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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.

PATRON: The Rt Rev. Ambrose Griffiths, O.S.B., Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.

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Biddlestone Chapel 71

NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY 1996

These notes serve mainly to chronicle the Society's events and to introduce each new edition. Being written in January, however, they record what happened last year and it is too early to advertise next year's programme which begins in September. The 1995/6 lectures ended in March 1996. Fr Dominique Minskip was unwell on 7 February and a paper by him on York Catholics was read instead. This was followed on 6 March by Fr Peter Phillips' talk on John Lingard and the Anglo-Saxon Church, both meetings being well attended. The two Summer outings were blessed with fine weather. On 18 May Fr Roland Connelly took members from Whitby on a guided tour of the Postgate country, including Egton Bridge and Ugthorpe, where Mass was said, while on 29 June Fr Milburn arranged visits to Bewcastle, Lanercost, Brampton, a tour of Carlisle Cathedral, ending with Mass at Warwick Bridge.

The 1996/7 season began on 4 September with the annual Mass for deceased members, followed by the A.G.M., at which Fr Milburn officiated, reviewing the year's activities, thanking the officers and conducting the elections [see inside front cover). He paid a special tribute to Eileen Swallow, retiring Secretary, for her twenty years of devoted work, and thanked Joan McCabe for taking up the baton. The second meeting was the half-day excursion to Bede's World at Jarrow on 14 September, where members toured the church, monastery site, hall, exhibition centre and the Saxon village and were welcomed by Professor Peter Fowler, Chairman of the Trust. The three talks before Christmas attracted good attendances: Professor Michael Lynch on Mary, Queen of Scots, on 2 October, Fr Minskip on the Middlesbrough Troubles of 1871 on 6 November, and Dr Sheridan Gilley on the Wilton Diptych on 4 December, poor weather that night not deterring an appreciative audience. The talks this year on 5 February by Fr Milburn on St Augustine and by George Thornton on Lindisfarne on 5 March are keenly awaited, as are the two usual outings in the summer.

Reflecting our title, the articles this year are wider in date and territory than usual. George Thornton reveals the location of places visited by St Cuthbert, Dr Constance Fraser traces the Elizabethan careers of Catholic clergy ordained in the Durham Diocese in the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary, Dr Alan Rounding examines the legend of Catholic continuity in Stella, Mr Anthony Williams gives an account of the anti-Catholic riots in Hull in 1780 and of the Catholic missions in that part of the East Riding, Fr Minskip's paper on the Fenian troubles in Middlesbrough in 1871 is published, and the edition is completed by a summary of the Diocese from 1870 to 1925, and by a report on the prospects of securing the future of Biddlestone chapel.

The Editor expresses the grateful thanks of the Society to these authors for their articles, the fruits of much research and writing, and solicits articles for 1998. Finally, members are saddened by the death of Elizabeth Shaw, one of our most faithful members from the start.

Robin Gard , Editor

ST CUTHBERT REVISITED

George Thornton

Walking in the Kyloe Hills in North Northumberland last Summer I visited St Cuthbert's Cave.[1] Entering the uphill grove between the fir trees that leads to the cave I heard the distant sound of singing: approaching quietly I saw a small group of men and women at the mouth of the cave paying homage to the saint with hymns and prayers. We exchanged greetings and the unknown group departed. Alone in the recesses of the cave, etched by Nature in the base of a high sandstone cliff, I reflected on how little I knew about this rather elusive figure who had brought about a chance meeting of fellow-pilgrims in this isolated place more than thirteen centuries after his death. I resolved to discover something of the real Cuthbert by exploring the places he visited and by attempting to assess the significance of what had happened there. The difficulties of the task soon became evident.

Neither Cuthbert, nor indeed any of his illustrious contemporaries - Aidan, Wilfrid, Chad, Cedd, Hilda, Ebba - has left us any memorials of themselves in writing; our debt to Bede is therefore all the greater. Archaeological evidence is scanty, though Cuthbert's grave and relics in Durham Cathedral associated with his life are real enough. For literary evidence our best sources are two *Lives*: one by an Anonymous monk of Lindisfarne, written c.700 (V.A.), the other by Bede, c.721 (V.P.), drawing heavily on the earlier work.[2] V.P. is detailed, didactic, linguistically polished, yet my preference lies with the simple, direct style of V.A., with its distinctly Irish flavour and its frequent naming of places and people. The Anonymous may well have known Cuthbert personally. Both are hagiographies, a popular genre of literature at the time, where it is often difficult to sift the history from the eulogy, for the saints are set in a tradition of sanctity where we hear much about their Christ-like qualities but little of their foibles and human weaknesses. Both Lives were much influenced by earlier models, notably Evagrius' translation of Athanasius' Life of St Antony of Egypt and Sulpicius Severus' Life of St Martin of Tours.

