of any real interest in Ushaw's willingness to part with it and only in 1921 any practical recommendation. The bishops at their annual meeting that year ordered the college president to draw up a list of all the paintings given by Sherburne. The bishops agreed that the de Roelas ought to be returned, 'if Valladolid is prepared to undertake the cost of removal and any expense Ushaw has had to undertake in respect of it'.[11] Maybe the College procrastinated, or Valladolid baulked at having to meet the cost of removal, but for a further ninety years it continued to hang in the Ushaw refectory.

A resurgence of interest came during the presidencies of Mgr Terence Drainey (2003-8), an alumnus of both colleges, and his successor Mgr John Marsland. At the beginning of 2009, after one hundred and sixty years at Ushaw, the altarpiece was removed to the International Fine Arts Conservation Studios in Bristol for a complete cleaning and restoration, and then to Paul Mitchell Ltd of London for a new hand-carved frame based on a seventeenth-century example. Thus refreshed, its formal installation in the refectory at Valladolid took place on 10 February, 2011.[12] The fourth and final stage of its journey?

Acknowledgments

Photograph by permission of the Revd Fr Peter Harris; the Revd Fr Nicholas Schofield for a copy of Peter Harris' booklet.

Notes and References

[1] This article is in essence a revised version of a talk which I gave to the Society at the end of its AGM at St Andrew's, Worswick Street, in September 2012.

[2] Zurbaran turned to the South American market as he struggled to make ends meet but without success, and he died in penniless obscurity in Madrid, 1664. Napoleon later restored his reputation, prompting an exhibition of Zurbaran's paintings in the Louvre. The Church Commissioners in the dying years of the 1990s suggested that that the paintings in the keeping of the Bishop of Durham at Auckland Castle and worth about £20 million should be sold in order to balance the Church's finances. A campaign to save them for the north-east won the support of philanthropist Jonathan Ruffer, who at the end of 2011 finally donated £15 million to manage the castle where the paintings. '… will continue to preach a powerful message of tolerance: religious, social and political.' (R. McManners, *Zurbarans at Auckland Castle* (2010).

[3] The University of Durham's Business School temporarily occupying a large part of the site happily retains the title, with the parlour and refectory functioning as prestigious dining areas for special occasions as well as serving its own needs.

[4] Martin Murphy gives an overview in his Historical Introduction, pp. 1-37 to *St Gregory's College, Seville, 1592-1767* (Catholic Record Society, 1992). Murphy's book successfully pieces together the very fragmentary surviving evidence for this least known of the English Colleges. Even so, there is interesting information scatted through the rest of the book which describes the College's archives (in Valladolid since 1767), quotes key documents, gives a list of alumni and martyrs, etc. After 1767 the Seville seminary buildings were given over to commercial use until 1932 when its poor condition merited demolition. The chapel survives to this day, though totally unrecognisable as such.

[5] In an article in the magazine Art Spanish Archives, No. 322, 2008, pp. 183-191 and in *Serie Archivo Colegio de San Albano* (2008), edited by Peter Harris, who himself wrote a useful and illustrated(but untitled) pamphlet about the history of the painting's travels to coincide with its triumphal return to the English College at Valladolid in 2010. The return of the *Triunfo* 'represents a very important asset recovery for Sevillian painting, since St Alban's School of Valladolid retains other paintings of saint kings of England [by] Francisco Pacheo, and the church of San Miguel in the same city' holds another 'holy Roelas English' painting. [Taken from a Spanish web-site.]

[6] Murphy, p.1.

[7] Murphy, pp. 13-14.

[8] Murphy, p. 29.

[9] J. Gillow, *Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics* (1887) III, p. 557, repeating most of his obituary notice of Sherburne in *The Tablet,* 23 December 1854, p. 806.

[10] G. Anstruther, O.P., *The Seminary Priests* (1977) vol. 4, pp. 151/152 (under Irving), correcting Gillow, op. cit., pp. 555f.

[11] Harris, p.10.

[12] Harris, p.13. I have, unfortunately, been unable to obtain an illustration of the old frame to compare it with the new.

THE PROTESTANT REACTION TO THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL IN THE NORTH-EAST OF ENGLAND, 1845-1870

J. Bush

By the 1850s, the Roman Catholic Church in England had experienced something of a dramatic resurgence[1]. The extent to which this was attributable to Irish immigrants or whether it was merely a natural process within the English Catholic Church has been a matter of some debate among historians.[2] However, there can be no doubt that the Church was becoming increasingly more assertive in the period after Catholic Emancipation, as is evident in the proliferation of churches and religious practice. In 1850, there were 587 churches in England and Wales, and 788 clergy. By 1870, however, there were 1,151 churches and 1,528 clergy.[3] This was complemented by the aggressively ultramontane attitudes of Catholic leaders, such as Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman in England and Cardinal Cullen in Ireland.[4] For many Protestants, this only served to show the true nature of popery. Francis Close, the notorious Cheltenham anti-Catholic, complained of the consequences of Catholic Emancipation:

> We give them civil and religious liberty *usque ad nauseum* and yet they go on bit by bit . . . beautiful cathedrals spring up, and the pomps and ceremonies of Popery, with its priests and bishops prevail, until at length comes a scarlet cardinal to take possession of the land. This is Romish ingratitude.[5]

In localities throughout the country, the march of popery seemed unstoppable to those who feared not only the decline of Protestantism but also of the very fabric of the cultural landscape.

In north-east England the Catholic resurgence was just as evident and Catholic communities grew rapidly in most of the region's major towns and villages during the mid-Victorian years. The days of small meeting houses, hidden away from the public gaze, were long gone. In their place were clear signs of the growth in self-confidence of a resurgent Catholicism: large and ornate Gothic churches, influenced by the ambitious architectural designs of A.W. Pugin, that were situated as close to public life as possible.[6] Churches were given dedications, such as St Patrick in the east end of Sunderland, and in some places, such as St Michael's in Esh Laude, the name of the local Anglican parish was adopted if it pre-dated the Reformation.[7] Worship within these churches highlighted the growing trend towards Ultramontanism with continental forms of Italianate piety, such as devotions to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary.[8]

For the most part, this increase in the Catholic community passed off without much comment from the Protestant population.[9] Direct opposition to expressions of Catholic worship was rare but this reflected the trend throughout the country.[10] As Norman has suggested, there was a general movement towards an acceptance of Catholicism in the country as a whole.[11] Many believed that Catholics were entitled to worship as they wished and only extreme anti-Catholics were prepared to deny them this right. There was, however, controversy surrounding the building of Catholic churches in some places in the north-east. The Seaham Harbour dispute, in

which Lady Londonderry wielded her influence to ensure that the continued demands of Irish Catholics for a church were denied to them[12], was perhaps the most famous local example of Protestant opposition to Catholic worship, but it was not the only example as difficulties were experienced in other areas too. In Esh, the Catholics of the village were constantly thwarted by opposition from the staunch Anglican clergyman, the Revd Temple Chevallier who, in a letter to his Cambridge friend, the Revd George Corrie, Rector of Newton, complained of the Catholics 'spreading their nets with too much success ... neighbourhoods have either fallen into their hands or been purchased.'.[13] In Jarrow, the Catholics priest of the town was eventually reduced to purchasing a disused Baptist chapel. The foundation of St. Augustine's, in Darlington, was sabotaged on several occasions.[14] In September 1854, a foundation stone was laid by the Bishop of Hexham for a new Catholic church at Shotley Bridge which, according to the local correspondent of the *Tablet*, had been previously opposed by anti-Catholic prejudice:

