Northern Catholic History

No. 29 Spring, 1989

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.

PATRONS: The Rt Rev. Hugh Lindsay, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, and the Rt Rev. Owen Swindlehurst, Auxiliary Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.

OFFICERS 1988/89

CHAIRMAN	Rev. D. Milburn, D.S.H.
GENERAL SECRETARY	Miss E. Swallow, 16 Spittal Terrace, Gosforth, Nc.3.
PROGRAMME SECRETARY	Miss J. O'Callaghan, 30 Burnopfield Gdns., Denton Burn, Nc. 15.
OUTINGS SECRETARY	Miss M. Davison, 6 Larkspur Terr., Nc. 2.
TREASURER AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	P. McGuinness, 3 Otterburn Ave., Gosforth, Nc. 3.
EDITOR	R.M. Gard, 21 Larchwood Ave., Wideopen, Nc.13.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	Officers: J. Scollen, Mrs J. Scollen, Mrs E. Shaw, G. Thornton.
Annual Subscription	£4.00 (with *Northern Catholic History*) or £2.00 (membership only).

NORTHERN CATHOLIC HISTORY

Published twice yearly. Annual subscription, including postage:
U.K. – £3.00; Overseas – £4.00.

Copies of Nos. 9–28 available from Mr Gard (above) at reduced rates.

© North East Catholic History Society and contributors.
Articles and enquiries welcomed by editor.

ISSN 0307–4455

NORTHERN CATHOLIC HISTORY

No.29 Spring 1989

CONTENTS

Editorial Notes		2
Bl. John Ingram, 1565—1594: The Gateshead Martyr	M.J. CASHMAN	3
Priscilla Maria Beckwith, 1806—1877: A Forgotten Victorian Lady	D.W. SMITH	20
A Victorian Priest, Rev. Thomas Ord, in the Holy Land, 1865	W.J. NICHOLSON	32
Lady Peat's Legacy	L. GOOCH	38

Illustrations:

Lt Gen. William Beckwith, K.H., 1795—1871	23
St Leonard's, Silksworth, built in 1873	27
Nazareth in 1839. Engraving of a sketch by David Roberts, R.A.	34
Rev. Thomas Ord (1812—1900), about 1865	37

NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society, bereft by the death last year of Fr Nicholson, held its fifteenth A.G.M. in St Mary's Cathedral Centre on 4 October, without an elected chairman. However, the announcement that Fr David Milburn, a friend of the Society since its beginning, had accepted an invitation to be chairman, was greeted with enthusiasm, and he and the existing officers and committee, who were all thanked for their services, were duly elected for 1988/9. Instead of the chairman's customary talk, Peter McGuinness, our Treasurer, provided an excellent slide show, testing members' knowledge with a quiz on buildings and memorials of Newcastle. The usual Autumn half-day excursion in October was to Brinkburn Priory.

This year the Society had three lectures before Christmas. On 26 October Dom Geoffrey Scott OSB gave a talk on the Benedictines in the North East in the Eighteenth Century, as a tribute to Fr Nicholson who had had a special interest in the subject. (It is hoped to publish the talk in the next issue.) Then, on 8 November Fr R. Connelly spoke about Bl. Nicholas Postgate, the martyr of the North Yorks Moors, and on 6 December Mr Michael Morris described his researches in writing about his popular 'Parish Profiles' in the *Northern Cross.* All these talks were well attended, although the latter two were in rather cramped quarters.

The forthcoming talks by Mr T.P. Macdermott on Irish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Tyneside on 7 February, and by Professor J. Watt on Anti-Semitism in Medieval York on 7 March are eagerly anticipated. The dates of the two Summer outings, to Nunraw in May and Ripley Castle in June, have yet to be finalised.

The present edition again offers varied reading. Mrs Joan Cashman has kindly agreed to the re-publication of her important biography of the Gateshead martyr, Bl. John Ingram, first published in *Recusant History* in 1973. Then, Mr Douglas Smith, now almost a regular contributor, writes about the life of Mrs Beckwith, a Victorian convert and correspondent of Newman, who built St Leonard's, Silksworth, and was a benefactor to the parish and the diocese. Finally, the Society is posthumously indebted to Fr Nicholson for providing some years ago a transcript of a letter of Fr Thomas Ord of Thropton describing a visit to the Holy Land in 1865, which is published by permission of Mr Charles Forster of Burradon, who happily continues the valued association between Burradon and the Society. The warm thanks of the Society are expressed to all these. Needless to say, the Hon. Editor would welcome articles for future editions.

Robin Gard, *Hon. Editor*

BL. JOHN INGRAM, 1565–1594 : THE GATESHEAD MARTYR

M.J. Cashman

The canonisation of John Boste may have awakened some interest in the story of his fellow-prisoner, John Ingram, who was the third and last of the seminary priests to be executed on Tyneside during the reign of Elizabeth I. Such an interest is easy to gratify, since Ingram is one of the best documented of the English Martyrs. [1] As with his two predecessors, Joseph Lambton and Edward Waterson, we have both an account by Holtby of the martyr's trial and execution, and some evidence of the latter in the same Newcastle Account Book; but in this case, these sources can be rounded out by a series of official letters and, most unusually, Ingram's own letters and epigrams.

He was born in 1565, at Stoke Edith, Herefordshire, a county noted for the strong Catholicism of its gentry. His parents, Richard and Anne Ingram, however, seem to have been non-Catholics at that time since John needed a dispensation from heresy, when he was sent to Douai in 1579. It seems likely that he came under Catholic influence through his sister, Cicely, who had married into the actively Catholic family of the Lingens at Stoke Edith. Her husband, William, was probably the nephew of the Marian priest mentioned in the following report:

> The said George Lingam . . . harboured and lodged sometimes at one Mr Wilscot's [probably Woolhampton] and at Englefield, who is at these places called James Lingar, and under colour of teaching on the virginals goeth from papist to papist, is thought also to be a priest, so made in Queen Mary's time, and like to be the man that was kept in the top of the said Parkyn's house [Ufton Court, Berks.] at a time when Her Majesty was but ill-served by her officers in a search there made. [2]

William Lingen was also related through his mother, Margaret, to the intensely Catholic family of the Englefields, which explains the gifts of money that we shall find Sir Francis Englefield sending to Ingram during his student days. His first epigram, cut into a wall of his cell in the Tower of London, implies that his mother was a Catholic by the time he was imprisoned. [3]

At Douai, John was assigned as a pupil to John Columb, a Devon-

shire Jesuit, but in 1582 the college was forced by war to move to Rheims, the students making their way there in small groups, as best they could. On the way, John was imprisoned and held to ransom, as he later recalled in an epigram:

'The happy land of France, fouled by the horrid crime of wretched Calvin, long shut me up when a tender child in a gloomy cell . . .' [4] He managed to escape, however, and arrived at Rheims with another student, Christopher Heywood, 'in tattered and worn-out clothes'.[5] The following April he was sent to study logic under the Jesuits at Pont-a-Mousson, and then to the English College, Rome, where he arrived on 7 September 1584, taking the scholar's gown on the 15th (the same day as his friend, Humphrey Wolsely), and the college oath to go on the English Mission the following June. [6]

It was in the summer of this year that a minority among the students rebelled against their Jesuit superiors, and Bishop Sega of Piacenza was sent to make a visitation. His report contains Ingram's name with those of Edmund Duke, Antony Major and Richard Walpole in the list of '*postremo logici*'.[7] Duke, the delicate scholarly Kentish youth whose letters show him to have been so attached to college life,[8] was doomed to be arrested soon after landing in England, and to be executed in Durham with three other priests in 1590. Major, with William Hardesty, whose name was among those of the theology students, chose the easier path of betrayal,[9] and we shall meet them later as the 'false brethren' who identified Ingram for Huntingdon. Ingram and Duke, with two more future martyrs, Christopher Buxton and Polydore Plasden, were among the majority of seventeen who supported the Jesuit authorities, whereas Major was one of the malcontents (though Fr Anstruther believes we whould not follow Parsons in making too much of this, as there were future martyrs and apostates on both sides). [10]

One of the complaints had concerned the poor health of the students, and the seventeenth-century Jesuit, Fr Grene, quoted two entries relating to Ingram from an old college account book. [11] The first refers to a copyist whom he employed to take down the theological dictates, probably through ill-health; the second notes that Sir Francis Englefield sent him money from Spain on at least two occasions. Ingram was ill in the summer of 1589 and was sent with other invalids to the Jesuit's college at Tivoli, where the Rector insisted he should

remain for a while to complete his convalescence after the others returned. During his absence, his dear friend Humphrey Wolsely died, and the letter about this which Ingram wrote to his Superior, Fr Creswell, reveals his affectionate disposition.[12] This letter was dated 21 August; one month later. Joseph Lambton arrived at the College from Rheims, so he was there for Ingram's ordination by Bishop Goldwell in December: 'Rome — under thy tuition I learnt wisdom and Christ in the sacred text. And to raise anointed hands unto heaven.'[13]

Ingram, however, did not witness Lambton's ordination, for he left the College in September 1591, travelling via Abbeville to Flanders. There he spent the winter, waiting for a passage to England, where a spy had tipped off the Government that he was expected:

> We are informed that Anthony Ingram, late servant to Alderman Hart, having been two or three years in Spain is become a seminary priest He was at Antwerp on 9 November last and now coming to England. He has a sister dwelling in Coleman St. at the sign of the Hand and Castle. His mother abideth in Hertfordshire and also an uncle named Liggens, to whom it is thought he will repair. He is to be arrested.[14]

The first particulars were incorrect, but it was true that Ingram stayed at Antwerp for part of the winter, as was revealed by Thomas Walpole's confession three years later; he deposed that Ingram had 'said Mass at the Jesuits' secret chapel in Bruxels and hath bene in secular apparell in Antwerpe, and hath also sayd Mass in the Carthusyans in Antwerpe'.[15] He probably went first to Brussels, for at Abbeville he had been joined by Edmund Yorke, who was going to be 'reconciled' by Fr Holt, the Jesuit who was Vice-Prefect of the English Mission, resident in Brussels. Walpole's further deposition, that 'he heard Mr Bruce, a Scott gentleman resydent at Bruxels, saying that he had written unto Scotland concernyng him and giving him dyrection where to kepe',[15] points to an agent of Holt's approaching his Scots colleagues.

