Northern Catholic History

War Memorial, St Patrick, Dipton

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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 £7 individual (£11 joint) which includes a copy of its annual journal *Northern Catholic History*. Details of the availability and price of back issues can be obtained from the Editor who welcomes offers of articles for future editions.

HERITAGE AWARDS

The twentieth-century architectural heritage of the Church in the north-east has been further recognised by new awards.

Firstly, the church of Our **Lady and St Columba in Wallsend.** In 2013 it was one of twenty-four churches in the UK long-listed for the National Churches Trust Diamond Jubilee Architecture Prize for places of worship judged to be the best sacred places built in the UK since 1953. Although it did not make the short-list of ten (which, in fact, included two English and two Scottish Catholic churches) it joins forty-two other churches in the diocese with Grade II listed status (or better), a distinction awarded by English Heritage to buildings having special architectural or historic interest warranting every effort at preservation.

In 1904 the Newcastle architect Charles Walker designed the first church here. As the population of Wallsend increased with the growth of local industries a larger church was needed. The foundation stone of the present church was laid in February 1957, and the church was opened by Bishop James Cunningham on 7 October 1957 and was consecrated on 13 June 1964. The church is built to designs of Vincent G. Steinlet of an architectural firm founded in Newcastle in 1904, specialising in ecclesiastical architecture. He is the son of Pascal Stienlet, whose church of St Edward's in Whitley Bay is also listed and whose grandson (also Vincent) designed St Augustine's Church in Felling. St Columba's has been described as 'the best example in the diocese of the work of the 'middle generation' of the Stienlet architectural dynasty.' (*Taking Stock:* see Notes in this edition.)

Externally, the imposing building is described as an example of Modern Perpendicular Gothic: a blend of Scandinavian modular forms with verticality in all elevations, seen particularly in the fifteen-foot high windows. Although there are *art deco* features in the detail of the square west tower, the building is otherwise without ornamentation. Internally, there is a dramatic sense of space with the nave lit by the coloured glass of the clerestory, supported by square exposed brick columns. The Stations of the Cross are hand-carved and painted. The sanctuary's features (which have been retained in the post-Vatican II

reordering of 1968 carried out by Vincente Stienlet (the younger) include the marble floor and ornate walls with marble and mosaic panels; the altar canopy with black and white marble reredos and tabernacle.

Secondly, the war memorial standing in the churchyard of **Our Lady and St Godric, Durham,** has been listed Grade II. (The church itself already has that status). It is listed because of its eloquent witness to the tragic impact of world events on this local community, and the sacrifice it made in the First World War. Moreover, because it retains its original design and has not been adapted for Second World War commemoration, its historic and architectural interest is exceptional.

In November 1915 the parish priest Canon Robert Thornton, suggested that the parishioners should plan to erect a memorial to commemorate the forty local servicemen who had lost their lives in the war. He called a parish meeting two years later, proposing that each family in the parish aim to donate £1 over the course of 1918. The memorial, sculpted by Messrs Lowes & Son, was unveiled on 13 May 1923 in 'a drenching downpour' by Lt-Col J R Ritson, 8th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry, and dedicated by Canon Thornton. The memorial stands on the north side of the church overlooking Castle Chare with views across the city. It comprises a tall, gabled crucifix in Portland stone rising from a six-sided pedestal standing on a three-stepped square base. The front face of the pedestal is a panel of blind arcading on which the dedicatory inscription is carved:

THIS
MONUMENT WAS
ERECTED BY THE
MEMBERS OF
ST. GODRIC'S PARISH
TO THE
MEMORY OF THOSE
BRAVE MEN FROM
THIS PARISH
WHO LAID DOWN
THEIR LIVES IN
DEFENCE OF THEIR
COUNTRY IN THE
GREAT WAR 1914-1918.
R.I.P.

To either side, in similar panels, a figure of a soldier and sailor with arms reversed are carved in relief. The commemorated names are listed on the two outermost faces. On the rear a small cross of St Cuthbert is carved in low relief in a roundel.

The first Catholic war memorial to be listed in County Durham is that at **St Patrick's, Dipton.** The mission was founded in 1907 on a site acquired from Lord Ninian Stewart. On 29 June 1907, a large timber and iron church with side aisles was opened by Bishop Collins. The church burned down on 15 June 1964. In 1967-68 a large church was built on the longitudinal foundations of the earlier church but with a centralised interior for the post-Vatican II era. The architect was Anthony Joseph Rossi (1916-1971) of Consett and the builders were Henry Ayton & Sons Ltd, Blackhill, Consett.

The war memorial is an elegant and well-carved Portland stone Celtic cross, erected in 1921 to commemorate the fifty-one parishioners who had died fighting in the First World War. It stands on a green in front of the new church, having been moved in 1994 a very short distance from its original location. In the centre of the wheel-head cross is the figure of Christ. The front faces of the cross, arms and shaft are decorated with intricate interlace patterns carved in relief. The shaft rises from a tapered, square, plinth that stands on a three-stepped, square base. The lettering is of lead sans serif capitals attached to the stone. The commemorated names are listed alphabetically in a single column on the rear of the cross shaft. The lower part of the front face of the plinth bears the inscription (with the unusual dating):

I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE. I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.

II TIMOTHY IV.7

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF FIFTY ONE MEN OF ST PATRICK'S CONGREGATION WHO LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR OF

1914 – 1919.

*

Churches in the diocese of Middlesbrough have also been upgraded. **St Charles Borromeo,** Hull, and the **Abbey Church, Ampleforth**, have been upgraded to Grade I; **Ss. Peter & Paul,** Leyburn is now rated Grade II* and **Ss. Mary & Romuald,** Yarm, by George Goldie receives a Grade II listing. The buildings listing adviser at Historic England remarked:

> Yorkshire has a wonderfully rich and varied Roman Catholic heritage, ranging from the no-nonsense Dales respectability of St Peter and St Paul; through to the astonishingly dramatic, almost operatic interior of St Charles, and Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's Ampleforth Abbey Church, sublimely crafted and only completed in 1961.

THE LATER WIDDRINGTONS AND JACOBITISM

P. Hills

The Jacobite Rising of 1715 (the Fifteen) has been overshadowed by that of 1745-6 (the Forty-Five) for lacking the drama and romantic appeal of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie.' Nevertheless, the Fifteen is of particular interest for north-east England where strong Roman Catholic and Anglican support was expected. The role of the Northumbrian Jacobites and their Scottish allies was to receive a French landing force on the coast and capture Tyneside to deprive London of its fuel supplies. On 6 September 1715 the Earl of Mar raised the Stuart standard at Braemar. By 6 October the Northumbrians had taken up arms, led by James Radcliffe, third Earl of Derwentwater, a grandson of Charles II by Lady Mary Tudor, (the king's fourteenth and youngest illegitimate child) and Thomas Forster, the M.P. for the county, a nephew of Dorothy, née Forster, wife of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham. They were joined two days later by William, fourth Baron Widdrington and his two younger brothers, Charles and Peregrine. James Francis Edward Stuart, son of James II, was proclaimed King James III at Warkworth. Forster, an Anglican, was appointed 'General', he being thought more appropriate than either Derwentwater or Widdrington, who were both Catholics. This article attempts briefly to examine why the three Widdringtons, members of a prestigious and historic Northumberland family, were motivated to join this uprising, the part they played in it and the outcome for them as leading participants.[1]

When William succeeded as Baron Widdrington in 1695, he held estates in Northumberland worth £4,000 a year, making him the second wealthiest Catholic peer in the county after Derwentwater of Dilston, to whom he was distantly related; an estate at Blankney in Lincolnshire (which was included in his title); and a coal-mining estate at Stella, County Durham, which he came into on his marriage to Jane Tempest. By this marriage, furthermore, William, who had been educated at the Jesuit College of St. Louis le Grand in Paris, cemented his own and his family's loyalty to Catholicism. The Tempests were a leading recusant family and Jane's own book of personally written prayers preserved at Ushaw College testifies to her piety. With their background of royalism and, it recusancy is not surprising that the Widdringtons were also leading Jacobites.

At his trial Lord Widdrington was to claim that his entry into the rebellion was unpremeditated: a 'rash' and hasty reaction to the gathering in arms of 'almost all his neighbours and acquaintance'. This was somewhat disingenuous in that he was one of a select few informed of plans being made for a French landing and northern rising. Furthermore, he canvassed support in the north-west where he had family connections, being assured by his brother-in-law,

Richard Towneley, that there would be ‘general insurrection of at least 20,000 men’ in support of James Francis Edward. There was a modicum of truth in his defence in that Forster and Derwentwater acted precipitately, not waiting until the date planned. In the Jacobite army the second English troop was Lord Widdrington’s, though commanded by Thomas Errington of Beaufront. Peregrine Widdrington was aide-de- camp to Thomas Forster and his brother Charles had command of the reserves.

For almost two weeks the Northumbrians marked time gathering recruits and waiting for the landing of Prince James Edward and the French. However, with the arrival in Newcastle of government troops under General Carpenter, they retreated north to Kelso where they rallied with Scottish Lowland gentry and a substantial group of Highlanders. Following some argument, they crossed back into England, heading for Lancashire; Widdrington was a key influence in this decision, pressing his family connections in the county and the promises of support he had gained. They arrived at Preston on 10 November and two days later they encountered government forces. Although the Jacobites successfully resisted the first onslaught, with the arrival of Carpenter’s troops they decided to surrender on the worst possible terms – ‘prisoners of discretion as rebels taken in the act of rebellion’. Widdrington was the first to urge capitulation, a point he would urge in his defence: ‘I did not obstinately persist in my fault, but was the first to propose an early submission to his Majesty’.

Between fifteen and sixteen hundred men were taken prisoner. They were taken to London, where they were greeted by anti-Popish and pro-Hanoverian demonstrators. Widdrington and the other peers were sent to the Tower while those of lower rank, including Charles and Peregrine, were imprisoned in Newgate. Derwentwater and his fellow lords were tried for treason by the House of Lords on 19 January 1716. Widdrington was found guilty and sentenced to death, but he was reprieved with only hours to spare. It was said that Charles Howard, third Earl of Carlisle, and Lady Cowper, the Lord Chancellor’s wife, distantly related to Widdrington, intervened on his behalf. Though Widdrington’s life was spared, his estates were forfeited and his barony was attainted. He and his brothers were released from imprisonment in November 1717 under an Act of Grace.

It has been stated that Widdrington’s release was followed by ‘poverty and obscurity until his death in Bath in 1743’.[2] This is, however, exaggerated and misleading. Shortly before his release, Catharine Graham, a first cousin of the Earl of Carlisle by virtue of her mother being a Howard, made clear her intention of marrying Lord Widdrington, her childhood sweetheart, and the marriage took place in July 1718. His second wife was a person of standing and substance; not only was she a Howard by maternal descent, but her father had risen to become Secretary of State on the eve of the Revolution, and she was ultimately sole heiress of the Graham estates at Nunnington in the North Riding

and Netherby in Cumberland. In August 1732 ‘Lord and Lady Widdrington’ were listed among ‘the principal people’ at York races. There was, nevertheless, clearly a period of straitened circumstances for Widdrington financially, compelling him to sell medieval manuscripts including items from the monastic library at Durham inherited from his father-in-law, Sir Thomas Tempest.[3] In 1719, although the king had no objection, the Commons rejected his petition for an annual allowance of £700 from his first wife’s estate, Stella, to support himself and his ‘distressed family’. In 1727, however, he was granted a special bounty of £12,000, with the implied intention of allowing him to recover the Tempest estates. In 1733 he petitioned for the removal of the legal disabilities incurred by his attainder, ‘having forfeited by his rebellion in 1715 a larger estate than any other [valued at £100,000] and behaved himself like a good subject since his pardon … and many members spoke in his favour’. This was granted.

Widdrington was interred in the Graham vault of his wife’s family at Nunnington, where his widow placed an impressive monument by Gibbs; the inscription highlights the consequences of his involvement in ‘the Affair of Preston’. Nonetheless, Henry Francis, Widdrington’s eldest son and heir, succeeded to the reduced, though not insignificant, inheritance of Stella (2,826 acres in 1873) and, in spite of his father’s attainder, he was regularly styled Lord Widdrington.

It has also been repeatedly stated that after his release, Charles Widdrington went to the continent and is said ‘to have died at St. Omers, in 1756’.[4] However, his will is dated 10 July 1737 and he is referred to as ‘the late Honourable Charles Widdrington deceased’ in a document dated 16 April 1747 in the Towneley Papers. A bundle of correspondence of 1725 to 1738, largely letters and invoices from his tailor, reveal that he maintained the style of a gentleman and, although living a somewhat peripatetic existence, he remained in this country. Though he did not possess any landed property he was able to bequeath books and various sums of money.

With regard to Peregrine Widdrington, who contracted spotted fever as a result of the appalling conditions at Newgate, both his petition for a pardon and the inscription on the monument to him at Great Mitton, near Clitheroe, state that he lost his fortune as a result of his participation in the rising. Nevertheless, his will, made in July 1747, is that of a gentleman of some substance, owning considerable landed property, including Corney House, a notable Chiswick villa, which he purchased under an alias. During the 1730s and 1740s he was in a relationship with the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, widow of the eighth duke. She was the last of the Shireburnes of Stonyhurst, a powerful and wealthy recusant and Jacobite Lancastrian family. From 1731 Peregrine acted as agent for the duchess in business matters connected with her Stonyhurst estate but their exact relationship was and continues to be the subject of some speculation,

in particular whether they were married for which there is no record.[5] At his death in 1748, there were twenty bundles of 'deeds, papers and writings' relating to him at 16 Arlington Street, the London home of the duchess, including his 'General Pardon [dated 19 July 1736] ... folded up in a Gilt & Leather Box'. He was buried in the Shireburne vault at Great Mitton and a monument was erected to a design by Gibbs.[6] The inscription, written by the duchess, highlights the consequences of his participation in 'the Preston affair', that is, he 'lost his Fortune with his health by a long confinement in Prison'. She was laid beside him following her own death in 1754.

The Widdringtons lost valuable estates together with the status and power they had enjoyed in Northumberland for over six hundred years. Furthermore, the childless deaths of Charles and Peregrine and then that of Henry Francis, titular Lord Widdrington, in 1774, meant that the senior line of the family became extinct within a generation. The properties they retained passed either directly or through the Eyres of Hassop in Derbyshire to the Towneleys of Towneley Hall in Lancashire, by virtue of the marriages of the sisters of the fourth baron, and his son, Henry Francis. (The latter's sister, Mary Teresa, married Rowland Eyre of Hassop whose sister Elizabeth (d.1786) is buried in St. Oswald's church at Durham, where there is a monument in the north aisle.) Substantial houses once occupied by the Widdringtons no longer survive: their seat at Blankney, was ravaged by fire in 1945; Stella was demolished in 1954; above all, the desolate site of Widdrington Tower, bare but for the trees, conspicuously symbolises their fall. The Widdrington family name has survived in Northumberland, but only through descendants of cadet branches.

Notes and References

[1] L. Gooch, *The Desperate Faction: The Jacobites of North East England 1688-1745* (1995) passim.

[2] C. Sinclair Stevenson, *Inglorious Rebellion* (1973), p. 192

[3] A.I. Doyle, 'The Library of Sir Thomas Tempest: its Origins and Dispersal', in *Studies in Seventeenth-Century English Literature, History and Bibliography* (1984) pp. 83-93.

[4] E.g., Gooch, p 123

[5] Bishop Challoner is said to have remonstrated with them for causing public scandal. Thomas Lawson, SJ, her chaplain felt obliged to ask the duchess to declare a marriage or to leave Peregrine, whereupon she threw the priest out. Cf. Gooch, loc.cit.

[6] From his 1728 *Book of Architecture.* The duchess had commissioned Gibbs to build her house in Arlington Street.

THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR IN NEWCASTLE, 1866-1899

L. Gooch

The Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Poor came to Newcastle in 1866 and has uninterruptedly cared for elderly and needy men and women of the city for over one hundred and fifty years with charitable donations.[1] This radical and unique apostolate continues to fulfill the original inspiration and vision of their foundress, a remarkable Frenchwoman.