> The bigotry displayed by the landed proprietors in the immediate neighbourhood has been so great that for several years past, every effort to obtain a site on which to build a church has been baffled. Not a piece of land could be purchased, even by a Protestant, without allowing the insertion in the deeds of a clause preventing the alienation of any portion of it to a Catholic.[15]

At Hartlepool, a Catholic church was finally opened in 1851 by Cardinal Wiseman after various attempts to sabotage its erection.[16] Although the opening passed off without incident, bad feeling was evident in the town towards Wiseman and the building of the church. The No-Popery lecturer, Mr. Lamb, issued a public challenge to Cardinal Wiseman to debate a series of controversial subjects in the Town Hall in July. Although Wiseman declined, the sectarian tension generated by this issue led to a serious riot in the town. A letter from W.G. Harrison in the *Durham Advertiser* complained of the support of the Catholics of the town for this project, when the Protestants themselves could not raise enough money to complete the building of a Protestant church holding 774 people. Harrison stressed the necessity of erecting this church in order to meet 'the strenuous efforts that the Roman Catholics are making to gain the ascendancy'.[17] Some Protestants even saw the method of raising money from the Catholic laity for church building projects as evidence of the ultimate designs of popery. In February 1854, a letter to the *Darlington and Stockton Times* complained of a recently published pastoral letter from the Bishop of Hexham, which requested one half-penny a week from those Catholics in employment. The letter-writer saw this appeal as 'well calculated to enlist the sympathies of the humblest' and typical of the aggressive nature of the Catholic Church:

> Thus it has ever been with the Roman Catholics—they are always on the move. If the voluntary system fails they have recourse to authority—if authority is out of their reach then they always fall back on the voluntary system. They are always aggressive—always either insinuating, or openly advancing.[18]

Rituals and other outward expressions of Catholic life were tolerated so long as Protestants were not affected in some way. When they were, however, anti-Catholic

outrage was not far behind. An example of this can be seen with an increase in the bell-ringing of Catholic institutions. Few Protestants could escape from the 'clamour' which often affected their daily lives. Thus, the *Bulwark* complained that the Catholics of Hartlepool had made themselves very unpopular with their Protestant neighbours by ringing the bells of the Catholic chapel and drowning out the sermon of an Anglican clergyman. Indeed, the journal suggested, it was not merely the noise that was the problem but also 'the consciousness of the act of gross idolatry being perpetrated'.[19] Similarly, in Sunderland, where a contingent of the Sisters of Mercy resided in Green Street, the noise generated by the convent bell was a cause for complaint among the Protestant population. One letter writer to the *Sunderland Herald* protested about the way in which the 'unmusical wagging of this intolerable convent clapper' affected his daily existence:

> Morning, noon, and night it is heard wailing out its church-yard like notes, disturbing people in their beds, and in their sitting rooms. Often I am aroused in the morning although living a full-quarter of a mile from Green Street, long before the hour at which I feel inclined to get up, by the mournful ding-dong of this excruciating bell.[20]

Renewed signs of confidence were also evident in the outward expression of Catholic Soirées. Their popularity as a social event amongst different sections of the Catholic community is evident by the vast crowds who assembled for an evening's entertainment of dinner, speeches and music. At a crowded meeting of Catholics held in the Newcastle Town Hall in January 1859, Canon Charles Eyre remarked that there was such an enormous assembly, 'they must arrange to have their next public meeting on the Town Moor' as that was the only place which could hold them.[21] Often Protestants themselves were attracted to these events and were welcomed by Catholics. Press reports of speakers thanking Protestants for their attendance were commonplace. In September 1848, the *Sunderland Herald* printed a report of a Catholic Soirée in the town at which the Chairman gave a toast of 'Prosperity to the Protestants who had honoured the meeting with their company'.[22] Nearly two decades later, the attendance of Protestants at these events was still commented upon by the Catholic contingent. At a Soirée in South Shields in April 1866, Mr. Turnbull stated that it afforded him 'great gratification to see present at that social gathering so many of their Protestant brethren'.[23]

The speeches made at these events were generally good-natured but often allowed the expression of clerical opinion that would have raised a few eyebrows among those Protestants present. At a meeting of Catholics in the Music Hall, Newcastle, in February 1853, the Revd John Bamber of Sunderland caused outrage by stating that if justice were not done to Ireland, he would, along with the Catholics of the United Kingdom, be prepared to 'welcome a French invasion'.[24] This caused a storm of protest led by the *Gateshead Observer*, which condemned the priest's speech. A Catholic wrote to the paper, hoping that Bamber's sentiments were not a reflection of Catholic opinion in general for, if they were,

> even the most liberal of our Protestant fellow-countrymen would be justified in

believing that a Catholic cannot be a good citizen in a *Protestant* country, and that, therefore, the Emancipation Act of 1829 was a mistake.[25]

A similar response was generated at a Catholic Soirée in Durham in January 1859. In his speech, the Revd Edward Consitt stated that every Catholic must feel sadness when casting eyes on the Cathedral in the city as it is 'now in the hands of those who were quite unsuited to hold it'.[26] If it were a Catholic cathedral, he argued, then it would be 'fill to overflowing'.[27] This caused an angry rebuke evident in a number of letters printed in the *Durham Advertiser* the following week.[28]

In the minds of some Protestants, Catholic priests cut an even more sinister figure as they became more militant in their outlook. At a Soirée in Newcastle, the Revd John Bamber complained that there were Protestants in the town 'whose prejudice ran so high that they would not look a priest in the face'.[29] The Revd Thomas Wilkinson, who later became the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle and President of Ushaw College, faced a hostile reception from his own family when he converted to Catholicism in 1847.[30] His father, George, in a letter to Thomas, made it perfectly clear what he thought of his son's decision by instituting a codicil to his will that effectively reduced Thomas's allowance to £100 a year.[31] When Thomas later became the parish priest at the nearby Durham village of Tow Law, George warned him to abstain from using his influence to try to convert any family members to the Catholic religion.[32]

Accusations were also levelled at Catholic priests in a number of court cases which served to highlight Protestant suspicions of a morally corrupt "priestcraft", thus helping to reinforce 'the image of the perverted Roman Catholic' and, in particular, the image of the priest as a murderer 'or sexual corrupters of young women'.[33] In the town of Stockton in 1854, the local Catholic priest, Richard Singleton was accused of bastardy by the daughter of an Anglican incumbent, Miss Jane Jones.[34] Other charges were levelled against him by Miss Jones, including bestiality with his dog. In the subsequent trial that followed, lurid details of the priest's affair with Miss Jones were dramatised in the local and even national sectarian press and devoured by a public who watched the proceedings with keen interest. The Revd George Fox, always willing to capitalise on the popular mood against the Catholic religion, delivered a sold-out lecture at Stockton and subsequently printed a pamphlet on the subject that was even circulated in America.[35] The priest was declared innocent by the magistrates who, in the end, could not convict him for lack of corroborative evidence.[36] Miss Jones appealed to other judges the following year but was still unsuccessful and the case was even reopened in Stockton when it was revealed that new evidence had come to light and a new character witness appeared, but to no avail. The failure to convict the priest was met with incredulity by one Protestant magistrate in a letter to the *Durham Advertiser*:

Surely seeing the unhappy and ill-used girl leave the man's bedroom at two o'clock in the morning, and on another occasion witnessing them in a situation that admitted no doubt of their intimacy—his arm encircling her waist—were abundant confirmatory evidence, superadded to her own solemn oath, to satisfy

the requirements of an Act of Parliament.[37]