Ingram's own confession after his capture admitted that he 'came from beyond the sea fyrst into Scotland but will not confesse the port or place where he landed, but that yt was betwene Lethe and Dunbarre.'[16] He said that he had been in Scotland for a year and a half, sent by his Superior, whose name he would not give, 'to do the office of a priest'.[17] He landed in the Spring of 1592, not long before Lambton and Waterson, but his confession gave no clue to his subsequent movements: 'He will not tell with whom, in whose houses, or in what

place of Scotland he hath bene'.[18] However, an examinate called Barrowes revealed that the Scots Jesuits had told him that 'he should goe to Abbott of Dumffrese where Ingram the priest already is'.[19] It looks as though he was one of the priests who were 'reset' in the West, on both sides of the Border, where the Government suspected much Jesuit trafficking; in 1586 Lord Scrope had expressed his suspicions of Lord Maxwell at 'the New Abbaye which is near unto Dumfreis'.[20]

Ingram's ultimate destination was the castle of Balgavies in Forfarshire, acquired in 1586 by Sir Walter Lindsay, son of the ninth Earl of Crawford. This nobleman claimed to be the first of the converts made by the Scots Jesuits, Gordon and Creighton, who persuaded him to make a public profession of Catholicism. It was natural therefore that Fr Holt should have sent Ingram to him as chaplain; but the priest's position there is an excellent example of the serious hindrance to the clergy's spiritual mission created by the political activities of Parsons and the Scots Jesuits. Ingram cannot have been led by affection for his host into involvement with his plots, for no evidence of that sort of treason was produced at his trial. Nevertheless it would have been unreasonable to expect the English Government to assume his innocence, since his host was a known firebrand, continually embroiled in family feuds as well as political plots, and finally met his death at the hands of a kinsman.[21] According to his own account, it was mainly his bold example which influenced the Earls of Erroll, Huntley and Angus to confess the Catholic religion openly, and it seems likely that the idea of making overtures to Spain was his, and that the correspondence was started in his castle.[21] He was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle in 1589 but conditionally released on 29 November, Francis Earl of Bothwell standing bail for him, to the sum of £1,000. It was during this period of liberty that he became Ingram's host; later he wrote in a Spanish report that 'he withstood the ministers for a long time with the help of an English priest, named Ingram (afterwards martyred in England), who lived in his house as chaplain, said Mass, and preached sermons . . . Many were converted to the holy faith.'[22] Ingram was probably referring to his host when he cut into the walls of his cell in the Tower these lines:

> Right on the threshold of that kingdom I was taken
> Whence came both my second mother and my second father;[23]

and another epigram shows that he thought well of the Catholic Scots lords:

Hail to thee, glorious band, born of a soil
That scorns to bear the yoke of any foreign tyrant.
I have lived in the religion of my sires, for it I am a prisoner;
Do you according to the example of my death.[24]

In 1592, James VI was caught between their conspiracies and those of the Kirk, who feared that he might be converted by the Scots Jesuits, and persuaded into an alliance with Spain, as he had drifted from the English alliance since attaining his majority. The Kirk imagined that the ensuing invasion would be supported by Scots Catholics (although there was never sufficient rapport between Scots and Spaniards for this to have been a viable proposition).[25] There had been rumours of such an invasion in 1591, and the next year the Kirk discovered the plot known as 'the Spanish Blanks'. George Ker was to have gone to Spain with important letters, said to be by Jesuits and seminary priests, and to consist of blank sheets, signed by the Earls of Erroll, Huntly and Angus. Ker was seized and tortured, and he made a confession (later retracted) that he was the agent for a plot of some Catholic nobles to help Spain in an invasion of Scotland. He was to have filled in the signed sheets and given them to the King of Spain.[26]

A hue and cry after Catholic priests and their harbourers inevitably ensued; this was doubtless the reason for Sir Walter's summons. On failing to appear, he was denounced as a rebel, and on 11 January 1592—93, was ordered before the King and Council to answer for practising in matters against the estate of religion, the King's person and authority. He again failed to comply, and the King during a Northern progress demolished his castle.[27] This must have occasioned Ingram's flight over the Border,[28] as fatal a journey for him as it had been for the King's mother.

Holtby described his capture:

> Mr John Ingram, having employed his travel, since his mission from the Seminary, in the country of Scotland, for the restoring of souls out of heresy unto the unity of the Catholic Church, upon some urgent occasion had been in England, and returning back again and entered into a boat to pass over the river of Tweed into Scotland (25 November 1593) was stayed by the keepers of Norham Castle, apprehended, and carried to Berwick, there being kept under the safe custody of Mr John Carew, governor of the town, and used very courteously . . .[29]

John Carew, or Carey, was one of the sons of Lord Hunsdon, cousin of

Queen Elizabeth; Hunsdon had been in charge of Norham Castle since 1584, and both he and his son had been on the look-out for priests, especially Jesuits, under the zealous direction of the Earl of Huntingdon. John Boste was the other quarry, and probably it was to him that Carey was referring when he took up the story in a letter to Lord Burghley, dated 26 November 1593:

> Only this, I am to advertise your lordship, that in longe and often laying of baite, I have at last caught a fishe (but not the same I would fayne have had). This ys one Mr Thomas Oglebye — a seminary priest and Scotsman lately comde out of Flanders (as he saythe himself) who landed in Scotland, but where, he will not confesse, but saithe he was set on shoare with a shipp boate, which shippe afterwards passed awaye into the sea — not taking any haven, but only setting him on shoare. He will not confesse no place where he was more than this: from alehowse to alehowse and to the poorest townes and villages that he could fynde, fearing (as he sayth) his own apprehension. Seying at that tyme the Scotish estate so troblesome, as then in dede yt was, and much search and staye of all passages for such men as he, was persuaded by a friend of his to goe into England, wher he made abroad (as he sayth) but one night. He wyll not confesse where he was, but sayth he sitt on his horseback and walked on the moores all that night. But this is trewe, that in his returne back agayne, at Norham fourde upon Satterdaye last the xxvth of this inst., he was going over, and his horses were ferryed over, and he in the boate ready to goe, who by good fortune was stayd with all his trash of papistrye which was in a cloke bagge with him — viz. his massebookes, his little God Almighties oyle boxes, vestment, stoale, and all the appurtenances to say Mass withall. The worst is, his chalyse was but pewter. [30]

'The bloody hand' [31] of the Careys had descended on Ingram, who recalled his capture in another of his epigrams:

> Why did such folly seize thy shattered brain
> As to make thee cry 'I am a Scot', when seized at Berwick? [32]
> My assumed name was that of a Scottish clan; [33]
> My horse, my servant, my dress was Scottish.

Successive letters from Carey to Burghley describe Ingram's imprisonment at Berwick.

> I must entreat your lordship's direction touching the seminary priest of whom I wrote, for he is very chargabell besides the trouble of mind for fear of his escape. He is a very notable man if he wear whear he myghte well be excemined, and a dangerous man for the estate. Her Majesty's embassetur do the often wryghte ernestley, to have great care of him, and thinks a great happynes he is taken. I thinke it will prove he is an Inlishe name. I have feyve

names of his. I have been graetly soughte to out of Scotland to yeuese him well — as by the Earle of Angwishe [34] and the Earl of Arrell, [34] beseydes divers others, which sheawes him to be a mane of sum worthe. For sum in Scotland have not stiket to say openly, that they wolde not care if all the frendes thaye have wear in prissen, so he wear lose, or that they had lost all thaye have in the world for his liberty. If he prove but a prisoner, I thinke thear wold be near a 1000 crowenns geven for him. I beleve his righte name will prove to be Robert Mefeld or Manfeld. It may be Master Toplefe hathe heard of such a name . . . But I beseech your lordshipe whatever he be, let me have your direction what I shall do with him. Berwike, this viiith daye at paste x owers in the nighte. [35]

On 19 December, he wrote again:

I beseech your lordshipes resolution for the priest of whom I wrote, still in my custody, who is both a great charge and trouble of mind to me, being still watched by 2 men day and night. [36]

A week later, Carey's impatience was mounting:

If it will please your honour to favour me so much as that I may have some direction for my priest here, yt shall be a warnynge to me otherwise, hereafter ever to be too busy in the like service agayne — for that I fynde bothe the care, the troble and the chardge to be too great. [37]

This letter produced its effect, as his next one shows:

I have this ixth received a letter from the council and one from your lordship. The council desire me to send the preist in my custody to the Bishop and Dean of Durham, but as he has been somewhat sickly and weak, and therefore not well able to ride, I thought it best to stay him three or four days, till his health serve him better, with assurance that he will be forthcoming, God willing. [38]

Carey was not alone in treating Ingram well at Berwick; he had several visitors who helped to make his imprisonment more comfortable. [39] A final letter from Carey to Burghley reported: 'I sent the priest on his amendment of health, under escort of six garrison men and a man of Lord Huntingdon's, this xxiijth day to Durham, as the council directed'. [40] The Council had sent an inquiry up North to Huntingdon, who sent on the letter to the Bishop of Durham; he replied, as the Earl told the Council in a letter dated 18 January and sent from York,

that he never saw your former one, as to examining Maifield, a Scottish priest, who was to have been sent to him from Berwick, and that he has never heard of the man, nor your former letters. If the intelligence were true, no practice should hinder the better knowledge thereof. [41]

Huntingdon gave the reason for the heavy guard in a letter to Sir John Pickering (12 February); (Ingram had been sent to Huntingdon at York, from Durham):

> And for the Seminarie which was sente from Barwick, I finde him stille to be most close, obstinate and resolute, but I thinke I maie boldelie affirme that he is an Englisheman borne, and noe Scotte, though himself saith otherwise. I cannot hitherto learne his right name, and I fynde nowe, that it is doubted his name is not Bourne, as it is most certaine that it is not Oglebie. But with Scotland he is greatlie acquainted, and amongest others speciallie with the Earl of Huntley, with whom (as to me it is verie constantlie affirmed) he hathe bin for the moste parte of one yeare and a half, and soe greate is the reputacion of him with the Arch-papists of Scotland and some others, that if money wolde redeme hym, he should not longe continewe prisoner, and I have bin tolde that if the time of his sending from Barwick had bin knowen, some wold have adventured to reskewe him, before he had passed Northumberland, a matter which I had cause to doubt of, and therefore I sent a man to Mr Carey expressely to send him awaie well garded on the soddaine, which [was] well performed.
>
> I think I shall shortly be hable to advertise at whose house, and with whom he hath bin in the Southe, as I doe allready partlie know some places and persons where and with whom he hathe bin in Northumberland. When I have gotten hereof more certaintie, I wish rather that I might be licensed to bring him to London, than commaunded to sende him, for I doe greatlie desire to see hir Majestie.
>
> But to return to this Seminarie, I thinke till he come to the Tower, he will not speak Englishe, soe rightelie as he canne and shoulde doe. [42]

At York, Holtby tells us, Ingram 'was kept very close to the Manor and very hardly used', [43] a fact which was corroborated by William Hutton, an old Catholic layman imprisoned on Ousebridge;

> Fr John Ingram, priest, being apprehended in the North country, brought to York to the Lord President, where he was kept in the porter's lodge about two months close prisoner, having secret conference with Dr Favor and others, and dealt withal both with lenity and extremity. [44]

Grene, the Jesuit martyrologist who endorsed Hutton's notes, confirmed this satement:

> This time the President and Council sent Mr Walpole and Mr Lignum [45] who was taken with him; also Mr Ingram, who was taken shortly after and kept at the Manor straitly. He was called the Scotch priest for he said he was born in Angish, but Mr Hardisty [46] and Mr Mayor detected him, and said he was an

Englishman born and one which they knew at Rome. These were all together sent up to London. [47]

'Mr Walpole' was the Jesuit Henry Walpole, Garnet's intended replacement as Superior, and his capture soon after landing near Flamborough Head, following that of John Boste in September 1593, and of John Whitfield, a servant of Francis Dacre, gave Huntingdon's master, Cecil, the material he needed to outlaw Dacre.[48] He would have liked, however, to compromise the Earl of Essex also, with whom Dacre had put some of the English and Scots Catholics in touch,[49] and it was doubtless with this in view that Huntingdon sought evidence of a plot involving Walpole, Lingen and Ingram. He voiced his suspicions in a letter to Cecil, written on 23 February, in which he discussed Henry Walpole and his brother Thomas, a soldier like Lingen who had been captured with him, and then continued:

