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No. 35 1994

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 yearly, in May.

PATRONS: The Rt Rev. Ambrose Griffiths O.S.B. Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, and The Rt Rev. Owen Swindlehurst, Auxiliary Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.

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NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY 1993

Although Northern Catholic History is published in the Spring, it goes to press in January and thus these notes, which provide a brief chronicle of the Society's activities,can conveniently review the previous calendar year, in this case 1993.

The Committee now arranges five talks, instead of just the four hitherto, two before Christmas and three in the New Year. The last three, by Fr David Milburn in February on the Bowes Memorial Church, Barnard Castle, by the Editor in March on visits to the North East by Fr Ignatius Spencer, CP (the cause for whose beatification has recently been introduced), and by Mr George Thornton in April on St Bede, were all well attended. In March, the Society was honoured by the presence of Bishop Ambrose, our patron, an unique compliment which was much appreciated. The two Summer outings, completing the 1992-3 season, to Hazelwood Castle (Yorks) in May and to the Border abbeys of Melrose, Dryburgh and Kelso in June, proved again that these excursions are a popular feature of the Society's programme.

The 1993-4 season started with another excursion, on 18 September, to Hulne Priory, Alnwick, about which Mr A.C.Everatt had both spoken to members in 1992 and written in the 1993 booklet, and he kindly attended during the visit. The Society's AGM was held on 6 October and was preceded by a Mass, said by Fr Milburn, for the late Peter McGuinness in thanksgiving for his devoted work for the Society since its foundation in 1974. Fr Milburn then chaired the meeting, reviewed the year's activities, thanked the officers, and conducted the elections of officers and committee (see inside front cover), some officers agreeing to double duties until other volunteers come forward.

The articles in this issue share, to an extent, a common feature in perilous travel, as well as covering much ground in time. Mr Aidan Harrison recalls visit to these parts in the fifteenth century by an Italian cleric, later Pope Pius II. Then, Fr Francis Rice, in recording the heroic life and death of St John Boste, martyred with Bl. John Ingram and Bl. George Swallowell in July 1594 reminds us how much more we should honour our local martyrs. We again dip into the treasure chest of the late Fr Vincent Smith, this time for a note on a Catholic schoolmaster in Morpeth in 1764. Fr Milburn then records the history of Douai College down to its establishment at Crook Hall in 1794, while Dom Geoffrey Scott traces the history of Birtley parish, which commemorated the 150th anniversary of St Joseph's church last year. Major Tom Johnstone and Dr James Hagerty review the history of military chaplains down the ages and the role played by chaplains from the Hexham & Newcastle and Middlesbrough dioceses in the First and Second World Wars, some who served in 1939-45 being happily still with us. Finally, Dr Ian Doyle provides a report on books formerly in the library of Lord William Howard of Naworth. On behalf of the Society, the Editor warmly thanks all these authors for their valuable articles, and earnestly solicits contributions for future issues.

Robin Gard Editor

POPE PIUS II IN THE NORTH EAST

Aidan Harrison

Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, eventually to become Pius II, was born in 1404 at Consignano in Italy and is said to have led an eventful life as a child and his later life full of incidents. It is unfortunate that we have no details of these. At the age of thirty he became private secretary to the Bishop of San Croce and was entrusted by his employer with many missions. One of these was to the court of Scotland where he was to negotiate with James I about the reinstatement of a particular prelate.

His journey to Scotland took him through Calais, where he was to take ship. But Calais was then in the hands of the English and they, suspicious of the object of his journey, refused to allow him to continue on his way or to return homeward. Eventually, passage was granted him through the intercession of Cardinal Beaufort of Winchester, who was passing through Calais at the time, and so Aeneas arrived in London. The account of his journey, in the Vatican it is presumed, recounts his visiting the sights in and around London, including the tombs of the kings in Westminster Abbey and the old London Bridge, which he described 'like a city'. He also visited a village where men were said to be born with tails! He paid a visit to Canterbury and the tomb of St Thomas a Becket which was covered with costly offerings and kindled his admiration.

Unable to obtain letters of safe conduct for an overland journey to Scotland, he was obliged to take ship for Bruges in Flanders, and after much delay he sailed from Sluys to Scotland. On the voyage two terrible storms were encountered and the ship was driven towards the coast of Norway, so far north that the sailors were unable to recognise the stars. After twelve days the wind changed and they were able to land safely on the coast of Scotland. In gratitude for his deliverance, he set out for the shrine of St Mary at Whitekirk, in East Lothian, and, despite it being midwinter and the ground covered with ice, he made the ten mile pilgrimage barefoot. He then made his way to Edinburgh where his mission to King James was successfully concluded. The king generously paid his expenses, gave him horses and money for the return journey, and a costly pearl which Aeneas later sent to his mother.

It was on this journey to Edinburgh that Aeneas encountered for the first time what to him was a miraculous substance. He speaks with

amazement of seeing the poor, half-naked beggars at the doors of the churches, receiving with undisguised joy what seemed to him to be only pieces of black stone. 'This kind of stone' he says, 'impregnated with matter which is either sulphurous or fatty, they burn in place of wood, of which that district is destitute.' His account gives many interesting details of Scotland but he describes it as 'cold, bleak, wild country, producing little corn, almost without wood, but yeilding a sulphurous stone which is dug out of the ground for fuel.' 'The houses', he continues, 'were usually built without mortar, and in the towns were roofed with turf, and in the country an ox-hide served for a door. The common people were poor and rude. They had abundance of flesh and fish, but wheaten bread was only occasionally eaten as a delicacy. The men are small in stature but bold; the women of fair complexion, good looking, and affectionate, kissing in Scotland being considered of less account than shaking hands in Italy.'

Aeneas was understandably reluctant to endure another dangerous sea journey, so opted to return overland which was itself not devoid of hazards. He later recalled that the vessel on which he had been due to embark foundered at the mouth of the harbour, the captain and crew all perishing within sight of land. Disguised as a merchant, he crossed into England by boat over a stream (the Tweed?) and arrived at 'a large village, and entered a peasant's house, where he took his supper in company with the priest of the place and his host. Abundance of broth and fowls and game was set before him, but there was neither wine nor bread.' The whole village turned out to see this stranger and enquired of their priest who he was, where he had come from, and 'Is he a Christian?' He had obtained a small quantity of wine and white bread for his journey from a nearby monastery and shared them with his hosts. All present were amazed and insisted on handling the one and smelling the other, begging a taste of both, for they had seen neither before. After the meal which, he recalled, lasted until the early hours of the morning, the priest, his host and the male villagers repaired to a tower 'a considerable distance away' for fear of the Scots, who, when the tide was low, were apt to cross over to plunder. It was only the men who departed, the women and girls being left behind for 'they thought their enemies would do them no harm. They regarded female virtue as a thing of no moment.' Aeneas remained behind also, with two servants and a guide among a hundred women who spent the night carding hemp and talking with his interpreter. There was a 'tumult' in the night when the women fled in all directions, followed by his guide, while Aeneas

stayed in his chamber - a stable - afraid that if he fled he would only run into danger and be robbed by the first man he met. However, the alarm proved false as it was friends and not enemies who arrived.

Aeneas continued his journey the next day and in due time reached Newcastle, 'which, they say, is the work of Caesar.' From this it is assumed that in the fifteenth century considerable evidence of the Roman occupation remained visible, sufficient to suggest to the local mind the name of Caesar. Arrived at Newcastle, it seemed to Aeneas that he had returned to the habitable face of the earth, for he says 'the land of Scotland and that part of England near Scotland, has nothing resembling our country (Italy), and he described Scotland and the Borders as 'horrible, wild, and in winter inaccessible to the influences of the sun.'

At Durham the traveller visited the tomb of the Venerable Bede, but makes no mention of St Cuthbert. This is significant for St Bede had then, and has had since, an international reputation which St Cuthbert lacked. At York, Aeneas was struck by the magnificence of the Minster. He completed his journey to London in the company of an English judge , and thence he proceeded to Dover, crossed to Calais, and at length rejoined his master at Basle, having faithfully fulfilled his mission.

Twenty-two years later, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini was elected Pope, as Pius II, but reigned only six years, dying in 1464. It is written of him:

> Throughout his life, he was a zealous advocate of education and learning, and was a warm friend of the poor. Unlike many of his predecessors and successors, he cared nothing for money, and was never guilty of simony. After he became pope, he endeavoured to maintain a policy of peace amongst the governments of Europe. As a man of letters, too, he deserved to be remembered. His many writings, all in Latin, are characterized by ease and gracefulness of style, I believe he was the only traveller through Northumberland who ever wore the triple crown, and certainly no writer of ancient or modern times who has visited the Borderland has left a more picturesque account of his experiences.'

NOTE

The above account is based upon 'A Roman Traveller in the North Country' by J.R. Boyle, F.S.A., published in *North Country Lore and Legend*, 1890, from which the final quotation is taken.

ST JOHN BOSTE (1543-1594): MARTYR SAINT OF THE DIOCESE

The Rev. Francis Rice

Sunday, 24 July 1994 is a day of considerable interest for the diocese; it dates the fourth centenary of the martyrdom of Saint John Boste. In this short article it would be foolish to attempt a full scale portrait of a man of his proportions and stature.[1] Instead, it will perhaps be sufficient to outline his life, to recall his known activities in the North East, then his capture at Waterhouse, and finally his trial and execution in Durham. As will be noted, great sections of his life will be mentioned only briefly, so as to bring to the forefront the fact that he is a saint of our diocese.

John Boste was born about 1543 in the village of Dufton, three miles north of Appleby, in Westmorland, the son of a 'gentleman' of a family long settled in the area. With his brother Lancelot, he was first taught in the village school and from seven years of age at Appleby Grammar School. This school had a connection with Queen's College, Oxford, to which John Boste was elected a 'taberner', or scholar. After four years of hard study in the disciplines of the day, including logic, Greek, rhetoric, divinity and physics, he took his B.A. in 1569 and after a further three study and teaching in the University school he received his M.A., and was elected a Fellow of his College. As college fellows were normally in holy orders, it is likely that he had by this time been ordained in the Church of England, and had therefore subscribed to the 1559 oath of supremacy and assented to the Thirty-Nine Articles. In 1574 he was appointed by the College as schoolmaster at Appleby, but in 1578 he had returned to the College as a Fellow again, and held office as master of the College school. The following year he joined with other Fellows in electing new Fellows. However, within a year he was expelled for denying his orders and for being absent without leave. He had, in fact, already joined the Church of Home. One can only surmise on what may have influenced him to abandon a promising academic career to embrace the faith of a proscribed religion, but the example of Edmund Campion and many other Oxford converts at this time would have been familiar to him.

On 4 August 1580, John Boste, in company with eight other Englishmen, made their way to the English College at Rheims,

originally founded by William Allen at Douai in 1568. Already well versed in theology and other studies, he was soon ordained, on 4 March 1581. Almost immediately, on 11 April, he left France for the perils of the English Mission. He landed at Hartlepool, whence he quickly made his way south and into East Anglia, where he clearly had reliable contacts. Later, he travelled to London and around the home counties, at one time posing as a retainer of the Catholic Lord Montague, adopting the alias of Harekley. According to a friend, Andrew Hilton, John Boste 'rode with a cloak bag behind him, apparelled in a cloak of rat's colour (brown), a white jerkin of coarse wool laced with blue, and a pair of buff coloured breeches.' In his travelling bag he doubtless carried the priest's basic equipment of missal, breviary, chalice and paten. His life as a travelling missioner which lasted twelve and a half years will almost certainly have resembled that described by John Gerard in his autobiography.[2]

There is no doubt that the future martyr exercised most of his ministry in the North, and in county Durham and the North East in particular. Despite merciless racking and interrogation, he gave away no information about his friends, safe houses and contacts. However, on his first examination after capture he admitted that he had left Oxford, was ordained priest at Rheims, returned to England, landing at Hartlepool and then went south; that he never left the realm except for Edinburgh and Ferniehurst, but not in the past five years, and for the last of these he was not beyond Yorkshire, the Bishopric and Northumberland.

Apart from his pastoral work as a travelling missionary priest, John Boste had also engaged, with George Errington and others, in the risky business of transferring aspirants to the priesthood from Newcastle and South Shields to seminaries abroad, Errington often going the whole way with his 'cargo' on the coal boats from the Tyne. Boste meanwhile, waited to welcome the newly ordained priests to the house of a valiant woman, Ursula Taylor of South Shields, the 'house of reception' as it was aptly called. Boste then shepherded these new labourers to safe houses or where they were most needed. His apostolate thus led him to two other houses on Tyneside. in particular, one in St Anthony's, Walker, and the other across the river in Hebburn. [3] In each he collected books printed abroad and much in demand, dealing with pressing questions of faith as

well as books of devotion. In February 1583 his brother Lancelot, not a Catholic, was examined in Carlisle and admitted that John had been with him three weeks earlier and had left certain Catholic books and letters. These included an 'exhortation moving likewise to papistrie ', in effect a spiritual testament, of Blessed William Hart, martyred at that time in York, a copy of which survives.[4] He seems to have used his mother's house in Durham for storage, for several books were found there, including a copy of the Rheims version of the Vulgate. It poses an intriguing question of the delicate relationship between the mother and two sons of opposing beliefs.

John Boste was arrested after saying Mass at the home of the Claxton family at Waterhouse, now part of the present parish of St Mary's, Newhouse. The Claxtons were of those courageous recusants who lived dangerously for the Faith, and their house was evidently always open for Mass whenever a priest was on hand. At the time of John Boste's arrest, William Claxton was already in prison for recusancy. On 12 and 13 July a Fr Metcalfe had offered Mass at Waterhouse and among those present were George Errington and a certain informer, Francis Eglesfield, who had inveigled himself into the confidence of the family. A month later, John Boste said Mass at the Claxtons and again Eglesfield was there, and memorised every feature and mannerism of the priest.

Some time later, Eglesfield heard the glad news for which he was waiting, that John Boste would be saying Mass again at Waterhouse on 10 September. Eglesfield joined the group that morning, ostensibly went to confession, heard Mass and received Holy Communion. As soon as Mass ended, John Boste unvested, put on his riding apparel and made his way outside. He was about to mount his horse when Eglesfiel.d knelt before him for a blessing. There was something about the man which made the priest hurry back into the house, give the alarm, and make for the hiding hole. Pursuivants poured into the house, but Eglesfield remained outside, hoping to maintain his credibility should the search go wrong. It nearly did and the pursuivants were about to give up when Eglesfield went in and directed them to the chimney breast, where they found John Boste, a helpless prey. Without ceremony, the priest was pinioned to his horse and led in a triumphal procession to Durham. When the Earl of Huntingdon, Lord President of the Council of the North, learned of Boste's capture, he called out in delight that he had taken 'the greatest stag of the

forest', an unsolicited tribute to the Saint's twelve years of successful missionary work. Huntingdon was at Darlington at the time but was present at Boste's first examination at Durham the next day. At this examination, Boste is reported to have declared himself resolute, bold, joyful and pleasant. He admitted to the'crime' of saying Mass, adding that 'if I had not said Mass every day, it was against my will. And, responding to Huntingdon's speech congratulating the priest-hunters on the success of their long search, extending over many years, he remarked, with a twinkle in his eye, 'After all this search, my Lord, at last you have gotten your Boast.'

Also taken at Waterhouse were Mrs Grace Claxton and Lady Mary Neville. Grace was sentenced to death but reprieved, but the ultimate fate of the two heroic women is not known.[5]

John Boste was soon moved, first to York and then to the Tower of London, where he spent the winter of 1593 and the Spring of 1594. He was examined fifteen times, racked four times, and once hung by manacles, while both an apostate priest and an informer were also employed, fruitlessly, to induce him to name those who had helped him in his missionary work. His guilt having already been established on his own frank admission, it merely remained for the Privy Council to decide when his trial and execution should take place. He was thus returned to Durham, in company with John Ingram, to be tried at the July Assizes at Durham, together with George Swallowell, a layman.[6] Before the trial, Boste was held in the North Gate prison, Durham, and John Ingram taken to New Gate, Newcastle. The details of the trial itself, even the responses of Boste, Ingram and Swallowell to the charges, their statements or attempted statements, and the judges' speeches are recorded in eye-witness accounts.[7] Although the Assizes commenced on Monday, 22 July, the prisoners did not appear until Tuesday, 23 July, when all three, Boste, Ingram and Swallowell were tried, Boste and Ingram were indicted under the statute of 27 Elizabeth, c.2, 1585, 'against Jesuits, seminary priests and other such disobedient persons', which made it high treason for an Englishman ordained abroad to return to England. Boste was also charged with saying Mass, but this was omitted from Ingram's indictment and he was condemned simply for being a priest. Swallowell was charged for reconciling a person to Rome and for making statements hostile to Queen and Church.