Anti-sacerdotalism was also present in the town of Hartlepool throughout the 1850s. The Catholic priest of the town, William Knight, appears to have been victimised on a regular basis in a town where a rabid anti-Catholicism seemed to be ingrained among the local Protestant community.[38] His very existence seemed to excite at best curiosity and at worst outright hostility. At a Soirée in Sunderland, the *Sunderland Herald* reported the Revd Mr. Knight recalling his first entry into the town by horseback:

> On entering the town, he observed a crowd of people assembled, and though he never imagined for a moment that they were waiting of him, yet he was soon made sensible of it. An old woman advanced, and, taking the horse by the bridal, she stared at him a short time. Then turning to her companions, in evident disappointment and disgust, she exclaimed, 'Oh—he's nowt but any other man'. (Laughter) He verily believed they expected to see him enter the town on four legs, with long ears, and a tail of his own (Loud laughter).[39]

During the 1850s, Knight became an increasing figure of hate for the local anti-Catholics. After narrowly escaping a lynching in July 1851, he found himself the target of sustained abuse, so much so that he was forced to appeal to the magistrates of the town. He complained that men and children 'had called him by very opprobrious names, and using such language as he would not repeat in court'. The driving force behind this campaign was allegedly the Revd George Fox of Durham, whose 'fiery discourses' against Catholicism in a sermon at the local Anglican church had generated renewed distrust of the priest. Knight also complained that his sister had been assaulted while out riding. The controversy reached the attention of the *Bulwark*, whose correspondent believed that Knight and the Catholics were hypocritical in complaining of discrimination when true persecution was carried out regularly in the 'dungeons of Rome, and the prisons of Florence'.[40]

It was, however, Knight's alleged behaviour towards a respectable young lady which caused the most controversy. In October 1851, the priest accused the local solicitor, John Hines, of assaulting him. Hines, who acted as his own defence lawyer, argued in return that Knight had attempted to seduce his daughter, Henrietta. It was alleged that Knight put his arm around Henrietta and told her she was 'a pretty girl'. The report of the case seemed to revolve around whether Knight had seduced Miss Hines or not, rather than the actual assault. Indeed, Mr. Hines appealed to the jury to consider carefully his motivations for attacking the priest:

> If any of you gentlemen are fathers and having daughters, and you found that a man, more especially a minister of the gospel, as he is styled in the summons, is trying all in his power to pollute them, how would you act? Draw your own inferences whether I discharged him or not.[41]

In the end, the case was dismissed on a technicality and Hines escaped punishment for assault.

This local anti-sacerdotal culture was often fuelled by individual personalities. The

local Hartlepool orator, A.H. Lamb, delivered popular lecturers on the evils of popery, some of which he subsequently published in pamphlet form. In a pamphlet entitled *Popery Opposed to the Laws of Nature and Revelation*, he lambasted the confessional in uncompromising language:

> By its means . . . the priest is made one with Satan. Operating in the very origin of the will, he can vitiate the purest mind . . . It seems a doubt whether Satan ever brought his ancient system of Paganism to such a state of maturity as his priesthood, in the counterfeit system of the Christian church, have brought his system of auricular confession.[42]

Similarly, the editor of the Conservative and Evangelical *Hartlepool Free Press*, Benjamin T. Ord, directed his energies towards exposing the sinister designs of the priesthood, publishing two aggressively anti-sacerdotal pamphlets in the mid-1860s.[43] In the second of these pamphlets, Ord accused priests of coercing dying Catholics into bequeathing their estates to individual priests, concentrating on a particular case in which a local priest was alleged to have donated £100,000 to Ushaw College bequeathed to him by a deceased Catholic. Ord entered into correspondence with Bishop William Hogarth, Cardinal Wiseman, and even W.E. Gladstone, to draw attention to this practice but to no avail.

Although anti-sacerdotalism was mostly evident in the southern area of the region, it was not uncommon in other areas. Court cases against priests in Durham City and Felling fuelled Protestant paranoia further north. In February 1863, a young lady, Hannah Hunt, alleged that the Catholic priest of Durham, Patrick Matthews, had threatened to assault her.[44] Matthews had originally accosted Hunt in a shop in Framwellgate, telling her that her husband, Patrick Hunt, was to stop deriding the Roman Catholic religion or he (Matthews) would stop him from 'walking or talking'. A few days later, Hunt told her friend what had occurred but as she was leaving her friend's house, Matthews walked in to speak to her friend's Catholic husband. On seeing Hunt, the priest asked if she was offended by what he had said before. When Hunt replied in the affirmative, the priest then said 'If that puts you about I will do far more'. The case was dismissed, to the applause from a group of Irish Catholics, owing to the fact that nothing untoward had taken place and the threats were more implied than real.[45]

Perhaps the most famous court case against a priest in the region concerns Edmund Kelly of Felling.[46] A stolen watch had been given to Kelly by a thief who admitted his guilt in confession to the priest. However, because the thief had surrendered the watch in confession, Kelly could not name the thief in court, much to the incredulity of the judge. After a fruitless attempt to obtain the name of the criminal, the judge felt he had no other option but to send Kelly to Durham Gaol for withholding information. This caused an outcry among Catholics and, after forty hours incarceration, Kelly was freed. The *Bulwark* was incensed, claiming that the confessional effectively 'defeats the ends of justice, both by absolving and concealing the criminal'.[47] Cooter has argued that Kelly's release is an example of a tolerant attitude towards Catholics, but the very fact that the priest was imprisoned in the first

place for following the teachings of his faith suggests otherwise.[48]

The battleground between an increasing militant Catholic community and a staunchly defensive anti-Catholicism can also be observed in the arena of the public lecture. The heightened religious tension in the early 1850s was 'strongly encouraged' by the culture of No-Popery lecturing campaigns that dwelt on the theological errors of Roman Catholicism.[49] This is clearly evident in the north-east. Newcastle was graced with the presence of a number of evangelical lecturers who exploited the anti-Catholic tension of the period. No fewer than ten No-Popery orators visited the town in three years 1850 to 1852 — all of them being met with large attendances. It also appears they were all effective public speakers who knew how to command their audience. Thus Dr. Sleigh, who lectured on the 'Errors and Inconsistencies of Popery', was reported to be a 'master of his subject, and his style of oratory is pleasing and effective'. In general, these lecturers were cordially received by their audience but, on occasions, the appearance of Irish Catholics often led to disruption. Thus a lecture delivered by Samuel Day on the subject of 'Romanism, the Religion of Terror' was 'frequently disturbed' by the presence of Roman Catholics from 'the Sister Isle'.[50]

While anti-Catholic lecturing was particularly popular in the early 1850s, so too were the lectures of prominent Catholics who saw a clear need to defend the increasing attacks on their faith. The obvious example is the Catholic orator Charles Larkin who was a staunch defender of Catholicism in political controversies but he was also a recognised authority on doctrinal subjects. He was never afraid to reply to the anti-Catholic lecturing of Alessandro Gavazzi and John Sheridan Knowles. Knowles, a famous playwright who had capitalised on the heightened anti-Catholic feeling of the early 1850s, was sponsored by the Protestant Alliance, as the organisation saw a definite commercial advantage in supporting the lecturing tour of such a famous figure. In North Shields, Larkin replied to Knowles's Newcastle lecture on the 'Romish Apostasy', delivering a long lecture in defence of the Pope to a crowded audience in which one Protestant was almost lynched for trying to question the lecturer.[51] Controversial Catholic lecturers could also be clerical. In 1852, both Frs Kelly and Knight, of South Shields and Hartlepool respectively, delivered a series of controversial sermons in their churches, the latter delivering anti-Protestant orations every Sunday evening for three months.[52] In Sunderland, the lectures of the priest Philip Kearney, in which he implied that if a penitent was to admit the crime of murder in confession before committing it, the confessor could not notify the authorities, generated an anti-Catholic outrage which went beyond the confines of the north-east. Indeed, opposition was even evident from the notable anti-Catholic firebrands, the Revd Hugh Stowell of Manchester and the Revd Hugh McNeale of Liverpool. McNeale argued that if Kearney's statement was true, priests should be given the death penalty as accessory to murder if the penitent carried out his threats.[53]

