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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.

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NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY 1995

Despite its small membership and limited means, the Society still flourishes, playing its modest part in keeping the story of the faith of our forefathers alive. Firstly, as these notes cover the whole of 1995, the success of the last two talks and the two outings in the 1994/5 season should be recorded. On 1 February Hugh Shankland identified the various Italian immigrants to the North East from the early 19th century, and on 1 March Frances Dickinson told the story of the Radcliffes of Dilston and the 1715, both talks being the fruits of valuable ongoing research. The outings to Easby and Jervaulx Abbeys on 20 May and to Wooler, Kirk Newton and Yeavering on 24 June were likewise well supported.

The 1995/6 season began with a visit to Lartington on 23 September and the first indoor meeting was the annual Mass for deceased members, followed by the AGM, on 4 October. Fr Milburn, as Chairman, officiated and many members attended. Fr Milburn reviewed the events of the previous year, thanked the officers and conducted the elections, the officers and Committee being all re-elected. The highlight of 1995 was the Fr Nicholson Memorial Lecture on 8 November given by Bishop Ambrose Griffiths, our Patron, which attracted our largest attendance ever. Bishop Ambrose traced the history of the monks of Dieulouard who came in 1794 to settle at Ampleforth. Then, on 6 October, George Thornton, with his customary deftness, painted a very human portrait of St Aelred of Rievaulx. The remaining two talks in the 1995/6 season, by Fr Dominique Minskip and Fr Peter Phillips, are eagerly awaited, and the Summer outings to Egton Bridge and Osmotherley and to Carlisle and Bewcastle should prove popular.

The articles in this edition relate in the main to more recent history than hitherto. Canon Wilfrid Fee reminds us of our six 'diocesan' lay martyrs, Dr Leo Gooch revises some misconceptions about the role of Northumberland Catholic Families in the 1715 Rising, Eric Clavering comments of the autobiography of Anthony Errington, an early 19th century colliery waggonman, and his Catholic faith, and Mrs Brenda Currer documents some of the problems of providing Catholic education before the 1870 Act. Three 20th century studies complete the issue, Dr James Hagerty on the Leeds Diocese during the 1914-1918 War, Douglas Smith on a Catholic unemployment relief scheme in Sunderland in the 1930s, and Aidan Harrison on the spiritual ministry to German POWs in local camps during the 1939-1945 War.

On behalf of the Society at large, the Editor thanks all these contributors and, as usual, solicits articles for future issues.

Robin Gard, Hon. Editor

THE BEATIFIED LAY HEROES OF THE NORTH EAST

Canon Wilfrid Fee

One of Our Lord's parables was about a pearl of great price. A merchant had gone out in search for fine pearls. On finding one such pearl, he went out and sold all he had and bought it. This pearl has sometimes been described as the gift of faith. A great price may have to be paid for it, and, if it is lost, a great price may have to be paid to regain it. We see examples of all this in the lives of some of the martyrs whose lives we are about to unfold.

There are six of our beatified martyrs who can be called the lay heroes of the North: Thomas Percy, George Swallowell, George Errington, John Speed, John Norton and John Talbot. There is space here to provide only brief biographies, but readers who wish to discover more information are recommended to read the books and articles listed in the short booklist at the end.

BLESSED THOMAS PERCY [1528-1572]

The Act of Uniformity of Elizabeth I restored the Book of Common Prayer, prohibited the Mass, and made attendance at Protestant church services compulsory. This Act was passed in 1559 and revived the first Act of Uniformity introduced by Edward VI but repealed by Mary. There were many widespread protests, in particular the Rising of the North in 1569. It began at Brancepeth Castle under the leadership of Thomas Percy, earl of Northumberland, and Charles Neville, earl of Westmorland. The banner adopted by the Rising depicted the Five Wounds of Christ. Blessed Thomas Plumtree was their chaplan. The insurgents (so-called) marched to Durham. In the Cathedral, the new communion table was removed, an old altar set up, and Mass offered. Here, there was a general reconciliation of the people. From Durham the insurgents marched on to Sedgefield. The people of Sedgefield met together, restored the old altar stone and holy water stoop. Here, the priest, Richard Hartborn, offered Mass and reconciled the people. They then cut up the Reformed Church service books and burned them at the village cross.

From Sedgefield the insurgents marched to Auckland, Darlington and Wetherby. However, the Rising had been badly planned, and when news that the Queen's troops were coming from the South was received, the Rising collapsed and all scattered. Numerous executions followed. The

Earl of Westmorland escaped to the continent and Thomas Percy fled to Scotland. He was taken prisoner by the Scots and kept for two and a half years in Loch Leven Castle, and not allowed to see his wife and four little daughters. He was offered his freedom if he would apostatize but refused. Eventually, he was handed over to Queen Elizabeth for £2,000 and taken to York. He was again offered his life if he would conform but again refused. He was beheaded at York on 22 August 1572. He died bravely with the words: 'I neither know of nor acknowledge any other cause, for we are seeking the glory, not of man but of God'. Another account records that he boldly affirmed his Catholic faith: 'As for this new Church of England, I do not acknowledge this new Church of England'. Thomas Percy was much loved throughout the North, and it was said of him that all his life he had been 'beyond measure dear to the whole people'. His death was thus lamented by all, but especially it was a source of anguish to our Catholic forefathers. He was beatified by Leo XIII in 1895. Blessed Plumtree was hanged at Durham on 4 January 1570. He, too, had been offered his life if he would conform but refused. He was beatified by Pius XI in 1929.

BLESSED GEORGE SWALLOWELL [d.1594]

We know practically nothing of George Swallowell's origins. We know that he was educated at Sherburn Hospital, near Durham, which had become an educational establishment. In 1576 he was appointed by Thomas Lever, master of Sherburn, first of all as a clerk and then as a curate of the parish of Trimdon. After three years he was appointed to the curacy of Kelloe, but this appointment was vetoed by the Bisbop of Durham because of Swallowell's Puritanical tendencies. Instead, he was appointed to Houghton-le-Spring where he officiated as reader, schoolmaster and deacon, having been ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Durham.

One day, towards the end of May 1590, a man named Finch, who worked at Sherburn Hospital, came from Durham full of news of an execution he had witnessed there of four young priests. The priests were Richard Hill, Richard Holiday, John Hogg, and Edmund Duke. Swallowell was so impressed by Finch's account of their heroic deaths that he remarked: 'No doubt these priests were martyrs before God'. This probably marked the beginning of his conversion. Sometime later, he visited a Catholic friend who was in prison in Durham for his faith. It may have been one of the Trollops of Thornley, Durham. Swallowell's intention was to persuade him to give up the old faith. Just the opposite happened.

Swallowell came away, convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith.

Resolute in his conversion, Swallowell went back to Houghton and getting up into the pulpit, he renounced the newly established Church of England and declared himself to be a Catholic. He was arrested soon afterwards and cast into prison, where he remained for a year, enduring very cruel treatment. Eventually, he was brought to trial at the Durham Assizes which began on 22 July 1594. He found himself side by side with two good priests, John Boste and John Ingram. The case against Swallowell was his statement about the four priests executed in 1590. 'No doubt these priests were martyrs before God', and that of 'persuading' others to become Catholics. Unfortunately, when the judge pronounced the death sentence, Swallowell's courage failed him, and he promised to conform and take the oath of supremacy. But John Boste then intervened, crying out 'O dear brother, what have you done?', and urged him: 'Profess that faith with your mouth which we know you believe in your heart'. That was enough. Swallowell withdrew his retraction, declaring 'I will die as a Catholic with these two blessed martyrs'. Boste then absolved him, to the great annoyance of the presiding judge. John Boste was martyed at Durham on 24 July 1594, and canonized in 1970, and John Ingram was martyred at Gateshead on 26 July, and beatified in 1929. George Swallowell was taken to Darlington, where some considered he had been born, and martyred there on 29 July. He, too, was among those beatified by Pius XI in 1929.

Dr A.M.C.Forster, an authority on the Martyrs and especially of Blessed George Swallowell, made an interesting reflection on the 'lapse' of Swallowell at his trial. She noted that he was arrested almost immediately after his renunciation of the Anglican Faith in the church at Houghton, and that this was followed by a long imprisonment. Did he have time for a course of instructions and was he actually received into the Church? Maybe it was only at the intervention of John Boste at their trial that he really made his profession of Faith 'I am resolved in matters of faith even by the example of these holy martyrs. . . I will be a Catholic and die with them'. So he had found his pearl of great price and he would purchase it with his blood. He came into the Lord's vineyard a the eleventh hour.

BLESSED GEORGE ERRINGTON [1556-1596]

George Errington was born about 1556 at Hirst, near Ashington. He studied at Trinity College, Oxford, and returned to Northumberland in 1580, to look after an estate at Ellington. Evidently, in succeeding years he

was engaged in, and subsequently became one of the leaders of, an underground organisation for receiving priests from abroad, 'conveying' them to different safe houses where they were harboured by heroic Catholic families, taking them to Mass centres, notifying Catholics when and where Mass was to be said, or how they could secure the services of a priest, and generally arranging the safe conduct of priests in their dangerous pastoral work. The Tyne was the port most frequently used in the North for the entry of priests and also for Catholic men, women and boys going abroad for education and study, which was illegal under the new penal laws. Hartlepool and particularly South Shields were also landing places and the headquarters of this organisation could be said to be the house of Ursula Taylor in South Shields. Two of the best known priests helped by and who also helped to develop the organisation were St John Boste and Fr Richard Holtby (1552-1640), the latter managing to continue his dangerous ministry and to avoid capture for fifty years. Evidence for the operation of the organisation comes, alas, mostly from reports of government spies, treacherous colleagues, arrests and examinations, many the prelude to martyrdoms, but even these accounts witness to the perseverance of men like George Errington, whose personal activity lasted almost ten years.

George Errington first appears in his role as a key man in the underground movement of priests in 1585, when he was arrested on board a ship about to sail from the Tyne for France. Errington, it seems, was escorting a boy to be educated abroad, but he was also found to be carrying letters intended for persons overseas. Errington and a companion, Robert Hethfield, were committed to the Tower and examined on 30 August 1585. This was the time of plots and supposed plots in connection with Mary, Queen of Scots, and Errington was questioned mostly about these. As nothing could be found to incriminate him on a major charge, Errington was asked if he would conform to the Established Church. This he refused to do, boldly declaring 'that he is a Catholic and so fully resolved'. Hethfield was not so steadfast, however, and conformed, since he was in the greater peril for his life, this being his second arrest.

Errington remained in the Tower for over a year until August 1586, but was not freed on bail until the following February. He was soon active again in his work of assisting priests. In 1590 the use of Ursula Taylor's house at South Shields for receiving priests landing from abroad was discovered following the arrest and examination of two priests at Dover.

Greater efforts were now made by government spies and the officials of the Council of North in York and the Bishop of Durham 'to break the nest of that popish and traitorous crew'. Four young priests, Edmund Duke, Richard Holiday, Richard Hill and John Hogg, were captured soon after landing and summarily executed at Durham on 27 May 1590. Errington and his companions carried on their work despite the ever increasing risk of betrayal and capture. In February 1591, three young men were arrested when attempting to sail from the Tyne, and in March Ursula Taylor was committed to prison in Newcastle. In April, all these, together with a Welsh priest, Sir George Williams, were transferred to prisons in York. George Errington was arrested again at about the same: time, sent to York, where he was examined, with Fr Williams, on 22 May, and then committed to York Castle. However, on 4 December Errington and Fr Williams escaped from prison. Williams seems to have disappeared from the scene, but Errington resumed his adventurous and dangerous life. Two priests, Joseph Lambton amd Edward Waterson, were captured separately in Newcastle in the Summer of 1592, and martyred there, Bl Joseph Lambton on 24 July 1592 and Bl Edward Waterson on 8 January 1593.

George Errington seems to have worked mostly in north west Durham, and he is named in reports of the spy, Anthony Atkinson, as being at Masses said by St John Boste at Waterhouse in July and August 1593, and elsewhere in co. Durham. St John Boste was captured at Waterhouse on 10 September 1593, and George Errington was taken soon afterwards, together with John Speed and Nicholas Briggs, and was brought before the Council of the North at York on 6 November. He was kept a prisoner in York Castle until sent, with St John Boste and Bl John Ingram, to stand trial at Durham Assizes. He. spent some time in Newcastle, in Newgate prison, with Bl John Ingram. However, for some reason, he was not sent for trial, and re-committed to York Castle.

Errington spent two more years in prison, before he, with two other laymen, William Knight and William Gibson, and two heroic Catholic ladies, also prisoners, Anne Teshe (friend of St Margaret Clitherow) and Bridget Maskew, were betrayed. A Protestant minister, imprisoned for some misdemeanour, anxious to reinstate himself with the law, told the Catholic prisoners that he wished to repent of his previous life and to become a Catholic. They believed him, and through the help of a Catholic layman, Henry Abbott, outside the prison, contacted a priest. The minister then gave information and all six were indicted for 'persuading' to Popery.

George Errington, William Knight and William Gibson were martyred on 29 November 1596, and beatified by John Paul II in 1987. Henry Abbott was martyred seven months later, and the two ladies were condemned to be burnt, but were reprieved.

BLESSED JOHN SPEED [d.1594]

In 1593 many loyal Catholics were arrested. Among them was a humble serving man, John Speed, or Spence. He was a member of an heroic group of Catholic laymen, under the leadership of St John Boste, Fr Richard Holtby SJ, and George Errington, who operated an underground organisation, for 'conveying' missionary priests landing on the North East coast to safe houses and Mass centres, as described in the above biographical note on Bl George Errington. As a member of this secret organisation John Speed held very important information which government agents were very anxious to discover.

On 10 September 1593, St John Boste was captured after saying Mass at Waterhouse, and soon afterwards George Errington was taken, and with him were John Speed and another young man, Nicholas Briggs, or Bridges. Speed was closely examined but no questions, threats, promises of rewards or other inducements could make him disclose the information he possessed. During his trial at the Durham Assizes, a letter (possibly a fake) was produced alledgedly written at the request of Speed by a fellow prisoner, a priest named Fr William Ogle, and addressed to a man called Miles of Durham, asking him and his wife not to disclose that he (Speed) had brought a priest called Metcalfe into his house, for if that could be concealed, then he thought be could clear himself of all other charges. This letter was quoted in court, and John Speed was condemned to death simply for 'aiding a priest'.

John Speed was martyred at Durham on 4 February 1594, and beatified by Pius XI in 1929. It seems that Nicholas Briggs, captured with him, probably conformed, but his wife remained a staunch Catholic.

BLESSED JOHN NORTON [d.1600,] and BLESSED JOHN TALBOT [d.1600]

These two Catholic laymen were martyred on the same day in August 1600, and as they were arrested on the same occasion and condemned for the same offence, their story can be told in a single account. Strangely, there is no record that John Norton was a recusant, although he came from a recusant family, the Nortons of Norton Conyers in Yorkshire. He and

John Talbot were captured with a priest, Blessed Thomas Palaser, in his (Norton's) house at Ravensworth in Lamesley parish, near Gateshead, on 24 June 1600, and this prompted Dr Forster conclude that possibly Fr Palaser had been invited to the house to reconcile the Norton family to the Catholic faith. Spies had, however, been on the watch and the house was raided. In it were found Fr Palaser, John Norton and wife Margaret, John Sayer, a Catholic gentleman of Worsall, Yorks, and John Talbot, of Thonton-le-Street, Yorks. A skirmish ensued in defence of the priest, Norton firing a blunderbus erratically, and Talbot drawing his sword, but to no avail. All, except Sayer who is not subsequently mentioned, were taken off to Durham and duly tried for treason, Fr Palaser for being a priest and the others for aiding and abetting him., and martyred on 9 August 1600.

Unlike John Norton, John Talbot was a well known recusant. He was born at Thornton-le-Street, near Thirsk, and described as s gentleman and a man of wealth. He was first convicted of recusancy on 18 March 1587, when he was twenty-five years of age, and a fine of £140 imposed. He persistently refused to attend the Anglican church, and, strange though it may seem, the case dragged on for years and then, owing to some confusion of names, he finally won his case. However, on 2 April 1599 he was again convicted and fined £60 for absence from church, and on 24 June 1600 he was involved in the same incident at Lamesley, arrested and executed as described above.

Fr Cuthbert Trollop (1573-c.1643), a member of famous Trollop family of Thornley, left the following story of these three martyrs when in prison together. Fr Palaser and his companions, John Norton and John Talbot, being in prison, were nearly poisoned by the gaoler's wife. She had prepared a poisoned broth for them. Fr Palaser was on the point of consuming some, when the bone of mutton on the dish began to run with blood into the broth in the form of crosses. Surprised and puzzled, he called the maid-servant, and sent it back to her mistress. The latter sprinkled some spice over it and returned it to the prisoners. The same thing happened again. The maid-servant then broke down, confessed that the food had been poisoned, and, strange to relate, asked for instruction in the Catholic faith. Fr Palaser was able to give her this and to reconcile her. Her name was Mary Day, and later on she became a servant in the Catholic household of the Forcer family at Plawsworth.

Thomas Palaser, John Norton and John Talbot were all beatified by

John Paul II in 1987.