It quickly became apparent that while some of the places named in V.A. and V.P. are immediately recognisable today, the location of others is doubtful or unknown.[3] Much of the fascination of Anglo-Saxon history lies in the scope it gives the student for speculation; it raises more questions

than it answers. Where, for example, is *Hruringaham?* Cuthbert's foster-mother, Kenswith, 'a nun and a widow', who brought him up 'from his eighth year until manhood', lived in this village and he regularly visited there in later life. The elements in the place name, 'the homestead of the people of Hrur (?)', indicate a very early Anglian settlement on the east coast, like Coldingham or Tyninghame, rather than inland where 'tons' and 'ingtons' suggest later settlement. Roddam near Wooler and Risingham on Dere Street have been suggested, but my guess would be the lower Tweed valley just inland from Tweedmouth.

We know nothing of Cuthbert's parentage, though they would be first generation Christians, perhaps converted by Aidan preaching in their locality. No credence should be given to the claim of royal Irish descent, nor is it likely that his parents were peasants, for they could afford to have their son educated by a foster-mother; furthermore, when he presented himself to the prior of Melrose he came equipped with a horse and a spear. It seems most likely that he came of country gentry stock.

As a boy of eight in the playground 'he surpassed all of his age in agility and high spirits' until a rather precocious young child, 'wailing and weeping', urged him to cease such foolish play, addressing him as 'O Holy Bishop and priest Cuthbert', prophetic advice which he heeded. V.A. tells us that he saw service as a soldier, as did his contemporary, Benedict Biscop; perhaps he fought in King Oswin's army in defence of the royal palace on Bamburgh Rock when it was beseiged by the invading Penda. In the loyal service of the local Bernician king he may well have experienced 'the pleasures of the hall. . . the place of the banquets. . . the gleaming chalice. . . the majesty of the prince'[5], a scenario vividly described by Bede in his famous passage on the flight of the sparrow.

Perhaps he was on the king's business returning from York along the old Roman road 'across a vast deserted region and haunt of wild beasts' when he came, cold and hungry, to the river *Uuir* (Wear) at *Kuncacester* (Chester-le-Street) and sought shelter from the winter storms in a deserted shepherd's dwelling. As he prayed, his horse 'greedily seized part of the thatch and there fell out a warm loaf and meat carefully wrapped in a linen cloth, food provided by God through the sending of his angel.' Eating the meat himself and sharing the bread with his horse, 'he set forth prosperously on his journey.' Bede, typically, quotes his sources, the priest Ingwald, 'a monk of our monastery at Monkwearmouth', who heard it from

Cuthbert himself when bishop, and quotes Elijah who, alone, was fed with the same food by birds. This is the first of the several examples in Cuthbert's life of the miraculous provision of food, usually through the services of an animal or birds.

One further incident from his youth while still a layman is revealing. He was standing on the headland at Tynemouth in a local crowd, watching monks ferrying timber downstream on rafts to build the monastery at South Shields. A sudden westerly gale blew the rafts far out to sea so 'they looked like five tiny birds riding on the waves'; the locals jeered: 'Let no man pray for them for they have robbed men of their old ways of worship. . .'. Reproving the scorners, the young Cuthbert knelt down to pray to God so that 'the violent wind turned about and bore the rafts safe and sound to land.' From Bede's account, all the more graphic as there can be few of us who have not stood on the headland at Tynemouth gazing at the river estuary; we learn how timber could be transported; we note the cynical attitude of the spectators to the 'new religion'[6]; the courage of the youth Cuthbert in standing up to a potentially hostile crowd; and, most significantly, the efficacy of his prayers, working with the forces of nature. It is no wonder that 'when the countryfolk saw this, they were ashamed of their unbelief.'

A defining moment in Cuthbert's life occurred when he was minding 'the flocks of his master' beside the river *Leader* in the Lammermuir Hills, still sheep country today. During the night-vigils spent in prayer, he saw a vision of 'angels ascending and descending, bearing a holy soul, as if in a globe of fire';[7] waking the other shepherds he described his vision and prophesied that 'it was the soul of a most holy bishop'. 'In the morning' (V.P.), 'a few days later' (V.A.), news came of the death of Aidan at Bamburgh, 40 miles away, at the very hour of the vision. 'Forthwith, Cuthbert delivered the sheep to their owners and decided to seek a monastery.' As Cuthbert was then about 17 years old and Aidan died on 31st August 651, he must have been born c.634.

Although he knew of Lindisfarne, he preferred *Mailros* (Melrose a bare promontory) because of the reputation of prior Boisil, who greeted him at the gates with the prophetic words: 'Behold the servant of the Lord'. Handing his horse and spear to a servant, Cuthbert entered to begin life as a monk. With Boisil as novice master, 'a priest of great virtue', Cuthbert was 'diligent in reading and working, in watching and praying'. He had an

early experience of the value of community life when the plague, that scourge of medieval society, struck, and he fell desperately ill. In the morning, learning that the community had spent the whole night in prayer for him, he rose from his sick bed to resume his daily routine. Perhaps about this time he met his first hermit in the person of the local monk Drihthelm, who regularly spent the night reciting the Psalms while immersed in the icy waters of the Tweed, a tale told with relish by Bede.