Jeanne Jugan was born on 25 October, 1792, in Brittany She worked as a shepherdess as a young girl and when she was sixteen she went into service with a noble and devout Catholic, who took Jeanne with her when she visited the sick and the poor. At the age of eighteen, and again six years later, she declined marriage proposals from the same man, telling her mother that God was calling her to 'a work which is not yet founded.' When she was twenty-five, she became an Associate of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary founded by St. John Eudes. She worked as a nurse in the town hospital of Saint-Servan for six years, and then worked for twelve years as the servant of Françoise Aubert a fellow member of the Eudist Third Order. The two women began to teach catechism to the children of the town and to care for the poor. In 1837 they were joined by Virginie Tredaniel, seventeen years old. In the winter of 1839, Jeanne encountered Anne Chauvin, an elderly woman who was blind, partially paralyzed, and had no one to care for her. She took her in and let the woman have her bed while she slept in the attic. She took in two more and by 1841 she had rented a room to provide housing for a dozen elderly poor people. The following year, she acquired an unused convent building to house forty of them and each day went door-to-door begging food, clothing and money for the women in her care. From these beginnings arose the religious congregation first called Servants of the Poor, then Sisters of the Poor and from 1849 Little Sisters of the Poor. Jeanne, now Soeur Marie de la Croix, wrote their simple Rule of Life. On 9 July 1854 Pope Leo XIII gave his approbation of the Congregation. Mere Marie died on 29 August 1879. She was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 3 October, 1982, and canonized on 11 October, 2009, by Pope Benedict XVI.[2]

The Congregation grew rapidly in Europe and North America, and the vocation of the Petite Soeurs was admired by English Catholics who had long recognised the need for similar consideration of the elderly poor in their own communities where there were no services except for degrading incarceration in a state workhouse. A home opened in London in 1851 followed by a second in 1861. Many Protestants were hostile to female religious orders and objected to the

convents which had begun to spring up around the country after 1850, but they soon came round to acknowledging the great value of the Sisters' innovative social work.[3] Charles Dickens, by no means a pro-Catholic, wrote admiringly of these

> few women, feeble in frame but strong in heart and mind patiently going about collecting from house to house with which in humility and tenderness, they nourish the poor.[4]

In the next few years houses opened in Bristol, Leeds and Manchester. The Foundation Book of the Little Sisters records how a home on Tyneside was established.[5]

In September 1865, Abbé Ernest Le Lièvre, who played a major rôle in establishing homes throughout Britain and Europe, was travelling from Edinburgh to London and stopped off in Newcastle where Mr Savage, President of the local conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society, told him that there was a great need for the Little Sisters in the town. The Abbé seems to have been in Newcastle before and had already come to the same conclusion, as he indicated in a letter

> Did I not talk to you a hundred times about Newcastle? Is there a country in which the Little Sisters are more useful? Is there a town blacker on the whole face of the earth? It is the city of coal. And in that crawling population of 140,000 inhabitants, spread amongst the mines, the foundries, the railways, the docks, the wharves, the ships, miners, puddlers, sailors, loaders, how many poor men, tomorrow invalids, [will be] abandoned, or thrown to the Workhouses for their last days.[6]

In January 1866 Mr Savage (whose sister had visited the house in Edinburgh and wished to join the Order) wrote to the Abbé saying that he was becoming more and more aware of the necessity for a home in Newcastle and that he had spoken twice on the matter to Canon Charles Eyre at the cathedral who was of the same opinion; they had approached Bishop William Hogarth, and he had enthusiastically given permission for negotiations to take place. Although the bishop died at the end of the month, aged eighty, the diocese and the SVP continued to support the project.[7]

The General Council of the Congregation readily accepted the proposal and Mother St Joseph (Superior in Leeds) was authorised to make a start and she was appointed 'the new Reverend Mother in charge of the home'.[8] In February, she and another sister came north to look for a suitable house. The Foundation Book continues:

> August came, and the house they had hoped to obtain slipped through their fingers, so all concerned, including a certain Mr Foggins, doubled their efforts to find a house. On passing in front of St Mary's

Cathedral, they noticed that a large house, 35 Clayton Street, had just been put up for rent. It was perfect. The owner was a Catholic, and Mr Foggins had built it. The next day, the rental agreement was signed, at a cost of £70 or 1,750ff, per year.[9] Monsignor Eyre, the priest in charge of this large, important parish, was delighted to have the Little Sisters established next to his church. It was equally fortunate for the Little Sisters, as religious services were guaranteed.

On August 20, Reverend Mother St Joseph, helped by Sr Ste Clothilde from the house in Leeds took possession of the house. The furnishings were sparse, just two chairs and a borrowed table, but Mgr Eyre organised [through Mr Savage] the provision of beds, bedding and everything else the Little Sisters might need. Mr George Dunn and the Misses Leadbitter provided some of the necessary goods.

On 22 August, Sr Raymonde, the Mother Superior, and Srs Anne, Emilienne-Marie and Marie-Arsene arrived

from France, and were escorted from the railway station by the SVP. (Sr Clothilde returned to Leeds at the end of the month.) Four days later: the 'first little old lady arrived [Mary Carrick, a spinster born on 24 November, 1800], then a 91 year old, followed by two others.' By October there were seventeen female residents.

THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR,

ST. JOSEPH'S HOUSE, MEADOW BANK, ELSW1CK, NEWCASTLE.

The Institution of the LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR was founded in 1840, at St. Servan, in Brittany. The aim and end of this Charity is to provide Homes for the Aged and Infirm Poor of both sexes—to feed them, to clothe them, and minister to all their wants.

The Little Sisters of the Poor have no funds or income whatever. They support their Aged Inmates by whatever public charity affords them, collecting daily, from house to house, scraps of food, old clothing, alms in money, or anything that may be offered them. Although the Institution is Catholic, no distinction is made on account of religion; provided they are infirm, destitute old people, incapable of gaining their own livelihood, and have no person to gain it for them, they are fit objects for the Asylum of the Little Sisters of the Poor. All that is required is a recommendation, and the sum *of £2 10*s. each, for defraying the expense of bed and bedding.

This undertaking has gradually spread over France, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, England, and Scotland; and the Little Sisters have now more than ninety houses, containing many thousand Aged and Infirm Poor, who have thus found a comfortable home for their declining years. The houses of the Little Sisters are at all times open to visitors.

The house recently opened at Meadow Bank, Elswick, Newcastle, is the eleventh foundation in the United Kingdom, and will contain forty poor of both sexes; but this number will be increased as soon as the Sisters are enabled to build larger premises.

The first notice of the home in *Northern Catholic Calendar,* 1869

Canon Eyre spread the word about the new foundation in notices distributed to local churches which resulted in numbers of Catholics coming to the house

with donations of bread, tea, sugar, crockery and other basic necessities. Mrs Dunn also provided coal, straw for the mattresses, linen and food. On the day after taking over their new premises, two Sisters coming back from Mass were approached by a poor woman who 'offered them 2 pence (4 sous) requesting their blessing.' This was the first monetary donation they received in Newcastle but more was to come. The children of the cathedral asked to visit and 'their pennies, put into collecting boxes, amounted to more than 12 francs' Other donations included £5 from Mrs Lamb, 'Mrs Priestman, a Protestant, gave £1', a small shopkeeper, a policeman and Mr Pattison each gave ten shillings, and Dr Charlton gave five shillings each week. In October, while visiting the town, Cardinal Henry Edward Manning delivered a public lecture entitled 'Education', the proceeds from which were donated to the Little Sisters and the SVP. Mr Lamb sent seventeen loads of coal. A doctor and a pharmacist 'became interested' in the ailing and sick residents, and presumably treated them. The Sisters took to visiting Grainger Market with a barrow to beg for alms and vegetables exciting 'lively curiosity, especially amongst the Protestants', and the Sisters were happy to explain their work: 'One merchant requested that we go once a week to his shop and take whatever we required.' He would later say that business had never been better since he started giving to them.[10]

Clearly, the Little Sisters had made an immediate and favourable impression on the people of the town. The local press certainly gave them an encouraging welcome. On 25 August, 1866, The *Newcastle Guardian and Tyne Mercury* reported:

> For some months past arrangements have been in preparation for their reception [and] this week the Little Sisters of the Poor have come to Newcastle to take charge of as many of the aged and infirm poor as the charity of the public will enable them to feed and lodge. The Little Sisters take charge of the poor of both sexes, and of any creed or country.'[11]

On 7 September Canon Eyre blessed the house and celebrated the first Mass in a 'modest chapel' where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. (The altar cost £8 and was donated by Mr Foggins.) On 9 November, James Chadwick, the newly consecrated Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, celebrated Mass in the chapel; he would be a constant support of the Sisters thereafter.[12] Mother St Joseph, 'who had shared the exhaustion and preoccupation of setting up the foundation', left on 27 November satisfied that everything 'seemed to be heading in the right direction'. Indeed, the last entry for the year in the Foundation Book observed that the 'work of nursing care was now well established, and seemed to bring together all the elements necessary to fulfil the aims of the community.'

The work of the Little Sisters continued to inspire the townsfolk of Newcastle whose charity, both in almsgiving and in making donations in kind, continued undiminished – butchers in particular were noted for their generosity, one gave ten shillings-worth of meat each week. 'Mgr agreed to preach a sermon, requesting charitable donations, on Christmas Day, which is an important celebration here in England.' The residents were given a Christmas tea party by Mrs Dunne, Miss Leadbitter, with Mrs Foggins and her friend who 'arrived smartly dressed and in a carriage' bringing their elegant crockery. The residents 'were totally overwhelmed to find themselves served with so much respect and reverence by the greatest ladies of the town.' In January 1867 the Coal Company gave two keels of coal and a concert was held in the Town Hall in aid of the home.

It was obvious, however, that the capacity of the home was strictly limited. There was only enough space for thirty-nine residents and the house was full when, on 20 May, a very unhappy man called John McMullen, a widower aged seventy-seven from County Down, Ireland, appeared at the door.

> It was very hard to refuse him the shelter he requested. Another person arrived after this and, by ingeniously placing the two additional beds in the attic, we succeeded in taking in 5 extra people.

One of them had 'been lost to drink' but he immediately reformed and stopped going out. 'There was a good feeling amongst these men and they added to the good atmosphere within the house.' Nonetheless, the

> small house which had been rented close to the church was no longer sufficient for the large number of poor folk who required our care, so we prayed to St Joseph and set off in search of land on which to build.

Abbé Le Lièvere visited briefly in April 1868 to encourage and help the Sisters, but it was only after a prolonged search that suitable premises on Westmorland Road were secured at auction on 24 July at the Queen's Head Inn, Pilgrim Street.

> Mother House sent Reverend Mother Emmanuel to us in order to sign the papers for the purchase. On November 16, 1868, in the name of Mgr Chadwick, Sr Emmanuel, Sr Philippe de Neri and Sr Bernard, we acquired a large property situated in Elswick named Meadow Bank. The purchase price of 100,000 frs [£4,000] was to be paid by March 25 1884. … The total area of the property acquired was 4 acres, 3 roods and 2 perches.

The Sisters were able, with the help of subscriptions and donations, to pay 25,000 frs immediately but it was necessary to borrow 75,000 frs.

Following Bishop Chadwick's death on 14 May 1882 a new contract was drawn up in the names of four Little Sisters: Sr Philippe de Neri and Sr Bernard

as before, together with Sr Eduoard Marie and Sr Bonne Marie. Curiously, neither Sr Raymonde, 'who had been in charge of the home since we arrived and was elected Reverend Mother' at the General Chapter meeting of 1868, or her assistant (and successor) Sr Anne St Ignace, was named in either contract. At any rate, the Community now had

> a solid stone house, in very good condition, able to house 40 poor souls. There are also outbuildings and a stable block and a quarry capable of providing the stone for all future building works, once the current debt is paid off. We are currently in the process of moving in having, as a priority, installed St Joseph who procured this house for us, followed soon after by our 36 dear poor folk. The house in Clayton Street had become so inadequate for our needs that, in spite of our tiredness, we felt extremely happy.
>
> The old folk, in spite of their advanced age and infirmity, were so happy to be able to walk in the garden and take the fresh air that we had trouble encouraging them to come back in for their meals. The Little Sisters were delighted to see them like this, and observed that they seemed to be growing stronger each day.

The religious life of the home, dedicated to St Joseph, is chronicled throughout the period. Immediately after the move

> when arrangements were made for a small chapel, Monseigneur [Bishop Chadwick] came to celebrate the first Mass and the Vicar General [Mgr Eyre] came to bless our house.

Provision was also made for Mass to be said each Sunday and on two or three weekdays as well as Confessions and 'other religious offices' by the thirty-year-old Belgian priest Bruno Vanderstichele. He had been in the diocese since 1864 and had served at the cathedral where he would have come to know the Little Sisters well. Four years later, he was instructed to establish a new mission at Elswick to relieve the pressure on St Mary's; it is not perhaps coincidental that this was at almost the same time that the Sisters moved to Meadow Bank, so that he became available to provide for their spiritual needs and those of the home.[13] To begin with, however, he continued to live in the cathedral house because, in common with general practice at that time, and until enough money was accumulated to finance the building of a church and a priest's house, he began with a school-chapel: it was opened in January 1873, dedicated to St Michael, with Miss Rockhead as headteacher. On holydays of obligation an early Mass was offered in the chapel of the Little Sisters and a late Mass in the school-chapel. Other services during the week, such as Benediction and Stations of the Cross, were held in St Joseph's until the new church was ready. But Canon Bruno did not live to see that, for he died in December 1885, aged fifty.[14] It was not until October 1891 that his successor, Joseph Dunn, opened St

Michael's church on Brunel Terrace, designed by the Catholic architectural firm of Messrs Dunn, Hansom & Dunn of Newcastle

An Assistant Reverend Mother (from the Mother House) would make annual visits both to inspect the home and to offer spiritual guidance. Regular visits were also made by French associate or auxiliary priests of the Congregation. In June 1869 Abbé Jacquin led the community in its first retreat since its foundation; these were given regularly thereafter (often for the residents as well as the Sisters) variously by a Jesuit or Redemptorist or a French or English secular priest.[15] The sisters also made their annual renewal of vows, normally on or about the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

The Foundation Book records frequent Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Communion for the sick and infirm. The conversion of residents occurred from time to time: the first was on 1 February 1867 in Clayton Street when '3 good Protestant women' were prepared for baptism by Canon Eyre and received their first Communion at Easter. The bishop usually visited to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. Funerals took place regularly, of course, given the age profile of the residents, but even so, one of the original resident ladies reached the age of 103. The Community was always meticulous in having Mass offered for the repose of the souls of their benefactors.

After the move to Meadow Bank in 1868 a list of benefactors of St Joseph's was drawn up, with 'Mgr himself at the head of the list'. (The use of the term 'Mgr' to describe both bishop and canon sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish who is referred to.) The benefactors included Mrs Ablot, a Protestant lady, who gave £50 and another, Mrs Smith of Gosforth, who gave a horse and persuaded her husband to give a second cow. (The first cow is not mentioned though one imagines it can hardly have been kept in Clayton Street, but perhaps it was.) Now, having a horse, they needed a carriage, and were in the process of buying one when a visitor asked about the cost and suggested that 'her friend, a Mr William Armstrong, would pay for it, which he did.'[16]

Fund-raising was, of course, a major preoccupation and great hopes were placed on a bazaar managed by Fr Vanderstichele. It was to be a grand affair, typically Victorian, and it opened on 2 March 1869 in the Town Hall and lasted four days. The Mayor, Mr James Morrison, performed the opening ceremony (said to be the first time a Protestant had done this for a Catholic charity) and he urged everyone to be generous – he and his wife set an example by buying something at each of the stalls. Archbishop Eyre came down from Glasgow to his old diocese to support the event, and Bishop Chadwick attended each day along with large numbers of priests and townsfolk, Catholic and Protestant. The Dominican Provincial brought a cameo of St George back from Rome as a present from Pope Pius IX as well as another cameo and mosaic from Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli.[17] The French Consul gave a present and obtained a Sèvres

tea service from the French Emperor. The King of Naples sent gifts and other donations came in from far and wide, including the Mother House. It had been confidently estimated that following the bazaar 'there would be little left to pay' on the loan but, although the total sum raised was a very creditable 15,000 frs, it was not as much as was hoped, but then, the bishop had not thought that that much would be raised given the misery and unemployment all around.