CONCLUSION

This brings to an end our little survey of the lives of our six Northern Beatified Lay Martyrs. They are representative of many other heroic laymen of penal days, such as the Trollops of Thornley, the Salvins of Croxdale, the Forcers of Harbour House, the Riddells of Gateshead, to name but a few. I do not know if any of these, including our martyrs, belonged to the association of Catholic laymen known as the Catholic Association, formally approved by Pope Gregory XIII in 1580, whose members promised to emulate the lives of the Apostles, to be content with very little in life, and to bestow their goods for the sake of the Catholic cause. They supplied priests with altar requisites, with horses, clothing and other necessities, and in the disguise of grooms and servants escorted priests throughout the country. It was formed by an heroic Catholic layman named George Gilbert, a member of an old Suffolk family. But it is not known whether the organisation which operated in the North, described in these notes, was ever affiliated to this Catholic Association, although did very similar work.

So, we salute all these brave men. We thank them for what they did, and suffered, to keep the Faith alive here in the North. May they in turn strengthen our Faith.

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THE CATHOLIC JACOBITES OF NORTH-EAST ENGLAND: 'A DOOMED SPECIES'?

Leo Gooch

The extent of Jacobitism among the Catholics of north-east England is worth enquiring into not least because some breathtaking generalisations on the subject have become established truths in the historical literature. Thus it is held that the English Catholics were solidly Jacobite and that the rising of 1715 (the Fifteen) was due to the desperate poverty of the northern Catholic gentry and hence they had become 'a desperate faction'. Arising out of those theories it has been asserted: 'As a result of the failure of the 1715 Rising, the Catholic gentry of the north-east was a doomed species. . . By 1745 this social group had virtually disappeared'. This article disputes all these claims and recovers the truth of this important episode in northern Catholic history.

The role of the Jacobites of north-east England and their Scottish allies in the Fifteen was to receive a French insurgent force on the Northumbrian coast and capture Tyneside in order to deprive London of its fuel supplies at the start of winter and thus bring the capital out on King James's side. This task was entrusted to the two local Tory members of parliament, Sir William Blackett and Thomas Forster, and the principal Catholics, the Earl of Derwentwater and Lord Widdrington. Blackett was required to bring over the keelmen and the mercantile and political establishment of Newcastle. Forster was to mobilise the Anglican gentry of Northumberland and provide one thousand horse for the invading army. Derwentwater and Widdrington were to ensure the participation of the northern Catholics.

James Radcliffe, third earl of Derwentwater, was descended from King Charles II through Moll Davis, whose daughter had married the second earl. James and his two younger brothers were play-companions and school-fellows of Prince James their cousin at the Stuart court at St Germain, near Paris. Derwentwater came of age at the end of 1709 and returned to England to take over his estates, worth around £6,000 a year. He immediately took a central place in the Catholic, Tory and Jacobite life of the region and began the rebuilding of Dilston Hall. William, fourth Baron Widdrington, was ten years older; he too had been educated in France and was well known at the Stuart court. He lived chiefly at Stella,

a coal-mining property acquired through his marriage to Jane Tempest in 1700. He had the reputation of being greatly attached to all country diversions and of having a hospitable nature.

These four were not selected to lead the Jacobites for their military capacity, they had none, but for their prominence, influence and popularity. Forster was highly confident that the Tories and High Churchmen would support him, but he was to be disappointed. Blackett got cold feet and withdrew when it became clear that the keelmen would take the Hanoverian side; and not one of the principal Anglican families of the county offered support. Derwentwater was disillusioned, too, because the contribution of the Catholics fell well short of what might have been predicted given that they had refused the oaths a few weeks before the rising took place. It is not going too far to say that some Catholic families offered only token support, for several certainly limited their participation to individuals who had least to lose, except, of course, their lives. Few of the Catholics who went out were heads of their families or eldest sons and heirs.

Thomas Errington, the third and, at fifty-five, the youngest brother in his generation, was a reluctant rebel despite being Derwentwater's close friend and Chief Steward of his estates. He, however, was one of the few Catholics to have had military experience and his participation in the rising was essential. Derwentwater therefore called on him at Beaufront Castle on the eve of the rising. Together they walked to a hilltop overlooking Dilston Hall; Errington tried to deter the young earl from rising by pointing to the newly-built mansion and the estate that would be lost, but the earl replied that it was too late, he had already pledged himself. Errington had little option but to join him. Edward Charlton of the Bower shared Errington's fears and did not go out, but, knowing that his two sons William and Edward were deeply involved, he took the precaution of making the Protestant Ralph Brandling of Newham trustee of his estates for the benefit of his grandson. Thomas Gibson of Stonecroft Farm stayed at home but his son George, aged thirty-four, went out. John Clavering of Callaly, who was married to Anne, daughter of Lord Widdrington, would not allow his eldest son Ralph, aged twenty, to join him in arms. William Sanderson of Healey was out but his older brother George stayed at home 'to ensure the preservation of the family acres'. The Swinburnes of Capheaton were proud of their relationship with the Derwentwaters. Isabella

Swinburne was an aunt of the third earl; her son William, who succeeded as second baronet in 1706, and his wife Mary became his close friends. Sir William was prevented from going out in 1715 by his precautionary imprisonment but he had prudently sent his seventeen-year-old heir John abroad with his priest-tutor, Philip Farnworth, OSB. Thomas Riddell was twenty and had 'a little before the rebellion come from the College beyond the Seas', that is, Douai College; his father, Edward Riddell of Cheeseburn Grange, was unable to dissuade him from going out.

While these families limited their contribution, others did not bother to offer even that. The Charltons of Hesleyside were conspicuously absent. William married in 1714, conformed and was appointed to the bench. Neither he or his younger brother Edward, who remained a Catholic, went out. Edward Horsley Widdrington of Felton and Longhorsley, aged twenty, refused the oaths in 1715 but he did not go out though he had an impressive Jacobite pedigree. Similarly, the Haggerstons had been prominent in King James's campaign in Ireland and were expected to rally to the Chevalier, but they did not. Carnaby, seventeen years old, was abroad from 1710 to 1719 on the Grand Tour with his priest-tutor, John Thornton, S J. His forty-eight-year-old uncle Edward Haggerston refused the oaths but did not go out notwithstanding his friendship with Thomas Forster, who was a trustee of his will. Thomas William Selby of Biddleston, aged thirty-four, was another notable absentee. He had married the Yorkshire woman Barbara Percehay, and they lived in York; he remained there during 1715. Other papists resident in Yorkshire who did not go out, though they had strong Northumbrian and Jacobite affiliations, included Sir Henry Lawson of Brough, aged sixty-two, and his son John, twenty-five. Ralph Brandling, fifty-three, owned collieries at Felling, Gosforth and Jesmond; he was married to Anne Legh of Middleton in the West Riding where he had lived since 1697. He was thought to be a likely rebel and was gaoled in York Castle 'on account of religion'.

The Catholic gentry of Durham had many family connections and social ties with their Northumbrian co-religionists and had even expressed great fervour for the Stuart cause a little over ten years before, but when it came to action their enthusiasm evaporated. Gerard Salvin, sixty-one years old and married to Mary Clavering of Callaly, was sympathetic to the cause but in February 1715 he was summoned to appear at the Quarter Sessions to 'answer such matters and things as shall be be objected against

him'. That summons, let alone his age, was enough to keep him at home. His son Bryan, aged thirty-nine, was a more likely rebel but he was betrothed to Anne Haggerston and he was not about to prejudice his prospects with her; his older sister was married to the noncombatant Edward Haggerston of Ellingham. Ralph Salvin of Tudhoe had married Barbara Browne, daughter of Henry Lord Montagu, sometime Secretary of State to James II at St Germain, and was no doubt expected to turn out but he did not. Thomas Maire of Lartington, forty-three years old, was another prominent Catholic in the Bishopric who did not go out. Sir Richard Smythe, with a large estate at Esh which he inherited the previous year, was an absentee landlord, and he stayed away in 1715. So far from espousing the rising, Salvin, Smythe and Maire provided 'volunteers' from among their estate-workers to serve in the Durham Militia during the emergency although, of course, they were hardly in a position to refuse. The Durham Catholic names of Kennet, Forcer, Jenison, Meaburn and Witham are all missing from the Jacobite roll of honour. Albert Silvertop, Widdrington's estate-steward at Stella, contrived to be 'incognito' in 1715, choosing neither the pro-Jacobite stand of his employer or the anti-Jacobite stance of his employees, the pitmen and keelmen. Joseph Dunn, another agent of Widdrington, was not as diffident as his colleague for he was said later to have been 'so useful in the late rebellion', though in what capacity was not stated.

No Catholic priest in the north-east volunteered, much to the disgust of the Chevalier. The mission in England held to the policy of the Holy See which was 'not to intermeddle with politic concerns or intrigues of state'. Since the northern vicariate was *sede vacante* between 1711 and 1716, no local episcopal influence could be brought to bear on the clergy either way. Evidently the arrest of Dom Joseph Wilson, chaplain at Stella Hall, proved a more effective deterrent. Widdrington's uncles Henry and Robert were Jesuits, and chaplains at Callaly Castle and Widdrington Castle, respectively, but neither went out. George Collingwood's brother Thomas, Jesuit chaplain at Biddleston Hall, took no part either. Augustine Jenison (alias Johnson) was chaplain to Lady Mary Radcliffe in Old Elvet, Durham. John Girlington (alias Anderton) was at Dilston ministering to the household, tenantry and local Catholics. Benjamin Petre (alias White) had tutored Derwentwater on the Grand Tour and was kept on as private chaplain on their return to England. Jenison, Petre and Girlington all stayed at home in 1715. The absence of Catholic priests from the Jacobite army can only

have been a deliberate act of policy. The government would have gained an invaluable propaganda coup if it could have shown that priests, particularly Jesuits, were in arms with the Jacobites.

It is clear, then, that contrary to the expectations of Hanoverian and Jacobite alike, a number of Roman Catholic families were opposed to the rising, while others offered minimal support. Some Catholic gentlemen kept out of the way and one or two were prevented from taking part by the authorities. So much for the Northumbrians who did not go out; there were, of course, those who did.

A correlation of all extant lists shows that there were 271 identifiable Northumbrians out in the Fifteen. Two thirds (187) of them were plebeians and nothing is known about them except their parishes of origin. There was, though, a marked correlation between the domiciles of the rank-and-file and the gentry; almost half the plebeians lived in the parishes of those who led them. Fifty-six came from Tynedale (where Derwentwater's main estate lay), twenty-six came from Coquetdale (Collingwood et al.), twenty-nine from the central parts of the county (Thornton) and sixteen from Widdrington's fiefdom in the east. It may be supposed that many of these men were Catholics but few of them appear in the 1705 Papist Returns. One recruit deserves special mention. James Robson, a Catholic stonemason and freeholder of Thropton was a ballad-maker and composed the marching song 'Hobby Elliott' for the Northumbrian Jacobites; he also played the Northumbrian pipes and led the Jacobite band.

Thirty per cent (84) of the Northumbrians were described as noblemen or gentlemen or by military rank; just under half (39) of them were Catholics. Peregrine Widdrington was Forster's *aide de camp*, and Charles Widdrington had command of the reserves; William Tunstall, of Wycliffe in the North Riding, was Paymaster and Quartermaster General. He was married to Derwentwater's great aunt, Mary Radcliffe. Henry Widdrington of Cold Park assisted Tunstall. The non-combatants included Edward Charlton, 'a doctor of Physick' in Hexham, who had lately turned Catholic having some six months earlier married the well-jointured Elizabeth, widow of Edward Errington of Walwick Grange.

The force was divided into five troops, each having two captains. Derwentwater's Troop was commanded by his twenty-two-year-old brother Charles Radcliffe. He was said to have had a great deal of courage but lacked experience. The second captain was John Shaftoe, an Anglican and

a half-pay captain in Franks' Regiment. Widdrington's Troop was commanded by Thomas Errington of Beaufront. He had been an officer in the French service and had the reputation of being a good soldier and a gallant gentleman. Lancelot Ord of Weetwood was probably second captain. The third troop was commanded by the border reiver John Hunter of Shillow Hill in north Tynedale, and the fourth, a troop of Borderers, by the Scot Robert Douglass; neither was a Catholic. The fifth troop was captained by the Irishman Nicholas Wogan. The subordinate officers in these three troops are not named.

The youngest unattached Catholic gentleman was Ralph Widdrington of Cheeseburn Grange who had celebrated his eighteenth birthday on 1 September and had come into his inheritance at the death of his father shortly before. Thomas Riddell was another young Jacobite activist, as were William Hardwick, a London merchant, and John Talbot, grandsons-in-law of Sir Edward Charlton, and Roger Salkeld of Simonburn their cousin. William Sanderson was out; he was married to Elizabeth Charlton. William ('Bowrie') Charlton of Reedsmouth and Edward, his brother the doctor, both incorrigible throwbacks to their family's reiving past, went out. Bowrie Charlton was a notorious horse-dealer who cheated and abused his customers; he was generally known to be someone whom it would be unwise to cross because of his violent temper. Edward and James Swinburne went out, and two of their younger sisters acted as despatch riders. Philip Hodgson, married to Anne Swinburne, was out and his daughter helped her cousins as a despatch rider. John Thornton of Netherwitton went out; he was a cousin of Sir William Swinburne and was aged about twenty-eight. Ephraim Selby of North Earle, whose father and uncle had both married Swinburne girls, was out with his kinsman William (elsewhere named as Gerard) Selby of South Earle who said he had been forcibly conscripted. George Collingwood of Eslington was aged thirty; his father had died earlier in 1715 and George had come into an estate worth around £900 a year. He had married Catharine Browne, daughter of Viscount Montagu in 1710, and it was only at her insistence that he is said to have joined Derwentwater.

Both Catholic branches of the Clavering family were out. John Clavering of Callaly, fifty-six years of age, married to Anne Widdrington, went out with his cousins, William and John Clavering of Berrington. William had married Anne Widdrington of Longhorsley in 1706. (Since he

died at the time of the Fifteen it is sometimes assumed that he died in action but his name appears on the list of captives taken at Preston. He was not among those taken to London and he must therefore have died in prison before 10 December.) John Hunter, a 'reputedly very rich' Catholic farmer of High Houses, Callaly, also went out. William Ord, a bachelor aged twenty-five who farmed at Sturton Grange near Warkworth, and his eighteen-year-old brother Richard joined the Jacobite army. Lancelot Ord of Weetwood, in the parish of Chatton, went out with his three brothers: John and Mungo [Edmund] who were killed at Preston and Francis who was kept in prison until he was freed under the Act of Indemnity. William Shafto of Little Bavington who was forty-two years old and had become a Catholic at his marriage to Elizabeth Riddell of Cheeseburn Grange and his son John went out; John had lately returned to England from the continent where he had been serving as a page to the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel, and was said to be 'a most violent bigot' to his Catholic faith.

These, then, were the Northumbrian Catholics who were prepared to risk all in the service of the Chevalier. Clearly they were not wholly representative. The higher Catholic gentry were more reluctant to take part than the minor gentry. The Fifteen was not, moreover, a rising of disaffected land- and coal-owners; those who went out came from a different circle with its own character and inspiration. Derwentwater would claim that he had been brought into the conspiracy by his friends and relatives. In fact, he brought them in; he had been recruiting for the rising from the day he got back to England. It is said that Lady Derwentwater urged the earl to join the rising against his better judgement, but his participation was never in doubt – though he may well have had reservations about the likelihood of its success. His motivation was a personal loyalty to Prince James whose cousin he was and whose companion he had been as a boy. On the scaffold Derwentwater remarked of James: 'Him I had an inclination to serve from my infancy'. In the same way, most of the Northumbrians who went out were young men who did so to fulfil a personal obligation to Derwentwater as a relative or friend or in deference to him as a cousin of the Stuart king. They were fervent Jacobites, of course, and they were united by a shared experience of recusancy, but it is striking how close the ties of kinship and friendship between all of them were. Thus political and religious allegiances merged naturally and imperceptibly with loyalties to family and friends; economic gain was irrelevant. They acted out of a sense of honour, duty and loyalty developed over many years

in the religious and social circles in which they moved. However else they are characterised, they cannot be described as 'a desperate faction'. The older Catholics, with responsibilities for estates and families, had no illusions about the risks involved or of the chances of success, and very few of them took part.

The government was determined to impose the maximum penalty on those who had taken part in the rising as a deterrent to further rebellion. Most of the rank-and-file and lesser gentry were transported to the plantations in America and the West Indies and were never heard of again. Of the higher gentry, two were executed (Derwentwater and Collingwood) and five others died in action or in prison. Some escaped from prison and fled abroad but, in due course, most of them, and all of those who served their full sentences, returned home and were left in peace. The principal measure taken against the Jacobites was the sequestration or forfeiture of their real estate and the obligation to register all property so that they could be assessed for a contribution towards the costs of putting the rising down. These were potentially devastating measures but tax evasion had been second nature to the recusants since the Reformation and the government found itself thwarted at every turn. As soon as it became known what was happening, relations, stewards and friends raised what cash they could from endangered estates by collecting all arrears of rent and selling timber, coal, livestock and so on. They hid all portable valuables, and tenants were forbidden, under pain of eviction, to hand over rents to the authorities. Farms were left untenanted, coal-mines, lead-mines and slate-pits were allowed to deteriorate so as to reduce their attraction to potential buyers.

In their registers, the Catholics minimised their income and emphasised their outgoings so as to reduce their liability to the new tax. When forfeiture became inescapable, every obstacle, legal and illegal, was put in the way and the government was locked in fierce wrangling for years as the courts tried to unravel the details of ownership in which the Catholics had enmeshed their estates. Complex arrangements for trusteeships, mortgages, dowries, jointures, and strict entail were the means by which they had protected their estates for years and that experience was used to great effect after the Fifteen. In the end the government was unable to collect more than a fraction of what it knew the Catholics were worth. Even Derwentwater's family was able to delay confiscation by sixteen years, and

even then they secured substantial sums from the estate for the support of innocent members of the family. In short, through subterfuge and sheer effrontery almost every Catholic family contrived to rescue enough to go on almost as before. In fact, they salvaged a great deal more than convicted rebels might have expected.

