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Mary Ward, 1585-1645

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NOTE: A Medieval Printed Book Returns to Durham

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Front Cover: Portrait of Mary Ward, foundress of the Congregation of Jesus in 1609. (School of Rubens, c. 1621, from the CJ house at Augsburg, Germany.)

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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.

MARY WARD IN YORKSHIRE

Sr Patricia Harriss, C.J.

Mary Ward, founder of the first apostolic congregation for women at the time when the church was insisting on enclosure for all women religious, spent nearly all of her active life in continental Europe. The seeds of her future achievements were sown, however, in Yorkshire, where she was born in 1585 at Mulwith, near Ripon, and lived for the first twenty-one years of her life. Marmaduke Ward, her father, came from a family with roots in the area traceable to the thirteenth century, with properties in Givendale, Newby and Mulwith; he himself owned Mulwith. In 1585, the year of Mary's birth, he was also made Bailiff of Spofforth and Keeper of Spofforth Park for Henry Percy, the young ninth Earl of Northumberland. His wife, Ursula, was one of the Wrights of Ploughland near Welwick in Holderness. Through both parents Mary Ward was born into the close-knit network of Yorkshire Catholic gentry families, and this was to have a strong influence on her life.

For those families the difficulties and dangers of recusancy loomed large. As a small child, she would not have been aware of the martyrdom at York in 1586 of Francis Ingleby of Ripley, a distant cousin on her mother's side. But her own life was soon to be affected by the more everyday threat of fines and loss of property. Marmaduke was evidently a skilful manipulator of the law, managing to avoid recusancy fines by frequent changes of residence, and eluding confiscation of property by shrewd transference of title to ownership,[1] but despite his efforts he and his wife were cited in August 1590 for failing to take communion in the State church at Easter.

Perhaps this threat was behind the decision to send Mary, then aged five, to stay with her maternal grandparents at Ploughland. She was to be there for about five years, and in fact would never subsequently spend a long period with her immediate family, including the brothers and sisters who were beginning to arrive.[2] The Ploughland period ended probably at some time before her grandfather's death in 1594; then came a short time at home, during which, on 2 February 1595, the house at Mulwith was burnt down [AB7[3]]; then a period at Harewell in Nidderdale with her mother's cousin Catherine Ardington, née Ingleby; then from 1599 till 1606 with other cousins through the Inglebys, the Babthorpes, at Osgodby and Babthorpe near Selby.

During these years she came under the influence of strong Catholic women. Her grandmother, Ursula Wright, had spent a total of fourteen years in prison for her faith, in York and the Blockhouses in Hull. The child slept in her room, and recalled later that

> so great a prayer she was as that I do not remember in that whole 5 years that ever I saw her sleep, nor did I ever awake, when I perceived her not to be at prayer.

Catherine Ardington and Grace Babthorpe were both among the group of recusant wives imprisoned for two years in Sheriff Hutton Castle. An old servant of the

Babthorpes, Margaret Garrett, also played an important part in Mary's development. We know about that development from some fragments of autobiography [AB] written much later, in which as an adult she reflects on childhood incidents. It is interesting both to see what she thinks about her younger self, and to draw our own conclusions.

It is not surprising that a small child away from her immediate family should show signs of insecurity. It is significant that, even as an adult writing later, she insists on her father's love – 'whose love for his children was boundless'; 'I was the eldest child and much loved by my father' – almost as if she feels the need to reassure herself. She remembers, because it must have hurt her very much, an incident in which she repeated some profane words spoken by a playmate.

> I presently repeated the same her words several times in way of reprehension, with desire that my father should hear me and love me the better, God permitted that he hear me say the words, but minding not what went before, thought that I had sworn and coming with his conceit thereof in great choler unto me he corrected me himself (which was unusual and the first and last time that ever I could learn he did the like to any of us his children). He afterwards heard me speak. [AB1].

In these writings she has a good deal to say about her desire for love and approval. She tells in AB1 how her grandmother used from time to time to send poultry to Catholic prisoners, and how she made a point of asking that some chickens given to her as pets should be included – 'but I said it only to gain her esteem'; how, still at her grandmother's, she came under the influence of an older girl, her mother's much younger sister Alice:

> …she loved me much, and I bore her exceeding great affection, when I could without blame be from my grandmother I was for the most part in her company.

Evidently Alice was light-minded, and encouraged by an attendant, 'a young gentle-woman, who though in show modest, yet was she indeed light of carriage'. Mary saw these two do many things which she knew were not good, but

> I kept her counsel in all, for so she often entreated me … once I saw a man in her Chamber where I knew her mother allowed no one to come. I conceived that to be amiss, yet made known to none who spoke what I had seen.

She reflects on her own behaviour at that time:

> I was not addicted to any one virtue, when my grandmother commanded me to pray, I sat in the place but spent my time in sports. Yet I wanted not wit to seek cunningly my own esteem…

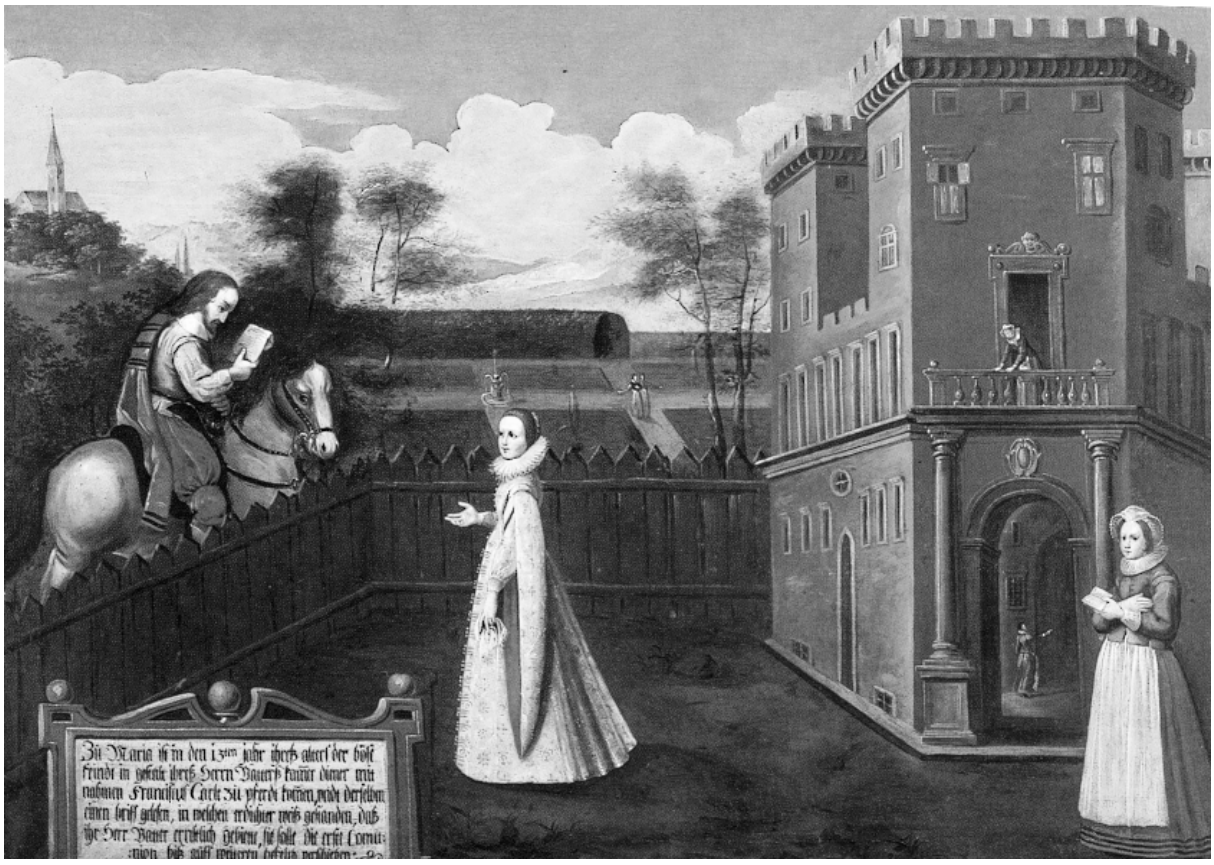
This desire for 'esteem' was still strong in her during her later stay in the Babthorpe household: she says of herself at that time 'I was so desirous to be esteemed and loved by all, that I sought this of everyone, both good and bad.' [AB3] Yet there is

always a conflict to be seen in her between the need for ‘esteem’ and her sense of what is right. This conflict is especially strong in the rather confused account in the second, undated fragment [AB2] which also probably relates to the Osgodby-Babthorpe period, of an uncomfortable situation that seems to have continued for some time.

> First living some years in one house where some lived that I had sufficient cause to think affected me in such manner as was not lawful, and yet neither removed myself from the place nor discovered the business to such as in likelihood might have procured remedy…

The priest who was confessor to both young people asked her once or twice if ever the man had made advances to her. She replied that she knew nothing of that kind relating either to her or to anyone else – which she knew to be false, because ‘he used besides uncomely familiarity to another young woman in that house.’ This young woman apparently came to her for advice, which she gave, and the young woman soon left the house. Mary seems to have been in a state of embarrassment and confusion, not wanting to make accusations damaging to another person’s reputation – but most of all, seemingly, afraid of losing the confessor, whom she valued.

This lack of clarity is in strong contrast to the little we know of her earlier stay with Mrs Catherine Ardington in Harewell Hall, when she was ten or eleven and preparing to make her first holy communion. The autobiographical fragments, which are not continuous, say nothing of this time; what we know comes from her companion Mary Poyntz in the *Briefe Relation*, but she can only have heard the story from Mary herself. Mary Poyntz evidently considered it important, since she also



commissioned a picture of it for *The Painted Life*, [PL6][4]. One evening Mary received a message that there was a gentleman at the gate who had come from her father. 'She surprised with joy to hear of her father (whom she loved entirely dear)' ran out to the man, who was on horseback on the other side of the fence. He took a letter out of his pocket which he said he was to read but not to give to her. The letter said that she was not to continue her preparation for communion, because her father had a very advantageous offer of marriage for her, one of the Talbots of Grafton. Having read the letter, the man took his leave.

> She as above said, loving so tenderly her dear and deserving father, felt pangs as of death to disobey him, on the other side, not to communicate caused her such remorse and grief, as between both, her life was inconsolable.

She would not tell anyone, partly because of her natural reserve, but also because she knew her father had a reputation as a zealous Catholic, and she was anxious not to harm him. Meanwhile, whenever she went into the chapel she felt that God was reproaching her. Finally she resolved to make her communion at the first opportunity – and afterwards it was discovered that her father had never sent such a message. Underlying this story there is the hint of a discernment process: she looks at what she knows as fact – her father's zeal for his faith – and at her experience in prayer. On that basis she makes her decision, which is confirmed in prayer by the sense of peace that follows. It seems that the long periods away from her family, which gave her such a craving for love and esteem, also helped her to develop quite early a sense of responsibility and independence of judgement.

The years with the Babthorpes were very important in forming her personal values and sense of direction. In AB3, written in 1618/19, she says that when she was about fifteen her parents moved further north, and were afraid that the colder climate would be bad for her. They

> therefore sent me to a kinswoman of my mother, a Catholic lady, on whom I was to attend, till either my parents returned, or some means of preferment should happen.

The 'means of preferment' would, of course, have been a good marriage. She had already received a proposal at the age of ten; *The Painted Life* has three pictures showing suitors, and there were others. She says here 'I refused not those they offered forth of any desire to be religious, nor for other reason but that I could not affect them'. But, looking back, she sees that God had other purposes in this move:

> O parent of parents, and friend of all friends, thy intent in this disposing was different from those: for here – without entreaty - thou tookest me into thy care, and by degrees led me from all else, that at length I might see and settle my love on thee….O happy begun freedom…

The 'Catholic lady', Lady Grace Babthorpe, 'was of more than ordinary virtue, and all things in her house [at Osgodby] so well ordered for the service of God, as led me by degrees to begin to serve him.' Fr James Pollard SJ, who spent three or four years

in it, gives more detail. He says that often there were two or three priests in the house; there were usually two daily masses, with sermons on Sundays and feast days; there was religious instruction, regular confession and communion, daily Vespers and Matins, litanies for the whole household before going to bed.[5] In this environment it is no wonder that Mary began to discover her own spiritual way.

She was still only fifteen or sixteen when she became convinced of a call to religious life. She describes what happened in AB3 and 4. In England at that time young people could know of religious life only from stories – and it was through a story told by the old servant Margaret Garrett that the realisation came. Mary was sitting sewing one day, with Barbara Babthorpe,[6] a young daughter of the family, when Margaret told the girls of the severe punishment given to a nun in former times

who had broken her vow of chastity. *The Painted Life* [PL9] shows Mary sitting quite still, sewing forgotten, as she is struck by what a high ideal religious life must be, if a failing so much taken for granted by the world in general is so serious for a religious. The little inset picture shows her alone, praying – evidently thinking about God's call.

AB3, 4, and 6 (the *Italian Autobiography*, probably written in Rome 1624-1626) give a picture of a young woman's attempts to grow in piety and prepare to follow a religious vocation, in a pious recusant household where she is in some ways very much alone – partly through her own shyness. She cannot even bring herself to speak to her confessor for about a year and a half, until he guesses one day from the tears in her eyes when there is some mention of religious life. Meanwhile she reads spiritual books, follows up ideas for devotional practices and makes a general confession, after long and careful preparation. There are flashes of insight – how she found confession

difficult, through 'too great bashfulness' (she had an embarrassing tendency to blush) 'and extreme repugnance to hear myself speak against myself'; almost of humour – trying to practice the virtues of saints in particular rooms of the house, she failed most often in the dining-room where the virtue was abstinence. Her appetite was good, her digestion was very bad, and she ate too much of things that she liked, even knowing that they would make her ill. There is good sense, even spiritual maturity. She was fervent and enthusiastic in prayer, trying to follow all the inspirations that came to her, until, naturally enough, 'what at first was easy and pleasing became on a sudden difficult and wearisome.' Then she realised that these practices were not of obligation, and decided 'I will do these things with love and freedom or else leave them alone' – so she began sometimes to do them, sometimes to omit them, in either case offering her intention to God, until she found a balance. The insistence on 'freedom' was to become particularly characteristic of her spirituality. There is a hint of the Mary Ward who would say later 'There is no such difference between men and women that women may not do great matters' in her resolve to enter the most strict and secluded order,

> thinking and often saying that as women did not know how to do good except to themselves (a penuriousness which I resented even then) I would do in earnest what I did.