> But Lingen is of another stampe. he will answere to nothing directlie but continues in like obstinancie, as he was at Mr Topcliffe his beine here. I doe meane to trie him once again, before the Jesuit [50] be sent awaie, because I will see what he will confesse, especially of the Seminarie that was taken at Norham, a man full freighted (as I coniecture) with manie shrewde practises againste her Maiestie by them that sent him into Scotland, whither it seemeth he was directed, and nowe at the laste he is come this farre that he confesseth himself to be an Englishman, soe the name of Oglebie is loste and the name of Bourne allsoe whereof I certified your Lordship, for he had tooe other names in the English Colledg at Rome, the one Johannes Messinghhamus, the other Johannes Ingrahamus, and I thinke your Lordship in perusall of that Kalendar, which you have (I doubt not) of all the gentlemen in this lande, will fynde his right name to be Ingram, if in the counties of Worcestershire or Herefordshire there be anie such name of note; but whatsoever he be for his birth in gentrie, he is Englishe and not Scottish borne. This I may affirme, for soe he confesseth, and I thinke he will not saie much more that is fitt her Maiestie should knowe by him until he see or feele the rack. Yeat I will trie him still everie waie that I canne, and keape him as I doe, in safetie here, for to the Castell I dare not send him.
>
> From Yorke, this xxiiith Februarie, 1593. [51]

As Fr Pollen points out, this letter shows that Huntingdon knew almost all that was afterwards learnt from Hardesty, so Thomas Walpole's evidence was of no practical importance and was not used in the trial. [52] Nevertheless Huntingdon made much of it in a second letter to Puckering, dated 8 March, in which he stated: 'Nether could the tooe

Seminaries Hardestie and Maior tell me anie thinge of him, which were both then here in this house'. [53] During Ingram's trial, Huntingdon himself contradicted this statement:

> Ingram, you know that I brought unto you at York another Seminary priest, Mr Hardesty, who as soon as he saw you saluted you by the name of Monsieur Messinghamus; where before you had told me you were a Scot, and that your name was Ogleby. [54]

Hardesty and Mayor, or Major, were the 'false brethren' by whom, Holtby wrote, Ingram was betrayed, but who was 'this Judas' who 'sold me for the sake of Bacchus', [55] mentioned in one of Ingram's epigrams? Holtby merely noted in his transcript: 'This was a certain rascal in whose house he lodged and who betrayed him to the judge. Otherwise he would have been taken for a Scot, for a certain Scottish nobleman owned him as his son and endeavoured to ransom him.' [56] Perhaps the porter in whose lodge he was imprisoned had discovered his identity, or at least his nationality, during the first month of his stay.

Huntingdon apologised in the above-mentioned letter for sending Ingram prematurely to London, explaining that he thought his prisoner 'more fytte for the Towre, where he mighte be in more safetie, and better syfted than here he could be'.[57] So 'they sent him to London, to the torturers', [58] with Fr Henry Walpole and Mr Lingen.[59] One of Ingram's epigrams gives us a glimpse of his long ride there:

> My lesser jade often changed his whiteness
> and made me black too with the mud of his own splashing,

and another of his arrival:

> The day, on which the unquenched love of the Faith
> made me behold the grim prison of the Tower. [60]

There Ingram, like Boste who had been sent up the previous October, underwent Topcliffe's tortures, as Fr Grene tells us [61] and Hutton confirms: 'He hung by the joints of his fingers and arms in extreme pain so long that the feeling of his senses were clean taken from him'. [62] In the intervals, one of his epigrams relates, he had only 'a pillow, a book, cups and a bed of straw', [63] and reckoned himself rich. Holtby proudly recorded that 'as appeareth by his own writing he confessed nothing to the hurt of either man, woman or child, or any place he had frequented; in so much that Topcliffe said he was of all others a monster for his taciturnity'.[64] The 'Bloody Question' was put to him:

'Being asked if he will take her majesty's parte against the pope, he sayethe it ys a future contingent, and knowethe not what he shold do'.[65] This answer, in spite of its prudent caution, sealed his fate, and with Boste, Holtby tells us,

> being appointed to die, were both together sent back again into the north country, having their feet tied under the horses' belly; for fear of flying, and the one severed a certain distance from the other, by the way lest they might confer or comfort the one the other. So they arrived at York about the 13 day of July.[66]

Fifteen days later, the following payment was recorded:

> To William Peryman and Henry Morton, yeomen of her Majesty's Chamber, upon Council's warrant dated at Greenwich xxviijth Julii 1594 for the charges and expenses of themselves disbursed for horse-cheer [*sic*] and other necessities in conducting of two Seminarie Priests, John Boste and John Ingram, to the city of York and for their return back — xv li.[67]

Hutton takes up the tale:

> York, where he was committed to Ousebridge, kept there close prisoner in low stinking vault, locked in a jakeshouse the space of four days, without either bed to lie on or stool to sit on,[68]

and Fr Grene continues it:

> Three days was kept in a gaol-house close by himself, very strait. Then was he and John Carr carried both from York to Newcastle . . . John had been long kept in Peter Prison, not a Catholic, but charged to receive priests; and about the Thursday after looked to be arraigned and condemned thereabout. Mr Ingram was executed and John Carr reprieved.[69]

He mentions Ingram's diet at York, said to be mostly bread and water, like Boste's. Holtby makes no reference to Carr, or to George Errington, the heroic lay-helper who had been sent bound with Boste to Durham, and then on to the Newgate in Newcastle, where he was imprisoned at the same time as Ingram. The same Municipal Account-book which contains the imprisonment and execution expenses of Lambton and Waterson includes some entries relating to Ingram and Errington. The following two have not been printed before:

> Paide for taking irons of George Errington prisoner and layinge one — 12d
> Paid for bringing Ingram the semynarie from the blewstoane to the towre of the bridge and then to Newgate where he laie — 4d

Although he was condemned to die at Gateshead, it was the

responsibility of Newcastle to arrange for the execution, and so we find two more hitherto unprinted entries concerning the preparations:

> Paide Lorence Thomson 1 daie, Ma. More 1 daie, Luke More 2 daie, Richard Cowtarde 1 daie, makinge a gibett for hinging the prest which was executid in Gateside att 10d and 9d per pece a daie — 3s 8d
> Paide for working 2 stone and 4 lbs of Danske iron in 4 gibettes for hinginge upp the semynaries 4 quarters and his heed for iron — 5s [71]

The remaining set of entries [72] tell us that Errington was imprisoned in the Newgate for ten days, which must have been from 16 to 26 July 1594 (the day when Boste was executed in Durham but Errington sent back to York), and that Ingram was there for four nights, probably from 19 to 22 July. The entries (for August 1594) are as follows:

> Paid for George Errington 10 days, 10s, his bedding, 20d
> Jo. Ingram, a semynarie, 4 nyghtes, 4s; his beddinge, 8d lyinge in Newgate till he was tried uppon; 11 watchmen 2 nyghtes, the 21 and 22 of Julii, 4d per pees, 7s 4d; for 7 day after 4 watchmen a nyght comes to 10s 8d; for 4 men more in the nyghte, 2s 8d; for 8 bow stringes, 8d — 37s 8d

The 19th July was a Friday, and Holtby relates that Ingram had a visitor on that day, who found him dining off bread and water. She was the wife of one of his Berwick custodians, perhaps Carey, and had shown kindness to him during his imprisonment there. Now he thanked her for having made his stay there more comfortable than his subsequent incarcerations. His joy, at which she so marvelled, is reflected in two letters he wrote in prison to his friends: 'I look for my trial on Thursday (25 July), and consequently for my death in God's honour . . . in my pained body, my spirit is not pained, nor in any disaster, distress or durance.' [73]

The Durham Assizes were held from Monday to Thursday, 22 to 25 July. The prisoners did not have to attend until Tuesday, 23 July, however, which accounts for the extra guards for the nights of 21 and 22 July. Holtby gives what was probably an eyewitness account of the trials and executions of all three, Boste, Ingram and Swallowell. All these were tried on Tuesday, 23 July. Boste and Ingram were indicted under the statute of 1585 (27 Elizabeth, c.2) 'against Jesuits, seminary priests and such other disobedient persons', which made it high treason for an Englishman ordained abroad to come into or remain in England. Boste was also charged with saying Mass, but this was omitted from

Ingram's indictment, and thus he was condemned simply for being a priest. Swallowell was charged and condemned for reconciling a person to Catholicism. Holtby gives much detail about the pleas, the exchanges between the judges and the accused, who protested that they were condemned for religion and not for high treason. The death sentences were passed on the morning of Thursday, 24 July. They were 'to die for the public example's sake', as Holtby's account says, 'at three sundry places': Boste at Durham, Ingram at Gateshead, and Swallowell at Darlington. Boste was executed that same afternoon, Ingram was to die on Friday, 26 July, and Swallowell on Monday, 29 July.

Ingram's execution took place outside the Chapel of St Edmund Bishop and Confessor (now the church of Holy Trinity), where a stone cross stood. Reading Holtby's report, one can follow the 29-year-old West Countryman going to his death in unsympathetic Gateshead on that long-ago Friday 1594:

> Upon Friday, being the 26th of July, Mr John Ingram was by the under-sheriff conveyed to Gateside. The cart, therefore, coming to the prison, he was brought forth and laid thereon, and entering into the cart he used these words, *Tamquam agnus innocens ad occisionem ductus sum*, and being so carried out of the town, there was a horse prepared for him, and as he rid the rest of the way on horseback, without boots or cloak, having upon his head a white coif only, with a JESUS wrought in the forehead with red silk. . . . holding the bridle in the left hand, and his right hand up, praying; but it seemed that he had no perfect use of his right hand, by reason of racking, for he could not hold it very upright. His horse was changed at Chester, and another delivered unto him; . . . and between the under-sheriff and the aldermen of Durham was conveyed unto the Tollbooth in Gateside . . . The same day, about three of the clock at afternoon, or a little before, all things at the place of execution being ready, Mr Ingram was then laid in another cart, and from the Tollbooth was drawn to the place of execution. [74]

(The tollbooth was a small local gaol in the High Street, between Swinburne Street and Oakwellgate.)

Again, Holtby gives an account of Ingram's preparations, the prayers he said, his words to the bystanders, and of the execution itself:

> I take God and his holy angels to the record, that I die only for the holy Catholic faith and religion, and do rejoice and thank God with all my heart that hath made me worthy to testify my faith therein, by the spending of my blood in this manner.

He was asked to pray for the Queen and he 'prayed God that she might long reign to his glory, and that it might please him to procure her to live and die a good Catholic Christian prince'. With the rope around his neck he said more prayers, ending with the psalm *Miserere mei Deus*, after which, 'making the sign of the Cross upon himself and saying, *In manus tuas* etc., the ladder was turned; and being dead, he was cut down, bowelled, and quartered, as the manner is'.

It was a much less costly affair than those of the two Newcastle martyrs, Lambton and Waterson; no large bribe was needed, evidently, to secure an executioner in Gateshead.