When, later, Boisil was dying from the plague, he spent the last week of his life with Cuthbert, reading and discussing 'the things that work by faith' in the seven gatherings of St John's Gospel, one a day. Boisil's influence on the spiritual formation of the eager young Cuthbert would be paralleled shortly in Monkwearmouth and Jarrow by that of the novice-master, later abbot, Coelfrith, on the boy Bede. Boisil lives on in the name of the nearby town St Boswell, but you will search in vain for signs of the monastery in the promontory of land in the great loop of the Tweed below Scott's View. Archaeologists report that all that remains is 'the boundary of the monastic enclosure, the vallum, or ditch, between the two banks, visible practically all the way across the neck of the promontory to the water's edge'. On a recent visit, although we searched diligently, we found no bumps or hollows, nor even the vallum, only level lush meadowland by the Tweed. The Scottish king Kenneth MacAlpine burned the timber buildings to the ground in 839.

Cuthbert's first move was to Ripon, under Abbot Eata, where he was elected to the important post of guestmaster 'while still a neophyte', surely a tribute to his warm and friendly character? One snowy day in winter a mysterious visitor appeared, 'a well-built man in the flower of his age'. Having washed his guest's hands and feet and wiped them with towels, Cuthbert left to find bread, but when he returned the man had disappeared, leaving behind 'three warm loaves of unusual whiteness and excellence'. Cuthbert concluded that the guest was an angel come to test him and 'from that time he was often held worthy to see and talk with angels and when hungry to be fed by food prepared for him by the Lord as a special gift'. Angels played a key part in his life and were always on hand when needed. In the stories of early saints, powerful angels, messengers of God, replace the fairies of the old Irish folk-lore.

The stay at Ripon was short. Eata declined to accept the Roman method of calculating Easter and King Alchfrid of Deira, influenced by

Wilfrid, turned the monks out. Cuthbert found himself back at Melrose, where he was elected prior in place of his beloved Boisil. It may well have been about this time when he was ordained priest, at about the canonical age of 30.

The three periods of Cuthbert's missionary life, as prior of Melrose, then of Lindisfarne, and finally as bishop, do not differ in character so that they are best treated as one.

Travelling either on foot or, unlike Aidan, on horseback, in unmapped country, and sleeping at times in a tent, he was 'often away from home for up to a month, living with rough hill-folk in steep and rugged mountains'. He was drawn especially to villages stricken with the plague where the folk were reverting to paganism, 'using incantations, amulets and other mysteries of devilment', as they lost faith in the Christian God. Here he would preach 'so gloriously that they would confess every sin openly', and when they had been absolved, he would celebrate Mass on a portable altar which 'he would never finish without shedding tears'.[8] 'No-one left unconsoled, no-one had to carry back the burdens he came with'.

At *Medilwong* (Middle field) - possibly Medomsley, but more probably Middleton, near Wooler - the priest Tydi told Bede that before Cuthbert left the plague-stricken village, he asked if there was anyone still suffering from the pestilence, a woman was pointed out who was weeping for her dead son and holding another, 'half-dead and breathing his last'. At once Cuthbert blessed and kissed the infant, saying: 'Woman, do not weep, your son will live and none of your household who are alive will perish by the plague'. Typically, Bede concludes this touching tale by telling us that mother and son are still alive and are witnesses to the truth of this. Cuthbert responded equally to calls from thegns, one Sibba, one of King Ecgfrith's nobles, invited him to his vill at *Examford* on the Tweed, just above Wark, where a servant was in much pain, 'tortured by a most evil disease'. Here, some water which he had blessed was poured down the sick man's throat three times and 'in the morning after a quiet sleep he was found to be cured', 'the man Baldhelm is still alive and a priest at Lindisfarne'.

At *Bedesfeld* (Bedrule in Roxburgh?), Cuthbert came to the home of a kinswoman of Aethilwald, prior of Melrose, who was ill with a great pain in her head which 'no doctor could cure with poulticing'. He blessed holy oil and anointed the woman who quickly recovered her health. Bede adds

interestingly that the lady was a nun of a community fleeing south from a barbarian army, at the same time Bishop Trumwine fled from Abercorn to Whitby Priory. In these and other places Cuthbert's reputation as a wonder-worker with miraculous healing powers grew; here, surely, people reckoned that he was indeed a man of God, gifted with divine qualities; equally impressive were his asceticisms and his instinctive understanding of and sympathy for the common folk.