Some anti-Protestant lecturers came from further afield. Dr Daniel Cahill, a renowned Irish Catholic theologian, toured the region in 1852 and 1853, lecturing in Newcastle, South Shields, Durham, Darlington and Stockton on subjects such as the

'Infallibility of the Church'.[54] The reports in the local press were generally unwelcoming to these anti-Protestant lecturers in contrast to the somewhat fawning reception offered to their anti-Catholic adversaries, and their attitude to Cahill was no different. In a report of his lecture at Stockton, the *Durham Advertiser* was clearly shocked by Cahill's oration:

> Such a specimen of Popery, pure and simple, has been seldom heard in Stockton. There was no artificial dressing of the subject to suit the time and place, but a real exhibition of the Papal system in all its extravagancies and deformity.[55]

The appearance of Dr Cahill, however, often inspired more than just vocal complaints. In Darlington, attempts were made by the 'Orange Low Church Party' to placard the town and prevent the lecturer from speaking.[56] A more serious incident occurred in Newcastle. The *Newcastle Journal* reported a 'malicious outrage', in which a stone was thrown through the window of St Andrew's Catholic Church where the Irishman was preaching, striking a young female and cutting her 'head to the bone'.[57]

The response of the Protestant community to the Catholic revival in north-east England was not generally one of outright hostility but neither was the Catholic religion warmly embraced. Catholics were tolerated rather than accepted and allowed to worship as they pleased so long as this in no way interfered with their Protestant neighbours. When this did happen, however, the façade of Protestant toleration became all too apparent.

Notes and References

[1] This article is taken from my forthcoming book published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing entitled, "*Papists" and Prejudice: Popular Anti-Catholicism and Anglo-Irish Conflict in the North-east of England, 1845-70.*

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[3] E.R. Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1984), p. 205.

[4] Ibid, p. 110.

[5] *Protestant Magazine*, 12 (March 1850), p. 40, quoted in D.G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 100.

[6] Michael Morris and Leo Gooch, *Down Your Aisles: The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle* (Hartlepool: Northern Cross, 2000), p. 13.

[7] Ibid, loc. cit.

[8] Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, vol. IV*, From Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900* (Princeton University Press, 1962).

[9] Fr Ignatius Spencer could walk in full Passionist dress without fear of molestation, 'even when he was urging people to say a Hail Mary each day for the conversion of England'. Morris and Gooch, *Down Your Aisles*, p. 10.

[10] See Marion Emes, 'Anti-Catholicism in York from the General Election of 1826 to the Opening of the New St. Wilfrid's Church in 1864' (unpublished master's thesis, York University, 1996), p. 88.

[11] Norman, *English Catholic Church*, p. 204.

[12] This has been examined in detail: R.J. Cooter, 'Lady Londonderry and the Irish Catholics of Seaham Harbour: "No Popery" Out of Context'. *Recusant History*, 13.4 (1976), pp. 288-98.

[13] Durham University Special Collections, Letter from the Revd Temple Chevallier to the Revd George Corrie, 11 May 1850, Add. MSS.837/109.

[14] Morris and Gooch, *Down Your Aisles*, p. 13.

[15] *Tablet*, 2 September 1854.

[16] Morris and Gooch, *Down Your Aisles*, p. 13.

[17] *Durham Advertiser*, 5 September 1851. How exactly Protestant churches could act as a bulwark against Roman Catholicism was questioned in June 1853 when the Anglican church of High Coniscliffe appeared to be ringing its bells in support of Cardinal Wiseman's carriage as he passed through the village on a tour of the region. As it turned out, the bells were ringing for Wiseman's passenger, the landowner Phillip Howard, who owned, according to a letter-writer in the *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 'every acre of ground, and almost every home in the parish'. *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 9 July 1853.

[18] *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 18 February 1854.

[19] *Bulwark*, December 1854.

[20] *Sunderland Herald*, 22 January 1858.

[21] *Newcastle Guardian*, 15 January 1859.

[22] *Sunderland Herald*, 29 September 1848.

[23] *Shields Daily News*, 10 April 1866.

[24] John Bamber, b. 1819 (Lancashire), o. 1843, d. 1902. Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests, 1801-1914: a working list* (Bath: Downside Abbey Trustees, 1993), p. 38.

[25] *Gateshead Observer,* 12 February 1853.

[26] Edward Consitt, b. 1819 (Canada), o. 1842, d. 1887. *English and Welsh Priests*, p. 39.

[27] *Durham Advertiser*, 31 December 1858.

[28] *Durham Advertiser*, 7 January 1859.

[29] *Tablet*, 9 June 1855.

[30] For more information on Thomas Wilkinson, see L. Gooch, 'Thomas Wilkinson 1825-1909, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle 1889-1909', *Northern Catholic History*, 13 (1981), pp. 26-31

[31] Ushaw College Library, Wilkinson Papers, Letter from George Wilkinson to Thomas Wilkinson, 12 January 1847, UC/P16/4

[32] Ushaw College Library, Wilkinson Papers, Letter from George Wilkinson to Thomas Wilkinson, 2 October 1848, UC/P16/6

[33] D. Peschier, 'Religious Sexual Perversion in Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Literature', *Sexual Perversions, 1670-1890*, ed. by J. Peakmen (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 205.

[34] Richard Singleton, b. 1825 (Lancashire), o. 1848, d. 1880. *English and Welsh Priests*, p. 46.

[35] This pamphlet was dedicated to the Scottish anti-Catholic newspaper the *Bulwark* 'as a tribute of respect for the energy and talent with which they have defended the cause of Protestant truth against Popish aggression in Great Britain'. G.T. Fox, *Priestly Celibacy Exposed: A Lecture, Delivered in the Borough Hall, Stockton-upon-Tees…* (Stockton-on-Tees: Jennett & Co., 1854).

[36] *Tablet,* 7 October 1854.

[37] *Newcastle Guardian*, 14 July 1855; *Durham Advertiser*, 15 July 1855.

[38] William Knight, b. 1808, o. 1833, d. 1874. *English and Welsh Priests*, p. 42.

[39] Reprinted in the *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 27 October 1860.

[40] *Bulwark*, December 1854.

[41] *Sunderland Herald*, 2 October 1857.

[42] A.H. Lamb, *Popery Opposed to the Laws of Nature and Revelation* (London: [n. pub.] 1854), p. 11.

[43] *The Beginning of the End*, which Ord 'dedicated to the Catholic priesthood', and *A blue book: or, an Exposition of the Manner in which the Priesthood Plunder and Devour their Flocks* (Hartlepool Free Press, 1865).

[44] Patrick Thomas Matthews, b. 1833 (County Meath), o. 1862, d. 1899. *English and Welsh Priests*, p. 48.

[45] *Durham Chronicle*, 6 February 1863.

[46] Edmund Joseph Kelly, b. 1794 (Kilkenny), o. 1835, d. 1866. *English and Welsh Priests*, p. 42.

[47] *Bulwark*, April 1860.

[48] Roger Cooter, *When Paddy Met Geordie: The Irish in County Durham and Northumberland, 1840-80* (University of Sunderland Press, 2005), p. 82.