> Paide for chairges att the execution of the semynarie preiste in Gateside John Ingram — 2s 6d
> Paide for hinginge his quarters of the gibbettes; 18d and for a panyer which brought his quarters to the towne 4d — 22d
> Paide for a locke for the towlboothe dore in Gateside — 3s 4d [75]

Holtby wound up his report:

> His quarters were sent to Newcastle, his head set upon the bridge, with Mr Lambton's and Mr Waterson's, and his blessed soul received triumphantly among the celestial spirits in the kingdom of his heavenly Father' [76]

In Rome, when the news of his victory reached his 'alma mater', they turned up his name and after it wrote: '*Martyrio insigni coronatus*' [77]

Blessed John Ingram was beatified by Pius XI on 15 December 1929.

NOTES

1 G. Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests*, I (1968), p.183.

2. T.B. Trappes-Lomax, 'The Englefields and their contribution to the survival of the faith in Berks., Wilts., Hants. and Leics.' *Biographical Studies* I, No.2, p.132, citing the Cotton MSS. (*Titus* II. 3).

3. C.R.S. 5, p.278.

4 Ibid., p.281.

5. *1st and 2nd Douay Diaries*, ed. Knox, p.191.

6. C.R.S. 5, p.165.

7. O. Meyer, *England and the Catholic Church under Elizabeth* (1916), appendix 3.

8. C.R.S. 5, pp.174–8.

9. John Morris, *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*, 3, p.122.

10. G. Anstruther, *A Hundred Homeless Years* (1958), p.16.

11. C.R.S. 5, p.271.

12. Ibid., p.65.

13. Ibid., p.281.
14. G. Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests*, I, p.183, citing A.P.C., 23, 345.
15. C.R.S. 5, p.243.
16. Ibid., p.242.
17. Ibid., p.281.
18. Ibid., p.279.
19. Ibid., p.242.
20. Ibid., n.41.
21. *Dictionary of National Biography*, 33, p.314.
22. W. Forbes-Leith, *Narratives of Scottish Catholics*, p.355.
23. C.R.S. 5, p.279.
24. Ibid., p.278.
25. D. Mathew, *The Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe*, (1935).
26 C.R.S. 52, p.112 (note).
27 It was never rebuilt, and two arches of the vaults are all that remain above ground today. I am indebted to Lady Dorothy Morley and her husband for allowing us to see these, and to her gardener, Mr Middleton, for showing us the way and providing information.
28. He himself refers to it (Morris 3, p.198).
29. Ibid., p.196.
30. Calendar Border Papers, ed. J. Bain, 1894, I, p.92, no.144.
31. An expression used by Sir Robert Ker, cited by A.L. Rowse in *The Expansion of Elizabethan England*, 1955, p.18.
32. Berwick is sufficiently near Norham for Ingram to use the better-known place-name.
33. C.R.S. p.279.
34. Presumably 'Angus' and 'Erroll'.
35. C.B.P., p.515.
36. Ibid., p.518, no.923.
37. Ibid., no.924.
38. Dated 10 January 1593–94, C.B.P., no.927.
39. Cf. Holtby's narrative, Morris 3, p.197.
40. C.B.P., no.928.
41. S.P. Eliz. Dom. Add., p.360.
42. C.R.S. 5, p.240.
43. Morris 3, p.196.
44. Ibid., pp.41–48.
45. Edward Lingen, Ingram's nephew, had left England for reasons of conscience and served as an officer in Sir William Stanley's regiment. Captured with Henry and Thomas Walpole soon after landing in Yorkshire, he was still in the Tower in 1598, occupying a cell adjoining William Weston's, who praises Lingen's steadfastness in his autobiography (P. Caraman, *Henry Garnet*, 1964, p.180).

46. He was presumably 'a precher, one Mr Hardeside, a seminarie was, and now God be thanked is convertid' (Chamberlains' Account 1590–96 [Payments], p.27, Newcastle City Archives). Newcastle Corporation paid him the considerable sums of forty shillings in 1595, and twenty the next year, if he was the priest referred to in the same terms: 'Paid and geven to a precher, a seminarye was and now convertid, who preched in St Nicholas' Church . . .' (C/A op.cit, p.623.) His name was also spelt 'Hardistile' (S/P 238, p.474). Verstegan recorded his capture: 'One Mr Hardesty, a priest, being taken in the North, was brought up to London and is sent down againe' (C.R.S. 52, p.68). This was in August 1592. Holtby refers to him (Morris 3, pp.122, 193) and Fr Grene describes his attempt to preach to the prisoners in York Castle on 18 December 1593, (Foley 3, p.763).
47. Foley 3, pp.743 ff.
48. C.R. Reid, *The King's Council in the North*, 1921, pp.208 ff.
49. C.R.S. 52, p.xxi, where it is stated that the rivalry between Cecil and Essex has recently been played down by historians.
50. Henry Walpole.
51. C.R.S. 5, p.241.
52. Ibid., p.272.
53. Ibid., p.242.
54. Morris 3, p.202.
55. C.R.S. 5, p.280.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p.242.
58. Morris 3, p.314 (William Hutton's notes).
59. Foley 3, p.765.
60. C.R.S. 5, p.280.
61. Foley 3, pp.743 ff: 'Mr Ingram often put on the rack, and another torture as ill, termed by some "Younge's Fiddle".'
62. Morris 3, p.314.
63. C.R.S. 5, p279.
64. Morris 3, p.196.
65. C.R.S. 5, p.243.
66. Morris 3, p.197.
67. C.R.S. 5, p.288.
68. Morris 3, p.314.
69. Foley 3, p.765.
70. C/A, op.cit., p.204. The 'bluestone', set in the Tyne Bridge, marked the boundary between Newcastle and Gateshead.
71. Ibid., p.198.
72. Ibid., p.201 (printed in R. Welford, *History of Newcastle and Gateshead* 3, p.87).
73. Challoner, p.205.
74. Morris 3, p.210.
75. C/A, op.cit., p.198, and original MS.
76. Morris 3, p.212.
77. C.R.S. 37, p.55.

Ed. This article was first published in *Recusant History*, October 1971, and is reprinted by kind permission of the author and the Honorary Editor.

Translation of Latin Epigrams cut by Bl. John Ingram with a blunt knife on the walls of the Tower of London while he daily awaited death, July 1594.

1. TO DEAREST MOTHER

Dear Mother, if you still breathe the breath of life,
I pray you put a happy end to your tears.
Behold this body which I have taken from your body is to be torn asunder,
Yet does my soul seek with gladness the golden stars.
The second from the eleventh year, unless I am deceived, has passed
Since your voice was drunk in by my ears.
In heaven it will be permitted to exchange words again,
Whither I hasten yet a youth, whither you will follow in old age.
'Tis love of the faith, and the worship of the Lord of Heaven,
This alone, and no crime, is the cause of my dread doom.

II. A MERRY EPIGRAM ON HIS TOMB

Rocks are quarried, the entrails of the earth,
That Dives may have living rock for his tomb.
No tomb seek I; and yet shall there be a living tomb
For my lifeless body — the carrion-crow.

III. ANOTHER

The land that binds the bear is my father, my mother
The spear and shield, my nurse the land rich in fruits.

[An allusion to the arms of the counties of Warwick, where he was begotten; Hereford, where he was born; Worcester, where he was brought up.]

V. ANOTHER

In early spring I sought the realm of the Scots, but these limbs
Which that land had given me, she took from me in early spring.

VI. ANOTHER

If thou wouldst with Christ spend eternal days,
Begin to scorn in heart the days of earth.

VII. ANOTHER

This expectation of a bloody death is another death,
Which grins at me, her grey hairs steeped in gore.

VIII. ANOTHER, ON HIS BED OF STRAW

London has few horses to feed, hence there fell to me
A couch though not a soft one: for my couch was straw.

The full Latin text and English translation of all the epigrams, with a facsimile of some, is printed in C.R.S. 5, p.273, et seq.

PRISCILLA MARIA BECKWITH, 1806–1877 : A FORGOTTEN VICTORIAN LADY

D.W. Smith

When they opened her will in 1877, the executors were faced with detailed instructions concerning three specially marked boxes that were to be found in her quarters. These were to be taken out into the field adjoining Silksworth House, 'holes made in them for the purposes of inserting tar and other combustables',[1] they were then to be set alight and the contents, still unopened, consumed.

Thus, we might assume, perished the private papers of Priscilla Maria Beckwith, one of the founders of the Christian community in the village of Silksworth on the outskirts of Sunderland. This destruction, if such it had been, was the express wish of the lady and doubtless Victorian propriety or personal modesty dictated it. Nevertheless, it is a pity, for such material would have served to gain an insight into the lady's conversion to the Catholic faith and her decision to endow a church, besides much else of her domestic life.

So it is to the few passing references that we must look to reconstruct something of the life of Mrs Beckwith. It is with the recent editing of the letters and diaries of John Henry Newman that we learn she was in correspondence with that great figure of the nineteenth century.[2] Did the onlookers that June day of 1877 witness, albeit unwittingly, in the field of Silksworth House the destruction of letters and spiritual advice from a man likely to be canonised? A tantalising thought indeed!

Mrs Beckwith was the daughter of Thomas Hopper of Silksworth House (now renamed Doxford Park), some three miles from Sunderland. They were an old Durham family several of whom had suffered fines for recusancy during Stuart times. Jane, wife of Hugh Hopper, draper of Durham, had paid these fines from 1605 for almost thirty years; Nicholas Hopper of Eastbrandon was likewise convicted in 1625.[3] At the Restoration they conformed but Hendry Hopper, most notable of this family, acted as legal adviser to such Catholic gentry as the Withams and the Smythe baronets of Esh.

It was probably as a result of this advising that William Johnson, a man said to be of 'dissipated habits', [4] bequeathed his estate of Silksworth with its Georgian mansion house to 'my good and worthy friend Hendry Hopper Esq.,' in 1792.[5] This estate also included land where Hopper Street and Johnson Street stood in the town, as well as Hendon House. Thus Hendry was a considerable landholder by the time of his death in 1819, of enough status to merit burial in the Chapel of the Nine Altars at Durham. He in turn left this estate to a nephew, Thomas Hopper, born in 1772, who had married Wilhemine Dorothea daughter of an Anglican clergyman. His daughter Priscilla Maria was born at Jesmond House 29 July 1806 and baptised at St Andrews', Newcastle.[6] Thomas Hopper died in 1830, and another daughter, Elizabeth Henrietta, died 1828, aged twenty, so that Priscilla, his sole heiress, was left alone but for her stepmother, who died in 1846. In 1831 she entered into a marriage settlement with William Beckwith, then Major in the 14th Regiment of Dragoons. [7] This settlement ensured £500 for her personal use as well as jewelry and the contents of the mansion house from her late father's principal fortune of £25,546.6s.5d., with £7,000 to be paid to his sister, plus £630 a year from a £3,000 mortgage on lands in Prestwick near Ponteland.