It has been said that Jacobitism evaporated after the Fifteen and it is certainly clear that Robert Walpole's claim during the Forty-five that the Catholics could not be trusted was not borne out, for there was practically no support in the north for the rising. Indeed, the Widdringtons suffered agonies that they might be thought rebels; when their butler absconded to join Prince Charles, Lady Widdrington wrote to the Lord Lieutenant disclaiming all knowledge of and abjectly apologising for her servant's behaviour. Bryan Salvin and William Maire gave their solemn assurances (written in capital letters) not to disturb King George or his government. The Northumbrian Catholics of this generation were even less inclined to come to the aid of the Young Pretender than their fathers had been to help the Old. It was clear that any Catholic-Jacobite threat had passed with the failure of the Fifteen; the Forty-five was an irrelevance. The Pope would not accord Prince Charles royal honours at the death of his father Prince James (*de jure* James III) in 1766, and when Charles himself died in 1788, Jacobitism ceased to have any practical purpose.

The association of Jacobitism and English Catholicism is therefore by no means cut and dried; in fact, the loyalty of the Catholics to the Stuarts was as overestimated as their inclination to accept the Hanoverians was underestimated. Few Catholic families were more than nominally active in the cause and hardly any of them were penalised. So it was that, far from being 'a doomed species', all of them survived into the nineteenth century.

NOTE

I have not thought it necessary to burden the reader with foot-notes and references detailing the primary sources I have used, but the authority for any point made here can be found in my book *The Desperate Faction? The Jacobites of North-east England* (1995), from which this article is derived.

ANTHONY ERRINGTON, 1778-1848

Eric Clavering

A notable Durham Catholic autobiography, that of the waggonwaywright Anthony Errington of Felling, ***The Reason of My Writing***, written around 1825 and published seven years ago, seems to have made little noise; the purpose of this paper is to draw attention to it, to add a little more general background to the very full presentation made by its editor, Professor P E H Hair[1], and to suggest what light it might add to the history of North Eastern Catholicism.

Errington's roots lay in a rural Catholic immigration into the coal country which, though on a much smaller scale, preceded the Irish by over a century. The Tyne's economy drew a constant influx from Northumberland farmlands, very largely of younger sons who could not be accommodated on the land, but also because of the non-renewal of Catholic tenancies as estates passed into Protestant hands. The outflow seems to have accelerated before and after 1700, and in these and earlier decades of anti-papism there is evidence of probable Catholics among the incomers losing their faith. Between 1722 and 1736 three Claverings died in Sunderland. Their Christian names point firmly to descent from the recusant Learchild branch of the family, and therefore to a Catholic upbringing. But what brought them to the area, a stonghold of Puritanism – the town saw anti-papist rioting in the 1680s – is most likely to have been that their father had obtained a tenancy of land in Monkwearmouth owned by Robert Widdrington of Plessey who died in 1641, or that they themselves had done so from one of his daughters. This would make their early Catholicism certain. Their descendants were to run three more generations, but Bishopwearmouth parish records show that they achieved settlement at the cost of lapsing. Yet this did not save them. Without land the eleven boys born faced the hard lives and unrecorded deaths of fishermen and sailors; though Clavering womenfolk died in the town, most of the men are simply not heard of again. The last of them, Thomas, died in the poorhouse in 1793, apparently at the age of 21, leaving a newborn baby Thomas who cannot have survived.[2] Doubly bereft, of clergy while they lived and of historians thereafter, such marginal lives were repeated a thousandfold as people lost access to the land, just as they are repeated today a millionfold in Third World cities.

William Errington of Netherwitton, a village west of Morpeth where

more than half the parish shared his Catholicism, moved south in the early 1730s. If in his case both lineage and faith survived it was because he was able to profit from a Catholic social network and was not driven to find a niche in a doubly hostile environment. He was able to find a farm tenancy on land owned by the Boweses of Gibside in Ravensworth South Pasture, between Kibblesworth and Old Ravensworth, and this is likely to have been possible only because Philip Trumble already held a farm there.[3] We may suspect an earlier Errington-Trumble marriage, for the Trumbles, or Turnbulls, were Catholics and appear to be from the Morpeth area.[4] They are figures of some note in Tyne coal. In 1727 Philip had worked his own colliery on Gateshead Fell, immediately south of Kells Lane[5], joined to the Felling Waggonway, and had been viewer or manager for the recusant Lady Radcliffe in her Redheugh Colliery, closed in 1725.

Philip Trumble's farming did not remove him from this world of coal, for the land was essential to colliery operation as the source of timber, fodder, horses and their drivers for the waggonways. Coal country farm leases imposed an obligation to provide a quota of waggon horses and waggonmen, and what is more a major waggonway, the Team Way, an extension of the Liddells' Ravensworth line, passed through South Pasture next to Trumble's Farm.[6] William Errington, too, must have become involved in the industry in this way. He had died by 1759, and the farm was then in the hands of a Richard Errington who must be his eldest son.[7]

Anthony Errington's father was Robert, a younger son of William, who had to fend for himself and in the 1750s had acquired a small tenancy at Felling, perhaps only just in time, for Charles Brandling, who inherited Felling estate in 1751, abandoned a century of Brandling recusancy which had brought Catholic names to the colliery, such as the Trumbles, who had a long connection with it and are likely to have been responsible for Robert's introduction. Another was Nicholas Galley, in 1734 in charge of the staith, an important one which served not only the pits in Low and High Felling but brought down grindstones from the Windy Nook quarries, and, using the 'battery' or railway embankment behind Queen Elizabeth Hospital, was joined to Birtley Colliery, which in turn had a line to the Wear, so providing the first rail link between the two rivers.[8]

Robert was given the contract to maintain waggons and what was in his time a busy waggonway. His son was to claim that Robert had invented braking on both axles of waggons instead of one, and the steep sinuous

embankment which made this necessary is still in use as a footpath above Elliot Street. Across Sunderland Road in Colbeck's factory in Bath Road in 1976 a stretch of wooden track was dug up from 1.5 metres depth; much of Robert Errington's waggonway must remain nearby.[9] He had established himself firmly in rail transport, and Anthony Errington was thus born to security both in religion and employment, for the coal industry, constantly expanding, had room for younger sons of its technicians.

In the early coal industry Catholicism had been important at least among owners and management, but after the Civil Wars by 1700 it had been eliminated except in the western and eastern fringes of the coalfield, in Ryton and in Felling. The Erringtons are significant of the maintenance and growth of a Catholic presence in the lower colliery cadres; they worked with their hands, but they were contractors and not employees and much was left to their initiative. Rail transport of the 1780s had seen no fundamental change since the engineer Thomas Surtees, probably a church papist, had first made it work profitably in the 1620s.[10] In 1792 when Anthony, then 13, was apprenticed to his father it had just embarked on an extraordinarily rapid evolution which by 1815, a mere 25 years, was to transform the wooden ways with their one-waggon one-horse haulage into the first horseless system of steam-hauled trains on iron rails. By writing himself 'Newcastle Mechanick' Anthony was to lay claim to a place among those making an industrial revolution.

The viewer at Felling was Thomas Barnes, who in the late 1790s was to be the first to introduce all-iron rails on Tyneside, allowing Anthony to make the transition from his father's age-old craft to the material of the future. This continuity is of some importance in the history of technology. The transition was difficult, and elsewhere a quick cheap fix was sought in replacing sleepers by stone blocks, and rails by edged plates, technical dead-ends showing a failure to understand the dynamics of a moving waggon.[11] A noteworthy Catholic family in coal were the Currs; John Curr the elder of Kyo seems to have been the viewer of George Silvertop's 'Pontop' colliery at Bushblades opened in 1765. His son John Curr the younger was converted to the plateway; the father's disapproval of technical heresy was such that the son was unable to find work in Tyne collieries and emigrated to Sheffield, where his Catholicism proved much durable than his plateways. He turned there his inventiveness to the pits, and his cage brought an end to traumas like that of Anthony Errington, who once

dangled on a rope's end over 60 metres of void for an hour and twenty minutes.[12]

In 1809 Felling was closed for a reorganisation which gave rise to the colliery still open in this century, and early that year we find him in Southwick on the Wear, building the Carley Hill Old Waggonway. This ran from the Fulwell quarries to limeworks on the river bank at Cornhill and carried only limestone. It appears on the Greenwell map as a 'Railway', a distinction kept for modern ways purpose-built of iron, and may be the earliest of those shown.[13] He was just 30; what gave him his chance was no doubt a recommendation from Barnes, a connection with Felling of the Wakes who owned the quarry, and experience on his father's line which had served quarries and been known as 'the Grindstone Way'. Felling John Pit opened the following year, and Anthony laid for that, too, an all-iron way, at a slight angle to his father's wooden way, thus leaving it intact to be buried east of Bath Road.[14]

Early the next year, following the kind of rag-up over pay which was always endemic in mining, he flung off from Felling and took up work at Percy Main Colliery on the opposite side of the Tyne, where he did not stay long, and thereafter crossed and recrossed the river, indistinguishable from a thousand others moving backwards and forwards across the coalfield as mood and money prompted.

Barnes called Errington 'particular', perhaps a euphemism for peculiar, and there is no doubt he was an odd fish. His autobiography is not a chronicle; it is a series of incidents retailed with the sharpness of vignettes by Thomas Bewick, picturing a way of life not yet altogether gone from Newcastle Quay. In many of these he portrays himself as playing a decisive role in emergencies, often to his own applause. Modest understatement was never much prized among miners, and it is clear that on such occasions other men did allow him an authority that his actual niche in the management hierarchy did not give him; such leadership has been a distinctive feature of pitwork. He himself saw this as arising from his religion. As a Catholic he felt himself a member of an aristocracy; noblesse oblige, and imposed a duty of responsibility for others.

Professor Hair seems to make somewhat heavy weather of Errington's concern with ghostly visions. For anyone who accepts philosophic dualism, for whom 'the other world' is not a metaphor but a constant presence, nothing can be more important than the interface between his two reali-

ties, and its manifestations. For Errington his faith gave him a privileged position at that interface, not in the sense of any trumpery and profitable mediumship, but as an awed yet chosen vehicle, bound by rules which whatever his failings he seems never to have broken. It is rather remarkable not only that we have been given the chance of glimpsing an unlearned Catholic mind with more in common with West Africans than with most West Europeans today, but also that a mechanic contrived the literary form which lets us do so.

Socially, in the history of northern Catholicism Anthony Errington marks a date, even if only a small one. His departures from Felling show that by 1809 a Catholic worker had no need to seek the aid of co-religionaries to find a living; it had not been so for his father and grandfather. The effect, and intention, of intolerance is to exile the nonconforming from their native community. As a result all 17th century non-conformist congregations developed characteristics found among immigrants today. They got by with the help of their friends, their kin, their kind. They conquered and held economic niches by closed marriage circles and strong mutual support; to dismantle such livelihood networks was to disarm. Yet Northumbrian Catholics differed economically very considerably from Quakers and Baptists in that for them both safety and betterment lay not in a meeting-house circle but within a social pyramid still headed by gentry. The alternative to unfriendly Sunderland was Brandling Felling, Widdrington Ryton.

Economics rather than prejudice explains the slowness of integration, supposed to have begun around 1700, from when John Bossy has seen a 'modernist' Catholic community growing, 'in the sense that it shared the essential secular values of the society it lived in.'[15] For lawyers and writers this was no doubt true; Pope (who incidentally had a Trumble for close friend) was as integrated as Rushdie today. In the world of coal shared secular values buttered no parsnips. Because of his professional standing and remarkable political ability Albert Silvertop could work for Whig coalowners through the Jacobite rising of 1715, but without the Widdringtons he could never have become an independent producer, and even half a century later without them his son George could never have had a great colliery at Pontop. The effect trickled down; without George Silvertop John Curr the elder might never have obtained the management of a large colliery. It was in the collieries of the Howards of Effingham that John Curr

the younger found employment.[16] Much of this was fortuitous; the survival of Trumbles and Erringtons had depended on a Brandling recusancy that lasted only a century.

Similarly, the Catholic space in coal was to some extent an outcome of monopoly; the handful of landowner coalowners who dominated the industry was quite happy to leave the unprofitable western and eastern fringes of the coalfield to others so long as they themselves held the rest. Their hold was broken in the 1760s (by George Silvertop among others) and by 1790 the old order had come to an end, and with it Catholic patronage. However he may look to us, Anthony Errington was thoroughly 'modern' in the sense that religion and livelihood were quite separate and this made of him, unlike his father and grandfather, not an internal immigrant but a migrant. The integration he represents was to smooth the way for Catholic economic immigrants two decades after his 'wrighting'.

NOTES

1. *Coals on Rails, or the Reason of my Wrighting: the autobiography of Anthony Errington, a Tyneside colliery waggon and waggonway wright, from his birth in 1778 to around 1825*, edited by P.E.H. Hair, Liverpool University Press 1988, 282 pp.
2. See the Cordcr manuscript genealogies, Sunderland Central Library. Their Christian names suggest Widdrington sponsors.
3. Durham County Record Office (DRO) D/St/B1/6/92, 93, mortgage of 1731.
4. It would be possible to document them in the parish registers and also no doubt in CRS lists, but I have not attempted to do so.
5. DRO D/St/BI/6/168 (4).
6. DRO D/St/B1/5/23-29; Trumble's Farm 1760/28, waggonway map Chafer's Farm /29.
7. DRO D/St/B1/6/59. Philip Trumble too had by then been succeeded in his farm, by a Charles who had accepted the 'educated' form of the name, Turnbull.
8. Bennett, Clavering and Rounding *A Fighting Trade: Rail Transport in Tyne Coal 1600-1800*, Gateshead 1990, I 71-75, II pp 1-4, plans 7-10; M J T Lewis *Early Wooden Railways*, London 1970 p 186.
9. The track raised has since been lost. It is typical of Tyneside's highly ambiguous attitude to coal that whereas what relics have been found of quite short wooden waggonways serving ironworks at Coalbrookdale and Berwyn have been studied and preserved for exhibition there is not an inch to be seen anywhere of the Tyne's 200 miles of wooden railway.
10. Bennett, Clavering and Rounding, *A Fighting Trade*, I, 37-44.
11. M J T Lewis, *Early Wooden Railways*, pp. 262-265.
12. J Curr, *The Coal Viewer and Practical Engine Builder's Companion*, 1797 reprinted.
13. C & I Greenwell, County of Durham, made 1818, published 1831. The way ran between the backs of Edward Burdis Street and James Armitage Street.
14. For plan of new and old waggonways, see Gateshead Central Library BP 3/211.
15. John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1550-1850* p 284.
16. *A Fighting Trade I 142-148*; Curr, *Coal Viewer's Companion.*

CATHOLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION, 1833 TO 1860, IN THE NORTH EAST

Brenda Currer

The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 enabled Catholics to live, in most instances, as the Christians of other denominations did in this country. Consequently, they were in a position to benefit from the efforts of successive governments, throughout this period, to provide the children of the labouring poor with an elementary education. By the time they were able to apply for aid, the ground rules had already been drawn up regulating relations between the Government and the Established Church, as well as the Protestant Dissenters. Current thinking on freedom of worship and conscience made politicians reluctant to exclude anyone from the benefits on offer, and so it would seem that the Catholic community would soon see its own elementary schools established wherever it had missions. But at the same time, Britain's liberalism and Protestant culture could not sit easily with Catholic ideology, and it was possible that, from time to time, a clash of principle might compound the material difficulties facing the burgeoning Catholic community, hampering the growth of education for the children of its labouring poor.

In 1833 the law which enabled the government to direct education was passed as part of the Finance Bill. Parliament agreed that the government could grant money to the two voluntary organisations, the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society, to assist in the building of schools, as they already provided most of the education to poor, Anglican and Dissenting respectively. Catholics were thereby excluded apparently. In fact this was due more to the Liberal Government's inability to provide a new mechanism to establish schools than to an unwillingness to extend the benefits to Catholics on religious grounds. In the beginning it was the Treasury which dealt with grant applications, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Spring Rice, received two such bids in 1835 from Catholic priests, one from a Rev. G. Keasley of Sheffield, the other from the Rev. J. Worswick of St Andrew's, Newcastle.[1] His response, somewhat belated as the British & Foreign Society could not bring itself to be associated with Catholics, was to let Fr Keasley have a grant, on condition that his school was registered as a Dissident establishment, and that he removed the inscription 'Roman Catholic School' from above the main door,

which he did. Fr Worswick, on the other hand, had already opened a school costing more than £1,500, in 1833, according to a report referred to in Fr Vincent Smith's *Catholic Tyneside*, but it is not known whether the Treasury contributed to defray any of the costs. In the meantime, Catholic communities got on with the task of instructing their young as best they could. Newcastle and Sunderland led the way in erecting purpose-built school rooms, but most were in makeshift accommodation. As one elderly parishioner of Crook, remembering his youth, put it, 'It was like the apostolic times, when haylofts and stables and pitmen's cottages served as church and school and presbytery'.[2]

It was not until the end of the 1840s, however, that some Catholic communities could take advantage of various benefits which the recently formed Committee of Council on Education had to offer. Once the government had decided that grants would be conditional on inspection, and that the nature of the education was at least as important as the money allocated, then the Treasury ceased to be the appropriate department for dealing with grants. So in 1839 the Committee of Council was set up by an Order in Council to decide on conditions whereby grants would be awarded to inspected schools, so as to ensure better as well as more schooling. In 1847 leading Catholics, both religious and lay, set up the Catholic Poor-Schools Committee to look after Catholic interests in general, rather than leave it to local initiative, as had been the case in 1835. The Committee was able to negotiate with the Committee of Council, which now offered schools further financial help in, for example, buying books, paying part of teachers' salaries, and pupil teachers' stipends. These last two grants were the most important, as they defrayed the largest of on-going expense.