[49] D.M. MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Macmillan, 1999), p. 174.

[50] *Newcastle Journal*, 8 February 1851.

[51] *Shields Gazette*, 18 March 1853.

[52] *Tablet*, 17 January, 17 April 1852.

[53] *Sunderland Herald*, 12 December 1851.

[54] According to John Wolffe, Daniel Cahill was one of the most controversial of all Catholic lecturers. From the 1820s, he employed language as extreme as his anti-Catholic opponents. John Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860* (The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991) p. 169.

[55] *Durham Advertiser*, 18 November 1853.

[56] *Tablet*, 10 December 1853.

[57] *Newcastle Journal*, 31 January 1852. Cahill also returned later that year to preach in the same church, delivering a series of ten orations on different subjects. Tyne & Wear Archives Service, 'Church Notice Book: St. Andrew's, Newcastle', 21-28 November 1852, C/NC/76/8/1.

THE IRONMASTER, THE ARCHITECT AND THE PRIEST: BUILDING THE CHURCH AT WOLSINGHAM

P. Harris

On 26 April 1834 the Roman Catholic architect Joseph Aloysius Hansom (1803-82) was declared bankrupt; on 29 December 1846 Thomas William Wilkinson (1825-1909), converted to Catholicism in Leeds; and on 5 September 1854, the church of St Thomas of Canterbury, Wolsingham, Co. Durham, was opened. This article will argue that a direct link existed between all three events, and it was their individual and collective connections with the Attwood family of ironmongers and landowners, politicians and bankers, which were responsible for the building of the church. Charles Attwood paid for the site; Hansom was the architect, and Wilkinson the first parish priest.[1]

The contributions of all three were of equal importance, but it is the recusant York-born architect, Joseph Hansom whose personal network was the most extensive, and who was the lynchpin between them. As suggested by David Milburn, it could easily be assumed that the contract for designing and building this church was given to Hansom because he happened to be working at Ushaw at the time, and the church was nothing more than a natural product of the Catholic Revival.[2] To a certain extent this was true but the background was far more complex, and it starts in Birmingham. Early in his career Hansom attempted to obtain that 'one commission of sufficient magnitude to establish a lasting reputation', in his case winning the competition to design and build Birmingham Town Hall.[3] Things went wrong: he was let down by the Birmingham Street Commissioners, money ran out and he was made bankrupt. However the whole experience was life-changing. Firstly it brought him into contact with the Attwood family, long established in the Halesowen area, seven miles south-west of Birmingham, where the wealth of the family derived from industrial interests which developed into land-owning and banking. They became personal friends and assisted Hansom generously with financial support. Secondly, it defined the course of Hansom's career, where his profession became increasingly vocational in nature, so that within a few years his work was almost exclusively for Catholic patrons.

The generation of the family which concerns us were the sons of Matthias Attwood.[4] Thomas, the third son, became a high-profile public figure, so much so that Francis Place described him as 'the most influential man in England' and he acquired the nickname of 'King Tom'. His mass rallies in Birmingham promoting the Representation of the People Act 1832, were said to have emulated those of Daniel O'Connell in Ireland. A highly respected philanthropist, Thomas advocated monetary reform, and he believed that the East India Company was restricting trade nationally and was the cause of growing unemployment in Birmingham. He was instrumental in setting up the Birmingham Political Union, and it was through him that Hansom became embroiled with the radical priest Fr Thomas McDonnell (1792-1869), Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), and the Co-operative leader, Robert Owen (1775-1847), so much so that he was temporarily dubbed 'the socialist architect'. When Hansom

became bankrupt, it was Thomas Attwood who arranged a position for him as financial adviser to one of his political and banking colleagues, Demster Hemming, who additionally had extensive mining interests in Warwickshire.[5]

In 1809 Matthias Attwood set up his three youngest sons, Edward, Charles and Benjamin, in soap-making and mining businesses in the north-east, almost certainly because at the beginning of the century most mines were to be found there. Edward spent most of his life as a glass manufacturer in Sunderland, no doubt a large employer of Irish labour, as by 1851 a quarter of the population was Irish-born. Benjamin diversified into banking, at one stage being a trustee of a London bank along with Richard Spooner, youngest son of the partner of his older brother, Thomas.[6]

Charles Attwood of Newcastle, Bishop Oak, Tow Law and latterly Wolsingham was initially a glassmaker in Gateshead and Whickham, where he owned ten per cent of the Crown Glass Company. He turned his attention to mining when he was introduced to an unusual source of carbonate iron, found on the Bishop of Durham's manor of Stanhope and Wolsingham. The land was originally mined by George Pearson, an agent of the Bishop, and this links in with the Wilkinson family, for Pearson's daughter, Elizabeth Jane, was to become the wife of George Wilkinson of Wolsingham and mother of Thomas William Wilkinson, the first missionary priest of Wolsingham. After several complicated negotiations, Charles acquired a sub-lease for what was to become the Weardale Iron Company. By 1850 he had acquired the full lease of all iron and mineral rights. At this stage his combined home and office was based in Wolsingham. His personal development is illustrated in the census records, whereby in 1851 he is described as an ironmaster, in 1861 as an ironmaster and coalminer and in 1871 as ironmaster, steel worker and landowner. In 1861 he moved to Tow Law, a new town which Moss goes so far as to claim was 'founded' by Attwood. He is reputed to have spent over a million pounds on the building of his ironworks there, along with the purchase of coal royalties, and was employing 467 men and 94 boys, already well in excess of the national average of two hundred, but only a fraction of the number he employed overall as his business extended in all directions. The effect of this is borne out by the increase in population, from just 60 in 1840 to around 3,000 between 1850 and 1860. [7] He also opened a processing plant at Tudhoe near Spennymoor in 1852, where the company set up iron refining furnaces, forging hammers, rolling mills and three collieries.[8]

Thomas Attwood remained in Birmingham, and, along with Joshua Scholefield, another key player in the Town Hall saga, was to become one of their first two Members of Parliament, following in the footsteps of his elder brother Matthias Jr., who had been the Member since 1819. However, lest there be any doubt as to the on-going influence of the Birmingham connection in the north, this is dispelled by the fact that Charles Attwood was prominent in campaigning on precisely the same issues, and it was he who founded the Northern Political Union in Newcastle. His active participation was well publicised in frequent newspaper reports and public notices. One example is a notice from the Council of the Northern Political Union, to the men of England and Scotland. It concludes: "Proceed, Brave Countrymen; "be

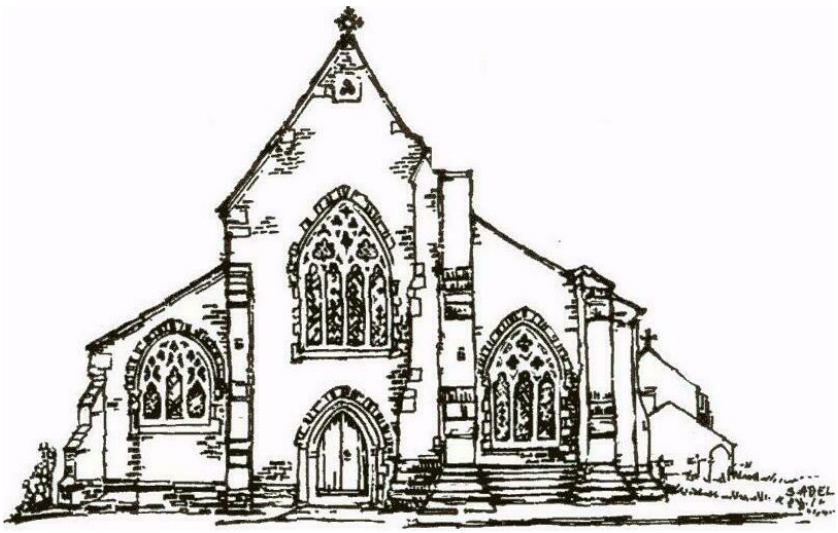
just and fear not", words which mirrored those of his brother Thomas, but could equally well have come from the mouth of Robert Owen. Of the three officials quoted, Charles Attwood is designated Chairman. Another example is headed 'To the Reformers of the Productive Classes, in the Districts of the Tyne and Wear', addressed to 'Brother Reformers', and decrying the disappointing outcome of the Reform Bill, to which his brother had been so dedicated.[9]