Although the home's debt was some £3,000, there could be no let-up in the development of the home: there were forty-eight residents in 1869, fifty in 1870 and sixty in 1872. Moreover, building work was expensive, even though the able-bodied male residents saved money by helping with the labouring. They first began to extract stone from the quarry and one of them, a former mason, started to build a wall around the whole property which ultimately reached a height of eight feet. A neighbouring Protestant minister noticed that access to the house was difficult especially in winter and appealed to his parishioners, who were 'amused' by his concern, for funds to repair the road – they obliged.

The main problem, however, was that 'an addition for the old men was much wanted by means of which one hundred of both sexes could be received'. So, 'the old men themselves set to, forgetting their age and infirmity, demolishing the damp outbuildings they had inhabited'. In June 1870 they began to build the new wing, 'supervised' by a visiting Assistant Reverend Mother although a professional builder was engaged. The builder's expenses were paid with a lottery win (which were not infrequent) and the final bill was paid with a donation of £90 from a benefactor in London. The building was finished by Christmas and the 'old gentlemen moved in in time for the celebrations'. (Bishop Chadwick would always refer to them as 'gentlemen'. On at least one occasion he gave each resident a glass of whiskey to celebrate the New Year.)[18]

In March 1871 the bishop assented to the construction of a third floor in the main house so that ninety residents could be accommodated. Work began in April (with the residents quarrying the stones to help the builder) and continued into the next year, 'overseen' by Abbé Derlet, an affiliate of the Congregation. At the beginning of January 1873 permission was received from the Mother House to start building a new chapel and work began on 3 March. The bishop laid the foundation stone on 11 June:

> The weather was magnificent and many people came from all over to attend this touching ceremony. The Mayor of Newcastle sent 5 policemen to maintain order.

Fr John Nolan gave a sermon. The collection amounted to 850 frs and benefactors unable to attend sent in their donations. (Mrs Sidney of Blyth sent £50.)[19]

The Sisters were ever anxious about money being available to finance their continuing building projects, but they were usually unnecessarily pessimistic

because, as the Foundation Book put it, collections remained 'good'. Benefactors from across the diocese were always generous with donations as well as food and fuel. Workmen living locally gave their spare cash and occasionally came to work in the gardens for an hour or two. Legacies, lottery wins, raffles and concerts also helped. At the beginning of winter 1873, James Crolly, the priest at Millom in Cumberland, appealed to his people to support the Little Sisters. As a result, a square crate four feet high was presently delivered to the home:

> It contained 3 fat ducks ready to roast, 32lbs of sugar, 25lbs of tea and large quantities of cocoa, rice and fresh butter. There was also soap, coffee, 10lbs of tobacco with pipes, in short everything that they could want to keep the old people going for a large part of the winter. There was also a large trunk containing linen and clothing.

The next day 350 frs was also received from Millom. It is not pretended that all donations were as plentiful, but the Little Sisters would also receive cartloads of coal and were told never to buy any but to let the donor know when supplies ran low. The gas company usually sent a supply of coke at the start of winter. On one occasion two Sisters out collecting were given thirty-four sovereigns by an old man. Such was the esteem for the work of the Little Sisters. It was just as well because their building ambitions were yet to be fulfilled. It was hoped to have the chapel completed by the end of June 1874 'that we may then proceed with our next project'. Approval had been given for another wing to be added, and although the Mother House made a grant of 10,000 frs towards it, donations were still required: the cost of the chapel and the new wing would be 50,000 frs.

On 30 July 1874 the new chapel was dedicated by Bishop Chadwick. Several canons and thirty-six priests were present. The chapel was full and some Protestant clergymen who had arrived late 'had to be squeezed in by the altar rail'. The preacher at Mass and later at Benediction was Mgr Thomas Joseph Capel, papal chamberlain and a fashionable London preacher. [20]The new wing was ready for occupation by the residents soon after that and there were new quarters for the Sisters (which would 'make life more peaceful and aid good relationships'). Timely donations from the bishop, Mrs Lamb and Mrs Mather had saved the Sisters from an embarrassing inability to pay the builder's instalment. Even so, a loan of £1,000 had to be taken out to pay his final bill and that was not redeemed until 1877. Annual income around this time averaged £95 boosted by a lottery win of £107 (2,384 frs 2674 frs respectively). And they had yet another project in mind: the creation of an infirmary.

Transport facilities were improved in 1876 when the bishop and a few priests gave a generous offering to buy the community a car, and a benefactor, Mr Liddel, died in 1881 leaving a legacy of £500 and his wife donated 'a small vehicle'. (He had donated winter coal for many years and his children continued

the practice.) Collections in the churches were successful and by 1881 the home's debts had 'diminished greatly'. A loan of £1,100 from Mr Leadbitter was repaid with a Liddel legacy and a subvention from the bishop. Bishop Chadwick died in May 1882, aged sixty-nine to the great regret of the Sisters. He was succeeded by John W. Bewick who proved as stalwart a supporter of the Little Sisters as his predecessor but he died after only four years as diocesan. In 1889 Thomas W. Wilkinson became Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle after a brief hiatus in the episcopal succession.

Building work at St Joseph's was continuous – one of the floors on the women's wing in the old house was being refitted in the early eighties. Further, the construction of new stables and a smoking area for the men, 'both being very necessary', was begun in 1883, overseen by a visiting Assistant Reverend Mother. They were completed in 1885 at a cost of about £100, part of which was borrowed from the house in Carlisle (and paid back the next year).[21] In 1884 the Sisters decided to seek alms in the Newcastle barracks and a Catholic soldier collected for them; Colonel Collingwood also made a collection. Money was later collected in the barracks at Durham and those as far away as Redcar, Whitby and Berwick. The Sisters needed a second second cow, the first second cow having presumably died; at any rate, they received enough to buy one, partly from a collection made by Fr Dunn at St Michael's nearby. A laundry was next on the agenda and it was begun and completed in 1887 (at a cost of 33,000 fr.). At that time there were 118 residents but word got about that the accommodation had been increased and 'lots of old people applied to join us.' To satisfy demand, work to extend the men's section began in 1888. It was completed in time for Christmas 1889 (100,000 fr.) Permission was sought in 1893 from the Mother House to build a new residential wing and work began in May 1894. A year later, however, the Community found itself unable to pay the builder 142,000 fr. and had to borrow £500 from the Edinburgh house.

It is noteworthy that the severity of the weather is recorded more frequently towards the end of the century and gifts of coal, coke, clothing and woollen garments were particularly welcomed. In 1880 after 'a long and rigorous winter … the needs of the home were greater than ever due to the number of residents.' In 1891 'the winter was cruel and many of our elderly were ill and many died'. (To celebrate his election to the Cathedral Chapter that year, Canon Dunn served the residents a warming glass of whiskey on the feast of St Joseph.) It was at this time that the Community would have liked 'to employ people on a regular basis' but funds would not allow it.

The Foundation Book contains no personal information about any of the Little Sisters except when they were appointed to positions of authority, moved or when they died. In 1872 Mother Raymonde was moved to the General Chapter and was replaced by Sr Anne de St Ignace; Sr Colombe de St Joseph became the new Assistant. In 1878, after having spent twelve years in the house,

Sr Anne was replaced by Sr Colombe de St Joseph but two years later she was sent to take charge of the newly opened home in Carlisle and Sr Noemie Thèrése, the Assistant, was made Reverend Mother. Six years later she was replaced by Sr Mélanie Thèrése and Sr Cecile du Saint Esprit was made her Assistant. A year later the visiting Assistant Reverend Mother 'was happy to observe that everything within the building was running smoothly …'

Soeur Marie de la Croix, foundress of the Congregation, died in 1879 but her passing was not mentioned in the Foundation Book although the deaths of senior members of the Congregation were. Deaths in the Newcastle community were, of course, recorded. In August 1870 Sr Pacifique de Ste Thérèse, from Dundee, died aged twenty-five only two years and nine months after her profession; she was buried in the Protestant cemetery nearby, but her remains were transferred to the Catholic cemetery of Stella in November 1872 where the parish priest had donated a plot sufficient to bury three or four Sisters. The Community later bought land sufficient to accommodate eight Sisters. In March 1890 Sr Anna de St Edmond died aged thirty-two after a long illness and having been a member of the community for nine years and four months. Reverend Mother Mélanie Thérèse who had suffered from cancer for some time died peacefully in March 1893 aged sixty, after almost twenty-nine years in the community and thirteen years and three months since taking permanent vows: 'Her burial was simple, just four priests assisting.' Finally, Sister Wilfrid of the Pentecost died on 8 May 1899 having suffered for several years with stomach ulcers. She was aged twenty-seven and a half, and professed for only five years and eight months; she made her perpetual vows on her deathbed.

From time to time the international connections of the Congregation are mentioned in the Foundation Book. In 1878 the Community was able to use its good offices in France on behalf of Bishop Chadwick:

> A little while ago, Monseigneur had spoken to us about an orphanage which he wished to set up in Newcastle. As he is exceptionally good to us, we contacted the Mother House, and received a reply concerning the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Marie de Parame. Monseigneur was very satisfied with our research as these sisters are going to set themselves up in Newcastle in February for the new orphanage.[22]

The Sisters did come in 1878 (the order's first undertaking in England) probably to take over the new orphanage at Shieldfield Green, Newcastle, but for unknown reasons they went instead to the Catholic Poor Law School at Tudhoe which had been under lay management since it opened in 1867.[23]

On 6 February 1897 the Mother Provincial Ange du St Esprit made the annual inspection of St Joseph's and wrote

> I visited our Newcastle house and found charity and union amongst the Little Sisters. The elderly are well cared for and all their spiritual needs are met.

She said much the same in 1899 and with those highly satisfactory reports we can conclude the narrative of the foundation of the Little Sisters in Newcastle and their remarkable progress up to the end of the nineteenth century.[24]

Archive photograph of the Dining Room

In the century and a half since its foundation almost six thousand elderly people have been resident in the home. It is important to note that with the foundation of their mission in Newcastle the Little Sisters were in the vanguard of social work practice, just as the Church was ahead of its time in caring for children in need.[25] It should also be emphasised that from the beginning, the Little Sisters have offered care regardless of denominational allegiance and have always been highly regarded by non-Catholics. The Congregation was therefore not only the first Catholic organisation to rise above the deep religious divide in Britain, but also the first to be widely accepted in a period of considerable anti-Catholicism.

Notes & References

[1] This article is based largely on the manuscript *Foundation Book* (or *Journal*) of St Joseph's Home. It is written in French, and an English translation made by Andrea Fairbairn has been used. Thanks are due to Revd Mother Marie Claire for making it freely available.

[2] F. Trochu, *Jeanne Jugan* (1960). Given that the fiftieth anniversary was celebrated in Newcastle in1890, the formal date of the Congregation's foundation is presumably 1840.

[3] By 1857 there were 31 female orders with 100 convents in England. The opposition to them is treated in W. Arnstein, *Protestant versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England: Mr Newdegate and the Nuns* (1982); See also J. Lenders, *History of St. Michael's Parish,* (1931) p. 162, for details of initial hostility to the Sisters (including at Ashington for no obvious reason).

[4] Trochu, p 161.

[5] The *Northern Catholic Calendar* of 1869 said that the Newcastle house was the *eleventh* foundation in the UK but the *NCC* of 1870 said it was the *fourteenth*. So as to include it in his *ad limina* report to Rome in 1869, Bishop W. Hogarth obtained a copy of the letter signed by Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò, Prefect of Propaganda, authorising the establishment of *twelve* houses of the Congregation in England. Incidentally, Barnabò is said to have ran Propaganda like a dictator with almost totalitarian gusto and controlled the missions like an empire. H. Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830-1914* (2000); H. Chadwick, *Acton and History* (2002)

[6] Lenders p. 164; the addressee is not named.

[7] Hogarth was the first Bishop of Hexham in the restored hierarchy (the diocese was renamed Hexham and Newcastle in 1861); he died on 29 January 1866. Eyre was ordained in Rome in 1842 and came to St Mary's in Newcastle in 1843; he was Rector from 1847. He was on the *terna* of nominations to succeed Hogarth in 1866 but was not elected and became VG instead. In December 1868 he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of the Western District of Scotland and on 31 January 1869 he was consecrated in Rome as Archbishop of Anazarba *in partibus infidelium*. He inherited his father's title of Count. He died in 1902.

[8] Lenders, p. 162n, wrote that 'The Rev. Sister Anastasia was the first Rev. Good Mother' but she is nowhere else mentioned.

[9] The Foundation Book gives most sums of money in francs. Using the writer's figures it appears that £1 = 25 francs in 1866. Mr Foggin did a great deal of building work in and around Newcastle for the diocese.

[10] He may have been the Mr Mitcheson referred to by Abbé Le Lièvre eight years later who had started with one small shop but who now had 'two great shops'. Lenders, p. 168

[11] In 1889 a 'Protestant journalist who visited our home and observed the buildings, published an article in our favour, encouraging even the Protestants to support us.' The location of the article is not known.

[12] Chadwick was born in 1813 to a Lancastrian father and Irish mother. His father was imprisoned and fined in 1745 as a Jacobite. James was educated at Ushaw and ordained in 1836. He was made bishop in 1866 and consecrated on 28 October in Ushaw College chapel by Archbishop H.E. Manning.

[13] The need for a new mission at Elswick was due largely to a substantial increase in population. The Elswick Works was established in 1847 by William George Armstrong (later Lord Armstrong of Cragside) to manufacture hydraulic cranes from which the company diversified into many fields including shipbuilding, armaments and locomotives. In 1863 the company employed some 3,800 men and the works stretched three-quarters of a mile along the riverside.

[14] He was elected to the Chapter and installed on 30 October 1879.

[15] Bruno Vanderstichele's brother Leo was a Redemptorist, ordained in London by Cardinal N. Wiseman in 1850. He gave missions in England, Ireland and Scotland and could well have visited St Joseph's.

[16] This might have been the Mr Armstrong, industrialist of Elswick (see n. 13), who became a generous philanthropist in Newcastle. They would be given another carriage in 1885 by an unnamed benefactor.

[17] Presumably the Dominican Provincial, Vincent King, OP, (1837-1886) was then resident at or visiting St Andrew's, Newcastle, which the Dominicans held from 1860. The site for St Dominic's church at Red Barns was being cleared in 1869; the foundation stone would be laid by the bishop on 14 September and the church opened on 10 September 1873. King was appointed coadjutor to the Archbishop of Trinidad in 1885 but he died before succeeding. Cardinal Antonelli was Papal Secretary of State often called the 'Italian Richelieu'. He was one of the last cardinal-deacons (i.e., not a priest) before Pope Benedict XV decreed in 1917 that all cardinals must be ordained priests.

[18] On 16 November 1869 Bishop Chadwick (who wrote the carol: 'Angels we have heard on high') left for Rome to attend the First Vatican Council. He returned on 26 July 1870. Archbishop Eyre also attended. Fr Vanderstichele holidayed in Rome for two weeks in June 1870 towards the end of the Council, cf. B. Harvey, 'The Roman Diary of Anthony Robson, 1869/70', *NCH* 53, 2012 p.24ff.

[19] John Nolan (1839-1884), Ushaw-trained and serving at the cathedral. The Sidney family had financed the building of St Cuthbert's church at Cowpen by Dobson in 1840.

[20] Capel (1836-1911) was dubbed the 'Apostle to the Genteels' because of his high profile converts to Catholicism, for which he was caricatured as Mgr Catesby by B. Disraeli in *Lothair.*

[21] The house in Caldewgate, Carlisle, opened on 17 November 1880. Another home would be opened in the Causeway near St Benet's, Sunderland in 1882, and then at Ettrick Grove as Holy Cross.