All aid was conditional on a favourable report from the Inspector, and herein lay the difficulty. The presence of an H.M.I. in a school implied a dual control, but the parties involved in this 'control' were not in harmony. There was a fundamental difference in the attitude and aims of the denominations who set up and ran the schools and the leading politicians who provided the grants. Increasingly, the latter contended that the poor had a right to an education which gave them basic skills, and that the government had a right to demand orderly behaviour and intelligent co-operation from the people it governed.[3] The denominations, on the other hand, believed that the main purpose of education was to make Christianity known to the young so that they could serve God by leading a good life.

Consequently, religious instruction and the control of the whole education process was all important to them. But the various denominations did not unite against government, because in many cases they could not tolerate each other's beliefs. The Wesleyans, for example, were strongly opposed to Catholics, who they thought should be excluded from State benefits altogether. It was probably the need to appease them, in 1847, that the Government delayed extending benefits to Catholic schools.[4]

The outcome of this conflict between the denominations, and between them and the politicians, held advantages and dangers for the Catholic Poor-Schools Committee (C.P-S.C.). In the case of inspection, the Catholics benefitted from the exertions of the Established Church and the Nonconformists which, while conceding that the Committee of Council had the right to appoint and empower inspectors, won the right to veto any appointment. Lord John Russell, a leading member of the Committee, declared in the Commons that there was no logical reason why Catholics should not enjoy the same arrangement as other nonconformists. The first inspector of Catholic schools, appointed in 1848, was therefore a Catholic, T.W.M. Marshall[5], who served the Catholic community for ten years. He was assisted in 1853 by another Catholic, S.N. Stokes, who also did a great deal of work for the C.P-S.C. Yet this agreement did cause trouble for one school in the Diocese, St Mary's, Sunderland, as the Christian Brothers, who taught there, did not wish to be associated with the government control which inspected implied. They had concluded from their experience in Ireland, where there had been a national system of education, generously aided by government grants since 1831, that to work with the government in Westminster would compromise their principles. They left in 1847[6], and were replaced with the Brothers of the Presentation, who had no such qualms.

However, when it came to devising a management clause, relations between the C.P-S.C. and the Committee of Council were less amicable. This was not because the Liberal Government wished to have a say in the management of schools, but because it wanted the subscribers, the lay leaders of the community, to have a voice in the running of all State aided elementary schools. It certainly did not want these schools to be completely under the control of the clergy. As in the case of inspection, when the C.P-S.C. came to discuss an agreement with the Committee of Council in 1849, there were already model management clauses worked out with other

denominations, but the two sides did not reach a settlement till December 1850, one year and ten months later.[7] The major point of disagreement was the Catholic claim that its clergy alone had not only the right and duty to instruct the laity on faith and morals but also the authority to state what fell within this purview. This was abhorrent to the Committee of Council which regarded it as an absolute power which could all too readily be abused. Lord John Russell indicated what he and his colleagues had in mind, when he later referred to his experience of the power wielded by priests in Ireland in his book *Recollections and Suggestions, 1813-'73*. The C.P-S.C. eventually let the Committee have its way, the crucial phrase being left thus, 'the priest... shall have the management and superintendence of the religious instruction of all the scholars. . . But in all other respects the management and superintendence of the school. . . and the selection, appointment and dismissal of the schoolmaster and schoolmistress. . . shall be vested in and exercised by a committee. . .'[8]

In practice, extant evidence so far consulted suggests that this management clause made little difference in the way the parish priest ran his school, but this divergence in thinking did recur and cause difficulties. Indeed, it showed up almost immediately over the crucial question of staffing the schools. Both the Committee of Council and the managers of Catholic schools regarded efficient teachers as essential for sound education, but they were in short supply, for until now little had been done on a national scale to train teachers for the education of the poor. Where could good teachers be found? Certainly not from the middle classes, who would not associate with the lower orders, so they would have to come from the ranks of the labouring classes themselves.[9] The Committee of Council devised such a scheme in the Minutes of 1846[10], whereby pupil teachers would begin a five-year apprenticeship, assisting the teacher in charge, from whom they would, in their turn, receive training. Government money would finance the whole scheme, both teacher and pupil teacher receiving payment direct by postal order.

The October edition of *The Catholic School* in 1848 gave a graphic picture of the effects of this initiative through a conversation between two managers, one Anglican and the other Catholic, on the subject of procuring a master. The former in a rural parish paid his master £60 p.a., together with a house, rent free, and coals and candles. As he was a certificated teacher, the Committee of Council augmented his salary by £30 p.a., and,

as his school had been pronounced a proper training place for pupil teachers (he had six or seven), he received some: £20 to £30. Thus his entire salary was £115. The manager of the Catholic school paid his master £30 p.a. without any perquisites. The writer took the contrast further, 'The Protestant school master was twenty two. . . , trained in the Normal School established by Mr Kay-Shuttleworth at Battersea, full of zeal, energy and intelligence; admirably suited for a situation, which he was filling to the satisfaction of all. The Catholic master was what might be expected for a bare £30 a year'.[11]

The obvious step for the managers was to attempt to fulfil the conditions laid down by the Committee of Council to select pupil teachers to assist the master or mistress. In doing so they would not only be ensuring a future supply of efficient teachers, but also easing the task of the master with their help. But to their disappointment, those schools run by religious found that they could not participate in the scheme as the regulations stated, 'No teacher in an elementary school can receive a grant who is not a lay person. . . ' In 1849 this affected St Mary's, Sunderland[12], as the boy's Master was Brother Austin Buckley, and the girls' school was under the Sisters of Mercy. In May of that year T.W.M. Marshall wrote on behalf of the manager, Fr Philip Kearney, to the Committee of Council, saying that the Brothers of the Presentation were not a Religious Order as they had not received a brief from the Pope[13]. The Committee of Council found this definition difficult to accept and, having consulted Dr Wiseman, decided to move away from definitions and to get to the heart of the matter. Their Lordships made it clear to the C.P-S.C. that they wanted to be sure of two points: first, that the teachers had been trained at a recognized institution and were using acceptable teaching methods; and, secondly, that the school was managed by local managers (members of the laity as well as the parish priest), independently of any other institution. If this was the case, the Committee would let the Brothers continue teaching in the school, and the nuns too. However, the Committee's Secretary, R.R.W. Lingen, indicated the Committee's unease at the prospect of substantial numbers of the poor being taught by men and women in religion, even when he and his colleagues were driven by the notion that, first and foremost, they wanted the poor to be taught. Consequently, he wrote, 'they cannot consent to encouraging the development of popular education through the agency of the Religious Orders, as opposed to that mixed agency of the laymen and local clergy. . . which in their Lordships' opinion is the only proper basis

upon which to erect an educational system dependent for its support upon the public revenue'.[14] However, at this stage, nothing was done to stop the expansion of the religious orders into other towns, and by 1860 the Sisters of Mercy had moved into Hexham, North Shields, and Durham.

More immediately, there were daunting practical difficulties barring the Diocese's schools from securing the services of pupil teachers and the benefits which would follow. Most of its schools had uncertificated teachers, but only certificated or registered teachers could train pupil teachers, so parish priests encouraged their staff to sit the examination set by the Committee of Council to obtain a certificate of merit. In the event of failure, they would have to seek certificated replacements, and these were not easy to find. It was not until 1850 that Notre Dame Training School for women opened in Liverpool, and 1854 that there was a Normal School for men, St Mary's, Hammersmith. Even so, few were able to study there, as they had to win a Queen's scholarship, after serving their time as pupil teachers, to do so free of charge. Also, with certificated teachers in short supply, the managers had considerable difficulty in engaging one of each sex, since the Committee stipulated that boy pupil teachers must be trained by a man and girls by a woman. Only the following parishes had certificated teachers by 1851: Darlington (boys only), Durham, Hartlepool, Sunderland, Newcastle, and North Shields (boys). By 1857, Alnwick, Hexham, and Stella had joined them, and three years later St Mary's, Newcastle.[15] Houghton-le-Spring, one of the first schools to come under inspection and employ a certificated teacher, had no pupil teachers at this period. The reason for this was that the school was built under the chapel and the regulations for school premises in which pupil teachers could be trained stipulated that this was not allowed.[16] St Michael's church and school had been erected in 1837, almost a decade earlier, when no-one would have anticipated any such difficulty.[17] However, St Michael's managed to soldier on, in spite of this.

The Committee of Council had a further objective when introducing pupil teachers. It saw it as a means of encouraging schools to abandon the now discredited monitorial system. At the same time it would enable the master to organize the school so that all children would be taught in classes by a person between 13 and 18, paid and instructed, or by the teacher himself. St Andrew's, with an average attendance of around 700[18], managed the transition very well, in spite of the extraordinary difficulties the

teachers had to contend with, as the inspector, T.W. Marshall, described in 1849, 'It is enough to say that more than 1,100 children have passed through these schools in the course of a single year, to indicate the nature of the difficulty which the teachers have to overcome. . . Success would appear, indeed, to be almost impossible where, from the constant migration of the parents, who are nearly all Irish labourers, the attendance is so irregular and the composition of the school so fluctuating, . . Yet there are many signs, especially in the girls' school, of active and steady progress. The mistress employs 'monitors of order' who are extremely diligent and well trained, with great advantage.'[19] By 1850, however, the Newcastle school had acquired certificated teachers, and thus a crop of pupil teachers, five boys and five girls. It continued to go from strength to strength so that by 1860 the Committee of Council had granted £1,940 to pupil teachers trained at the school.[20]

The largest lump sum which the Committee of Council awarded was the building grant. In Northumberland and Durham, Catholic schools fared very poorly, as only three schools were given grants, compared with 105 Anglican and 17 Dissident schools of different kinds.[21] St Andrew's benefitted from the Committee's desire to improve school premises in 1853, and H.M.I. Stokes, in line with its advice to inspectors, suggested to Fr Joseph Browne that they should replace the stone flags with a wooden floor. Stokes had commented in his report in 1854 that this was needed for the health of the children, especially the Irish, 'who were in the habit of attending quite barefooted. I have watched such children, while their class was under examination, as they shifted painfully from foot to foot, and at length placed beneath them a copy book or a cap to check the efflux of heat'.[22] Consequently, they were awarded £243 to refloor the school, in 1856.[23]

It would seem that the government was prepared to give St Thomas Aquinas, Stella, £279 to build a new school because their committee had been given a site, had raised almost £700, and had great numbers to provide for, due to Irish immigrants.[24] Moreover, the Inspector had indicated in his reports that the school was, in the words of the *Explanatory Circular to Inspectors of 1863* 'in the hands of persons who lack neither the intelligence nor the wish, but only the means to improve it'. He was proved to be correct as the school flourished, once the new building was completed by 1855. A third school to benefit was Stamfordham in 1857, receiving £130

to add to the £245 donated by Isabella Riddell, who had already given the seven acre site for the new school. The Committee seems to have thought that there was a great need for an efficient school here to serve the widely scattered agricultural population. Although Fr Trappes of Cheeseburn Grange was correspondent and the school was known as a Catholic school, it served the poor whatever their religion.[25] (Figures show that in 1879 there were 16 Catholics on the roll and 70 Protestants).[26]

At the end of the decade substantial progress had been made in establishing elementary schools for the Catholic poor. That more had not been achieved seems to have been due to the poverty of those who aimed to provide the schools. This was one reason why only three schools gained a building grant. None of the other parishes had managed to raise enough money to have the Committee of Council match it, to erect a viable school. There were very few members of the middle classes to donate to the schools of the expanding towns and villages, (Stella was an exception), and the poor could scarcely pay the school-pence to help maintain the school. Matthew Arnold, who served as an inspector, commented, 'In the Roman Catholic schools children do much more decidedly belong to the poor and very many of them to the Irish poor, who are in a class by themselves.'[27] The agencies which should have assisted the expansion of Catholic education had very little cash to share around. The C.P-S.C. gave £85 to Stella and £50 to St Andrew's,[28] and, though the Diocesan Fund gave £50 to Stella in 1854, this was rather exceptional. Only one other mission received such a large sum at this time and that was Gateshead in 1860. During the years that these diocesan financial records were kept, coinciding with the decade under review, 1854-'60, a mere £135 was awarded to four parishes.[29] Thus, only 13 schools came under inspection in ten years, although there were six others under simple inspection, that is they had been visited by an inspector to see that the grant for books and equipment had been properly spent.

The conclusion might therefore be drawn that poverty was the real enemy, and the ideological differences, evident at the beginning, proved to be no obstacle. But if supporters of Catholic education believed, on reviewing the success of their schools when compared with those of other denominations, that the cause would continue to progress, they deluded themselves. Although the dedication and enthusiasm of the clergy, the support of their staff, and the loyalty of their parishioners had achieved

much, the money contributed by the Committee of Council, especially regarding the payments to teachers and pupil teachers, was crucial. Should government thinking and policy change regarding the provision of financial aid, it could well turn out to discriminate against Catholics, bound as they were to fixed principles about education. This did, in fact, happen in 1870 with the introduction of Board Schools, following Forster's Education Act. Developments here, consequently, made the period under review appear, in comparison, something of a golden age.

NOTES

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3. *Quarterly Review*, September 1846, quoted in M. Sturt, *The Education of the People*, (London, 1967) p. 186.
4. Paz, *Politics of Working Class Education* pp. 134-135.
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16. Kew, P.R.O., *'Interesting letters'*, Lingen to St John's Episcopal School, Greenock, 22 November 1847, p.39

17. *The London and Dublin Weekly Orthodox Journal*, 25 Nov 1837, 'Opening of the Houghton-le-Spring New Catholic Chapel', quoted in J.D. Lincoln, *'The Catholic Church in Houghton-le-Spring.*
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21. Ibid. Durham pp. 607-612; Northumberland, pp. 708-712.
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24. Ibid, Papers, Vol. 52 p. 435 Canon R. Platt, correspondent, Stella St Thomas Aquinas, 1854.
25. Ibid, Papers, Vol. 53 p. 629, Fr F. Trappes, correspondent, Cheeseburn Grange, 1855-57.
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27. Matthew Arnold, *Reports on Elementary Schools, 1852-1882* ,F.S. Martin editor, London, 1908.
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THE DIOCESE OF LEEDS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

James M. Hagerty

INTRODUCTION

On August 6, 1914, Dr Joseph Robert Cowgill, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds, addressed his diocese:

'With a suddenness that is absolutely appalling, practically the whole of Europe has been plunged into a great and terrible war. It is impossible to tell what will be the extent and duration of the struggle but we may be quite certain that the conflict will be fought out to the bitter end. It is impossible too, to form an idea of the terrible sufferings and misery that will result therefrom.'[1]

THE BISHOP AND HIS DIOCESE

In August 1914 Bishop Cowgill had been Bishop of Leeds for just over three years. Born at Broughton-in-Craven in 1860, he was educated at Douai in France and then at the English College in Rome. Following his ordination at St John Lateran in 1863, he returned to the Leeds Diocese and for the next twenty-two years he was involved in diocesan administration, at first assisting Bishop Cornthwaite and then Bishop William Gordon. In 1905 he was nominated as coadjutor Bishop of Leeds and took the title Bishop of Olenus. Five years later his administrative talents were given full rein when he was responsible for the organization of the first English National Catholic Congress, held in Leeds and designed to demonstrate the social and political achievements of the Catholic community in what was still a missionary country.[2]

The Diocese of Leeds, together with that of Middlesbrough, had been established in 1878 when the Diocese of Beverley had been divided into two. Beverley itself was derived in 1850 from the old Yorkshire District or Vicariate which had been established in 1840. The Leeds Diocese was essentially the West Riding of Yorkshire stretching from Durham, Westmorland, and Lancashire in the north and west, to the counties of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire in the south. It included the textile districts of the west Yorkshire conurbation, the coal and steel producing areas of Sheffield and south Yorkshire, and a mission south of the River Ouse in the City of York.

Most Catholics lived in the heavily industrialised urban districts of

the diocese and in 1914 there were just under 120,000 Catholics out of a population of 3.1 million in the West Riding. 192 secular and regular priests served eighty-nine missions, thirty-two chapels, and fourteen other private chapels, religious communities, prisons and institutions. There were nine religious orders for women and many of these worked in the eighty-five elementary schools and eleven secondary schools in addition to the homes and orphanages across the diocese. The diocese had its own seminary, St Joseph's, opened in 1878, and in 1914 it accommodated thirty seminarians not all of whom were from the Leeds diocese.

