Northern Catholic History

No. 21 Spring 1985

North East Catholic History Society

NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society was founded in July 1974 to foster interest and promote research into the history of the Catholic Church in North East England.

A yearly programme of talks and visits to places of Catholic interest is arranged and *NORTHERN CATHOLIC HISTORY*, the Society's periodical, is published twice yearly.

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NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

The tenth A.G.M. of the Society, held at Holy Name Parish Centre, Jesmond, on 2 October 1984, was attended by a good gathering of members and friends and amiably presided over by Fr Nicholson, Chairman, who reviewed the past year's activities, thanked the officers for their hard work, conducted the necessary elections (all officers and the committee were re-elected), enthused about another excellent programme of lectures in prospect, and modestly set a high standard with an enlightening talk on English mystics. The second event was a well-supported coach outing, ably arranged (as ever) by Miss Davison, to the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle on 6 October.

The Parish Centre, although not convenient for some members relying on public transport, provides a most comfortable meeting place (for use of which thanks are warmly accorded to Fr White) and there were good attendances for absorbing and scholarly talks by Dr Ian Doyle on 6 November and Leo Gooch on 4 December.

This Spring 1985 issue will be in the capable hands of the Carmelite Sisters of Darlington Carmel (to whom the Society owes a debt of gratitude for the devoted care, efficiency and economy with which they print the booklet) when the February and March meetings take place, but Mr Lang's and Dr Gilley's talks are anticipated with eagerness. Likewise, during the winter evening it is cheering to look forward to the summer outings, which this year will take members to Lastingham and the Vale of Pickering in May and to Shap Abbey and Sizergh Castle in June, circumstances permitting.

This being the twenty-first edition of the booklet it is fitting to remember with gratitude all the Catholic historians who during the last ten years have written nearly one hundred articles, a modest but significant addition to the published information on the history of the Church in the North East. We remember especially Fr Vincent Smith, the news of whose death on 19 February will be received by all with great sadness, and Dr Annie Forster. Happily, other scholars are following in their steps, several being regular contributors.

In this issue, Fr David Milburn's funeral panegyric is printed as an initial tribute to Fr Vincent Smith, then Leo Gooch provides a short account of the Northern Brethren's Fund, derived from Fr Smith's tercentenary history in 1960, George Mulvey writes about Matthew Hadfield, a Catholic architect who practised mostly in Yorkshire, Fr Nicholson continues his research on the Irish priests who served the diocese in the nineteenth century, and the second part of the history of St Mary's Convent and School at Berwick upon Tweed and at Longridge Tower completes the booklet.

Grateful thanks are accorded to these contributors and an open invitation is extended to Catholic historians to submit articles on topics of Northern Catholic interest.

WILLIAM VINCENT SMITH [1900–1985]
Priest and Historian

David Milburn

'If we live, we live for the Lord. If we die, we die for the Lord'. So says St Paul. Our funeral rite is a little less sure. It has a prayer which thanks God for all the blessings with which he endowed his servant during his life on earth, then puts it all in brackets just in case there is nothing to thank God for. Rest assured. There is plenty to thank God for in the life of Father Vincent Smith who would have celebrated the diamond jubilee of his priesthood this July.

They say it takes all sorts to make a world, even people interested in history. One of our English bishops, now on the point of retirement, used to spend his day off as a priest, not playing golf but, instead, rummaging through recusant papers in the Essex Record Office. I understand that, together with cricket and stamp collecting, this was the kind of pastime that attracted Vincent Smith from his earliest days as a priest. He once confided to me that his love of history began in his student days at Ushaw, and that he would like to have had the opportunity to progress from an amateur to a professional historian.

In fact, he became quite a professional, as some of us here today know very well. His earliest essay, *Catholic Tyneside*, published in 1930, was written while he was a curate at St Andrew's, Worswick Street. Bishop Thorman, a former parish priest of St Andrew's, contributed the foreword. At intervals during the next forty years, Fr Smith produced a number of articles on local recusant history. Many of them appeared in the *Ushaw Magazine* and stimulated my own interest in the subject. He also wrote a history of the Northern Brethren's Fund, of which he was treasurer and secretary from 1947 to 1954. On the whole, however, and especially as time went by, he preferred to collect material rather than to shape it into a narrative. In the 1950s, as general interest in recusant history awakened, he earned the reputation of being the local expert to whom writers of books and theses would turn for information and advice. Mind you, that wasn't always forthcoming. He was inclined to dismiss those who wished to use him for their own ends;

but, equally, he readily and generously put himself at the disposal of the many who came to him with a genuine interest in the subject. He never quite forgave me, he said, with malicious twinkle in his eye, for picking his brains about the history of Newhouse and then repeating it all shortly afterwards (unacknowledged) in a centenary sermon there in 1971.

As the expert on local recusant history, he took a keen interest in the formation of the North East Catholic History Society. Automatically, when the editor of its journal looked for an informative essay on the sources available to students of local post-Reformation Catholic history, Fr Smith was asked to provide it, and he shared the work with his life-long friend and collaborator, the late Annie Forster of Burradon.

On reflection, just to say that he was the expert on local recusant history is unnecessarily restrictive. His knowledge ranged widely over the whole of English post-Reformation Catholic history. He was a frequent visitor to, and occasional speaker at, the early meetings of the Conference on Post-Reformation Catholic History held annually at Oxford under the guidance of Dr David Rogers and Mr A.F. Allison. He had much to offer, even to professional historians: advice, guidance, knowledge of sources, especially biographical details of priests, and also criticism if he felt that they were way off mark, either in their facts of interpretation of them.

However, such a consuming passion for the past did not lead him to neglect the present. For this essentially pastoral priest history remained a hobby, a pastime. About his specifically pastoral ministry I cannot say much, except that my own mother, who had been a parishioner of St Andrew's in the early years of the century, and remained in contact with St Andrew's nearly all her life, spoke warmly of him as a priest. That was as she knew him — as a priest. I don't suppose she ever thought of him as a scholar or an historian. That friendship of my mother with Fr Smith, forged in his early days as a priest, continued right through to her death in 1960. In my own mind, it was always a sign of his deep interest in people as well as in books. And I know that when I left Ushaw to be parish priest of Newhouse and came across to see him here at Lanchester we chatted not about the latest piece of historical research but about very practical problems of the parochial ministry. Of those years as a priest from 1925 — ten

at St Andrew's, two at Tudhoe, four at St Teresa's, Heaton, (years during which, at the Bishop's request, he worked on the diocesan archives), two at Ushaw Moor, eight as parish priest at Tow Law and over twenty years here at Lanchester — there must be many far better qualified to speak of his pastoral zeal than I am, and many more, too, who can speak of the kindliness and concern which lay behind a sometimes rather gruff exterior.

We must all give an account of ourselves one day. In a way, Vincent Smith has already given an account of himself. His historical research had an essentially religious motivation. In the introduction to *Catholic Tyneside*, he expressed the hope that by our greater knowledge of those who kept the faith for us we might be spurred on to emulate their example in our own lives and in handing the faith on to others. He made it his special concern to record the deeds not of the martyrs but of those ordinary priests and men and women whose unsung sacrifice sowed the seeds of the Second Spring. By his unremitting and patient research he has left the materials for a major study of the early history of this diocese of ours. I expected to see him once again, on his deathbed, to thank him for that work. It was not to be. I hope that I have made good that omission today. We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings with which you endowed this servant of yours in his life on earth.

Our friend was not allowed to grow old gracefully. Increasingly, he felt the burden of his years. May I thank all those who cared for him during this difficult time, notably Miss Hodgson, his devoted housekeeper, and Fr Mallaley, his successor here at Lanchester. To his relatives and friends, I offer the sympathy of the bishops and of his fellow priests, and may I personally thank you all for coming to say farewell to someone who could so easily have slipped away unnoticed. Eternal rest grant to him, O Lord.