Inevitably, through the way she was behaving people began to suspect her intentions and talk about them, and her father came, to forbid her to leave England without his consent. She made no sign of resistance but was firmly determined to disobey, even though she 'loved him extremely'. But this was a difficult time: all her friends and relatives, even her confessor, were against her vocation. She writes

> In this conflict I prayed much and had little repose, forcing myself as best I could to put my mind into a state of indifference and myself totally in the hands of God… [AB6]

She does not mention in her own account, but Mary Poyntz explains in the *Briefe Relation*, that there was another suitor at this time, and an important one: Edmund Neville, a claimant to the Westmoreland title. This marriage would fulfil her parents' hopes for her; she would be able to further the Catholic cause by creating a new, influential Catholic household. Everyone was in favour

> above all her Confessor, so far as to say that were she a Novice in any Religion she would do God more service to come out and marry this party than to proceed: and particularly he resolving not to marry if she would not have him; nor did he, but became a Religious Man and a Priest, and from him the title went to heretics, so as by his absence the Catholics lost a great support.'

He became a Jesuit, and died in 1648**,** three years after Mary, aged eighty-five.[7]

It is Mary Poyntz, again in the *Briefe Relation* and in PL14, who explains what made the confessor, Richard Holtby, SJ, change his mind. At a Mass in 'Lodgings in Baldwin's Gardens in London' (most probably a house rented by the Jesuits, as a

chapel is mentioned) he spilt the chalice after the consecration, and took it as a sign that he should no longer oppose Mary's vocation. But this Mass can only have been after the end of January 1606, when Fr Holtby left Northumberland for London, to become superior of the Jesuits in England after Fr Henry Garnet's arrest.

This is how the Gunpowder Plot partly forms the background to Mary's departure to Flanders to follow her vocation, at Whitsuntide 1606. Close relations were deeply implicated: her mother's two brothers John and Christopher Wright, and Thomas Percy, cousin of the Earl of Northumberland and his agent in the north, husband of Martha Wright, sister of John and Christopher. On 5 November 1605 Marmaduke Ward himself was at John Wright's house at Lapworth in Warwickshire, along with John and Christopher, their wives, and Martha Percy. He had been staying there for a fortnight. On 6 November he was arrested near Alcester, on a horse which he said his sister in law, Mrs. Wright, had asked him to take to Mr Winter at Huddington. (Mrs. Wright, who was also arrested later, said he had taken the horse to ride home to Yorkshire). Marmaduke was among those taken to London and imprisoned; on the list of prisoners he is among a group suspected of being priests. Apart from his statement about the length of his stay in Lapworth, the horse, and that he had seen a troop of horseman (in fact men implicated in the plot) but knew nothing of who they were, there is no information about the proceedings.

There are many unanswered questions. When and how (and why) did Mary travel to London? When was Marmaduke released from prison? When did father and daughter have their last conversation? What seems certain is that life had changed irreparably for the family; would the Neville marriage even have been possible, under the new circumstances? Perhaps Marmaduke came to the conclusion that it would be better and safer for Mary to follow her vocation. But there is no evidence, beyond the facts of her father's arrest, Fr Holtby's presence in London, and Mary's departure to Saint-Omer in the Spanish Netherlands. In her own writings Mary says no more than that God did not permit her to carry out her resolve not to obey her father's orders but to set out immediately after his visit to her at the Babthorpes', and that God caused her confessor, Fr Holtby, to change his opinion. Perhaps understandably she says nothing at all about the Plot – but neither does she say any more about her father.

From the little that she did write of her life in Yorkshire, between the ages of five and twenty-one, we can deduce that by the end of that period she was a young woman of good sense, freedom of spirit and strong religious commitment. What we have seen of her use of spiritual discernment, and her efforts put her mind into a state of indifference (*i.e.* readiness to use whatever happened as a means of serving God) show that she has learned something of Ignatian spirituality from Fr Holtby and the other Jesuits whom she has encountered, certainly at the Babthorpes' and probably even earlier. This is interesting in the light of her insight in 1611 about the way God was leading her new congregation: 'Take the same of the Society' [of Jesus].

She may perhaps have visited Yorkshire again on one or more of her visits to England from Saint-Omer between 1609 and 1621, when she left for Rome; there is no information. What is certain is that once again, at the end of her life, her own

fortunes were affected by national events, this time the Civil War. She had returned to England in 1639 for health reasons – to try that last resort of seventeenth-century medicine, her native air – but one of her last extant letters, to Pope Urban VIII in February 1640, speaks of her intention to return to Rome as soon as she is well enough to travel. However, she had not recovered by the time war threatened, and in April 1642 she and her household left London in 'three coachfulls' of sisters, children from the small school they had begun, household goods, chapel furnishings and a priest [*A Briefe Relation*] and accompanied by four horsemen, for Hutton Rudby in Cleveland, where the Inglebys had lent them a house. They did not arrive until mid-September; the journey would have been slow, with the loaded coaches, and dangerous, because of the war, which perhaps caused changes of route. Perhaps also they needed to deliver children to anxious families.

The *Briefe Relation* is our only source of information about this last phase of Mary Ward's life. It tells us of two pilgrimages to Mount Grace, at that time roofless, but still a place of devotion for Catholics – one by her sisters to pray for her recovery from serious illness in October, and one by Mary herself to give thanks for her recovery. Then there is a vivid account of threats from parliament troops to the house – they had plundered Catholic houses in the neighbourhood – and of the suspense the household was in over two days: early Saturday afternoon, their arrival in a neighbouring village:

> 8 o'clock of the night, and then came one Soldier alone to ask in very civil terms for oats for their horses adding we should not be afraid to go to our Beds, they would not come to us that Night.

No one went to bed except Mary herself. In the morning two soldiers came to ask for a drink. 'A good hearty plain Gentlewoman in the House undertook to go with them to the Officers, esteeming those 2 not to be trusted.' The Captain said he had been told that they had trunks of gold buried, and he would come and search. When he came, Mary met him, and after a civil conversation he went away without searching, even returning twenty shillings he had been given, saying that the soldiers would only spend it on drink, and the ladies needed it more.

But the stay in Hutton Rudby lasted only a few months, because of the need for communication with the sisters in London and on the continent. The community moved to Heworth Hall outside York, again a loan from friends, this time the Thwing family. From Mary Poyntz's account there are details which give a graphic sense of conditions at the time – for example, that in Heworth, Mary Ward

> must suffer conversation and visits which she loved not, it being but half a mile off York, which then was full of the Nobility and Gentry, not only of the North part, but most part of England.

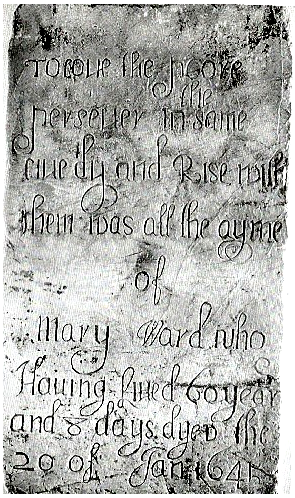
But then came the siege by the parliamentary army: some time in the second half of April 1644 the household had to leave Heworth and take shelter inside the city walls. Mary Poyntz again gives a sense of the suspense of the passage into the city, when they had to pass by 'Enemy Scouts and Troops who pillaged all they laid hands on.' But while others were being robbed and searched to the skin, their servants passed by

'with Pots, and beds on their Backs and heads (for Men or horses durst not venture'. Once inside the city, Mary spent her time encouraging and cheering those who came to her – and when the city surrendered on 16 July made the wise decision not to go 'with the King his Army to their Garrisons', but to return to Heworth. They arrived to find 'all the Lead off the House, all the Iron from the Windows and Doors, full of stink and vermin, 400 Soldiers besides the sick having lodged therein.' But, amazingly, neither the room that had been the chapel nor Mary's own room had been touched, 'not so much as the mats on the floor hurt.' Soldiers had been buried in the garden, 'the lovely trees cut down, the garden unpaled and wholly ruinated.'

From July to November there was no opportunity for a priest, and also no means of getting letters from the south. Eventually one of her companions, Winefride Wigmore, set off 'on foot disguised with a Woman Servant only, in snow and ill weather through both Armies.' She returned safely, bringing letters with news that all was well with the companions elsewhere. Already Mary was seriously ill; on 30 January she died, just before eleven in the morning. At that time it was difficult for Catholics to receive Christian burial, and the bodies of Catholics were even dug up out of the earth. But

> we found a little Church-yard where the Minister was honest enough to be bribed, and the Church-yard, not the Church, because less profane. … As the custom is, the Neighbours were invited, and came willingly, for they bore her great respect, which they were very desirous to express, and it was heard like an Echo among them these words, there never was seen such a Woman no never.

Exactly where in the churchyard the body was buried is not known. There is a ledger-stone, which was evidently placed on the grave some time before the community left Heworth for Paris in 1650, but some time later was moved to the wall outside the porch. In the 1960s, when the church was enlarged, the stone was built into a place of honour in the wall inside, where it is visited by some hundreds of people each year. It reads



To love the poore
persever in the same,
live dy and rise with
them was all the ayme
of
Mary Ward who
having lived 60 years
and 8 days dyed the
20 of January 1645.[8]

Notes & References

[1] For example, an agreement to hand over to Sir William Ingeby the manors of Oulston and Mulwith and Marmaduke's offices at Spofforth in the service of Henry, Duke of Northumberland dated 1 June 1590.

[2] David in 1587; Frances, 1590; Elizabeth, 1591; Barbara, 1592; George, 1595; Thomas, b. & d. 1598.

[3] C. Kenworthy-Browne, CJ, (Ed.), *Mary Ward 1585-1645, A Briefe Relation… with Autobiographical Fragments* [AB1 – 7] *and a Selection of Letters,* Catholic Record Society, Records Series No 81, 2008: AB7, pp. 110/111; PL4 (see n.4).

[4] A series of fifty-four [fifty are extant] large paintings known as *The Painted Life* … [PL] portraying Mary Ward's spiritual journey were executed in the latter part of the seventeenth century by various unknown continental artists, and evidently commissioned by Mary Poyntz, perhaps with other early companions, are kept by the Congregation of Jesus at Augsburg.'

[5] James Pollard, *vere* Sharp (1576-1630). 'Father Pollard's Recollections of the Yorkshire Mission' [dated at Louvain, 1610], in J. Morris, *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers Related by Themselves',* 3rd Series, 1877, pp. 467/8. Lady Grace Babthorpe died a professed nun at St Monica's, Louvain, 10 Nov 1623, cf. Morris, p.468, n3.

[6] Barbara was later to join Mary Ward's congregation and to be appointed by Mary on her deathbed as her successor in the office of Chief Superior.

[7] Kenworthy-Browne, p. 9, n.28, citing H. Foley, SJ, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus,* 7 vols. 1875-1883, I, pp. 220-223, 669/670, but Edmund Neville's death is given as 1646 in D.A. Bellenger, OSB, *English and Welsh Priests 1558-1800,* 1984, p. 91, and in T.M. McCoog, SJ, *English and Welsh Jesuits 1555-1650,* Catholic Record Society, Records Series No. 75, 1995, p. 251, though he is named Edward by McCoog.

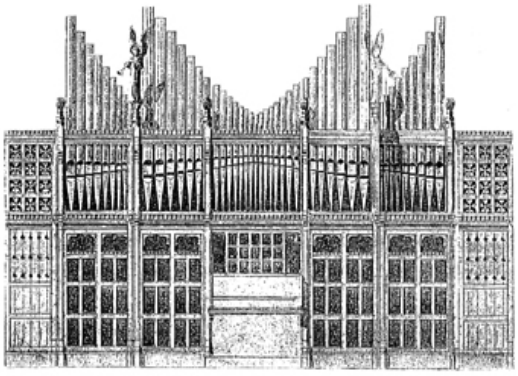
[8] 30 January, New Style.

THE ORGANS OF ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL, NEWCASTLE

P. Hale*

The church of St Mary in Newcastle, designed according to the principles of neo-Gothic architecture by Augustus Welby Pugin, was opened on 21 August 1844. It was unfinished (lacking a spire and baptistery) and had a plainer interior than the architect wanted, largely because of the poverty of the Tyneside congregation which paid for the church with their penny donations. The modest budget also meant that only a secondhand organ could be afforded, and a fifteen-stop two-manual Nicholson instrument, bought for £325 from Ushaw College, was installed by the London organ-builder J. C. Bishop over the west doors. (In any case, Pugin had little interest in organs or organ galleries and the very few designs he originated were for small instruments trying to emulate medieval examples.) The diocese of Hexham was created in 1850 at the restoration of the English hierarchy. On 21 August 1860 St Mary's was consecrated as the Cathedral Church of Our Lady of the Assumption. The diocese was renamed as the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on 23 May 1861.

With the growth of its congregation and liturgical requirements a larger organ was needed, and so in 1869 a three-manual thirty-three stop instrument costing £1,400 was built by the London firm of T. C. Lewis in a greatly enlarged gallery extending across the whole west wall. The organ case – mainly of panelling with five 'flats' of pipes above, divided by posts and held in with a cross-rail – was one of several Lewis organs designed by J. F. Bentley, and it housed 2,042 pipes. The organ was blessed at a Pontifical High Mass complete with choir and soloists on 13 October 1869. The evident success of this organ in its striking west-end position resulted in Thomas Lewis winning a steady stream of contracts in the area among them St Nicholas cathedral (c.1880), St George, Cullercoats (1884), Newcastle St Cuthbert (1885), the Royal Mining, Engineering and Industrial Exhibition (Newcastle, 1887 – with an instrument very similar to that in St Mary's), Jesmond Presbyterian Church (1890), Jesmond Parish Church (1895), and numerous others in the North East.