The most extensive missionary journey recorded was to the region of *Nidvari* in Pictland, wrongly identified as Nithsdale in Galloway, but more probably on the north-east coast of Scotland. Cuthbert, with two brothers, set out to sail there just after Christmas, intending to spend Epiphany with the Nids. Unsurprisingly, at this time of the year, they encountered storms and became stranded on a deserted beach, where a great hunger assailed them. A night spent in prayer revealed in the morning three portions of dolphin's flesh on the sand, 'as though cut by human kind with a knife'. Giving thanks, they cooked the pieces and 'enjoyed the wonderful sweetness of the flesh'. After three days the storm died down, as Cuthbert had foretold, and a calm voyage brought them safely to their destination. The story reveals the extent and dangers of their evangelistic endeavours, the characteristic Anglo-Saxon confidence in boats, even for mid-winter journeys, and the depth of their faith that the Lord would provide for them on the way.

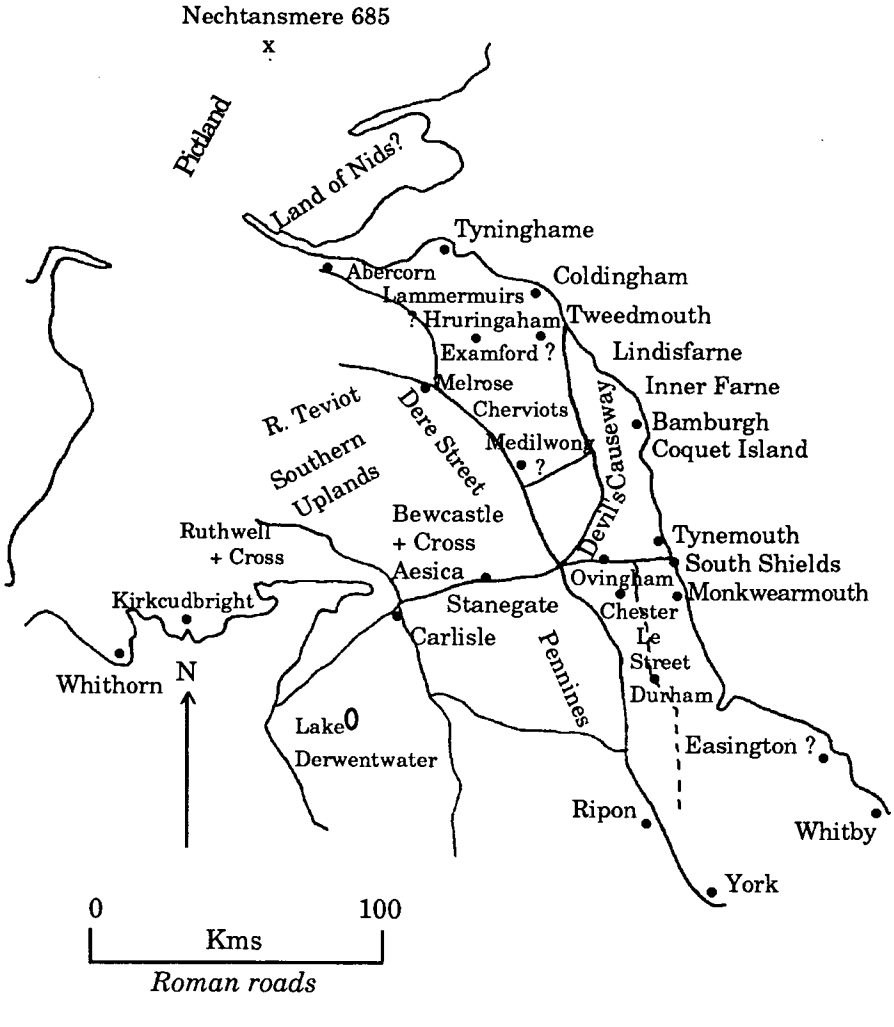
A similar miracle, again told by Tydi, occurred as Cuthbert, accompanied by a boy, was travelling south along the river *Tesgeta* (Teviot), teaching and baptising the country folk among the mountains (Cheviot Hills). Cuthbert, sensing that the boy was becoming anxious for a mid-day meal, as they had no provisions with them, pointed to an eagle flying in the sky and said: 'This is the eagle the Lord has instructed to provide us with food today'. The eagle settled on the bank with a large salmon at its feet which was divided equally between the bird and the travellers, who cooked their share and, giving thanks, ate it before resuming their journey.

Double monasteries of men and women living separately, as at Coldingham, Hartlepool and Whitby, invariably under the rule of an abbess of noble birth, usually from a royal family, were a feature of early Christianity in Northumbria.[9] Only at Coldingham, situated on St Abb's Head, was there any scandal. The visiting abbot of Iona, Adamnan, Columba's biographer, warned against the lax life led by the monks and

nuns and, shortly afterwards, Bede relates that the monastery was 'consumed with fire as a punishment'. The abbess, Aebba (hence St Abb's Head and perhaps Ebchester), sister of Kings Oswin and Oswiu, 'a widow and mother of them all in Christ', invited Cuthbert 'to open the community to the paths of righteousness'. Before slipping back to church to sing the first office of the morning, Cuthbert spent the night in the sea up to his armpits, praying and singing psalms. A curious monk, hidden in a cave, spied on Cuthbert and in the dawn saw 'animalia maritima', otters more likely than seals, emerge from the waves to dry the holy man's wet feet with their fur and warm them with their breath, and then, having received his blessing, they returned to the sea. Overcome with guilt, the spy fell ill and only recovered after confessing to Cuthbert and receiving his absolution, on condition that he tell no one what he had seen until after Cuthbert's death.