Rather than implicate a jury in the responsibility for the inevitable verdict, Boste pleaded guilty to the indictment, though he was aware that this would cost him his life. 'I am a priest of the holy Catholic Church; and I came, though unworthy, according to St Paul, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whereof I am not ashamed, and to minister the sacraments unto my dearly beloved countrymen.' To which Judge Ewinges replied 'Sirrah, you came not hither to preach'. He told the prisoner to submit to ordinary trial by jury, ending 'Thou art an obstinate villain'. Boste replied 'Woe be to them that have taught that true obedience to the Queen and true religion cannot stand together well. I do not mean that any of this inquest shall stand charged or be guilty of my blood. I had rather confess the whole indictment.' The other judge, Beaumont, then brought matters to a head: 'Then you do confess that you are an Englishman, and have travelled beyond the seas, and there made priest, by authority from the Bishop of Rome, since the first year of her Majesty's reign, and have returned and said Mass in England, according to the indictment?' 'All that I must needs confess', replied Boste, 'and am not ashamed of it, but do greatly rejoice that I have done so.' This confession was duly entered on the record. Boste offered to speak, but Judge Ewinges ordered his removal: 'Carry him away from the bar, for he is so impudent and will seduce the people.'

John Ingram was the next to be tried, for being a priest and having re-entered the country, contrary to the law, although he had merely crossed the Tweed into England for a matter of hours. George Swallowell was charged with reconciling a person to Rome and for statements against the Queen and Church, including the bold remark that the four priests executed in Durham in 1570 were 'martyrs before God' [8] Both Ingram and Swallowell were duly found guilty of high treason, whereupon Ingram protested that he was condemned for religion only. 'My lord, I die for religion by which and no other your lordship and this whole bench must be saved, if ever you will be saved.'

The death sentences were passed the next morning, 24 July. John Boste was asked to declare any reason why he should not receive this judgement. He answered that 'he was glad that God had called him unto that trial of his priesthood and profession, and very sorry that the laws of his beloved country were such as could not concur with the holy Catholic faith.' Lord Huntingdon then accused him of having

concealed evidence of a threatened Spanish invasion, to which Boste admitted that a fellow priest had indeed told him of an invasion, but that he had reproved him, saying 'Thou and I are made priests, it is our function to invade souls, and not to meddle with these temporal invasions.' He was then reminded that he had taken the oath of supremacy at Oxford when a minister, and thus by changing his religion he was an apostate, perjurer and a 'lewd' (worthless) fellow. Boste humbly admitted to the last of these charges, answering 'I have sinned infinitely, have mercy on me, O God', but he quoted in Latin the adage that 'It is never to late to turn to a good way of living'. And he responded to the charge of apostasy and perjury, saying 'because I once persecuted, therefore, by your reason, I must persevere therein', and he referred to the example of St Augustine. As to having foresworn himself by changing his ministry, 'Your orders of clergy were not known nor heard of when the statutes of the House were made.'

John Ingram likewise made a spirited reply when asked what he had to say in his defence. 'I say that I am a priest, and that my exercise and practice of priesthood cannot be called or made treason by any Christian law, and I beseech God to forgive you, and all my accusers and persecutors; and so I beseech God to have mercy upon me, and strengthen me with patience and constancy in mine agony.' Swallowell, however, wavered in his resolve, and after further questioning appeared ready to comply with anything the judges asked of him, to renounce the Pope, condemn all seminary priests, to take the oath of supremacy, and the like.

When the death sentences were pronounced, concluding with 'God have mercy on you', John Boste knelt down and, stretching out his hands, thanked God that had given him grace to confess His Name before them all, and said he did glory in it. John Ingram said 'Te Deum laudamus' and then the two priests kissed hands and embraced each other. At this resolve, George Swallowell recovered his earlier courage and said' ' My lords, I pray you hear me. Let me die with these two blessed martyrs. I will be a Catholic, and die as they do; and I do here renounce and am sorry for that which last I said against the Catholics, and am now by these blessed martyrs' examples resolved to be a Catholic.'

Lord Huntingdon and the judges then decided that the two priests and Swallowell should died for the sake of example to the public, in

three places: John Boste at Durham that very day, John Ingram at Gateshead the next day, 25 July, and George Swallowell at Darlington on 29 July.

At four in the afternoon, 24 July, John Boste was led from the North Gate prison, laid on a low cart, and taken under close guard, so that few could get near him, to an area outside the city known by its little chapel as St Leonards, on which a gallows stood. Even so, a large crowd followed the procession including many women of gentle birth, three of whom were arrested for asking the priest's blessing. Others were asked: 'Gentlewomen, what should move you to come hither?' to which one replied that 'they came to hear Mr. Boost speak.' One witness to the execution was Fr Christopher Robinson, a young Cumberland priest, also ordained at Rheims, and later to be martyred at Carlisle in April 1597. Fr Robinson described in a letter how he stationed himself near the gallows and recorded the circumstances of John Boste's execution.

On arriving at his Calvary, John Boste was quickly ordered to mount the ladder of the gallows, and as he did so he said a verse of the Angelus on each step. Near the top he turned towards the people and made the sign of the cross and began to address the crowd, when the sheriff stopped him and ordered the hangman to put the rope round his neck. The martyr was then told he could now speak but was prevented from making the speech he had prepared and told to 'make him fit for God and say his prayers', to which Boste replied 'I hope in God, that if you will not suffer me to speak unto you in this world, this my death will speak in your hearts that which I would have spoken.' 'At least', he said, 'seeing you will not suffer me to speak to you, suffer me to speak to my soul in the psalms of the prophet David', to which the sheriff agreed. Then, holding up his hands towards heaven, he began to recite psalm 116 (V 114-115) 'I love the Lord, for He has heard the cry of my appeal'. He made such comments as he proceeded with the verses that it is difficult to see that all was impromptu, and so he made much of the speech which the sheriff had denied him. In these reflections on the psalm, he thanked God for having chosen him for this special mercy of suffering for his holy faith, and praised God for the constancy and perseverance He had given to one like him, a former heretical minister with many worldly advantages, all of which he had left in order to die with Christ and for Christ, and he thanked God for saving his soul from death, which he defined as the sting of heresy. The sheriff interrupted him, to which

John Boste protested 'this is but the psalm of the prophet, and therefore cannot be hurtful.' 'Yea', said the sheriff, 'but you make a commentary upon it', and only allowed the martyr to complete the psalm in Latin. Some one in the crowd said 'Let him be sorry for his offences towards his prince', to which he replied 'I have never offended her; I take it upon my death, I never went about to hurt her; yea, I wish to God that my blood may be in satisfaction for her sins.' Another account records that someone else asked him something and the martyr asked the sheriff's leave to answer, but was denied. 'Well then', he said, 'seeing that neither living nor dying I can be suffered to speak, then I beseech God that my death and blood may speak for all.'

Soon after this, the martyr was turned off the ladder and left hanging for 'the space of a Pater', during which he was heard to say, in Latin, 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit', and then the rope was cut. One man took him by the feet and two by the shoulders, and ran with him to the fire nearby, but before reaching it, the martyr recovered consciousness and some say stood upright. Thus he saw and felt the knife which cut into his body. 'God forgive thee', he cried out, 'go on, go on', and his final words were, again in Latin, 'Purify me, Lord, Lord have mercy.' The hangman then plucked out his heart and held it up for all to see, shouting 'Behold the heart of the traitor', to which a voice in the crowd responded, 'Nay, the heart of the servant of the Lord.' His quarters were set up on the Castle, and his head on Framwellgate Bridge, but is said to have been removed that night by his friends.

Even with the little information we have of the life and work of John Boste - in common with most martyrs, we known far more about his death than of his years of missionary work - we still have enough to assess those qualities which made him a great saint and martyr, in fact, 'one of the greatest', as Lord Huntingdon, albeit in a different context, called him. Outstanding and fundamental to all his virtues was his intrepid faith which integrated his whole Catholic life. It was such as to be uncommon in most ages and would have shone out in our own. Hence, once he saw that God was clearly calling him to leave behind 'that death, the sting of heresy', then nothing could withhold him from facing the difficulties of a persecuted life with the ceaseless threat of death. He was certain that this was the will of

Christ for him and he remained steadfast to this purpose, praising God in his suffering for the constancy and perseverance He had given him. Although he had laboured for twelve years as a travelling missionary priest, enduring every hardship, taking unavoidable risks in order to minister to his scattered flock, and had endeavoured always for their sake to elude his hunters, nevertheless, he seems to have been aware that it was also his mission to die as a witness to the truth of the Catholic Faith, and in his last testimony on the gallows he thanked God 'for having chosen him to this special mercy of suffering for his holy faith.'

John Boste's faith was nurtured and strengthened through the sacrifice of Christ's Death and Resurrection, which he offered in the Mass every day as far as conditions allowed. He told his judges that he was a priest of the Holy Catholic Church and proud of it, and there is no surprise that the last act of his free life was to say Mass. His faith had been animated through the Mass, by which he grew in love of Christ and his persecuted fellow members of the Church, and so transparent was this faith, that it became infectious. The quality of any person's faith is shown in various ways. It may well be that we can see Christ more plainly in John Boste by his reception of those who visited him in prison: 'In spite of the pain from his racking, he was consistently cheerful in his prison, and whenever visitors came to see him, he rose courteously and chatted pleasantly to them.' This is the picture of a man in possession of his own soul and at peace with God, or, more correctly, living in union with Him, as all saints do.

Saint John Boste was the only one of the Forty Martyrs canonized in 1970 to have died within the diocese. He has been declared by the Church as worthy to be united with all the saints of the past, but there are grounds for supposing that in the diocese we have not yet come to see that a saint has been given us to stand beside Cuthbert, Bede, and the many other saints of the North East. It is thus well to remind ourselves of the honour which is his due, as well as of our own loss in failing to pay it and neglecting to seek his intercession for our own faith and for our country.

NOTES

1. For a full length biography, se F. Rice, *One of the Greatest Stags of the Forest,* Durham, 1978, 58pp. Reprinted 1993.
2. P. Caraman, *John Gerard,* Longmans, Green & Co., 1951. Also published, in paperback, including *The Hunted Priest: Autobiography of John Gerard,* Fontana Books, Collins, 1959.
3. M.J.Cashman, 'The Catholic Underground on Elizabethan Tyneside',*Northern Catholic History.* (*NCH*), No.13, Spring 1981; also A.M.C.Forster, 'The Venerable George Errington', *NCH,* No.25, Spring 1987.
4. State Papers, 15/28/58 iiii, from a copy in Dr Forster's Notes and Papers, Northumberland Record Office, ref. NR0.1594/83/5.
5. W.Fee, 'The Heroines of Persecution Days', *NCH* No.28, Autumn 1988, reprinted as a pamphlet under the same title in 1993, and obtainable from Canon W. Fee, St William's Presbytery, 23 Front Street South, TrimdonVillage, Co. Durham, TS29 6LZ, (65p. plus postage and packing).
6. M.J.Cashman, 'B1. John Ingram (1565-1594): The Gateshead Martyr', *NCH*No.29, Spring 1389; W.Brown, 'The Venerable George Swalwell, or Swallowell', *Northern Catholic Calendar,* 1902; A.M.C.Forster, 'Blessed George Swallowell', *NCH* No.32, 1991.
7. Particularly Christopher Robinson's Relation, Knaresborough MSS.,*Catholic Record Society,* Vol. 1, pp.85 et seq; and Richard Holtby on 'Persecution in the North', in Fr J. Morris, *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers,* Vol. III, pp.193 et seq.. Copies of these are also available in the Northumberland Record Office, ref. NR0.1594/ 50.
8. These martyrs were Edmund Duke, Richard Hill, Richard Holiday, or Halliday, and John Hogg. They were ordained in September 1589 and sent on the English Mission. They were unfortunate enough to be captured almost immediately on arrival south of the Tyne, and were tried and condemned for their priesthood and martyred at Dryburn, Durham, on 27 May 1590. Their remains were buried in St Oswald's churchyard, and there is an entry in the parish burial register recording this. It seems likely that George Swallowell witnessed their execution. They were among the eighty-five martyrs beatified in 1987. See, W.Fee, 'The Venerable Martyrs of the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle', *NCH* No.7, Spring 1978; and W. Fee, 'The Beatified Heroes of the North', *NCH,* No.27, Spring 1988.

WIDDRINGTON BOURNE OF MORPETH, A PAPIST SCHOOLMASTER IN 1764

The Rev. W. Vincent Smith

The Rev. I. Sharpe was a surprised man when he wrote this letter from Morpeth to the Bishop of Durham on 9 March 1764: '1 am informed that there is a popish School-master in this town who has a great No. of scholars and brings them on extremely well; he also teaches them the catechism and attends them to Church when they come to say it. He is the more dangerous by being so clever in his profession. His name is Witherington Bourne; he was not discovered to be a Papist till 4 days ago when the Churchwardens were enquiring into his settlement. As the penalties by Law are very severe in this case I shall be glad of your Lordship's direction.'[1] The letter seems clear enough but there are several difficulties about it. The writer is unknown in Morpeth, but was probably Dr John Sharp, Vicar of Hartburn and Archdeacon of Northumberland, acting in the latter capacity,, which he did from 1762 till his death in 1792.[2]

The subject of the letter, Widdrington Bourne, was a native of the town, aged at that time 39, and seemingly had always lived there. The names of his father and mother are unknown. On his father's side one wonders if he was a relative of Jonas Bourne, who was the secular priest at Hexham in 1732-37. His maternal uncle was Michael Widdrington of Bullen's Green who mentioned him in his will, and so he was descended from the Catholic family of the Widdringtons of Buteland.[3] Hence no doubt his unusual Christian name. He occurs as Widdrington Burn of Morpeth in a list of Papists, Reputed Papists and Non-jurors, who were summoned before the magistrates in 1745.[4] In the 1767 Return of Catholics in Morpeth he is named as 'Widdrington Burn, School Master, aged 42, native', so that the complaint seems to have had no effect on either the Bishop of Durham or the town authorities. [5]

Lastly his teaching. The letter implies that he was keeping his own private school, since the enquiries were about 'his settlement'. The Catechism he was teaching and the Church to which he attended his pupils must have been the Church of England (otherwise his religion would have been suspect much earlier) but also possibly the Catholic. Morpeth at this time was supplied by the Jesuit priest from Longhorsley, and probably frequently since there were 86 Catholics of all ages in the parish at this time

compared with 56 including two priests in the Longhorsley parish.[6] But unfortunately the Jesuit Durham District account books for those immediate years are missing.[7] For some years up to and including 1762 the Longhorsley Jesuits received the normal annual allowance of £2-2-0 for assisting at Morpeth. When the extant accounts start again in 1770 he received that year £14-14-0 arrears for Morpeth and in 1771 and the following years an annual allowance of £6-6-0 which included the Chapel rent. So that by that time there was a permanent place where the schoolmaster and his Catholic pupils could go to Mass.

NOTES

This article by the late Fr Vincent Smith was first published in the Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland, Centenary Issue, Vol XI, Parts III & IV, pp.287-288, in 1967, and is reprinted with permission of the Editor. The notes below are as in Fr Smith's original article, but are updated where necessary with details in parentheses.

1. Archives of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, from the Franklin MSS, one of the few transcripts of eighteenth century documents concerning Catholics, 'which were thrown out of Auckland Castle', as the transcriber states. The 'Franklin MSS.' have yet to be found.
2. If so, his signature was miscopied, for, though he used the ambiguous initial I, the final *e* never occurs in extant letters or inscriptions. It is of interest that his father and predecessor as Archdeacon (1723-58), Dr Thomas Sharp, as Rector of Rothbury, 'maintained at his own expense five, if not more, different schools in the villages . . .The children of Roman Catholics, and of all other sects, were equally admitted . . . and very strict care was taken not to give any offence to them, or their parents, about the difference of religious opinions' (Prince Hoare, *Memoirs of Granville Sharp* 2nd ed. 1828, Vol. I, p.223). When by John's will the family library was endowed under Lord Crewe's Trustees at Bamburgh Castle after 1792, Nonconformist and Roman Catholic clergy were admitted on the same terms as those of the Church of England. (Ed., i.e. W.V.S.)
3. *Northumberland County* History, Vol. IV, p. 369.
4. Northumberland County Archives, Moothall, Newcastle. (Now in the Northumberland Record Office, ref. QSB.88)
5. Return of Catholics for 1767, House of Lords MSS. (Published as *Returns of Papists 1767,* Vol 2, ed. E.S.Worrall, by the Catholic Record Society, 1989),
6. The two priests were Joseph Howe S.J. and John Hankin, a secular. The latter was at Witton Shields under the patronage of the Thorntons of Nether Witton. While the former lived in Longhorsley itself on the estates owned by a Catholic landowner, he was independent of the family with £30 a year and £5 added for house rent received from the Society.
7. Durham District Account Books 1749-95, Farm Street Archives.