[22] The congregation of the Sisters of the Saints Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie was founded at Parame in France in 1852 by Amelie Fristel (1798-1866) who, like Jeanne Jugan, had been an Associate of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary founded by (St) John Eudes. The *Northern Catholic Calendar* (1878) said the order was popularly known as the 'Sisters of Our Lady of the Oak'.

[23] Tudhoe was handed over to the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul in 1894/5.

[24] In 1898 the Congregation's new Constitution was published and a year later the Newcastle community was placed under the auspices of the London house. At the General Chapter Cardinal Serafino Vannutelli was made Protector of the Congregation. Vannutelli (1834-1915), born in Gennazano, Palestrina, was a papal diplomat for many years before becoming Cardinal-Bishop of Frascati and later taking up positions in the Vatican. He is thought to have been *papabile* in the conclave of 1903. His brother Vincenzo was also a cardinal.

[25] L. Gooch, 'Catholic residential child-care in Newcastle, 1872-1945', *NCH* 51, 2010, pp. 41-58.

THE PRIESTS BURIED IN ST OSWALD'S CHURCHYARD IN DURHAM

W.V. Smith

[This article, reprinted from *Ushaw Magazine, 1940,* and updated with expanded and modern references, contains much of continuing interest both for the principal historic parish of the City of Durham as well as for the county.]

Many of the churchyards in England which date back to the Reformation contain the bones of some priest or priests who served the Catholics of the neighbourhood. Until the beginning of the eighteenth century their names were entered in the burial registers without any sign of their sacred profession: as they lived secretly in fear of their lives owing to their priesthood, so they were buried, lest the knowledge of their priesthood brought imprisonment or worse to those who had befriended them. Because of the constant use and often changing of aliases it is now almost impossible to trace the burials of the clergy in the days of active persecution. But after the Titus Oates Plot, the times became less troublesome and consequently, except for short outbreaks of bigotry, for example after the Revolution or the Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745, the priests seem to have been known publicly as priests, at least when they died if not earlier, and it is the rule rather than the exception that in the Burial Registers they are noted as Popish or Romish Priests.

This is true of the registers of St Oswald's in Durham. Up to the eighteenth century we have to discover the names of priests with the help of other sources of information; after the beginning of that century every priest mentioned in the register is, with one exception, noted as a priest. The graveyard of this church has more priests buried in it than any other burial-ground attached to an old parish church in the diocese; in fact very few in England would be able to equal it. Fortunately for easy reference, the Registers of Births Marriages and Deaths from their beginning in 1538 to 1750 were published in 1891 by the then vicar, the Rev. A. Headlam, and in the following pages they have been quoted without verification. The book, *The Monumental Inscriptions of the Cathedral, Parish Churches and Cemeteries of the City of Durham* (1880) has been used for the later years, from which the details on tombstones are taken. Since priests rarely had tombstones before the end of the eighteenth century, there was a gap in the printed records between 1751 and 1790. The clergy of St Oswald's kindly filled it by verifying the entries of the three priests who, it was known, might have been buried there during that time.

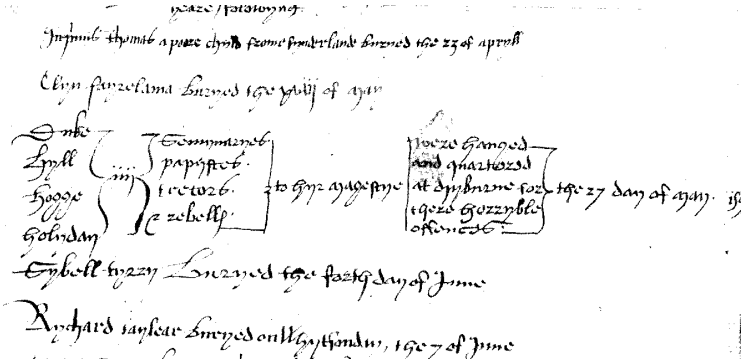
So far there have been traced from these sources the deaths of four martyrs, who were secular priests, and the burials of eleven others, with those of eight Jesuits, one Benedictine and one Dominican. The obituaries of these priests are to a certain extent similar but our knowledge of them often differs; of some we know a good deal of their student days and little of their priestly work, while of

others the reverse is true. But what few details there are show the manner of men they were – a hard-working, hard-suffering clergy. The information is also of use in helping to fill in gaps in the stories of several old Catholic missions in the diocese.

*

1590. May 27. Duke Hill Hogge Holyday iiij Semynaryes papystes tretors and rebelles to hyr magestye were hanged and quartered at Dryburne for there horryble offences.

The lives of these four martyrs do not come within the scope of this article because their quarters would not have been buried in the graveyard but hung on the bridges, gates and walls of the city.



The entry in St Oswald's register showing the execution of the priests Duke, Hill, Hogg and Holiday.

1673. May 8. Mr. John Midcofe.

John Metcalfe, alias Middleton, was born in 1615 and studied for four years at St Omer. He entered the Venerabile in 1636 and was ordained in 1641. He came to the mission in 1643 and worked in northern England until his death.

[G. Anstruther, OP, *The Seminary Priests,* (4 vols. 1968-1977), vol. 2, p.218.]

1681. Dec. 12. Mr. David Constable who died in the Javele.

David Benedict Constable, O.S.B., was the third son of Thomas Constable, Esq., and his wife Anne, daughter of John Marston. Born in Yorkshire, he was professed at Lambspring in 1669, and after ordination he was sent to England to work in the Northern Province but he was arrested immediately after he landed. Some authorities say that the arrest took place in Sunderland, but the Durham Quarter Sessions Records state that on November 14th, 1677:

> Talbot Constable of Ganstead near Hull was last night apprehended in the house of Lady Susan Hodshon in Elvet and confessed himself to be a Jesuit Seminary or Massing Priest.

He was committed to gaol. It seems therefore that these two Constables, Talbot and David, were the same priest, yet it is strange that Mr Constable apparently escaped trial, condemnation and execution during the Oates Plot of 1679.

[N. Birt, *Obit Book of English Benedictines, 1600-19*12 (1913) p. 55; *Durham Chronicle,* 27 March 1891]

1697/98. Jan. 13. Matthew Chambers who died at Mr. John Forcers in this parish was buried at Harber House.

Practically all that we know of Mr Matthew Chambers and his brother Robert, both secular priests, is from the *Third Douai Diary.* On May 27th, 1651,

> Matthew Chamber an English soldier, about to start the study of Logic, son of Richard Chamber a Protestant minister and of Susannah of Spofforth in the County of York, born in London, educated for some years at Cambridge,

arrived at the College. A few months later the *Diary* records that Robert, the brother of Matthew, also arrived at the College and began to study Logic. When they arrived they were still both Protestants, and on October 29th of the same year, 1651, they both made the profession of faith.

After settling down to some eight years of hard study they must have found it a great surprise when early in 1653 they were told to take the College Oath and be examined for Holy Orders. These they did on March 5th and the following day they were sent with other students to Cambrai for ordination. On March 7th they received minor orders, and on the two following days the subdiaconate and the diaconate; on the 12th, the Feast of St Gregory, they were ordained priests and returned to Douai. On Passion Sunday (the 30th of the same month) the diarist recorded that Robert Chamber said his first Mass as the Community Mass and the same day at 10 a.m. Matthew Chambers sang his first Mass. A month later, on May 1st

> were sent on the English Mission Matthew and Robert Chamber priests (who came here in Logic on Sept. 27th [sic] and Oct. 7th, 1651) with faculties and owing to want of health and the necessity of the College, they were sent on the mission with the course of Philosophy uncompleted and with no work in the study of Theology.

Arriving in England at the height of the Cromwellian persecution they hid themselves successfully both from the Government informers and also from future historians, hence the remainder of their story is soon told. They occur together in a list of priests serving in the North of England in 1666, and together sign an undated circular letter of the clergy exonerating Douai from a charge of Jansenism. Mr Matthew Chambers signed the Rules of the Durham and Northumberland Clergy Fund in 1691, and he is also mentioned in a report of the clergy in the North to the Old Chapter in August 1697: ‘Mr. John Yaxley at

Mr. Kennets' in Coxhoe. Mr. Chambers at the same place very old.' Which Mr Chambers is not stated; it is doubtless Matthew, who died a few months later after having spent 45 years on the Mission.

Harbour House on the north side of Durham belonged to the Forcer family for centuries and had been granted a private chapel, in which members of the family were buried, in pre-Reformation days. The Forcers always remained Catholic and Harbour House was served by the Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who used it as their headquarters. The piscina and other relics of this old Catholic chapel were given to the late Provost Consitt, who built them into the mortuary chapel at St Bede's cemetery, Redhills, Durham which was consecrated in 1866. Mr Chambers died at the Forcer's town-house in Durham and not at Harbour House, which was in the parish of St Margaret's.

[CRS Records vol. IX, p. 114 and vol. XI passim; T. Knox, *First and Second Diaries of the English College, Douai* (1878), pp. 46, 83; Anstruther vol. 2, pp. 50/1.]

1712. April 4. Mr. Ferdinando Ashmole a popish priest living with the Lady Mary Ratcliff in Old Elvet.

Ferdinand Ashmall was born at Amerston, Sedgefield, in 1650. He studied at the *Venerabile* and was ordained in Rome in 1674. He was chaplain to the Radcliffes of Dilston and he ended his days with Lady Mary in her new house in Old Elvet which enemies confidently but wrongly predicted was 'really designed for a Nunnery (as at York) for entertainment of Young Ladys of that persuasion'.

[Anstruther, vol 3, p. 6.]

1713. Oct. 22. Mr. Christopher Todd dyed at Croxdale, a papist, a priest.

Only two references have so far been found about Mr Todd. In a list of students at Douai who took the Oath, his name occurs under Sept. 8th, 1703: 'Christopher Todd son of George Todd and Mary Medcalf, Diocese of Durham.' His name also appears in the list of priests in the General Clergy Fund, and Mr Eyre has added to his name, 'Durham *sine cura animarum.*' If he followed the usual custom of taking the Douai Oath in Logic he was probably ordained about 1710; his living in retirement and dying shortly after ordination implies that he was probably always in ill-health and lived privately with relatives in Croxdale: Todd was then a common Catholic name in that neighbourhood, as was his mother's maiden name of Medcalfe in Durham.

[Knox, *Diaries,* p. 54; UCM, *Eyre Papers*.]

1718/19. March 10. Mr. Ralph Jennison a popish priest aged about 80 was buryed in Harbour-house Chapel.

Of the many families in the two northern counties who gave sons as priests to the Church, the Jenisons of Low Walworth, near Darlington, are second only to

the Maires of Hardwick and Hartbushes. In the Jenison family there were ten who became Jesuits (one of them dying as a confessor of the Faith in prison during the Titus Oates Plot) and two who became secular clergy. Born in 1635, probably at the family house, Ralph Jenison became a novice at Watten in 1656 and took the alias of Freville, as did most of the family who became priests. After ordination he was sent to his native county in 1671 and he remained in the North for the remainder of his life. In 1710 the Jesuit *Annual Letters* said of him,

> Fr. Ralph Jenison was still a missionary distinguished by his laborious and fruitful work during a space of forty years, and although 75 years of age he performed all his extensive journeys on foot.

About 1717 an informer adds to a report to the Government about the Radcliffe estates, 'Examine said Lady Mary, Mr. Jenison her priest and allsoe Mr. Jackson late of Durham.' The burial register is wrong in saying Mr Jenison was about 80; he was 84 and working to the end of his long life.

[H. Foley (ed.) *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (7 vols., 1875-1883), vol. V, passim; vol. VII p. 400.]

1729/30. Feb. 1. Mr. Bullock, a popish priest.

William Joseph Bullock, O.P., was ordained at Bornheim in 1725 and was sent on the English mission two years later. His address for a time was 'Ness, to be left at the Post House in New Malton, Yorkshire.' Ness was a residence of one of the Langdale family, who kept a chaplain there for over a century. Before Christmas 1728 Mr Bullock became chaplain to Joseph Porter in Old Elvet, whose son was also a Dominican. When he died, Mr Bullock was only thirty years of age.

[CRS Records vol. XXV, pp. 130, 151; J. Payne, *Old Catholic Missions* (1889) p. 54]

1730/31. Jan. 21. Alexius Toket, a popish priest.

Mr Tocketts belonged to a northern family, possibly to the branch which in the seventeenth century was settled at Wearhead. Born in 1665 and having entered the Society of Jesus in 1689, he was back in the Durham District as a priest before 1701, and here he spent all his missionary life. The *Annual Letters* of 1710 said of him: *nullibi requiem habet in continuis semper laboribus.* Later he seems to have had a more settled abode and, about 1727, letters were to be addressed to him as 'Mr. Young at Mr. Clifton's in Old Street, Durham.' When the Vicar Apostolic Bishop Williams, O.P., gave Confirmation in the city in 1729, Tocketts is mentioned as serving the Jesuit mission in Old Elvet.

[Foley, *Records,* vol. V, pp. 628, 640; vol. VIII, p.781; CRS Records vols. XIII, p. 173, XXV, p. 11.]

1731/32. Feb. 5. Mr. Thomas Pearson, a popish priest.

Like so many other Jesuits who served in the North of England, Mr Pearson belonged to a Yorkshire or Durham family. He was born about 1645 and became a Jesuit in 1667; owing to ill-health he was unable to complete his studies but was ordained early and sent back to his native country in 1675. He appears to have gone straight to Durham, and in the peaceful years of James II he opened both a public chapel and a large school which was attended by the sons of Catholics and non-Catholics. It was probably in his chapel that Bishop Leyburn confirmed 1,024 people in August 1687. A few months later all the fruit of Mr Pearson's labours was scattered. On the arrival of William of Orange in England his school was closed, his chapel was looted by the mob, and he himself had to fly abroad. He returned to his mission in Durham about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and in the *Annual Letters* of 1710 it was stated that 'Father Pearson, although 65 years of age, made all his missionary labours on foot, content with an allowance of eight *scudi* a year.' Eight *scudi* was equal to thirty-five shillings which, even in those days, was a mere pittance. In 1727 his address was 'Mr. Woods, Draper, Durham.' Some years before he died he had a stroke which left him dumb and paralysed, and he finally died in the city where he had spent most of the 55 years of his priesthood.

[Foley, *Records* vol. V pp. 640, 649 et seq; vol. VII p. 578. CRS Records vol. XIII 173; *Ushaw Magazine* 1900]

Doubts have been raised about the number of people confirmed by Bishop Leyburn in Durham during his tour of the North — the first visit of a Catholic bishop for nearly 150 years. It is said that no chapel could have held such a number and that it seems impossible there were so many to be confirmed. But the bishop stayed two days and probably confirmed not merely once but at least twice each day. As regards the number, Durham was the centre of a very strong Catholic part of the county. There were Jesuits living in Durham and Harbour House; secular clergy in Old Elvet and Gilesgate as well as Newhouse, Croxdale and Coxhoe; and a Benedictine near Chester-le-Street. Other Jesuits were working in the neighbourhood as itinerant priests, and there were probably other priests as well. Some of the people to be confirmed may have come from still further afield, since the bishop did not confirm in any other place between Cliffe on the Yorkshire bank of the Tees and Newcastle upon Tyne.

1732/33. Feb. 13. Mr. Thomas Errington of Croxdale, a popish priest.

Though probably descended from one of the numerous branches of the family in Northumberland, William Errington — to give him his right Christian name — was born in Yorkshire and went to the English College in Lisbon in 1684. Nine years later he was ordained priest, but remained two further years at the College. When he left Lisbon in 1695 he travelled to England slowly; the Report of the Clergy in August, 1697, says of him: 'Mr. Errington at Mr. Salvin's at Croxdale

newly come from Lisboe.' It was at Mr Salvin's that he spent the whole of his priestly life of 35 years in England.