NOTES

1. Fr William Vincent Smith was born on 27 July 1900. He was educated at Ushaw College and ordained priest at St Hilda's, Sunderland, on 25 July 1925. From September 1925 to September 1934 he was curate at St Andrew's, Worswick Street, Newcastle, during which time he published his book *Catholic Tyneside* (1930), and he was then curate successively at Tudhoe, St Teresa's, Heaton, and Ushaw Moor. While at St Teresa's he travelled daily to Bishop's House, Tynemouth for twelve months to arrange and transcribe the diocesan archives. He was parish priest of Tow Law from May 1941 to October 1949 when he became parish priest of Lanchester, where he worked until his retirement on 10 February 1971, and where he lived until his death on 19 February 1985. His funeral was attended by His Lordship Bishop Swindlehurst and by numerous clergy and friends.

2. Dr David Milburn D.S.H. of Newhouse has kindly agreed to the publication of this panegyric which he gave at the funeral Mass of Fr Vincent Smith at All Saints, Lanchester, on 22 February 1985.

THE NORTHERN BRETHREN'S FUND

Leo Gooch

From the time when the full severity of the penal laws under Queen Elizabeth had been brought into effect, the Catholic priest in England was proscribed and liable to imprisonment, exile or death. Every priest was an outlaw, but the secular clergy had greater difficulties than the members of religious orders. The latter had superiors, both local and abroad, to whom they could look for guidance in spiritual and temporal matters. They had common funds to tide them over the crisis of 'being out of place', as it was called, of sickness or old age. They could retire to religious houses on the Continent. The secular clergy, however, had to depend on the charity of layfolk — there were no central funds to support them. Moreover, according to the penal laws, money given by Catholics for the support of religion was illegal and no express mention could be made of it in wills. Trust funds were handed on secretly from one to another, placed on mortgage or note of hand with some trustworthy person, sound both in religion and financially. To the fear of spies and the threat of capture, priests had, then, the added anxiety of whether they would continue to find support in the necessities of life. One priest, when discussing his retirement owing to ill-health, wrote to Bishop James Smith in 1691 that he desired 'to live without spunging upon others which I was afraid of falling to'. In later years some had annuities or other help from their relatives, but many others were disinherited converts, or sons of families impoverished through their loyalty to the faith.

The first attempt to alleviate this situation seems to have been made towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. Frs John Mush and John Colleton formed a project 'to establish a congregation or fraternity which was to unite the members, and regulate the concerns of the general body'. This plan seems never to have come to fruition. Some of its rules were impracticable, and the whole idea of association or of meeting together threatened the security of their hidden missionary life. However, the gradual relaxation of active persecution after the Restoration led to several new schemes in different parts of the country.

The beginnings of what is now the Northern Brethren's Fund date from about that time. Fr Thomas Eyre wrote in 1807, 'The earliest copy of the rules of our clergy funds goes back as far as 1660'. These rules are now missing but his statement is supported in the earliest list of benefactors. The first name is that of Sir Edward Radcliffe of Dilston Castle, the donor of £100. His estates were restored in 1660, but he died three years later. Similarly, many others named in this list — clergy and laity — are known to have died before 1680.

In 1688 Bishop James Smith was appointed first Apostolic Vicar of the Northern District. As the first resident bishop for well over a century, he began the process of getting church finances into order, including the charitable donations made since the Restoration. He first persuaded the clergy to sign a declaration that they would safeguard the funds entrusted to them and, by making a will and putting it in the safe keeping of a brother priest, ensure that these benefactions remained for the support of the secular priesthood and missions. Then, on 13 May 1691, the eleven priests in the North East met under the Vicar Apostolic to formally agree the constitution and rule of 'a Fund for ye relief and benefit of the Clergy of Bishoprick and Northumberland'. Membership was to be confined to the secular clergy, and there were to be three Superiors, including the Vicar General, and a Treasurer, elected every three years. The founding Superiors were Frs Roger Midford (VG), Richard Rivers and Ferdinando Ashmall; the first Treasurer was Fr Francis Hodgshon.

The rule stipulated that membership would only be granted to priests who submitted to the Vicar Apostolic's jurisdiction and who remained at their posts. Every Brother was to leave at least £10 to the Fund at his death and each was to offer three Masses at the decease of a member and a monthly Mass for the Fund's benefactors. In the regulations there is mention of 'receiving distribution', that is, a dividend. The rule of 1691 laid down that the first care of the Fund must be the relief of necessitous Brethren — those 'out of place', sick, aged or imprisoned. After that, however, 'the overplus of the rents rising from the fund shall be equally divided among the Brethren of the District, as often as there is, or shall be any considerable dividend to be given out'. Nonetheless, the Treasurer had to keep a reserve of £10 for emergencies. When a priest first came into the district and had signed the constitutions of the Fund, he was given £1 representing two Mass offerings for

the Fund's benefactors. These disbursements continued for nearly two hundred years, the amounts varying considerably at different times.

The members of the Fund met every three years. Although the number of priests was small (never more than sixteen in the eighteenth century) and despite being accustomed to gather in quiet places without exciting comment or arousing suspicion, these meetings were perilous. Notwithstanding the dangers, Bishop Smith promoted these meetings because he wished the priests, normally isolated on their scattered mission stations, to have a sense of being members of a corporate body, and to have an opportunity to discussing all matters, spiritual and temporal, which were of common interest. In 1707 he wrote to one priest, 'I hope your meeting on the 27th of August will be the increase of peace, mutual love and confidence in each other; and that every particular man zealously join in everything for the common good and honour of the whole body'. Fr Robert Witham said in 1712, 'We do not only transact what belongs to ye fund, but confer on other matters and publish ye orders and instructions from our Bishop, and what in general related to ye Body . . .'. It is not surprising then, that the Treasurer during the 18th and 19th centuries was also normally the Clergy Agent, who dealt with mission endowments and other vicariate business matters.

New rules were signed in 1703, and in 1726 the rules were again revised. The major change of 1726 was that the Vicar General ceased to be *ex officio* a Superior of the Fund. The immediate cause of this change may have been that in the previous year a regular, Bishop Williams O.P., had been appointed Vicar Apostolic. (The Fund was managed by two Superiors until 1880 when a third was added.) Another feature of the 1726 rule was a demand for greater secrecy. It had been decided in 1703 that each Brother should have a copy of the rule, but the revision laid down that the rule and other books relating to the affairs of the Fund were to be kept by the Superiors and Treasurer in a 'private and remote place, which they shall make known to two or more of their Brethren, that in the case of death, they may not fall into the hands of our enemies'. The Brethren were to have a copy of their obligations, but for the rest there was to be only one copy 'which shall be read at every meeting'. That custom remains to this day.

The members were also recommended to leave their books to a common library and urged to tell their people about the Fund and the

DEED OF 1693/4. Original Signatures

benefits they received as benefactors. The annual Mass for the faithful departed was also instituted in 1726. A later addition to the rule stated that 'those who shall be absent from the triennial meeting shall forfeit half of their dividend, unless they allege such an excuse as shall appear satisfactory to the major part of the Brethren'. One other facet of the activities of the Fund is mentioned in 1726: 'The two Superiors for the time being shall look after the funds that have been given by the laity or others of this District to ye Colleges abroad for the education of youth, and shall use their utmost interest with ye donors and trustees thereof that such youth as belong to this District and are the most promising, be sent upon them'.