DOUAI TO DURHAM: THE SECOND CENTENARY OF CROOK HALL

The Rev. David Milburn

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ENGLISH SECULAR COLLEGE AT DOUAI

At first sight it may seem to be a distant view of the medieval spires of Oxford. In fact what I have in my mind's eye is an engraving from the collection known as the Cabinet du Roi, c. 1660, portraying the town of Douai in northern France. Oxford transported overseas, so it was claimed. A town of perhaps 10,000 inhabitants with 4 monasteries and 2 convents in 1562 when its university was founded, and with something like 25,000 inhabitants and 18 monasteries and 13 convents in 1789, besides several churches and chapels, as well as hospitals and university buildings. A distinctly religious skyline. [1] Here too on the eve of Revolution were about 30 long established seminaries and colleges, especially noteworthy from our point of view the first of the English Colleges founded abroad during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and later. I refer of course to the college founded by the Lancashire priest, William Allen, in 1568, the full history of which is "tantamount to the history of the Catholic Church in England during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries." [2]

The English Secular College at Douai began its life as a house of studies for Catholic exiles from Protestant England. It was attached to the faculty of theology in the new university, occupying at first a large rented house in what is now rue Fortier at the corner of the rue des Ecoles. [3] However, it was not for long "domus ampla satis et percommoda", for within a short space of time it became an active and enterprising missionary college, training men who, on their ordination to the priesthood, were expected to return to England in secret against the law of the realm to maintain the Catholic faith, a work which must have been particularly pleasing to a university founded to take up the pen against the Protestants. To the original house, the Maison du Soleil, was added, probably in 1570, the Maison de la Belle Lune next door, [4] and third house nearby rented in 1576 to accommodate the unusually large number of students who had sought admittance to the college the previous year, bringing the total to 120.[5]

Religiously inspired political upheaval in the Catholic Spanish Netherlands forced the college to be evacuated to Rheims in 1578 for 15 rather unhappy years. Anyone who is tempted to romanticise about the glories of Douai in these still early days cannot have read the letters of Dr Richard

Barret (1588-1599), a president of Allen's own choosing, [6] but I mention that only in passing, as my main aim purpose here is to examine the material development of the college during its 250 years' history before considering its death and resurrection.

INTO THE 17TH CENTURY

Though settled at Rheims for some time, the college had never given up ownership of its property at Douai, which was fortunate, as the deteriorating political situation in France in 1593 led to staff and students leaving so precipitately for Douai that they were denied even the opportunity of taking books, clothing and other essentials of collegiate life with them. [7] Penniless, they faced the prospect of repossessing a building in urgent need of repair, their misery of that year no doubt compounded by the death of their beloved founder on 16 October 1594, leaving massive debts behind him.

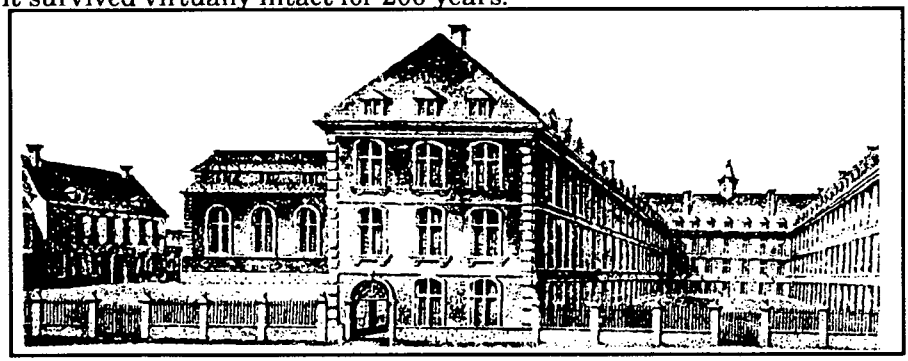
The work of Dr Barret at Rheims and Douai is, one would think, due for reappraisal. Until now, though praised by Allen, he has always been described as a weak and ineffective leader at a time of crisis. However, following the publication of his letters in 1967, he may eventually have to be considered in a somewhat different light. [8] Will the same be true of his successor, Thomas Worthington (1599-1613), who like Richard Barret has consistently been regarded as unequal to the task? Maybe not, though one has to say in fairness that it was he who took the important and presumably necessary step to move the college premises to a new site near the church of St Jacques, where a new chapel was opened on 7 July 1603 and a new refectory in the north wing in use by the end of that year. [9] As to the former buildings opposite the College D'Anchin and the theological schools, the Maison du Soleil appears to have continued from 1600 as the Seminaire du Soleil, supporting six priests, [10] the rest of the site occupied by the Seminaire de la Torre from 1618. [11]

Apparently, it was from this time that the college began to accept lay boys on a regular basis for their schooling alongside boys who wished to become priests. Another change took place, too, when students in philosophy and theology began again under the direction of resident staff instead of going to the Jesuit College d'Anchin, though this had more to do with a dispute between the secular clergy and the Jesuits than with the provision of new buildings. [12] Church and lay students alike were at this time dressed in black cassocks and their training in common became a distinctive

feature of English seminary life from this time until comparatively recently. By mid-18th century, if not before, as many as three quarters of the students at Douai had no intention of proceeding to the priesthood, "which demonstrates the important part which Douai played in educating the English Catholic laity." [13]

THE 18TH CENTURY

A 100 years on, the collegiate buildings of the early 17th century were again in need of refurbishment, [14] not least because of the damage done to them in the course of the two sieges of the town during the War of the Spanish Succession, during which the college students were evacuated to Arras. [15] With the debt incurred during Dr Paston's presidency paid off, [16] it was possible in March 1722 for the new president, Dr Robert Witham (1715-1738), to plan the construction of a new west (i.e. front) wing 183ft x 28ft and a new chapel 90 ft x 28ft, the two occupying almost the entire space between the Seminaire de Henin on the one side and the road running between the chapel and the Abbey de Sin on the other. [17] With the contracts signed in May and August of that year, [18] the old building was demolished in January 1723, [19] and the new structure completed in what must have been a record time of twelve months, [20] though internally much still needed to be done. In 1725 new stalls were provided for the chapel, the dormitory was completed and "magna janua" fitted, which we may perhaps take to refer to the installation of new doors at the principal exit of the college close to the parish church of St Jacques. [21] When finished, the building was on a slightly larger scale than before and reputed to be the finest in the town, so substantial that despite a good deal of ill treatment it survived virtually intact for 200 years. [22]



18TH CENTURY DOUAI COLLEGE SEEN FROM THE GARDENS

These successive stages in the re-building of the college during Dr Witham's presidency can be traced fairly easily in contemporary records such as the college diary, which is more than can be said for work undertaken later in the century. We know that collections were being taken in England in the course of 1769 to help to continue the work of refurbishment of the college, [23] but we have to guess at what was achieved. Twice in 1771 visitors inspected a "new building", [24] and when completed it was blessed on the feast of St Joseph, 19 March 1773, after a mass of thanksgiving for the preservation of life and limb during its construction.[25] What was this new building? It cannot have been the east wing envisaged in Dr Witham's plans, the foundation stone of which was laid on 28 June 1735, [26]for we have several views as well as plans of the college made only fifty years later and none of them show an east wing. In the absence of documentary proof we are left to guess from the visual evidence that after the demolition of the eastern side of the quadrangle and the laying of the foundation stone of its replacement there was a change of plan and that the "new building" consisted of the reconstruction of the north and south sides of the quadrangle. Presumably the accommodation lost by the demolition of the old east wing was more than adequately provided in the "new building". [27]

THE PRESIDENCY OF WILLIAM GIBSON 1781-90

Having thus far tried with a good deal of hesitation to ascertain the earlier building programme undertaken by the college and continued during the presidency of Dr Witham's three successors, William Thornburgh (1739-50), William Green (1750-1770) and Henry Tichborne Blount (1770-1781), we come to the years immediately prior to the outbreak of Revolution in France. Of a Northumbrian family distinguished for its adherence to the Catholic faith, William Gibson, like his three priest brothers, was educated at Douai College, commencing his studies there as a young boy in April 1750. [28] After ordination in 1764 he returned for a short time to the college[29] before taking up his appointment as chaplain to the Silvertop family at Minsteracres. His duties there not being particularly onerous, he was apparently able to spend a considerable time in London, frequenting the circle which clamoured, among other things, for the reform of Douai College, by which they meant a matching of its educational methods and facilities to contemporary needs. Given this association he cannot have been surprised at being appointed successor to Henry Tichborne Blount in September 1780, and installed as president in July 1781. [30] His improve-

ments to the fabric of the college described so fulsomely by Rev. John Penswick much later [31] we may be tempted to suspect to be the time-warped memories of allegedly the last survivor of Douai College, but they agree on the whole with the less exuberant entries in the college diary and the new president's copious correspondence with the English bishops. His main task was to build a new studyplace, to make necessary alterations to the great dormitory, to provide a separate infirmary, and in general to modernise the college interior. Most of this work was completed by 1784, though the infirmary appears not to have been built until after 1786. [32] I make no apology for quoting John Penswick's account in full, since it provides a unique guided tour of Douai College just prior to its untimely closure during the violent days of the French Revolution:

> Under the presidency of Rev. William Gibson, who was afterwards bishop of the Northern District, and principally by his exertions, aided of course, by the contributions of the nobility, gentry and other friends, very considerable additions were made to the college buildings, and to college accommodation. Great taste was displayed in their erection, and they were as commodious as they were tasteful. Even the old part of the house was so ornamented and beautified as to stand in favourable competition with the new. The same style was held throughout, and it would have been difficult to have told that they had not been built at the same time and on the same plan. The studyplace, a noble room in the old wing, was remodelled and refitted, and furnished with elegant oaken desks capable of accommodating, easily and commodiously, a hundred students. This lofty and spacious room was crowded to overflowing, and was insufficient to contain the classes under poetry. The other public rooms, such as the libraries, the refectory, and the divines' school, in which at every competition the successful students received their premiums in the presence of the president and of all the inmates of the college, were indeed noble apartments, such as are not usually found even in the houses of the first nobility. The apartments of the superiors were elegant and commodious, and such, in somewhat less degree, were those of the divines. The rooms for the students were also comfortable and sufficiently capacious to accommodate themselves and their pupils. For recreation, the seniors had their walled garden, laid out in extensive walks and stocked with choice fruit trees.The professors and the divines had their garden, walled also on three sides, having vines affixed, and near them gravelled walks for exercise. On the fourth side their premises were separated from the grounds of the philosophers, rhetoricians, and poets, by a low wall surmounted by an elegant green palisade, which determined the boundaries of each without obstructing their view. To these latter classes were allotted grounds intersected by spacious

gravel walks, over-arched by noble lime trees to protect them from the heat and glare of a too-often scorching sun. On the side, and at the end of a walk, were pleasant summer-houses, around which vines were thickly trained that they might admit an abundance of fresh air while they excluded the solar heat. The younger students had also their playgrounds, their ball places, their racket corners, and all the appendages for pursuing the games accredited at the college. Apart from all these, and having as little as possible communication with them, were the apartments and lodgings of the servants and workmen necessary to do the menial offices and supply the various requirements of such an establishment. Such was the external economy of the college . . . . [33]

John Penswick entered Douai 30 November 1790 at the age of 12, just a fortnight after William Gibson had left to become bishop in northern England, succeeding to that position when his brother Matthew died at the comparatively early age of 57. To the impressionable young boy the college would obviously have seemed to be "at the height of its fame and prosperity." [34] He would know nothing about the opprobium heaped on the president throughout his term of office. While he had the support of the laity, and attracted more pupils to the college than ever before, most of the clergy interested in the welfare of the college thought his programme of structural modernisation unnecessarily extravagant and his introduction of novelties like English literature and arithmetic into the severely narrow classical curriculum the work of a philistine. Much of this criticism is likely to have been unfounded, yet it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the president's weak grasp of finance at a time of growing insecurity in France did bring the college close to the brink of bankruptcy, its debt growing by £700 a year, though such a state of affairs persisted right through its history. Finance overshadows all other problems in William Gibson's correspondence with the English bishops. [35] His alleged mis-management at Douai was regularly used by the northern clergy as the proverbial stick with which to beat him during his long episcopate. Evidently, his journey from Douai to Durham was very much a case of his jumping from the French frying pan into the English fire.

THE CLOSURE OF DOUAI COLLEGE

Clearly William Gibson was happy to move away from Douai. Nine years in office had taken their toll. Just before his brother Matthew died, he complained to him : " I do not suppose any one ever had so hard a time as I have had." [36] Nevertheless, back in England he continued to influence affairs at Douai by arranging for the appointment of his successor. At the

head of his recommendations to Propaganda he placed Rev. Edward Kitchin, chaplain at Lartington, "a strenuous defender of the Catholic Faith and Ecclesiastical Tradition." As second choice he nominated Rev. Thomas Eyre then at Stella Hall, "prudent and just, exemplary in missionary duties". In third place he suggested Rev. John Daniel, the vice-president and professor of theology at the college. [37] It was Kitchin, his first choice, who was appointed in the spring of 1791 and arrived at Douai on 30 July. Although the town was quiet compared with others, revolutionaries had already invaded some of the British institutions, including the English College. On one occasion it was three quick-thinking northern students, Thomas Gillow, George Silvertop and Francis Riddell, who prevented almost certain damage to the property by rapidly indentifying with the aspirations of the drunken soldiers in the corridors. "Vive la Nation! Vive la liberte" they shouted, whereupon they were carried shoulder high through the town as examples of good citizenship. Only three days after his arrival, the new president witnessed further disturbance. In ill health and with no stomach for a fight, he resigned his office within three months and was replaced somewhat tardily by John Daniel who in February 1792 became the 18th and, as it turned out, the last president of the English Secular College at Douai. [38]

When war broke out between England and France in January 1793 the five British institutions in Douai were placed under armed guard. At the English College important rooms like the library were sealed and all access to and exit from the college controlled by three Republican officials. Nevertheless the students managed on occasion to outwit them. They buried some of their prized treasures in two different places within the college and even succeeded in hiding others outside the town walls. Among these enterprising students were some northerners, Richard Thompson, future vicar-general in Lancashire and Thomas Penswick, future bishop in the northern district of England. Thomas Stout, also took part in this highly dangerous activity, not a student as I wrote earlier [39] but the prefect general, and perhaps the only member of staff to share the students' enterprising spirit.

The story of the closure of Douai College has been told often enough, mainly on the basis of the long account written up by the then vice-president, Rev. Joseph Hodgson, which eventually saw the light of day in 1831. [40] Occasionally, new information turns up, like the early recollections

of Lord Clifford [41] and Thomas Stout's letter to Richard Thompson at Crook Hall, dated from internal evidence 16 March 1795, not 1796 as thought up to the present time. This means that Stout was writing to his friend within a fortnight of the release and return of the 32 priests and students held captive in France after the seizure of the college by the French revolutionaries. That he expresses a particular interest in the whereabouts of the treasures is perfectly understandable, for he had assisted in hiding them. I have printed this new source of information in full elsewhere. Suffice it to add here that the marble tabernacle Stout reports missing and perhaps destroyed was in fact saved and deposited in what later became the parish church of St Jacques in Douai. [42] This precious relic bears the inscription "J. Lewin me fecit" and had been acquired in 1762, presumably as part of the on-going process of renovation within the college. [43]

With an allied attack on Douai imminent after their capture of Valenciennes on 13 July 1793, the town authorities ordered the expulsion of disaffected persons on 8 August, including all British subjects. By this time a number of students had departed. The 50 or so who had stayed set out for their country house at Escherchin three miles away, taking with them what they could carry on carts and wagons. Only John Daniel remained behind, with a young student who was too ill to be moved. After two months they received permission to return to Douai, during which time several more students escaped. Unhappily the re-entry coincided with a decree of the National Assembly ordering the confiscation of all British property and the imprisonment of all British subjects in France. During the afternoon of Saturday, 12 October, officials arrived to seal the more important rooms, and by nightfall the members of the college were told to collect their beds, sheets and blankets and move to the Scots College where they were to be imprisoned. Three days later, on 16 October, soldiers arrived there to escort the prisoners to the citadel at Doullens, 40 miles south-west of Douai. In consequence of several more escaping en route the initial number at Doullens was 42, to which we need to add 6 monks from the English Benedictine house at Douai. Despite poor conditions the prisoners did their best to follow the college timetable. In the course of time others managed to escape, but 32 (the trente-deux), who included the six English monks, remained in captivity until the spring of 1795. They were joined in the summer of 1794 by a large contingent from the English College at St Omer's with their president, Gregory Stapleton, a disaffected procurator during William Gibson's presidency. [44] He would become the first

president of St. Edmund's College, the southern successor to Douai, and later bishop of the Midland District of England.