This delightful tale illustrates perfectly a characteristic feature of Irish monasticism - a close affinity with the natural world. Here we see Cuthbert, a man transformed by prayer and penance, in total harmony with the creatures of the deep, Man and Creation in union, Eden before the Fall. It was a tradition very much in line with the desert Fathers, where we read of Jerome befriending a lion, of Pachome riding across the Nile on the backs of crocodiles, of a penitent wolf, a grateful hyena and helpful wild asses;[10] all a world away from the half-man, half-beast were-wolves, the fearful semi-human monster Grendel of Beowulf, and the Fenrir wolf and serpent of Norse mythology, for these creatures represented the powers of evil and darkness fighting against 'the light with which God penetrated the primordial darkness'.

The map shows the close correlation between many of Cuthbert's journeys and Roman roads whose worn cobbles still provided routes in the difficult hill country of Northern Britain more than five centuries after they were laid down.[11] Stanegate (stony road), immediately to the south of the Wall, provided east-west access through the Tyne Gap. At the eastern end of the Wall, Cuthbert visited the monastery of Abbess Verca at South Shields, where he was given a splendid reception and a fine linen cloth as a present. Invited to drink wine or beer, he asked for water, but when his cup was passed round, all who supped agreed that the water tasted like fine wine. At *Osingadun* (Ovington) Cuthbert dedicated a new church[12] in a daughter-house of Abbess Aelfflaed of Whitby. While feasting with the abbess, Cuthbert's countenance suddenly changed and the knife fell from



MAP SHOWING PLACES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

Note the close correlation between the Roman roads and the places visited by Cuthbert

his hand. When asked the reason, he replied lightly 'Can I eat all day? I must rest sometime'. In truth, he had seen a vision of a shepherd dying in an accident. Next morning, during the canon of the dedication Mass, the abbess 'came breathless into church with woman-like astonishment', crying 'I pray you, my lord bishop, remember at Mass my Hadwald who died yesterday falling from a tree'.

Though neither *Life* mentions it, it is hard to believe that Cuthbert, journeying west, failed to visit his fellow bishop Eata and Wilfrid's 'finest stone church north of the Alps' at Hexham. However, he is recorded as preaching and confirming at *Ahse* (probably Aesica, the old Roman fort of Great Chesters). *Luel*, otherwise written as *Lugubalia* ('wall of Lugus' - a Celtic war-god), now Carlisle (Caer - Welsh for fort), near the western end of Stanegate, where he had been granted lands by King Ecgfrith, features prominently in Cuthbert's travels. That he was a regular visitor is shown in Bede's account of his meeting with Herbert, the hermit from an isle[13] in Lake Derwentwater who, 'constantly on previous occasions' met 'the holy bishop for spiritual converse' at *Luel*. Herbert's prayer that he would die on the same day as Cuthbert was granted, 20th March 687. It is encouraging to note that men of God do, at times, crave human friendship as much as lesser mortals: Herbert and Cuthbert's friendship is akin to that of Robert of Newminster and Godric of Finchale in the mid-twelfth century.

On another visit to *Luel*, Waga, the town reeve, was showing Cuthbert the town walls and the Roman fountains when 'the bishop leaning on his staff... lifted his eyes heavenward with a sigh and said 'Oh! Oh! Oh! I think the war is over and that judgment has been given against our people'. Cuthbert was visiting at the invitation of Queen Iurminburg, who was anxious for her husband, knowing that the bishop had strongly advised against his campaign in Pictland. A few days later, her worst fears were realized for, at the hour of the vision, the King and his army had been destroyed in an ambush at Nechtansmere[14] by the Picts under Ecgfrith's cousin, King Bruide. Widowhood transformed Iurminburg, for she took the veil, Cuthbert receiving her religious profession, and from 'being a she-wolf she was changed into a lamb of God, a perfect abbess, an excellent mother of the community'. Interestingly, the story reveals Carlisle as a town with an active administration and with York the only sizeable town in the north of Britain, for the Anglo-Saxons were essentially country dwellers and mostly shunned the old Roman cities calling them 'tombs surrounded by

nets and built by giants'. It shows, too, that Cuthbert's counsel was sought by royalty and commoner alike.