157 secular priests worked alongside thirty-five regulars – Benedictines, Jesuits, Vincentians, and Oblates of Mary Immaculate – and it is remarkable how cosmopolitan the clergy were, reflecting not only Irish but also European immigration. Seventeen of the priests had either Dutch or Flemish names whilst four were French. A number of priests were multilingual. Confessions could be heard in Dutch, Flemish, French, German, Italian and Spanish. French was offered in twenty- two locations across the diocese, Dutch in nine, Flemish in six, German in twelve, Italian in four, and Spanish in two. Irish was also offered in two. [3] Two of the German priests in the diocese were to suffer before and during the war on account of their nationality. Fr Edwin Schreiber of St Mary's, Bradford, had the windows of his presbytery smashed in by anti-German protestors in May 1914, and in 1916 Fr Maximillian Tillman of St Mary and St Michael in Settle was actually interned as an alien despite having been resident in the country for many years. Both men, however, survived the war and became well known in the annals of the diocese. Fr Tillman would have found it rather ironic that the presbytery in Settle now stands on Tillman Close.[4]

Schreiber was one of those rectors whose authority, power and leadership were legendary. Technically, until the new Code of Canon Law in 1918, there were no parishes in England and Wales and diocesan administration was very much a two-tiered arrangement. The Bishop was assisted by a small curial staff and advised by the Cathedral Chapter composed of senior diocesan clergy. Daily administration of the missions was in the hands of rectors and priests-in-charge. They were financially independent of the Bishop who had only limited funds to dispense. Indeed, the annual collection for the Bishop's 'mensa', or upkeep, was a feature of the period.

Some rectors, in additon to being Canons, also had the title of *Vicarius*

Foraneus or Rural Dean, not in itself a particularly important office but one which nevertheless gave the Dean limited local jurisdiction and a framework in which to operate. The diocese was divided into twelve deaneries and this meant that the rectors who were also Deans and Canons were men of influence and power. Deanery agendas, the maintenance of missonary life, the training and spiritual development of curates, the purchasing of land and property, and links with Local Education Authorities, Poor Law Guardians and other locally elected statutory bodies involved the rectors in a great deal of practical, public and high profile work. In essence, they formed the links between missions, between the missions and the Bishop, and between missions and their political districts. Their status and reputations commanded respect.

THE BISHOP AND THE WAR

On to the shoulders of the Bishop, rectors and priests were placed the considerable burdens of not only maintaining diocesan life but also of responding to the circumstances of war and their effects on the diocese. The Bishop himself was deeply saddened by the outbreak and continuation of the war. He was a gentle man and his concern for those directly affected by tragedy was exacerbated by the need to distinguish between the claims of the warring Christian nations. 'Ask your people', he told his priests,

> 'to offer up prayers to God for the protection of our soldiers and sailors who are risking their lives for their country and their King, for the consolation of the wounded and the dying, for the comfort and support of those whose relatives have fallen in battle, for the repose of those whose lives have been sacrificed, for success to our arms, and for a just, honourable and lasting peace.'

Throughout the war his letters and Pastorals reflected his despair, but especially those given at Advent and Lent when his horror at the calamity was manifest. In Advent 1914 he wrote that never in the history of the world had there been a Christmas so completely and universally associated with sorrow as the coming one was sure to be. Is Christianity of so little avail, he asked, 'that after twenty centuries of divine teaching, justice, honour and truth should disappear before the principle that might is right and that everything must give way to human ambition and love of worldly power.' He urged his flock to have confidence in the Almighty: 'Victory will be on the side of justice... right will conquer might, pride and ambition will be humbled to the dust, and we shall see the growth of a civilization more truly Christian and a great revival of the spirit of religion.'

A better understanding of the true meaning of Christmas, he wrote, was needed now more than ever before.

His Advent letter of 1916, following as it did the tragedy of the Battle of the Somme in which so many Yorkshiremen were killed, was one of almost total despondency: '. . . our hearts are sad and weary and our homes are desolate. The dark shadow of death has settled down upon the nations, blotting out the sunshine from life.' The tone was repeated in 1917: 'After forty months of dreadful slaughter the war goes on, and the peace which we are all longing for and praying for does not seem to be within sight.' The colossal wealth of nations, far from being employed to alleviate distress and suffering, was being used 'for the training and equipment of millions of men to fit them for slaying their fellow men, for the manufacture of instrumeuts of war that will most easily carry out their deadly mission of slaughter.'

Yet Bishop Cowgill did not shrink from urging men to join the colours. By June 1915 he estimated that 10% of the total diocesan population had joined up. 'We are justly proud', he wrote, 'of this splendid spirit and are confident that further appeals for the nation's needs will find no readier or more willing response than in the hearts of the Catholics of Yorkshire.' To him of course, as to other Catholic leaders, the contribution of Catholics to the war effort was a way of demonstrating national loyalty and overcoming the latent anti-Catholic prejudice still lurking in early twentieth-century England. Catholics, the Bishop reminded his people, were members of two great empires:

> '. . . one is the Catholic Church with its marvellous civilizing power and accumulated wisdom of 2000 years, the empire which can never lose sight of God and His glory. The other is the great British Empire, in which it behoves us to do our part in preserving the spirit of justice, freedom and religion by educating ourselves as good and intelligent citizens. . . . The fate of Germany . . .' he concluded, 'has come as a warning to England.'

Throughout the war, education and post-war reconstruction were recurrent themes for Bishop Cowgill. He never missed an opportunity to urge his diocese to support Catholic schools and to value education. The younger generation had to be considered. In 1915 he wrote that Catholic parents should 'make up their minds that their children shall no longer be the poorly paid slaves of unskilled work. . . ' And then in 1918, again in a letter on secondary education, he wrote to a wider audience:

'Many thoughtful men and women are now thinking seriously of the social

reconstruction that must take place when the present slaughter has come to an end. Life cannot be as it was before the war, which has to some extent prepared for the change by drawing closely together men of every class and creed. . .'

For many of his diocese, life indeed could never be the same. The Bishop knew that previous social arrangements had been dislocated. His exhortations to Catholic men to enlist would, and did, very often end in tragedy and his Lenten Pastoral of 1917 contained this passage: 'Today there are many mothers who find themselves at the foot of the cross, and have their hearts pierced because their sons are being sacrificed in the cause of justice and truth.'[5]

CHAPLAINS TO THE FORCES

Lay men were not the only ones who offered their services to the nation. By the end of the war over 1000 Catholic priests had served as chaplains to the armed forces of the Empire and Commonwealth.

Since the time of the Crimean War, the number of Catholic chaplains to the forces had remained at sixteen for the Army and two for the Royal Navy. This small number was obviously inadequate and on the mobilisation of so many men in 1914 bishops in the British Isles pressed for more chaplains to be commissioned. In 1906 the Holy See had declared that Archbishop Bourne of Westminster had sole responsibility for all military chaplains in British and Imperial forces and it was to him that the War Office and Admiralty turned on the outbreak of hostilities. There was considerable hostility between Bourne and the Irish Hierarchy over the control of the many Irish priests ministering to the Irish regiments and even when Mgr William Keatinge was appointed Bishop to the Forces in 1917 the discontent among the bishops rumbled on.[6]

Irrespective of ecclesiastical politics, ordinary priests ministered to Catholics (and others) in battle, sharing the same dangers, experiencing the same emotions and sometimes suffering the same fate. Thirty-six Roman Catholic CFs were killed during the war, the first being Fr William Finn of Middlesbrough who was mortally wounded on the beaches of Gallipoli in 1915. Thirteen Leeds priests served as chaplains and all but two served overseas. Five served in France with various regiments of the British Expeditionary Force and six served in Palestine, France, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. The other two served in home garrisons. The average length of service was just over three years, with a maximum of six

years and a minimum of a few months. None were killed, none were wounded. Fr Claude Warren was Mentioned in Despatches and later received the O.B.E. for distinguished war service. Fr Oswald Dolan was Mentioned in Despatches and received the Portuguese Order of Christ, and Fr Ernest Levick was awarded a Belgian decoration for his work with Belgian refugees at Ripon.

Of the thirteen, nine were curates and three – Fr Ernest Levick of St Wilfrid's, Ripon; Fr Oswald Dolan of St Marie's, Sheffield; and Fr Patrick MacMenamin of St Joseph's, Brighouse, were rectors. The remaining one, Fr John O'Sullivan, was a teacher at St Bede's Grammar School, Bradford. The average age of priests on enlistment was thirty-eight, although Frs Dolan, Levick and Murphy were in their fifties. Eight of the priests had been educated at Ushaw College, whilst two had been trained in France, two in Ireland and one at St Joseph's, Leeds. Eleven of the thirteen returned to the diocese on the termination of their commissions; two disappeared without trace on demobilisation.

As mentioned above, no Leeds chaplain was killed but Fr MacMenamin came nearest to death when his ship was torpedoed of the coast of Egypt with the loss of 900 men. Born in Gibraltar and from a military family, Fr MacMenamin served in Egypt, Gallipoli and Bulgaria. Fr Richard Barry-Doyle, a much travelled Irish priest, served with Irish regiments in France, Palestine, Egypt, Constantinople and the Black Sea and treated the boys of St Bede's to thrilling stories of wartime experiences. Fr James Bradley of St Cuthbert's, Bradford, served in France and his letters contain typical references: having to say Mass outside, in sheds and barns; using ammunition boxes as altars; ministering to his own men and to prisoners; and hanging vestments and altar linen out to dry after days in the trenches. After a send off by the parish pipe band, Fr William Appleby of St Mary's, Bradford, served in France; Francis Bell of St Joseph's, Goole, Robert Dunford of St Mary's, Selby, Daniel Murphy of St Patrick's, Bradford, Matthew Dunne recently ordained, and John O'Sullivan also served in France. Oswald Dolan served in France and Gallipoli; whilst Claude Warren of St Joseph's, Bradford, served in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Fr Timothy O'Connor of St Patrick's, Huddersfield, served on home bases for a few months before disappearing without trace in 1915. The remaining chaplain, Fr Levick, served with distinction on the home front. Ripon became a vast military garrison with over 50,000 troops billeted in

Clotherholme, Red Bank, and Studley Roger to the west of the town. Thousands of British and Canadian troops passed through the camp and Levick, Fr Beauchamp and other CFs ministered to them. By the end of the war they had also received ninety-four soldier converts including Edgar Seymour Hunt, an Anglican military chaplain.[7]

PARISHES AND REFUGEES

For priests not involved in military chaplaincy, diocesan and parish life went on as normal given the extraordinary circumstances of wartime. It soon became obvious that the war which was supposed to have been over 'by Christmas' was going to drag on and impinge on almost every aspect of life. Bishop Cowgill, like others, wished to give financial support for the war effort but he had also to consider the needs of his diocese. His customary appeals for schools, for his 'mensa', for the missions, for the Rescue Society and the Holy Places for example, continued throughout the war but there were additional appeals for the sick and wounded, the Red Cross, Poland, for hospitals and for those in distress.

And many Catholic families were in distress. The loss of the bread-winner, the employment of women in munition factories, and wartime shortages dislocated life in general. In 1917 the Headteacher of St Cuthbert's School in Bradford reported heavy absenteeism due to children having to queue for 'war bread' and when they managed to get it they were absent from school with digestive problems. However, their young lives would have been made more exciting by the visits of former pupils now serving with the forces, with making comforts for the troops, and entertaining the wounded.[8]

Many families across the diocese answered the call of their priests and gave shelter to the numerous Belgian refugees who had fled before the invading German army in August 1914. The record of the refugees who arrived in Leeds is particularly well documented and may serve as an illustration of what presumably happened elsewhere.

In September 1914 the Lord Mayor of Leeds established a Belgian Refugee Committee which pledged accommodation for 1000 refugees. By October 800 had arrived but there was insufficient accommodation and temporary shelters were provided at the Friends' Meeting House and the City Art Gallery. The Committee's attempts to register the refugees were complicated by the offers of private accommodation, mainly through church organizations, and also by the Catholic Women's League in London,

which sent refugees directly to private addresses. The refugees were found clothing, food and jobs in the city. By 1916 there were 1,600 refugees in Leeds of whom 216 were men. All males were employed, the children were in local schools, and as they began to earn money their dependence on charity declined. Over £20,000 was received from donations and then after 1916 funds were received from Government grants. Distribution of the funds was in the control of the General Committee composed of the Lord Mayor, the Vicar of Leeds, the Belgian Consul, Councillors and other local worthies. Three Catholic clergymen were also on the Committee – Dean Shine, Fr Butler and Fr Vermeire. No doubt their ready access to the refugees through their language and religion made the three priests very useful members. At the Cathedral in 1914, for example, parish notices were being read out in English, Flemish, Dutch and French. In 1919 1,500 refugees, including 500 families, were repatriated from Leeds and the last family left in 1920.[9]

A cursory examination of baptismal registers indicates that many refugee children were baptised in churches across the diocese. At St Patrick's, Huddersfield, the priests actually marked each entry 'Belgian Refugee' and between November 1914 and October 1918 twenty-five refugee infants were baptised, usually by a Flemish priest, Fr Versteylen. Between April 1915 and October 1918 there were eight marriages of Belgian refugees. In other registers only the names indicate the nationality and although it may be regarded as unscientific it is probably a good guide. According to registers, therefore, at St Patrick's, Bradford, six Belgian refugee children were baptised; at St Joseph's, Bradford, there were four; at St Ann's, Bradford, one; at St Joseph's, Pontefract, seven; at St Walburga's, Shipley, two; at the Sacred Heart, Ilkley, six; at the Sacred Heart, Bingley, four; at St Anne's, Keighley, eight; at the Cathedral, Leeds, sixteen; at St Patrick's, Leeds, twelve; and at St Wilfrid's, Ripon, four. There were probably many more. There was a considerable influx of refugees at Yeadon and Mass was said for them at Esholt. The small Catholic community at Silsden increased to fifty with the arrival of Belgians and in the parish records of St Joseph's, Pontefract, references to refugees shed light on their mixed fortunes. One Belgian soldier, wounded in the defence of Antwerp, was nursed back to health and returned to the front in 1915; a man aged seventy-five died a refugee and was buried in Castleford; and another refugee, Joseph de Raedt, designed the new Lady Altar for St Joseph's. In Normanton there were three houses accommodating refugees. All the adults were employed but had at an early stage been supported by local Catholics.[10]

At Ripon, Fr Levick, who had been educated in Belgium, became Vice Chairman of the local Belgian Refugees Committee. His ability to speak French and Flemish proved an asset in helping to accommodate and integrate the refugees and at the many fund raising events he was always on hand to act as interpreter. He was also instrumental in helping the refugees – who came from a variety of backgrounds and occupations – to find work as self employed toymakers, although he was anxious not to upset local craftsmen. Nevertheless, shops were opened in Ripon and Harrogate and Catholic societies in Knaresborough, Ripon and Harrogate, where there was a Belgian refugee priest, worked hard to alleviate the distress of the newcomers.[11]

In Bradford Canon Earnshaw of St Patrick's was the Vice President of the Bradford Khaki Club. Between 1915 and 1919 the club provided meals, books, entertainment and support for servicemen, including transportation of the wounded. The Headteacher of St Cuthbert's School, Bradford, recorded that 'the wounded soldiers at Field House were visited and entertained, the children bringing with them gifts of cigarettes, tobacco, sweets, tea and fresh eggs as well as heaps of magazines.'[12]

Reference must also be made to the work of the Catholic Women's League. Throughout the war they provided not only for Belgian refugees but also for the troops. At home and abroad they provided huts were Mass could be said and where men could relax. Their appeals were broadcast by priests and their support often came from the upper echelons of Catholic society. The presence of exiled European princesses, bishops and other Catholic dignitaries helped swell the proceeds of their fund raising events at Harrogate.[13]

In addition to a practical response to the war Bishop Cowgill also requested that prayers be said for a speedy end to hostilities and the safe return of those involved. At Ripon there were processions for servicemen, their families and for the refugees. At St Mary's, Bradford, daily Rosary was offered 'for the return of the men of the parish who have been called for service, that they may be preserved from all harm and come back safely.' At St Patrick's, Huddersfield, the call was more reminiscent of the Church Militant: 'Prayers will be said at parish meetings for the success of our armies in battle and we think it is the duty of every woman in the parish to be present at the Children of Mary meeting to ask the God of Battles to nerve the arm of England to keep the invader from our shore.'[14]

Announcements at Sunday masses soon began to contain details of casualties. In September 1914 the deaths of Private John Leahy of St Anne's, Leeds, and Lieutenant Humphrey Coghlan of St Patrick' s, Huddersfield, were announced to their fellow parishioners. In October the death of William Kelly of St Mary's, Bradford was reported and in the following month six parishioners of St Patrick's, Huddersfield, were reported killed. According to the historian of Catholicism in Halifax, Francis Aloysius Finn of St Mary's was not only the first of that parish to die on active service but was also the first to be decorated, albeit posthumously, for bravery in the Battle of the Marne. One must assume that these and other early casualties must have been either regular soldiers or reservists as the new armies of Lord Kitchener's volunteers were not yet trained or ready for battle. [15]

And when they were, from 1915 onwards, the casualty lists became longer and longer and the participation of local regiments in particular engagements is often recorded in parish notebooks. Five parishioners of St John's, Normanton, for example, were killed on July 1, 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme.[16] This particular offensive involved many Yorkshiremen in regiments such as the West Yorkshire Regiment and the York and Lancaster Regiment. Often such regiments were composed of city or 'Pals' battalions named after their town of origin such as Bradford, Leeds, or Barnsley. Halifax was the depot of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment; York that of the West Yorkshire Regiment; Sheffield was the home of the York and Lancaster Regiment; Pontefract was the garrison town of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry; Leeds was the depot of the Yorkshire Regiment; whilst Ripon not only had a massive staging camp but it was also in close proximity to the new Catterick garrison. The destruction of so many local battalions, very often in their first military encounter, led to the re-forming of units and the movement of officers and men on a huge scale. Technological advances and the formation of new commands meant that many Yorkshiremen served in a variety of regiments and locations. Students of St Bede's Grammar School, for example, served in new units such as the Royal Flying Corps, as wireless operators, as drivers and as tank crew. They served in established and local regiments but were also to be found in Belgian, South African, American, Australian and Canadian armies.[17]