The bridegroom chosen by this heiress was already possessed of a colourful history. Said to descend from Malbisse, a knight of the Conqueror, [8] the family had long resided at Thurcroft in Yorkshire. The Beckwiths were largely a military family who by the eighteenth century had inherited the Woodifield estate of Trimdon in County Durham. William Beckwith of Thurcroft and Trimdon [9] married one of the seven daughters of John Neasham, colliery proprietor of Houghton-le-Spring, and settled at Herrington Hall nearby. Here his son, another William, was born in 1795 and entered the army at an early age, becoming Cornet of the 16th Light Dragoons (now Lancers). By 1813 he had served in the Peninsular Wars at the battles of Nivelle and the Nive. Awarded the Waterloo medal in 1815 for having seen action there, he thereafter served principally with the 14th Light Dragoons at Dundalk in the Curragh and in the Dublin barracks. After a review on Hampstead Heath before the Duke of York, the smart appearance of the troops earned his promotion. In 1829, as Major he was raised as Knight Companion of the now obsolete Guelphic Order of Hanover.[10]

In 1831, the 14th were being moved about the country for spells

of duty during the riots associated by the movement for parliamentary reform. Beckwith was in Gloucester when there broke out the great disturbance known as the Bristol Riot. Reminiscent of the Gordon Riots some fifty years earlier, it resulted in horrific scenes of bloodshed. According to various accounts, between 250 and 500 are said to have been killed, wounded or perished by fire.

Large crowds had gathered in Bristol before the ceremonial entry of Sir Charles Wetherall, known as a violent crusader against municipal and parliamentary reform as well as Catholic emancipation. The civil authorities found themselves powerless against such a number. Col Brereton, commander of the troops then stationed in Bristol, seemed at a loss how to deal with the situation and the magistrates were unwilling to give clear orders. Volleys of stones greeted one magistrate who nervously appeared and mumbled out the Riot Act, but by this time the government offices were in flames and the mob ransacking the Bishop's Palace.[11]

The Mayor, Mr Pinney, sent an urgent request to Beckwith and his troops which he received at two in the morning.[12] He left for the forty-mile march and reached the city about seven o'clock when the magistrates, unhappy at their lack of support from Col Brereton, left the situation in his hands. Amidst continual volleys of stones, he stepped forward and demanded that the mob return home. One man struck his horse. 'Do that again and you'll rue, the next you throw will be your last', responded the infuriated Beckwith.[13] As another stone struck the major, whether deliberately or because his horse startled, he lunged at the man with his sabre and a head rolled to the ground, the body swaying for a moment or two before falling heavily. Giving order to charge, swords flashed down on the mob as they scrambled through doorways and passages in an effort to get out of the way of the horses.

After the affray, the magistrates were brought to trial, and in the middle of the hearing Col Brereton committed suicide. Of those arrested from the mob, five were hanged, some were transported, and the rest given penal servitude with hard labour.

A picture of this court martial was painted by the Bristol artist, Rolinda Sharples, and included a sketch of Major Beckwith. The artist in her diary recorded that 'Miss Shipperdson called with a letter from Mrs Beckwith asking for a copy of this.'[14] This she completed, a small full-length portrait. His sepia photograph of later years shows

him in full Lancer uniform. Handsome, moustachioed, of undoubted military bearing and resembling a somewhat stouter version of the Prince Consort.[15] But evidently not a man to be trifled with, probably of irascible temper.

Lt Gen. William Beckwith, K.H., 1795–1871

This, then, is the background to the husband of Priscilla Maria Hopper. In career terms he figures little after the Bristol affair. Two years later he left the 14th to become unattached Lieutenant Colonel and was regularly promoted until becoming full General in 1869. He had, in 1847, attempted to stand as parliamentary candidate for northern Durham but was not successful: possibly it was some consolation to be made High Sheriff for 1858. A keen sportsman and hunter as one might expect from a dragoon, he suffered from the effects of two mishaps in the saddle,[16] which cannot have improved his temper, the violence to which local oral tradition points. There is also a slight oral tradition that a child was born to them but who died in early infancy; however, no evidence for this has come to light.

Of their domestic situation at Silksworth something can be gleaned from the Census Returns. In 1851 with an unmarried sister living with them, there were nine indoor servants. In 1861 they were away, leaving the house in charge of three servants, but in 1871 Mrs Beckwith had a complement of thirteen indoor staff, ranging from butler, coachman to undergroom, footman and maids. At one point she employed a coloured man as butler.[17] The General and his wife regularly spent their winters in Paris and it is from an account there in 1863 that we find a description of the lady herself. Her closest friend, Mrs Charlton of Hesleyside, provides this in her *Recollections*, and it is worth quoting.

> Dear Mrs Beckwith, the kindest and best of women was my constant companion, but she did wear a most comical style in dress. Although a married

woman, she had always been ascribed the character of an old maid — which *par parenthese*, she really was — and, with not so bad a figure, had the particular cut and *Tournure* of *une veritable vielle fille*. The odd thing was that if she sought to choose a garment, whatever it might be, for any young girl, that girl at once acquired the old-maidish appearance that belonged to Mrs Beckwith. Sometimes it was excruciatingly funny but not when it came to one's own door.

Fanny [18] . . . . . being dressed by Mrs Beckwith, being at age of not quite 17, she put on the appearance of being 50, all in Havana-coloured silk, a rotonde that no young person ever wore and, of all styles in headdress, a bonnet! A white bonnet, twice too big for her, garnished with a profusion of dark violets. She walked a perfect guy, but it was more a melancholy, than a comic, sight to see anyone so young and so misguided. For how could I tell the kind woman, my devoted friend, that she had made of Fanny a figure only fit to frighten crows? [19]

It is also from this diary that Mrs Charlton in 1862 at a dinner in Paris, records meeting 'General and Mrs Beckwith, the latter who was converted by Mme. Davidoff.' This throw-away remark is something of a puzzle.

There are, in fact, two versions of her conversion to the Catholic faith which took place about 1858. It has been said that she might be loosely termed an 'Oxford' convert in the sense that several prominent ladies in London society were affected by the religious turmoil reaching out from the universities to the salons of Mayfair.[20] However, the reference to Mme Davidoff [21] is baffling for the identity of the lady remains a total mystery. Certainly, she was present at the laying of the foundation-stone of the church in 1871 as was one of the Hesleyside family [22] but here she is described as 'princesse de Davidoff'. Nothing apart from this seems to be known of her existence. Strangely enough, when the lake at Silksworth House was constructed in 1901 there was found a tiny Russian icon cross of metal which surely could only have made its way into this part of the world as coming from her to Mrs Beckwith.[23]

The second account of her conversion — though both need not be without some truth — comes from local oral tradition. It was said that her Irish maid, of whom she was fond, was observed leaving the house during a heavy snowstorm in order to attend Mass. [24] Her mistress expressed astonishment and incredulity when the maid replied that whatever the weather she must fulfil her obligation. 'Well then', said

the lady, 'I'll come with you to find out what it's all about.' [25] And indeed, in the 1851 Census there is a likely candidate — Mary Connor, maid, aged twenty-seven, born in Ireland.

Behind the magnificent stone entrance adorned with the Beck-with arms which had been built on to the front of Silksworth House, not all things ran happily. Again, local tradition hints at the General who it seems was by no means well disposed to his spouse's change of allegiance. There are tales of spying and obstruction, of drink and violent encounters, the suicide of an indiscreet coachman, and of the maid shielding her mistress' movements by disguising herself in her clothes. At one point Mrs Beckwith is said to have left the house to live with her maid in a cottage in the neighbourhood until things cooled down. She was also undergoing the spiritual problems of any pilgrimage in new territory. In 1867 she wrote to Newman concerning a problem about eternal punishment. [26] Again, during the debates of the First Vatican Council she protested doubts over the question of infallibility — was it a sin to dissent in thought though avoiding every outward act of disobedience? 'To compel one's thoughts is impossible', she declared, 'God alone can do that.' [27] From the Oratory in Birmingham, Newman sent her a confidential eight-point reply expressing his belief in the doctrine but opposition to its being defined. But he urged her to 'make an act of faith in all the teaching of the Church . . . be calm . . . go to Communion.' [28]

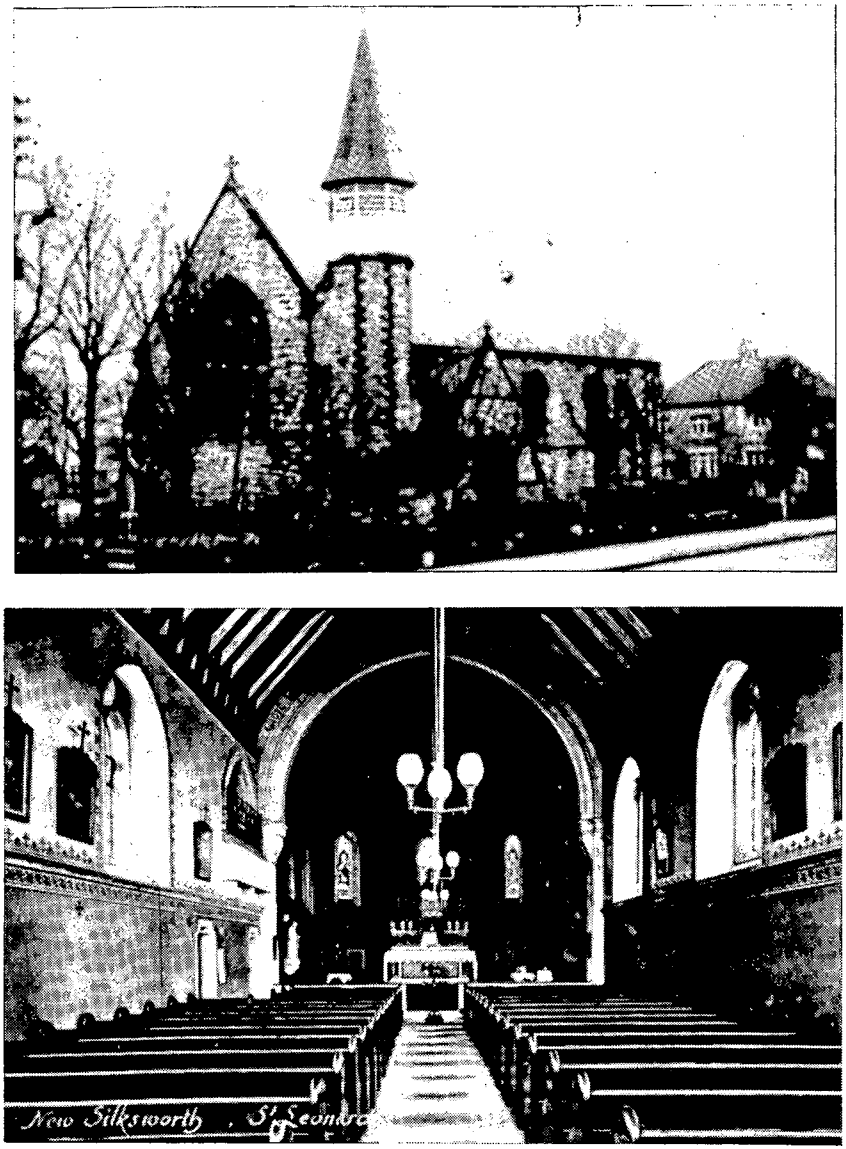
With the approach of 1870 there is a hint that she had plans to endow a church. The General, also, perhaps spurred on by a sense of opposition it has been suggested, had thoughts on the establishment of an Anglican church in Silksworth which was then in its initial stages of birth as a colliery village. [29] No evidence of his involvement in the foundation of this church, St Matthew's, has come to light and in any event he was dead several months before the foundation-stone was laid. [30] It may have been the plans for this that finally spurred the lady into action. The General died in February 1871 at the age of seventy-five [31] and was buried in a specially constructed vault cut out of the face of the limestone rock at Houghton-le-Spring cemetery. His widow was later to commemorate him with a brass in the church '*ut pie et amanter servetur memoria*.' [32]

Priscilla Maria was now a widow of sixty-four but with a constitution and vitality that her brother-in-law declared she would live to

ninety, or longer. [33] Now a landed proprietor in her own right, holding 792 acres, earning a rental of £2,133, [34] she had residing with Captain John Beckwith, her 67-year-old brother-in-law, who had retired from the army after spending most of his life in Calcutta. They were visited by various Beckwith relatives and comfortably cared for by six housemaids. To one of these, Anne Donkin, she seems to have been close, as she was to make provision for her old age.