As time went on conditions at Doullens became less rigorous, reflecting the emergence of the political moderates in France. On 23 October 12 staff and 52 students returned to St Omer's, and a month later the others were permitted to return to Douai. The 6 Benedictines were lodged in their own college, and the 26 members of the English College placed in the small and ruinous Irish College, as their own building had been turned into a military hospital. With little or no hope of continuing the work of the college in France, efforts were made chiefly by Gregory Stapleton to secure permission for the members of the two secular establishments, St Omer's and Douai, to return to England. This was finally granted in February 1795, and all, including the 6 English monks, boarded an American vessel at Calais during the morning of 2 March, "and after an inconvenient and difficult passage, but with joyful hearts, landed at Dover the same evening."[45]

The buildings of the English College at Douai continued to serve as a military hospital until some time after 1804, when the administrator appointed by Napoleon to deal with British property in France leased them to a cotton manufacturer. At that time the church was filled with hay, the infirmary lay in ruins, and the refectory was rapidly deteriorating. By 1818 the offices and outbuildings had been demolished, and the interior disposition of the buildings so changed that it was no longer fit to be used as a college. From 1816 when the properties were restored to their rightful owners, the cotton manufacturer who occupied Douai College paid an annual rent of something like £100 to the surviving president of the college, and when the lease expired in 1834 the buildings were sold to the French government for the relatively small sum of £3,200. Still structurally sound, the main buildings survived as a barracks under the name of Caserne Durutte or des Grands Anglais, until they were demolished in 1926 to widen the approach to the town's railway station. [46]

RETURN TO ENGLAND

Of the four bishops in England, two, William Gibson and John Douglass, were especially concerned to house the staff and students returning from Douai in ever increasing numbers as a consequence of the growing tension between England and France. Early in 1792 Propaganda itself had advised the bishops to draw up contingency plans in case a precipitate departure became necessary, [47] but it was already late in the

year when Bishop Douglass of London took the initiative and asked his colleague "to be looking out for a house, which may receive the refugees from Douai College in case of necessity." In view of subsequent developments such a request may appear surprising, but we must remember that John Douglass was a northerner, born at Yarm, and from 1776 missioner at York before being appointed vicar apostolic of the London District in 1790. By May 1793 Bishop Gibson was actively considering a lease of Flass Hall in the Deerness Valley, north-west of Durham, a property belonging to the Smythe family of Acton Burnell, formerly of Esh nearby. "Unless we begin", wrote the bishop, "all will be dispersed and we shall have twenty foolish plans." Detailed draft proposals which belong to this time leave the site unspecified, but as its first resolution envisages a college being established in the north, the property of which would belong to the bishops of the Northern and London Districts until such time that a college in the south might also be established, it is very likely that the bishops had in mind arrangements for Flass Hall. And if not Flass Hall, the lease of which was never taken, perhaps Crook Hall which in the course of the negotiations was put forward as an alternative.

Why the lease of Flass Hall (or Crook Hall) was not taken at this time remains a mystery. All we know is that at some date after 1 October and before 11 November 1793 "Flass Hall was given up for Old Hall," as a contemporary put it. Given the urgency to house the refugees, Bishop Gibson accepted the offer of Bishop Douglass to settle temporarily as many of the students as possible in the small school at Old Hall Green, Hertfordshire, run by Rev. John Potier. According to the diary of Bishop Douglass, the first two arrived on 12 November and four days later in a simple service the bishop celebrated the opening of the temporary college. [48] Conditions there were not of the best. Due to shortage of space, as well as the fear that the 30 young pupils might suffer from the presence of the new arrivals, most of them much older, the Douai students were relegated to somewhat inferior accommodation away from the main building. John Penswick, one of the northern students there at the time blamed Bishop Douglass for the supposed injustice. [49] He in turn blamed the northern students, with Thomas Gillow as their alleged leader, for the considerable discontent that prevailed there, and chastised them severely. The case of Robert Freemont shows that the disaffection was not confined to the northerners, however. A native of London, he left Douai 5 August 1793 in second year theology, and when he resumed his studies at Old Hall he was lodged in the "sulphur

room" previously a bathroom, with little furniture and scarcely anything to put on his bed save his own clothes. Enduring these conditions for some time, he woke one morning and said to himself: "Roberte, tolle grabatum tuum et ambula." And off he went. [50]

TUDHOE ACADEMY

The unsatisfactory conditions at Old Hall eventually led to all but one of the northerners there appealing to Bishop Gibson to deliver them from their bondage. By chance he received their letter the very same day as one from Bishop Douglass (who, to give him his due, had tried to pour oil on the troubled waters) which assured him that all was well. The bewildered prelate asked Mr John Silvertop, present in the room at the time, whose side he should take. "The students', to be sure", replied his friend, "You must get a house and I will aid you." [51] Our friend John Penswick later took the view that Crook Hall was the result of their joint endeavour. [52] In reality, the bishop had matters enough to attend to without concerning himself overmuch with the plight of his former students at Douai, and indeed it needed a reminder from the superior at Old Hall before he recalled them at the end of October 1794. [53] During the intervening months he continued to expend a great deal of his time and energy searching for the elusive site to replace Douai College in its entirety. For a lesser mortal this might have been thought enough, but the indefatigable bishop was also occupied with a house of studies at York, about which we know tantalisingly little as yet, [54] and in addition at a moment's notice needed to find a place to settle 5 of his students who had escaped from their French prison on 16 January. In choosing to send them to the small boarding school run by Rev. Arthur Storey [Story] at Tudhoe, 11 miles west of Durham, he may have simply been using Tudhoe Academy in the way that Bishop Douglass had used Old Hall Academy, but as Tudhoe was at the centre of fresh negotiations as the site for the desired replacement for Douai just at this time, it is far more likely that the bishop was trying to anticipate events. It is perhaps significant that he actually resided there for a year and a half. Syntaxian Thomas Cock was the first to arrive at Tudhoe on 10 March. Shortly afterwards came two students in Poetry, Thomas Dawson and Thomas Storey, Rhetorician Thomas Lupton, and his brother John a Philosopher. John Lingard, then a Theologian, soon joined them as their master at the express wish of the bishop. A Douai College in miniature, one would think. [55]

CROOK HALL AT LAST

During the first few months of 1794 Bishop Gibson twice considered the possibility of extending Tudhoe Academy to make it a suitable place to gather together all the Douai students, and twice he had to admit that the cost would be too great. So he continued to travel the length and breadth of the enormous area under his jurisdiction in the hope that he might ultimately find a site to the liking of Bishop Douglass. One proposal among others was to lease Stella Hall (formerly the episcopal residence of his brother Matthew) on the banks of the river Tyne. It was when this fell through in the May that he turned again to Crook Hall, which had already been considered briefly as an alternative to Flass Hall in the preliminary discussion between himself and Bishop Douglass in the autumn of 1793. [56] He seems to have had reservations about it, being prepared even at this stage to consider other sites. Such was his indecision that it was only three months later, on the last day of August, that "Bishop Gibson arrived at the Brooms, one and a half miles from Crook Hall, to see what can be done towards beginning some kind of school at that old mansion." [57] So remarked Rev. Thomas Eyre, recently appointed missioner to nearby Pontop Hall, one of many clergy and laity who had joined in the exhausting summer search for a suitable site. He adds, rather gloomily: "It seems that we must at last put up with Crook Hall." [58]

An irony, to be sure. Only four years previously he had expressed himself very much opposed to the suggestion that he might succeed William Gibson as president of Douai. Now he was asked by him as the bishop to take under his wing at Pontop Hall some of the Douai students until Crook was made ready. He rightly saw it as an indirect way of making him the first president of the new college and managed to resist until 8 October when, on a visit to Minsteracres, he minuted in a note: "There Mr John Silvertop assured me that the gentlemen expected me to be President of the new intended Establishment, and hoped that I should not disappoint them...Hence it seemed almost impossible for him [sic] to refuse any longer the taking of the charge of the new Establishment at Crook Hall." [59]

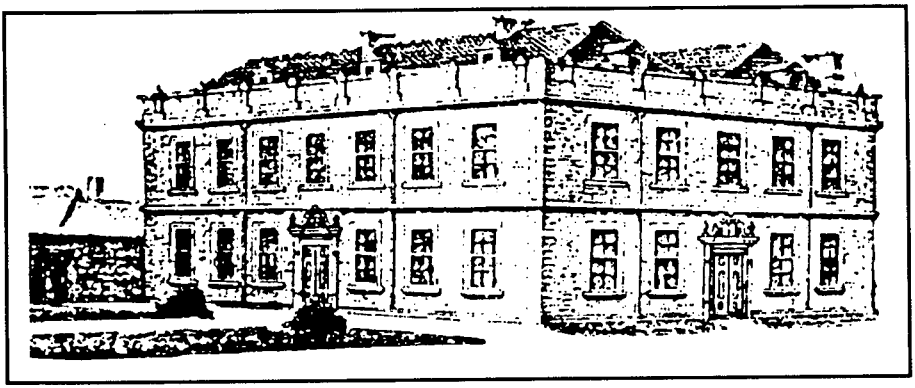
Of the 5 Douai students settled at Tudhoe Academy under John Lingard's supervision in the spring of 1794, John Lupton had left, but another 2 had arrived: John Rickaby who had escaped from Douai on 17 October 1793 and John Bradley, one of the group who had slipped away from Doullens on 16 January 1794. Messrs Lingard and Rickaby were the

first to move to Pontop Hall on 9 September 1794, followed by 2 others on 22 September and the rest on 9 October. Then, on the Saturday following the last of these arrivals, that is the 15 October, all left Pontop accompanied by Mr Eyre to walk the 3 miles to Crook Hall, an arrangement, it must be added, envisaged by everyone concerned as purely temporary until the question of a permanent college could be settled.

Comments like "a neglected habitation" and "much was wanting to make the house any way fit to dwell in" [60] may lead us to believe that Crook Hall had long been an abandoned property. Was it? Let us first establish which Crook Hall was being taken over as a seminary. There is a splendid mansion within the confines of the City of Durham which bears that name. It has recently been attractively refurbished. That is not the house in question. As has been indicated already in passing, the Crook Hall leased by Bishop Gibson in 1794 was close to the Brooms and not far from Pontop Hall, in fact just south of modern Leadgate. We now know something of its history. The manor of Cruketon goes back to the 12th century, changing its name in the course of time to Stockerley Crook, or Croke, after the small stream that runs through the estate. It also changed hands several times. At the end of the 16th century it was conveyed to William Shafto of Ryton, who in 1635 granted the "vill of Crook by Iveston" to George Baker of Durham, later to become Recorder of Newcastle. The Baker family owned the Crook estate until 1877 when it was sold to the Consett Iron and Steel Company. George Baker III, several times MP for Durham City, partly rebuilt and remodelled the mansion in 1711. His son, also George, moved at the time of his marriage to his wife's home at Ellemore near Pittington, Co Durham, where he built the present hall in the then fashionable palladian style. Nevertheless, Crook Hall was not abandoned. His three bachelor uncles continued to live there until they died, all at advanced ages, George in 1777, Ferdinand in 1783, and Francis in 1789. [61]

Thus it seems to me in the light of this information which has been overlooked until now, that any defects in the building were probably minor, resulting from its standing empty not for a generation but for 4 or 5 years only: nothing that a few weeks' work might not put right. The evidence that we have at hand, walls being whitewashed and the garden being reclaimed certainly suggest little more than minor repairs being undertaken. It goes without saying that the interior needed to be altered in order to transform the domestic dwelling into a boarding school, but as these alterations were

in the main completed in the space of 3 weeks, there cannot have been too much wrong with the building. Was it not its comparative inaccessibility which lay behind so much of the criticism? Singled out in particular was the "road" leading to the house. "Paradise Lane" the students called it, for no lane was it in the least but a muddy track full of pot holes. At any rate, whatever state the house was in, the Catholic gentlemen involved in the search for a somewhere to put the students were so delighted that a start had been made at Crook Hall that they quickly collected among themselves about £500, which met the cost of furniture ordered by the president. [63]



CROOK HALL. EARLY 19TH CENTURY ENGRAVING

The house which Thomas Eyre and his students entered on 15 October 1794 has long since disappeared. In 1958 at the time of the Ushaw 150th celebrations some of us inspected what was left of the building, a few stones covered by long grass alongside the nearby farmhouse. Even in 1894 at the time of its first centenary it was in such a dilapidated state that too close an inspection invited danger to life and limb. Despite this, Canon William Brown of Durham, much interested in local history, accompanied by the parish priest of the Brooms, managed, with the aid of information available in the Ushaw archive, to provide a comprehensive survey which he published with accompanying plans and photographs in the 1894 issue of the *Ushaw Magazine*. There he describes the house as substantial, built in the classical style on a rectangular plan with a first floor and attic space above in the double roof. The front contained a range of 7 windows upstairs and three on each side of the ground floor front entrance. The outer walls were of ashlar, with rustic quoins at the corners. A heavy moulded plinth

ran around 3 sides of the building, interrupted on the north side by the abutting servants' quarters. A string course separated the upper and lower windows externally, and a deep cornice surmounted by a parapet completed the elevation. On 3 sides the window openings were provided with architraves, though at the back of the house they were merly plain rectangular openings, with the exception of the window over the staircase which took the form of a high rounded arch, ornamented inside and out. Below this were two small circular openings to light the pantry. If the house had any special feature it was a curved pediment over the front door originally bearing some kind of heraldic device. As this was supported by 2 lions rampant, Canon Brown speculated that the pediment may have contained the arms of the House of Stuart, to which the Baker family was firmly attached at the time they were living in the house. [64] The well known engraving of Crook Hall and the illustrations which accompany Canon Brown's long article flesh out these bare architectural bones. [65]

For the record, those who accompanied Mr Thomas Eyre on this historic occasion were: John Lingard, John Rickaby, Thomas Lupton, John Bradley, Thomas Dawson, Thomas Storey, and Thomas Cock, all previously students at Douai. John Bell arrived shortly afterwards, and this group was gradually joined by the students who had petitioned Bishop Gibson to bring them back north. Charles Saul, Richard Thompson, Edward Monk and Thomas Penswick set out from Old Hall after mass on All Saints Day 1794 and resumed their studies at the northern college on 11 November. Thomas Gillow and George Leo Haydock had actually been the first to leave, two days before the others, but Bishop Douglass persuaded them to return. With the others gone they did not stay long. Gillow turned up at Crook Hall on 6 December, but Haydock stayed at home for a while, and only in January 1796, accompanied by his brother Thomas from Lisbon and Robert Gradwell (a future bishop) did he take up his studies at Crook Hall. [66] Gradwell had been one of the trente-deux imprisoned at Doullens in October 1793. All were freed in the course of February 1795, and returned to England on 2 March 1795. Of the other northerners, William Croskell went to York to be ordained, and James Harrison (by then in 2nd year theology) did not continue with his studies. The rest, Thomas Berry, Joseph Swinburne, John Penswick, and Matthew Forster came to Crook Hall at once. [67]

By the end of January 1796 the temporary college at Crook Hall

housed 4 seniors and 28 students, of whom 7 were in divinity, 7 in philosophy, 5 poets, 2 grammarians, 2 in high figures, 3 in low figures and 2 in underlow. [67] With all Bishop Gibson's Douai students settled into the new premises (out of the 32 residents 20 had previously been at Douai) we have reached a point at which we may suitably bring this commemorative article to a close, the long journey from Douai to Durham ended at last. In the circumstances it is only right that as we take our leave one of the students should give us his impression of the place as winter set in:

> Crook Hall is a spacious stone building, situated in a vale whose adjoining hills are bleak and barren. It has this singularity attending it which few other houses can boast: I mean it has no road to it. We came in a chaise from Durham, amidst the greatest danger of being overturned. You will be surprised if I tell you we have not everyone a room to himself. We sleep about three in a room and have a perpetual fire. When I say fire, I don't mean such as you have at Old Hall: they are but chaufer pots. Our kitchen grate is so large that I don't believe old Stacy with his three horses would be able to draw coals enough to fill it...Besides the fire in our rooms, we the divines, who are distinguished from the vulgar world, are allowed the benefit of a fire in the refectory, so that two can study together by the same fire the whole day without being molested. I hope you will be kind enough not to measure our rooms by the narrow limits of those with you. They are far more spacious in every dimension than the divines' room at Douai. More room may be naturally expected as soon as the top rooms are repaired. Mr Lingard is factotum, a great man with the Bishop. He is professor of Rhetoric and Poetry, and has the care of the cellar. Our regulations are the same as at Douai, but an hour later in everything. Our table is good, especially on meagre days, when fish abounds at two pence half-penny a pound. The Bishop and Mr Eyre sleep in the same room." [68]

We can well understand the nature of the advertisement placed in the *Laity's Directory* once things had settled down:

Crook Hall College, in the County of Durham. The Rev. Thomas Eyre, President, - The plan of education and terms, as usual. - Parcels etc. to be addressed to the care of Mr. *Crawford*, Grocer, Mosley Street, Newcastle, Northumberland.

Everything as usual. Douai College had clearly taken root in the in the Durham countryside.

PEN AND INK SKETCH OF CROOK HALL IN 1894

ABBREVIATIONS

DD1-2 *The First and Second Diaries of the English College, Douay, and an Appendix of unpublished Documents*, ed. Fathers of the Congregation of the London Oratory, with an Historical Introduction by T.F. Knox, London, 1878.

DD 3-5 *The Douay College Diaries, Third, Fourth and Fifth, 1598-1654, with the Rheims Report, 1579-80,* ed. E.H. Burton and T.L. Williams, *Catholic Record Society*, vols. 10 and 11, London, 1911.

DCD *Douai College Documents, 1639-1794.* ed. P.R. Harris, *Catholic Record Society*, vol. 63, London, 1972.

DHGE *Dictionnaire d' Histoire et de Geographie Ecclesiastiques.*

DM D. Milburn, *A History of Ushaw College,* Durham, 1964.

HP J. Gillow, *The Haydock Papers, a Glimpse into English Catholic Life under the Shade of Persecution and in the Dawn of Freedom,* London, 1888.

LA Archive of the Diocese of Leeds, Gibson Papers.

UM *Ushaw Magazine.*

FOOTNOTES

1 DHGE XIV (1960), cc. 704-727

2 P. Guilday, *The English Refugees on the Continent,* London 1914, p. 64.

3 F. Fabre, *Early History of Douai College,* unpublished ms. p. 30 and fn. 92.

4 Within a short space of time extra accommodation was rented, probably coinciding with the legacy left by Dr Morgan Philips at his death in August 1570. Cf. DD 1-2 p. xxxi.