Coquet Island, off Amble, was the scene of a meeting between 'the hermit of God and a certain nun, a virgin and royal abbess Aelfflaed', King Oswiu's daughter and Hild's successor at Whitby. Like Iurminburg at Carlisle, Aelfflaed was anxiuous about the future of her brother King Ecgfrith and wept bitterly when Cuthbert prophesied that he had but twelve months to live, and, when pressed on the succession, replied that the next king presently lived 'on an island beyond the sea'. She, at once, realized that he meant Aldfrith,[15] her half-brother, then on Iona. Asked about his own future as bishop, he prophesied: 'after the brief space of two years I shall rest from my labours'. 'After many prophetic words, all of which came to pass, he sailed to his own place'. His counsel was sought here, not on spiritual but on dynastic matters concerning the royal succession, a new dimension to his prophetic powers.[16]

Two islands, *Lindisfarne* and *Inner Farne*, figure prominently in Cuthbert's life for he had two spells on each, a total of nine years on the latter. When Cuthbert was first sent to *Lindisfarne* as prior by Eata, who was both abbot and bishop, he would see a scatter of buildings lying now somewhere beneath St Mary's parish church, the Norman priory and the Heugh headland, but not even the latest archaeological research can say where precisely. Centrally situated would be the church 'built of hewn oak and thatched with reed' by Aidan's successor Finan, and later roofed with lead and re-dedicated by Archbishop Theodore after the Synod of Whitby, significantly to St Peter. Around would be scattered cells of bee-hive type huts and, outside the vallum or cashel, now possibly identified, he would see cow byres, barns, stables, a kiln and bee hives - all very much like Iona from where the founder Aidan had come in 635.

Initially, Cuthbert's tact and patience as prior were fully tested, for even after the departure of Colman with a party of some 24 monks for Iona, then Inishboffin, and eventually Mayo, 'the community found it difficult to adapt to new ways'.[17] 'Assailed by bitter insults in the daily chapter meetings, he would calmly rise and leave, only to return the next morning with cheerful countenance' after a night of prayer, so he gradually won them over 'to a rule of life which we composed for the first time which we observe along with the Rule of Benedict' - a triumph of sensible compromise. Bede tells us that Cuthbert relieved the tedium of prayer and psalm-singing

by walking about the island; any reader feeling jaded would do well to emulate Cuthbert and enjoy, as he did, the invigorating air and sights and sounds of an amazingly rich natural environment.[18] In these respects little has changed and our present day visitor will find it possible to walk again in spirit with Cuthbert and then return to everyday life refreshed and re-created.

St Cuthbert's Island lies off the south-west shore of *Lindisfarne* and is only a short walk over slippery rocks and sea-weed at low tide: here, Cuthbert, one suspects, first felt strongly the pull of a solitary iife, for he spent the penitential days of Lent and Advent in watching and praying alone, in this he was following the example of Aidan. All the visible remains today are post Saxon; most marked are those of the medieval chapel of St Cuthbert in the Sea which may well lie above the original oratory. Only a dig will reveal if the mound to the north of the chapel is the site of a cell.[19] The modern visitor searching the shore may find the fossil remains of sea-lilies, crinoids, popularly known as St Cuthbert's beads, and will hear the same sounds as Cuthbert did, most evocative of all the plaintive, melancholy cry of the curlew. It is an atmospheric place.

From short spells of solitude to permanent isolation was a step on the path to spiritual perfection 'in the stillness of divine contemplation'. With the permission of his abbot and following the example of Aidan, Cuthbert sailed the seven miles south to *Inner Farne*, 'an island frequented by evil spirits, utterly lacking in corn, water and trees', where he built his 'city', so well described by Bede.[20] His oratory and dwelling may lie beneath the medieval chapel: his guesthouse was by the jetty, where droves of visitors from Seahouses land every summer; 'the spring close by' is still there, though now only one metre deep and filled by run-off water; unchanged is the sea-filled gully, known as St Cuthbert's Gut, where a storm threw up a piece of timber which the monks had failed to provide, which, placed across the gully, served as a 'necessarium', nature thus compensating for the shortcomings of men.

At first the hermit had problems with his new neighbours. The ravens tore the thatch off of the guest-house with their beaks for their nest building; admonished twice by Cuthbert, they returned 'with feathers sadly ruffled and drooping heads', asking pardon and, duly forgiven, brought a piece of hog's lard as a gift which, for a year,visitors used to grease their boots. Like Columba in Iona his first attempt to become

self-supporting failed, for spring-sown wheat 'produced no fruit', yet the barley sown much later, out of season, yielded 'an abundant crop', which the birds began 'eagerly to consume'. Ordered to depart, the flock flew off and thenceforward refrained from attacking his crops, just as Antony 'with one exhortation restrained the wild asses from injuring his little garden'. Cuthbert would read in Job: 'Even the birds and animals have much they could teach you; ask the creatures of earth and sea for their wisdom'.[21]

A visitor to the Farnes in early summer will immediately see that creation is an ongoing saga, as some 75,000 breeding pairs of birds engage in a flurry of activity, laying, incubating and hatching their eggs and feeding the chicks - surely one of the great sights of Nature. Most trusting of all are the Cuddy ducks, the females a drab brown, the males in striking black and white plumage.