The father of the Revd Thomas Wilkinson was George Hutton Wilkinson, Recorder of Newcastle in 1834 and the first County Court Judge for Northumberland. The lineage of his mother, Elizabeth Jane (née Pearson) can be traced back to Edward III. They lived at Harperley Hall in Weardale. Thomas was educated at Harrow and at Durham University, where he graduated in 1845. He went to Leeds to join the quasi-monastic community of St Saviour's. It was here, when he was so impressed by J. H. Newman's *The Development of Christian Doctrine,* that he and five colleagues decided to convert to the Catholic faith. He made his decision on 29 December 1846, the feast of St Thomas of Canterbury, the patron to whom the as yet unconceived Wolsingham church would be dedicated. He was ordained priest by Bishop William Hogarth at Ushaw College in December 1848 and duly moved to Oscott College, near Birmingham, for his training under the direction of Wiseman. After that he returned to Ushaw and from then onwards always maintained a very close connection with the locale and the college. He was particularly involved in the building works which were taking place at the time and this brought him into contact with Hansom. Hansom built the Exhibition Hall and the Big Library, which was paid for by Wilkinson and which housed his personal collection. He also built the Home Farm which would have been an area of special interest to Fr Wilkinson, who had a passion for farming.[10]

On 30 August 1854 it was reported that 'the affluent members of the Catholic church in the northern counties of Durham and Northumberland were assisting their bishop and clergy to erect four churches in the area'. These were at Crook, Gainford, Minsteracres and Wolsingham. In the latter case, this was extraordinary bearing in mind that in 1792 only ten Papists were recorded in Wolsingham, and between 1810 and 1814 there was only one Catholic family in a population of 1,800, most of whom were farmers. However the situation then changed rapidly and a new labour force grew up, mainly from the influx of Catholic Irish settlers escaping from repeated potato famines in their own country and seeking work and refuge. Hence while the population of Wolsingham was about two thousand in the years 1811-1841, by 1851 it rose to 4,885. As in other parts of the country, the religious needs of the Irish had to be met.[11]

Baptist and Methodist churches already existed in Wolsingham, and between 1848 and 1849 a new Anglican church was built. It was at this stage that Thomas Wilkinson was appointed missioner in Weardale, and, along with Bishop Hogarth, he purchased a small plot of land which included a cottage, a two-storey hayloft and a stable, in which a new mission and school was established. An inspirational preacher, Wilkinson generated so many new recruits that by 1851 he needed the assistance of two of his former clerical colleagues from Leeds, Richard Ward (1813-1869) and

Seton (Austin) Rooke (1824-1901). His success attracted the attention of Cardinal Wiseman, his mentor from Oscott College, and a proper church was fast becoming essential. This was agreed and after a visit by the cardinal in June 1853 work began on clearing their chosen site. The foundation stone was laid on 8 September and the church, which cost £2,000, was opened on 5 September 1854. Dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury, it is illustrated with the 'hayloft chapel-school' on the right.)



Just seven weeks later, the more elaborate church of Our Lady Immaculate & St Cuthbert was opened in Crook, at an estimated cost of £3,000, including school and presbytery. Neither were entirely complete at their opening. The intended bell-tower for St Thomas' was never built, and the bell which was especially manufactured remains in the grounds of the church. The Crook church was not consecrated until 1926, as, not untypically, it took that long to clear outstanding debts.[12]

With such contacts as those just described, the question has to be asked as to why Edward Welby Pugin (1834-75), was chosen to design the church at Crook and not Hansom. Between March 1852 and February 1854 the two architects were working together at Leith near Edinburgh, where they were completing A. W. Pugin's church, St Mary Star of the Sea; and between 1849 and 1855 members of both families were working at Ushaw. Additionally, Hansom had a very good connection with Mgr Newsham, dating back to his early life in Yorkshire. No records have been traced to explain Pugin's appointment in preference to that of Hansom, but Hansom suffered a brief period of ill health at this time and already had a very heavy workload. It is just possible that Hansom put Pugin's name forward, as the much younger Pugin was trying to establish a reputation in his own right after the death of his father in 1852. A more realistic suggestion is that the decision resulted from mutual consultation between Mgr Newsham, Fr Wilkinson and the two architects inasmuch as the work should be shared between them.[13]

The influence and scope of Hansom's networking, as mentioned at the beginning, is confirmed by subsequent events. After his near mishap at Minsteracres, when his brother Charles Francis, (1817-1888) came up from Clifton, near Bristol to assist

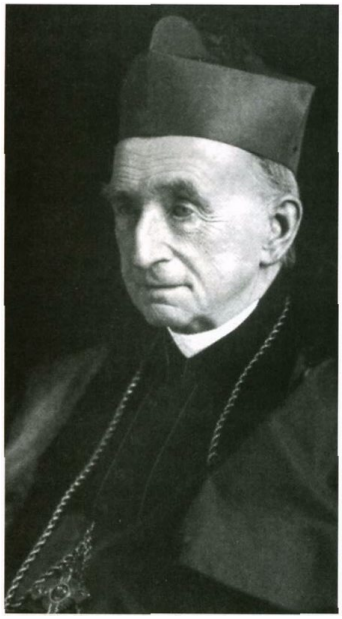
with the Silvertop chapel, Joseph moved to Clifton where the two brothers were in partnership between 1854 and 1859. As Charles Attwood's move north emanated from his Birmingham connections, that of Charles Hansom from the Midlands to the south was prompted by William (Bernard) Ullathorne, first Bishop of Birmingham, who invited Charles to build the pro-cathedral there when he moved to Bristol. Fr McDonnell, the radical priest from Birmingham also relocated and officiated at the cathedral for two years. The Bristol, Somerset and Gloucester area has further significance inasmuch as both the Revv. Ward and Rooke were born there, and both returned later in life. But it was in Leeds that they met up with Fr Wilkinson and Joseph Hansom. Hansom was in the process of designing a huge complex, the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, which was subsequently known as Mount St Mary. Sited on 'the Bank', home of a vast conclave of Irish immigrants, it was being built for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Order to which Fr Robert Cooke, the future Provincial, belonged.[14]

Wilkinson moved from the 'hayloft' chapel to St Thomas as soon as it opened, and was happily settled there until 1860. Rooke and Ward took over the Pugin church in Crook. However, when Ward left for St Catherine's in Frome, Somerset due to ill health and needed to move to a milder climate; and then Rooke, who had taken over from him, also left, Wilkinson was obliged, apparently reluctantly, to leave Wolsingham to take charge of the much larger parish of Crook.[32] The reason for Rooke's move was that he wished to join the Dominicans. Both Joseph and Charles Hansom had close connections with the Order, the former from his days with the Dominican Priory at Hinckley in Leicestershire, (where he moved after his Birmingham debacle), and the latter due to his work at Woodchester, near Stroud in Gloucestershire, (the future home of the Hinckley Priory).[33] Whilst still resident in the Hinckley area, Hansom had designed and built the Dominican Priory Convent at Atherstone, only eight miles away. It was at Woodchester, however, that Rooke received his training; he subsequently became head of the Dominican Priory in London, where he remained until his death. It is not suggested that either of the Hansoms swayed the decisions of Wilkinson's two colleagues unduly, but their moves cannot be dismissed as totally coincidental.[15]