Mr Arthur Storey, who was priest at Croxdale many years after this, left an account of his predecessors. Of Mr Errington he wrote:

> William Errington by authentic accounts which I have collected of his life was particularly zealous and indefatigable in paying weekly visits to the three villages under his care, preaching, exhorting, instructing and visiting the sick, etc.

Mr Errington by his will and private instructions left the whole residue of his estate to form a fund for the maintenance of a priest at Croxdale or in its neighbourhood, and Masses are still said for him in the chapel there. The following extract from his private instructions to his executor and trustees shows one of the difficulties of his visits to his flock. Amongst other effects left to his successors at Croxdale were

> My Oil Boxes, Pix and ye Purses it is in: and ye purses designed for ye same use, as also my Cane with a scruehead and two little silver boxes, ye one to be put into the fore-said Cane-head to smel to, when He visits the Sick; ye Other to carry in his Pocket with such proper ingredients in it to put in his mouth or nostrils as He shall find occasion.

His executor was his cousin, Michael Batmanson of Ushaw. Batmanson was tenant of one of the two farms which now comprise the Ushaw farm, and his name occurs on many of the old plans of the fields which surround the College. He was probably a descendant of Christopher Batmanson of Broomhall (between Broompark and Bearpark) who is mentioned in St Oswald's Register

> Aug. 5, 1605. Md. that Xpofer Batmanson of Bromehall within the parish of St. Oswald's nigh the City of Durham delivered his name and presented himself according to a Statute provided for confining of Recusants within the compass of five miles and chose for his abode Bromehall aforesaid the day and year above noted. Christofer Batmanson.

Christopher's wife Helen made the same statement eleven years later.

1741. Aug. 26. Mr. Anthony Jackson, a Popish Priest.

He was born in 1666, probably at Leake in Yorkshire, to Durham-born parents. He was ordained at Douai and went to England in 1701 and was mentioned in some connection with the rising of 1715.

[Anstruther, vol 3, p. 112.]

1741/42. Jan. 17. Mr. Robert Widdrington, a Popish Priest.

His exact place in the Widdrington family is unsolved, though Foley is almost certainly wrong in saying he was a brother of Rev. the Hon. Henry Widdrington,

SJ. Robert was born in Northumberland in 1660 and entered the Jesuit noviciate in 1679 under the name of Watson. He was probably working in England as early as 1685. The first trace we find of him is at Longhorsley in Northumberland where he left behind him Busenbaum's *Medulla Theologiae Moralis,* inscribed '*Ex Lib.* Rob. Widd. S.J. Horsley.' Though the book was printed in 1678, there is no indication when Mr Widdrington acquired it or when he left it at Longhorsley. The next news we have comes from the *Eyre Papers:* 'Alnwick was served at the beginning of this [i.e. eighteenth] century by a Rob. Widdrington, who resided at Widdrington Castle.' Owing to the participation of Lord Widdrington in the Rising of 1715, the Government confiscated the castle with other estates and sold it in 1720 for £57,100. The Jesuit must therefore have left before 1720. For the next three years Mr Widdrington was superior of the District, but it has not yet been discovered where he then lived; perhaps it was at Longhorsley. In 1725 he went to Biddlestone and remained there for eleven years. The Bishop of Durham, in his notes of a Confirmation tour through Northumberland about this time, says: '28 papists meet at Biddlestone about a mile from the Church at Mr. Selby's. Rob. Widdrington Priest.' In 1736 owing to old age and blindness the priest retired to Durham, where he died five years later at the age of 82.

[Foley *Records,*vols.V, passim; VIII, p. 842; *Ushaw Magazine* VII (1897) X (1900)]

1759. March 21. Mr. John Thornton a Popish Priest.

Unlike in the cases of so many priests buried in St Oswald's churchyard, Thornton was an alias, his real name being John le Hunt. He was born in Huntingdonshire in 1675, and became a Jesuit in 1693. On his arrival in England shortly after ordination in 1701 he was stationed immediately at Haggerston Castle in Northumberland, where he remained fifty years. Of his life a good deal is known because a large number of his letters have been preserved and a precis of them published. He hid his real profession by living as a confidential friend of the family and taking a great interest in hunting and racing, In his old age he retired to Ellingham, another seat of the Haggerston family, where he lived from 1753 to 1756. In the latter year he came to Durham where he died at the age of 84.

[Foley, *Records,* vol V, p. 652; 'Letters of a Jesuit Father in the Reign of George I', *Dublin Review,* April 1916.]

1763. March 19. Francis Warham.

It is not absolutely certain that this entry refers to a priest. In the *Eyre Papers* there is an entry, 'Rev. James Warham, Tudhoe, March 18, 1763.' Mr Storey, a later priest at Croxdale, says that Mr Warham died at Sunderland Bridge, and Mr Eyre added the date March 12*,* 1763. In the former reference the date agrees with this burial entry but the place does not, since at that time Tudhoe was in the Brancepeth parish. In the latter reference the date appears to be wrong — people

were in those days usually buried the day after they died — but the place is correct since Sunderland Bridge was in St Oswald's parish. The balance is in favour of Francis Warham and Rev. James Warham being the same person.

James Warham arrived at Douai in March, 1727, and was placed in Rudiments. Five years later he had finished Rhetoric and was sent to St Gregory's in Paris for higher studies:

> 1734. Mr. Warham upon full information of most inexcusable and dangerous faults was sent to England.
> 1735. Mr. Warham upon great proofs of amendment and strong recommendation was received back again and passed Master of Arts.
> 1739. Mr. James Warham being in his vacation and wanting health to perform his studies in proportion to the expenses necessary to maintaining him here was sent to England and soon after ordained Deacon and Priest by B[ishop] Williams in the North.

Mr Warham spent the whole of his life as a priest in the neighbourhood of Durham. He was probably at Croxdale from the time of his ordination (which must have taken place between the summer of 1739 and April, 1740, in which month Bishop Williams died) until 1746. Then he went to Tudhoe, where he spent the next six years. In 1752 he returned to Croxdale and remained there till about 1760 when he retired owing to ill-health. Mr Storey in his account of the Croxdale priests said that Mr Warham

> lived many years at Tudhoe and Croxdale successively. From many anecdotes of his private life I find he was remarkably charitable to the poor as also very attentive to all pastoral duties. His infirmities at last rendered him unfit for the pastoral charge. He retired from employment and died at Sunderland Bridge at Mr. John Norman's, Farmer, there.
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> [CRS Records vols. XIX, passim; XXVIII passim; UCM *Eyre Papers*]

1766. Aug. 18. Thos. Waterton (a papist supposed to be a Priest)

A Yorkshireman, Thomas Waterton was born in 1701 and entered the Society of Jesus at the age of 20. He came to Durham, probably about 1731, to take the place of Mr Tocketts who died in January that year. An undated Government Report of about the same time as that of his arrival in Durham gives the names of 102 ' Papists that go to Mr. Watterton's Meeting kept at Mrs. Ellots in Old Elvet Durham.' In his own report of the 1750 Jubilee he said, 'As to customers I reckon about two hundred and most of my own gaining'. It was a remarkable feat to double his congregation in the days when the number of Catholics in general was decreasing. Mr Waterton for many years rented a house in Bishop Auckland for a chapel at thirty shillings a year, and received two guineas from the common funds of the District for assisting there. Compared with many of the Jesuits who died in Durham, Mr Waterton was a young man – only 65.

[Foley, *Records,* vols. V passim, VIII 820; *Ushaw Magazine* 1900.]

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From this time the parish registers have not been consulted, but the inscriptions on the tombstones are quoted.

I.H.S. Revd. John Lodge died 3rd of November 1795 aged 74. R.I.P.

His father was a haberdasher in York and his mother came from Brompton on Swale where he was born in 1722. He was ordained in 1746 and taught at Douai until 1753. He went to the mission in Sheffield and was there until 1786 when he moved to Durham where he died.

[Anstruther, vol. 4, p.175]

Rev. Edward Walsh died Oct. 22nd 1822 aged 84. R.I.P.

Mr Walshe was an Irishman who joined the English Province of the Jesuits as a novice in 1756 at the age of 17. After ordination and taking his M.A. abroad, he went on a tour to Rome in 1771 and the following year arrived in Durham as assistant to Rev. Henry Brent, S.J. Shortly after the Suppression of the Jesuits in 1773 Mr Brent left and Mr Walshe remained in sole charge of the mission till his own death nearly fifty years later. Like his predecessors, for many years he rented a house for a chapel in Bishop Auckland, and his baptismal register shows the large area in the county he had to cover. In a local newspaper, filled with denunciations against those in favour of Catholic Emancipation, the obituary notice of Mr Walshe read:

> At his house in Old Elvet on Tuesday last aged 84 Rev. Edward Walsh, minister of that order of Roman Catholics called Jesuits. Mr Walsh has resided in Durham for a great number of years and was generally respected and esteemed.

Mr Walshe had not, however, renewed his vows in the Society at its Restoration in 1807. Of all the priests who lived in Durham the only portrait in St Cuthbert's presbytery is that of Mr Walshe.

[Foley *Records* vols. V, 169; VIII p. 810.]

Rev. Christopher Rose late of Hardwick near the Sea died April 20th, 1826 aged 85. R.I.P.

Like other Jesuits who died in Durham, Mr Rose never worked in the city but retired there in his old age. He was born in 1741, and having entered the Society in 1763 was ordained earlier than customary, as it was thought he was suffering from consumption. He arrived in England in 1770 and went to Hardwick, where he remained as chaplain to the Maire family and their tenants for 55 years. In 1825 the estates were sold to non-Catholics and Mr Rose had to leave the Hall, so he retired to Durham, which was the only Jesuit house left in the county. Rev. Thomas Slater, an alumnus of Ushaw, arrived at Hardwick in 1823 as assistant

to Mr Rose to arrange for the transfer of the mission to Hutton Henry, which took place the same year as Mr Rose left. Canon Slater, as he later became, died in 1884, so that these two priests between them served that mission 113 years — a record in the diocese.

[Foley, *Records* vol. VIII, p. 671]

Rev. George Witham died 1st of May 1829 age 79 R.I.P. also Mary Clementina sister of the above George Witham, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Witham who died 7th of May 1835 aged 82 years.

Thomas Witham, the father of these two persons, was a well-known doctor in Durham in the second half of the eighteenth century and came from a very famous Teesside Catholic family. His son, Rev. George Witham, was educated at Douai but ordained at St Omer about 1776. He was in Yorkshire from 1782 to 1790 and then became chaplain to the Countess of Shrewsbury at Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire. After her death in 1805 Mr Witham returned to his native city and lived with his sister, though during most of the time he also acted as chaplain to the Salvin family at Burnhall.

[G. Oliver, *Collectanea* (1857) p. 440.

The Very Rev. William Croskell, G.V. died January 19th, 1838, aged 70 years. Also on the same day died the Rev. James Wheeler M.A. aged 72. *Requiescant in pace.*

William Croskell, a Lancastrian, was born in 1767. He was a deacon at Douai in 1783 when he was arrested by the revolutionaries. He was liberated in 1795 and returned to England to be ordained in the Bar Convent, York, on 18 April 1795 together with John Lingard. He served in Yorkshire until he came to Durham in 1824.

James Wheeler, of Hampshire, was born in 1765 and was at Douai from 1776 until he was ‘dismissed at his own request’ in 1787 and moved to Paris where he was ordained two years later. He served in London after leaving France at the Revolution but he became involved in a lawsuit ‘for dissuading a person in the confessional from marrying’ and he felt obliged to leave the capital in 1805. He was at Clints Hall before moving to Burn Hall in 1830 and died there.

[Anstruther, vol. 4, pp. 79, 295-7.]

There were no further burials of priests in the parish churchyards of Durham. Mgr Fletcher and Provost Platt, both of whom were for many years in charge of St Cuthbert’s, left the city in their old age. Provost Consitt, who succeeded them, was buried in the Catholic cemetery at Redhills, like all the later priests who died in Durham.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A CATHOLIC FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

G. Loughran

I don't know if it was Miss Fitzgerald checking the Monday morning Mass register, ("Please Miss, eight o'clock Mass and Holy Communion," "Please Miss, I had no shoes," "Please Miss, I forgot") or Mam organising the six of us kids into our Sunday best, or the Redemptorist Peter Deery hollering, "If you don't go to Mass, you'll go to Hell!" The fact is I have always felt nervy if Sunday hoves into view and getting to Mass seems unlikely. And during my thirty years as a journalist abroad that was often the situation. Atheistic Russia and Islamic Arabia were places where the Catholic Church was not quite as catholic as one hoped. It wasn't that I believed Father Deery's apocalyptic Mission Week threats. I knew the good Lord wouldn't hold me responsible for obstacles I couldn't overcome. But the Sunday habit never went away, and I was not alone in this.

Those early Mass register days were at St George's primary school in my parish, west of Newcastle. There followed five years at St Cuthbert's Grammar School, which I left to become a junior reporter with *The Northern Echo* in West Hartlepool, Now I was a parishioner of St Joseph's, a big church with several priests and a canon in charge. Years of local reporting primed me for wider horizons and in 1960 I began my foreign career on a local paper in Africa. My parish church now was the massive Holy Family cathedral in Nairobi. However exotic the surroundings, I realised the Sunday pull was still there. And I was not alone in this.

St George, Bell's Close

It was sometime in the 1970s, when the city of Amman was a battlefield for Palestinian guerrillas, that one Sunday morning, with the gunfire temporarily in abeyance, I slipped out of the Intercontinental Hotel and into a pew in the only Catholic church I knew in the city, I think the only one there *was* in the city. Moments later, I felt a tap on the shoulder and I turned to see Hugh Aloysius Mulligan smiling his bucktooth smile. Hugh Mulligan was the star correspondent of the American news agency, the Associated Press, head-on competitor with my own American news agency, United Press International. That there was an element of competitive triumph in Hugh's smile ("You

thought you'd scooped me!") was undeniable, but the truth was that Hugh, like me, saw Sunday Mass as a spiritual as well as a logistical challenge. His newsroom colleagues said Mulligan always found a way to mention the Catholic Church in any story he wrote, though he must have been pushed to do so when assigned to spend a weekend in a Pennsylvanian nudist colony. Never short of an arresting phrase, Hugh described his hostess as "5ft 2in in any direction and barefoot all the way up to her Harlequin sunglasses." A New York-born Irish-American (his brother was the city's deputy fire chief), Hugh had studied for the priesthood, but reporting and writing were his strengths and he lost count of the countries he covered. He once confided in me that the first thing he did when arriving on a story was to contact the local priest, since he always knew what was going on. This was something I already knew.

On a bum-numbing, 415-mile drive from Kampala to Nairobi, I came across Fr. Hebdenstall from Blackburn, Lancashire, who served out his vocation in a uniquely practical way. He had been kicked out of Uganda by Idi Amin and settled over the border in Western Kenya, where he built a church and a house. It was something he was good at and he became a sort of village clerk of works, putting up houses for needy parishioners, checking invoices, arguing with cheating suppliers about costs and quality. And because he was the only one with a car, he doubled as a twenty-four-hour ambulance service. Who is to say his life's work was any less worthy than those of his confreres in cathedrals, monasteries and seminaries?

It was usually easy to get to Mass in Africa, where people seem to have an innate sense of the spiritual. Sunday mornings in any village will see matriarchs dressed, not to the nines but to the nineties, with vast hats and sometimes veils, huge coloured frocks swaying as they pick their way carefully along the red earth paths to church. Children following in a line, all wearing shoes, an unmistakeable sign that it is Sunday. If everyone is carrying a Bible, you know they are heading to the nearest Pentecostal church, whose rafters will soon be raised to the sound of hymns and drums. It might be the Redeemed Gospel Church or the Lighthouse Pulpit or Jesus is Alive Ministry or the Hallelujah Mission or the Raise the Roof Brotherhood. Self proclaimed pastors start their own churches and call them what they wish. One rickety edifice I drove past proclaimed itself The House of the Rod. It took a colleague to remind me that Kenya's Kikuyu people have trouble with R's and L's, so it was most likely The House of the Lord, rather than an establishment of, well, a different sort.