Cuthbert preferred to be alone, 'satisfied with the converse and ministry of angels, full of hope in God'; but he soon discovered the paradox that visitors were attracted 'even from the remoter parts of Britain' by the wisdom and insights he found in his prayerful solitude; Antony in the Egyptian desert, Columba on Iona, and Guthlac in the Fens had the same experience. Yet at all times he wore 'a happy and cheerful countenance ', counselling and absolving the pilgrims. However, rather unwelcome was a powerful deputation led by the King and Bishop Trumwine who, having met at *Twyford* (probably Alnmouth), arrived to persuade a reluctant Cuthbert to become bishop. 'Weeping and wailing, he was led away unwillingly' and was consecrated bishop in St Peter's, *York*, by Archbishop Theodore, assisted by six bishops, the largest ecclesiastical gathering in the country to date. As he had prophesied, his episcopate lasted only two years before he resigned in order to return to his hermitage on Inner Farne to prepare for death.[22]

Still the visitors came, 'attracted by reports of his miracles', but he became increasingly ascetic, shunning human contact and answering only through the window. Visiting brethren from *Lindisfarne* were chastised for unseemly celebration at Christmas and rebuked when they neglected to cook the goose as ordered by Cuthbert, and were stormbound for seven days for their disobedience. His body became infirm, yet 'during the last period of his illness' he called the faithful brother Walhstod to his cell and 'at the saint's first touch' cured him of chronic dysentery.

Some query the authenticity of Cuthbert's farewell oration as recorded by Bede who quotes the priest Herefrith, an eyewitness, as his source: 'Have no communion with those who depart from the unity of the catholic faith, either in not celebrating Easter at the proper time or in evil living'. The Bedan slant is clear. However, there can be no doubting Cuthbert's suffering in the final few days: alone, storm-bound, in his last agony, a near despair and sense of desolation oppressed him as no bird or beast came to minister to him,[23] he had only the sea, the sky and the rocks for company, a Gethsemane on Inner Farne. 'My adversaries have never persecuted me so severely as during these past five days', he told the monks from *Lindisfarne* who finally reached him after the storms had died down; 'as my mouth was parched and burned through excess of dryness, I sought to refresh and cool myself by tasting these', and he indicated seven onions, one half-nibbled.

No longer alone, 'he passed a quiet day in the expectation of future bliss', and, at the time of night prayers, 'fortified by the communion of the Lord's body and blood, raising his eyes to heaven, he sent forth his spirit in the very act of praising God to the joys of the heavenly kingdom', where 'God's tribe are seated at the banquet and where there is eternal joy'.

The ideal place to end this journey is where Cuthbert's earthly journey ended, in Durham Cathedral, not especially at the slate slab marked 'Cuthbertus' behind the high altar but rather in the Treasury, where his priceless relics are collected for all to see. The sight of his pectoral cross, his ivory comb, his portable altar, his copy of St John's Gospel, and his oak coffin may well bring him alive for us more than any readings of the *Lives*.[24]

Even if he still emerges with difficulty from the mists of legend and hagiography; 'like Galahad of the Quest of the Holy Grail',[25] yet we can discern two sides of his nature. An Anglo-Saxon Northumbrian by birth, he had the gift of friendship; as guestmaster at Ripon; as prior of a troubled Lindisfarne; as diligent bishop, anxious for the pastoral needs of his flock, he moved easily in the company of peasants and royalty alike. His evident love for his mother, Kenswith, the warmth with which he was received by royal abbesses, Aebba, Aelfflaed, Iurminburg and Verca, show that his affection for them was reciprocated. Verca's gift of white linen in which his body was first wrapped symbolises Cuthbert's relationships with high-born women who often held prominent places in Saxon society, and gives

the lie to Norman alleged propaganda that he was a misogynist.[26]

Yet, at heart, his spirituality was Irish, 'that strange, austere, and often eccentric pursuit of happiness', and his life displayed those characteristic features of Celtic monks, a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ, an abiding love of nature, and a marked tendency towards asceticism. People he saw as whole beings, body, mind and spirit; physical and spiritual health were one and the same; a strong sense of the oneness of human and natural communities induced a respect and a reverence for all living things; matter and spirit were one, rooted in the Incarnation where 'the Word became flesh'. He could, like Martin of Tours, successfully combine the active role of a Martha with the contemplative role of a Mary. He impresses as a quiet man of prayer and that peculiarly medieval figure, the wonder-worker, the thaumaturge.[27]