5 Fabre, op. cit. pp. 116-7, He gives the date 1576, but in Allen's *De Ratione et Progressu Seminarii Cleri Anglicani in Universitate Duacena,* an important unedited document of 1575 which M. Fabre allowed us to print with a translation in UM vol. 78 (1968), pp. 20-27 we read on p. 25 : "Between April this year and 1 November news of the pope's generosity [Gregory XIII's pension of 100 gold crowns a month to the college] has drawn 60 young students to Douai from universities in England and elsewhere, so that two and now three houses have not proved sufficient for them."

6 *Letters of William Allen and Richard Barret, 1572-1598*, ed. P. Renold, Catholic Record Society vol. 58, London, 1965.

7 Ibid. pp. xx and 243.

8 Ibid. This is the view taken by the editor of the volume.

9 DD 3-5 pp. 41, 47, 52, 56 and 335, 338, 340. Cf. E.H. Burton, *Life and Times of Bishop Challoner* I (1909), p. 55, fn. 1. This church of St Jacques is not to be confused with the present church of that name in Douai. Sold and demolished during the Revolution, it left the college overlooking a large empty square. The present church of St Jacques is the former English Franciscan church of St Bonaventure enlarged after the Concordat substituted it for the previous parish church of that name.

10 DHGE XIV (1960), c. 703f.

11 Fabre, op. cit. fn. 92. DHGE XIV , c. 720.

12 From its earliest days young men were attracted to Douai to receive religious formation, but they lived outside the college. As time when on, others came seeking schooling, since English law prohibited catholic schools. These included layboys as well as aspirants to the priesthood. Until the beginning of the 17th century this schooling seems to have been provided by the Jesuits at the College d'Anchin. From Dr Kellison's time all students, junior and senior, received their education within the walls of the college and a course of humanities was devised for the younger students. Later on, in 1753, a small preparatory school was opened at Esquerchin three miles away for boys who were too young to enter the lowest school of Rudiments at the college.

13 DCD p. 146.

14 During such a long period there were naturally some changes to be expected. Thus alterations were effected in 1704 by the future Bishop Dicconson to prevent mice eating important papers in the procurator's office. (DCD pp. 81-2) In 1705 a house belonging to the Henin seminary bordering the rue Morel was purchased and absorbed into the college. (DCD pp. 94, 98.)

15 Burton, *Life of Challoner* I, p. 34.

16 Ibid. p. 40.

17 DD 7 pp. 95, 97, 99.

18 *Life of Challoner* I, p. 56.

19 DD 7 p. 103.

20 Ibid. p. 116.

21 Ibid. p. 128.

22 *Life of Challoner* I, p. 57.

23 Ibid. II, p. 152.

24 DCD pp. 345, 346.

25 Ibid. pp. 350, 354.

26 DD 7 pp. xviii and 303.

27 During the earlier part of the century the numbers hovered round the 110 mark. In 1740 and 1741 they rose to 132, and in 1784 there were all told 164 persons resident in the

college. From then to the outbreak of the Revolution the numbers remained above 150. DCD pp. 143-4 and 145-6.

28 DD 7 p. 270.

29 Dec. 1764-June 1765 following convalescence at Esquerchin after a skating accident. Cf. UM 66 (1956), p. 75.

30 DCD 375.

31 HP pp. 77-78.

32 Cf. UM 67 (1967), p. 13, fn. 12. For a fuller analysis of William Gibson's presidency cf. my articles in UM 66 (1956), p. 69f. and p. 134f; UM 67 (1957), p. 11f. A resume in DM pp. 12-18.

33 HP pp. 77-78

34 Penswick's opinion.

35 UM 67 (1957), p. 19f. DM pp. 14-16.

36 LA 6, a remark he made in a letter to his brother Matthew, 12 February 1790.

37 Ibid. 23, to Propaganda. In view of this DM p. 19 needs to be corrected.

38 DM p. 19 and refs.

39 Ibid. p. 21.

40 E.g. in DM p. 22f.

41 *Recusant History* 8 (1965), p. 147f.

42 In the forthcoming collection of papers delivered at the Downside Easter Symposium 1993. I hope to re-print it in the Crook Hall commemorative issue of the *Ushaw Magazine* scheduled for December 1994. The original is in the Upholland College archive, but Bishop Brian Foley kindly sent me a photocopy. Since then an early copy of the letter has been found at the back of a ms. of the closure of Douai College in the Ushaw archive.

43 Surprising, no one seems to have taken notice of this until now. Bishop Douglass thought the tabernacle had been taken to Anchin college. It is possible that it reached St Jacques by that route.

44 DM p. 13. Wishing to concentrate on the material development of the college, I have said little about William Gibson's relationships, though these are crucial in explaining the great difficulties he had with his own clergy.

45 DM pp. 22-25. A clear account of these confused last months of the college's history is provided by R.P. Harris in DCD p. 152f.

46 DM pp. 122-126.

47 For much of what follows cf. DM p. 28f.

48 Entry for 12 November 1793, quoted UM 4 (1894), pp. 26-27.

49 UM 20 (1910), p. 239.

50 UM 4 (1894), p. 130f.

51 Ibid. p. 131 and DM p. 40.

52 HP pp. 130-1.

53 DM p. 40.

54 This extraordinary twist in an already complicated story was first recorded by the late Rev. W.V. Smith writing in UM 76 (1966), pp. 92-102. I have re-examined the York experiment, if that is what it was, in the forthcoming collection of papers from the Downside Easter Symposium 1993 and hope to reprint some of the material in the December 1994 issue of the *Ushaw Magazine*.

55 DM p. 32. Also UM 4 (1894), p. 18.

56 Ibid. p. 12 and DM p. 35.

57 Minutes of Thomas Eyre's correspondence quoted in UM 4 (1894), p. 22.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid. p. 23.

60 Ibid. p. 22.

61 Cf. J.W. Fawcett, *Crook Hall Manor by Leadgate*, in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne*, 4th series (1926), pp. 113-116. Some of these facts are contradicted by other writers, e.g. N. Whittaker, *The Old Halls and Manor Houses of Durham*, Newcastle, 1975, p. 27. Fawcett is however alone in mentioning the occupation of the house by Baker's uncles.

62 DM p. 36. HP p. 191.

63 Ibid.

64 DM p. 58. UM 4 (1894), pp. 134-36. It is followed by a guided tour of the premises pp. 13746. Cf. also Ushaw College. *A Centenary Memorial*, ed. R.C. Laing, Durham, 1895, p. 19f.

65 DM p. 42. UM (1894), opposite pp. 135, 139 and 144.

66 Ibid. pp. 125 and 147. DM p. 42. DM p. 57 incorrectly gives the year of Haydock's arrival as 1795. A list of the trente-deux is given in DCD p. 338. A list of the last students at Douai and their subsequent careers is given in HP pp. 129-141.

67 It would appear that of these Matthew Forster was a layboy.

68 DM pp. 41-2, quoting B. Ward, *The History of St Edmund's College, Old Hall*, London, 1893, pp. 115-6. DM examines life at Crook Hall in some detail pp. 57-63.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BIRTLEY CATHOLIC MISSION AND PARISH

Dom Geoffrey Scott OSB

THE BEGINNINGS UNTIL 1800

After the Reformation and during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, County Durham's Catholic community was served by a number of priests who belonged to the secular clergy or to the religious orders, such as the Jesuits and the Benedictines. In centres of large population like Durham, these priests were supported largely by their small congregations. Elsewhere, the priest was the chaplain to a wealthy Catholic family, like the Riddells of Gateshead. Sometimes, the priest was a 'riding' missioner, going around on horseback, visiting a circuit of small Catholic congregations. Throughout this time, the Catholic community was subject to restrictions and sometimes persecution, on account of its beliefs.

We have no definite record of a Catholic community in the Birtley area before the 1690s, although it is likely that there were a few Catholics in the vicinity of the nearest town of any importance, Chester-le-Street. Chester-le-Street was a prosperous market town and the centre of a widespread and important Anglican parish in the Anglican diocese of Durham. By the 1680s, the Catholic centre of Chester-le-Street was to be found at Lumley Castle and in the park which surrounded it. Richard, First Baron Lumley, had been brought up a Catholic, but became an Anglican in 1687. His sisters, however, and some members of the Lumley household seem to have remained attached to the ancient faith. Lumley's agent was William Tempest and a member of the famous Catholic family of that name. It was this gentleman who, despite the apostasy of his patron, Lord Lumley, donated in 1696 the sum of £300 (a princely sum in those days) to the English Benedictine monks to provide a priest for the few Catholics around Lumley Park and Chester-le-Street. The condition of the gift was that mass should be said each month for the donor by the monk who was supported by the interest from the fund.

Nothing is known about that first chapel attached to the mission at Lumley Park until 1746, although it was almost certainly a domestic chapel in the home of a member of the congregation. No free-standing chapel was allowed by the law at this time. One relic which we do possess from this time is the small, late seventeenth-century silver chalice which was rediscovered in the 1980's in St Joseph's Primary School by Father Brian Murphy.

We have little surviving evidence of this Lumley Park mission over the next few decades, although we do possess the names of the monks who served it. There is also a strong tradition that during the period of persecution, these monks ministered to the Catholics of the area by travelling from place to place disguised as pedlars. Birtley as such can hardly have been said to exist during this time. It can have been little more than a hamlet with a few houses in which lived miners working in the many surrounding pits.

This insignificance may partly explain why Fr Leander Raffa moved the Catholic mission in 1746 from Chester-le-Street to Birtley. For in the previous year, Catholics, especially in the north, had undergone a renewed persecution because of their alleged support of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Stuarts in the Jacobite Rising of 1745. In the city of Durham, an angry mob attacked one of the 'popish chapels', and in Gateshead, Fr John Walsh, a Jesuit, who was nicknamed 'Daddy Walsh', was 'smoked out' of his lodgings by the Duke of Cumberland's troops. If Chester-le-Street was such an important town, Catholics would doubtless have wanted to keep out of the limelight, and the quiet backwater of Birtley would have been a suitable refuge for a Catholic priest. Catholics in Gateshead might also have helped in the development of the Birtley mission at this time. Fr Raffa was chaplain to the Riddell family whose main seat was at Great Swinburne, north of Hexham, in the 1740s, and the Riddells had a large house and property in Gateshead adjoining the present St Edmund's (Anglican) chapel, which still survives. This Gateshead property also seems to have been threatened by the mob at the time of the 1745 rebellion, and it is possible that the Riddells' chaplain, Fr Raffa, retired to Birtley at this time in order to avoid trouble.

Once the priest moved to Birtley in 1746, another chapel seems to have been established, although this was again in a private house. This was the 'windowless' apartment, about seven feet square and hardly six feet high, found in the eastern part of the town. It is said to have been located in 'Atkinson's Buildings', behind the Rose and Shamrock public house, in what is now Kateregina. The priest lived with a 'pious Catholic family', latterly the family of the merchant, Thomas Hill, and travelled about the countryside disguised as a pedlar. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Father Bede Swale (1850-79) at his own expense kept the little windowless apartment white-washed and clean, out of reverence for the hallowed

purpose it had once served'. This 'small unlighted chamber' was still standing at the end of the nineteenth century, when Father Wilfrid Phillipson regretted not gaining possession of it.

In Birtley, the Catholic mission expanded fast, helped by money left to the mission by members of the Brandling family who were wealthy coal owners in Leeds and Felling. Ralph Brandling, who died in 1751 aged 21, left £500 to the Chester-Ie-Street mission. He had probably been taught as a boy by Fr Raffa in the Benedictine college at Douai in northern France. The conditions of this gift were that 22 masses be said yearly for Ralph Brandling, and that 2 masses should be said each month by the Birtley priest in Felling, where his mother lived. It was the Brandlings who seem to have introduced the Humble family to Birtley. Like the Brandlings, the Humbles had connections with Leeds and the heads of the family acted as coal agents for the Brandlings in their pits around Felling and Birtley. The Humbles were to be great benefactors to the Catholic congregation in Birtley for over one hundred and fifty years. The Birtley Catholic baptismal register which dates from this period lists the names of successive generations of this family.

Gradually, more donations were added to the invested capital of the Brandling fund. In 1753, for instance, the Benedictine Placid Hutton, a Durham man, left £100 to be invested to help Birtley. It was for reasons of safety that all these funds were invested with local Catholic families like the Erringtons of Beaufront, near Hexham, who were looking after the Tempest fund in 1725 and the Swinburnes of Capheaton who were later to take care of the Brandling fund.

The Birtley baptismal register gives us an indication of the size of the Catholic congregation from about 1750. More importantly, it also shows the growth of the congregation, as Birtley expanded in response to the demands of industrial growth in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Between 1745 and 1770, there were usually no more than five baptisms a year, but from the 1770s, this figure doubles. It is significant that this increase coincided with two Acts of Parliament (in 1778 and 1791) through which many of the penal laws against Catholics were repealed.

A better indication, however, of the actual size and type of the congregation attached to the Birtley mission during the eighteenth century can be gained from a variety of other sources. In 1744, just before the

mission moved from Chester-le-Street to Birtley, the authorities drew up a list of Catholics, 'suspected of being dangerous' (presumably they were Jacobite sympathisers); there were 25 of these in Birtley, 14 in Chester-le-Street, including Fr Edward Bulmer, and those in Felling included Ralph Brandling of Felling Hall. By far the most valuable source for Birtley, however, is the list of Catholics drawn up nationally for the House of Lords in 1767. This showed that there were 137 'papists' in the parish of Chester-le-Street, of which 14 were living in Birtley, and another 30 in Lamesley parish. The 1767 Returns are particularly useful because they tell us of the ages and professions of Birtley Catholics: 13 of the men worked in the coal trade as miners, viewers, wrights and staithmen, but there were also a merchant, innkeeper and husbandmen. Four Humbles were also listed: Mary (aged 68), and her 5 grandchildren, Ralph (aged 42), and his 9 children, Anne (aged 55) and Margaret (aged 60). The priest, Fr Robert Daniel, whose name is also found in this list, was, of course, also responsible for the Catholic congregations found, not only in Birtley, but also in Chester-le-Street, Lumley Park, Pelton, Waldridge, Whitehill, 'Pictree', Fatfield, Chateshaugh, Portobello and Urpeth. Thirteen years later, in 1780, the number of Catholics in the whole Anglican parish of Chester-le-Street, which included Birtley, had grown to 180.

By this year, 1780, our picture of the Birtley Catholic mission becomes clearer, thanks largely to letters from the Birtley priests to their religious superior, the Benedictine President who was then living in France. Fr Robert Daniel was to be the mission priest until his death in 1781, and for most of his time in Birtley had lived with a family who belonged to the congregation. His letters suggest that the mission chapel itself was to be found in the same family house. By 1779, this family had 'broken up' so the priest was determined 'to purchase land and build a place to pray in himself'. He expected Benedictine funds to be used for this purpose. Despite his grumbles about the poor salary he was being paid whilst in Birtley and about his ill-health, he was reluctant to leave. He admitted that the congregation was large, but that ever since 'the Lumleys' defection', it had been 'unstable'. The only household which had the means to put up the priest as a lodger was that of the prosperous merchant, Mr Thomas Hill, and his was presumably .the family which had 'broken up'. There is no further mention of this chapel, and as at the time of his death in 1781, Fr Daniel seems to have had a lot of money invested locally. We can only presume this was set aside by him to finance the proposed chapel.

There was a brief interval after Fr Daniel's death, when no priest was resident in Birtley, and therefore, between 1781 and 1783, it was served from Pontop Hall by the secular priest Fr Johnson. The frequent journeys from Pontop soon proved a great burden to him and the Benedictines therefore decided to install Fr Bernard Slater in early 1783 as priest in Birtley. He was to remain as pastor of the congregation until his death in 1810.

It is likely that Birtley's first free-standing chapel was erected soon after Fr Slater's appointment, thus realising his predecessors, Fr Robert Daniel's principal aim. The 1791 Catholic Relief Act allowed Catholics for the first time to build their own chapels. These had to be in secluded positions, they were to be simple and unadorned, without bells or towers, in order that their construction might neither annoy nor alarm Protestant neighbours. Birtley's new chapel was registered on 29 October 1791, and was then described as 'a place of Religious worship, prepared and used in or near the Dwelling House of John Slater, Clerk, situate at Birtley'. This registration was performed by Fr Slater, by the merchant Thomas Hill, and by Charles Joseph Humble of the White House, then aged 28 years old.

This chapel seems to have been built on land donated by Charles Joseph Humble, probably near the site of the present St Joseph's. It was a humble affair, and probably resembled a plain nonconformist chapel. In 1884, Fr Wilfrid Phillipson recounts that the 'sanctuary end' covered with an arched ceiling was all that was left of this chapel. After its replacement by the new church in 1843, it served as a workman's cottage. Its altar and altar-stone were, however, later taken to Wrekenton and used in the new church there from 1882.