The scale of recruitment, training, engagement and casulaties was

enormous. Even by October 1914 forty-two former pupils of St Cuthbert's School, Bradford, had joined the services. In August 1914 the Cathedral had a book at the rear of the church for people to record the names of those who were serving. St Patrick's, Huddersfield, had one by September 1914, although St Mary's, Bradford, did not have one until May 1915 by which time fifteen parishioners had been killed. None of these lists appear to have survived.[18]

There is, however, a list of those students of St Bede's Grammar School who served. St Bede's and St Michael's College, Leeds, were the only two boys' grammar schools in the diocese and both, like other schools, provided former pupils for the services. Sadly, St Michael's list does not survive nor does a record of their dead. 264 St Bede's 'boys' served in the three armed services; ten were decorated for bravery and thirty-six were killed on active service. Despite the fact that Canon Hewison of Castleford was told in 1915 that officers had to be of university or public school background, be of the sporting out-door type, and be used to handling men, twenty-seven Bedesmen became officers. Second Lieutenant Thomas Mulroy of Halifax went to St Bede's in 1906 and from there to Reading University before becoming a schoolmaster at St Mary's, Halifax. He and his colleague James Noone of the Duke of Wellington's were both killed.[19]

Although the nature and location of war memorials caused much controversy throughout Britain, there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case in Catholic communities, probably because most people assumed that memorials would be placed within churches and have a religious theme. However, there are exceptions to the general location of memorials. At St Wilfrid's, Ripon, the Pieta, unveiled in 1923, is outside the church and a wayside cross was erected on the site of the hut sponsored by the C.W.L. in which Mass could be said and men relax. And at St Mary's, Otley, a metal crucifix is on a background of Portland stone on the external east wall and eighteen names are inscribed in the centre of a laurel wreath. At St Mary's, Batley, the names of those who died are on the steps facing the altar rails. St Joseph's, Pontefract, has simple tablets recording the names of forty who died; St Stephen's, Skipton, has a single tablet recording thirty names. St Patrick's, Leeds, has a side chapel with two tablets on either side of the altar but the insertion of the names of World War 11 casualties makes it difficult to distinguish between the dead of this and World War 1. In total there are 305 names. At the Church of the Holy

Rood in Barnsley the war memorial is a shrine dedicated to the English Martyrs. In St Anne's School, Leeds, two tablets high on a wall on a second storey corridor record the names of 100 former pupils who died. At St Cuthbert's, Bradford, is probably the most famous memorial in the form of the Stations of the Cross sculpted by Eric Gill. The cenotaph at St Bede's was erected in 1928 and overlooks the school grounds and the city of Bradford. At Normanton the thirty-three who died are commemorated in the Stations of the Cross, whilst at St Mary's, Bradford. 250 names inscribed on the west wall above a magnificent Pieta. Earlier in the war new altar rails had also been installed as a memorial. Of the 90,000 Leeds men who served, 9,640 died and of these it has been estimated that 2,000 were Roman Catholic. In the Cathedral Magazine of 1922, Canon Mitchell wrote that it was fitting that Catholic heroes should be remembered alongside their non-Catholic comrades on the city's cenotaph and roll of honour, but he also acknowledged that each parish would wish to erect its own memorial. To the memory of the 180 parishioners of St Anne's Cathedral a chapel was to be erected 'not as a memorial to the awful and disastrous war but to perpetuate the memory of the poor men who were victims of that lamentable tragedy.' The chapel was blessed and opened by Bishop Cowgill on April 11, 1920, and above the altar can be seen the foundation stone of the Cathedral laid on the feast of St Anne, July 26, 1902, by Bishop Brindle of Nottingham, himself a much decorated and respected Chaplain to the Forces.[20]

The last words must belong to Bishop Cowgill himself. He sang the *Te Deum* on November 12, 1918, and then later, at the unveiling of the memorial at Otley in 1922 said that he never liked the title 'war memorial' but preferred the name 'war shrine'. They had heard sufficient about war and would feel the effects for years to come. The shrine contained the record of the greatest sacrifice that men can give. They had given their lives willingly and heroically. The memorial would be a reminder of the fight men had won and the lives they had given in order that those in this country might have peace. In that sense, he said, it was a pleasure to see the names beside the figure of Christ who had made the greatest sacrifice of all.[21]

NOTES

1. *Acta Ecclesiae Loidensis*, vol. xvi.

2. See J.M. Hagerty, 'The First National Catholic Congress', in *Northern Catholic History*, No.20, Autumn 1984.

3. *Catholic Directory* (1914).
4. P.Grogan, *A History of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Bradford* (Bradford 1976); *Leeds Diocesan Directory* (1930, 1945)
5. *Acta Ecclesiae Loidensis,* vols. xvi, xvii.
6. See J.M. Hagerty and T.Johnstone, 'The Priest In The Armed Forces', in *Northern Catholic History,* No. 35, 1994.
7. See (cf 13. below) 'A *Ripon Record 1887-1986* (Ripon 1986); St Wilfrid's, Ripon, parish registers. Details of all priests mentioned are taken from *obits* in Diocesan Directories.
8. St Cuthbert's and First Martyrs School, Bradford, *Centenary 1877-1977,* (Bradford 1977).
9. W.H. Scott, *Leeds In The Great War 1914-1918* (Leeds 1923), pp. 301-305; see also J.M. Hagerty, *Leeds At War* (Wakefield 1981).
10. Leeds Diocesan Archives, *Baptismal Registers* (on microfiche) and also parish registers. St John' s Normanton, *Parish Magazine.*
11. *Ripon Gazette,* August 1914-June 1915.
12. St Cuthbert's and First Martyrs School, *Centenary.*
13. *A Ripon Record 1887-1986.*
14. *Ripon Gazette,* Sep.24, 1914; parish notebooks of St Mary's, Bradford, and St Patrick's, Huddersfield.
15. J.J. Mulroy, *Upon This Rock: The Story Of The Church In Halifax* (Halifax 1952), p.77.
16. St Joseph's, Castleford, *Parish Magazine* (August 1916).
17. St Bede's Grammar School, Bradford, Archives.
18. St Cuthbert's and First Martyrs School, *Centenary;* parish notebooks of St Mary's, Bradford, and St Patrick's, Huddersfield.
19. St Bede's Archive; St Joseph's, Castleford, *Parish Magazine* (June 1915); Mulroy, *op. cit.,* p.83.
20. St Anne's Cathedral. *Parish Magazine* (November 1922); R.E. Finnigan, *The Cathedral Church of St Anne, Leeds* (Leeds 1988), p.36.
21. *Wharfedale and Airedale Observer* (Dec. 1,1922).

THE ST JOHN BOSCO FARM TRAINING CENTRE, SUNDERLAND, 1934 - 1937

Douglas W. Smith

We are told by those who lived through the '30s, that unemployment today, however unpalatable, is as nothing in comparison to those days. L.S. Lowry's landscapes of grim factory chimneys and mean streets are a visual comment on the dereliction of most Northern towns in that era. Those streets are often populated by figures whose human potential is both undeveloped and reduced to matchstick proportions.

For the '30s immediately bring back memories of the Depression when the North-East in particular was hard hit. Thousands were out of work and, moreover, suffering real deprivation. By 1936 the North East Development Board had registered some 86,000 on Tyneside and 26,000 on Wearside as lacking jobs. With men standing idle all day, with boredom, hunger, dirt and overcrowding, the grinding existence affected family life deeply. Often only the pawn shop appeared to flourish and anything that might supplement the housekeeping was tried – women took in washing; men and boys scoured the coal tips for shale.

Adding to the humiliation and despair of those out of work was the dreaded Means Test of Government economy measures. It was a Test popularly associated with 'selling the sideboard before qualifying for benefit, of parish boots with holes punched in the ankles to prevent them being pawned. . . of young people with fictitious addresses to avoid their incomes being taken into account when their father's relief was assessed. . . of passing possessions via the back door to neighbours whilst the Means 'Test Man' stood at the front. . . '[1]

For the young especially, it was a time of lost opportunity. . . 'of apprenticeships missed, scholarships lost because of lack of money or. . . family rejection of education in favour of a few shillings earnings. . . '[2]

There were various, sometimes seemingly desperate, attempts to ameliorate the situation in the North-East. The *Times* correspondent somewhat condescendingly suggested that by far the most promising opportunity to reduce the surplus unemployed population was to be found in encouraging young girls to go away from the area into service. Hundreds

did: many returned. Not only did they find themselves lost souls in the well-to-do houses of the south, but North-East folk (and perhaps Sunderland in particular) have a notorious affinity to their natal place that draws them back again. Indeed, many south country ladies visiting the black spots in the county expressed themselves 'disappointed' by the attitude of young people and their parents.

Another scheme suggested, in this instance for Sunderland Borough, has, in view of recent innovations, an ironic ring about it. Noting the rate increase which was paralysing the town, a Special Areas Commission suggested that the only hope was the introduction of a car factory which, they admitted, was 'more of a wish than a hope' in the atmosphere of decline.

Without prospect of finding a solution in the sphere of traditional employment, there was born a prevailing philosophy – a 'Back to the Land' movement – which turned its face against hope of industrial miracles. Enterprising families were encouraged to emigrate to the south or even to Canada in search of farming and small-holding opportunities. For example, in February 1935, some twenty families left Sunderland for Bedfordshire farms. Others migrated to the London area though not always staying with the pursuit of agricultural ideals – a new airport under construction in North London or the Mars factory at Slough offered other opportunities.

In the same vein, Sunderland Town Council began to look at proposals for a municipal farming scheme, involving some 2000-5000 acres to provide work at one person per acre. The Special Areas Commission, it was hoped, could persuade the nation to bear the cost of the land and erection of buildings. On such a scale the scheme was not perhaps altogether thought out, as one letter to the local newspaper pointed out:

> Giving one person one acre is ridiculous when best arable crop does well to realise £20 per annum. There is not much left for 12 months wages after the cost of production has been taken out. The poultry and cows are going to have a hard time to make the up deficiency. Of course, the unemployed town-workers will be skilled farm hands after a month or so training according to some people who know nothing about farming.[3]

In fact there was already one notably successful farm training scheme in operation. Under the sphere of the Y.M.C.A., and with grants from the Ministry of Labour, young jobless lads were taken for a three-month course

in basic farming before places were found for them on farms up and down the country. The scheme was also being used as a model by the Cleveland Training Employment Council which directed boys from distressed areas for training. Though the scheme did not envisage the employment of whole families, it did at least address the problem of a future for young people.

Against this background of a 'Back to the Land' philosophy, the Tyneside Council of Social Study Groups had discussions in 1932. The possibility of establishing a Catholic Land Association within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle arose. Approaches were made to the Catholic Social Guild who investigated other experiments run by the Church elsewhere. Several schemes were looked at – successful and not so successful – which pointed to the grave difficulties experienced by those colonies.

A Scottish Association appeared to have developed a 'down with machinery' complex and its attempt to return to simple handwork produced conflict over the 'impossible' ideas of the cleric in charge. A colony in Essex likewise suffered from the 'theories' of a young City gent who refused to take advice but not large donations. The colony in Buckingham, on the other hand, was most willing to learn but had gone ahead without Diocesan permission, found itself in debt after two years as well as conflict with local clergy for hearing confessions without a faculty. Other schemes were criticised: either it was their refusal to listen advice or they had never quite got off the ground. Two schemes were singled out. At Great Harwood in Lancashire, the introduction of allotments had proved of great benefit, whilst in Yorkshire, Fr Potts of Pickering (ex-Beda and farm lecturer at Leeds University) might be called upon as adviser to the Diocese.

After a perusal of the drawbacks mentioned, Bishop Thorman appointed Fr Francis Avery of Low Fell to investigate the possibility of setting up a Catholic Land Association within his Diocese. Fr Avery outlined three major problems:

1. Setting up whole families, as distinct from individuals, would depend upon the nature of buildings for housing on any land they might acquire.
2. Agricultural authorities in both Northumberland and Durham were sympathetic to the idea but pointed out that small-holdings already existed over a large acreage, as well as the costs involved if the Church were to consider rent or purchase of many hundreds of acres more.

3. Advice from Armstrong College singled out the difficulty of marketing the surplus which would be necessary to enable a tenant to pay rent and overheads.

Presented with this report, the Bishop preferred to postpone a decision until he had more confirmation on how to avoid pitfalls. Fr Avery was elected Chairman of a Catholic Land Association in March 1933 with the task of coming up with a viable scheme. He began to sound out advisers, particularly Fr Potts, who was less in favour of farming at a centre, considering it better to place men with existing farmers. Another view held that a combination of the two might be made, provided that 'fads' (elementary machinery or eccentric ideas) were avoided which would only serve to make them look ridiculous and alienate the local farming community.

The major headache would be to settle whole families on land capable of sustaining them. On the other hand, whilst the idea of farming might be attractive to young single men, it left out the female element. Likely as not, reasoned Fr Avery, the young men will marry non-farming girls and drift back to the towns, making the whole venture a waste of money and energy. Aware that the project was not without risk, he sought to draw up plans sufficient to warrant a reasonable hope of success, cautioning that the delay of 'even a year' better than immature, idealistic action, and of course, it would require funding. It would also be a full-time job for a priest or 'exceptional layman.' And, he noted, it marked a new departure in the work of the Study Clubs with their view that greater good can be done for souls in the social, rather than doctrinal, sphere.

Meanwhile, the Cleveland scheme had proved so successful that many applicants had to be turned away. As M.P. for North Yorks (Cleveland), Cdr Robert Bower was active in encouraging the employment venture in his constituency.[4] His wife, Mrs Henrietta Bower was an active church worker who took an interest in this and envisaged a like minded scheme under the auspices of the Church.[5] Through Bishop Myers she obtained permission from Cardinal Bourne to advertise in *The Universe* for funds. The Bishop had already investigated the Cleveland dossier and found that from 73 boys in one year, 47 had proved satisfactory and were in employment, 14 were waiting places and only 10 'weeded out' as failures.

Mrs Bower's letter to *The Universe* elicited an eager reply. It came at a critical moment for J.W. Witham, an assistant master at St Mary's School in Sunderland. In 1933 he had taken lease of an old house with the idea of

starting a Catholic preparatory school of his own. He had previously worked in this field, but the venture as a private establishment had failed to materialise, hence he was left with a large house on his hands which threatened to become a financial burden. This house, Grange Hall at North Hylton, he now offered to Mrs Bower. It was described as a 'big, rambling old house, bought cheaply because of lack of all modern conveniences. No water laid on but a supply from a well in the back yard, no gas or electric lighting, only oil lamps; no up-to-date lavatory or bath but earth closets; cooking apparatus 'archaic', but the situation of the house good, standing on the north bank of the river just above North Hylton village.' Despite the primitive nature of the building, Mrs Bower was enthusiastic. An inspection by an official of the Y.M.C.A. gave a favourable report and from Mr Witham she sought out the names of local clergy likely to be of help.

Thus it was that Fr Edward Avery of St Hilda's, Southwick, (brother of the Chairman of the Catholic Land Association) found himself called upon to give soundings to the Bishop on both the lady and her proposal. He recognized that success would depend entirely on the 'uncertain appeal for funds', otherwise it was asking for trouble. The lady herself saw no disadvantage to the spartan nature of Grange Hall and was sure it could accommodate some 20-30 boys. He admitted he was impressed by her and that she had all the costs worked out. Since she had overseen 300 lads in her husband's constituency, it was not surprising that he reported she 'appears to me to be quite competent, business like to her finger tips.' In addition, it was really the first suitable place that had been offered so far in the diocese.

Mrs Bower visited the place herself in April 1934. Initially, she envisaged recruitment of boys from the Unemployment Bureau, ten or twelve, housed with Mr Witham as superintendent and being placed on neighbouring farms to learn the trade. Grange Hall was to act merely as a hostel and Mr Witham was faced with the choice between development of the project with himself in charge against a possible risk to his career as schoolmaster.

Confident that an appeal to the press would bring in a considerable amount, Mrs Bower approached Bishop Thorman for permission to proceed with the backing of the Catholic Land Association. Permission was given, and in November 1934 the hostel opened with ten boys. Mr Witham acted as superintendent, his wife (fortunately a trained nurse) as matron and a

cook. The property was secured at a rent of 30 shillings a week and the estimated cost of the scheme, on the basis of 20 apprentices, was expected to be £1000 a year. There were hopes that Government grants might be forthcoming. Altogether it was, thought the Committee, a reasonable beginning to a Catholic Land Scheme with 'everything to gain and nothing to lose.' Following requests which she had received 'from many quarters', Mrs Bower asked that the new venture be placed under the patronage of Bl. Don Bosco.[6]

By 1936 a new superintendent Fr Gerard OFMC, a jovial man whose laughter was said to fill the house, had taken over. He it was who saw them arrive – 'mostly poor boys with only the clothes they stood up in' (one neighbour testified to their black leggings and weary expressions), to become not prospective farmers overnight, but 'land minded.' Fr Gerard looked for a minimum height of about 5 feet and a 'fattening process' started immediately. One notable candidate put on 28 lbs in twelve weeks; another added three-and-a-half inches to his stature. The Hall acted merely as a dormitory, for it had no actual farm land itself though some gardening and poultry work in the grounds was contemplated. Twenty farms in a radius of five miles were selected for training. The local farmers expressed themselves happy with this and after three months it was thought, places might be found. Essential clothing was provided with one shilling pocket money, also with Saturday afternoons and Sundays free.