The T.C. Lewis organ 1869-c.1957

The specification of the Lewis organ is known from an article heralding its inauguration published in the *Newcastle Chronicle* and a similar one printed in the *Newcastle Guardian* of Saturday 16 October 1869. The articles contain much useful

detail and, as little of this has been published since, I quote the *Guardian* at some length:

> The magnificent new organ, which for several weeks past has been in course of erection in St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Newcastle, was opened on Wednesday by the celebration of Pontifical High Mass in a manner worthy of the auspicious event. The organ is estimated to cost upwards of £1,400, the greater part of which sum has been raised by subscriptions from principally the Catholics of Newcastle and neighbourhood. Messrs Thomas C Lewis and Co of Brixton, London, a firm of great eminence as organ builders, were entrusted with the order for manufacturing the instrument, and the unanimous verdict of experienced organists, who have seen and heard it, is that it is without doubt one of the finest in England. The organ occupies the entire width of the nave of the cathedral, under the west window, and surrounded by a highly ornamented gallery front, extending more than thirty feet, and admirably planned to harmonize with the main structure. A splendid engraving of it as it stands in the cathedral appeared in last week's *British and Foreign Mechanic*, and in an able article in that paper, written by Mr Harmann Smith, its general appearance is thus described: It is noticeable that in all the works of Messrs Lewis the organ cases are specially designed to accord with the style of the building in which the organ is to be placed, and the professional architect is called upon to add his quota towards completeness; a practice which it would be well to have more generally observed, that the eye might be gratified with the harmony of proportion, and essential to its pleasure as the harmony of sound is to the ear. In the present instance the case was entrusted to Mr John F Bentley, than whom no more competent artist could be named in the province of Gothic design. The bold outline of the case, the rigid buttresses, the deep mouldings, cusped headings and battlements, are peculiarly appropriate to the building, and as regards musical results the organ benefits greatly by the adoption of the free open-fronted style to which modern taste inclines.
>
> The dimensions of the instrument are 25 feet 6 inches wide, 15 feet deep, and 21 feet high. The front – the plan of which recedes in two breaks on either side of the organ to the depth of nine feet – is divided into seven compartments, five of which are occupied above the impost, by the two diapasons of the Great organ, the remainder having small panels filled with gilt ornaments, as are also those of the side elevations. The massive case is of pine, the posts being buttressed and surmounted by finial terminations. The design includes figures of angels on the angle posts of the principal section of the front, playing musical instruments. The imposts, and also the rail supporting the diapasons, are deeply moulded and battlemented. The case below the impost is filled with panelling, the upper part having cusped headings and battlements. The whole of the framework of the case is stained and varnished, and the panels of the five centre compartments are

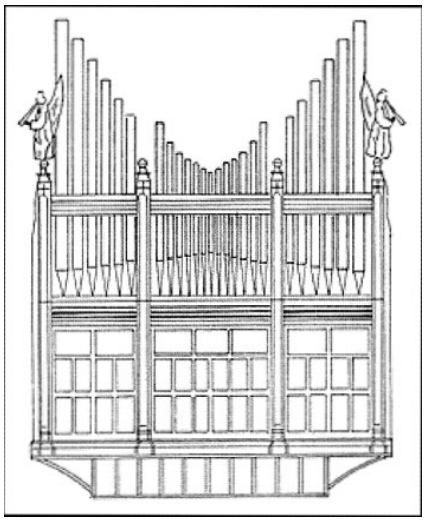
painted Indian red. The supply bellows, placed on either side of the organ, are caused by two double-action vertical feeders. There is also a large automatic air reservoir, intercepting the wind between the manual soundboards and their supply bellows, for the purpose of rendering the wind perfectly steady. The total surface of bellows and reservoir measures 150 feet, and they contain 160 cubic feet of air. The swell-box has Venetian shutters back and front, worked by independent pedals, for the purpose of equalising the temperature between the manuals, by leaving both sets of shutters open when the organ is not being played upon; it will also allow a moderate form of crescendo in accompanying solo voices. The voix humaine is again enclosed in a box within the swell, which is acted upon by a separate pedal.

The appearance of the noble interior of St Mary's when the service commenced at eleven o'clock in the morning was grand, [the] magnificent stained windows showing to the greatest advantage. … There was a full attendance, including most of the principal Catholic families in Newcastle and surrounding district. Admission was by ticket only, the proceeds being given to the organ fund, as was also the offertory. The mass – Haydn's No 3 or Imperial – is acknowledged to be one of the most sublime compositions ever dedicated to the praise of Almighty God, and in the hands of the talented and powerful choir who performed it, received every justice. The organ was played by Mr Leggatt during the celebration of the mass ... The first offertory was played by Mr Corelli Bere, the organist, the music being by [Lefébure-Wély]; and the second offertory was executed in masterly style by Mr Rea, who also played during the procession out of the church, No 1 sonata, and Beethoven's 'Hallelujah'. The Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle delivered an earnest and in some parts, eloquent discourse from Luke x 27, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart". He spoke of the ritualistic tendencies of the times, as manifested in the Church of England more and more every year, and defended the symbolic rites or ceremonials of the Roman Catholic Church as being of divine origin, many of the incidents in the life of our Blessed Saviour having, he contended, been purely ritualistic.'

The stop list of the Lewis organ, as published in the local newspapers, shows it to have been a typical example of his work. It would have been bold and strong in tone, brilliant and yet possessing a rich, pervading bass. Placed at the west end of the church, the Lewis organ would have made a tremendous impact in the nave. It drew admiring musicians from far and wide and St Mary's developed considerable renown for its liturgical music.

In 1872, shortly after the advent of the organ, a tower and spire were finally added to the cathedral, to a design by the Pugin-inspired partnership of Dunn and Hansom, the foremost Catholic architects in the north of England. Responsible later for the colleges of Downside, Stonyhurst and Ushaw, it was their first collaborative work. To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of 1894, considerable redecoration work was carried out

in the cathedral with a vast amount of stencilling work around the arches and windows. The work continued and included the erection of the baptistery in 1902, re-tiling the floor and the installation of decorated tiles around the walls and on the window sills. In 1966, before the Vatican II reforms caused the cathedral to be heavily treated and stripped of much of its Pugin or Puginesque decoration, the organ was for some reason removed from the west end and squeezed behind an elevated arch in the south-east corner, above the cloister door – actually taking over the Dean's bedroom! Nelson of Durham carried out this work. As Nelson left it, complete with a new key mechanism allowing a detached console, the altered and slightly enlarged Lewis instrument would have sounded totally different in its new position from its old. Instead of a powerful and commanding voice from the rear of the cathedral, it became soft, atmospheric but essentially boxed-in and ineffective. Indeed it was so soft that microphones and loudspeakers had to be employed to enable it to be heard at all.



The Nelson Organ 1958-1980

In reality the rebuild proved to be serious error of judgement, especially as the organ could not be maintained, so crammed-in were its pipes and mechanisms. It is clear that Nelson used the Lewis organ in full, substituting and deriving a very few stops, adding a Choir 2ft, a Swell 2ft and Clarion, a Great Rohr Flute, deriving a manual Bourdon to the Pedal, transposing the 10 2/3ft to 8ft, and changing several names. The instrument was appallingly cramped, with all long pipes mitred into extraordinary shapes. Access for maintenance was minimal. With the advent of dry rot in the organ chamber, this instrument was removed in 1980 to local howls of protest at the scrapping of an instrument considered once the finest in the City.

Its place was taken by a new mechanical-action instrument by Nigel Church and Co. of Stamfordham, near Newcastle. Church built a number of characterful tracker organs, all with imaginative cases, often Werkprinzip in style, during the 1970s and 1980s; that installed in St Mary's in 1981 was one of his larger instruments. Placed in the north nave aisle, facing south and with the cathedral choir seated to its left side, this instrument sounded like nothing the cathedral had experienced before. Bright, articulate and colourful, its wide range of stops afforded the opportunity to hear much

– particularly pre-nineteenth century – music sound effective and attractive. It soon became apparent, however, that the organ lacked the real body of tone and sheer power necessary for accompanying a large congregation or inspiring a great liturgical event. In addition, it had very few of the stops necessary for accompanying a choir, and it appeared to many people to be in the wrong place and to look too modern. By 2009, as work needed doing to restore wear and tear to the organ, which, as we have seen, had never proved adequate for the cathedral's liturgical and musical needs and aspirations, it was decided to start again with a new organ to complement the restored and beautified building. Consequently the Nigel Church organ was sold in 2012 to the Catholic Church of St Mary and St Joseph, in Poplar, East London.

The Nigel Church Organ 1981-2012

In recent decades an historically-informed renaissance in organ design and organ building has transformed the British organ scene and so the *digital* option was rejected, and thanks to a most generous donation by the late Martin Ballinger, St Mary's found itself in the fortunate position of having sufficient funds to commission a new *pipe-organ.* After discussion, widespread consultation and professional evaluation, it was concluded that the only possible site for the new organ was at the west end of the church so that its sound would project straight down the centre of the nave, hence the construction of a gallery big enough for it and the choir was required. In 2009, after drawing up a short-list, the contract for the new organ was awarded to Kenneth Tickell, founder of one of Britain's leading firms of organ craftsmen. He has designed and made a steady stream of beautiful organs over the past thirty years and his company's splendid work can be seen all round the country from small country churches to Keble College, Oxford and Worcester Cathedral. Tickell organs are distinguished by the beauty of their visual design, nowhere more so than in the Pugin-inspired casework which now graces cathedral architect Kevin Doonan's spacious new gallery. Tickell's instruments are also blessed with sensitive key touch and colourful yet refined pipe-voicing. The organ is intended to be versatile both as a solo instrument and as a robust accompaniment for the congregation and choir.

The main organ case contains the Great and Pedal divisions, with the Swell behind and the full-length wooden pipes of the Contra Bass 16 standing behind the swell box. The Choir organ is placed in its own case at the front of the gallery. The centre of both cases has been kept low to afford the maximum view of the tracery of the west window. The cases are framed of oak, with painted and gilded panels designed to be sympathetic to Pugin's architecture, and the colours have been chosen to complement the existing decoration of the cathedral. The pipe shades above the tops of the pipes, carved by Keith German in limewood, depict various flowers associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary. The instrument was made and installed during 2012 and finished in January 2013. It certainly ranks alongside those of St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, and Westminster Cathedral as the finest in any Catholic cathedral in the country. Magnus Williamson, senior tutor in music at Newcastle University has observed: 'Without doubt Tyneside has acquired a significant addition to its organ heritage ...'

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The Tickell organ. [© www.tickell-organs.co.uk]

CHARLES MILLER & ROMAN CATHOLIC CHOIRS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Paul Gailiunas

The *Catholic Magazine* in 1832 reported that when St. Mary and St. Thomas Aquinas at Stella was opened on 12 October 1831,

> Webbe's three-part Mass was performed with full orchestral accompaniments, preceded by the overture from the Messiah, and terminated with Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. The band was very complete, consisting of primo violins, second violins, tenors [violas], violin cellos, double basses, trombones, trumpets, flutes etc. The choir was very full and efficient. We never remember hearing the different solos, etc. sung better, than on this occasion. The *Laudamus Te*, by Mrs Douglas was very good; this excellent lady's singing reminds us of Mrs Gillow of Liverpool. *Glorificamus Te* and the *Qui Propter Nos Homines* by Mr Nixon was well performed. *Et In Spiritum Sanctum* by Mr Smith, was most beautifully executed – as also the *Et Unam Sanctam* by Mr Robson. The bass solo *Dominus Deus, Rex Caelestis* by Mr Douglas, reminded us of the finest effort of Naldi, Angrisani, chastened by religious propriety. We certainly never heard a finer bass, his rich and mellow tones fill and long vibrate on the ears. The choir was under the management of Mr John Wingate, and the band under the direction of Mr Charles Miller.

Where did these musicians and singers come from? Who were the named individuals? Was such elaborate music typical of Catholic celebrations at such an early date? Evidence is sparse, but it is possible to place the music of the Catholic Church in the wider context of the musical life of Tyneside, particularly Newcastle, at a period when Catholicism was becoming more accepted in society.

The brief notice in the local press of the opening of Stella reports that the event 'received additional interest from the attendance of several members of the Newcastle and Gateshead Choral Society.' The Newcastle and Gateshead Amateur Choral Society had held its first concert, a performance of *Messiah*, in St. Mary's, Gateshead, on 31 October 1827. Richard Ingham, who had trained the choir, played the organ and Henry Monro conducted the band, which was led by Charles Miller. An article in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* on 31 May 1873, 'Recollections of Newcastle Organists During the Last Fifty Years', tells us something about him.

> Mr. Miller was unrivalled in the North of England, whether as *chef d'orchestre* or as a solo violinist. He was a spirited leader, and never failed to carry a band through the most difficult overture or symphony; whilst his solo playing, particularly of slow Scotch airs, always produced most thrilling sensations on his audience. He was also a brilliant organist; but there was little scope for display at St.Thomas's during the presidency of either Mr. Ingham or Mr. Miller, as the use of the instrument was confined almost exclusively to the leading of simple psalmody. The latter gentleman subsequently became organist of St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church, Pilgrim Street, where he found, in the grand masses, abundance of the richest materials to gratify his luxurious taste. Sims Reeves made his *debut* at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle, when Mr. Miller was leader of the orchestra. Mr. Reeves, though favourably received by the "gods", left no impression on the public mind that he would ever reach any eminence; but Mr. Miller, with a prescience that did credit to his judgement, said that the young man would become a great singer. During his engagement in Newcastle, Mr. Reeves took part in the choir of the Catholic Church over which his friend at that time presided; and it is perhaps not too much to say that the stimulus and encouragement he received from Mr. Miller had something to do with the ultimate splendid success of the "great English tenor".

There is generally no reason to suppose that any of the singers in the St. Andrew's choir were Catholic, in fact there is good evidence that some probably were not. Sims Reeves, who was only briefly in Newcastle, was the son of a bandsman in the Royal Artillery at Woolwich, which would have been against the Test Acts if he were not a practising member of the Church of England. Annotations in a copy of the programme for the Newcastle and Gateshead *Messiah* in 1827 provide information about some of the soloists, who also sang at Stella. Mr Smith was a glass cutter who became a clerk at Sowerby's New Stourbridge works. He was the son of Thomas Smith, Captain of the Watch for the suburbs, who was once a Tax Waiter. Again, under the Test Acts, he must have been Anglican. The reference to 'religious propriety' might indicate that Mr Douglas was a Catholic. William Douglas was a tailor, whose marriage to Margaret Wingate was registered at St. John's, Newcastle on 25 July 1825. (Until 1837 all marriages had to be registered by the Church of England.) John Wingate, presumably Mrs Douglas's father, was a brush manufacturer and animal preserver. No baptisms are registered at St. Andrew's to the Douglas

family, so it is less likely that some of the principal musicians were Catholics.

The case of Charles Miller is similarly uncertain. He died on 8 July 1841, aged thirty-two, but unfortunately the relevant registers for St. Andrew's do not exist. He was certainly not baptised there in 1808-9, but the family need not have been in Newcastle at the time. Mackenzie (*History of Newcastle*, 1827) states that John Miller was master of the boys' school at St. Andrew's and also the librarian. There are only two John Smiths listed in Parson and White's *Directory* for 1828: one is a travelling tea dealer, the other is a teacher of music at 37 Carliol Street. In an addendum Mackenzie also notes, 'In mentioning the eminent teachers of music in Newcastle, Messrs. John and Charles Miller were inadvertently omitted.' He does not, however, omit to state in the section on music,

> Charles Byrne, professor of music, one of Thompson's pupils, has removed to Edinburgh, but is succeeded as organist in the Catholic chapel by a promising performer, Mr. Miller, jnr. This chapel can boast of a good choral company.

There is no doubt that John, the music teacher, was Charles's father, and very likely that he was master of the Catholic boys' school, so it is reasonable to assume that he, and by implication, Charles were Catholics. Even after the repeal of the Test Acts in 1828 and Catholic Emancipation in 1829 this probably did them no good professionally, and when Charles advertised as a singing and piano teacher in 1834 and 1835 he referred to his position as organist at St. Thomas's, rather than at St. Andrew's, which seems to have had a better musical reputation.

There are a few other reports that reflect the high standard of music at the church. On Sunday 11 September 1831, the anniversary of William IV's coronation was celebrated 'with great solemnity' and 'several gentlemen of the choral society lent their assistance' and

> The Rev. Mr. Worswick preached an eloquent and impressive sermon on the duty and obligation of loving one's country, after which he invoked the blessings of heaven on this beloved country, and its patriotic and reforming sovereign, and the coronation anthem was sung [Sykes, Local Records.]

and Graun's *Te Deum* was performed. Later that year, on 9 November, the vicar apostolic, Dr. Thomas Penswick (*epis*. 1823-1836), administered the sacrament of confirmation, and the choir sang one of Mozart's masses.