Long-established Catholic parishes usually have big, stone-built churches and, at least in my time, they had mostly white missionary priests. The Holy Ghost Fathers operated in Kenya, the White Fathers in Tanzania and the Jesuits in Zimbabwe. There was an irksome element to this. A lady in the Holy Family Cathedral, Nairobi asked me to hear her confession, assuming since I was white that I must be a priest. And in a crowded up-country church, a middle-aged

African lady offered me her seat, presumably thinking the same. But whatever these encounters might suggest about lingering colonialism, most Masses were black African all the way through. Purple-robed choirs danced their way to the altar, literally danced, women ululated in that eerie way and priests preached for a couple of hours, if that's how they felt. Sometimes, as a white man, a rare sight in an up-country church, I would be invited to address the faithful. Usually, I would stumble through *Mabibi na mabwana, nina furaha kuwa hapa na wewe leo* ("Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to be here with you today") before retreating into English. It did not escape me that "Ladies and gentlemen" must have sounded strange to churchgoers used to "My dear brethren," but they nodded and laughed at my fractured Kiswahili and invariably gave me a generous, rhythmic ovation. Whatever the Latinists might think, it made me feel truly part of our amazing Church.

If there is one part of the world where *everybody* believes in God it is the Middle East, and as we know, this is not always a recipe for perfect peace. The editorial staff in my Beirut bureau consisted of an Egyptian Copt, a Maronite Christian, a Lebanese Armenian, a Palestinian Muslim and me. Sometimes listening to their passionate theological conversations reminded me of that famous scene when Eric Morecambe is accused of playing the wrong notes in Grieg's Piano Concerto. His response: "I am playing all the right notes, but not necessarily in the right order." In Beirut, everybody seemed to be heading towards the same destination but never by the same route.

Abdul was a good Muslim who quietly broke most of Islam's more pernickety rules but demonstrated the depths of his belief when he told me one day that his new European girlfriend was an atheist. "Can you believe it!" he said, laughing, incredulously. "She doesn't believe in God!" He wore exactly the expression that greets you in Britain today if you tell someone you believe in God. Abdul was no simple peasant, he had a degree from the American University of Beirut, but his thinking did not admit of a world without God. The atheist lady became his wife, a lovely person though I doubt if she ever became a believer, and they had a fine family. As for Abdul, he died too soon, but managed to reach the fifth Pillar of Islam, the pilgrimage to Mecca, before he did so. I was happy to hear this. At his insistence, I had looked up the Five Pillars long ago and often thought how close they were to our customary disciplines: 1. Make a profession of faith. 2. Pray five times a day. 3. Give alms. 4. Fast during the month of Ramadhan. 5. Visit Mecca. Substitute Lent and Jerusalem for the latter two and I think I qualify.

From the nations of belief to the land of the godless. Moscow under Communist rule in 1974 had only one Roman Catholic church, Saint Louis of France, about twenty minutes from Red Square and uncomfortably close to the Lubyanka prison and KGB headquarters. Sunday Mass was available there but few westerners attended, the belief being that it was training territory for police

watchers. Instead, we gathered at the American Embassy. In a lunch room in the diplomatic compound, Mass was celebrated on Sunday mornings by the lone American priest permitted by the Soviets. The congregation was composed mainly of diplomats, business people and journalists from a dozen nations and things were less formal than some were used to. Once, as Mass ended, the Americans burst into *Happy Birthday To You.* An astonished French lady near me hissed, *"Ce qui se passe?"* What's going on? Her husband hissed back that it was "the feast of the sacristan." Not unlike Fr Hebdenstall's, the chaplain's was a unique vocation. The only priest in the Latin tradition, he was forbidden to wear a collar, restricted, as we all were, within a twenty-five-mile travel zone. Once, on a rare train journey to what then was Leningrad, he encountered a young woman Communist who spent most of the journey sneering at religion. Her main thrust seemed to be that the letters of God also spelled dog. There was nothing our priest could do. That they had been ticketed in the same compartment was no accident. It was one of the KGB's meaner tricks.

Now a confession. Moscow has one of the most famous churches in the world, St Basil's on Red Square, and I never set foot in it. I hear it has occasional Orthodox services these days, but in my time it was a museum to atheism and I was disinclined to support an odious regime by handing over even a few kopecks for a church's desecration. What did tempt me into Russian Orthodox churches was the treasury of sacred song, from the days of the Byzantine empire to Gretchaninov, Tchaikovsky, Chesnokov, Rachmaninov and company, so gorgeously rendered by those black-robed, bearded priests in their stove-pipe hats. There is a story that Rachmaninov was playing through the score of his marvellous Vespers, the All-Night Vigil, before its first production. The fifth part of the Vigil, the Song of Simeon, takes the basses softly and slowly, down and down to the very lowest B flat. The choirmaster shook his head. "Where on earth are we to find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas. "But", recalled Rachmaninov, "He did find them. I know the voices of my countrymen."

Being reassigned from Moscow to New York City in 1976 should have been a jolt, but the truth is I felt immediately at home. Maybe the movies had programmed me to expect yellow cabs and skyscrapers and steam billowing up from the streets. But religion was a factor there, too. Catholics in New York were comfortably the largest religious denomination; people spoke easily of "St Pat's" cathedral and "the Cardinal," and kids making their first communion, and when several of our colleagues walked into the office one day with ash on their foreheads, nobody made anything of it. It was nice to be in the majority for a change. I took a flat at 124 Thompson Street in Little Italy just in time to celebrate their great feast of San Gennaro, with the saint's statue making its wobbly way through the streets to Mass, then a day-long food fest and celebration. Everybody seemed to be a second or third generation Neapolitan

and certainly this was Mafia territory. Indeed, I discovered that in the late 1930s, crime boss Vito Genovese fancied a certain lady who unfortunately was married. Unfortunate for her husband, that is. Genovese had him strangled on the roof of 124 Thompson Street. New York City was also heavily Jewish – more Jews than in Jerusalem, as everybody kept reminding me – so Passover seders, weddings and bar mitzvahs kept religion to the fore.

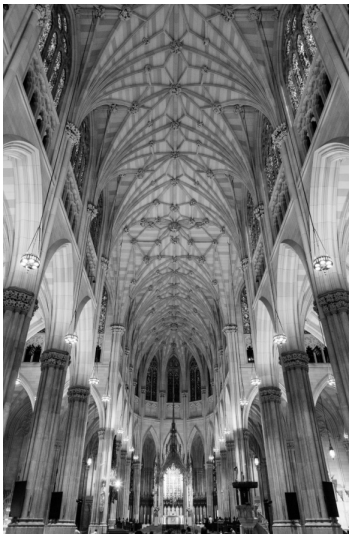
After a year in Manhattan, I crossed the East River to Brooklyn and joined the parish of St Charles Borromeo, notable for the large fenced lot where the clergy parked their automobiles. I seem to remember a Stutz, a Pontiac and a Ford Pinto and there were others. These vast machines did not go unremarked. "See their cars," I heard a parishioner grunt one day in best Brooklynese. "They should be giving us money, not us giving them." The best thing about St Charles was the pastor emeritus, Monsignor Charles Diviney, who was one of the three best preachers I ever heard. The others were a young Redemptorist (pace Fr Deery) in Luxembourg, and Canon Cecil W. Phillips of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle when he could bring himself to talk about something other than money. Three fine preachers in a lifetime of church-going! Not a great return, is it?

Running the international desk for a world wire service in New York or a bureau in Paris or Moscow is certainly a form of foreign reporting, but it's not the sharp end. That comes when you find yourself fearful and helpless, perhaps at the mercy of men with guns and hair-trigger tempers, in situations beyond your control. For instance: piloting a left-hand-drive car across blacked-out, smoking Rwanda with an armed escort's rifle in your ribs; caught between Egyptian rockets and Israeli artillery in the Sinai desert; walking off a plane in Santiago, Chile to hear the Tannoy announce, "Senor Loogran report immediately to Security;" walking from a plane in Yemen into the embrace of four armed soldiers; dodging behind the breakfast room furniture when my hotel came under fire. These are what I call "Lord, please get me out of this" situations. Journalists are not given to discussing the depths of their feelings but I suspect they would probably acknowledge the truth of that old saw about there being no atheists in fox holes.

For myself, Amman, Jordan, where Hugh Mulligan and I once prayed our individual prayers, proved the sharpest of sharp ends. For a week, the city had been a battleground between Palestinian guerrillas and King Hussein's army. At one point, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine seized control of the Intercontinental Hotel, taking the guests hostages. By one of those hideous misunderstandings, actually an unwarranted assumption by a nervy guerrilla leader, I was taken to be a spy for the king. I learned this when an Arab photographer talked to one of our captors and then told me, I was next. "Next?" I said, "Next for what?" "You know," he replied, and made an unmistakeable throat-slitting gesture like they do on the movies. People have often asked me

how it felt to be under a sentence of death. Well, certainly, it was the ultimate "Lord, get me out of this" situation and the prayers that went up were as numerous and sincere as I was ever to produce. And when early the next morning, a gunman hammered at my bedroom door and shouted "Out, out," I wondered if this was to be the most dramatic foreign story I would never write. But then down the corridor the *Daily Express* guy called, "It's all right, Gerry, it's all of us." And when we assembled in the lobby, we were told by Dr. George Habbash, the PFLP chief and a Christian, that an accommodation had been achieved with the king and we were free to go. I don't think I heard too much more of Dr Habbash's speech, I was too busy sending up prayers of thanksgiving. Did the good Lord intervene and get me out of it, or was it just that power politics worked in my favour? One day I'll know.

Holy Family, Nairobi



St Patrick, New York

St Louis, Moscow

ROBERT SOUTHWELL AND *A SHORT RULE OF GOOD LIFE*

Alastair Fraser

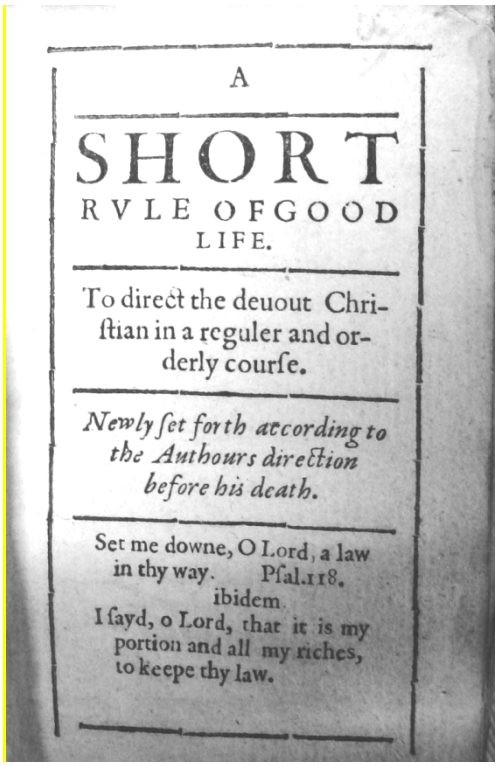
One particularly significant work among the volumes of ascetics and guides to a spiritual life at Ushaw is Robert Southwell's *A short rule of good life*, probably printed secretly in London in about 1597 (shelfmark IV.B.12.18). Only one other fragmentary copy of this edition is known.

Southwell (1561-1595) was the son of Richard Southwell, a Norfolk gentleman. He became a Jesuit, and entered England secretly with his Jesuit friend Henry Garnet in 1586. As confessor to Anne Howard, Countess of Arundel and Surrey he wrote *A short rule of good life* which exists in a number of manuscript copies. Southwell eluded the authorities until June 1592, when he was captured by the notorious priest hunter Richard Topcliffe; there are two confiscated Catholic books in the Ushaw collections which bear Topcliffe's hostile annotations.

Whilst Southwell was suffering at Topcliffe's hands, Garnet gathered up his papers including many of his poems, and two selections of these, carefully edited to avoid overt Catholic references, were openly published in 1595. Amongst the papers was a revised version of *A short rule of good life*. Garnet printed this, probably in London, on a secret press in 1596 or 1597. The text consists of *A short rule ...* which contains general directions on how to lead a good life. The second part is *An epistle of a religious priest unto his father ... To the worshipful his very good father, R. S. his dutifull sonne R. S. wisheth all happines.* Southwell's father Richard had become reconciled to the Church of England, although it appears that he returned to his old faith and died a Catholic. This part has its own pagination and signatures but shares an ornament with the first part suggesting that it was printed at the same time and place. It seems to have more mistakes than the first part and one wonders if it was set in a hurry. Somebody has minutely corrected the errors in the first seven pages for some reason. We do not know why the work in its first edition should have been so thoroughly suppressed. Another, legal edition was entered in the Stationers' register in 1598 to John Wolfe; other editions were published secretly in England and also in Saint Omer and Douai in the early seventeenth century.

The early history of the Ushaw copy is unknown. There are numerous brief manuscript annotations in the text and on the back endpapers, apparently in the neat hand of Henry (or Harfield) Pretty, a Roman Catholic priest. Pretty entered Douai in June 1612 so it is likely he was born in the 1590s; he was still alive in 1661. Most of his books date from the 1590s to 1620, with a few from the 1650s. He was the uncle of another priest, Francis Fitter (1620-1710), and probably left his books to Fitter. Thirty four of Pretty's books have so far been identified during the cataloguing project and a further twenty are known to have been owned by Fitter. An inscription in Ushaw XIX.F.10.14 in the hand of

Edward Dicconson (1670-1752) records that he purchased the book and the remainder of Francis Fitter's library from his executor Mrs Mary Cross of Oulton in Staffordshire. Significantly six of Pretty's books bear annotations or bookplates of Edward Dicconson, thus confirming the path of ownership. Jan Rhodes suggested in her history of the College Library that Thomas Eyre probably acquired Dicconson's library, and one book of Eyre's (Ushaw XIX.E.10.25) tantalisingly has a very faded inscription on the title page which may be Pretty's signature. A correction on the errata leaf certainly looks like Pretty's hand. Through the work being done on the cataloguing of the Ushaw books, we can at least begin to understand the history of this unique item and its place in the libraries of later owners.



A

SHORT

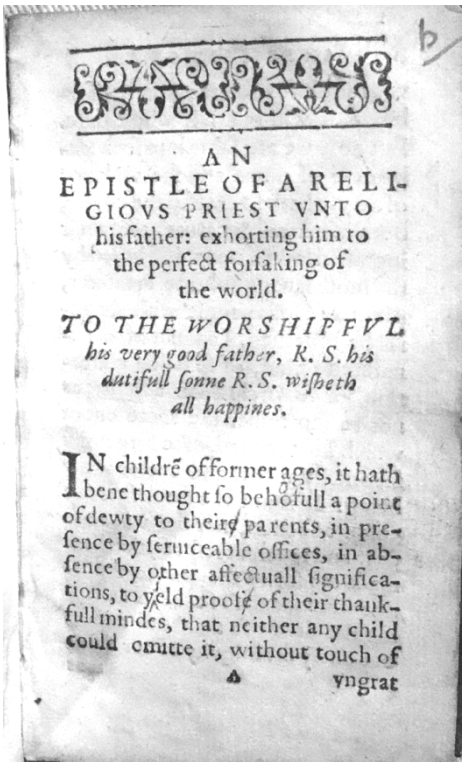
RVLE OFGOOD LIFE.

To direct the deuout Christian in a reguler and orderly course.

Newly set forth according to the Authours direction before his death.

Set me downe, O Lord, a law in thy way. Psal.118. ibidem

I sayd, o Lord, that it is my portion and all my riches, to keepe thy law.



AN EPISTLE OF A RELIGIOVS PRIEST VNTO his father: exhorting him to the perfect forsaking of the world.

TO THE WORSHIPFVL his very good father, R. S. his dutifull sonne R. S. wisheth all happines.

IN childrē of former ages, it hath bene thought so behōfull a point of dewty to their parents, in presence by seruiceable offices, in absence by other affectuall significations, to yeld proofe of their thankfull mindes, that neither any child could omitte it, without touch of

A vngrat

Left:The title page of *A short rule of good life* with no imprint or clues to its origin.