The boys, between ages of 14 and 17, needed to be physically able to withstand work on the land. In an era of deprivation not all were found to have the required physique as the Y.M.C.A. scheme had discovered in South Shields where not a single candidate was deemed fit enough to be taken. At North Hylton, therefore, it was decided as a priority good food and a healthy lifestyle were essential. The lads were warned they would have to get used to a bit of 'spartan spirit' for the only means of washing was a pump in the yard. Psychologically, too, they must realise that town life was behind them, farm conditions being vastly different from anything known to them in the back streets of a depressed town. But there were lighter moments. One former apprentice remembered ghost hunting for the 'Cauld Lad' in nearby Hylton Castle; another the mummers calling at the Grange during Christmastime. For most of the boys, nevertheless, it must have opened up a completely new world and many appeared reluctant to leave when their training came to an end.

Daily the boys reported to the farms – a practical approach from the beginning emphasised Fr Gerard. Once they adapted to the work, he claimed, they never looked back. Any employment opportunities were investigated by the Committee and, if found to be satisfactory, a requirement was undertaken by the farmer that the boy be allowed to attend Sunday Mass. In the Hall itself a large bedroom was set aside as a chapel and gradually furnished. It lacked altar rails but Fr Gerard used some old goal posts and a broken camp bed to remedy this deficiency.

A report to Mrs Bower as Lady Patroness at this time (1935) shows ten boys had been trained and placed within the previous six months. Main water was shortly to be laid down and expenditure incurred since opening amounted to £70. Of the boys, apart from the ten successfully placed, one had decided to join a timber merchant in Tyne Dock, another considered unsuitable had nevertheless gained a taste for disciplined life and joined the Green Howards, whilst a third had been dismissed at the end of training only to suffer a serious accident at home. By March 1935, there were in residence some 18 boys; 13 came from Co. Durham, 1 from Bedford, 3 from Northumberland and 1 from Yorkshire. A menu was presented which illustrated well the fattening process with its heavy emphasis on porridge, bread and baked beans.

The experiment drew interest from the neighbourhood at the time with reporters from the local papers visiting Grange Hall – now correctly called St John Bosco Training Centre. The reporters were told of the work of this important diocesan scheme and were shown the bicycles provided at the centre for boys who might find themselves more than two miles from a Catholic Church on Sundays.

An advertisement appeared in the 1937 edition of *The Northern Catholic Calendar*:

ST JOHN BOSCO'S FARM TRAINING CENTRE.

North Hylton, Co. Durham.

A large house has been rented at North Hylton to serve as a hostel for boys between the ages of 14 and 17 .who wish to train as farmers. The boys will go out daily for preliminary training by local farmers, and if they prove satisfactory they will then be sent further afield to live in with farmers and receive the regulation wage less an agreed amount for board and lodging. While in these positions they will still be the care of the Training Centre for their spiritual and material welfare.

Boys who would like to take advantage of this training and employment may obtain the necessary application forms from:

THE SUPERINTENDENT,
ST JOHN BOSCO'S FARM TRAINING CENTRE,
NORTH HYLTON, Co. DURHAM.

The Foundress and President of the Centre is the Hon. Mrs Bower, 3 Oakhill Road, Putney, S.W.15.

Treasurer – Mr L.V. Edgar, 54, Winneyfield Road, Walkergate, Newcastle, 6.

Secretary – Mr M.J. Young, 2 Croft Terrace, Jarrow.

This request for candidates underlined a problem that had been growing and the lack of numbers was eventually to bring the project to a close. In addition, Fr Gerard needed a rest from his strenuous efforts as superintendent – trying to keep the place going had affected his health. For months he had suffered an attack of diabetes. A review of the situation by the Training Centre Committee culminated in a decision to bring the work to a temporary halt. The boys already in training were to be found places swiftly and, on medical advice, the superintendent was ordered to have a three month holiday. During that time arrangements were made for the house to be looked after and it appears that the possibility of re-commencing was left open. However, the advert for St John Bosco Training Centre did not appear in the 1938 edition of *The Northern Catholic Calendar.*

Other factors were coming into play. The threat of war was to bring an expansion of work in the shipyards and mines, military service and the promise of higher wages in essential industries gradually brought a halt to unemployment. Farming wages were low down in the scale of things and the life not altogether attractive at such a momentous time except to those born to the job. Overtaken by events, the promise of a Catholic training scheme within the diocese came to an end.

The Grange itself was demolished in 1977 and few remember this Catholic initiative in the area today. Nevertheless, in its short life many a boy – perhaps by now a third generation – must have been directed towards a future on the land. A touching letter from one of these boys underlines the gratitude felt for the opportunity the Church had attempted to provide:

> 'This is little John writing a few lines to you. I am getting on all right with the job. I am milking very well so my master says he is letting me be his yard boy. the place is very healthy and the Yorkshire people are very polite and kind. Oh do not be afraid I'll be faithful to you, Mr Williamson, Father Gerard, Mrs Lady Bower and the Centre will then prosper. May God bless you all for ever and He will bless the Centre and all in it.'

NOTES

The basis of this article comes from a file (No. 319) in the Diocesan archives containing correspondence and papers, 1932-4, concerning the possibility of setting up a Catholic Land Association.

Reports on St John Bosco Training Centre appear in the *Sunderland Echo* for 26 May 1934 and 7 February 1936, as well as the *Newcastle Journal* 8 February 1936.

1. G. Milburn & S. Miller (ed) *Sunderland, River, Town, People.* Sunderland Borough Council, 1988.
2. ibid.
3. *Sunderland Echo*, 5 February 1935.
4. Cdr Robert Tatton Bower R.N., at Battle of Jutland 1916-18 and Naval liaison officer for RAF coastal command escorting convoys. MP for N. Yorks (Cleveland), 1931-45.
5. Hon. Henrietta Bower, 4th daughter of last Baron Strickland of Sizergh, an active laywoman, who amongst other ventures, started the All Night Vigil movement.
6. St John Bosco, founder of the Salesian Order, had in fact been canonised in April 1934.

ST JOHN BOSCO FARM TRAINING CENTRE: DIET SHEET

Breakfast 7 am. Dinner 6 pm. Supper 8.15 pm.

Porridge served for Breakfast daily.

Monday	
B'fast:	Fish, B & B, Tea
Dinner:	Panagerty, Potatoes,
	Milk Pudding
Supper:	Tea. B & B.
Tuesday	
B'fast:	Bacon. B & B. Tea
Dinner:	Pressed beef, Cabbage, Potatoes,
	Stewed fruit & custard.
Supper:	Cocoa, B & B.
Wednesday	
B'fast:	Baked Beans, B & B, Tea.
Dinner:	Liver & Onions, Dumplings, Potatoes,
	Baked apple.
Supper:	Tea, B & B.

Thursday

B'fast:	Sausage, B & B, Tea.
Dinner:	Mince, Potatoes, Cabbage, Baked pudding.
Supper:	Cocoa, B & B.

Friday

B'fast:	Herrings, B & B, Tea.
Dinner:	Fish or eggs,Potatoes, Milk pudding with currants.

Saturday

B'fast:	Bacon, B & B, Tea.
Dinner:	Roast Potatoes, Vegetables, Stewed fruit.
Supper:	Cocoa, B & B.

Sunday

B'fast:	Corned beef, B & B, Tea.
Dinner:	Cold meat & pickles, B & B. Tea cake.
Supper:	Tea, B & B.

NB Tea for Saturday:
B & B, cheese, tea-cake.

Tea for Sunday:
B & B, Jelly & custard.

THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF GERMAN CATHOLIC PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE NORTH EAST,1940—1948

Aidan Harrison

From the early days of the War German Prisoners of War held in Britain were mainly Luftwaffe (Air Force) and Kriegsmarine (Navy) personnel. When Hitler's invasion of Britain was a possibility, many of those considered as a possible threat were transferred to Canada and the United States. Those retained here were housed in the large camps such as Bridgend in Wales,Comrie in Scotland and here, in our own diocese, at Featherstone Park, Haltwhistle. Featherstone was an 'Officers Only' camp with only a few German 'other ranks'.

In the beginning these men made no impact on the local communities as they were strictly confined to their camps and fraternization by, or with, the local population was forbidden, even if it had been possible. After D-Day and the Invasion of Europe, the number of prisoners greatly increased with Featherstone's population reaching 4000 men. Other camps were set up in the two North East counties to accommodate the influx of the vast number of prisoners – mainly ordinary soldiers or seamen. These camps, in turn, spawned satellite Work Camps or Hostels for the men who were to be engaged in mainly agricultural work. The farmers and others employing them were obliged to communicate in order to give instructions but they were strictly admonished to restrict their contact only to work-related subjects. This could not be strictly enforced and was mainly, and immediately, ignored. Knowledge of prisoner of war camps during and after the European War was 'Restricted Information' and it was only through local priests and parishioners that the location of these was learned. Certain priests were soon active in ministering to the prisoners in whatever way they could but with varying success.

A file of the correspondence of Bishop McCormack [1937-1958] in the Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan Archives relating to the spiritual welfare of prisoners of war within the diocese survives. These papers, all dating from 1945, at once identify the main camps and the efforts then being made to enable prisoners to hear Mass and receive the Sacraments. To questions directed to Bishop McCormack as to what was expected of priests who had POW camps within their parishes he, in turn, carried out a survey. All parish priests were asked for information about camps within their

boundaries and what arrangements had been or were being made for Mass and the Sacraments for the prisoners. In addition, the Bishop requested the Senior Forces' Chaplain at Northern Command H.Q. for a list of Prisoner of War Camps in the diocese. The reply he received in December 1945 listed these as:-

	Total Prisoners
Haltwhistle (Featherstone)	3927
Ponteland	1159
Crook	948
Wooler	1134
Blyth	451
Redesdale	422
Wolviston	447
Bishop Auckland	217

These were Main Camps but had attached to them various Hostels or Work Camps. The replies from the parish priests, mainly in letter form, gave the Bishop a fuller picture of the situation with suggestions as to how it could be improved. Some priests, having already experienced the presence of Italians POWs, continued their ministrations in the camps when these were taken over for Germans.

The Non-Fraternization Laws already referred to meant that restrictions were severe and applied equally to the prisoners and all British civilians including priests. Contact by, or with, the prisoners was strictly forbidden. Some Camp Commandants were co-operative, however, and allowed immediate access to their camps by the priests but others, acting 'according to the rules', categorically refused. Requests for the prisoners to be allowed to travel under escort to the nearest church to attend Sunday Mass were also turned down in many cases. It is unfortunate, but true, that many of the commandants, whatever their motives, were deliberately obstructive.

The camp at Wooler contained about 250 Catholic prisoners and was in Fr Arthur Wills' parish. In his letter to Bishop McCormack in October 1945 he reported that he '... used to visit every week up to about last May when further entrance to the camp was denied me. The Commandant was

particular about the exact observance of the law.' Fr Wills was told by the Commandant that as a German prisoner-priest, Fr Hans Annas, acted as Chaplain to the camp no other padre would be allowed in 'and, in any case, only those with War Office passes were allowed to enter the camp.'

In the same month, October 1945, Fr Joseph O'Brien of Ellingham reported to the Bishop that he had received permission from the Commandant of his local POW Hostel to visit and to say Mass every week 'except the 5th week when a German priest comes to attend to them'. This German priest was the same Fr Annas, based at Wooler, who ministered to a number of camps and hostels in north Northumberland. Fr O' Brien confirmed that, of the 58 men stationed at Ellingham, 20 were Catholic and that he had arranged to say Mass 'at 9.15 am as from next Sunday.'

Fr John O'Doherty of Felton told the Bishop that the 50 Catholic prisoners at Druridge were 'visited by the chaplain from Wooler'. (Fr Annas again) 'They could come to Widdrington (for Mass) if they were allowed but cannot.' As well as telling the Bishop he did not consider Druridge Bay as part of his parish, he stated "I am unable to say Mass in the camp.' Whether this was because of the lack of permission, facilities or opportunity he does not say. At that time priests were able to say only two Sunday Masses and Vigil and Sunday evening Masses were unknown. A lone priest in a parish would have real difficulty and there were also the strict fasting regulations which will be referred to later.

Fr Aidan Slack at Lowick reported that at the new Haggerston camp there were 85 German POW's, half of whom were Catholic. Within his parish boundaries he also had a 264 strong Italian POW camp situated at Low Lynn. He wrote to the Bishop 'I am very fortunate in having the services of 2 priests – 1 Italian for Hetton House near Wooler. . . the other a German priest, himself a POW, who visits the Germans each week and can give them the Sacraments such as hearing their confessions.' Needless to say the German priest referred to was the ubiquitous Fr Annas.

Although visiting his fellow countrymen on a regular basis, Fr Annas was unable to offer them a weekly Mass for, as stated by Fr O'Brien of Ellingham, Fr Annas could only manage once every five weeks and had only recently been allowed to visit Haggerston. Fr Slack, confirmed there was no Mass as yet at Haggerston but if it could be arranged he would assist the German priest by 'doing everything I can to assist him by lending him Mass requisites.' He went on to add 'as for saying Mass there myself I

might, if necessary, be able to do that on a weekday periodically but owing to my feeble health it would be beyond my strength to say Mass at Haggerston on Sundays as well as at Lowick.'

Fr Slack, in common with other priests with camps in their parishes, soon found that access to the prisoners during the week, particularly in the mornings when Mass was traditionally celebrated, was totally impossible as the prisoners, engaged mainly in agriculture, went off to work early. Evening Masses were then unknown and, unless the camp was large and had a recreational hut, facilities for saying Mass in the smaller hostels, even on Sundays, were non-existent.

The solution to many of these problems was for the men to be allowed to attend the local churches. To the credit of some commandants, and despite whatever regulations were in force at the time, they did allow their charges to attend Sunday Mass but under escort. Klaus, one of the prisoners, recalls today, some fifty years later, how their guard, a British soldier, always got one of the prisoners to carry his rifle for him on their one mile walk to church. The prisoners knew that the rifle was unloaded and, in any case, the guards never carried ammunition!

Fr Crawford of St Joseph's Highfield advised the Bishop:-

> 'High Spen Camp is in this parish. There are 100 Germans – 38 Catholics. I have visited the camp regularly. The prisoners attend Sunday Mass in this church, I have been trying – and I am still hopeful of procuring the little book 'Confessions in 16 Languages'. If I get that book I hope to be able to hear their Confessions and then get them to Holy Communion.'

As mentioned previously, the strict fasting laws then in force – no food or drink from midnight – created problems for both prisoner and priest alike. Holy Communion was, at that time, usually distributed only at the first Mass on a Sunday. Prisoners were often obliged to forego breakfast in order to attend Mass, whether intending to receive Holy Communion or not. Food in Great Britain in the immediate post-war period was still rationed with bread being rationed for the first time in 1945. The young Germans POW's, being engaged in hard, manual work were forever hungry. This fact is recalled by many of them today even after half a century. 'All I remember is always being hungry' is a recurring memory. Prisoners who were able to attend Mass in parish churches usually attended the later Mass and so were unable to receive Holy Communion. There was also the problem of Confessions in their own language. Some

prisoners did speak excellent English and others, when later allowed to mix with the civilian population, did make progress with the language. This was evident when a conversation between two prisoners was overheard as they tried to negotiate a farm cart through a gate into a field:

'Vill it gann, Kurt?' 'Nein, Fritz, it's ower narra!'

The Northern Catholic Calendar for 1944 listed only two parishes in the diocese where Confessions in German could be heard – St Agnes', Crawcrook and St Dominic's, Newcastle. Crawcrook was soon to have a German POW camp within its boundaries at Wylam but by that time the parish priest, Fr George Wheatley D.D., a German linguist, had died. Only the rare and infrequent visits by priests, such as Fr Annas, could solve this problem unless the prisoner could speak some English. One diocese, believed to be Nottingham, did introduce a 'Confession Card' in English and German intended to help both prisoner and priest but this appears not to have had nationwide acceptance.

The need for spiritual reassurance and comfort was only too apparent for these unfortunate men. Having been fed on a diet of Nazi propaganda and German nationalism, the trauma of being part of a defeated German army, with a homeland invaded and devastated, was a great psychological blow to them. The news which reached them when the concentration and extermination camps were liberated were greeted by them, at first, with disbelief as being Allied propaganda and 'Hollywood Special Effects', and then with absolute numbness. Many of them had already experienced certain aspects of the harshness of Nazi totalitarianisnm but the absolute moral degradation of Belsen, Auschwitz, etc., was a final, bitter blow which cast many of these otherwise resilient young men into the depths of despair. Without the assistance of a native German-speaking priest their situation could have become untenable. As quickly as possible this situation was recognised and steps taken to alleviate it.

Fr Michael Henry, who succeeded Dr Wheatley as Parish Priest at Crawcrook in 1944, visited the POW Camp at Wylam when it was first occupied by Italian POW's and he continued to do so when it was taken over for German prisoners. From the start he arranged with the Commandant for his charges to be allowed to attend the 11.00 Mass on Sundays and, despite the regulations in force at the time, made it possible for the Brothers of St Vincent de Paul to visit the men mid-week after they had returned from their work on the local farms. These visits, when small

quantities of material comforts in the shape of chocolate, cigarettes, razor-blades and packs of playing cards, etc. were given out, were important, but more so was this initial social contact. This led, in turn, to the prisoners singing at Midnight Mass that year and their being invited into the parishioners' homes for Christmas dinner. Many became regular visitors for Sunday dinner in subsequent weeks and many of the friendships made at that time have endured up to the present day.