Individual parish histories of churches opened in the period may include details of the music performed during the opening Mass. For example, for the opening of St Mary's, Alnwick, in 1836 the local newspaper announced:

> A new Roman Catholic chapel dedicated to the Virgin was opened at Alnwick when Mass was performed by the Rev. G. Fisher [Fishwick] assisted by the choirs of Newcastle and North Shields.

Mozart's Mass No. 12 was sung and the preacher was the Rev. Philip Kearney, missioner in Sunderland. [Latimer, *Local Records*, September 1836.]

It was quite common at the time for a choir to be engaged to sing at any important church event of any denomination, and the Newcastle and Gateshead Choral Society was what was available. For example it sang at the installation of the organ at St. Paul's, Winlaton, in 1829. When St. Mary's at Hexham was opened the year before Stella, on 22 September 1830, tickets were sold and the event was advertised,

> The music will consist of a Mass, and selections from Mozart, Handel, Webb, and others; and a very select and powerful Choir, comprising the best Performers, vocal and instrumental, in the North of England, is engaged for the Occasion, under the Direction of Mr. Haupt, of Newcastle.

There were probably singers from Hexham as well as members of the Newcastle and Gateshead Society on that occasion, which is why it was not named. There is some evidence of a good standard of singing in the town, because when St. Mary's, Warwick Bridge, was opened on 24 Nov 1842 the choir from Hexham attended.

By 1842, after the death of Charles Miller, the Choral Society does not get mentioned, so that when St. Patrick's at Heworth opened on 25 January 1842 it was the Newcastle Catholic Choir that sang music by Haydn and Mozart, and things had changed even more by the time the foundation stone of St. Joseph's, Gateshead, was laid on 25 May 1858. By then the hierarchy had been re-established in England, and Henry Hemy was in charge of the music at St. Andrew's. The proceedings did not begin with standard repertoire, such as the overture to *Messiah*, as at Stella, instead Hemy led the cassocked choirboys of St. Joseph's, Gateshead, and St. Andrew's and St. Mary's, Newcastle, in *Faith of Our Fathers*. Things had moved a long way.

PIETY AND COMMITMENT: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF WASHINGTON'S CATHOLICS

J Dunleavy

> Piety and commitment were … encouraged by the formation of devotional guilds and sodalities. Several confraternities had flourished before the restoration but the following were active in Newcastle in 1852: Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart, Most Holy Rosary, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and St Joseph Association of the Sacred Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners, Sanctuary Guild of St Aloysius, Bona Mors, Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Sodality of the Living Rosary, Temperance Society of Our Lady and St John the Baptist, Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Elizabeth for visiting the sick, and the Society of St Vincent de Paul.[1]

The abundance of societies and confraternities to be found in the cathedral parish was indicative of our co-religionists' tendency to indulge in what was often termed 'corporate Catholicism.' Seemingly there was an agency to satisfy a person's spiritual and social needs in any eventuality. While some of these agencies were content to fulfill their purposes in a quiet, unobtrusive way, others occasionally felt the need to advertise their mission by publicising their aims in print or in a public demonstration. Until well into the nineteenth century, however, legal disabilities hampered the Church's freedom in addition to which anti-Catholic prejudice persisted in some places.[2]

Happily, as what were termed the penal laws were repealed, modified or simply no longer imposed, it became possible for Catholics to observe religious festivals outside the confines of a church building or grounds. Impressive evidence of how a parish might observe a great feast of the Church can be illustrated by referring to a remarkable publication entitled: *Our Lady Immaculate's, Washington, Parish Magazine.* Published monthly, a file of copies of the journal issued during 1925 was brought to the attention of the present writer and aroused his curiosity. Washingtonians, and for that matter anyone interested in the Church of several generations ago, cannot but marvel at the level of activity in a parish serving a mining community. A typical issue of the *Magazine* contained: a calendar for the month, giving the times of services; a list of music to be performed, by composers such as Santley, Webbe, and Terry, whose works are not heard all that often these days; statistics of baptisms, marriages and deaths; and attendance numbers for Sundays, Feast-Days, and evening services on Sundays and Thursdays. A chronicle highlighted the religious and social events in the past month. Parishioners were reminded frequently of the financial position of the parish that could only be sustained by regular donations from members of the congregation. To realise this, the parish entrusted the task of attaining a regular income to the Finance Committee. This vital agency was able to announce that something like 70% of the homes visited had agreed to have deductions (or 'off-taken' contributions) taken from the wages at source. The price of the *Magazine* was two pence, an amount made possible thanks to the willingness of local businesses to pay for advertisements.[3] The *Magazine* reported that the Brothers of St Vincent de Paul distributed copies of the Catholic weeklies to those in need.

In 1925 the Washington Catholics held three processions. In May there were two 'Lady Processions.' The first was on the first Sunday of the month, an event blessed by ideal weather conditions, though that held later in the month was spoiled by rain which compelled the organisers to honour Our Lady within the church. Observance of the Feast of Corpus Christi dates back to the thirteenth century. Happily the weather for the Corpus Christi procession on 14 June in Washington was all that could be desired. The *Magazine* reported:

> … we set ourselves the task of equalling last year's wonderful pageant in honour of the Blessed Sacrament. At first the fates did not seem propitious, for on the Saturday evening bad weather forced us to remove the tapestry coverings from the outdoor altar, which had been prepared. However Sunday broke finely, and the good weather was a faithful augury of renewed success. With the blessing of God we not only equalled, but surpassed our triumph of last year. . . . Exposition during the day was well attended and we found that, not merely were our Procession numbers of 1580 some 300 better than last year's, but the concourse of respectful and reverent onlookers had increased from hundreds to thousands. As on the last occasion the culminating moments were the scene on the Village Green when the Procession was half on the return, and the soul-stirring minutes during the singing of the *Te Deum* and the giving of the Eucharistic Benediction on the lawn …[4]

Such an extensive programme and perceptive report reflected great credit on the clergy in Washington and many of the parishioners. The procession comprised contingents from the parochial societies and sodalities, and the faithful were enjoined to wear their confraternity medals throughout the day. The *Programme* (see below) provided what amounted to a profile of a well-organised Catholic community.

There were many details to consider in order to ensure that the procession was conducted in an orderly manner. Such a diverse number of people required clear directions as to where to assemble to ensure their contingent took up its allocated position in the procession, and eventually where to disperse. Of all societies in the modern parish, the Society of St Vincent de Paul was the one that could be called upon to manage parades and so the task of marshalling the procession was entrusted to the Brothers who were to ensure that those in the procession walked four abreast.[56]

The *Magazine* for 1925 reveals that like the congregation in Newcastle, the parish was home to a variety of confraternities and societies, though they did not seem to be as numerous in Washington. As the programme for the procession indicates, there were the usual societies catering for the women, men and younger parishioners, and there was a branch of the Catholic Young Men's Society, an organisation that enjoyed the approbation of Bishop Joseph Thorman (1871-1936). Such agencies could be found in many parishes though their effectiveness varied. What emerges from the *Magazine* is that not only did Washingtonians join parish organisations, but that spiritual life was not neglected. Several times during the year on feast-days, such as 17 March, a High Mass would be celebrated. What is more, the music accompanying the Mass comprised pieces by the great composers. Piety and commitment were obvious in the parish.[7]

Programme of the Corpus Christi Procession

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ORDER OF THE PROCESSION

(A) *Banner of the Blessed Sacrament*

Processional Cross

SCHOOL-GIRLS

(B) *Banner of St Agnes*

GIRLS' GUILD

(C) *Banner of Our Lady Immaculate*

WOMENS' GUILD

(D) *Banner of Our Lady of Lourdes*

SCHOOL-BOYS

(E) *Banner of St Michael*

BOYS' GUILD

(F) *Banner of St Joseph*

MENS' GUILD

(G) *Band Banner*

BAND

(H) Acolyte *Parochial Cross* Acolyte

CHOIR

(I) Flower Girls

Thurifer Thurifer

Torch-bearer Torch-bearer

The Most Blessed Sacrament

Torch-Bearer Torch-Bearer

(J) *Crucifix*

Parochial Banner

CONGREGATION

This portrait of a lively parish was compiled against the background of an economy that was not as buoyant as might be hoped. The staple industries (of which coal was one) had still not recovered from the effects of World War I and the loss of overseas markets. Unemployment was coming to be a fact of life. Continuing problems in the coalfields compelled the government reluctantly to grant a temporary subsidy to the miners, and that bought peace until 1926. In the meantime on August Bank Holiday a High Mass was offered for what was termed 'A speedy and Just

Settlement of the Coal Crisis and the needs of the Parish.'[8]

The progress of the church in Washington was hampered by a long-standing parish debt. In 1925 it was determined to tackle the debt problem. To this end what was called the 'Immaculata Bazaar' was held in October and raised £600 in receipts, leaving £400 of the net proceeds towards reducing the debt, a respectable amount by any standards. Bishop Joseph Thorman, who had been appointed to the see of Hexham and Newcastle in January, came to preside at the function and had the satisfaction later of learning that the church debt had been reduced to £1,600. Pleased at the outcome, the organisers announced that they hoped to wipe out the remainder of the debt within a few years. Despite a troubled economic climate, within eight years the debt was cleared and Bishop Thorman was able to consecrate the church on 27 September 1933. He is still remembered with affection by older Catholics. His readiness to visit Washington not once but twice in the first year of his episcopate was much appreciated by parishioners.[9]

Notes and References

[1] Michael Morris and Leo Gooch, *Down Your Aisles. The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle 1850-2000* (Hartlepool, 2000), p. 15.

[2] M.V. Sweeney has suggested that the abundance of societies could be taken as a sign of wasted effort: 'It is true that in theory each organisation is intended to cater for different classes of people, but in practice it is amazing how often the same persons appear to belong to each of the organisations. There is room for rationalisation, for combined effort at all levels, but the prospect does not seem to be too hopeful for anyone who attempts it.' See G.A. Beck, (ed.), *The English Catholics 1850-1950* (1950), p. 144.

[3] *Parish Magazine, Our Lady Immaculate's, Washington* (Co. Durham), January to December, 1925 [hereafter *Magazine.*]

[4] M.F. Connell (comp.), *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (2nd ed., Washington, D.C., 2003), vol. 4, p. 272; *Magazine,* July 1925.

[5] *Magazine,* June 1925.

[6] *Magazine*, February, March, 1925.

[7] *Magazine*, passim.

[8] A.J.P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (1965), pp. 242-248. *Magazin*e, October, 1925. The withdrawal of the subsidy to the coal industry in 1926 prompted the Trades Union Congress to call for trade unionists to strike in support of the miners. This led to the General Strike when several million came out in sympathy with the miners, though the 9-day stoppage failed to bring about a change in government policy. The miners ultimately returned to work on the owners' terms.

[9] *Magazine,* December, 1925.

THE CATHOLIC BENEFIT AND THRIFT SOCIETY IN WASHINGTON, 1925

J. Dunleavy

Friendly societies served a useful role in British society in the days before the comprehensive welfare scheme devised by William Beveridge was implemented after 1945. In his book *Self-Help: Voluntary Associations in 19th Century Britain* (1974), Peter Gosden mentions two specifically Catholic agencies, the United Order of Catholic Brethren and the Catholic Benefit and Thrift Society.

Catholic Ancestor, December 2013, carried a short account of the now-forgotten friendly society popularly known as the Catholic Brethren which offered not only social payments but also spiritual benefits. Several references to the local branch of the Catholic Benefit and Thrift Society appear in a number of editions of the monthly magazine published by the Catholic parish of Our Lady Immaculate and St Joseph at Washington, County Durham, dating mainly from the period 1924 and 1925, and these are sufficient to compile a snap-shot of the operation of the Society in what proved to be a troubled period. I employ the term troubled advisedly since as a coal mining community Washington's residents were dependent on the changing fortunes of what was still one of Britain's staple industries: periods of prosperity followed by times of protracted depression. Among the advertisements in the magazine was a half-page advertisement setting out the main advantages of the Society:

In Hoc Signo Vinces

The Catholic Benefit & Thrift Society

Every Catholic in the Parish insured under the Health Insurance Act, or who makes provision for Sickness and death, should be a member of St Joseph's Branch of the Society.

Funeral Benefit Fund –

Male and Female Children accepted as members from birth to the age of 16. Contributions 1d. per week.

Immediate Benefit £2 to £15 according to years of membership.

Members accepted between the ages of 16 and 40.

Contributions, 1d., 2d. or 3d. per week.

Benefits £12, £24, and £36.

Men and Boys between the ages of 14 and 45 accepted as members of the Sick and Funeral Fund. No entrance fees.

All claims are fully and promptly paid weekly, at your homes.

Further information may be had from the Committee or the Branch secretary -

E. ROBSON, Village Lane, Washington.

One of the obvious drawbacks to such a voluntary system was the obligation to keep paying subscriptions regularly. There is no indication whether members were

given some leeway with reduced contributions in the event of unemployment or an industrial dispute. It would be interesting to know how membership of the Society fared in 1926, the year of the general strike when, following the stoppage in May, many men refused to return to the pits on the owners' conditions. The May 1925 edition of the magazine published

CATHOLIC BENEFIT AND THRIFT SOCIETY.

The 21st annual meeting of St. Joseph's Branch was held in the School on January 18, Brother Fitzsimons, J.P., presiding. The reports disclosed the following satisfactory position of the branch:

The Ordinary Section, Income was £290 1s. 7d.; Expenditure £291 17s. 7 1/2d.; Balance £78 13s. 4d. *National Health Insurance Section:* Income, £563 3s.; Expenditure £561 11s. 6d., of which £507 18s. 10d. had been paid for sickness, disablement and maternity benefits to members.

The following were elected Officers and Committee for 1925: Chairman: B. Fitzsimons, J.P., Vice-Chairman: T. Lafferty, Treasurer: R. Gibbons, Secretary: E. Robson, Auditors: T. Blackburn and Jos. Stephenson, Trustees : P.Corven, P. Welsh, and Jos. Kelly, Committee: R. Madden, Jas. McHugh, O. McMahon, J. McPartlin, and P. Noon.

The branch continues to show an increase numerically, the present membership being: Ordinary 170; Health Insurance 322.