FROM 1800 UNTIL THE PRESENT

From 1800, the history of the Catholic community in Birtley is quite well documented, and except for an interval between 1802 and 1805, there were, in fact, two priests in Birtley, because Fr Bernard Slater was joined by the retired monk, Fr Anselm Bolton, who made his name as the monk who gave up his home at Ampleforth in North Yorkshire to house his community exiled from France after the French Revolution. Birtley, in fact, was at this time the only mission in County Durham which was served by priests from a Religious Order, in this case, the Benedictines. The Birtley Benedictine priest had still a wide area to look after. In 1807, for instance, we find him officiating as far away as St Andrew's, Newcastle, and at

Saltwell, Gateshead, in 1817 and 1825. In Birtley, the priest continued to officiate in the chapel which, as we have already suggested, dated from about 1791. The best description we have of this small mission chapel is to be found in the *Catholic Magazine* of March 1832, which describes this chapel and the priest's house being in the north west part of the town, 'a plain unpresuming edifice'. This suggests that it was on the site or very close to the present St Joseph's Church, since the centre of old Birtley village was the area around where Charles Perkins's monument now stands, and St Joseph's is to the north west of this. This description of 1832 noted that the congregation was 'chiefly composed of persons connected with collieries' as the mission was 'in the heart of the coal mines and adjoining the Great North Road'. It included Chester-le-Street and stretched as far as Houghton-le-Spring, which was soon to have its own church built.

When there was no priest resident between 1825 and 1828, the story is told that Mr Humble of Birtley White House, which was situated south of the present Leafield House, had the whole congregation taken to Newcastle for Mass in a farmer's long cart. It was in this chapel that Fr James Higginson died whilst saying Mass in 1836. He was taken into the presbytery, and the church locked, everything being left untouched, until a priest came from Newcastle the next morning to finish the uncompleted Mass.

There were in 1832, at the time of the above report, 'one hundred communicants' in the Birtley congregation, and this number was to grow rapidly as the coal industry underwent a huge expansion during these years. As the Catholic Irish streamed into this part of the world in ever larger numbers in search of work in the pits, so the little chapel built some fifty years earlier was soon unable to house the growing number of Catholics.

By 1837, Birtley's Catholic mission narrowly escaped being re-absorbed into Chester-le-Street. which had remained the administrative and urban centre of the district. In June of that year, Fr William Riddell wrote to Bishop Briggs: 'For a long time I was against the Chapel being built in Chester-le-Street because the most regular *attenders* in every way were either living at Birtley or close to it. I thought it rather hard upon those who had given general edification to lose for the benefit of the slothful and the negligent'. Such sentiments demonstrate how strong the faith was among Birtley folk at the time. But Riddell reluctantly conceded that it might be better to transfer the chapel to Chester-le-Street 'principally on

account of it then being in a town'. Again, we are left with the impression of how small a place Birtley must have been as late as 1837. Riddell's letter also gives us some impression of what a poor state of repair the chapel was in by this time: 'The present chapel is an abominable place, so exceedingly damp and rather out of the way, and certainly has no attractions. The House, though small, is very tolerable'.

The tug-of-war between Birtley and Chester-le-Street in regard to the chapel's location was won by Birtley. The monks preferred to remain in Birtley and pledged their commitment to remain here by deciding to replace the old run-down chapel with a new church in 1842-3, which was designed by the famous North-Eastern architect, John Dobson, who was responsible for some of the finest buildings in Newcastle, including the Central Station. In 1815, Dobson had already designed Birtley Hall (south of St John's Anglican Church and demolished in the 1960s) for the Warwick family, and whilst busy on the new Catholic Church in Birtley, he was also engaged on plans for the Catholic churches at Longhorsley (1841), Felling (1841) and Ministeracres (1843). Dobson designed for Birtley the Chapel, Priest's House and Schools. It was this Church whose 150th anniversary we celebrated in 1993. Its erection marks the Birtley Catholic mission's coming-of-age, for in 1843, it became for the first time a recognisable parish, with its own handsome Gothic church dedicated to Saint Mary and Saint Joseph.

John Dobson tended to build churches essentially Georgian in style but with Gothic additions. Birtley St Joseph's is in the Early English Gothic style, with very thick walls and a porch. It was built on a commanding position in the north of the town. The dedication to St Mary seems to have been dropped early on , although older parishioners will remember the stone St Mary's Terrace which lay to the east of the present presbytery. The only major additions to the church were made by Fr Bede Swale in 1862, and consisted of an extension to the nave, a new sanctuary and sacristy. In 1910, Fr David Hurley had the north aisle and Lady Chapel built.

The labours involved in all this building fell on the shoulders of Fr James Sheridan, who had become the parish priest of Birtley in 1841. He gained permission from his Benedictine superiors to purchase a plot of land from the Maddison family on which he built the church and its associated buildings. This land cost £400 and the building itself, £1000, most of which Fr Sheridan seems to have begged from well-wishers in Liverpool. The foundation stone was blessed on 16 July 1842 by the same Fr Riddell who

had tried earlier to transfer the mission to Chester-le-Street. The church was opened at a mass on 18 August 1843 which was celebrated in the presence of Bishop Mostyn. The procession into the church was led by the 'Newcastle and Sunderland guilds' and Fr Henry Brewer, the Benedictine Provincial of the North, preached on 'the sacrifice of the mass'. The choir came from Sunderland, the collection taken amounted to £30, and 'after the service, the company sat down to an elegant and substantial entertainment'. On 12 May 1846, Fr Sheridan registered the new church 'as a place of Congregation or Assembly for Religious Worship after the manner of the Church of Rome'. There are many famous anecdotes about Fr Sheridan. It is said, for instance, that one night he returned to find the Church doors locked during what was supposed to be a choir practice, so he went into the Church through the sacristy where, to his amazement, he discovered the choir dancing. He promptly expelled them.

Throughout the following decades, the congregation continued to grow, causing another major building scheme to take place in 1862, when the nave was extended, the separate sanctuary built, and the sacristy added. When this project was completed, a High Mass was sung by the Prior of Ampleforth in the presence of Bishop Hogarth, and the sermon was preached by Fr Cuthbert Hedley, a native of Morpeth and monk of Ampleforth, and later Bishop of Newport. The choir sang a mass composed by Thomas and John Swinburne who owned a brickyard in the town and who had been educated at Douai. They were to be amongst the greatest benefactors of the parish. The steady growth of the parish continued throughout the rest of the century. A new school was built in 1870, further property was purchased, and land bought for a church and school at Wrekenton in 1882. The century ended in 1896 with the bi-centenary celebration of the establishment of the original Lumley Park mission in 1696, when the choir and orchestra performed Gounod's Messe Solennelle under the direction of the two Swinburne brothers.

What picture do we have of the congregation in these years? The development of a school shows a growing Catholic population, and the setting up of various parochial societies demonstrates the continuing close bond between church and people. In 1895, for instance, Fr Benedict Scannell founded the League of the Cross, originally a Catholic organisation to support temperance, but Birtley's League soon developed its own fine brass band attached to St Joseph's.

Fortunately, we have the personal reminiscences of Fr Wilfrid Phillipson who was parish priest in Birtley between 1884 until 1891 which give a revealing picture of the parish at this time. In 1884, with some fear and trepidation, he reached Birtley at night, after a journey on the train from Newcastle, and leaving the station, climbed up to the church, 'along a cinder path with fields on the left, and a few cottages on the right'. There was no pavement, no street lamps, drainage nor water supply. He boasts that a water supply came to Birtley when he promised he would support temperance and teetotalism only after a water supply had been installed. Fr Phillipson's parish was still extensive, covering an area of nearly forty square miles. Inevitably, he had to deal with frequent serious mining accidents; in 1884, for instance, he remembered forty -two dying from a pit explosion. Smallpox was another scourge; during one epidemic, he re-counted that he had buried 'our Catholic dead by night'. Fr Phillipson was friendly with Miss Charlotte of the Springs and Miss Anne Humble of the White House who were the last two members of a family which had supported the mission in Birtley for generations. He later returned to Birtley to preach the bi-centenary sermon in 1896, choosing for his text the words: Others *have laboured, and you have entered their labours.* 'I traced back the history of the mission from the present time to the dark days - 200 years ago - when the remnant of the faithful, at the peril of their lives, met in the narrow, windowless hiding-hole still existing in the village, to receive the Bread of, Angels from the hands of a proscribed and hunted priest of God'. From February 1891 St Joseph's was allocated to Douai Abbey, then still in France and monks from that abbey henceforth served the parish.

During the twentieth century, it is surprising how little the parish as such has changed since Fr Phillipson's time. The north aisle and Lady Chapel were added by Fr (later Abbot) David Hurley in 1910. During this century, the sodalities and societies have continued to expand: St Joseph's Football Team, St Joseph's Literary Debating Society Study Club (1930), the Catholic Young Men's Society (1933), the Children of Mary, the Tertiaries, the Catholic Women's League, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the 2nd Birtley St Joseph's Scouts, Cubs, Brownies and Guides, the Knights of St Columba, and latterly, the Young Mothers' Group. All of these tell us something about the congregation's devotion to its church and to its members. The long tradition of choral music has been maintained in

the Male Choir, and has taken on another form in the Folk Group established in the 1970s.

In 1935, the chapel of St Benet as Ouston was founded, which, thanks to the development of new housing estates, has now its own primary school. In the late 1960s, the re-ordering of the church was begun, in accordance with the liturgical directives of the Second Vatican Council, and in the early 1980s, a new social club, opposite the church, was built and linked up with the Parish Hall, which had originally been the school. A major change occurred in 1977 when the Benedictines who had staffed the mission and parish for over two hundred years, left and were replaced by diocesan clergy. The 1970s and 1980s saw an expansion of ministry within the parish as the clergy encouraged members of the congregation to share in their own pastoral work. Thus, a convent was established near the church, which became the home of two Daughters of the Cross, who soon found themselves fully part of the parish. Later, a large team of eucharistic ministers were commissioned, allowing many of the housebound and sick to be visited and to receive Holy Communion more frequently.

Birtley still remains a traditional parish, despite the development over the last thirty years of large numbers of new housing estates. It has no large institutions like hospitals and schools which require more specialist ministries. Instead, its priests devote themselves fully to the parish, and in this way, the traditional character of this Catholic community has continued, as it has in the past, to provide strength, support and inspiration to its members. In 1996, we shall be celebrating the 300th anniversary of the establishment in 1696 of the Catholic Chapel in Lumley Park, and in 1993, we commemorated the 150th anniversary of the building of St Joseph's Church in 1843. We therefore congratulate Fr Tony Duffy and Fr Wayne Roxburgh and all members of the parish, and ask God's blessing and protection for them in the future.

THE PRIEST IN THE ARMED FORCES

Tom Johnstone and James Hagerty

In this article with the role of the Catholic priest in the armed forces, the authors briefly outline the growth and development of Service chaplaincy and examine the role played by Catholic chaplains during the First and Second World Wars, referring in particular to chaplains from the Hexham and Newcastle and Middlesbrough dioceses.

THE PRIEST IN BATTLE

Millions of television viewers will have seen Fr Sean Scanlon, with a backdrop of desert sand and main battle tanks, saying Mass and giving general absolution to British soldiers just before the land battle of the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Many may have considered priest and battle incongruous but both have been associated since Pope Leo I personally confronted Attila's Huns at the gates of Rome in 452 AD. The Venerable Bede mentions priestly participation in war extending back to the Dark Ages, and during the Norman invasion of England, Bishop Odo of Bayeux accompanied his half-brother William of Normandy, and was present at Hastings. Bishop Odo we are told, was careful to use only a mace in order to avoid shedding Christian blood. In 1138 Archbishop Thurstan rallied Yorkshire to confront the Scots invaders at the Battle of the Standard, near Northallerton. One hundred and sixty years later, during an invasion of Scotland, Anthony de Beck, Prince-Bishop of Durham, in full armour, said Mass before the Battle of Selkirk. We know from Shakespeare's *Henry V* that a priest said Mass and gave absolution at the Battle of Agincourt.

MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

From the time of Elizabeth I, every regiment had a chaplain on its establishment and from this time, depending on the imposition of the penal laws, Catholic chaplains managed to minister to the spiritual needs of their troops. In exile some secular priests became chaplains to English regiments in Spanish service. During the Civil War, Catholic chaplains served on the Royalist side and two Lisbonian priests were casualties: Fr Francis Pavier, a Yorkshireman, was piked whilst giving Extreme Unction to a wounded soldier on Marston Moor, and Fr Henry Sankey, a Cheshireman, had one leg carried off by roundshot. During the reign of James II, Fr Edward Cary, a Devonian, was Chaplain General.

It was in 1796, during the French Revolutionary period, that the British Army established a Chaplains Department to provide for the spiritual needs of its soldiers. The Department was suspended in 1829 but reconstituted in 1846 and from then until 1914 served British forces throughout the Empire, in colonial wars, and in larger engagements such as the Crimean War and the Boer War. Within the Department there was always a small number of Catholic chaplains but it was not until after the Crimean War, due to the efforts of Cardinal Wiseman and Mgr Manning, that the Government accorded them military rank. In 1855 Mgr John Vertue was appointed commissioned chaplain at Chatham and later Aldershot. After a tour of duty in Bermuda, he returned to England and worked at Colchester until 1871 when he was posted to Portsmouth. In 1878 he was sent to Malta and in May of that year became the first bishop of the newly created diocese of Portsmouth. Fr Robert Brindle was a chaplain with Wolseley's army as it made its way up the Nile in an attempt to rescue Gordon. He read the lesson at the memorial service for Gordon and was awarded the DSO for his part in the Khartoum expedition. He later became Auxiliary Bishop to Cardinal Vaughan in Westminster and from 1901 to 1915 was Bishop of Nottingham. Several permanent and temporary chaplains served the forces in the Boer War of 1899-1901.

In 1914 the longest serving chaplain was Fr Lewis Matthews, a priest of the Westminster diocese who had been commissioned in 1884. Mgr Francis Bickerstaffe-Drew was commissioned in 1893. A priest of the Malta diocese, he was stationed on Salisbury Plain whilst *Mgr* William Keatinge of the Southwark diocese had been commissioned in 1897 and was stationed in Cairo. Other chaplains, commissioned between 1898 and 1912, were from a variety of English, Irish and overseas dioceses, and were serving at home and imperial bases. Their ecclesiastical superior, irrespective of country, diocese or order, was the Archbishop of Westminster, Francis Bourne. Originally, authority over military chaplains had rested with the Bishop of Southwark,due to the large number of military camps within the diocese and also the pioneering work of Bishop Thomas Grant who himself was from a military background and had done much to improve chaplaincy facilities for Catholic servicemen. Such authority, however, was limited for although the Holy See had given him powers of supervision and nomination of chaplains, other bishops could withdraw their priests in peacetime. Chaplains too were prepared to exercise their independence and acknowledge that the War Office was the source of their

salary and means of advancement. This was the situation which Bourne inherited when he became Bishop of Southwark in 1897 and one which became more complicated during the Boer War when certain military chaplains on active service reacted strongly against attempts by South African bishops to control them. Bourne was infuriated by this interference and visited Rome in 1903 with proposals which would, in effect, name him as Delegate of the Holy See with sole responsibility for army chaplains. His proposals met with approval but in September of the same year Bourne was translated to the Archdiocese of Westminster. In 1904 he persuaded the other bishops to agree, 'that the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda should be asked to transfer the oversight of Army Chaplains from the Bishop of Southwark to the Metropolitan'.

Since 1885 naval chaplains had exercised their functions entirely on shore and were dependent on the local Ordinary. The right of supervision of all naval chaplains rested with the Bishop of Portsmouth as Ordinary of the principal Royal Navy depot. In 1901 the Admiralty requested that Bourne take sole responsibility for naval chaplains and also agreed that chaplains be allowed on board Royal Navy ships in the exercise of their ministry. In 1906 the Holy See declared that Bourne was ecclesiastical superior for commissioned army and naval chaplains; he was not responsible for local priests who served military bases which happened to be within their diocese.

Opposition from within the Irish Hierarchy to the appointment of military chaplains had always been strong and Bourne had insisted that he was not responsible for Irish priests. The British Government, however, expected him to provide priests for all military personnel and since 1904 he had been able to get round this by having an Irish bishop represent the interests of the Irish dioceses. Further complications for Bourne arose with respect to chaplains from the Dominions, colonies, and India. He did not regard them as his responsibility and requested Propaganda to recognise this.

WORLD WAR ONE

Since 1858 the number of Catholic chaplains in the Army had consistently remained in the region of sixteen at any time. With two re-employed retired chaplains and one recalled from the Reserve of Officers, there were eighteen Catholic Chaplains serving on 5 Aug 1914. However, one was temporarily attached to the Royal Navy. The Royal Navy chaplains, not

including the one attached from the Army. Fr James O'Reilly, still numbered four, one at each of the main three dockyards, and Malta.

Of the eighteen, seven were serving overseas; in order of seniority they were:

Rev.	L. Matthews,	Gibraltar
Rev.	W. Keatinge,	Cairo
Rev.	Robert Nash,	South Africa
Rev.	Daniel Lane,	Malta
Rev.	John Moth,	South Africa
Rev.	Peter Grobel,	Malta
Rev.	James O'Reilly,	Attached to R.N.