The demands on the resources of the Fund do not seem to have been heavy in the eighteenth century. The accounts for 1751—81 show that there were two cases of relief for the clergy. In 1751 Mr Chambers, priest at Cliffe, was paid one guinea for assisting Mr Johnson at Staindrop, who was ill. In 1760, four guineas were paid to Mr John Norman, a farmer at Croxdale, because he was looking after the sick priest, Mr Warham. A dividend was paid regularly; from 1781 to the end of the century the average was £5, and in the first part of the nineteenth century the dividend increased to £8 a year. It appears that until 1828 members also received their *Ordo* each year as a gift.

This Fund, like other church funds in the penal era, found difficulty in investing its capital. Mostly it was placed in the hands of trusty layfolk, but sometimes, and especially in the eighteenth century, the money was put into property in Old Elvet, Durham. At one time the Fund owned some ten houses there. At the end of the century, with the passing of the Relief Acts, the use of lay trustees could be abandoned and with the increasing availability of gilt-edged stocks, the modern methods of investment were used.

Several times during the nineteenth century small changes were made to the rule, but the essential character of the Fund remained the same. In 1820 it was decided that the meeting should be held annually, as it has been ever since. The forfeit for non-attendance was restricted to those who failed to be present every third year and was then abolished in 1837. From 1814 to 1926 the meeting was held on 'the Tuesday after the feast of St Bartholomew'. Since then, however, the Brethren have met on the fourth Tuesday of October. A dinner is inseparably linked with the annual meeting and, as it was impossible for many

to return home the same day until the coming of the railways, the expenses included 'supper for some'. In 1794 the catering expenses were given in detail by the Treasurer:

Dinner for 12 at half-a-crown a head:	£1.10s.0d.
Port 10/-, Sherry 7/-, Porter and Ale 5/-, Dessert 5/-:	£1. 7s.0d.
Supper for 6 at a shilling, Port 2/6, Rum 1/6, Porter 1/6:	11s.6d.
Hay and corn for 5 horses:	11s.8d.
Shoeing:	2d.

The Brethren were not always in favour of supplying drinks from the Fund. In 1845 it was agreed that 'tea and coffee be furnished at the public charge, but that the use of wine or spirits be left to the private charge of each individual in the evening of the meeting'. In 1854 it was decided that 'the expenses of dinner only be defrayed from the public purse'. A most startling motion was proposed in 1882 when someone suggested that the dinner be discontinued; needless to say, the motion was defeated. So the annual dinner has continued except in times of war. There was no dinner in 1914; each member was given 2/6d for his lunch in 1915; but in 1916 'luncheon with light wines' was provided. In 1918 only those with meat coupons could have a full lunch and it was not until 1921 that the meal was again described as dinner. During the Second World War there were no half-measures about austerity, and there was no meal until 1946.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century there is evidence of an increasing demand on the Fund, with discussions as to how the money available should be distributed. The Superiors held to the principle that first consideration should be given to the maintenance of aged and infirm priests, though it was strongly argued that such expenses as medical operations be funded if possible. Since 1891 a doctor's certificate has been required from all seeking admission to the Fund. It was the Mass obligations which generally concerned members most, and various modifications to the rule were made. The three Masses to be said by each on the death of a Brother-member were reduced to two in 1876. Originally, one Mass was said by each member for each benefaction of £10; in addition there were the monthly and annual Masses. In 1855 the obligation was fixed at 25 Masses for each £10; in 1881 it was increased to 40 for each £10 donated, and then in 1919 it was

fixed at 20 Masses to be said for each benefactor at his or her decease whatever the amount given.

The Fund had been designed to help and support secular priests, and members have been reluctant to admit anyone to its temporal benefits who did not conform to that definition. Thus, while bishops often attended the annual dinner as guests, they were not recipients of dividends or Mass offerings, nor had they 'the right to attend and vote at meetings'. Latterly, however, bishops have been admitted as honorary members, entitled to the spiritual benefits of the Fund, including the two Masses said by each member at the decease of a Brother. Similarly,it was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that the President of Ushaw and college professors were admitted to the Fund. Amongst others who have benefitted from the Fund, though not full members, were four French refugee priests, victims of the Revolution. As an act of charity they received the annual dividend during the five years they worked on the mission.

The Northern Brethren's Fund was instituted when the English secular priest could look only to the charity of his fellow-priests and a few faithful layfolk for help in distress and for all his temporal needs. It has survived into a period when ecclesiastical finance is much more organised and the Welfare State offers the priest, as citizen, its material aids. Nevertheless, the Fund still has its part to play in providing resources unavaliable from the State; in providing an association for the clergy; and, perhaps most importantly, in providing spiritual benefits to its members and benefactors alike.

NOTES

1. This article is an edited version of a privately printed pamphlet, *The Northern Brethren's Fund 1660–1960,* by Rev. W. Vincent Smith (1960). The pamphlet contains many details which cannot be reproduced here. There are, for example, two appendices giving the early benefactors and a complete list of the Superiors, Treasurers and Secretaries of the Fund.
2. The archives of the N.B.F. are held by Rev. T. Burke, St Joseph's, Blaydon.
3. Membership details of the N.B.F. are published annually in the *Northern Catholic Calendar.*

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continued from p. 24

10. All Hallows College, Dublin, Calendarium of letters: letter 2519, from Hogarth to student; letter 2521, from R. Suffield to Woodlock. Photocopies of these are in the Northumberland Record Office.
11. Woodlock succeeded Newman as Rector of the Catholic University and later became Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois.
12. Joseph Gillow, *Dictionary of English Catholics,* Vol. III, 321. William Hogarth.

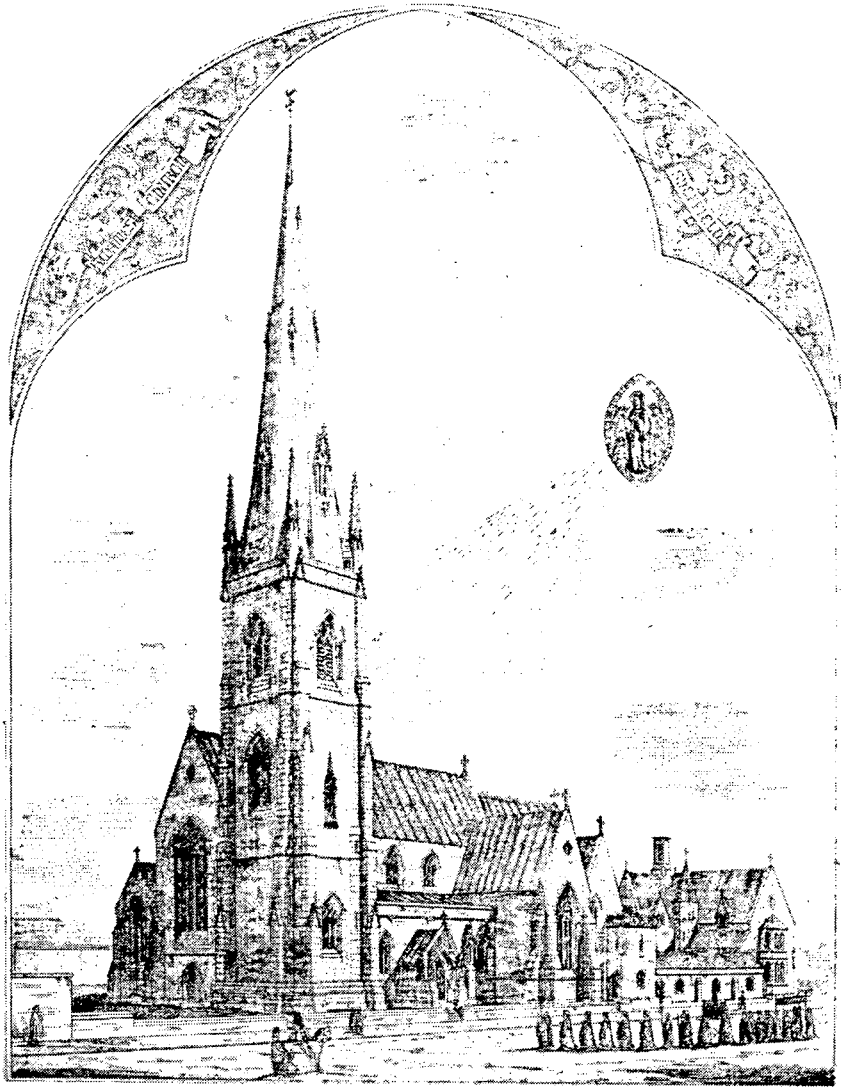
MATTHEW HADFIELD (1812–1885), A SHEFFIELD ARCHITECT