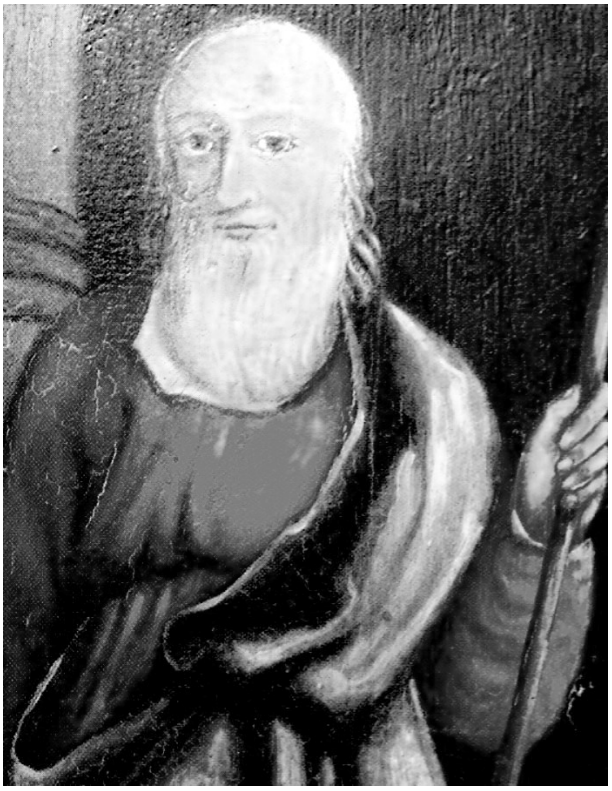
As the rules have been brought up to date during the past year, both for Sickness and Death benefits, it is hoped that the parishioners, with the assistance of the Branch Officers and Committee, will make 1925 a record year for membership.

Ideally in what was often termed, 'The golden age of self-help', everyone supposedly subscribed to schemes of insurance but there are always some who fall outside the net. Perusing the parish journal indicates that there were individuals who were either unwilling or unable to make adequate provision against a rainy day. Fortunately at Our Lady's in Washington there was an active conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society, and their reports make interesting reading. Their turnover in 1924 amounted to £28 9s. 9d.The largest source of revenue came from church door collection, some £10 6s 4 1/2d. while smaller amounts came from individuals and other sources. The main item of expenditure was relief in kind, and that amounted to £8 3s. 0d. Yet it was not only material welfare that was of concern to the S.V.P., some fifteen shillings were spent on newspapers. An indication as to how the price of papers has risen comes from the item in the report that states no fewer than on e hundred and twenty dozen Catholic papers were being distributed each month.

This information gathered from a dozen or so issues of the parish magazine suggests that there is a great deal of material that needs to be collated, preserved and published for the light it throws on parish life some ninety years ago.

THE PORTRAIT OF NICHOLAS POSTGATE

Mark Edwards*



For many years Whitby Museum has had in its possession a portrait of Nicholas Postgate, the 'Ugthorpe Martyr' who was born in Egton Bridge in 1597. After training in France and serving as a missionary priest in Yorkshire, mostly on the North York Moors, he was arrested in Ugglebarnby and executed in York on 7 August 1679 aged eighty-two. In 1987 he was beatified by Pope John Paul II.

The origin of the portrait is as uncertain as its age and painter. It has long been assumed by local tradition to be a true likeness, maybe even painted during his lifetime, It is uncertain how the picture came to the museum but it presumably belonged to people living on the moors. Recent research has given some answers which while not definitive have helped to better understand the painting's age and condition.

In July 2013, the portrait, measuring 146 by 134 millimetres (roughly six by five inches) and 6 mm. (3/10th of an inch) deep, was delivered to Amanda Paulley, an art conservator in London, for cleaning and tests. She first asked a dendrochronologist to inspect the piece and, although there were too few tree-rings on either the image or the frame to take samples, he noted that they appeared to be from coppiced, or farmed, oak. The frame showed a number of embedded rusty nails, which indicated it might have come from either an old piece of furniture or a floor-board. It is impossible to say for certain whether the wood is local, or where it had been used, but it is tempting to suggest buildings of significance in Postgate's life, perhaps the

Hermitage at Ugthorpe where he lived, or the Mass House at Egton, where a hidden chapel was discovered in 1830.

The image itself has been cleaned of an accumulation of wax and surface dirt (a light intervention in keeping with the museum's instructions). Areas of cracking on the image, mostly visible on the cloak, have not been retouched. Samples of the paint were taken by Libby Sheldon of the Art History Department, University College, London, and a comprehensive illustrated report was received in December 2013. The preparation layer under the image is predominately white, with an upper layer with a pale blue tint. This is composed of a complex mixture: silica, barytes, calcites and some ochres; these can all be found in paint from the sixteenth century onwards. Lead white or flake white were used in both the ground and image but there are no modern white pigments in the painting, and the absence of nineteenth-century zinc white, or early twentieth-century titanium white, strongly suggests eighteenth-century work. The image is painted in oils, and the heavy wrinkling of the flesh colour suggests this had been mixed with an excess of an oil medium. The cloak is painted in ochres, warm earthy pigments which were widely used in oil paint because their hue was stable, and easily available. Most importantly, the types of blue pigments can date the picture. There are traces of natural ultramarine over Prussian blue. The former is very expensive and derives from lapis lazuli found only in Afghanistan; it was replaced by the much cheaper Prussian blue in fairly wide use as early as 1710.

In conclusion it is fair to say that, from our conversations before and during the process, the conservators found the picture something of a conundrum. The presence of earth pigments and flake white makes it difficult to date by colour alone, but the Prussian blue indicates an earliest possible date of about 1710, some thirty years after Postgate's execution. This would indicate that rather than being painted from life, as was once thought, the portrait was painted by a person who had known him, or by someone else working from the memory of a person who had known the 'Priest of the Moors.

* This article has been adapted from *The Postgate Society Newsletter* No. 37 (February 2014). The author is Honorary Keeper of Whitby Museum, Pannett Park, founded in 1823 and run by volunteers. It is presently open 9.30 to 4.30 daily except Mondays.

Additional Note.

The Postgate Society has reported that it is intended that a collection of Postgate relics held in the museum of Oscott College is to be placed on indefinite loan in the diocese of Middlesbrough. The collection comprises: a cape worn by Postgate; a lock of silvery hair; a length of the rope used to hang the martyr; two pieces of bone, perhaps backbone; two pieces of linen, one of which is stained with blood; a phial of Postgate's blood.

SECULARS, JESUITS AND CISTERCIANS AND THE DESOLATE DALES MISSION

Dominique Minskip, with the assistance of Ann Hartley

It is unsurprising that most people have never heard of Marsett, a very small settlement at the southern end of Raydale, one of the smaller valleys within the Yorkshire Dales most people would recognise as Wensleydale. It is four miles from Hawes, four and a half from Askrigg and fifteen from Leyburn but not easy of access. The poetic rambler A.J. Brown described Raydale as

> a secret little valley that might have concealed the Doones … guarded to the east by the leonine mass of Addlebrough and to the west by the Crag ... (and) closed to the south by the steep ravine of Raydale beck.

For Brown, Raydale had a 'feyish' quality – something attractive yet uncomfortable, a 'haunting fear which amounts almost to dread.' He felt it around Semerwater, the lake dominating the northern end of Raydale, but he felt it too at Marsett :

> Marsett always makes me shudder, especially at night. All the strange influences that I feel on the bank of Semerwater seem to reach their climacteric at Marsett – a grim, grey little hamlet consisting of seven farms, all huddled together in a solid mass, like a fortress, and guarded by the bridge that spans Bardale beck. It is seldom one sees a soul about Marsett; an eerie air of quietude hangs about the impenetrable place; at least it seems impenetrable to me! There seems to be no way into it, though there are two ways round it and away from it. The conspiratorial cottages and farmhouses turn their backs on the road and face inward to a sort of private square or forecourt of their own. If you enter, you find your-self trapped in a kind of cul-de-sac and hasten away as fast as you possibly can.

The valley was entered at its north end from the village of Countersett, 'associated with the Quakers whose influence extends all over Raydaleside.'[1] In 1840, there was also a Methodist chapel at Marsett.[2] Beyond Marsett is Raydale House, the last house in the valley before it rises up steeply to the peak the other side of which is Langstrothdale. According to Brown, Raydale House was 'the scene of the last private war in England' in 1617 when Sir Thomas Metcalfe of Nappa Hall besieged the house trying to recover it from John Robinson, even though the latter had been deemed by the York Assizes to be in legal possession. The siege lasted for four days with many musket shots fired until John Robinson's aged mother managed to make her way to York and return with the Sargeant-at-Arms and his troop. Brown notes that the Metcalfes had been pronounced Catholics in Wensleydale until, in Elizabeth's reign, Sir Christopher Metcalfe ('who squandered the family fortunes in riotous living and ostentation') renounced the Faith, presumably to remain as High Sheriff of Yorkshire, an appointment he first received in 1555 under Queen Mary.[3] One suspects that various branches of the family in Wensleydale remained Catholics since Metcalfes, ironically together with Robinsons, are found in later centuries as yeomen and tenants on both the Tunstall estates around Wycliffe and on the Constable estates in Holderness.

Certainly there were Metcalfes and Robinsons who married into the Catholic Kearton or Kirton family in the eighteenth century, though proving the case for their ongoing recusancy and tracing all the links is beyond the scope of this essay.

Given the remoteness of Marsett, its unprepossessing 'feyishness', the influence of Quakerism, and the ghosts of private wars, it would seem incredible that in the middle of the nineteenth century Marsett was considered as a possible site for the founding of a Cistercian monastery. The story of how this came about is part of a much broader one involving battles between a bishop and the Jesuits, partly (inevitably) over funds and partly over accusations that the Catholics of the Dales were being sadly neglected.

Perhaps, though, we need to take a step back and survey the pastoral provision for Catholics in the Dales prior to the middle of the nineteenth century. Danby Hall, acquired through marriage by the Scrope family in 1548, was a Mass centre throughout the recusant period, served by Jesuits from 1730 until 1785 not just as family chaplains but also as ministers to the wider Catholic community. The surviving Danby registers beginning in 1742 provide evidence of an active Catholic community not just on the Danby estates but in surrounding villages too. In 1787 the Scropes built a chapel-cum-family vault close by at Ulshaw Bridge, a modest building but a sign of growing confidence that the times of active persecution of Catholics were over. By this time, the Jesuits (whose Society was suppressed by the Holy See from 1773 to 1814) had been replaced as chaplains at Danby by a mixed succession of Benedictines, French émigré priests (escaping the French Revolution), Franciscans and secular priests.[4] In 1806 or thereabouts, the Ulshaw Bridge chapel seems to have closed and a chapel opened instead at West Witton. (If Danby Hall is considered to be at the eastern end of Wensleydale, West Witton can be considered to be much more in the centre of the dale). The registers begun at Danby were transferred to West Witton, indicating some sort of continuity, but there was also a connection with Leyburn (between Danby and West Witton) where another Catholic gentry family, the Thornburghs, had maintained secular priests as chaplains from at least 1738 and possibly from as early as 1715 when Francis Thornburgh moved from Westmoreland to Leyburn having married a daughter of Thomas Suddall of Windlass Park and West Witton. Francis' residence at Grove House, Leyburn, was inherited by his niece Mary and her husband Ralph Riddell of Northumberland in 1774 and was also the known residence of Richard Billington, the priest who opened the West Witton chapel in 1806. From then until his death in 1830 he appears to have been chaplain to the Scropes of Danby and to the Riddells of Leyburn, when in residence, as well as ministering at West Witton. The chapel at West Witton, dedicated to St Bartholomew, was no extravagant affair but very possibly an existing building adapted for the use and, it seems from the Land Tax returns, rented or borrowed from members of the Haw family who were not themselves Catholics. Though the chapel was in West Witton, the larger number of Catholics, at least as listed in the eighteenth-century recusant returns, seems to have lived in the neighbouring village of Wensley, several miles distant and closer in fact to Leyburn. Whether there were Catholics of some means at West Witton to support the chapel is not known with certainty, though the family names of Buckle and Furniss have been put forward: the spinster Elizabeth Buckle left £10 to Richard Billington in 1818.

At the same time as the Catholics in Wensleydale were ministered to from the centres already mentioned, those in Swaledale had the benefit of the Jesuits in Richmond. There is evidence of their being in the town from 1597 and, after being chaplains to the Strickland family in the eighteenth century, their presence was maintained in the nineteenth through the assistance of the Lawson family of Brough Hall, near Catterick, which owned property in Newbiggin in Richmond. Sir John Lawson had a purpose-built chapel erected on his Richmond property in either 1806 or 1809 and from there the Jesuit priests attended Catholics in other parts of the dale. In 1765 James Nelson, S.J., baptised Margaret Kearton (or Kirton) at Ivelet. Evidence suggests that Mass may have been celebrated periodically at the home of the Keartons in Ivelet and the house they occupied is believed to be identifiable today. A gift of an altar and its appendages was made to the Jesuits in April 1836 'to the chapel in the Dales.' This could refer to a chapel within the home of the Keartons – we cannot be sure, but it is a distinct possibility. The gift came from Mr Stapleton, of another Catholic family whose main branch resided at Carlton near Selby, but who also maintained a priest and a 'chapel' in a chamber over a stable in Aiskew, next to Bedale, to serve spinster relatives of the family and other Catholics in the neighbourhood. Whilst Bedale is geographically peripheral to the area of interest here, the maintenance of a priest there by the Stapletons indicates just how important the Catholic gentry were in keeping the faith alive through the recusant period. Their influence would wane through the nineteenth century but only slowly and more so in the towns than in the countryside. The sums they bequeathed to the various Catholic centres or 'missions' which had begun as their domestic chaplaincies were most often invested by the Church authorities and the interest earned was used to support the priest in that particular place.

The system did have its dangers. A sum of £100 left to the Richmond mission in 1823 by Miss Francis Scrope to be invested for the mission was temporarily lost when her trustee, Simon Scrope of Danby, became insolvent and it could not be legally proved that the money belonged to the chapel. This must have been in 1832 or thereabouts when the Scropes were forced to leave Danby for twenty-five years to live more economically at The Mount in Yarm, a property owned by Mrs Scrope's father, Edward Meynell (the Meynells being another Catholic gentry family).

The temporary departure of the Scropes from Wensleydale does not seem to have caused any great trauma to the mission there. Indeed, in 1834 a new church building was begun in Leyburn and was opened on 14 October the following year. Although Simon Scrope of Danby is said to have been one of the main subscribers to the cost of the building, this claim sits uneasily with his financial position and his absence from the neighbourhood at the time. John Clifton and his wife Elizabeth (néeé Riddell) were resident at Grove House in Leyburn; they had moved there in 1819 and remained for twenty-two years. They too could have been substantial benefactors. The priest at Leyburn is known to have benefited from bequests made before the nineteenth century, including a property at Hill Top, left by a Mr Grimshaw; but it is not likely that these on their own would have yielded sufficient to pay for the church.