Indeed, this period of her life is said to have been her happiest, devoting herself to her new faith and to the welfare of those about the estate. She had once remarked to the girl she accompanied to Mass that it was a pity they had to go so far. This thought may also have dictated her resolve and since the 'Church of Peter was founded upon a rock', she was not to be outdone — she purchased a rocky outcrop of land overlooking Tunstall Hill and the sea. From a London firm she obtained designs but the material and workmen were found locally and by 1871 she witnessed the laying of the foundation-stone. At the time of the consecration the following year, it was given the patronal name of St Leonard, somewhat unusual for this district and period but appropriate since a pre-Reformation chantry chapel of this name lay under the ground on her estate. It was here that the Russian cross was found so it may be she had a devotion to this saint associated with her home. It was, however, to prove somewhat confusing for the church shortly afterwards when it was revealed that another St Leonard [35] had been canonised some four years earlier. Either the parish or the lady became aware of this more recent historical saint and a switch of allegiance quietly took place.

She had barely half-a-dozen years left in which to nurture her new foundation but this is exactly what she did. Though parish tradition remembers only her arrival in her carriage for Sunday Mass, behind the scenes the lady was constantly noting to Bishop Bewick the need for financial resources. 'When I die and the Mission is left to its own resources', she explained, 'there will be a certain sum of money available for repairs etc.' [36] Thus she ensured an income from interest on an endowment of £1,500 added to later so that it increased to yield £72 a year. She set up a fund for renewals explaining that 'after my death there will be many little things required which I have been accustomed to supply and I am very glad to think there will be a little fund on hand for repairs, renewals, furniture, etc.' [37]



St Leonard's, Silksworth, built in 1873

Already she had provided the altar of Caen stone, the altar furnishings, and east window in memory of her husband, and the presbytery. The school also she endowed and visited several times with treats for the children. To the priest, Fr Sharples, she forwarded the small sum to add to the interest that was accumulating and explained to Bishop Bewick that her little fund was meant to include 'everything from adding to the church to purchasing new vestments.' [38] Truly, as Bishop Chadwick said in his address at the consecration, in future ages 'worshippers would come and return thanks that in our time there were persons sufficiently generous to build edifices such as that.' [39] And Newman himself responded to this generosity by presenting the church with a silver lavabo bowl. [40]

What is remarkable is the lady's foresight. How much she possessed at the outset is hard to say, but future developments have proved it considerable. To build a church for some three hundred persons in what was then a rural hamlet of Tunstall, high amidst green fields and an agricultural landscape, might have seemed folly. True, the colliery had been sunk in 1868 and she would have noted the expansion of population in neighbouring colliery villages. Yet even by 1871, when it was producing coal, there was still only a small work-force of mainly immigrant sinkers and the whole population of the new district of Tunstall (later New Silksworth) was only 392, with a further 396 in the agricultural area of Old Silksworth. Certainly it had not experienced the influx of Irish workers that was to be seen ten or twenty years later. Other Catholic churches in the neighbourhood had then to struggle for years until sufficient funds were built up to construct a proper edifice, having to do with Mass said in public houses and elsewhere. That the birth of St Leonard's, New Tunstall, was both painless and less protracted was due entirely to Mrs Beckwith who paid for it wholly from her own purse.

Yet she remains in the shadows — a Victorian lady determined to leave behind her a memorial to the Faith. Her personal touches were the brasses commemorating her family, and the steps to the sanctuary where Latin lettering implores prayers for her soul. In 1874 she suffered an illness which left her with heart trouble.[41] It got worse and in 1877, in severe suffering, she was sent to Bournemouth for several months in hope of improvement. During her last illness, Newman wrote to her and the date of her death -- 3 June 1877 — he followed his habit of

carefully noting in his book of anniversaries.[42]

The news was conveyed to the church and school by her brother-in-law. He also had the task of arranging for the body to be brought home having been informed of the strict instructions by the solicitor, Mr Maddison. Mrs Beckwith had stipulated that her coffin was not to be made of lead and the funeral to be 'as inexpensive as possible in all respects.'[43] She also ensured that it be taken to the church and left overnight with a service for the dead said next morning and 'a coach for the priest must be requested to accompany my remains to the cemetery.'

In the event and surely indicative of the esteem in which she was held, the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle himself arrived to conduct an early Mass on the Saturday morning, then accompanied by Fr Sharples and Dr Welford, he travelled in a chaise at the head of the cortege. Twelve carriages followed the hearse with tenants and village folk on foot across the roads leading to Houghton Cut. There she was laid to rest in a vault adjoining that of the General.[44] Her will she had altered, adding a codicil upon becoming widowed. She left bequests to her Beckwith nephews and nieces, all wages to date plus another year's income to her staff and £250 to the school trustees for charitable purposes. To Anne Donkin her maid, she provided £10 a year to the age of fifty to be increased to £20 a year for life. The estate and bulk of her fortune she left to her brother-in-law. He was to die unmarried twenty years later, and the family then moved to Millichope Park, Shropshire.

No mention was made of the Hoppers. It provoked an indignant outburst from the Rev. Hopper, a clergyman in Norfolk, to his brother who had kept a hopeful eye on the proceedings in the north.

> It cuts [he said] with a clean cut — she must have comparatively recently gone over in her mind various friends and studiously and intentiously ignored us . . . of the lands which were her father's and her father's fathers . . . she utterly deprived her father's relatives . . . there must have been some imagined cause.

So wrote the Rev. Anthony, then cast the disappointment aside having been recently examined by a doctor who 'ordered me to Hamburg (Humbug! you will say) both for peculiar water and invigoration.'[45]

Today a neglected path leads from an abandoned lych-gate on Houghton Cut. Through muddy ways, one enters a broad expanse of

grass where a few headstones, all toppled, witness the vandalism prevalent today. But the Beckwith memorial has escaped — a marble tablet fixed high on the rock out of reach and one of the original three panels still showing the faintly raised hinds' heads and chevron of the Beckwith arms. Below, three rectangles of mortared bricks cover the entrance to the vaults of Mrs Beckwith, the General, and his brother. A sepulchre in a garden indeed, and from it one looks high over the surrounding countryside to the city where her forefathers long ago suffered for their faith.

'She was', declared Captain Beckwith, 'the kindest and most amiable women I have ever known.' [46] 'The kindest and best of women', confided her closest friend, a lady to whom Newman was prompted to write in her last illness. But by far the best tribute is the enduring effect of her good works in Silksworth.

NOTES

1. Shipperdson Papers in the University of Durham, Dept of Palaeography and Diplomatic, No.1495.
2. *Letters & Diaries of J.H.Newman*. Edited by C.S. Dessain & T. Gornall, Clarendon, Oxford, 1973. Vol. XXV, p.480.
3. Durham Recusant Roll, Surtees Society, Vol. CLXXV.
4. Corder MSS. Sunderland Library.
5. Will of William Johnson, 1792. Dept of Palaeography & Diplomatic.
6. St Andrew's Newcastle, baptism: '27 Oct 1806 Priscilla Maria 1st dau. to Thomas Hopper native of parish of Bowdon, Cheshire and Wilhemina Dorothea dau Rev. Rich. Hammett of Heanton, Devon.'
   Thomas Hopper married three times, his last wife, a cousin Elizabeth Hopper of Durham, is commemorated on a tablet in the north aisle of Bishopwearmouth Church – 'Thomas Hopper of Silksworth House died 14 June 1830 aged 59, youngest daughter Elizabeth died 17 June 1828 aged 20, wife Elizabeth died 22 March 1846 aged 75.'
7. Shipperdson, op.cit., No.399.
8. The name Malbisse is in current use by the family. If the three General Beckwiths named in the *DNB* are related then a curious connection might be made via marriages to Karl Marx. See Wishart of Cliftonhall barony, Scottish Genealogist, Sept. 1978, v.19.7.
9. Hence the name given to Trimdon Street, Sunderland. Also, General's Bank in Silksworth.
10. Information: D.J. Hill, Regimental Historian, 14–20 King's Hussars, 9 Aug. 1988.
11. Latimer's *Annals of Bristol*, p.171–2. Bristol Record Office. See also Susan Thomas, *Bristol Riots*, Hist. Assoc. of Bristol, 1974, and Peter McDonald, *Hotheads and Heroes – The Bristol Riots 1831*, C. Davis, 1986.
12. Evidence at Trial of Pinney. Bristol Record Office.
13. Alexander Baharie, *Tales & Sketches of Sunderland & Neighbourhood*, 1887, pp.125–8, though to be taken *cum grano salis*, as 'painted freely with a full brush.' (*sic*).

14. Diary of Rolinda Sharples, 1832, p.263–4. Typescript copy in Bristol Art Gallery.
15. H.B. Hamilton, *Historical Records of 14th (Kings) Hussars 1715–1900*, London, 1901.
16. Durham Directory, 1871, p.39.
17. Memoirs H.S. Whiteley, in possession of author.
18. Her daughter Frances Mary, born 1846, died unmarried 1924.
19. Barbara Charlton, *Recollections of a Northumbrian Lady 1815–1866*, Cape, 1949, p.259. Quoted with generous permission of Major Charlton of Hesleyside. 1863 was the date that marked the revolt against crinolines and bonnets.
20. Information of Fr W.J. Nicholson of Whittingham to author, 9.9.1987.
21. Research in the Catholic Central Library, London Library, Dict. de Biog. Francaise, Catholic Encyclopedia, Almanack de Gotha, Pryce's Court Guides 1860–75, plus several works of the Oxford Movement and Catholic life in London have failed to reveal this identity. Nor has any reference been found to her in the Royal Archives at Windsor.
22. *Sunderland Times & Herald*, 1871.
23. Whiteley Memoirs, op.cit.
24. Presumably at Houghton-le-Spring St Michael's.
25. Private information to author, 29.3.1988.
26. Newman, *Letters*, op.cit., p.480.
27. Ibid., p.189.
28. Ibid., Dated 21.8.1870.
29. Constituted a separate parish by the Bishopwearmouth Rectory Act, 1869.
30. Foundation-stone laid by Countess Vane, 3 August 1871.
31. *Sunderland Herald*, 29.2.71, Col. E p.5.
32. Fr James Burke, *St Leonard New Silksworth – A Centenary Handbook*, 1973.
33. Shipperdson, op.cit.1496.
34. *Landed Proprietors of Gt. Britain*, 1871.
35. St Leonard of Port Maurice, a Franciscan born in 1676, was for a time spiritual adviser to Clementina Sobieski. *Northern Cross*, March 1983.
36. Letter to Dr Bewick, 6.9.1876. From extract in parish archives at St Leonard's church.
37. Ibid., 4.9.1876.
38. Ibid., 16.9.1876.
39. *Sunderland Herald*, Sept. 1873. [The church has recently undergone extensive alteration in accordance with the requirements of the liturgy, but the brasses have been preserved in the sanctuary.]
40. *Northern Cross*, March 1983.
41. Shipperdson, op.cit., 1496.
42 Newman, *Letters*, op.cit., p.480.
43. Shipperdson, op.cit., 1495.
44. *Sunderland Herald*, 11.6.1877, p.3, col. B.
45. Shipperdson, op.cit., 1497 and 1499.
46. Ibid., 1495.