George Mulvey

The association of the architectural firm of Dunn and Hansom with Newcastle on Tyne[1] indicates the possession of 'territorial rights' enjoyed by certain Catholic architects in the nineteenth century. Besides those mentioned above, one can point to the firms of James O'Byrne in Lancashire, Edward Simpson in Bradford, John Kelly in Leeds and London, Charles Hansom in Bristol and the West Country, and Frederick Arthur Walters in the Southwark diocese. There are others, but what prompted this article was the hundredth anniversary, on 9 March 1985, of the death of Matthew Hadfield, whose practice, centred on Sheffield, embraced a large area of the North Midlands.[2]

Hadfield was born in 1812 — the same year as Pugin — and after attending Woolton Grove Academy, he entered at the age of fifteen the office of his uncle, Michael Ellison, agent for the Duke of Norfolk's Sheffield estates. Since he had a decided talent for architecture, he was articled in 1831 to Messrs Woodhead and Hurst of Doncaster. After three years, Hadfield went to London, and entered the office of Peter Frederick Robinson, who had gained a premium in the competition for the design of the new Houses of Parliament. When he returned to Sheffield in 1837, Hadfield had sufficient confidence and professional expertise to undertake business on his own account.

The fruitful partnership that Hadfield undertook in 1838 with the Anglican John Gray Weightman lasted for twenty years. In a period when the church building movement was expanding rapidly, Weightman obtained and carried out Anglican commissions, and Hadfield concentrated on Catholic works. In this connection they threw themselves wholeheartedly into the Gothic Revival movement, following the architectural lead of A.W.N. Pugin. They sketched enthusiastically numerous medieval churches in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and other parts of the country, translating their new knowledge into church designs for their clerical clients. One of Hadfield's early churches, St Bede at Rotherham, was singled out by Pugin for illustration and a measure of praise in his *Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England* (1843).



ST MARIE'S CHURCH (now Cathedral), SHEFFIELD, 1850

The firm was joined in 1850 by their former pupil George Goldie. Then following the purchase in 1858 of William Wardell's London practice, which was administered by Goldie, Weightman withdrew from the partnership. Goldie too, left the partnership in 1860; but in 1864 Hadfield was joined by his son Charles (1840—1915). During these changes the anchor-man was Matthew Hadfield, who maintained a consistently high standard of design for the firm's many works.

Anglican works apart, Hadfield was closely associated with designs for no less than seventy Catholic churches and chapels, besides numerous presbyteries, convents, schools, houses, hotels, and commercial and railway works. Outstanding among his churches are Salford Cathedral (1848, one of the earliest revival of a large cruciform church with a central tower and spire; St Mary's Church at Burnley (1849), well composed despite its unfinished tower, and considered at one time as a possible cathedral for the Salford diocese; and St Marie's Church (now Cathedral), Sheffield (1850). This last, Hadfield considered to be his masterpiece, taking infinite pains with the planning and detailing which were based upon a close study of the fourteenth-century church of St Andrew, at Heckington, Lincolnshire.

A staunch Catholic, Matthew Hadfield was associated with local movements to advance his Church's interests. As a member of the Sheffield Town Council he took a prominent part in forwarding the Improvement Bill in 1854—57; he was Vice-Chairman of the Sheffield Board of Guardians. Interested in the Sheffield School of Art, he served as its president in 1878—80, and was ever ready with time, advice and money to promote the institute. A cause to which he gave much time was the establishment and maintenance of the school for Catholic deaf-mutes at Boston Spa, serving as its secretary and treasurer.

Following his death in 1885, Hadfield's practice was continued by his son Charles, and subsequently by his grandson. The architectural partnership still survives in Sheffield under the style of Hadfield, Cawkwell and Davidson.

NOTES

1. See the author's 'A Newcastle Architect (A.M. Dunn)' in *Northern Catholic History*, Spring 1982.

2. Data for this article was drawn from Matthew Hadfield's obituary in *The Tablet*, 14 March 1885, pp.422—3; also *The Builder*, 11 April 1885, pp.512—3; and J. Gillow, *Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics*, vol. 3, pp.79—82.

IRISH PRIESTS IN THE NORTH EAST IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

W.J. Nicholson

The nineteenth century was a period of rapid expansion in the Catholic population in the North East, as elsewhere in the industrial areas of England. A few simple statistics make this very clear. In 1800 there were between 5,000 and 6,000 Catholics — 3,000 plus in Northumberland, 2,000 plus in Durham, and 250 plus in Cumberland and Westmorland.[1] In 1850 this had risen to 70,000, in 1875 to 121,000, and in 1900 to nearly 172,000. How did the bishops cope with this vast increase in the needs of the people? In 1800 there were 31 missions, in 1850, 47 missions and two Mass centres, in 1875, 63 churches and 10 chapels, and in 1900, 121 churches and 24 chapels. Where were the priests to be found to staff the new parishes and churches?

The diocese itself never provided enough priests for its own needs. Bishop Gibson's founding of Crook Hall in 1794 and the opening of Ushaw College in 1808 made sure of a supply of secular priests for the Northern District after the closure of Douay College. The numbers of students at Ushaw showed a rapid increase during the critical period 1850 to 1875. From 1810 to 1850 the numbers remained steady at 140 to 150, but jumped roughly to 350 from 1850 to 1875, after which they levelled off to 300 until the turn of the century.[2] The gap between the supply of English secular priests and the needs of the missions was filled largely by Benedictines, working in the Morpeth and Workington areas. In 1800 there were 31 priests in what was to become the diocese, of whom 6 were O.S.B., in 1850 there were 67 priests, of whom 11 were O.S.B., in 1875 there were 130, of whom 18 were O.S.B., and in 1900 the total number of priests was 191, of whom 24 were Benedictines manning parishes.

One would imagine that priests from Ireland, especially after 1850, when so many Irish people had arrived in the North East, would be here in large numbers. This was not so. Only a handful of Irish priests trained in Irish colleges were on the diocesan strength throughout the nineteenth century. It was not until 1900 that the diocese forged links

with St Kieran's, Kilkenny, and the diocese of Ossory especially which have served us so well in the first half of this century. The reason for this state of affairs is complex, but two fundamental attitudes, one Irish, the other English, are critical.

From the Irish point of view, even before the Famine, Archbishop Murray of Dublin was receiving appeals for priests from many parts of the world. One of his priests, John Hand, fired with enthusiasm by the work of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, founded All Hallows, Drumcondra, Dublin, as a missionary college. It began with few resources, either in material or in personnel. It was saved from closure only by the disaster of the Famine when the need to provide for the Irish Diaspora became obvious to all. The College sent nearly 2,000 priests to North America, 1,000 to Australia, and over 1,000 to Britain, South Africa, New Zealand, West Indies and Argentina.[3] The other Irish colleges which sent priests overseas also saw their priorities lying in the needs of North America and Australia, so it is little wonder that so few could be spared for the North East.