This widespread deployment of chaplains meant that only eleven were available for immediate service with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), and some of these had to remain at home stations. In the event, seven chaplains accompanied the initial BEF and were present during the opening battles of the war, others followed shortly afterwards:

Rev.	Francis Bickerstaffe Drew,	Salisbury
Rev.	Edward Ryan,	retired re-employed chaplin, 1st Cavalry Division
Rev.	Stephen Rogers,	1st Division
Rev.	James Dey,	2nd Division
Rev.	James Dunphy,	3rd Division
Rev.	William Forrest,	4th Division
Rev.	William Flynn,	5th Division
Rev.	Peter Bradley,	6th Division
Rev.	John Malony,	initially retained in UK, then with 27th Division
Rev.	Emmanuel Morgan,	retired chaplain, Devonport
Rev.	John Hassenauer,	(later Carden), recalled to the active list on 5 Aug 1914, 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers and 4th Division.

It would appear that the senior first class chaplain, Rev. L.J. Matthews, was considered too old for active service (he was nearly sixty and died in 1916). Probably because of this, Rev. William Keatinge was recalled from Cairo and appointed Principal Chaplain (RC), HQ BEF. He quickly appointed a temporary chaplain, Dom Bernard Rawlinson, as his assistant, thus freeing himself from from day to day administration. This accomplished, Mgr Keatinge was able to tour the front, visiting his

scattered chaplains, inspecting, counselling, advising, and giving what material aid he could in the chaotic opening months of the war. We can be sure he also visited wounded in the base hospitals and field ambulances. Liaison with Cardinal Bourne and the Vicar General of Westminster, Mgr Bidwell, would have occupied considerable time in his urgent efforts to obtain reinforcements for his overworked chaplains. In response to his appeals, repeated from Westminster, volunteers were not slow in coming forward, even from the most distant parts of the Empire:

> While Fr Peal, S.J. was at Darjeeling on 12 Aug 1914, he received a letter from his Fr Superior granting permission to apply for a chaplaincy. He went to Garrison Headquarters and from there a wire was sent to the ADC to the C.-in-C India. At Jalapahur on Sat 15 Aug, Fr Peal received a reply, it was the Feast of the Assumption, "you have been appointed RC Chaplain to accompany 3rd (Lahore) Division, Expeditionary Force and should proceed to Bombay as early as possible and report to the Embarkation Officer, who will arrange accommodation.

Wasting no time he left that evening, and on Monday 17 August Fr Peal was at Calcutta, fully equipped and ready to embark.

Another priest who volunteered immediately was Dom Edmund Dunn OSB of Ampleforth. He had but recently returned for a year's leave having served for a long time in Borneo. He devoted his year 'at home' to the troops on the Western Front. At the end of his one year army chaplaincy contract, Fr Dunn returned to Borneo.

THE OPENING BATTLES

The planned strength of the BEF was six infantry divisions and one of cavalry. The allocation of chaplains was one to a division. Each division had approximately twenty major units ranging in strength from five hundred to one thousand men, often units would be spread over a wide area, especially in mobile operations such as the encounter battles of August-September 1914. With so few chaplains available to minister to a widespread . . . flock of Catholic soldiers, with the nearness of battle, the soldiers sometimes grew anxious about salvation, and it is recorded some took unorthodox methods to fulfil their spiritual obligations.

> We cannot vouch for the following story, but it is told by one of our 'old boys' who was at Mons, and was wounded in the course of the retreat: A party of Catholic soldiers of "the Warwicks," finding themselves near an Irish regiment went in search of a priest. But in those days "a padre" of the right sort was a luxury, in many cases denied even to the sons of Erin. Undaunted and

now joined by some Irishmen, they decided to capture one for themselves, and ended by stalking a French curé, who, struggling and loudly vociferating, was triumphantly carried off into the presence of the retailer of this story. Having deposited their burden upon the ground they made a formal request that the officer would be good enough to explain to the affrighted curé that they had no designs on his life, but wanted absolution. Absolution followed, and the curé recovering from his rough handling marched and ministered to his captors for many a long mile of the retreat.

So scarce were Catholic chaplains in the BEF, that when 2nd Munsters, rearguard to Ist Corps, held at bay an entire German Corps at Etreax for over twelve hours and were annihilated, it was a German Catholic chaplain who read the service over their 127 dead, and succoured hundreds of wounded Munstermen. It was a service Catholic Chaplains of both sides was to repeat towards the 'enemy' many times in the course of the war.

CONCERN OVER THE SHORTAGE OF CHAPLAINS

Naturally, the shortage of Catholic chaplains caused deep concern at all levels of Catholic society, both lay and clerical, throughout the British Isles. Questions were asked in Parliament, letters appeared in newspapers, statements were issued from Westminster and Armagh. It was even mentioned in Number 10 Downing Street where Margot Asquith told Kitchener he ought to "let them have their priests".

The War Office, after years of parsimony on the part of the Treasury, was suddenly faced with the task of expanding the Army from seven to seventy-seven divisions. At the same time it had to support an under-strength field army fighting desperate battles. In consequence, the War Office Staff was fully stretched and took time to adjust to the new situation. Even within the Church Hierarchy there appears to have been some confusion and uncertainty, as the following letter from Mgr Bidwell to the Bishop of Northampton illustrates:

> My Dear Lord, The Cardinal is only responsible for supplying and appointing those chaplains who are to give their whole time to the troops, whether abroad or at home. There is no difficulty as to this. We have a long .list of volunteers, and appointments are made as soon as we are asked for them by the military authorities.
>
> The care of those troops at home who have no whole-time chaplains of their own rests with the local Ordinaries and the local Clergy This is necessarily so, as the Cardinal has no jurisdiction over the local clergy.

> The War Office has given the Commanding Officers power to arrange for the appointment of Chaplains, but many of them have not done so yet, being presumably, under the impression that the services of the local clergy meet the needs of the Catholics under their command. If the clergy would impress on the Commanding Officers that this is not so, it would be undoubtedly a great help. We are doing all we can from here, but we do not come into touch with the Commanding Officers until they apply, and what is wanted is precisely to get them to apply,
>
> The War Office cannot give us information as to the movements of troops! so we have no means of knowledge where they are, which makes it all the more important that they should have chaplains of their own, and that the local clergy should help us to have this done.

The Irish Hierarchy also had reservations concerning not only the control but the supply of chaplains. On 13 October 1914, a resolution passed at the annual meeting of the Irish bishops declared:

> All the information at our disposal forces upon us the very unwilling conviction that the supply of chaplains for the Irish Catholic soldiers at the front is lamentably inadequate.

On 31 October 1914, *The Tablet* in a semi-official note, stated:

> Let there be no misunderstanding on this point - there is no difficulty about finding any number of Chaplains that maybe needed. More than fifty are at this moment in readiness to go wherever they are called for.

The Tablet then went on to advise that it was essential that: "Catholic soldiers should try to go to the Sacraments before they leave this country", adding that chaplains were "not in the trenches".

In November, following questions in the House of Comons upon the shortage of Catholic Chaplains at the Front, the War Office wrote to John Redmond MP, leader of the Irish Nationalist Party on the subject:

> Since the outbreak of the war, the approved establishment for Roman Catholic Chaplains has been one to every division sent abroad and three were allotted to the general hospitals.
>
> It was recently decided that every Irish Regiment and battalion predominantly Catholic should have a Chaplain attached to it. Consequently the number of such chaplains was increased from 14 to 30 to admit of this being done, and, in addition to this, four more were sent out on the requisition of the Principal Chaplain.

The letter went on to explain the arrangements made with Cardinal Bourne and Cardinal Logue for the supply of priests, and how the Principal

Chaplain in France deployed them, and concluded:

> If, as I think you feared, there should be found an insufficient number of chaplains in the hospitals at the base to overtake the work, and this is reported to me, I need hardly assure you that our sympathetic consideration would not be wanting.

By the end of 1914, an additional eighty-nine priests, Regular and Secular, from all over Great Britain and Ireland, had been given temporary commissions as chaplains and many were actually in the trenches. When all the difficulties are taken into account, the expansion of the Army Catholic chaplainy, seen in the context of the time, has to be accounted remarkable.

CHAPLAINS AT THE FRONT

After the "Race to the Sea" the front stabilised from the Channel to the Swiss border and settled down to trench warfare which was to last for almost the rest of the war. Reinforcements for the hard-pressed chaplains began to arrive, the comments of one newly arrived priest in a letter home are interesting:

> Medical department wonderfully well organised...
>
> It is certainly not the kind of life to select as an amusement...
>
> I hope however that one may go nearer the fighting line...

When posted to a battalion he reported home:

> The Commanding Officer gives every encouragement, but between being in the trenches and sudden moves it is not always possible to hold Mass. Confessions in fields, roadside, generally in several inches of mud. . . Whole battalion have been to confession and Holy Commnion in the last week to ten days.. . . The advantage of being attached to a regiment is that I am able to be up this far. . . There are rumours of dispensation from fasting before communion for soldiers. But we in the Front Line who should be the first to hear of such things have heard nothing.

(This chaplain was subsequently awarded a DSO MC and was twice mentioned in despatches.)

In the course of the war Catholic chaplains constantly shared the dangers of the fighting troops, to give Extreme Unction to the dying on the battlefield. Such was their commitment to this they won universal respect (from both troops and Army establishment) for their courage, endurance and leadership; in addition to their priestly devotion.

These Catholic priests impress one. Leeson (the RC padre) never dropped a word of religion in my hearing, but one felt a serenity and certitude streaming from him such as was not possessed by our bluff Anglicans. Already there was a growing dislike of these latter. They had nothing to offer but the consolation the next man could give you, and a less fortifying one. The Church of Rome sent a man into action mentally and spiritually cleaned. The Church of England could only offer you a cigarette. The Church of Rome, experienced in propaganda, sent its priests into the line. The Church of England forbade theirs forward of Brigade Headquarters, and though many, realizing the fatal blunder of such an order, came just the same, the publication of that injunction had its effect.

Father Simon Knapp OCD had in South Africa excited the admiration of the future Field-Marshal Allenby. In 1915 much the same admiration was evinced from the other extreme of the military spectrum, when a Rifleman of Ist Royal Irish Rifles wrote home;

Our chaplain is not an Army chaplain, but a Volunteer who came from Winchester with us, and a regular saint. He is the Rev S.S. Knapp, and he is always in the trenches with the regiment. He has faced death at least forty times since we came out. No other clergyman have I seen in the front trenches but him - hearing confessions, with bullets, in showers like hailstones, passing over the heads of the penitents and confessor. This is what makes soldiers fight well and die calm.

Admiration was not one sided. The soldier also impressed the chaplains. Fr Hubert Barnett OSB, of Ampleforth, went to France in 1915 with 28th Division, a division completely consisting of regulars home from India. He was at the front at the time of Second Ypres.

I have never appreciated Tommy as he is. I have never known him before. He is really a wonderful being. It makes one feel proud same race. There is no showy parade of bravery, but an earnestness lightheartedness that touches one. He is always ready to do his 'little bit,' and to give his life in doing it. There is no joyous foolish rush to the trenches at night, but just a grave, quiet grim Tommy out to do his best. He does not like the scream of a shell nor the frightful noise of the explosion, but the sight of a comrade in danger or in need is enough for Tommy to make the greatest sacrifices to give his fellow soldier a moment's relief or the slightest help. The tales of the trenches are really very touching. My admiration for the average Tommy increases the more I see of him. Tommy is one of the very best!

The watching non-Catholic troops were not slow in observing and appreciating the spirituality, devotion and fortitude of these priests. As a result, during the war there were 14,000 conversions to the faith in France

alone. The numbers which followed after the war in consequence of war experience and priestly example is inestimable. One, Barclay Wilkie late RMF was received into the Catholic Church in 1940, wrote: "my war time experience helped to set me on the right path". The mother of an officer killed in action wrote to his chaplain Fr Devas:

> He told me how he had attended Mass often as the C of E Padres were not allowed up in the Front trenches and he could not have spoken more highly of any one than he did of the RC Padres. My father was a C of E Padre in India. He and the RC Padre worked hand in hand in Afghanistan in 1879.

NAVAL CHAPLAINS

The first chaplain to die in the Great War was Rev Basil Gwydir, OSB, a Naval chaplain. When the Hospital Ship *Rohilla* was wrecked off Whitby in the winter of 1914, Fr Gwydir could have allowed himself to be rescued, as another chaplain did (he resigned a month later). Instead, Fr Gwydir choosed to remained on board with the wounded, and shared their fate.

Fr Anthony Pollen was not only present at the battle of Jutland but also won a well-deserved DSC. As Catholic chaplain to 5th Battle Squadron, serving in *HMS* Warspite, he plunged into a severe cordite fire to rescue two seamen. Although Fr Pollen succeeded in dragging both men out of the inferno alive, he was himself badly burned. It was according to a Naval historian 'one of the finest deeds of the day'.

In the Army brigade of 63rd Naval Division Fr Stephen Thornton, was chaplain to 10th Dublins on the Somme.

> Many of my readers will recall how a certain Roman Catholic priest won the DSO at Beaucourt. To see this venerable, whitehaired old man, spectacles on the end of his nose, his legs clothed in gumboots, stumbling through trenches waist-deep in mud to some point in the front line where the shelling was heaviest and hence all the casualties greatest, was always an example to all. His creed was that a man wants to see his priest before he is dead.

Two other Naval chaplains deserved special mention. Fr Thomas Meagher, of Hexham and Newcastle, who had been on the staff of Newcastle Cathedral was serving in *HMS Revenge*. He had been with the Grand Fleet in the North Sea and in the Black Sea. His elder brother, Fr William Meagher, also of Hexham and Newcastle, was Chaplain to the 4th Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet.

CHAPLAINS WHO DIED ON SERVICE

In all, thirty-six Catholic chaplains were killed in action, died of wounds, or died during the war on active service with the British Army and Royal Navy. A considerable number also died after the war as a result of their war service. The first Army chaplain killed in action was Fr William Finn of Middlesbrough, Chaplain to 86 Brigade, 29th Division. He took part in the landing at Cape Helles, Gallipoli, during April 1915. Many stories are related about his death, the most accurate is probably the account in the regimental history;

> Father William Finn insisted upon landing with the battalion despite appeals to remain in safety on the *River Clyde*. 'The priest's place is beside the dying soldier', he replied, and embarked on one of the the first boats; he was shot dead on landing.

An Anglican chaplain of 29th Division, telling the story of the landing wrote about Fr Finn:

> The men never forgot him and were never tired speaking of him. I think they felt his death almost more than anything that happened in that terrible landing.

Fr Matthew Burdess DD, PhD., a former Professor of Philosophy at Ushaw, was killed in action in France while attached to 1/6th Gloucesters at the battle of Arras on 18 April 1917 when a delayed-fuse boobytrap left behind by retreating enemy exploded.

> On the night of the 17th of April, with the colonel and four other officers, he went to take some rest in a cellar in a village recently captured. Between three and four in the morning, a concealed mine exploded, and all six officers were killed.' ....

Shortly before the end of the war in the Middle East, Fr Matthew Prendergast of Hebburn, Co Durham,died at Naistrich Hospital, Cairo, on 16 Sept 1918.

By the end of the war nearly one thousand priests served as chaplains in the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth and Empire, in every part of the empire, on all battlefronts, and wherever the Fleet was. Two died in sunken hospital ships; twenty one were killed in action or died of wounds in France, Gallipoli and Palestine; eleven died on service as a result of accidental explosions, heatstroke, malarial fever, and a variety of illnesses due to exposure and overwork; one was drowned on the Western Front in February 1918 - presumably in a water filled shell-hole. During the campaign

which led to the capture of Jerusalem, Father Bernard Kavanagh, C.SS.R. was killed in action and was buried on Mount Olivet.

THE MILITARY PILGRIMAGE IN JERUSALEM

Eight months after Fr Kavanagh's death, in August 1918, despite preparing for a major offensive, HQ Egyptian Expeditionary Force encouraged a major pilgrimage of its Catholic soldiers to the Holy Places in Jerusalem. 1500 officers and soldiers drawn from all parts of the British Empire, and from from France and Italy, took part. Organised by the Principal Catholic Chaplain, Jerusalem, it was described by a chaplain who had journeyed from Egypt to attend, Dom Bede Camm OSB.

> I saw sights at Jerusalem that had never been seen since the days of the Crusaders, saw the victors prostrating themselves, as their forefathers had done centuries ago, before the Tomb of Christ, long processions of Catholic soldiers making the Stations of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa, British Tommies on guard at the doors of the Holy Sepulchre, and in the very cave where Christ was born for us at Bethlehem. I heard the vaults of the old Crusading church of St Anne echo to the familiar strains of English hymns, and well-known bugle-call of our Army ring out from the Mount of Olives, mingling with the hoots of the lorries It was wonderful to hear them sing the familiar hymns during the Mass that followed. I have never heard anything like that 'Faith of our Fathers' shouted from fifteen hundred lusty throats, and it was even more wonderful to kneel in the hush and the stillness that fell on that great crowd when the bell rang out and the Host was raised. I don't wonder that the celebrant, Austrian though he was, burst into tears and could hardly go on with the Mass. He told us afterwards that he had never been so moved in his life, and he wrote a detailed account of the Pilgrimage to Rome, which (as I found later on) had delighted the Holy Father, and done good in many ways there. Indeed, it was difficult enough to refrain from tears.