Fr William Malone of Ferryhill reported to Bishop McCormack that he had 191 Italian POW's at Bishop Middleham and 210 Germans at Windlestone but: 'I have two Masses at 9 and 11 so I am unable to give them Mass. The Camp authorities at Windlestone are agreeable for a Sunday am Mass in the (Recreation) Hall but they say that the man cannot be allowed out to go to Mass.'

Fr James Wright of Longhorsley had no such problem as the camp in his parish had only 16 German Catholic POW's and, by arrangement, they were escorted to his 9.00 am Mass. Ten had attended Mass on the previous Sunday. He ended his report to the Bishop "The crux is, who will hear their confessions?'

Fr Denis Lucey of West Cornforth, who also served Sedgefield and Kelloe, reported that he had 50 German POW's in the camp at Sedgefield.

> 'I have been awaiting a new Commandant but he has not yet arrived. I have made arrangements (subject to the new Commandant's approval with the acting chief) – he is going to see if the men can come to our parochial Mass at Sedgefield each Sunday. I have arranged to go into the hostel during the week after working hours. I have spoken to most of the men – many can make a good show at English – I may be able to hear their confessions helped (with) my own little bit or German. I visit these hostels regularly.'

Fr Francis Hutchinson of Wolsingham took nearly two months to reply to the Bishop's enquiry and his answer was brief.

> 'a) All are Catholics (67)
>
> b) All can get to Mass if they wish (1/2 hour walk from church)
>
> c) A priest comes to hear Confessions 3 times a year at my request.
>
> Result: 22 Holy Communions at Christmas
>
> 9 " " " " Easter
>
> 5 " " " " Whitsun
>
> I visit the camp periodically.'

It is probable that the priest hearing Confessions was Fr Alois Theissen D.D. from Ushaw College.

When Mgr Charles Corbishley was appointed President of Ushaw College in 1934 he needed to appoint someone to teach Scripture and sought the advice of his old friend and tutor Fr Fritz Tillmann at Cologne. He was recommended to engage the newly ordained Alois Theissen, a pupil of Tillmann. Cardinal Schulte of Cologne agreed to release him indefinitely and Dr Theissen, then only twenty-eight years old, moved to Ushaw in 1936. At the outbreak of war in 1939 he was registered as an 'Enemy Alien' and was obliged to report daily to the local police station. When concern grew about the number of enemy aliens in this country and the question was asked as to what was to be done with them, Winston Churchill's reply was to order 'Bag the lot!' This resulted in Dr Theissen being interned with hundreds of others in the Isle of Man.

Dr Theissen was in good company there for, ironically, among his fellow internees were the many German Jews who had been fortunate enough to escape Hitler's Germany. Among them was the remarkable Herbert Sulzbach who had served as an officer in the German Army in World War I. Fleeing Nazi Germany he had come to England only to be interned at the outbreak of war. Eventually released from the Isle of Man, he joined the British Army's Pioneer Corps, became a sergeant and then as a captain, visited various POW camps as an intelligence officer and did much to rehabilitate and re-educate the German prisoners in democracy. It is not known if Dr Theissen met Sultzbach whilst in the Isle of Man but Dr Theissen is quoted as saying that in his nine months in internment he 'learned more Hebrew, and more about Judaism and rabbinical theology than I ever did at university.'

In April 1941 Alois Theissen was released to return to Ushaw, helped, it is generally believed, by the 'personal intervention of Cardinal Hinsley with Mr Churchill.' He was still under restrictions however and could only move within a short radius of the college. His ministering to his fellow Germans at Wolsinghan and Lanchester, and possibly also at Darlington, would be the extent of his allowed journeying. Dr Theissen continued at Ushaw and helped with his imprisoned fellow-countrymen until 1947 when he returned to Germany to help Cardinal Frings regain possession of, and restart, the seminary at Bensburg which had been commandeered by the Allies.

Fr Dominic Westendorp of Lanchester told of his German prisoners:

'There are 150 of them 58 are registered as Catholics – about 25 coming to Mass on Sundays and yesterday (there were) 13 at Holy Communion. Dr Theissen and I have been discussing the (desirability) of early Mass for Communicants but both the Military Authorities and POWs themselves had so many difficulties about it that we had to be content with letting them receive Holy Communion during the 10.30 am Mass. As for Holy Communion in the camp itself – the Commandant ruled it out by the want of accommodation in the huts (Nissen Huts I think you call them) making relays even for their meals necessary, difficulties about varying time for rollcall etc. And as the church adjoins the camp (I suppose at least that was the reason) he laid it down that there must be no service of any kind in the camp. As for their (the German POWs) dispensation for non fasting for Holy Communion I told them that neither our Bishops nor theirs would like them to avail of that dispensation if it was not really necessary. Dr Theissen agreed with that. I don't know what Dr Theissen said to them personally but I suppose that is all we can tell them for the present and leave it to themselves. Of course I don't understand their difficulty even *after* war is over; they go to do farm work everyday and they tell me that they get their food in good quantity but they don't regard it as sufficiently nourishing.'

Dispensation from fasting before receiving Holy Communion was given in wartime to those in imminent danger e.g. going into battle.The discussion between Fr Westendorp and Dr Theissen on this matter was as to whether the prisoners were still regarded as being in a 'war situation'.The matter was taken up by Bishop McCormack and he obtained the following reply from Fr J.H. Richardson, OSB, Senior Chaplain to the Forces, Northumbrian District on 27th August 1945.

Many thanks for your letter of August 22nd which I received on my return from the Retreat. Father Parisotti sent out a circular two years ago about Non-Fasting Communion from which I enclose the relevant extract. Since this has not been cancelled, I presume it is still in force. A German Army Chaplain whom I met in my former District told me that they had received official instructions authorising a fast of only two hours. He was unable to produce any document in support of this because, he said, all his documents had been taken from him on his capture. Your Lordship's suggestion is obviously the best but there my be cases when the dispensation will be necessary because the Parish Priest can only provide Mass at a late hour. (This holds, as a matter of fact, for my own Mass at Low Byrness). It is true that Nazi Prisoners have brought pressure to bear on others and discouraged the more timid from practising their religion, but this problem seem to be

solving itself because, in the first place, the authorities are sorting Prisoners out and separating the Nazis from the rest, and also the influence of the Nazis has rapidly dwindled since the German collapse, with the natural result that the others take courage more easily. In present circumstances an exhortation from the Camp Chaplain should prove quite effective. I am enclosing a copy of a circular I have just sent round to the Prison Camps with regard to Church Students. It also asks for a list of Hostels etc. which I will forward to you as soon as it can be compiled.'

The copy circular referred to read:-

Extract of Memorandum from the Army Vicar General 28th June 1943.

So much confusion exists and so many questions are raised that it is considered necessary to issue the following ruling given by the Rt.Rev. J. Dey D.S.O., Bishop-in-Ordinary to H.M. Forces and based on a rescript received from Rome early on in the War: 'Personnel of H.M. Forces may take solid food provided that they fast three hours before receiving Holy Communion. But dispensation for this must be obtained individually from a priest holding faculties from Bishop Dey; it may only be given in cases of necessity, and the Priest will be the judge of the necessity.'

The influx of such large numbers of prisoners following D-Day in June 1944 had obviously created great problems for both military and church authorities. It is to the credit of most parish priests that they coped as well as they could with the situation and persisted in their efforts to persuade the Camp authorities to greater co-operation. It is generally recognized that it was the priests, the civilian population and certain organisations and other churchmen who pressed the authorities to relax the strictures on the prisoners. Urged on by this popular movement Richard Stokes, a Catholic M.P. lobbied in Parlament and elsewhere for the welfare of the prisoners, for the relaxation of the rules, and later for the speeding-up of repatriation. Richard Stokes soon became known as 'The Prisoners of War's M.P.'

It was eventually realised by the British authorities that the best and quickest method of 're-education' or 'de-Nazification' of the prisoners would be to allow them contact with ordinary British civilians. The Spiritual Welfare of the German POWs was also regarded as being of importance and in 1946 the War Office, petitioned by the Hierarchy and the Senior Chaplain to the Forces (R.C,), agreed to facilitate access by priests to the camps and hostels and allowed either Mass to be said in the camps or prisoners be permitted to attend local churches.

The Hierarchy, at its meeting on 30th April/1st May 1946, received a report of its special sub-committee concerning German Prisoners of War under the following heading:-

WAR OFFICE

It was agreed that:-

1. That Mgr Clarke be asked to secure regular and up-to-date information for each diocesan Ordinary from the respective S.C.F's concerning

a) The number and location of camps in his diocese.

b) The number and location of P.O.W. priests.

2. That a liaison officer (civilian or C.F. priest) be appointed between the Army authorities and the bishops. (Suggested names: Father Wells, C.F. , Fenham Barracks, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Father Theissen, Ushaw College.)

3. *RE-EDUCATION*

A. (i) In order to make the best use of the available P.O.W. chaplains, a circuit system should be introduced i.e. each P.O.W. priest should be responsible for a number of camps, plus all hostels and billets attached to these camps. He should travel from camp to camp, attending to his men and saying Mass at each camp in turn.

(ii) Where POW priests are not available to attend to their spiritual needs and re-education of POW's the work will devolve upon diocesan civilian priests. In such cases aid should be given from public funds to meet the expenses of the priest.

B. *Schools, literature etc.*

(i) Schools

It is noted that a school or theological college has been set up in the diocese of Nottingham for the re-education of selected POW's. Its lecturers, literature etc. are Lutheran, and yet it includes a certain number of Catholics among its students. *

N.B. The existence of a Catholic Theological College at Colchester does not meet the above need as it is solely for students for the priesthood and, according to information, numbers only about forty.

(ii) *Literature*

Paper should be released and a grant made for the printing of prayer books, hymn books and periodicals.

4. Monthly days of spiritual recollection or re-education of German priest POW's. It would be an ideal thing for POW priests to have an opportunity to

meet and discuss their difficulties together. Further it would provide the S.C.F. of the area with an opportunity to meet the POW priests at regular intervals in order to see whether he can help in their work.

THE HOLY SEE

It was agreed that each bishop should have the facultics to deal with:

a) Non-fasting Communion, not restricted to Sundays.

b) Triplication.

c) Evening Mass every day.

d) Liquid food for priests saying more than one Mass.

e) Discretionary power, free from time limit, for solid food before Communion.

f) *Servatis servandis* power for general absolution.

The bishops feel that in P.O.W, circumstances they should have the amplest powers possible.

[Author's Note: Norton Camp, Nottinghamshire, became the renowned 'University of Barbed Fire' preparing and training men for careers in the Protestant Ministry as well as Teaching, Accountancy, Medicine etc., for when they would be repatriated. Its reputation was then, and is still today, formidable.]

Unlike the British Forces, where chaplains were supplied by the dioceses and commissioned as officers, the Germans, under Hitler, had no such system.There were a few, but very few, German commissioned chaplains but the vast majority of priests who ended up in British Prisoner of War Camps were conscripted as ordinary servicemen – often with the lowest rank but, out of some deference to their calling, were sometimes drafted as non-combatant medical orderlies. They had not been allocated to camps in consequence of their priesthood but on a purely random basis.

Following the recommendations of the Hierarchy, an agreement was made in 1946 between Northern Command, York, and the Northern Dioceses which resulted in the redistribution of the 17 German Prisoner Priests in their area (including Fr Annas) to inaugurate the proposed 'circuit system' This was, in effect, a system that Fr Annas had been operating, unofficially it seems, whilst based at Wooler but now he was to be transferred outside the diocese to Naburn POW Hospital, south of York. Fr Quecke, who had been confined to Featherstone, was to continue there with the added responsibility of the camps at Wooler and Low Byrness. Fr Cammer now had the resposibility for Crook, Billingham, Gosforth and Ponteland. A summary of the orders to all Camp Commandants headed

'German P.W.- Spiritual Welfare' from H.Q. Northern Command, July 1946 stated:-

a) Circuit. System, whereby Chaplains will be shared by a number of camps rather than kept solely by one Camp.

b) Every facility must be provided for them to visit hostels and billetees belonging to the parent camp.

c) Commandants of camps will be responsible for providing transport to convey PW Chaplains to the next camp on their roster.

d) Commandants and Officers Commanding P.W. Companies are requested to give all assistance necessary to ensure the smooth working of this scheme including the use of motor cycles by P.W. Chaplain.

e) Prisoners should be allowed to attend Church Services (in local churches) under escort.

f) Civilian Chaplains may be conveyed by War Dept. Transport, if available, on Sundays for the conducting of Divine Service and that such duty is not prohibited.

This system ensured that every prisoner in every camp in the diocese would have the benefit of a visit from a German priest with the chance of Mass and Confession at least once a month. The agreement with the authorities also provided for the men to be allowed to attend Mass, without hindrance, at neighbouring churches when not practical for them to attend Mass in their own camps. The stipulated escorts were eventually dispensed with. These facilities, officially sanctioned in 1946, were those already provided by a few of the Commandants the year before as Bishop McCormack's correspondence showed.

From his priests, and from the now more co-operative Army authorities, the Bishop obtained the information enabling him to ensure that ministering to all the German Prisoners of War was, at least, adequate. An up-to-date list dated July 1946 from Northern Command records the Main Camps and Hostels in the diocese as being:-

POW CAMP

18 *Featherstone Park, Haltwhistle*

Hostel: Plen Meller.

69 *Darras Hall, Ponteland*

Hostels: Long Horsley. Raylees (Otterburn)
Prestwick.Wylam. Colwell (Whittington)

South Gosforth. Meldon. Catton (Allendale)
Kitty Brewster (Blyth). Seaton Deleval.
Bothal Barnes (Ashington). Eshott (Tynemouth)
Druridge Bay.

93 *Harperley, Crook.*

Hostels: High Spen (Highfield, Rowlands Gill)
Lanchester. Bedburn (Hamsterley)
Langton Grange (Staindrop)
Usworth (Castletown, Sunderland)

105 *Wooler*

Hostels: Craster. Ellingham. Rothbury. Whittingham.
Hetton House (Nr Wooler). Low Lynn (Beal)
Haggerston. Cornhill (Coldstream)
Westwood (Wooler). Hurworth (Darlington)

139 *Wolviston Hall, Billingham*

Hostels: Rift House (West Hartlepool). Sedgefield
Bishop Middleham. Manor Farm (Hartlepool)
Kiora (Norton), Coxhoe Hall. Cowpen Bewley (Billingham)

667 *Low Byrness, Redesdale, Nr Otterburn*

669 *Tyne J. Camp, Gosforth, Newcastle*

Working Party *Walworth Castle, Darlington*

[Author's Note:This list, remarkably, omits the Military POW Hospital at Bishop Auckland]

Imprisonment for these young men with its lack of freedom and social intercourse had been deeply traumatic. The effects of the war and its aftermath meant that Europe in general and Germany in particular were in utter chaos. Many of the prisoners had lost touch with home and they had no knowledge as to whether or not their families had survived the bombing and fighting. From the news bulletins, many of them from areas such as Silesia and Sudetenland, realised that their homeland no longer existed and that their families, had they survived, were now adding to the millions of refugees in a shattered Europe. Those with homes in that part of Germany that was now the Russian Zone were particularly anxious. Added to this was the fact that, believing they would be released and repatriated

at the end of hostilities, they were told they were to be held indefinitely. For many it was to be 1948 before they were eventually released, and this only after British public opinion had urged and obtained acceleration of their repatriation.

The solace afforded by their faith and the Sacraments was paramount in the prisoners' rehabilitation. Contact with a priest, of whatever nationality, was a prime contributory factor to their spiritual well-being as was the eventual contact with 'ordinary people' – the parishioners they met after Sunday Mass and the people they met in their day to day work. These ordinary people did, with few exceptions, greet the prisoners with Christian charity and befriended them. Invited into the homes of these British people, the prisoners were able to enjoy, if for only a short time each week, a semblance of normality. This was the therapy needed to enable them to adjust to their circumstances, to experience a non-totalitarian system and eventually to face a difficult future on their eventual return to their families and a devastated homeland. These were the men who were to become the foundation of a reconstructed, democratic 'New Germany' and who now still speak so highly of their reception and acceptance by the British people led, undoubtedly, by Catholic priests and parishioners.

SOURCES

Hexham & Newcastle Diocesan Archives, File X39. All the documents quoted are from this source.

Ushaw Magazine ,1993-94, Article in tribute to Dr Theissen by Dr John McHugh.

Personal Testimonies by several German ex-Prisoners of War in correspondence with the author.

PROGRAMME 1995 — 1996

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

4 October 1995	Mass followed by A.G.M.
8 November 1995	The Annual Fr Nicholson Memorial Lecture. Rt Rev Ambrose Griffiths, O.S.B: *The Early History of Ampelforth.*
6 December 1995	George Thornton, Esq: *Aelred of Rioevaulx.*
7 February 1996	Rev Dominique Minskip: *The Middlesbrough Troubles 1871-1872*
6 March 1996	Rev Peter Phillips: *John Lingard and the Anglo-Saxon Church*

Coach Excursions

23 September 1995	Lartington (half day).
18 May 1996	Egton Bridge, Osmotherley.
29 June 1996	Carlisle, Bewcastle.

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