A VICTORIAN PRIEST, REV. THOMAS ORD, IN THE HOLY LAND, 1865

W.J. Nicholson

Mount Carmel, April 13, 1865

My dear Mary,

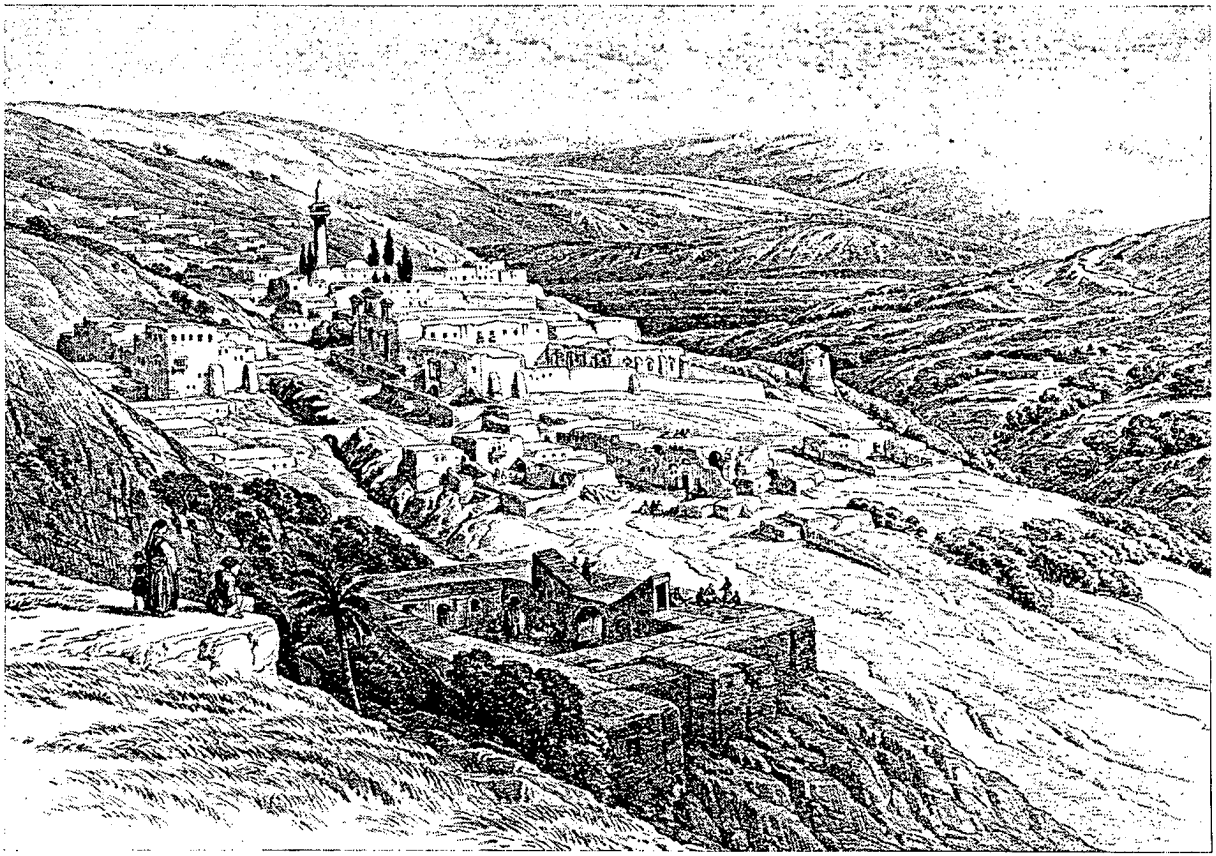
There has not been much time for writing since we entered Palestine. Here however in this sweet retreat we are a few days in rest and leisure and I will therefore devote a lonely hour to sending you a brief account of our proceedings. We have crossed many a hill and plain in the Holy Land but there are not many hills like Carmel. It rises grandly from the very water's edge and high as you are; while sitting at the window admiring the soft blue waters of the Mediterranean, the sweet murmuring music of the waves can be distinctly heard. It is a noble convent like a ducal palace and perched aloft on its mountain throne deserves the title of queen of the Levant. The promontory on which it stands runs considerably out to sea and attains an altitude of 1700 feet above sea level. You may easily fancy then what a fine command it has over the waters of the Mediterranean. Close at hand but far away beneath is Acre on one side and Caesarea on the other though a little more remote. As monks or hermits have resided here from time immemorial from the days of Elias this St John of Acre must have taught them many a practical lesson of war.

Beautiful as the situation is, the climate is just as salubrious — the Syrian sun seems to have lost half his heat in this airy spot — here you feel as vigorous as at home and this afternoon I was out alone for three hours on the mountain rambling from peak to peak seeking for the best point of view. It is often difficult to get along on account of the growth of brushwood that covers every portion of the hill — the dwarf oak and the terebinth and the locust tree, the prickly genista, the wild thyme that here attains half the height of a man — a thorny heath and other shrubs I know nothing of form a jungle that in places you can hardly penetrate. It would be a choice fox cover in England — here it is the lair of the jackal and the wolf and the wild boar. I fell in this afternoon with nothing more dangerous than small hawks and smaller birds — I was ready for better game but came across none.

The top of the hill is all firm dry ground, the bald limestone is everywhere protruding and all the ground is thickly strewn with small fragments of the same material yet the roots of the copize wood must find support, for nothing can look healthier and greener than it is. There is no place whose outline and general contour I have more endeavoured to stereotype in my mind for I have often heard that Hulne Abbey very much resembles it. I mean to see it (for the first time) soon on my return so as to judge of the justness of the comparison. Of course there is one broad fine feature wanting — the sea — and I am afraid that will destroy the whole likeness. The hill too on which it stands is a mere mole heap to this. But magnificent and beautiful Carmel must take up no more of my letter.

I must turn to the donkeys — a fine and useful race in Egypt, but here a bad set and many a bad hour I have passed on their company. For seven long days consecutively we rode them through Judaea and Samaria and Galilee, on an average nine hours a day carrying our food and cooking utensils on mules and often sleeping on the floor when the day's work was done. We generally rose about 5, had coffee, horrid black coffee, and away by the dawn making indeed many hours but not many miles a day. What shall I pick out to say we saw? St John's retreat in the wilderness; Emmaus, and the burial place of Samuel, a high hill-top whence all Judah and Benjamin lies round and beneath you and to which our own Richard Lionheart came in his Crusade to have a sight of the Holy City, but when there covered his face with a mantle deeming himself unworthy to look on Jerusalem when he could not rescue it from Saladin by his sword. And Shiloh, the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant, and the well of the Samaritan woman near Shechem and the place where Joseph was sold by his Brethren. And Samaria itself and the long-famed hills of Garezim and Ebal; and Naim and Endor and Gilboa, fatal to Saul and Jonathan; and through the plain of Esdraelon that wide sea of waving corn of unsurpassed fertility yet desolate-looking and forsaken, for from end to end it is a houseless and uninhabited solitude. All day through we crawled slowly over its vast expanse, the hills to the North that hide Nazareth seeming never to draw any nearer to us and this for hours on end. We guided our asses apparently in vain over the great plain of Esdraelon where Napoleon gained his laurels in what he called the battle of Tabor.

But the evening came at last and with it Nazareth which so sweetly



Nazareth in 1839
Engraving of a sketch by David Roberts, R.A.

nestles in the hills, the echoes of which were being awakened by the soft tones of the convent bell as we were winding through the defiles. We rested here a day then off again on weary and wearied beasts along the path where O.L. was rebuked by the Pharisees for allowing his disciples to pluck corn on the sabbath, and over the hill of Beatitude and the plateau of Hattin where Saladin crushed the power of the Crusaders, and into sight of the sweet and hallowed waters of the Sea of Galilee and rested for the evening in the Locanda of Simeon the Jew in Tiberias, a filthy place built I believe by one of the Herods and more famed as the headquarters of all the fleas of the East which the dragoman told us on account of their numbers are often put to hard straits for a livelihood, so that when the season of the Pilgrims is past they are driven to the necessity of putting themselves out to grass. I am sorry to say they were not at grass during the two nights we slept there. We found them diligent bloodsuckers and nothing vegetarian about them. We bathed in the Lake and spent 9 hours sailing from site to site on its margins which at the North end is densely fringed with oleanders in full blossom. The population that once swarmed around it is now all gone. The wild Arab pitches his tent there and the solitary Pelican we disturbed as we were landing to explore the site of Capernaum was a perfect symbol of the solitariness of the place.

We returned back to Nazareth by Mt. Tabor which we ascended and from which you can take in at a glance the whole country round. Great Esdraelon looks very small at its foot and it was refreshing to look North to Hermon with his summit covered with perpetual snow. 'Can a man hold a fire in his hand by thinking of the Caucasus' some one said — still the sight of snowy Hermon seemed to cool one's blood and it was a pretty sight besides. As we came down the mountain the wind arose and the clouds gathered and presently a storm of rain fell that drenched me to the skin. We could not warm ourselves by riding on mountain tracks, even in the plain we could not have done on such cattle, so the cold wind went into the very centre of my system and I returned to Nazareth shivering like an aspen leaf.

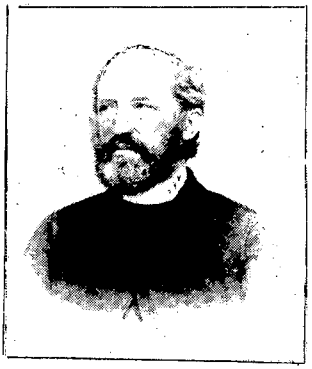
We spent our Palm Sunday there. It was a free and easy sort of ceremony that distribution of palms. The children, afraid I suppose of not getting such as would please them from the priest at the altar, came ready provided with various ornamental forms in vegetation woven with taste and skill, and right proud the little ones seemed to be as they

toddled up and down the church floor during the service. You had them of all ages down to 3 or 4 months old adding to the throng. You must know by the by that Arab children bear a strong resemblance to Highland lambs, they run as soon as they are born. And then there were other and older children who, preferring bulk to beauty, came with whole armsful of olive branches to join and grace the procession. One man I saw with half a tree-top over his shoulder. You would have throught there was little need of this provision for in the distribution, after the true palms were given to a few of us, the officiating priest was most profusely generous. He gave the olives by the handfuls and some of the lesser ones came in for bundles as large as their little arms could clasp. When any child refused to leave the altar step because perhaps a small branch only fell to his share, the subdeacon shouldered him away with scant ceremony. When some other little lucky fellow fell in for a bundle wider than he could enclose in both his arms, a jealous companion made a snatch for a dangling portion of it. The Deacon seemed mightily to enjoy the devotion; for as he stood with his face to the people he laughed with every lineament of his features. It was what Palm Sunday should be, a commemoration of a real triumphant procession where the men lead and the women talk and the children shout and laugh and all goes 'merry as a wedding bell'. I find the English are in all ways a solemn sober long-faced race of men, and in their religious worship the three adjectives are magnified exceedingly.