Right: Page 1 of *An epistle of a religious priest* ... Note the signature **A** at the foot of the page and the manuscript corrections, perhaps for resetting the text for a new edition.

(Originally published in the Friends of Palace Green Library *Newsletter* Issue7, Spring 2017.)

RETURN TO DOUAI IN 1918

D. Milburn

The letter reproduced below was almost the last of a number of reports sent by devoted Ushaw alumni to the college President, Mgr. Brown, from some of the main war zones (including air and sea) of the 1914-18 war. It comes from the hand of one of our diocesan priests, the Revd John Thompson, about whom I give some details culled from *Northern Catholic Calendar*. After his ordination at Ushaw in April 1915 he went to Stockton St. Cuthbert's where in March of that year he joined the army as a chaplain until 1918. He then went back to Stockton (Spring Street), and served thereafter at St. Cuthbert's, Durham, 1921, St. Mary's Cathedral, 1922, Gosforth, 1927, Lowick, 1930, Port Clarence, 1937, and finally at The Brooms, 1938, where he died in 1949.

It can be truly said that the story of Ushaw College (and its slightly older sister St. Edmund's, Ware) begins not in the English countryside at the end of the eighteenth century but in a foreign land over two hundred years earlier. The Lancashire priest and ex-Oxford don William Allen (later Cardinal) probably picked up the idea for a house of studies for exiled English Catholics during his time in Leuven (Louvain), in modern Belgium, home of an internationally renowned university to which he like many others migrated at the accession of Queen Elizabeth I. However the interruption of life there by constant warfare led him to begin his enterprise further south in the town of Douai blessed with a new university dedicated to meeting head-on the new Protestant theology sweeping across western Europe.

As the Church's counter-attack against Protestantism gathered pace, the university itself prompted an ever increasing number of religious institutions to open houses in Douai which already boasted a number of medieval foundations, so much so that from a distance it reminded the English of the spires of Oxford. Some British exiles were already active there; in one particular year a Welsh-man held the office of Chancellor. What better place than this for Allen's enterprise? He rented a house near the school of theology and it opened with six students on 29 September 1568. After initial set-backs, this insignificant house of studies grew in size as it adapted to meet the more realistic needs of the time. As the first such college to be established in Europe, the English College, Douai, led the field in training remarkable scholars, zealous bishops, hundreds of priests and laymen, eventually becoming a pivotal element of English Catholic life at home and abroad, reviving the flagging fortunes of the small persecuted community in England and enriching the Church with over one hundred and fifty martyrs.

However, the town's brutal decline beginning with the French Revolution and continuing throughout the nineteenth century, culminating with the massive destruction of two World Wars left it as just another characterless industrial

eyesore, not really worth a visit. That was my reaction when I and other representatives went for the fourth centenary of the English College in 1968. Since then, however, it has gradually rediscovered itself. Its three-hundred-year-old English presence should attract more of us. Next year we celebrate the 450th anniversary of the college.

A late arrival at the Western Front, Padre Thompson quickly sensed how exhausted and dispirited the troops were, a mirror image of the German combatants, yet willing to make a final push which would bring an end to the sheer monotony of trench warfare. In the renewed fighting he suffered an unspecified wound but recovered in time to join his brigade as it rested near Douai on its way home after the November Armistice. After a day sight-seeing in the town he sat down to let his *alma mater* know of this stroke of luck. The letter arrived in time to be printed in the December issue of the *Ushaw Magazine.*

'Pietas' alone prompted a visit to such a war-scarred area. Most of the inhabitants had fled. A complete stranger to the town, just as, it seems, were the two refugees he met, Padre Thompson misdirected them to what he took to be Allen's first property. It had been an English property, but in fact was the Benedictine monastery and college of St Gregory's founded in 1605. Closed by the revolutionaries in 1793 its monks had moved to England, ultimately settling at Downside Abbey. After 1815 the English Benedictines of St Edmund's in Paris moved into the empty premises at Douai, to be in turn forced out by the bitterly anticlerical Government in 1903. This community also sought refuge in England, building Douai Abbey near Reading, their French premises being opened as a state school, which today is known as the Lycee Corot: hence Fr Thompson's jibe about the 'jeunes filles'.

The chapel mentioned by him is by Pugin, 1840. Long disused, it is cared for by the Association of William Allen, a group of some sixty Douatians formed to keep alive interest in Douai's long English connections. Allen's house no longer exists. In 1968 I was shown its site on the corner of the Rue des Ecoles (referring to the former university theological faculty).

What Padre Thompson describes as the 'old college' is the one we know from paintings and photographs, namely the seventeenth-century property, radically updated by President Robert Witham a hundred years later, the handsomest building in the town. In 1918 it still retained some of its grandeur despite neglect by successive tenants, the worst of them military – German as well as French. It is likely that Padre Thompson was the last alumnus of Ushaw to visit this building. Post-war reconstruction led to its demolition in 1926-7 principally because its site prevented direct access to the town's busy railway station. But it did not disappear without causing a flutter of excitement if not alarm. For in the course of the excavations the dismantlers stumbled across the

body of St John Southworth, student, priest and missioner in England who was hung, drawn and quartered at Tyburn on 28 June 1654, the last of Douai Martyrs. Anxious to save it, his friends secretly took it to Douai, where it was venerated publicly until 1793 when it was hidden for safe keeping. It is now enshrined in Westminster Cathedral.

*

Revd J. Thompson, C.F. to Mgr W.H. Brown

Well, I am still alive and feeling all the better for my experiences out here.

You will be pleased to know that I visited D_____ this morning. I did hope at one time that my brigade would be the first to enter the town. Unfortunately we passed to the north of it. However, I promised myself that on the earliest opportunity I would visit the ancient town. So this morning I made my first visit. I got on a lorry which, fortunately, took me right into the town.

You can imagine my feelings as I approached. I could see the huge dome of St Pierre and the tower of Notre Dame; and these were my thoughts on catching the first glimpse of D____. There is the town of D____, there somewhere is the mother house of Ushaw, and along this road the D____ martyrs have as boys taken their college walks.

On arriving I went straight to the college, from which the community was a few years ago expelled by the French Government. I entered by the garden entrance, and the first thing that struck me was the name over the door, 'Collège des Jeunes Filles.' Then I noticed a huge hole in the garden wall, which had been hit by a shell or bomb. In the enclosure itself was a bomb hole quite near the wing, which I believe was built by Mr. Granville Ward. The concussion from this bomb has broken all the windows of the college.

I strolled all round, in and out of every room almost. The Boche had used it as a hospital, for there was a huge red cross on the roof, and numberless bandages were lying about, to say nothing of countless notices in German, which were all hospital notices. There was nothing at all left in most rooms, except perhaps a few bandages, and upstairs a heap of fine wood shavings which the Hun used for bedding. In one or two of the rooms there were some German pictures plastered on the wall. The picture of Hindenburg seemed to be a favourite. I took one of these as a souvenir. I will enclose it in this letter. In a room on the topmost storey a few of the old study desks were stored away. I looked to see if any of the old boys had carved their names thereon. As you used to say, and no doubt still say of such boys, 'Nomina

stultorum ubique reperiuntur.' I did not find any such names. Instead I saw 'Gott strafe England' written on the wall there. No doubt some Hunnish lover of England had thereby relieved his feelings. In one of the dormitories there was quite a heap of German books on the floor. I picked up one or two small ones. I am enclosing two of the books. One is the *Gospel of St. Matthew,* by M. Luther, the other the *Sufferings of Jesus,* I think. The dormitory was used, I think, as a convalescents' room. The books left behind were mostly religious ones.

The place of interest was the church, and a beautiful church it is. Taking everything into consideration, it has not suffered very heavily. Fortunately it had not been hit directly either by bomb or shell. However, all its windows except one were 'napoo,' and the one which escaped had several shrapnel holes in it. This window was the one on the Epistle side of the altar. The windows had been broken by concussion, for a bomb had dropped quite close to the front door of the college, and splinters from it had scarred the walls not only of the College proper, but also of the Church as well. A shell or bomb had made a gaping hole in the roof of what I take to be the front of the College. This hole is quite near the Church; in fact, only about four windows from the end nearest the Church. The concussion of this shell or bomb no doubt would finish the work of destruction within the Church. As I remarked above, the windows of the Church fared the worst. There were, however, quite a number of shrapnel holes in the woodwork, mostly in the seats and benches. The door of the Church had lost a panel. But beyond the broken windows and these minor damages the Church has escaped. All the beautiful statues, as far as I could see, are untouched. I found a piece of shrapnel on the altar steps, which I immediately took as a souvenir. But I could not find any shrapnel holes in the altar itself, nor on the sanctuary. The enemy had appropriated the candlesticks and the crucifix. In the place of the crucifix was a geranium still in flower. On the credence table there was a heap of bandages, made of paper. Whether he had actually used the Church for patients I could not say. He would, however, not have hesitated to do so had it been to his purpose, for quite a number of the churches in this part of the line have been used as hospitals. In fact, the old Carthusian Church next to the College was used as a stable. I myself went into it, and saw the stalls and the dung. The side chapels, too, were all used as stables.

After I had rambled through the whole of the College, I went to see the old, old College, which really was of more interest to me. I found

it after asking one or two refugees, for all the natives of D____ have been taken away by the Boche.

The old place has not suffered except for broken windows. Bombs have evidently fallen all round it. The first place I went into was the old Church. In the lower portion a fire engine with all its appurtenances was housed. Mr Boche had taken care to destroy the engine before he left. He had cut through the spokes of the wheels and perforated the body of the engine.

The prisoners had evidently been kept there, for the white-washed wall was full of names of British soldiers, with the date and place of capture. The upper portion of the old Church, divided from the lower by a wooden floor, had been used by the Germans as a tailor's and bootmaker's shop, for evidences of both trades were scattered all about. I secured two German buttons - more souvenirs. After the Church I wandered all round the College from top to bottom, in and out of the rooms and through all the narrow corridors. There is little to write about the old place. It is simply a barracks now. The rooms are occupied by soldiers, and bear every evidence of such. The French as the soldiers would say, had made a 'pucker' barracks of it. The Germans used it for the same purpose evidently. In some of the rooms there are still German pictures hanging up. In one room I went into, most probably in the old days a professor's room for it faced the front, I saw quite a number of such pictures and sketches hanging up. I took one of the prints down - yet another souvenir, for it has one advantage; it has touched the old walls.

The oak stairs are still doing duty, and bear strong evidence of their age. The walls seem as strong and solid as ever they were, but the coats of arms (or whatever they were), worked in stone, adorning the main quadrangle, are wearing away, and show faint evidences of their former beauty.

On the whole D____ is not badly knocked about. Most of the damage has been wrought by bombs. Here and there houses have been laid flat, and windows are conspicuous by their absence. But taking everything into consideration, I would not say that the town had been very much injured. It is, of course, more like a city of the dead than anything else. Practically every house is tenantless. The Boche took away everyone with him. There are here and there a few refugees who have come from the battle zone into safer quarters. Every house is furnished, their owners having been forced to leave everything behind them.

Practically every house has this notice: ‘Considered safe. R E Booby Trappers,’ written in chalk on the door.

The magnificent Church of St. Pierre has been hit by a small bomb or shell. A small hole has been made in the roof on the Gospel side of the nave. The damage does not appear to be very extensive. Mr. Hun has taken away the grand statue of St. Peter, and all the candlesticks, bells, etc. He had also collected together all the pipes from the magnificent organ, and vestments and banners ready to carry away. They lie now in a heap by the main door. He had evidently not had time to carry them off. He reverenced nothing, and stopped at nothing. It makes one’s heart bleed to see how he has treated some of the churches in these parts.

You must excuse this long ramble, but I thought you might be interested to know how D____ has fared. No doubt you will have heard from other Ushavians who have had the fortune to see D____ since the Hun left.

You must excuse my not writing to you before. I trust this long letter makes amends.

Douai in 1918

REVIEWS

P.F. Lupton, *Rowland Broomhead 1751-1820: Apostle of the North,* Gracewing 2015

It is encouraging that against the grain of academic fashion for methodology, structuralism, post-modernism and so on, the ordinary reader still has a hearty appetite for autobiography, biography, collected letters and other well-sourced accounts of lives and events without tedious theorising, and this book certainly satisfies that demand.

'The Poor Man's Friend', 'Good Father Broomhead', is principally remembered for his important role in the history of Catholicism in Manchester, and his involvement in the secular social institutions of the town but, as he rose in clerical seniority, he also became influential in the wider concerns of the English Catholics in the later eighteenth century during the period of Catholic Relief and the long battle for Catholic Emancipation (which he did not live to celebrate). One of the major developments at that time which will be of particular interest to readers of this journal is the establishment of Crook Hall in 1794 and, almost fifteen years later, Ushaw College as the replacement for the English College at Douai. Lupton provides a lengthy and detailed discussion of the ecclesiastical politics involved, quoting extensively from the letters and papers of the vicars apostolic and the clergy. Few priests, let alone the higher clergy, are treated to a biography of almost four hundred pages, but Broomhead deserves his for his wide-ranging contributions to English Catholicism at a difficult time as well as for his charitable work for all the people of Manchester.

L. Gooch

*

A. Spencer, P. Pinsent & E. Shackle, (eds.) *Tales out of School, Recollections of Ex-Convent-School Girls*, 2016 (ISBN 978-1-905270-74-3)

The background to this book is a letter written by its Managing Editor Anthony Spencer to *The Tablet*, published on 18 February 2012, inviting lay women (non-Catholics as well as Catholics) educated wholly or partly in convent schools, to send him personal accounts of their experiences as schoolgirls. As a result, forty accounts are recorded in the book.

Before launching into individual stories, readers would be well advised to read the excellent Introduction by Pat Pinsent, Literary Editor, who is one of the convent educated schoolgirls. She pulls together many of the elements mentioned by the writers in order to create a picture that readers can identify with, especially those who benefited from this kind of education. In general, the accounts reinforce the common impressions that we have of convent schools, either through experience or by reputation. Religious teaching formed the framework for life; art subjects were taught more than the sciences; sex education was just about non-existent. In these instances the teachers were firm but not too strict as regards discipline, and showed kindness especially to girls experiencing family or personal difficulties. There is a strong

feeling of gratitude to the nuns not only for providing a sound education but also for their dedication, and care. Lifelong friendships began at school. There is no feeling that girls were indoctrinated into a religious belief that they never questioned but rather that they spoke out in criticism of the Catholic Church, whilst still practising their faith.

The experiences are presented roughly in chronological order in two sections. In Section One we read about those born before 1938. During this period statements create a picture of traditional Catholicism, with a strong emphasis on the teaching of doctrine in word and deed by nuns who devoutly believed it. Section Two covers those born from 1938. Following the 1944 Education Act, many more girls were able to attend convent schools, some of which became Direct Grant Grammar Schools, as a result of getting through the 11+ scholarship examination. They represented a greater social mix with free Grammar School education for thousands of girls from a working class backgrounds Religious Education was very much affected by the Second Vatican Council in the sixties, generating a more positive attitude towards ecumenism.

Each set of recollections has a title, which gives a flavour of the memories described: ‘An ordered but benevolent regime’; ‘The roots of faith’; ‘An Irish girl in an English school’; ‘The excitement of being at school during the Vatican Council’. The accounts are enjoyable, well written, full of details about daily life: lessons punctuated with prayers, visits to chapel, insistence on good behaviour, courteous manners and the importance of sound study habits. Such reminiscences will certainly awaken memories and comparisons in readers who shared the same experience. The names of nuns and numerous pen portraits, mainly complimentary, of individuals who made a great impression on them, are drawn, bringing these characters back to life. The reader can select the recollections in any order. Inevitably there is a lot of repetition, but each person has her own story and it is very interesting to learn how they have lived their lives since leaving school and the evaluation of the influence being convent educated has had on them. In general, they write with profound appreciation and warm affection, remembering the dedicated nuns and lay staff who equipped them for religious faith and with the skills to sustain them through life.