From the British point of view there were also problems. It was a century marked by strong political feeling on the Irish question which in other parts of the country created grave pastoral problems. The bishop, therefore, showed great caution in accepting Irish students for this diocese, and even greater caution in avoiding any involvement in politics. When the *Newcastle Chronicle*, in an editorial on 'Irishmen in England' in 1867, declared that 'Tyneside is famous for its hospitality' it was not merely voicing a random appeal for calm during the tense days of the Fenian scare. In spite of the fact that the North East had by 1861 the fourth highest ratio of Irish to English in all England and Wales, the region had been and continued to be remarkably free from anti-Irish and anti-Catholic feeling.[4] As a result of this cautious policy the diocese received a succession of apostolic priests who served their people faithfully and well. Some left handsome churches and schools as their monuments; others did not leave even a document.

In the days of the old Northern District the Vicar Apostolic sent any Irish priest available where they were most needed — to Liverpool and Manchester. One outstanding priest who came to the North East was **Philip Kearney** who was sent to Sunderland in 1829, the year of Catholic Emancipation. He built the present church of St Mary which was opened in 1835, brought the Sisters of Mercy

from Ireland to staff the schools, became canon of the diocese in 1852, and died in his native Kells in 1856. [5]

When the old Northern District was divided into three in 1840 and Lancashire and Yorkshire districts were created, the new Northern District received boundaries which it was to retain when it became the diocese of Hexham in 1850. Two letters of Bishop Riddell survive which throw some light on one aspect of his pastoral care.

To Rev. William Hogarth (his Vicar General)

7 Charlotte Sq., Newcastle on Tyne Jan. 15th, 1845

I have had the offer of one [priest] from Ireland (from Waterford I think), but I am rather afraid of introducing an Irishman at present so near to Newcastle. Had it not been for the late row I was very much tempted to strike a bargain with him. Mr Kelly (this was the priest at the Felling) spoke to me about him, but he is not yet ordained priest being only in deacon's orders.

+ Wm Riddell [6]

William Riddell, the son of Ralph Riddell of Felton and Swinburne and curate of Fr James Worswick at old St Andrew's, was instrumental in the founding of old St Patrick's on Felling Shore in 1842. He served the chapel there until moved to the new church of St Mary's, Newcastle, in 1843. He was most eager to find a priest to look after Felling and an Irish ex-Dominican, **Anthony McDermott,** was appointed there for a short time. The second letter of Bishop Riddell, to Bishop Brown of the Welsh District, pinpoints the anxiety felt by those in authority throughout this period.

To Rt Rev. Dr Brown

7 Charlotte Sq. Feb. 13th. 1845

My dear Lord,

From the letters which Mr McDermott will have sent Your Lordship, you will have perceived he was in this district but a very short time, not more than four months, & that during that time he gave me great satisfaction, indeed it was only yesterday that I expressed to a gentleman how I regretted Mr McD's leaving for Newry doing a great deal of good where he was.

In regard to the more immediate inquiry made by your Lordship

whether *there is anything in his character, disposition or conduct that would make him troublesome among the Irish* — I should say No — unless I am very much mistaken. He kept very much by himself and always professed a disinclination to mix with the low Irish and take part in their squabbles, & he certainly gave me no reason to complain of him in that respect, indeed quite the reverse. He is ready at preaching and teaches well & works well provided he may have plenty to do. He is nervous and appears very sensitive, hence it struck me he would be better alone than with another priest unless that person was an elderly man or a person of his own choice. A mission with sufficient work to keep one priest very well employed would in my opinion be the best place for him . . .

+ Wm Riddell [6]

McDermott stayed only for a brief spell in Wales, at Merthyr Tydvil, and soon returned to the North East when he was sent to Berwick in November 1847 where he remained till his death in February 1855. The *Berwick Advertiser* in its notice said that he was much esteemed in the town where he had laboured most zealously and successfully. The following week, it described his funeral and burial at St Ninian's, Wooler, when his two brothers, Robert and Michael McDermott of Brooklawn. Co. Galway, were among the mourners. [7]

At Felling Shore, **John Kelly** was sent as resident priest. He was born in Ireland and was a late vocation. After his studies at Ushaw he was ordained priest at the College at the mature age of forty-three. He went straight to Felling in 1847 and remained there thirty-five years till his death in 1883. The interment took place at Waterford.

Fr John Kelly achieved a great deal at the Felling during his stay there. He also succeeded in making legal history since he was committed to Durham Gaol for refusing to break the seal of confession. On Christmas Day 1859 a silver watch was stolen and later handed to Fr Kelly in the confessional, and a police inspector later received the watch on calling at the presbytery. At the trial, Queen v Hay, at Durham Assizes in 1860 before Mr Justice Hill, Fr Kelly was summoned as a witness by the prosecution. As the oath was about to be administered to him, he objected to its form — not, he explained, to that part of it which required him to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, 'but as a minister of the Catholic Church I object to that part which

states I shall tell the whole truth'.
The judge answered him, 'The meaning of the oath is this: it is the whole truth touching the trial which you are asked; which you legitimately according to law can be asked'.
The judge told him he must be sworn. When asked by counsel from whom he had received the watch, Fr Kelly replied, 'I received it in connexion with the confessional'.
The judge said, 'You are not asked at present to disclose anything stated to you in the confessional; you are asked a simple fact — from whom did you receive that watch which you gave to the policemen?'
Fr Kelly protested, 'The reply to that question would implicate the person who gave me that watch, therefore I cannot answer it. If I answered it my suspension for life would be a necessary consequence. I should be violating the laws of the Church as well as the natural laws'.
The judge said, 'On the ground that I have stated to you, you are not asked to disclose what a penitent may have said to you in the confessional. That you are not asked to disclose; but you are asked from whom you received the stolen property on the 25th December last. Do you answer or do you not?'
Fr Kelly replied, 'I really cannot, my Lord'.
He was forthwith committed into custody as a misdemeanant of the first division on Monday afternoon but was released by order of the judge on the following Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock after a question had been raised in the House of Commons. [8]

The same year as John Kelly arrived at Felling Shore, Bishop Riddell died, aged forty years. He had been appointed coadjutor to Bishop Mostyn in 1844 and succeeded him as Vicar Apostolic in August 1847. Three months later he fell a victim of cholera, 'the famine fever', while ministering to the Irish down by the river.

Bishop William Hogarth, Riddell's successor, was consecrated Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District on 24 August 1848, at the critical moment for the growth of the Church. Negotiations for the restoration of the hierarchy had already begun but it was the year of revolutions throughout Europe and the Pope had to flee from Rome, so it was two years later on 29 September 1850, that he became the first Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle. With limited resources, both of manpower and finance, he had to cope with the flood of Irish refugees from the Famine. The figures for the North East show what

he had to deal with throughout his time as bishop:

Year	In Co. Durham	In Newcastle	Total	
1841	5,407	2,857	8,264	Irish-born
1851	18,501	7,152	25,653	
1861	27,719	7,518	35,237	
1871	37,515	6,894	44,409	[9]

Despite his difficulties, he succeeded in opening twenty-one new parishes, five in Northumberland and sixteen in County Durham.

Where did he find the priests to staff these new parishes? We have already observed that the numbers at Ushaw College showed a dramatic increase at this period, and one would expect that at a time of heavy Irish immigration some of the students would have been Irish-born.

Francis Kearney, a native of Co. Meath, was educated and ordained at Ushaw in 1848. Sent to the Brooms, where he built the church in 1860, was made a canon in 1881, and died in 1890.

John William Carlile was born at Castlewellan, Co. Down, in 1815. He was a late vocation and was educated at Ushaw and Rome, where he was ordained in 1857. After ten years at Lowick and Wooler, he was sent to Stockton St Mary's in 1869, and died there in 1899. When he arrived at Stockton there were only 70 children in the Catholic school; when he died there were 1,700. He was made a canon in 1892.