All this took place at the peak of Joseph Hansom's church-building career. His work for members of the Catholic gentry from then on was such that he became known colloquially as 'the Catholic architect'. Apart from his undertakings for Thomas Witham at Lartington Hall and at Minsteracres for George Englefield Silvertop, he also extended Danby Hall for the Scrope family. His churches and convents are far too numerous to mention, but three of the most prestigious churches, built in conjunction with his youngest son, Joseph Stanislaus Hansom (1848-1931), were the Holy Name of Jesus at Manchester, St Aloysius at Oxford and St Philip Neri at Arundel. Unlike the Hansoms, Charles Attwood and Thomas Wilkinson stayed in the Durham area. Despite a working life beleaguered by numerous financial complications and several protracted legal battles, added to the fact that the nephew who acted as his agent had suffered from paralysis at an early age, Attwood's career was one of resounding success. He died at his home, Holywood House, Wolsingham,

leaving an inheritance of '[just] under £180,000'. On the day of his funeral, his works at Wolsingham, Tow Law and Tudhoe were temporarily suspended as a show of respect. From 1860 Wilkinson suffered from ill health and he spent several years in semi-retirement, during which he took over the management of his family farm at Thistleflatt. However this was only a break in his professional life, as he was appointed Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle in 1889 and nine months later he succeeded Dr James Lennon to become the twelfth President of Ushaw College, a post he held until his death.[16]

Wolsingham is an exceptional example of the strength and depth of the close-knit Catholic community, which thrived regardless of geographic distance. It also goes some way to explain why any gazetteer of Hansom's work, which largely emanated from his network of Catholic contacts, would be equally widespread. However, standing back from the detail, the overall conclusion to be drawn is that the unwitting originator of the church of St Thomas of Canterbury at Wolsingham was Matthias Attwood of Halesowen. There were many contributory factors: Hansom and Wilkinson were facilitators, encouraged by Ushaw, and it was the younger Attwood who purchased the site, (no doubt prompted by Hansom), but without the business move initiated by Attwood's father, affording the opportunity for his youngest son to develop his entrepreneurial skills in the north and thence to provide work for a vast number of displaced Irish, there would never have been a reason for the other people to come together in the way in which they did, and their expertise might well have been dissipated to other parts of the country. The nineteenth century was an age of rapid and radical social change, and this was perhaps the most important factor of all, for it was within this context that St Thomas' came into being. There could have been another priest, another architect or another benefactor, but it was the surge in population in this area, specifically attributable to Charles, which created the need to build a Catholic church in Wolsingham.[36]



Attwood, Hansom and Wilkinson in later life

Notes and References

[1] *The Times,* 26 April 1834; *Catholic Directory,* 1855, p. 213; Michael Morris and Leo Gooch, *Down Your Aisles; The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle 1850-2000,* Northern Cross, (Hartlepool, 2000), p.243.

[2] David Milburn*, A History of Ushaw College. A study of the origin, foundation and development of an English Catholic seminary. With an epilogue, 1908-1962,* (Durham, 1964), p. 297; Joseph Hansom, his younger brother Charles and his eldest son Henry were all working at Ushaw between 1849 and 1853.

[3] Arnold, Ergut, Ozkaya, eds, *Rethinking Architectural Historiography,* Part I, Boundaries, Andrew Ballantyne, 'Architecture as evidence', p. 40.

[4] There were eleven children in this generation of the Attwoods, Thomas was the third and Charles the youngest; D. J. Moss, *Thomas Attwood, the Biography of a Radical*, McGill-Queen's University Press, (Montreal and London, 1990), p. 308, n.1. J. Robinson, *The Attwood Family with historical notes and pedigrees,* (private circulation, Sunderland, 1903).

[5] Victoria County History, Warwick, City of Birmingham, p. 314. Fr McDonnell (1792-1869), was particularly outspoken on the question of church rates. He took over as 'acting editor' of the *Catholic Magazine*, to which John Lingard contributed, and used this to air his controversial views; J. L. Altholz, *The Religious Press in Britain, 1760-1900,* (1989), p. 99. P. Harris, *The Architectural Achievements of Joseph Aloysius Hansom (1803-1882), Designer of the Hansom Cab, Birmingham Town Hall, and Churches of the Catholic Revival,* (2010), pp.79-82.

[6] Moss, p.308, n.8; The bank of Spooner, Attwoods & Co was founded in Birmingham in 1791 and the London branch followed in 1802.

[7] R. Storey, *Charles Attwood,* Tow Law Deerness & District History Society, pp.3/4; website: www.historysociety.org.uk/charles_attwood.htm; Edward Maltby (1770-1859), was the controversial Bishop of Durham who 'meddled in politics'. At one time he tutored Edward Bouverie Pusey and he was not averse to being seen dining in public with both Tractarians and Roman Catholics. His position was secured when he agreed to vote in favour of the Reform Bill. Edward Maltby, Wikipedia, accessed 19.12.12; Moss, p.338., n.38.

[8] Hansom was the architect of St Charles of Borromeo, Tudhoe in 1869-70. Whilst it is suggested that this was simply a natural sequence of events, personal connections are also noted here, beyond the Attwood ironworks and Hansom as architect. Both Thomas and Charles Salvin, sons of the benefactor from nearby Croxdale, were being educated at the Dominican Priory in Hinckley in 1851, at exactly the same time that Hansom and the three Wolsingham priests were in Leeds. Fr James Aylward, the head of the Hinckley Priory, was born in Leeds.

[9] Matthias Attwood was Tory M.P. for Fowey in 1819, for Callington 1820-1830, Boroughbridge 1830-32 and Whitehaven 1832-47. His son, Matthias Wolvey fought the election at Sunderland in 1841, but was defeated by Lord Howick. http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Attwood,_Thomas_(1783-1856)_(DNB01)

[10] Milburn, p.295; Hansom also carried out other work at Ushaw, including the bounds wall with racket and ball courts, the terracing and the cemetery. Most of the buildings are listed by English Heritage.

[11] *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser,* 30 August 1854, *et al;* Gainford was designed by John Gibson (1817-92), who trained with Hansom in Birmingham before his bankruptcy. The first priest at Gainford was Thomas Witham, whose property, Lartington Hall, was modified and extended by Hansom around 1862. The architect of Crook was E.W. Pugin, and Hansom the architect of the latter two: L. Gooch, *Catholicism in Weardale,* (1984) Chapter II. In Weardale the Irish were mainly coal-mining and working steel; at Hansom's church of St Walburge in Preston they were working in cotton mills; at Ss Mary and Germaine at Selby they were working on the railways, and at St Mary Immaculate Conception at Hartlepool they were working in the docks. W. Whelan, *History, Topography, and Directory of the County Palatine of Durham* (London, Manchester, 1856), p.341.

[12] *Catholic Directory* 1854, p. 211; *Catholic Directory* 1855, p. 213. C Hetherington, *A History of the Parish and Church of Our Lady Immaculate & St Cuthbert* (2003), p.10.