On Tuesday last we rode through the plain of Acre, none richer in Palestine and we came into a swarm of locusts as we rode along — nasty yellow-looking things with 4 wings (insects of course) and of the size of a large dragon-fly. The ground was covered with the repulsive looking creatures, and the air was thick with the same as they rose in clouds out of the herbage as we passed along. As far on every side as you could see there was the same yellow cloud. I thought we should soon pass it — no, it only grew deeper and denser as we penetrated further in. Mile after mile and it was all the same. There is nothing in England with life to liken it to. But you have seen many a fall of large heavy flakes of snow and yet you never saw them larger or thicker than were the locusts on this plain of Acre. It is a plague of Egypt come back upon the land. But we also passed an immense flock of storks — without any enlarging there must have been thousands and thousands of them. Where or how they live at other times I cannot tell, but they are in the midst of plenty just now for they are feeding on the snowdrift (the

locusts) and if they feed day and night for a hundred years their stores I think will never fail.

We leave Carmel, its beauties and hospitality, for Beyroute and then take diligence for Damascus and return to Beyroute the same way, and then one's travels in the Holy Land are ended. For we embark again at Beyroute and quit these shores likely for ever.



Rev. Thomas Ord [1812–1900] c.1865

I want a week in London and the same at least in Hexham -- the quickest way home will thus engross all the rest of my spare time. Therefore the shortest way home is the best and I will follow it. I have had all this time only one letter from England and two papers — the letter dated 17 Feb — but I expect to find several at Beyroute awaiting me there.

I hope you are all well. I wrote to Juliana from Cairo. I trust she got the letter. I have one request to make. Send this note to my sister and it will save me the trouble of re-writing a good deal. She will return it to you again when she has read it. Give my kind love to all. I must take this on to Beyroute to post. We go today, Good Friday.

Believe me, dear Mary, yours very affectionately,

Thomas Ord (Beyroute April 20)

Note

THE REV. THOMAS ORD was one of the eminent Victorian priests of the diocese. A Hexham man, he was educated and ordained at Ushaw on 23 December 1839. After a few months at St Patrick's, Liverpool, he was appointed as chaplain to Callaly Castle in 1840 and remained there twenty-five years. In 1866 he moved to Thropton which he served for thirty-five years until his death on Rosary Sunday, 7 October 1900, in the 88th year of his age and the 61st of his priesthood.

It was in the interval between Callaly and Thropton that he and Mgr Charles Eyre of St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle (later Archbishop of Glasgow), set off on one of the earliest Cook's 'Tour of the Middle East'. Edmund Swinglehurst in his book on Cook's Tours (1982) describes how after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Thomas Cook quickly consolidated his position in the Middle East.

The best and most economical route to Egypt was across Europe by train to Brindisi and thence by passenger steamer to Port Said. Cook offered this trip for 150 guineas. A Cook's tour to the Middle East usually included a tour of the Holy Land.

He organised what amounted to a luxurious army camp for parties between 30 or 40 tourists. This caravenserai moved about the deserts of Palestine served by an army of muleteers, servants and guards and masterful dragomen, as well as Cook or one of his family with each party. The inventory of camp equipment included 11 sleeping tents, 2 dining saloons, 1 cooking tent, 35 saddle horses, 42 pack horses and 15 asses. He carried iron bedsteads and mattresses for their comfort at night. Provisions included porridge and eggs for breakfast, and a typical dinner included hard-boiled eggs, cold chicken, lamb or mutton, and a cooked pudding.

The letter suggests that even these 'luxuries' were not available in the earliest days of Cook's travels. The modern tourist to Israel who travels by jet to Tel Aviv and then does the Holy Land in air-conditioned buses has not the toughness and stamina demanded of these early Victorians. Mr Ord — he always insisted on the old style of address to the end of his days — thought nothing of walking the thirty miles between Thropton and Hexham to see his relations. During his weeks of travel in the Holy Land he allowed his beard to grow in the style of a Greek priest and he kept this memorial of his visit to 'Palestine, of glory past, and proud Jerusalem'.

This letter is published by kind permission of Mr C. Forster of Burradon, who identifies the recipient as Miss Mary Forster [1834—1911] of Burradon. Thomas Ord was a lifelong friend of the family. This copy was transcribed by Fr Nicholson and provided for publication some time before his death.

---

continued from p.40

its centenary, and the convent in Sunderland has flourished for 145 years. All in all, that represents an exceptionally fruitful legacy by any standard.

NOTES

1. The Taylor Smith's pedigree is at: J.W. Fawcett, *The parish registers at Satley* (1914), 191f.
2. *The Tablet*, 18 July 1868, p.453.
3. See the *Centenary Booklet* of the Convent of Mercy, Sunderland (1943), pp.20—21, for brief histories of the Tow Law and Wolsingham convents. (I am grateful to Sr Stephen of St Anne's Convent, Wolsingham, for this reference.)
4. L. Gooch, et al., *Catholicism in Weardale* (1984), ch.3. A parish history of Tow Law is in preparation.

LADY PEAT'S LEGACY

L. Gooch

The life of Lady Peat had a beautiful sequel in north east Catholic history which perhaps merits a footnote to Douglas Smith's account of this extraordinary lady in *Northern Catholic History, No.27, Spring 1988.*

As has been explained, Jane Taylor was the heiress of an ancient minor gentry family long resident in Stobilee by Satley in the parish of Lanchester. She married Matthew Smith of Herrington and their only daughter, Jane Smith, later Lady Peat, died in 1842, leaving her fortune between three beneficiaries. Firstly, Rev. Philip Kearney was left £1,000 to endow St Bede's, the new Convent of Mercy in Sunderland. Secondly, she left the Flass Hall estate to John Leadbitter of Gateshead, on condition that he took the surname of Smith. Thirdly, on the same condition, she bequeathed her west Durham estates to her cousin, Edward Taylor of Crook.[1]

In 1843, then, Edward Taylor Smith, hitherto living in obscurity (some said he was a butcher), became the wealthy Lord of the Manor of Hedleyhope and owner of valuable coal-bearing lands there, at Colpike and at Stobilee. He was soon to be a pillar of Victorian county society, a merry, fox-hunting squire, but also a conscientious Poor Law Guardian and member of the Lanchester bench. He built Colpike Hall in 1859 and bought the Broadwood Hall estate for his eldest son, George Garry, in 1875. The careers of his five sons illustrate how quickly the Catholics of the post-Emancipation generation assumed places in public and professional life.

George Garry Taylor Smith, the eldest son, was a Justice of the Peace and sat on many public boards. He married Clara, daughter of James Holdsworth of Leeds, the first Catholic mayor in England after the Reformation. The second son, Edward Taylor Smith, lived a quiet country life in Satley. The fourth son, Thomas Taylor Smith, was apprenticed as a mining engineer, became a successful colliery manager for James Joicey & Co., was joint owner with his brothers George and James of the Hedleyhope Colliery, and Managing Agent to the Trustees of Ushaw College. James, the youngest son, was educated in Edinburgh for the medical profession. However, it is with Edward Taylor Smith's third son, William, that we are principally concerned.

William Taylor Smith was born in 1838 and sent to Ushaw College in 1851 and was ordained priest there on 24 March 1852. He served briefly as assistant priest at St Mary's in Sunderland, and then successively at Newcastle Cathedral, as chaplain at St Clare's Abbey in Darlington, and as missioner at Penrith. In November 1869 he was appointed to the west Durham mission of Wolsingham cum Tow Law, close to his birthplace and *alma mater*, and to the estates which his father had so unexpectedly inherited from Lady Peat in 1842. The mission at Wolsingham had been established in 1849 by another locally-born priest (and future Bishop), Thomas Wilkinson. A school-chapel was opened in Tow Law in 1860 but as this proved too small for use as a chapel a new school-chapel was erected in 1867 'with the generous cooperation of Edward Taylor Smith and of his son Thomas'.[2] Two years later, the Rev. William Taylor Smith arrived as missioner.

Fr Taylor Smith proved an energetic young priest. An expansion of the Tow Law mission was required. Many young adults had been attracted to the town for work and Fr Taylor Smith aimed to provide good Catholic education for their families. Immediately, he asked the Sisters of Mercy in Sunderland to take over the school. The Sisters had then only two branch houses in the north east, at Darlington and at Hexham, and it perhaps surprised many people that their third foundation should be at this rather out of the way hill-top mission in west Durham. However, the connection with Lady Peat proved decisive. She had been both the benefactress of the Sisters and the means by which the Taylor Smiths had risen to prominence. Moreover, Fr Taylor Smith had been pastor to the Sisters while at Sunderland seven years before.

Edward Taylor Smith died in 1889, leaving William £10,000. Part was given to the Catholic school in Wolsingham, part to Ushaw College, and £6,000 was used to buy a property called Bridge End, Wolsingham, and to convert it into a convent and boarding school for girls. (A new school was needed after the closure of that at St Clare's in Darlington, another of Fr Taylor Smith's appointments.) The convent was opened in July 1890.[3] Fr Taylor Smith died on 26 March 1891 at Wolsingham (where he is buried), and so did not live to see the opening of the school in 1892.[4]

Thus, Lady Peat's legacy was used to endow three Convents of Mercy and to promote Catholic education in County Durham. The convent in Tow Law closed in 1928, but that in Wolsingham approaches

continued on p.38

PROGRAMME 1988–1989

All lectures will be given in St Mary's Cathedral Centre, Clayton Street West, Newcastle upon Tyne, on Tuesdays, at 7.00 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

4 October 1988	Annual General Meeting, followed by slides and quiz by Peter McGuinness.
26 October 1988 (Wednesday)	Dom Geoffrey Scott OSB, *The Benedictines in the North East during the Nineteenth Century.* (Fr Nicholson Memorial Lecture)
8 November 1988	Rev. R. Connelly, *Blessed Nicholas Postgate: an Historical Appreciation.*
6 December 1988	Michael Morris, *Parish Profiles, Yesterday and Today: a Personal View.*
7 February 1989	T.P. Macdermott, *Irish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Tyneside.*
7 March 1989	Professor J.A. Watt. *Anti-Semitism in Medieval England: the Massacre of Jews in York, 1190.*

Coach Excursions

October 1988	Brinkburn Priory (half-day visit)
May 1989	Nunraw Abbey, Scotland
June 1989	Ripley Castle, Yorkshire

Printed at Darlington Carmel