Peter Eugene Harival was also ordained at Ushaw in 1856 where he had studied theology. He was French, worked in Hartlepool and Hutton Henry, and then retired to Coutances, France, where he died in 1894.

Francis Cambours was also French, born at Tarbes, near Lourdes. He was ordained in 1857, was the first priest at Washington where he arrived in 1866, built the church in 1878, and left in 1879.

An important development in diocesan policy was the acceptance of priests from Irish dioceses on loan for a few years until they were needed in their own diocese at home. Priests with Irish names appear in the *Northern Catholic Calendar*, although there is not much information on them available.

Thomas Hannigan was the first resident priest at Blackhill, but he was recalled to Ireland after three years.

James Foran joined his brother **Robert** at old St Andrew's in 1855. Both were educated at St John's, Waterford. Robert returned home, but James opted to stay. He began a new parish at Walker before becoming the first resident priest in the Falkland Islands. He died at Blackhill in 1900.

An important pastoral problem is noted in Fr James Foran's obituary notice. It is said that, unfortunately for many who were not familiar with English, Fr James had the Gaelic and his confessional was thronged from all along Tyneside. It has been remarked in America, for example, that immigrant women make little effort to learn the new language until the grandchildren appear on the scene. It was said of Canon Ralph Platt, who was at Stella in 1847 to 1857, that he learnt Irish to overcome that difficulty. Indeed, it was possible in mid-Victorian times to spend the whole day at the Blaydon races with the 'boys' without hearing a word of English, except for the names of the horses.

As far as regular clergy were concerned, the Benedictines continued to expand in numbers and to open new parishes. In 1855 the last Jesuit left the diocese when the parish of Alnwick was handed over to the Bishop and a secular priest had to be found to replace him. In Newcastle, the Dominicans returned to the diocese after half a century and Bishop Hogarth arranged for them to take responsibility for St Andrew's until St Dominic's could be built — it was not opened until 1873.

At the same time, he began an association with All Hallows, Dublin, for some of his students. All Hallows priests did well in Yorkshire and Lancashire and perhaps the influence of other bishops led him to communicate with the College. One of his motives may well have been the lowness of the fees. From 1842 to 1860 the annual pension was £20 per student, and from 1860 to 1912 only £25. In 1855 Hogarth wrote to one of his students at All Hallows to say that he would pay him £10 per annum for him for three years and £20 for two further years.[10] Four priests benefitted in his time from this link.

Henry Coll was born in Glasgow in 1837, went to All Hallows from Petit Seminaire de Malines in 1854, returned to Belgium, and was ordained in 1861. He was chaplain and assistant to Bishop Hogarth at Darlington, and succeeded him there when Hogarth died in 1866.

Laurance J. Boland was born in Sligo in 1836, came to All Hallows from Mount Melleray school and was ordained in 1863. After serving at

Thornley, Minsteracres and Easington, he retired in 1894, and died in 1907.

Michael Thomas Daly Bourke was born at Westport in 1838, came as an infant to North Shields, went to All Hallows in 1857, then to Petit Seminaire at Roulers in Belgium, then to English College, Bruges, and was ordained at Ushaw in 1863. He began the parish at Port Clarence and died at Penrith in 1905.

Patrick Thomas Matthews, the fourth in this group, had the most varied service in the diocese. Born at Louth, Armagh, he was at school in Mount Melleray before coming to live and work in North Shields. An interesting letter to the College helps us to understand some of the problems which faced student and bishop at this time.

> Rev. R. Suffield, St Ninian's Diocesan Mission House, Wooler, to Bartholomew Woodlock, President of the College. [11]
>
> 2 September 1856
>
> Very Revd and dear Sir,
>
> There is a respectable and virtuous young man of 21 years of age, clerk in a linen drapers shop. He has for some time past been most anxious to get into some college to study for the priesthood. His Parish Priest the Rev. T. Gillow of North Shields feels much interest in forwarding his views and sent him to me when I was giving a mission in that neighbourhood to see if I could aid him for that aged priest is quite blind. My own Bishop has not room for him at present but seemed quite agreeable to taking him if it had suited the present state of his students Funds. The young man has a little money, the result of his earnings which he is anxious to devote to the purpose of his education for the Priesthood. I cannot just now remember the sum but it seems to me it was more than a little above £50. He has to learn Latin I believe almost quite from the foundations. Do you think he could get to Drumcondra?
>
> Perhaps you may remember a student at St Sulpice who then as now subscribes himself.
>
> Yours faithfully in Christ
>
> R. Suffield [10]

The letter is endorsed 'Youth's address Patrick Matthews, 24 Howard Street, North Shields, Northumberland'.

Accepted by the Bishop, Matthews also studied at Paris, Soissons, and finally at Ushaw where he was ordained in 1862. As curate to Provost Platt at Durham, he threw himself in to the work of building St Godric's. He then began a new parish at Sacriston in 1867, then moved to begin another new parish at Byermoor, from which he set up Mass centres at Stanley and Chester-le-Street, which soon became separate parishes. He died at Cheeseburn Grange in 1899.

Bishop William Hogarth presided over this amazing transformation of the Church in the North East for eighteen years. He had begun life on the mission in the eighteenth-century style as chaplain to the Catholic family at Cliffe Hall. He moved into Darlington and founded St Augustine's parish church which he never left, even after becoming Bishop. It was said at his funeral in 1866 that every chapel or church in the whole of the four northern counties had been either built or enlarged under his management. In the words of Bishop Ullathorne, Hogarth was 'a man of energetic character who had evinced for long years a marked capacity for business'. [12]

NOTES

1. These figures are from the 1767 Return of Papists. Some evidence suggests that Catholic numbers began to increase after 1791. But the numbers of baptisms in the records of our older missions show little change, except in St Andrew's, Newcastle, where the numbers are one or two a year until 1795 when they increase to 13, and in 1800 to 25. The figures ignore those of the French emigres.
2. D. Milburn, *A History of Ushaw College,* Durham (1964), p.367.
3. For all the information on All Hallows in this article, I am indebted to Rev. Kevin Condon of All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin, and his unpublished paper on All Hallows priests working outside Ireland.
4. Quoted from R.J. Cooter, 'Lady Londonderry and the Irish Catholics of Seaham Harbour', in *Recusant History,* Oct. 1976, 13, p.4.
5. Throughout this article the notes on priests are taken from obituary notices in the *Northern Catholic Calendar.*
6. Extracts (only) from a transcript of the letter book of Bishop William Riddell, Hexham & Newcastle Diocesan Archives, Northumberland Record Office, ref. RCD.1/3, letters 28 and 71.
7. *Berwick Advertiser,* 24 February, 3 March 1855.
8. Account of trial in R.S. Nolan, 'Seal of Confession', *Catholic Encyclopedia,* 1912, XIII, p.658b. Additional details in *History of Felling Parish.* Although English Law takes no cognizance in principle of Roman Canon Law, in practice no priest has been challenged on this point since Fr John Kelly's case.
9. R.J. Cooter, 'On calculating the nineteenth-century Irish Catholic population of Durham and Newcastle', *Northern Catholic History,* No.2, 1975.

continued on p.12

1950 On 14 September the Community moved to Longridge, glad for the school's sake but sad at heart to be leaving the dear banks of the Tweed. The Sisters and Teachers at that time were:

Community

Rev. Mother Ethna (Superior), Mother Maria Ursula (Assistant), Sister Agnes (Headmistress), Sister Mary Anna (Art Mistress), Sister St Columba (Piano), Sister Maria Cecilia (Domestic Science), Sister Monica (Prep. School), Sister Frances Mary (Prep. School), Sister Cecilia Mary (Infirmarian), Sister Mary Brendan, Sister Benedict Mary, Sister Hilda (St Cuthbert's School), Sr Margaret Mary (St Cuthbert's School), Sister Benignus, Sister Rose, Sister Mildred, Sister Helena, Sister Conleth, Sister Andrew.