With the opening of the new church at Leyburn the registers previously at West Witton were transferred there, even though, at the same time, the two centres were

separated. Thomas Middlehurst, the priest at Leyburn since 1830, moved to West Witton, and William Parker took over at Leyburn for the next two years and was then succeeded by Richard Bolton. Given their proximity, it is difficult to see how the two missions could avoid rivalling one another. Now that there was a church at Leyburn, the little cluster of Catholics at Wensley were more likely to go there than to West Witton. That the chapel at West Witton survived for nine years after the separation is surprising and perhaps there were elements of its life unknown to us. In speculating on the reasons for its final closure in 1844, the growing popularity of Methodism in the Dales has been suggested as one factor. A new large Wesleyan Methodist chapel was opened in West Witton in 1842 and one or two instances of families leaving Catholicism for Methodism have been traced. The fate of West Witton becomes somewhat more complex and intriguing as we return to the issue of Marsett and its 'nearly' mission.[5]

Robert Johnson, S.J., was missioner at Richmond from 1814 (the year in which the Society of Jesus was restored) until his death in 1865 aged seventy-nine. In 1835 he dictated a statement about a stranger who had come to visit him in 1828. The stranger was one Christopher Alderson, formerly of Marsett but then living in Whitby, where he had become a Catholic through the auspices of Nicholas Gilbert, a French émigré priest ministering there. Alderson's ancestors had been Catholic and (according to the later testimony of his sister) had only ceased to be so because there was no Catholic chapel closer to Marsett than Richmond. An aunt of Christopher had been a woman of exemplary life. On her deathbed she sent to Richmond for a priest only to find him already on his way, divinely forewarned of her peril and directed to attend her. This event had deeply struck her nephew. Alderson had lost his wife and four of his six children and wished that, should his two remaining children die, his property at Marsett should pass at his own death to the Church authorities to enable a Catholic chapel to be built in or near Askrigg. Alderson's two remaining children did subsequently die (perhaps Alderson's move to the coast had been in hopes of bolstering their fragile health) and in August 1832 he duly made a will in accordance with his expressed wishes. The beneficiaries of the will (effectively trustees of the Marsett property) and its executors were Robert Johnson and three secular priests of the Northern District: Thomas Middlehurst of Leyburn, William Hogarth of Darlington and Joseph Render of Stockton. Christopher Alderson himself died on 22 November 1835 and his will was proved on 16 December, at which time he was described as 'of Richmond or Leyburn.' He was buried at Marsett.[6] Between making his will and his death, Alderson had directed Johnson verbally that until such time as a chapel could be built in the vicinity of Askrigg, any yearly income from the property at Marsett should be equally divided between the priest of Wensleydale and the priest of Ivelet. Johnson writes that this was in consideration that

> a chapel was already wanted at Leyburn for the accommodation of the Catholics of that town', and that 'the Catholics of Ivelet and the neighbourhood in SwaleDale [*sic*] were the nearest to Askrigg and the most entitled in consequence thereof to his consideration.

As already mentioned, the hamlet of Ivelet (on the main route through Swaledale

and roughly equidistant from Richmond in the east and Kirkby Stephen in the west) was the home of the Keartons. Various Keartons appear on recusant lists for the area in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (mostly as 'Kirton') and it is possible that Mass was celebrated in properties belonging to the family at various times throughout the period. In fact, another memorandum written by Robert Johnson (but surviving only as a copy-extract made in 1850 by Richard Bolton the priest at Leyburn) confirms the fact that his predecessors attended the Catholics in Ivelet and nearby Gunnerside on twelve Sundays in the year. Why Christopher Alderson's ancestors were unaware of this fact and went the extra distance to Richmond is unclear. Johnson had discovered from the Jesuit agent in London that an annual sum of £60 provided to the priest at Richmond represented the interest on £1,200 derived from the sale of a farm at Paradise Lo[w] Ro[w], a few miles to the east of Gunnerside. The identity of the person who had bequeathed the farm to the Richmond mission had, however, been lost in the mists of time. Whether there was any *obligation* upon the priest at Richmond to celebrate a monthly Mass at Ivelet because of this fund, Johnson did not know; it may just have been out of custom or charity. He did admit, however, that 'the general report was that the land was left for the missioner who attended the Catholics near Ivelet' and that consequently 'the missioner at Richmond was often styled the missioner of the dales.' It becomes clear from this and other references that the term 'Dales Mission' was applied specifically to Ivelet and its environs.[7]

Johnson's income, though, was not solely from that one source. Notes in the parish register at Richmond (a copied volume for the period up to 1840) indicate two bequests of £100 in 1823 (the second being that of Miss Frances Scrope put in jeopardy by Simon Scrope's insolvency); a further £100 was given in 1829; and in 1837 a Mrs Townsend of Sheffield left over £300 'for the advantage of the Catholics of Wensleydale and Swaledale.' This latter produced £12 per annum divided equally between the priests at Richmond and Leyburn. To this, after 1835, was added income from the Marsett property bequeathed by Christopher Alderson, which seems to have included pasturage as well as a house. Although four trustees were named in Alderson's will, including the priest in Wensleydale, Thomas Middlehurst, it seems that administration of the property fell to Johnson alone. Certainly he is named as owner of the property, without reference to others, in documents relating to enclosures, albeit these documents date to the 1850s. (Another document notes that he is neglecting the maintenance of fences!)[8] Johnson indicates (in documents to be cited shortly) that £8 a year was accruing to the Dales Mission from Alderson's bequest in 1842, but appearing to rise to £12 in 1843. A matching sum was being paid to Thomas Middlehurst at West Witton. What emerges additionally from the same set of documents is that, certainly by 1846, the property at Marsett was mortgaged in the sum of £900.

The documents which reveal this are, in fact, a detailed account of events relating to the Dales Mission and to Marsett drawn up by Robert Johnson in 1846 for John Briggs the Vicar Apostolic.[9] From 1836 to 1840, Briggs had been Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District covering the whole of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland; but, in 1840, the Northern District was divided and

Brigg's responsibility was reduced to Yorkshire alone. Freed in this way, he began to take a closer look at the needs of each part of his District and in April 1842 he took the opportunity of a meeting with Robert Johnson to question him about the Dales Mission. The following, from Johnson's statement of 1846, gives the course of events thereafter.

Having been informed that Mass was celebrated at Ivelet twelve times in the year by Johnson or other Jesuit priests who occasionally assisted him, Briggs stated that he thought this was not enough 'especially since the means of that place is so much increased' (referring presumably to the income from the Marsett property and perhaps also from Mrs Townsend's bequest). When Johnson said that he could not do more because the congregation at Richmond was growing rapidly, Briggs offered to 'relieve Mr Johnson's mind from further anxiety' and to have the mission served by secular clergy 'provided arrangements could be made [with the Jesuit Provincial] about the money which was said to belong to the Dales'. Johnson said he thought that would be possible though there might be difficulty over the £60 which popular opinion gave to the Dales although written documents assigned it to the Richmond Mission. Was there some disingenuity on both sides here? Was Briggs looking at the matter chiefly from a financial viewpoint, perhaps hoping to provide extra income for the priest at West Witton to help keep that mission open? What are the written documents claimed by Johnson to assign the Paradise Low Row money to Richmond? In the copy-extract of his other memoranda already alluded to he suggested that no written details of the donor nor of his or her intentions could be traced. Perhaps at this stage Johnson was hopeful that some evidence might be found; ultimately, he would be disappointed.

The Jesuit Provincial, it seems, agreed to compromise. In return for a secular priest attending the Dales Mission, for Mass at Ivelet, more than twelve times in the year and offering other pastoral care, the £6 currently received by Richmond from Mrs Townsend's gift and £18 of the £60 derived by Richmond from the Low Row money along with the £8 received from the Marsett property would go instead to whichever secular priest attended, and Briggs appointed Thomas Middlehurst from West Witton to undertake the task. He said Mass at Ivelet on 1 January 1843 but missed the next date he himself had fixed and, in fact, never attended Ivelet again. Johnson heard from Mr Kearton, 'the principal Catholic of Ivelet', that another leading member of the congregation who used to lead the devotions in the Ivelet chapel on Sundays when there was no Mass had died without spiritual assistance, except for a Protestant clergyman. Yet another person had gone over to the Methodists 'thinking any religion better than none'! In May of 1843, Johnson paid £6 to Middlehurst, a half-year share of the Marsett income, but refused to pay over the promised £18. Middlehurst complained about this and also that he had not received anything from Mrs Townsend's bequest, administered by Briggs. In December 1843, Middlehurst left West Witton for the mission at Kippax; the West Witton chapel closed for good in 1844.

Is Middlehurst then the villain of the piece; was his neglect truly as scandalous as depicted by Johnson or could some excuse be found for him? Certainly the distance from West Witton to Ivelet is not inconsiderable but perhaps even more trying to someone probably on foot, or at best on horseback, would be the terrain. Having crossed over the windswept fells between Wensleydale and Swaledale by car and on a

relatively bright day, I cannot quite imagine how bleak and threatening the route must have seemed to Middlehurst at the beginning of January. A modern map indicates that one possible route might have taken him across Crackpot Moor, if that route were at all traversable. Perhaps he was so put off by his first experience that he could not face repeating it. Yet, it seems probable that the fate of the West Witton chapel depended on his receiving the monies for ministering at Ivelet. His failure to go there may have sealed its fate just as much as the advance of Methodism. Briggs was not prepared quite yet, though, to give up on his plan for Ivelet and he asked Richard Bolton to go from Leyburn instead. According to Johnson, Bolton did go a few times but only on week days. Johnson, therefore, refused him likewise the £18 share of the Low Row money, not keeping it for himself but banking it at Pontefract (the location of another Jesuit mission), and the monies due from Marsett in Mr Stapleton's bank in Richmond. By the time of Johnson's writing his account in 1846, the Catholics at Ivelet had not had Mass there for three years.

In the 1850s when John Briggs was desperately trying to create new urban missions to care for great influxes of Irish Catholics into Yorkshire he was referred to by one of his senior clergy as a 'solemn dawdler' whose proceedings were 'very strange as they always are in everything' and perhaps they do accurately describe something of his character.[10] Certainly, according to Johnson, he neither addressed nor even answered letters about the Dales Mission in the period from the middle of 1843 to 1846. He may not have been shaken into action even then except for a proposal by Cistercian priests to found a monastery in or on the site of the Marsett property. In the nineteenth century the Cistercian order, a strict form of the Benedictine rule, had one monastery in England, at Mount St Bernard, Leicestershire, founded in 1835. All we know (through Johnson's account) of the proposal is that it was put forward by Henry (Norbert) Woolfrey, a Dorset man who had joined the Cistercians at Melleray in Ireland and returned to England in 1831. How he came to know of and seemingly view the property at Marsett is not stated but he recommended it to his superior, John (Bernard) Palmer (later the first abbot of Mount St Bernard) who came to view it in March 1846. Also present on that occasion were Johnson and other Jesuits as well as William Hogarth, the secular priest from Darlington, one of the trustees under Alderson's will. Dom Bernard agreed to put the idea to his fellow monks and to take on additionally care of the Catholics both at Ivelet and in the part of Wensleydale near to Marsett. However, Johnson subsequently received a letter from Dom Bernard stating that Briggs had dissuaded him from the undertaking because the property was burdened with a mortgage of £900. It was in response to this disappointment and with the encouragement of Hogarth and others that Johnson decided to send his account of the Dales Mission to Briggs appealing for something to be done.

Briggs did, this time, reply to Johnson. He asserted that there were two or three points in Johnson's statement that he did not admit to be correct but he would not go into them then. Instead he questioned the financial viability of the Dales Mission and proposed that since 'documentary and traditionary evidence are conflicting' there should be an independent investigation into the purpose for which the Low Row money was intended. Briggs asked about Christopher Alderson's intentions in leaving the

Marsett property, to which Johnson offered as a reply the account he had drawn up in 1835. Briggs also asked about the income of the property and Johnson subsequently indicated that it yielded a net yearly income of £24.5s.7d. – being let for £65 but mortgage interest consumed £38.16s.6d. and property tax £1.17.11. He revealed, too, that Mr Douthwaite, formerly steward of Mr Scrope of Danby, had now taken over as agent of the farm but had let it at £7 less than previously obtained. The final part of Briggs' letter concerned the Cistercians : he had not advised them against the plan solely because of the mortgage which would have to be paid off in full but also because the care of souls was not part of the Cistercian lifestyle; indeed, whilst priests from the Mount St Bernard monastery had at one time acted as missionaries in that locality they had now ceased to do so as it conflicted with the Rule. Johnson accepted the point in replying, though stating that certain 'zealous individuals' had expressed themselves willing to pay off the £900 mortgage had that been the sole difficulty. That this was indeed the case is confirmed in a separate letter from William Hogarth to Briggs in which he states that certain of the Catholic gentry of Richmond and its vicinity had taken 'a very deep interest' in the plan for a monastery at Marsett and were willing to pay off the debt. Hogarth's letter is dated 1 May 1846 and he had evidently not caught up with events because he advised Briggs, unless he had any serious objections, to accept the plan or face 'unpleasant feeling'.[11] Johnson closed his reply to Briggs' letter with a wearied comment on his remarks regarding the Low Row money:

> I must be allowed to express my regret, that your dissatisfaction about these money matters has not been made known during the last three years and upwards [i.e. since the seeming compromise had been reached between Briggs and the Jesuit Provincial] for certainly it would have been agreeable to my feelings to have aided and assisted in the good work which you had undertaken. And as far as Justice and Equity would have allowed I would never have permitted money to be a hindrance to the good of souls. I will inform my superior of the enquiries.

If he did, there was no quick action because Briggs wrote again to Johnson on 12 May 1847, asking why he had heard nothing.

The Catholics of Ivelet must by this time have given up all hope of ever having Mass celebrated in their locality again. If so, they were wrong. The Duchess of Leeds, a Catholic, whose husband had become Crown Ranger of Swaledale and who resided at Gunnerside Lodge very close to Ivelet, had already, in 1850, persuaded five sisters of the Order of the Assumption, only recently founded in Paris, to establish a convent and school in Richmond. In 1853, the Duchess had a small chapel with attached presbytery built at Thistlebout, between Ivelet and Gunnerside. Walter Lomax, S.J., chaplain to the Assumption sisters of Richmond, officiated at its opening on 28 July 1853, even managing to get a piano carried to the site for accompaniment. He was then himself appointed to the mission. Letters in the Assumption archives in Paris suggest he was very low-spirited at his appointment, fearing he would be lonely, but he soon began to feel more positive and to enjoy it.[12] Though small, the chapel, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, contained stained glass windows including an east window of three lights.[13] The building still exists as a private house, and, though disguised by later

extensions and alterations, is still identifiable by Gothic arched doorways externally and internally. Sadly for the Catholics of the Dales Mission, the chapel did not exist for very many years. The duke died within ten years and the durchess died in 1874. She had clearly been its financial mainstay (though one has to ask what of the Low Row money) The Marsett property was sold in 1859 with the four original trustees (Johnson, Middlehurst, Hogarth & Render) named as vendors. The sale yielded £700 according to a letter written on Johnson's behalf by his assistant Thomas Meyrick S.J., seemingly to Briggs' financial secretary. The undated letter states that the money is lying in the bank and asks how it may best be invested on behalf of the Wensleydale and Swaledale missions.[14] Was there an answer or did the matter simply go on circling for decades more to come?

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[3] Brown, pp. 26, 130-134.

[4] Secular priests owed obedience to the Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District, the nearest equivalent in those times to a bishop.