The title of the book gives no hint of the final sections where there is some analysis of the sociological implications of the information. Emma Shackle writes as one who has researched the experiences of children who attended boarding schools and has also studied how students express their thoughts either as ‘visualisers’ or ‘verbalisers’. There are very informative Selective Index Tables. There is a profile of every writer and a list of the twenty-one religious orders represented.

The Convent School is now thing of the past. In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, religious orders were able to focus attention on activities not related to education. There has been a steady decline in recruitment as committed Catholic women find fulfilment in careers which do not involve taking vows. Many former convent schools continue as very fine schools without nuns on the teaching staff.

The contributions from the writers express the memories of girls who were generally compliant and their recollections are happy. Spencer is seeking to get a better balance and would like to hear from pupils who have lapsed or since rejected Catholicism, and who are also willing to write an honest account of what may not have been a positive educational experience. None of us can have missed the repeated distressing tales in the media in recent years concerning unacceptable practices prevalent in certain Catholic institutions. It is therefore gratifying to read about religious orders who worked tirelessly through generations to foster the spiritual, moral , intellectual, physical, affective and imaginative development of their pupils, introducing them to as wide a range of experience and skills as would give them confidence to play an active and responsible role in society, as well as fitting them for heaven.

Margaret Henderson

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C.P. Johnson, OSB, *Vatican II As I saw It,* St Michael's Abbey Press, 2015

The Second Vatican Council, 1959-1965, the most important event in the life of the Church since the Council of Trent, quite apart from its continuing pastoral and theological importance, has now become an historical subject, and there is a growing number of studies and personal accounts of the Council's proceedings. This is a particularly fine example of a scholarly but accessible treatment by a witty and perceptive participant, the Sunderland-born Mgr Lawrence McReavy, canonist professor of Ushaw College', who was appointed by the pope to contribute to the preliminary work and then to participate as a *peritus* (or expert adviser) to the Council Fathers.

After excellent general and biographical introductory chapters, McReavy's letters from Rome to the President of Ushaw, Mgr Paul Grant, (intended to be shared with the staff of the college) describing the progress of the Council are presented. His journal, which follows, comprises brief notes of the speeches made by the Fathers in each of the General Congregations. The various lectures he delivered in England about the Council are reprinted. Then come the summaries of Council documents, discussions and 'position papers' which he prepared for the English bishops (and they found him an invaluable consultant). Finally, there is a diary of his day-to-day life during the Council which do not appear in his letters or journal.

McReavy was an assiduous Councilman and worked hard but on several occasions he recorded both his mental and physical exhaustion. Whenever he had the opportunity to relax he took up his principal hobby of watercolour painting and did several pictures of Roman scenes. He found relief from his occasional weariness and the boredom of the debates in the (coffee) bars set up in St Peter's: Bar-Jonah, Bar-Abbas or Bar Sinister though he does not mention the Bar-Nun, belatedly instituted for the few women in attendance. It was during those intervals that he enjoyed the gossip and current witticisms: Cardinal Heenan telling the reforming Cardinal Suenens of a Reverend Mother in England who had only one desire: the head of

Suenens in a dish; and Suenens confiding to Heenan the news that at the end of the Council the highly conservative Cardinal Ottaviani would be baptised into the new Catholic Church and that Cardinal Bea, promoter of closer relations with the Jews, was to be circumcised. In his last letter he wrote: 'I used to think that I should be glad when the Council was over and I could say goodbye to Rome. I am not so sure now.'

When McReavy died in February 1990 the then President of Ushaw observed that 'the crowning experience of his life and work was the Second Vatican Council'. It had convened 'when he was at the height of his powers just 60, with his confidence and expertise in full flood'. This well-presented and comprehensive account does full justice to those endeavours and is certain to become an important primary resource for all historians of the Council. On his return to Durham McReavy became a fervent advocate for the Council and took every opportunity to explain its teachings and its aims for renewal. Doubtless, however, he would be disappointed that despite his own best efforts it has yet to be fully implemented over fifty years on. As Pope Francis has said we must ask ourselves, 'have we done everything the Holy Spirit was asking us to do during the Council.'

L. Gooch

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S. James, *George Errington and Roman Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century England,* OUP 2016

The name Errington has a distinguished pedigree in Northumberland as an important recusant Catholic family which includes the martyr Bl. George Errington who was executed at York in 1596. The family adhered to Catholic-Jacobitism and Thomas Errington, the 'Chief of Beaufront' in Tynedale narrowly avoided losing his life for supporting the 1715 Rising, though he could not avoid material losses. The subject of this biography was the son of a later Thomas Errington who had come into a large inheritance from his maternal uncle which allowed him in 1800 to buy the estate of Clints in Swaledale near Richmond in North Yorkshire comprising three hundred acres. He created a chaplaincy in the mansion in 1805 which survived until the 1840s. George Errington was born at Clints Hall September 1804; he entered Ushaw College at the age of ten and he went on to the English College in Rome in 1821 to complete his education for the priesthood.

That was the end of his connection with the north-east but his subsequent career is of considerable importance in the history of the English church in the nineteenth century. He was ordained, and created Doctor of Divinity in 1827 and his intellectual capacity clearly marked him out for substantial advancement. Indeed, he held a number of important appointments connected with seminary education before being made the first Bishop of Plymouth; he was later created Archbishop of Trebizond *in partibus infidelium* so as to be translated to Westminster as coadjutor with right of succession to Cardinal Wiseman.

Such a bald statement of Errington's dignities does not do justice to the indignities he endured throughout his later life as clerical machinations and episcopal in-fighting brought friendships to an end and made adversaries of colleagues. In particular, his estrangement from Wiseman led to his deprivation of the coadjutorship by the Pope (clearing the way for Henry Edward Manning) and effectively bringing to an end his ecclesiastical career. Needless to say, this all took place unknown to the faithful, for the most part, and anyone reading this well-sourced account unfamiliar with clerical ambition and politicking will be surprised and perhaps shocked by the vehemence and hostility which could attend such matters (and may still do).

Errington emerges from this biography as a wronged man but then he was not always his own best advocate. He was a highly principled and uncompromising churchman, and so perhaps a little forbidding in his public persona. (He may have been better advised to have sought a position in his native Yorkshire where they are more tolerant of such outspoken figures.) On the other hand, in his private relationships he was kindly and considerate and was deeply loved by his family, friends, priests and parishioners. He died in 1886. The book ranges widely over the English Catholic history of the day and is a major contribution to the history of the Victorian Church belatedly filling a gap (though, regrettably, it is not illustrated even by a portrait). It is by the way, but I was struck favourably by the fact that Errington customarily took a glass of claret with his lunch.

L. Gooch

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A. Lock, *Catholicism, Identity and Politics in the Age of Enlightenment, The Life and Career of Sir Thomas Gascoigne, 1745-1810,* Boydell, 2016

For much of the eighteenth century English Catholics lived in one of the trickiest periods in post-Reformation history. The Elizabethan penal laws were still on the statute book long after Jacobitism and other supposed popish dangers had passed, and although they were rarely invoked, it was unsafe to consider them to be in abeyance even if in most respects Catholics were left in peace. This ambiguous state of formal proscription and informal toleration was accepted by many Catholics but it did not suit those who hankered after a career in politics or a profession which required them to repudiate their religion: the choice was whether to remain faithful but live privately or apostatise so as to enter public life. This book is a detailed treatment of how the dilemma was resolved by Sir Thomas Gascoigne (VIII) of Parlington Hall, near Aberford in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Gascoigne family was devoutly recusant and developed a close association with the English Benedictines: successive generations of the family provided vocations to the religious life in the expatriate convents and monasteries on the continent. In the eighteenth century, however, the secular exclusions associated with recusancy were becoming more difficult to accept and in 1743 Sir Edward (VI), finding 'both York and Yorkshire too circumscribing', felt obliged to take 'refuge abroad from almost monastic seclusion at

home' and moved the whole family into the guest-house of the convent at Cambrai where several Gascoignes had become nuns and which had also benefitted from the family's financial support. One wonders what social opportunities a convent guest-house offered that York did not. At any rate, it was there that Thomas Gascoigne was born and where he would spend his earliest years. He was schooled firstly at Douai by Benedictines, then at Paris and Turin, acquiring, as stipulated by his guardians, a 'liberal and polite Education' rather than the traditional and limited secular syllabus offered at many Catholic schools of the day. Thomas succeeded to the baronetcy in 1762 at the age of sixteen and two years later he was dispatched on a Grand Tour to complete his education. The tour was curtailed, however, following a fracas in Rome in which a coach-man was shot dead for which Gascoigne only avoided prosecution by bribery, but he had to flee the country. Over ten years passed before he ventured abroad again: in 1774 he went on an extensive five-year Tour of France, Italy and Spain in company with the celebrated Northumbrian traveller and writer Henry Swinburne and Martha Swinburne his wife.

Within months of returning to England following his intellectually liberating continental travels, Sir Thomas determined to assume his place in society which his title, status, wealth and landholdings would have entitled him to had he not been a Catholic. What's more, he sought a seat in parliament to confirm matters. To achieve that, of course, required that he abjure his religion and he did so on 4 June 1780, the king's birthday, in a deliberately timed deferential declaration of his allegiance to the crown and conformity with the established Church – though in some circles his apostasy was received sceptically. In any event, three months later Gascoigne was elected to the Commons for Thirsk, in the Whig interest; he would later sit for Malton and then Arundel. He remained on the backbenches, however, and had little, if any, influence on the nation's affairs, rather like the other seven Catholics who apostatised to take a seat in parliament in the period, including the Northumbrians Sir John Swinburne and Charles Brandling. It must be said, however, that Gascoigne continued to support the local priest, chapel and recusant community.

In 1784 Gascoigne married the Protestant widow Lady Mary Turner, and he decided to eschew politics to take up a domestic life at Parlington and concentrate on the development of his estates comprising almost ten thousand acres in nineteen localities, yielding an income of around £3,200 in 1750. He had learned during his early life that a recusant family's survival depended on the sound management and preservation of their landed inheritance since it was their only asset in the absence of political rewards, sinecures, and so on. It was a lesson he carried into his Anglican life as is shown in two long and detailed chapters of this book. He demonstrated considerable enterprise in developing wasteland, promoting enclosure, encouraging crop diversification and experimenting with new cultivation methods. The estates included several coal mines and limestone quarries which he exploited with equal enthusiasm. Clearly, Sir Thomas was a much more successful landowner than politician, for in 1810, the year of his death, the estate's annual income had increased to some £9,650. While he realised his lifetime ambitions, however, he was

disappointed by the early death of his only son and with the knowledge that when he himself died his baronetcy would become extinct.

His Catholic religion was only important to Gascoigne in relation to the negative impact it had on his secular aspirations, essentially his exclusion from the ordinary duties of the English gentleman such as taking his place on the bench, and the impossibility of entering parliament. But, as one of a tiny group of recusant gentry dissentients, he was exceptional not typical – the majority of comparable Catholic gentlemen did not apostatise although they held similarly liberal views and pursued wide cultural, industrial and scientific interests, such as the Tunstalls, the Lawsons, the Salvins and many others in the north. They were, if not content with, at least resigned to the long haul towards political emancipation. Excellent though this book is, its main failing is to ignore their valuable contribution to the nation's growing prosperity despite their exclusion. Notwithstanding that important lacuna, this biography can be highly recommended. Readers will discover the notable rôle Gascoigne played in the county's economic development which, he would have had to acknowledge, owed a great deal to his recusant heritage.

L. Gooch

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NOTES

The **Catholic National Library** (CNL, founded in 1912) has been taken into the care of Durham University. The CNL has 70,000 volumes of books including ephemera, and over 150 runs of various periodicals. The range of the collection is wide: religious history and biography, theology, spirituality and devotion (much of the latter is of primary importance as little of such material has been collected elsewhere). There is also material on all aspects of Catholic culture as well as a widely admired collection of Catholic fiction.

The CNL trustees found that Durham University Library met a large number of their requirements. It is committed to the study of Catholicism, as shown by the establishment of the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS), its work with Ushaw College, its public out-reach, and its high level of conservation skills. It also holds important collections of other Christian denominations. The CNL collection will therefore complement the holdings of the University, Cathedral and Ushaw College libraries and further enhance Durham's status as one of the leading places in the world for the study of religion.

A well-illustrated *Centennial History of the Catholic National Library 1912-2012* by Gerard Skinner was published by Fisher Press in 2012.

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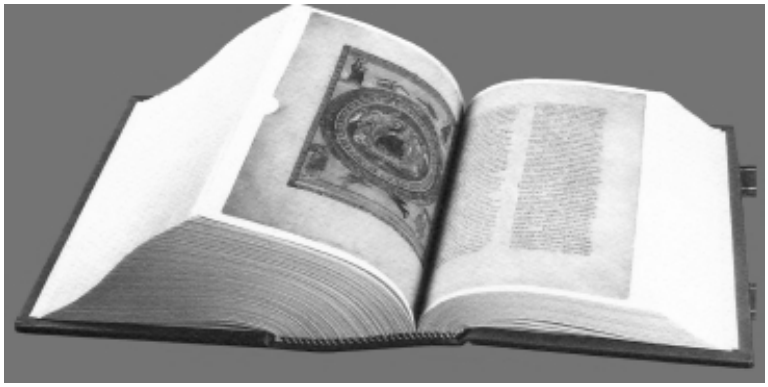

The ***Codex Amiatinus*** – the earliest and most accurate copy of a complete Latin bible – was the subject of an article in edition No. 54 (2013) of this journal by Maria Makepeace. As she explained, in 716AD, Abbot Ceolfrid and a group of monks left Jarrow to present a copy to the pope. The abbot died en route and the whereabouts of the codex in the following century remained uncertain. By the ninth century it was to be found in the abbey of San Salvatore, Monte Amiata, but it eventually fetched up in the Laurentian Library in Florence and is still there. In 2000-1 permission was given to make a facsimile for the abbey at Monte Amiata. Permission was later given for a second facsimile to be made for permanent display in Jarrow, the place where the originals were created. Accordingly, the codex is now on view at the Bede Museum in Jarrow Hall.

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Taking Stock (From information supplied by G. McCombie & A. Derrick.)

The ***Taking Stock*** initiative began in 2005 to assess the historical and architectural importance of every Catholic church and chapel in the English dioceses. Although all faith buildings represent a key part of the nation's heritage, and many are protected under existing legislation, it was felt that a greater knowledge of Catholic churches and chapels was required. The project was a partnership between the Patrimony Committee of the Bishops' Conference, English Heritage and individual dioceses and was part-funded by English Heritage. In the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle the work was carried out by architectural historians and the research included old and new photography, updated descriptions of the buildings as well as assessments of their significance and vulnerability to change.

The written findings of the survey, as well as photographs, are openly available on the project's website: taking-stock.org.uk/home. The following extract is an excellent example of the results achieved by the project:

St Michael, Esh Laude

The oldest church in the diocese still in use, built in 1798 on land given by the Smythe family (who also owned the land on which nearby Ushaw College was built). As originally designed, the group of church, presbytery and stables was designed in a deliberately low-key way, with a farmhouse character. Later alterations increased the 'ecclesiastical' look of the church. The interior contains several features of note, including a wooden Gothic balcony looking towards the sanctuary from the first floor of the presbytery, and an altar in memory of Cardinal Wiseman.

The ancient manor of Esh passed to the Catholic Smythe family in about 1560, and Esh Hall was rebuilt by Sir Edward Smythe in about 1687. The house had a chapel on an upper floor and a priest hide. It was later abandoned by the family for their Acton Burnell estate and was rebuilt in the mid-nineteenth century. The original gate piers survive and, outside, the sandstone Esh Cross, inscribed 1687 on one side and IHS on the other.

In 1651 the Smythe family endowed a mission at Newhouse, in the parish of Esh. This remained active until 1798, when the church of St Michael was built at a more convenient location (for the Smythe family) at Esh Laude, on land given by Sir Edward Smythe, fifth baronet. Around the same time, Sir Edward sold another larger parcel of land nearby to William Gibson, Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District, upon which was built the great Catholic seminary of Ushaw College.