Teachers

Miss MacDonald (L.R.A.M.), Miss Sweeney (B.Sc.), Miss Quinn (B.A.), Miss McFadden (B.A.).

On 15 September they attended their first Mass in their new home. The original dining-room, 23 ft high, had become their chapel with the altar replacing the worm-eaten sideboard.

Meanwhile, painters and engineers continued their work. A board, over the room now called the 'Tower Parlour', held the inscription 'Cocktail Bar'. As workmen were about, Reverend Mother asked that the inappropriate sign be removed, but beneath, on the wall itself, was another inscription, 'Gentlemen's Snug' and this offending phrase had to remain until painters began work! The library became the Community Room and, at that time, it was economically and severely furnished with two long tables in the centre surrounded by straight-backed chairs. Here the Sisters assembled for recreation, handwork and

prayer. One day, while they were busy sewing and listening to some spiritual reading, a man's head suddenly appeared from the central floorboards beneath the table and then disappeared again just as quickly! Mr Williams, an electrician, had lost his way between floors where he was installing some electric cables, and someone had inadvertently switched off the connecting light!

The building which had been the home of Sir Hubert and Lady Jerningham is unusual: a central block and west wing two storeys high, contain the largest rooms — the original dining-room, library, coffee room and drawing room below; the present library, laboratories and classrooms above. The suite, including a small room leading into the present library plus the library itself and the room adjoining it, was intended for the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) who had been invited by Sir Hubert but actually did not come. It has a secret safe built into the wall and hidden by a canvas door cut into the wall hangings. The iron safe door was locked, the key lost and then cupboards which were put up for library books, blocked it still further. Such a secret was worthy of a mystery story so the boarders invented a ghost, still affectionately known as the 'Green Lady', who roams around at certain times. The story is made more ghostly each year and so young newcomers had to be warned that it is all mere fiction.

The west wing included the long drawing-room (now the Assembly Hall) separated partially into two by a stone arch and a thick dividing curtain. At one end was a magnificent fireplace adorned with exquisitely carved figures in dark oak featuring our Lady being assumed into heaven with small, up-gazing cherubims at her feet, St Peter holding his keys on the left, and St Mary Magdalen with her jar of ointment on the right. At the other end of the room there was another totally different fireplace in pastel-coloured tiles, depicting hunting scenes from medieval German folk-lore — a gift to Sir Hubert from some German Court.

The east wing has four floors. Firstly the basement — parts of the servants' quarters containing five small bedrooms, a bathroom, a door leading off to a passage giving access to six rooms — a large bakery (later turned into the Junior Boarders' dining-room), laundry, store rooms and, at a right-angled turn, the wine cellars; above the basement were five servants' rooms similar to those below; the partitions between

three of them were removed to provide a dining-room for Senior Boarders. On this floor also were the kitchen, scullery with two doors opening to a bread store-room and a strong-room. Eventually the strong-room door which was too heavy to move, was replaced by a lighter one and the butler's pantry was transformed into a pleasant reception room.

The floor above, described as the 'Mezzanine Floor' was occupied by bedrooms and bathrooms. At one end a window looked down on to the roof of the Senior Dining Room. In 1957 this roof was raised two storeys to provide cubicles and toilet facilities for 30 pupils and 2 Sisters-in-charge. At the other end of the corridor, another window gave a splendid view of the long corridor below and there the servants used to gather on special occasions and watch the guests as they went towards the drawing-room-cum-ballroom.

The fourth storey of this wing is similar to the Mezzanine floor below, only the rooms are higher, the corridor lighter and its floor is covered with light oak blocks. The tower contains five large rooms with high windows and inner wall 3 ft thick. The fourth room has a strong vaulted roof to support the water tanks above. All the rooms in the building have fireplaces. It was a weary task to carry up wood and coal in winter. Work was hard but there were compensations — parties, interesting people coming and going and very generous employers.

1951 21 May 1951 was the day chosen for the official opening of St Mary's Convent, Longridge Towers. His Lordship Joseph McCormack, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, came to bless the premises. At 10.30 a.m. the Sisters, Teachers (Miss Greta McDonald, Miss Bridie Sweeney, Miss Mary Quinn and Miss Mary McFadden) and pupils gathered together in the chapel.

The Bishop, attended by Father McHugh (deacon), Father McGuigan (sub-deacon) and Father Cronin (Master of Ceremonies) proceeded to the altar. The Bishop intoned the *Veni Creator* which was taken up by all. After the prayers prescribed for such an occasion, the deacon intoned *Procedimus in Pace* and the procession advanced through the main corridor to the front entrance, then to the end of the corridor, out by the present Maths room door, round the building to re-enter by the front door and then finally to the Assembly Hall where the solemn blessing was given and the Crucifix erected.

At 2.00 p.m. the guests were received, among them the French Reverend Mother General, Charles de la Croix, her Assistant, Reverend Mother Marguerite Marie, Reverend Mother Raphael (Regional Superior), Mary Cuthbert (Edinburgh), and also relations of Sir Hubert and Lady Jerningham — Miss Liddell-Grainger and Miss Gordon, Colonel and Mrs Home-Robertson. A platform equipped with a loud-speaker had been erected outside the front entrance. From there, Father McHugh addressed the assembly, thanking his Lordship for coming, and giving a brief account of how Longridge Towers had been acquired. His Lordship gave a short speech in reply and declared the school open. A former servant was present, very eager to tell the story. One day, it appears, Lady Jerningham had just alighted from her carriage in front of the house and, happening to look up, saw a little fair-haired girl dressed in blue looking out of one of the windows. She asked for the child to be brought down, but although the place was searched, no child was to be found. Had Lady Jerningham the gift of foresight?

The original dining-room had been converted into a temporary chapel, the altar replacing the huge light oak sideboard which was worm-eaten and also easily removed. On 15 August 1950 the community attended their first Mass there. In November the Stations of the Cross were erected.

1952 On 12 June, the feast of Corpus Christi was celebrated by an outdoor procession which became an annual event until 1970. Altars were erected at three suitable places in the grounds, the first under the front arch. The girls spent the morning gathering flowers and helped to adorn the altars. The procession started in the chapel, then the participants, singing appropriate hymns, preceding the priest who carried the Blessed Sacrament, made their way along the corridor, out by the side door to the first altar where they knelt to receive the first blessing. In the same way, they went on to the second and third altars, finally returning to the chapel. It was a moving and colourful sight to watch the long lines of girls in their blue dresses and white veils move slowly along making the surrounding fields resound with their singing.

1954 Until April 1954, the Kennels and the fields extending from them to the main drive were retained by Captain and Mrs Collingwood Thompson who had bought the estate after Sir Hubert Jerningham's death. They returned to Edinburgh at this time and the Convent purchased their property. Eventually the other houses — the Gas House

and West Lodge became free and were refitted, furnished and heated adequately to lodge the senior boarders. The Kennels house was renamed 'Marion House' and the Gas House 'Meadow House'.

In July, Reverend Mother Ethne was appointed Superior at Greenhill, Swansea and Reverend Mother Mary Cuthbert from Edinburgh replaced her. She knew Longridge Towers well because she had been the guest of Sir Hubert and Lady Jerningham when she was a schoolgirl.

1961 On 5 January, Reverend Mother Mary Cuthbert celebrated her Diamond Jubilee. His Lordship James Cunningham honoured this special occasion by celebrating Mass here in the presence of many clergy. To commemorate the day, a grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes had been made and on 25 March at 7.00 p.m. there was a torchlight procession to the grotto led by Father McGuigan.