[5] For further detail on the histories of the missions at Danby, West Witton, Leyburn, Richmond & Bedale and the sources quoted see: Sally Doyle and Ann Hartley: *The Catholic Missions of Danby Hall, West Witton & Ulshaw Bridge* (Middlesbrough Diocesan Archives, Occasional Publications No.4, 2008); Joseph Gillow, 'Historical Notes to the Catholic Registers of Danby, West Witton & Leyburn, 1742-1840', CRS, Records Vol. XIII (1912), pp.227-287; Sr Clare Veronica Wyman, r.a., & Dominique Minskip: *A History of the Catholic Mission at Richmond* (privately printed, York & Richmond, 1992); Dominique Minskip, *The Catholic Mission of Aiskew-Bedale, 1800-1900* (Middlesbrough Diocesan Archives, Occasional Publications, No.3, 2004).

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[8] Richmondshire Museum, Broderick Collection: B/1/M/6; B/1/M/8; B/1/M/17; B/1/M/34; B/1/M/38; B/1/M/42; B/1/M/48.

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[10] Robert Tate, commenting to his friend & confidant Thomas Slater: Ushaw College Archives, Tate Correspondence, T.S. 18/06/ (1853) and T.S 24/05/ (1858).

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[13] T. Whellan, *History & Topography of the City of York & North Riding of Yorkshire*, (Beverley, 1859) Vol. II, p.491.

[14] Leeds Diocesan Archives, Old Series, 1623E: Thomas Meyrick, S.J. to 'Dear Revd Sir', Richmond, June (1859).

REVIEWS

M. Sadgrove, S. Riddell & V. Horsler (eds.), *Landscapes of Faith: the Christian Heritage of the North East* (Third Millennium Publishing, 2013)

On a trip one Good Friday a few years back to join pilgrims following the ancient route across the tidal estuary that separates Lindisfarne from the rest of Northumberland, I ended up by accident staying overnight not on the fabled Holy Island itself but back away from the coast on the mainland. While I was waiting for the sea to retreat and let me cross, I filled the empty hours exploring and so stumbled across some of the ancient and isolated churches that make up the North-East's "landscapes of faith". Some are in small market towns, others in villages with few inhabitants left, and a handful – such as St Cuthbert's, Corsenside, at the end of a lonely lane, with its overgrown churchyard – stand out on their own, in the rough, wild countryside of the Cheviot Hills.

The round-towered medieval churches of Norfolk are rightly celebrated, as are the dreamy spires that rise above Cotswold villages, and the Hardy-esque places of worship tucked in the folds of hilly Dorset; but much less fuss is made of the extraordinary treasury of spiritual architecture in the land between the Tees and the Scottish border. Yet the Christian heritage of this region dates back long before anything so neat as England existed, stretching over thirteen centuries to Saxon Northumbria and those inspiring monks Aidan and Cuthbert, and later Bede, who did as much if not more than Augustine, much further south, to bring and root Christianity to and in our country.

And it is that heritage that is being highlighted and celebrated this summer with the return to Durham Cathedral for three months only of the *Lindisfarne Gospels.* Made in the eighth century on Lindisfarne, this priceless decorated medieval manuscript contains the oldest surviving translation of the gospels into the English language.

To mark the occasion, this beautifully produced book – I'm tempted to say coffee-table book, but as well as stunning photography, most of it by the dean of Durham, Michael Sadgrove, these two hundred-odd glossy pages are packed with history and insight – has been produced. And it is an absolute gem. It makes the point in words and pictures that landscape can be imbued with faith every bit as powerfully as T.S. Eliot did in 1936 in "Little Gidding" after a visit to the site of a seventeenth-century high-minded religious community in Huntingdonshire. In such places, he wrote,

You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid.
…
Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

Peter Stanford

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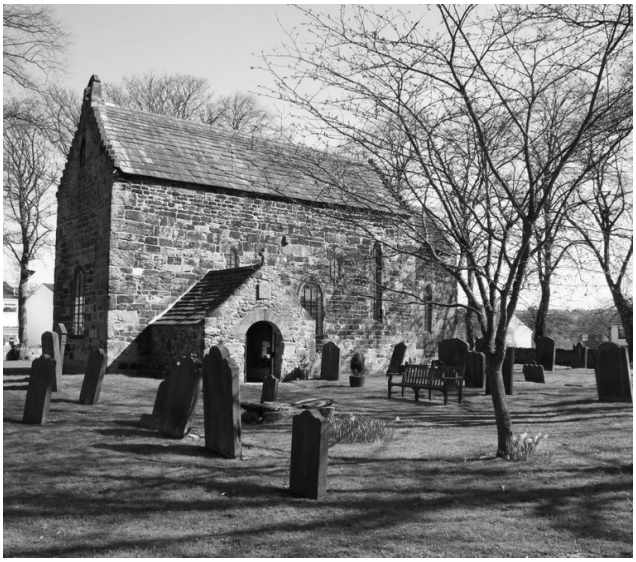

St. John's Escomb, Co. Durham, described as 'one of the best preserved Anglo-Saxon [c. 675 AD] churches in England'.

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David Willem, *St Cuthbert's Corpse: A Life After Death* (Sacristy Press, Durham, 2013) ISBN 978-1-908381-15-6

This paperback book, with its startling title on a black and white full-page cover of the saint's skull depicted frontally from 1899 drawings, is not quite as ill-judged inside as might be expected. It was first put on sale in the shop attached to the exhibition of the Lindisfarne Gospels and other early Northumbrian books, including the former Stonyhurst Gospel of St John, at the Palace Green Library in Durham during the summer of 2013, which had nearly 1000,000 visitors. The author (publishing under a pseudonym I am told) has his work commended on the back cover by two local scholars not otherwise known for their expertise on this subject.

After some slightly naïve acknowledgements of his indebtedness to various authorities living and dead, he proceeds to a moving account of Cuthbert's last two years, as bishop and alone on the Inner Farne. The following chapters offer the author's interpretation of the making of the original coffin and other treatment of the incorrupt body found at its reinterment on Lindisfarne in 698AD; his suppositions of the immediate widespread cult by pilgrims; the Viking raids of 793 onwards; the eventual decision to move in 875; and journeying till the community with the body settled at Chester-le-Street in 895 after strengthening its politico-economic position with the Norse rulers and the later visit there by King Athelstan.

Willem's account of the takeover of the custody and traditions of the body by the new Benedictine monastery after 1083 adopts recent scepticism about Symeon's version, yet accepts that of Reginald, (both monks of Durham Priory in the twelfth

century) as well as the anonymous narrative about the opening of the coffin in 1104, although there is reason to think that Reginald was the copyist if not the actual inventor of the forged charters for the monastery about half a century after the translation, though some of what he reports can be corroborated.

Chapter Five goes straight to the Dissolution of the Monasteries where the well-known *Rites of Durham* are quoted and said to be 'published' in 1593 – really the date of the earliest manuscript – but it was not printed until 1672, and he attributes it (following the Cambridge antiquary Thomas Baker, of a County Durham family) to George Bates, the Clerk of the shrine, who could have written that part but died too soon to be responsible for the rest. The visit of the royal commissioners cannot be closely dated but 1537 given in the margin of an autograph manuscript of *Historia* by Nicholas Harpsfield (d. 1574), the earliest description of their proceedings and of the monks there present, written in the 1560s or early 1570s, probably before 25 March 1538, Old Style. He may have had his information from Thomas Watson (also of a County Durham family) who had been the Marian Dean of Durham (1553-1558) in whose time more than one witness was still alive. And Watson, as Bishop of Lincoln (1556-1559) but deprived and imprisoned under Queen Elizabeth, and who died in 1584, had the episcopal ring (now at Ushaw College) said to have been on Cuthbert's body, but thought by experts to be of the thirteenth century. So it was either put on his hand after his disinterment, or else found in a late medieval coffin opening not otherwise recorded – for which there are other arguments. Nor does Willem discuss any other instances of bodily incorruption in cases of sanctity or otherwise.

Chapter Six, 'The Second Protestant Desecration', deals with James Raine's ill-motivated excavation in 1827 (the year in which St Cuthbert's Catholic Church in Old Elvet, was opened). It starts rather prejudicially by quoting John Lingard's pamphlet review of the event (which we know to have been edited at Ushaw College to disguise his acceptance of the authenticity of the findings) and of Raine's remarkable book about it, before citing the latter's own words but without his illustrations. Realisation of the haste with which it had been done came with Canon Gilly's later frank admissions to Lingard and the more careful discoveries in 1899 covered in Chapter Seven. This tells, in the words of Canon J.T. Fowler and/or the invited Catholic representative, Father William Brown of St Cuthbert's, Old Elvet, how the remains of St Cuthbert, the skull of St Oswald and other bones were recovered and examined, recorded and reverently buried.

Although Willem notices that Fr Brown may not have been moved from 'The Roman Catholic tradition that sometime during the Reformation Cuthbert's corpse had been spirited [sic] away and hidden in another part of the cathedral in order to protect it from further desecration', he does not discuss the two versions of that

tradition, one held by Benedictine monks and the other by members of the secular clergy, of which latter a distinctly seventeenth-century copy with a mid-eighteenth-century endorsement by William Maire, one of Fr Brown's predecessors as priest in Old Elvet, was illustrated by him in one of his articles on the question in the *Ushaw Magazine*. This was also ignored in a recent article by Diana Newton. The tradition was still maintained by at least one member of the Ushaw College teaching staff in the 1950s to my knowledge and contradiction in the Catholic press. Its origins and currency, however, deserve more investigation. It may be thought to have been at last buried in 2014 by the service for a Catholic congregation which filled Durham Cathedral to close the Year of Faith, when the Rt Revd Seamus Cunningham, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, preached and led the closing procession to venerate St Cuthbert's tomb, after doing so first at that of St Bede.

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A.I. Doyle

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J. Bush, *'Papists' and Prejudice: Popular Anti-Catholicism and Anglo-Irish Conflict in the North East of England, 1845-70,* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2013) ISBN 978-1-4438-4672-1.

In Britain, anti-Catholicism is not just an ecclesiastical or theological concept, it is a deep-rooted cultural phenomenon. It has been described recently by David Hempton as the 'most ubiquitous, most eclectic and most adaptable ideology in the post-Reformation history of the British Isles.' Catholicism is presented as non-biblical, idolatrous, blasphemous and sacrilegious in its belief in transubstantiation, Marian

devotion and the veneration of saints and images; the claim to infallibility is repudiated; the perceived domination by priests, who are held to exercise undue influence in the confessional, is condemned; and monks and nuns are vilified for living unnatural lives. These views were held by the reformers of the sixteenth century and are still to be found among militant Protestants. In the mid-nineteenth century they were compounded by an associated dislike of the Irish, so that one could be anti-Catholic for both religious and xenophobic reasons. In this comprehensive and absorbing book Dr Jonathan Bush shows how these elements of the anti-Catholic creed were deployed after 1829 when it might be thought that such prejudices had been laid to rest with the enactment of Catholic Emancipation. Not a bit of it!

Conservatives and Anglicans believed in the principle that Church and State formed an essential part of the 'Protestant Constitution' and had to be defended at all costs. For that reason, an annual grant to the Catholic seminary – the Royal College of St Patrick at Maynooth – made from 1795 was always regarded as unconstitutional by anti-Catholics and demanded its withdrawal. In 1845, however, the Conservative government announced a substantial increase in the subsidy which outraged the Ultra-Tories who saw it as a 'direct encouragement and sanction of Popery', of which 'there is nothing more fatal to the constitution of this country' as the *Durham Advertiser* put it. Liberal Dissenters disapproved of all religious endowments and were also opposed. The *Newcastle Journal* resisted the grant on somewhat different grounds: 'the stream of ill-bred, ill-taught and ill-conditioned priests which [the college] sends forth, is anything but calculated to give one a favourable opinion of it as a seminary for education, much less an ecclesiastical establishment'. Turning that argument on its head the *Newcastle Chronicle* supported the grant because the college 'ought to be placed in a more respectable and efficient state'. Throughout the spring of 1845 large meetings were held in the towns of the north east mostly to voice anti-Maynooth sentiments and parliament was petitioned. Such was the controversy that the question absorbed more parliamentary time than the debates on the Corn Laws, the Second Reform Act and proceedings on other major topics. In the event, the measure was approved by a large majority. (One wonders what might have happened if it had been proposed to extend the grant to Ushaw College.)

In September 1850 the Holy See restored the ordinary hierarchy of England and Wales in twelve new bishoprics, prudently given the names of disused medieval sees. Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman (who was, as it happens, born in Seville of Irish parents) announced the restoration from Rome in a jubilant Pastoral Letter, which was seen as an insidious attempt by a 'foreign Power' to impose its jurisdiction on the country. The Maynooth controversy was fresh in the nation's memory, the Tractarianism or 'semi-popery' of the 'Puseyites' was gaining ground in the Anglican Church,

migration from Catholic Ireland was increasing and now the papacy was seeking to subvert British civil and religious liberties. It could not be borne: A storm of protest broke out and the nation was united in a No-Popery revival. The Bishop of Durham was highly indignant and wrote to the Prime Minister, the Liberal Lord John Russell, deploring this 'Papal Aggression', at which the Premier took fright and hinted at a legislative response.

The pulpits and newspapers across the north east resounded with calls to arms against Roman pretensions and many public meetings were held. The Anglican Church would seek 'whatever lawfully and charitably may be done to uphold the prerogative of the Crown and defend the rights and privileges of the Church'. The pope's action united Evangelicals, Methodists and Dissenters against a common enemy. The Liberal newspapers all followed their leader's example and condemned the papal bull. Those who supported a Catholic's civil right to freedom and might have been caught in a dilemma got out of it by denying the crown's spiritual authority while upholding its temporal rights against the Pope. The *Gateshead Observer* censured the Puseyites: 'The Protestantism of this country is in more danger from the Anglican than from the Romish Church …' The Tory and Anglican papers were divided. The *Newcastle Journal* unequivocally attacked Papal Aggression. The *Durham Advertiser* deplored the agitation and criticised the Prime Minister for stirring up Protestant passions and it denounced Anglican clergy for taking his part.

Given the apparent degree of popular interest in the matter, it is surprising to find that the number of Protestant addresses sent up to the queen from the region was not higher; Northumberland and Durham were at number thirty and thirty-four in the list of the forty-two English counties that did so, but caution is necessary before taking that as evidence of a more tolerant outlook of northerners. The day to day experience of Catholics in the region certainly worsened at this time; they were verbally abused in the streets of Darlington, Durham and Gateshead, and there were calls for the reintroduction of the penal laws. On the other hand, many No-Popery rallies were disrupted by contingents of belligerent and vociferous Irishmen. Some prominent Catholics gave public speeches in defence of their Church, not always persuasively. The Radical Charles Larkin undertook a lecture tour but he usually managed to infuriate his Protestant audiences with inflammatory comments; he once promised to 'trample on the royal prerogative of the Queen of England'. (With his coverage of these lectures, Dr Bush rightly corrects my own claim that Larkin helped 'to moderate the anti-Catholic hysteria' – he did anything but.) Just as Protestants sent memorials to the queen, loyal addresses were also sent to her by Catholics. They also sent congratulatory addresses to Cardinal Wiseman.