Allenby's offensive began within a month, and a month later Turkey sued for peace. It was a fitting end to the Pilgrimage.

CHAPLAINS FROM THE DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE

SECULAR CLERGY

Rev. F. Avery
Rev. N.H. Brown
Rev. Dr. M.F. Burdess, DD PhD. Killed in action
Rev. J.W. Campbell
Rev. T.A. Harker, OBE and Mentioned in Despatches.
Rev. F. Holmes
Rev. M. Hurley
Rev. E. T. Kane, MC
Rev. J.W. Kelly
Rev. G. McBrearty, wounded in action
Rev. J. McEnaney
Rev. J. McHugh
Mgr J. H . McShane, MC
Rev. G. Madden
Rev. T. Meagher
Rev. W. Meagher
Rev. R.B. Milroy, wounded in action
Rev. G.W. O'Neill
Rev. P.A. O'Sullivan
Rev. J. St George
Rev. C.O.C. Taylor

REGULAR RELIGIOUS

Rev. D. Ahern, C. SS.R.
Rev. M.W. Boyle, C.SS.R.
Rev. W.B. Buggins, O.S.B.
Rev. P. Dinley, S.J.
Rev. J.A. Hogg, O.P.
Rev. D. Sargent, O.P.
Rev. J. Stack, C.SS.R.

CHAPLAINS FROM MIDDLESBOROUGH

SECULAR CLERGY

Rev. J.H. Bigland
Rev. F. Bradley
Rev. A. Bryce, Mentioned in Despatches
Rev. W.J. Finn, killed in action
Rev. W.T. Harris
Rev. J. Holiday
Rev. D. Lucey
Rev. W.Pickering
Rev. M.V. Prendergast, died on service
Rev. G. Ryan
Rev. J. Thompson

REGULAR RELIGIOUS

Rev. A. Barnett, OSB.
Rev. A. Byrne, OSB.
Rev. D. Dawes, OSB.
Rev. E. Dunn, OSB.
Rev. W. de Normanville, OSB.
Rev. F. Primavesi, OSB.

WORLD WAR TWO.

With the vast expansion of the Forces in World War Two, it again became important to establish that Catholic Chaplaincy Services in the Army and RAF were administered separately from the Chaplain General's Branch. Again it was established that they were to be in the hands of the Permanent Under Secretary of State at the War Office and the Under Secretary of State at the Air Ministry, in consultation with the Bishop in Ordinary (H.M. Forces). The Admiralty continued to deal with the Archbishop of Westminster on matters pertaining to Catholic chaplains in the Royal Navy.

Mgr J.M. Coghlan, Principal Chaplain (RC) Army on the outbreak of war, retained his post until the end of the war, and became Vicar General for the Army in 1940. In 1939, following the precedent set by Mgr Keatinge in World War One, Mgr Coghlan positioned himself, with an assistant, at HQ BEF in France. The Principal Chaplain (RC) RAF was Mgr H. Beauchamp. He had also been chaplain at RAF Halton for the previous ten years. In late 1939 he moved from Halton to the Air Ministry in London. Both Principal Chaplains were immediately faced with the problem of finding chaplains to meet their rapidly expanding commitments. Despite a willingness on the part of a vast number of priests, the Ecclesiastical authorities were slow in responding; particularly to the needs of the RAF, whose requirements were less appreciated, outside the Services, than those of the Army. Mgr Beauchamp was involved in considerable travel, visiting bishops and religious superiors throughout the British Isles in efforts to persuade them otherwise.

FRANCE 1939-40.

Fr. Basil McCreton, born in Middlesbrough, was Assistant to the Principal Catholic Chaplain at the BEF Headquarters in Arras when, on 15 May 1940, the order was to received to evacuate. In a small convoy Mgr Coghlan and Fr McCreton were driven on roads crowded with refugees often attacked by German aircraft. For almost a week they moved from place to place in this chaos of crowded roads under air attack. On the way they visited military hospitals, giving spiritual comfort where they could. Eventually, they arrived at Boulogne only to be ordered to move to Bergues about six miles inland from Dunkirk just behind a defence perimeter. There they attached themselves to an advance dressing station and helped the medical officers attending the wounded and burying the dead. In this

they were joined by a party of Belgian and French nuns some of whom were trained nurses. Included in the wounded was a German from an armoured unit; (a) "Very smart soldier and well dressed; left arm smashed to bits." He had been brought in by French soldiers.

No matter how well conducted, the fog of war is never denser than in a fighting withdrawal. Up to 28 May, refugees, headquarters' echelons and service troops had withdrawn through their positions. On this day, fighting troops of divisions began to fall back and Mgr Coghlan knew it was nearly time to go. Amongst the troops were their chaplains and Fr McCreton saw Fathers Hobson-Matthews, Ford, Withers and McNulty. Seeing this withdrawal it was deemed advisable to evacuate the nuns to Dunkirk. Breuges came under enemy shell fire on 29 May, and engineer demolition parties began destroying everything of value, including the railway station. A heavy pall of smoke lay over the Dunkirk and soon smoke began to arise also from Breuges. That night, 29/30 May, a message was received ordering evacuation.

> At Ypres gate midnight, [wrote McCreton] "Giddins drove Mgr Coghlan and self in Humber...Main road to Dunkirk impassable so convoy, including 500 men on foot, took devious track much pot-holed with half-broken bridges. Heavy gunfire audible on both sides of gap, fields flooded by French...No lights allowed or smoking. . . Moved very slowly; everyone much keyed up. May 30th arrived beaches at dawn. Deserted car on dunes, surprised at number of troops on beaches.

They tried but failed to embark at Dunkirk's docks, there were too many wrecks in the harbour and German planes overhead to allow this. They could see ships standing three miles off-shore firing at the attacking planes: "terrific A.A. fire and tracers from destroyers". The chaplains' party decided to take their chances on the open beaches ..where a few days earlier Father G. Hobson-Matthews O.S.B. was killed, the first British chaplain to die in action in the Second World War. One of the armada of little ships spotted their party, but were unable to take all. The chaplains waited for the next, and were eventually taken aboard an already overloaded cutter which took them to *HMS Impulsive*. In the embarkation *Impulsive* was damaged and had to limp to Dover, arriving safely that night. For his bravery and devotion to duty in the course of the retreat and evacuation, Fr McCreton was awarded the Military Cross. He later saw action again in the Middle East.

THE PRINCIPAL CHAPLAINS DEPARTMENT

Following his return from France, Mgr Coghlan established himself near the War Office, responsible directly to the Under Secretary of State for War. Under him, in Home and Overseas commands, Catholic chaplains were in the charge of the General Officer Commanding in Chief, through his Administrative Branch, in consultation with the Command Senior Catholic Chaplain. The establishment called for three Catholic chaplains to a division, one for each brigade; and one for each independent brigade or its equivalent proportion for Army and Corps troops in rear echelons; and one for each casualty clearing station. In base areas and on the lines of communications, hospitals and convalescent depots had a chaplain, who sometimes also served the needs of his locality. Districts, Areas and Sub-areas had chaplains proportional to the numbers of troops stationed there.

Rarely was an overseas command fully up to establishment, but the front always had first priority. Being only one to a brigade of three fighting units, in action the chaplain usually positioned himself at a section of the Field Ambulance which received wounded from the Regimental Aid Post stationed with the battalion," and the thick of it". Where there was an Irish battalion, or a majority of Catholics in one battalion, the chaplain might position himself at the RAP of that battalion. More usually in battle he was at an Advance Dressing Station or a Main Dressing Station. Naturally, before the battle he would have toured all the battalions in the brigade to minister the sacraments to the troops. But always the chaplain had to be prepared to go forward to minister the last sacraments to those in need of them, wherever. A good working relationship with stretcher-bearers and medical orderlies, was very important as this kept him informed of any Catholic who might need his comfort.

CHAPLAIN PRISONERS OF WAR

Possibly the first Catholic chaplain captured was Ushaw graduate, Fr Michael Charlton C.SS.R., taken prisoner at Dunkirk. He was known to his fellow prisoners as 'the mad monk' Once, listening to his fellow prisoners bemoaning their fate, he silenced them by exclaiming "I don't know about you chaps, but I've never been so free before."

In the course of the war four chaplains from the North East were captured: Mgr J.J.J. O'Mahoney, Fathers E.W. Hodgson and G.W. Forster and Fr D.A.E. Bankes (who was also wounded in action). Fr George Forster was captured at Tobruk, and was subsequently a POW in Italy and

Germany. Next to being killed or mutilated, the most serious thing which can befall a chaplain in action is the loss of his Mass kit. Fr Forster lost his kit and portable altar when his car was destroyed by shell-fire at Tobruk. During the early days of his captivity at Bari, Fr Forster was unable to say Mass, and an Italian chaplain promised the loan of one. The following Sunday morning he duly arrived but set up an altar draped with the Italian flag, much as a British battalion drapes the Union flag over its stacked drums for a drum-head Service. Fr Forster refused to use it; the Italian priest and the camp commandant were outraged, but were told by Fr Forster that the Church is universal, not Italian, and that for British soldiers, Mass in such a way was out of the question.

> There was a heated argument. The Commandant and a visiting General joined in and seemed to be accusing us of insulting the Italian flag by refusing to celebrate Mass on it. But we held our ground and the chaplain removed the flag with bad grace, while General and Commandant scowled at us. I was able to say mass and give Holy Communion to a large number of officers and men.

Later more priests arrived in the camp some had their portable altars and daily Mass became a regular feature of camp life. The Italian chaplain became more co-operative and supplied wine and altar breads for use by the chaplains. Because of the dilapidated state of his desert uniform, Fr Forster was loaned a Franciscan habit, until a replacement uniform arrived. Speaking Italian as he did, it would have been easy for Fr Forster to have escaped to Rome and Vatican City. Such a thought never occurred to him and he remained with his flock, shared their captivity and ministered to their spiritual needs until the end of the war.

CASUALTIES OF WAR

Meanwhile the war continued, and other chaplains from the North East became casualties. Three were killed in action: Fr B. Costello of Middlesbrough, and two from Hexham and Newcastle. Fr G. Nesbitt was killed in action, mentioned in despatches and was awarded a posthumous French Croix de Guerre. In the Far East, Fr James O'Callaghan, chaplain to 7th Battalion, Worcester Regiment, sadly, became the first of his battalion to be killed in action during the battles of Kohima/Maram (April-June 1944), the turning point in the battle for Burma. After the battle the Worcesters pioneers fashioned a teak memorial upon which were carved the names of the battalion's dead. Shown thereon is:

"Captain (Rev) J. O'Callaghan, RAChD". The Worcesters' Memorial

was placed initially in the Dak Bungalow (Government Rest House) at Maram; then in 1952 it was moved to St George's Chapel, Worcester Cathedral.

Many chaplains were wounded and decorated. Fr P. Bluett was wounded in action and awarded the Military Cross. Soldiers appreciate that awards for bravery in action is a lottery in which many deserving cases are overlooked because of the 'filter' system of higher command. Even when recognition is forthcoming it is often inadequate for the service in the field. Thus many who deserve the Victoria Cross achieve only a 'mention in despatches' (the French equivalent is the Croix de Guerre). Fr R.O. Carnaffan was wounded in action and mentioned in despatches Fr J. Knowles, mentioned in despatches. Others who deserved much received no recognition, such as Fr M.J. Barry, wounded in action; Fr M. McAnill, wounded in action; Fr Cornelius O'Callaghan, younger brother to Fr James O'Callaghan, was blown up in the Western Desert and during the invasion of Sicily wounded by shrapnel. He thought little of himself, only that "the poor doctor sitting beside me in the vehicle took the full force of the explosion".

CHAPLAINS FROM THE DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE

Rev. J. Anderson	Rev. G. Anwyll	Rev. T. Battle
Rev. J. Bull	Rev. M. Campbell	Rev. R.O. Carnaffan, MID
Rev. P. Cleary	Rev. G. Corbey	Rev. J. Crawford
Rev. C. Crilley	Rev. J. Daly, MID	Rev. M. Dempsey
Rev. H. Dowd, MID	Rev. C. Duffy	Rev. J. Duggan
Rev. G.W. Forster	Rev. E. Harriott	Rev. J. Hardy, MBE
Rev. H. Higgins, MID	Rev. E. Histon	Rev. E.W. Hodgson
Rev. P. Kerwick	Rev. L. Landreth	Rev. T. Lynch
Rev. J. McKenny	Rev. R. McLaughlan	Rev. J.J. Meagher, MID
Rev. G. Nesbitt, MID,	Croix de Guerre	Rev. E. Ord, MID.
Rev. J. O'Callaghan	Rev. C.G. O'Callaghan	Rev. E. Scallon
Rev. E. Plowman	Rev. R.P. Redmond, MID	Rev. P. Smyth
Rev. A. Sheedy	Rev. J.L.V. Smith	Rev. P. O'Donoghue, RAF
Rev. J. Wordsworth	Rev. L. Deegan RAF	

CHAPLAINS FROM THE DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBOROUGH

Rev. D.A.E. Bankes
Rev. P. Bluett MC
Rev. J. Knowles, MID
Rev. B. McCreton, MC
Rev. Barry
Rev. B.Costello
Rev. M. McAniff
Mgr. J.J.J. O'Mahoney

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BOOKS OF LORD WILLIAM HOWARD OF NAWORTH

A. I. Doyle

In December 1992 Durham University Library bought at auction in London the remainder of the collection of books formed at Naworth Castle, Cumberland, by Lord William Howard (1563-1648), second son of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk (executed in 1572 for plotting to marry Mary, Queen of Scots) and half-brother of St Philip Howard (who died in the Tower of London, where he was imprisoned for his Catholicism, in 1595). William, who was reconciled to the Church and spent some time in the Tower himself, had married Elizabeth Dacre of the leading Border family, and, after lengthy disputes with other members of the family, settled at Naworth about 1601, and subsequently was protected by James I from prosecution for recusancy in view of his role of law-keeping in the area. He built up a large library of printed books and of medieval manuscripts reflecting both his religious and antiquarian interests, but all those manuscripts and many valuable printed books were dispersed between the seventeenth century and 1947. There is a list, including some at Castle Howard (E. Yorks.), by G. Ornsby in his edition of Lord William's *Household Books* (Surtees Society, Vol. 68, 1878), and a good account of those in his oratory at Naworth by Archbishop David Mathew (*For Hilaire Belloc: Essays in Honour of his 72nd Birthday*, ed. D. Woodruff, 1942, pp.117-130). Of the present remainder of over 300 books, mostly Lord William's acquisitions, apart from one of his father's, a number have inscriptions by him, the earliest of 1587, the latest in the 1630s, and some annotations in his italic or secretary hands, chiefly on earlier history, but not on the religious books which form about half the collection. There are also annotations apparently in the small secretary hand of Nicholas Roscarrock, a Cornish Catholic who suffered two periods in the Tower, and retired to Naworth where he compiled a collection of lives of the British Saints which survives in Cambridge University Library, MS. Add. 3041, from which those of Cornwall and Devon have recently been published (*Nicholas Roscarrock's Lives of the Saints: Cornwall and Devon*, ed. N. Orme, Devon & Cornwall Record Society, New Series, Vol.35, 1992), with an account of Roscarrock superseding that by A.L. Rowse (*Studies in Social History: a Tribute to G.M.Trevelyan*, ed. J.H.Plumb, 1955). The

same manuscript also contains Roscarrock's life of St Cuthbert, as yet unpublished. One book also has the inscription of Thomas Widmerpoole, Lord William's household steward, from a Nottinghamshire recusant family (as noted by H.S. Reinmuth, 'Lord William Howard and his Catholic Associations', *Recusant History*, Vol.12, 1974, pp.226-234).

There are also five manuscript 'commonplace books' in the hand of Lord William's uncle, Henry Howard (1540-1614), apparently compiled before he was made Earl of Northampton and a chief counsellor by James I. They include quasi-liturgical offices composed from the Old Testament, and theological arguments not certainly either Protestant or Catholic. He is thought to have been a recusant of church papist at different times, but to have died a Catholic. But he had no northern connection.

BISHOP AMBROSE GRIFFITHS, OSB, FR DAVID MILBURN AND MR ROBIN GARD AT THE MARCH 1993 MEETING.

PROGRAMME 1993 — 1994

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

6 October 1993	Mass (in the Centre) followed by the Annual General Meeting.
3 November 1993	The Annual Fr Nicholson Memorial Lecture. Dr Euan Cameron: *Re-shaping the religion of the people, 1400-1600.*
1 December 1993	Mr T Greener, B.A: *John Boste: a saint for our time.*
2 February 1994	Mr A. Harrison: The mystery of Amelia Radcliffe (1831-1880), 'Countess of Derenwater'.
2 March 1994	Dr C. Shrimpton: *The post-Reformation history of Hulne Priory.*
13 April 1994	Rev. D. Milburn, D.S.H: *The end of Douai College: Bishop William Gibson's search for continuity.*

Coach Excursions

18 September 1993	Hulne Priory, Alnwick
21 May 1994	Durham Cathedral
25 June 1994	Fountains Abbey and Ripon

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