Bishop Cunningham continued to show interest in the school and came on several occasions to distribute prizes and certificates. In December Father McHugh retired owing to ill-health. He had been parish priest of St Cuthbert's for thirty-two years and was greatly respected and appreciated in Berwick; Father was a keen gardener and the fir trees opposite the swings came from cones nurtured and planted by him.

In September, workmen started to transform the Coach Houses at the old Kennels into a Domestic Science room and an Art room.

1963 The year 1963 was marked by sorrow. On 3 June the much-loved Pope John XXIII died. On 15 June, Pauline Winston, a 14-year old boarder was drowned at Spittal. After this tragic accident, the girls were no longer taken to bathe at Spittal and the convent's dream was to provide a covered, heated swimming pool in the school grounds. This dream was realised in October 1966 when the building was completed and the Mayor, Councillor Knox, officially opened it.

In August, Reverend Mother Mary Cuthbert, after nine years at Longridge, was transferred back to St Margaret's Convent, Edinburgh. Her Assistant, Mother Maria Ursula, who had been at the Berwick convent as a young nun, was named Superior.

The bright event in the year was a triumph for Form III. Encouraged by Mothers Marie Cecilia and Mary Columba, the pupils decided

they would like to do a project on Chocolate sponsored by Nestles Ltd. They took the matter seriously for the coveted prize was a cruise for 20 children and 2 adults on board the *Devonia* to the northern capitals of Denmark, Sweden, Finland and even beyond the Iron Curtain. Their finished work in the shape of a cocoa bean had each page illustrated and hand-written in medieval script. Tuesday, 9 January at 10 a.m. when the news was announced that the competitors had won the prize, the clapping and cheering was such that one would have thought the building would collapse with the reverberations!

1967 The temporary chapel was now too small to hold the increased number of boarders and the time had come to build a new one. Mr Anthony Rossi the architect of Consett, presented plans and models and on 16 January the work started. Two earthen pots dating back some three thousand years to the Bronze Age were discovered by the workmen digging the foundations of the chapel. The larger pot was partly broken, the smaller one intact, both decorated with cord marks. They are displayed in a glass case in the school corridor.

1968 On 8 May 1968 the chapel was ready to be blessed and opened by his Lordship the Bishop, the Right Rev. James Cunningham, in a Mass celebrated by twelve priests: Fathers Curry, McGuigan, Mullen, Burke, Melia, Coster, Fimney, Fitzpatrick, Milburn, Rice, Bennett and Wilkinson. It is a beautiful chapel. Among the many features to be admired are the windows and, in the porch, the fine oak panel inset with ceramics which, when illuminated, cast a glow on to the Lady Chapel, the benches and crucifix all in light English oak and the carved Stations of the Cross. The building of the chapel was possible only through the generosity of friends and money raised by the pupils' many ingenious means.

1969 There was, thanks to the new chapel, a large room available for other purposes. A classroom by day, it was especially useful in the evenings for parents-and-teachers' meetings. In October, 35 men spent spent a day of recollection here and on 2 November over 60 women
1970 attended a similar retreat. During Unity Week in 1970, in January, the chapel was used for a joint service for the first time with Father Curry and the Reverends Pridham, Salisbury and Thomas-Jones taking part. The ecumenical movement was gradually working down old prejudices. The convent was able to open its doors and receive members of St

Vincent de Paul and the Newcastle Club for the Handicapped, and other groups. In 1975, the room of the ex-temporary chapel, being excessively high, was divided into two with girders being installed to hold a new ceiling. Both rooms received a face-lift and, at last, a large Common Room was provided.

1971 In September 1971, William Morris, F.S.A., was in this district looking for old stones of archaeological interest. One in particular, he thought, had been used for the building of a stone dyke to the east of Longridge. He gave Reverend Mother Ursula a description of it and asked for a search to be made. Two VIth-form girls, Jane Whiteford and Mary McIntyre found it near the base of the old dyke. It measures 14 inches x 6 inches. In the centre is a small cup-shaped hollow 3½ inches in diameter encircled by two concentric ring-shaped grooves and another diagonal groove from the cup towards one of the corners. These stones are believed to be Man's first attempt at sculpture on stone in Britain. The popular theory concerning them is that they were used for blood sacrifice and often marked the spot of a burial ground.

1972 In January, Reverend Mother Ursula fell ill and in August had to retire after forty years of dedicated service here. She was succeeded by Sister Bridget Guidera who was responsible for planning the school Common Room mentioned earlier.

1975 Three years later, Sister Bridget left for Edinburgh and Sister Anna Lee, Science Teacher, was appointed Superior.

Father Curry, so long an integral part of the school and always present at school charity campaigns, retired. Father Melia rook over his duties as parish priest in St Cuthbert's, and Father Leonard was appointed as convent chaplain. In September, Sister Agnes retired and Sister Cecilia who had taught in the school for nine years, became Headmistress.

1979 In 1979 Sister Anna was given charge of the Novitiate and Sister Aelred took her place. The school continued to grow and prosper; two mobile units were procured for classrooms; Form III room was equipped as a Biology Laboratory. The future seemed secure but, because of dwindling numbers and fewer aspirants to the religious life, the higher authorities of the Order decided that one large convent must close.

1983 St Mary's Convent, Longridge Towers was chosen, put up for

sale and sold in 1983 to a Charitable Trust formed mainly by parents of the pupils of the school.

At its close the Community was twenty-three in number:

Sister Mary Aelred (Superior), Sister Celine (Headmistress), Sister Clement (retired from St Cuthbert's School), Sister Loreto (Art teacher), Sister Angela (English), Sister St Columba (Music), Sister Mary Columba (Preparatory School), Sister Elizabeth (French), Sister Ann Christine (Domestic Science), Sister Agnes Cullen (English), Sister Francis (Preparatory School), Sister Agnes Seed (French), Sister Mary Gilligan, Sister Augustine, Sister Austin, Sister Benignus, Sister Rita, Sister Scholastica, Sister Imelda, Sister Leonard, Sister Carmella, Sister Winifred, Sister Mary Ryan.

Teachers:

Mrs S. Alkers (Geography, Needlework), Mrs P. Bonia (Music), Mrs A. Conway (History), Miss C. Ford (Speech and Drama, English), Mr S. Hall (Mathematics), Mrs C. Jones (Preparatory School), Mrs L. Lee (Biology), Miss P. Luckey (P.E., Geography), Miss I. MacDonald (German, English), Mrs M. Stone (Mathematics, Physics), Mrs M. Taylor (Chemistry, Biology).

Although the Community was no longer in Berwick itself, all the Sisters entered fully into the community of Berwick where they were always welcomed and they assisted Father Melia in his parish work. Various Sisters regularly gave religious instruction in local schools and a strong link was maintained with Seaton Hall and Berwick Infirmary.

The Community of St Mary's Convent, Longridge Towers, officially closed on 31 August 1983.

PROGRAMME 1984/85

All lectures will be held in the Holy Name Parish Centre, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, on Tuesday at 7.00 p.m.

2 October 1984	Annual General Meeting. Rev. W.J. Nicholson (Chairman). *English Mystics.*
6 November 1984	Dr Ian Doyle. *Catholic Historical Traditions in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Durham.*
4 December 1984	Leo Gooch, B.A. *'Vile Rogues and Jacobites' : Silvertop v. Coatsworth 1715–1735.*
5 February 1985	James Lang, B.A. *'Judgment and Exile' : the carvings of the Franks Casket.*
5 March 1985	Dr Sheridan Gilley. *'Durham – No Popery' : A Forgotten Chapter.*

Coach Excursions (all whole day)

6 October 1984 (Sat)	Escomb Church, Raby Castle.
May 1985	Vale of Pickering and Lastingham.
June 1985	Shap Abbey and Sizergh Castle.

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