Thus ‘Papal Aggression’ aroused the deep-seated prejudices against Catholics and any Anglican who seemed to be imitating them. In February 1851 the Prime Minister introduced the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, to prevent the assumption of English territorial titles by Catholic prelates. The anti-Catholics were not placated and some nineteen hundred petitions demanded a more stringent measure. The *Newcastle Journal* called the bill ‘a damp squib’ and the *Shields Gazette* ‘the bleat of a calf’. The parliamentary debate lasted five months and the bill was enacted in July but its provisions were ineffectual and it immediately became a dead letter.

British anti-Catholicism was not just a domestic crusade. Evangelicals and Liberals held that popish tyranny and despotism had to be replaced with political freedom in a global Protestantism. The conversion of Italy, the unification of the Italian states and the abolition of the Pope’s temporal power fitted exactly into this ideology. Anti-Catholicism and Italian nationalism was particularly evident in the celebrated lecture tour of the north by the Italian liberal, exile and former priest, Alessandro Gavazzi. In 1851 he gave a series of sell-out lectures on ‘Papal Institutions, Errors and Corruptions’ and ‘Italy and the Italians’. Gavazzi, however, proved ‘more of an opponent of papal claims than a proponent of Evangelical Protestantism’. At any rate, he lectured in the region throughout the fifties and sixties. Another Italian, Felice Orsini, toured the region in 1856, and the formidable Jessie White (later known as Madame Mario) also gave lectures on similar themes. General Giuseppe Garibaldi visited the north east in 1854 when he arrived in the Tyne aboard the American ship *Commonwealth* to widespread popular acclaim except from the Conservatives who rejected his secular and republican programme. A number of Dissenting clergymen did, however, deliver sermons and public addresses in his support. The Catholics of the region held a number of public meetings to protest. Anti-Catholicism was to be expected, of course, but the attempt to deprive the Pope of his temporal patrimony was reprehensible. Priests recruited men of their parishes and go to Italy to join the Papal Zouaves, an international regiment formed to defend Rome and Pio Nono. The ancient collection of Peter’s Pence was re-established in the diocese.

One incident in particular raised the ire of the anti-Catholics. In August 1852 two Protestant missionaries, the Tuscans Rosa and Francisco Madiai, were imprisoned by the Grand Duke of Tuscany for holding a Protestant meeting in their home. The case became a *cause célèbre* for English Liberals. All the Protestant denominations and the press were united in its condemnation and a number of public meetings were held. The Protestant Alliance took a central role in the proceedings and the release of the couple in early 1853 was said to be one of its ‘most notable achievements.’ For anti-Catholics the Madiai episode was a classic example of the way in which popish intolerance deprived ordinary people of their freedom. Indeed, this denial of personal

liberty was not confined to Europe, for it could be found in English Catholic convents where women were incarcerated against their will. It is difficult to exaggerate the popular distaste for nunneries in Victorian England, described as they often were as 'prisons or brothels' and horror stories about them were eagerly consumed. In 1851 a parliamentary bill was introduced providing for the inspection of the convents to ensure their 'efficient superintendence' or, preferably, their 'total suppression' but the bill was defeated. Although there were attempts later to revive the proposal, 'the convent question was increasingly seen as a joke'.

Inter-denominational antagonism was exacerbated as the Catholic population grew, due largely to migrant Irishfolk, and church-building expanded to accommodate bigger congregations. Although attempts were made to prevent the Church from buying land and in some places building operations were sabotaged, highly visible Gothic Revival buildings began to appear in prominent places. That went together with a more open and enthusiastic expression of the faith – festal processions, St Patrick's Day rallies, and so on, which only whetted the Protestant evangelical appetite for proselytism especially in the 'Town Mission' movement and on the lecture circuit. Catholic priests were engaged in a perpetual struggle to protect their flocks (particularly children and those in workhouses), lay and clerical Catholic lecturers defended the faith, Catholic Defence Societies were formed, and groups of the Irish laity were always on hand ready and eager to discomfit anti-Catholic demagogues such as Andre Massena, William Murphy, Patrick Flynn and sundry English preachers. Economic factors were important in inflaming Anglo-Irish clashes as both communities competed for scarce employment in the heavy industries of the region but intra-Irish violence also became significant – not all Irish migrants were Catholics. Orange-Green disorders occurred frequently in most areas, fomented partly by secret or semi-secret societies on both sides of the divide, mostly during the marching season. The *Durham Chronicle,* ignoring the sectarian factor, noted, 'both parties are equally to blame, and ignorance and drink are at the bottom of all these disturbances'.

Anti-Catholicism has been around in Britain since the Reformation and, as this substantial and widely-sourced book shows, it was especially marked in the nineteenth century, so much so indeed that it would not be amiss to describe it as 'Protestant Aggression'. In his conclusion, however, Dr Bush points out that although this highly flammable ideology was more or less prevalent throughout the north east, it was not on the same scale as it was, say, in Glasgow or Liverpool. Nor was it unified: Anglican Durham, Quaker Darlington and Dissenting Tyneside had different takes on it just like Conservatives and Liberals. But then, the Church Militant has never been united, and, judging by the material presented, it could be said that it all

came down to the same thing in the end. Anyway, as it was then, so it is now: as the attitude of some Foreign Office officials showed in the run-up to the visits to England of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI anti-Catholicism will probably remain a constant in British life.

L. Gooch

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Persecution Without Martyrdom: The Catholics of North-East England in the Age of the Vicars Apostolic, 1688–1850 (Gracewing, 2013)

Dr Leo Gooch will be a familiar face to members of the North East Catholic History Society. As editor of *Northern Catholic History*, and author of numerous books and articles on various aspects of North East Catholic history, he has become a recognised authority on the subject. Dr. Gooch is therefore well placed to write what essentially amounts to a definitive history of the Catholic Church and its adherents in this region, dating from the establishment of the Vicars Apostolic in 1688 to the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850.

The first chapter provides an excellent introduction to the subject through an examination of the ebb and flow of Catholic fortunes in the region over the long-term and the circumstances which affected its rise and fall in different areas of the North East. It is drawn primarily from the various statistical surveys of Catholics undertaken throughout this period to demonstrate the way in which the tenacity and self-assurance of the English Catholic community in the North East ensured its survival.

Dr. Gooch notes that Catholics were to be found at all levels of society but, certainly until the nineteenth century, it was the gentry who played a crucial role in the continuance of the faith. The second chapter therefore investigates their role. According to Dr. Gooch, the survival of the Catholic gentry and English Catholicism in the North East can be attributed to a number of factors, including, most notably, the laxity of the penal laws, astute estate management, and a willingness of the gentry to engage in commercial enterprise (notably in coal mining). Gooch argues that, although the Catholic gentry tended to live much the same lives as other gentlemen, there were notable differences between Anglicans and Catholics in the field of education, politics and culture. Gooch uses the case studies of the Silvertops, Brandlings, Salvins, and Tunstalls to illustrate that local circumstances were often crucial in determining strategies for survival.

Although, as Dr. Gooch argues, the gentry were ‘untroubled by sordid party-political strife’, this did not equate to an absence from the political arena. In fact, Chapter 3 shows the very opposite is true with the campaign for Catholic emancipation in the first half of the nineteenth century. Gooch makes an interesting observation that the Catholic Question in the North East was particularly divisive because of the strength of both the Catholic AND the anti-Catholic camps in the region, epitomised by the long pamphlet war between Shute Barrington, bishop of

Durham, and the Catholic historian and apologist, John Lingard. Dr. Gooch describes how the agitation surrounding the Catholic Question came to a head in the late 1820s, with the 1826 general election and the petitioning campaign which resulted in the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829. The Catholic Question simmered throughout the next twenty years and the Catholic cause was defended, in no small part, by the activities of the Tyneside surgeon, Charles Larkin. Dr. Gooch rightly draws attention to the activities of a rather pugnacious individual who became a regular fixture on the public platform as a staunch champion of Catholic rights.

The second part of the book examines the North East mission stations and the missioners who ran them. Chapter 4 provides an introductory overview to life on the missions in the North East. Dr. Gooch shows how the geographical development of the North East mission occurred in two phases: 1688 to 1730 and 1790 to 1850; the second was particularly important because it was based on the need of the Church to adapt to the challenges posed by industrialisation and urbanisation. Dr. Gooch outlines the missionary structure of the north east and how, from the late eighteenth century, it came to be financed largely by the middle class. Churches were erected as a means of accommodating the growing Catholic (often Irish) populations and were, in a break from the past, elaborately designed and built conspicuously, although the worship practiced in the chapels retained the character of the recusant period well into the nineteenth century. Dr. Gooch also shows how the Jesuits flourished in the North East during the eighteenth century, in spite of attempts to suppress them, and how the region became a haven for French émigré priests fleeing the anti-clerical climate in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Chaplains played an important role in missionary development and Gooch is able to illustrate this through an examination of the correspondence between Robert Banister and Henry Rutter that also sheds light on the protracted disputes surrounding the building of Ushaw College. The chapter is punctuated with biographical details of the Vicars Apostolic and descriptions of the political context which helped to shape (although not to determine) missionary activity until the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850.

The final two chapters provide a mission-by-mission examination of all the stations in County Durham and Northumberland. This approach has the advantage of showing how local circumstances and individuals could determine mission development. For example, there was a Benedictine influence in the building of the new chapel at Birtley in 1842, whereas the chapel of St Patrick's, Felling, was built in the same year to accommodate the large influx of Irish immigrants. It would be a mistake, therefore, to assume that the development of the Catholic missions followed a uniform pattern and that Catholic missioners faced identical difficulties in all areas of the region.

By Dr. Gooch's own admission, much of this book has been brought together from earlier publications but this is more than simply a cut and paste job. It is much needed, because many of his earlier works have not always been accessible to the general reader. This approach has also not detracted from the overall structure of the book which is logical with a coherent argument throughout. In particular, the last two

chapters on the development of mission stations in Northumberland and Durham will prove to be immensely valuable for historians of North East Catholicism.

Criticisms are minor. A few maps and tables would have helped to illustrate the statistical descriptions of the growth and character of the North Eastern Catholic community which dominate the first chapter. Gooch is careful to place his regional study within the national context but some comparisons with other regions would have helped to illustrate his points better. Were the Catholic gentry of the North West as involved in commercial enterprise as their contemporaries further east for example? There are one or two factual errors; probably inevitable in a volume this size. For example, Dr. Gooch describes the Irish nationalist, Bernard McNulty, breaking up a Protestant Alliance meeting in Newcastle in 1845. The Protestant Alliance, however, did not exist until 1851 and the anti-Maynooth meeting referred to was not, in fact, organised by any Protestant organisation.

Overall, Dr. Gooch's book fills a significant gap in North East Catholic historiography. Its target audience, i.e. those who are interested in North East Catholic history, will not be disappointed. Through its emphasis on the economic, social and political, as much as the religious aspects of the lives of eighteenth century Catholics, this book should, I hope, also appeal to the general reader interested in any aspect of North East history.

Jonathan Bush

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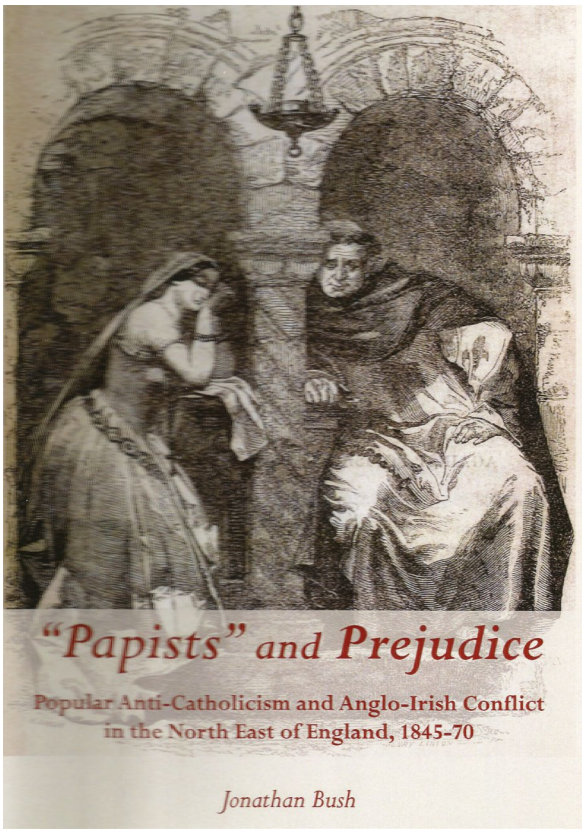

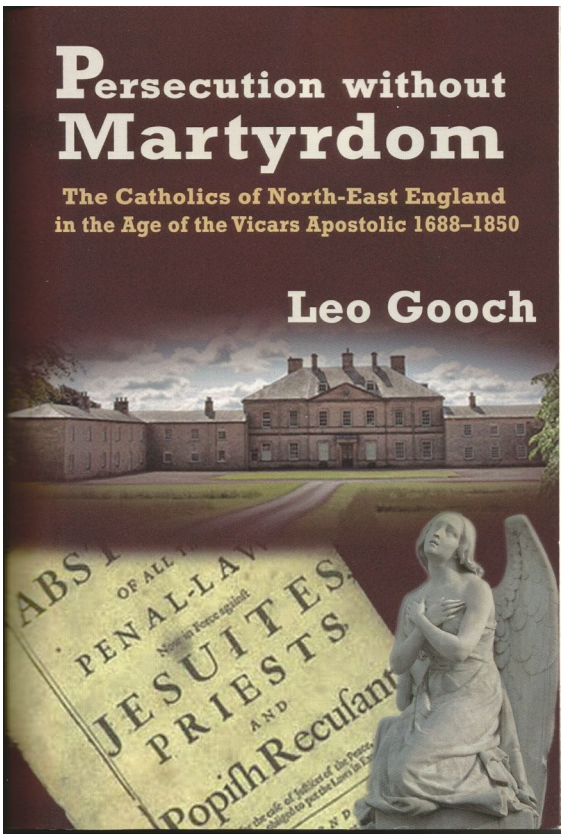

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A Medieval Printed Book Returns to Durham

More books – manuscript and printed – survive from the medieval library of the cathedral priory in Durham, a Benedictine house which was dissolved in 1539, than from any other pre-Reformation foundation in Britain and the greater number of them remain at the cathedral to this day although some are still dispersed. However, one more of the hundred or so printed books from the monastery library listed by Ker & Watson in *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books* (2nd edition, 1964) was recovered in 2013: a copy of *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* (Strasbourg, 19 July 1493) by Guillelmus Duranti, the thirteenth-century French canonist and theologian Bishop of Mende. The *Rationale* is one of the main authorities on the origin and symbolic sense of Christian ritual and sets out all the prescriptions for services in the Western rite. The book is in its original English tooled binding and bears the inscription of the Benedictine monk William Wylom (1516-1556) who served as the cathedral priory's chamberlain and feretar (guardian of St Cuthbert's shrine). He was educated at Durham College, Oxford, which was dissolved at the Reformation and taken by the Crown. The property later became Trinity College.