[13] This was ten years prior to the brief and ill-fated partnership between Hansom and Pugin, which ceased abruptly in December 1864. (*The Tablet,* 26 Nov, 1864, p.763); Hardman Letters, Birmingham City Archives, Charles Hansom to John Hardman, 25 November, 1853. Hansom's workload at this time comprised ten churches, one school, two additions to existing work and the major complex at Leeds; all in addition to his work at Ushaw. The geographical spread was from Scotland down to Devon.

[14] Ward was born at Westbury-on-Trym, Gloucestershire, and Rooke at Litton in Somerset. Before his conversion, Ward had been the curate of St Saviour's. Apart from Mgr Newsham, Hansom had also known Cooke from Everingham and he built the church of the Sacred Heart for him at Howden in 1850/1.

[15] Ward 'fitted up an old building, known as St Catherine's Tower, after which time Catholicism in the district greatly increased', cf. B. W Kelly, *Historical Notes on English Catholic Missions,* repr. Michael Gandy, (London 1995), p.182. In 1865 he took charge of the seminary in Bristol (later St Brendan's), cf. Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, comp., *English and Welsh Priests 1801-1914: A working list*, (Bath 1993), p.37. Hansom moved to Hinckley immediately after his bankruptcy in Birmingham, and it was here that the hansom cab was designed and built. He became a close friend of James Aylward, head of the Priory, and carried out further associated work in the Leicester area. Four of his children were buried there. Charles superseded Pugin to build the chapel and intended the Priory to house the Dominicans when they moved to Woodchester from Hinckley to set up a novitiate. Aylward held the post of Professor of Divinity at Woodchester in 1861, whilst Rooke was undergoing his studies.

[16] It could be argued that Matthias Attwood of Halesowen triggered a chain of events which ensured that a President-in-waiting, of very high calibre, was residing locally at a time when Ushaw College was in dire need of a new leader. Milburn considered that Dr Lennon 'achieved very little' and 'his ability did not match the tasks he ought to have faced' ... 'The Rt Rev Thomas William Wilkinson ... assisted in restoring its [Ushaw's] lost prestige', pp.294, 295.

REVIEW

Nicholas Rhea, *Blessed Nicholas Postgate Martyr of the Moors,* Gracewing, Leominster, 2012, ISBN 9780852447857

Nicholas Rhea is best known as the author of the Constable series of books on which the television series Heartbeat was based but his literary output also includes many other fiction and non-fiction works and regular columns in local and regional newspapers. His interest in Nicholas Postgate stems both from his Catholic faith and the fact that he was born and brought up in the same area around Egton and Egton Bridge, North Yorkshire, where the martyr himself was born, raised and served the last years of his priestly ministry. This, therefore, is something of a homage to someone whom Rhea was brought up to regard as a hero and inspiration, as witnessed by the tales he tells of pilgrimages and processions made with fellow pupils from school, as well as family and fellow parishioners, to places associated with the martyr.

Nonetheless, the book is more than a simple homage and Rhea's research is sufficiently thorough as to have revealed the very probable location of Postgate's birthplace at a little distance from the spot traditionally identified. He makes good use of his own knowledge of the geography and climate of the local area to paint a convincing picture of the likely conditions of Postgate's childhood and his later ministry. His description of the Catholic network of the area, emanating from the Chomleys of Whitby and encompassing many of their tenants and other local farmers, is also very evocative of the seventeenth century Catholic scene.

Nicholas Postgate did not work only on the moors of North Yorkshire and Rhea adequately covers his time as a gentry chaplain to Lady Hungate (at Saxton in the West Riding), the Dowager Lady Dunbar (at Halsham in the East Riding) and the Meynell family (at Kilvington in the North Riding). Few details are known of this period of Postgate's life but Rhea again fills out the picture with details of the Catholic gentry community in each locality and sites and houses which would have been familiar to him. Just occasionally the text reads too much as a guidebook at this point but the excuse lies in the lack of extant material directly concerning the priest himself in these chaplaincies.

Reaching the final phase of Postgate's ministry and his return to Blackamoor ('the high moors' where 'the stark treeless heights are beautiful in the spring, summer and autumn but can be deadly in winter') Rhea proposes his second piece of new-found knowledge, the existence of carved marks on posts within certain houses to denote their use as places for the secret celebration of Mass. This is a subject on which Rhea has compiled a book-length typescript (read by this reviewer) and on which he has also published articles in learned journals. Basically, his case is that the X mark, a simplified representation of the five wounds of Christ as found in the banner of the Pilgrimage of Grace, was a mark much in use among the Catholics of the area to denote safe routes and safe houses for priests returning from the continent via the

ports and inlets of the North Yorkshire coast. It was also an emblem particularly used by the Simpson Players, a troupe of actors from the Egton area known to have travelled widely performing plays in which positive references to the Catholic faith and denigration of Protestantism were common. One 'Nicholas Postgate' was amongst members of the troupe brought before magistrates for an offence of exactly this type, though it cannot be established with certainty that this Nicholas was the future martyr.

In the cottages of the North York Moors it was common to have an inglenook fireplace with a sort of full-height side-screen to form a passage protecting the area and keeping in the heat. The main upright in this screen was the 'heck-post' and a significant number of heck posts carved with an X mark survive, some in situ and some preserved in museums where it has been supposed that the carving of the X reflected a folk-belief in its power to ward off witches. Having made a close inspection of the surviving posts, Rhea contends that the X marks were made by Fr Postgate to let the initiated know that this was a house where Mass was celebrated. The fact that many of the posts have one, two, three or more 'scrolls' carved above and/or below the X suggests to him a code for denoting when Mass might be offered there. This is the theory at its most basic and there are other elements in its favour which Rhea outlines in the book and expands on in the longer typescript. He finds the evidence very persuasive and writes at some points as if the link between the X marks and the martyr is certain fact. For this reviewer the link remains an intriguing possibility in need of more definite proof.

Occasionally Rhea's book is repetitive, the same information provided in one chapter recurring almost verbatim in the next. Perhaps this would have been picked up with better proof-reading, the lack of which has allowed a fair number of typographical errors and omissions to go undetected. At some points, too, the creative writer or the journalist in Rhea takes over from the strictly factual historian. Nonetheless, we have here a work which furthers and refreshes our knowledge of Nicholas Postgate, thanks to the efforts of one who clearly feels a strong personal link to the martyr.

Revd Dominique Minskip

NOTES

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, SJ, on his election as Pope Francis I on 13 March 2013, chose to retain his episcopal seal and motto, illustrated on the back cover.

Superimposed on the symbols of the pontifical office: crossed keys, mitre and a red cord, is a blue shield depicting the emblem of the Jesuit order: the letters IHS, the monogram of the name of Christ, on a radiant sun with a cross and three nails. At the bottom left is a star, symbolising the Virgin Mary, and to the right is the plant spikenard, symbolising St Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church.

The Holy Father's motto, *Miserando Atque Eligendo* ('Because he saw him through the eyes of mercy and chose him', referring to the calling of St Matthew by Jesus) is taken from a homily by the northern English saint and scholar the Venerable Bede.

*

It is with deep regret that the North East Catholic History Society learned of the deaths of two longstanding members during the last year:

Miss **Eileen Swallow** served on the Executive Committee from 1975 until 2011, and was General Secretary of the Society from 1976 until her retirement in 1996.

Mrs **Dita Bowman** led a remarkable life. She was Jewish and born in Bohemia. She came to England at the outbreak of the Second World War and became a Catholic. She was multi-lingual and served in the secret services – making four 'drops' into occupied Europe. She later worked at Bletchley Park. In her post-war years she worked for many faith-based and secular charities on Tyneside. Dita's obituarist observed that she 'belonged to a generation where self-effacement, rectitude, service and reticence were guiding principles and she observed these all her life.

May they rest in peace