Some analysis of the forty or so miracles attributed to Cuthbert is found in the appendix, but did these miracles really happen? Are we to see them as historical facts or merely as legends? Certainly his contemporaries, be they simple peasants or men of learning, believed them for in a world shot through with Divinity miracles were expected; indeed it would have been surprising if they had not occurred. Interestingly, Bede more often uses the word 'signa' rather than 'miracula', and then seeks to look beyond the mere colourful event to the deeper significance of what happened; the question asked was not 'how?' but 'why?'; it was the interpretation that mattered rather than the facts. Bede is at great pains, too, to quote his sources and to comment on their credibility, and he submitted his *Life* to the monks of *Lindisfarne* for their scrutiny. Even allowing that some miracle stories seem to us hardly extraordinary, that others are plagiarisms of Gospel stories, and yet others spring from a perfervid imagination, 'yet there remains an indissoluble core that cannot be explained by any natural means and attributable solely to the supernatural power of God displayed in and through his saints'.[28] Why should Cuthbert, a man of God, not be given a share in divine qualities, even in the power of miracles? The early church in Northumbria, no less than in Palestine, was nourished by these miracles which showed the Christian God to be more powerful than the pagan gods.

Cuthbert was essentially a bridge-builder who helped to heal the wounds caused by the Synod of Whitby in 664: in his removal from Ripon he had early first-hand experience of the hurt these wounds could inflict.

He came to see that reconciliation and order were essential for unity and peace, and carried the Celtic spirit into the emerging Anglian tradition. Though his head became Roman, his heart remained Celtic.

If readers are encouraged by this essay to explore the life of Cuthbert and the places he visited in the rugged Northumbrian landscape that helped to mould his character, then it will have served its purpose well. As the Anonymous reminds us in his Preface: 'It is in itself a ready virtue to know what he was'.

NOTES

1. This impressive cave, G.R. 060352, is in the care of the National Trust There is another St Cuthbert's cave above Doddington, G.R. 004310. These may be places where he lived for spells as a hermit earlier in his life or where his body rested on its travels. Note also Cuddy's well at Bellingham, G.R. 837933, and Cuddy's Crag on Hadrian's Wall.
2. *Vita Sancti Cuthberti: Auctore Anonymo* (V.A.); *Vita Sancti Cuthberti:Auctore Beda* (V.P.), translated by B. Colgrave (C.U.P), 1985 edition. Neither Bede's *Metrical Life* (V.M.) nor his chapters in the *Ecclesiastical History* give us much new knowledge. V.A. is our earliest known English biography.
3. C.J. Bates, 'The Names of Persons and Places mentioned in the Early Lives of St Cuthbert', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, N.S., XVI, 1894, is a most helpful essay.
4. See article by M.H. Dodds on 'The Little Book of St Cuthbert', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 1929, p.52, where this claim is summarily dismissed; the life is almost identical with the Irish St Molacus of Lismore and originated from Melrose Abbey, c.1138.
5. 'The Wanderer', *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, Everyman, 1992 edition.
6. Yet such Christian poems as 'The Dream of the Rood' were perhaps written about this time. Were the spectators disillusioned Christian converts left without a pastor?
7. A common vision in the lives of saints, see Adamnan's *Life of Columba*. In 1158 Godric of Finchale had a similar vision of Robert of Newminster.
8. In his commentary on Exodus, Bede states that tears are most fitting when celebrating the divine mysteries. Our founding chairman, Fr Nicholson, achieved a life-long ambition by celebrating Mass 'in a most fitting fashion' for members of the Society on Inner Farne on a memorable day in May 1987.
9. There are no records of convents purely of nuns at this time.
10. For a delightful anthology of such tales, see Helen Waddell, *Beasts and Saints* (Constable, London), 1934.
11. A point well illustrated in R. Hill, *Christianity and Geography in Northumbria*, who also emphasises the importance of stone crosses, as at Bewcastle and Ruthwell, as signposts through difficult unmapped country.
12. This is the first time the word 'parochia' is used and may well represent the first parish church with a resident priest.

13. Hermits favoured islands, note also Skellig Michael, Inishboffin and Iona; Lindisfarne, Inner Farne and Coquet Island; and the present Cistercian monastery on Caldey Island.
14. Ecgfrith had just returned from a destructive invasion in Meath in Ireland; Cuthbert would see that a similar attack in Pictland would not help his efforts to convert the Picts. The king's defeat occurred within a month of the dedication of St Paul's, Jarrow, 27 April 685, and marked the beginning of the end of Northumbria's Bretwaldship.
15. Aldfrith, illegitimate son of King Oswin and the Irish princess Fina, ruled 685-705; he proved to be a strong and scholarly ruler, almost certainly our first fully literate king.
16. 'It is salutary to note the political, dynastic alignment of this apparently eremetical figure. Cuthbert was far more than the recluse of hagiographical tradition', D.P. Kirby, *St Wilfrid at Hexham* (Oriel), 1974; yet it was Antony of Egypt who remarked 'a monk in society is like a fish out of water'.
17. The trouble was probably due to the change in emphasis from the individual asceticism of Irish Rules, e.g. Columba's, to that of sanctification through community work and prayer in the more moderate Rule of Benedict.
18. At the time of writing this essay, November 1996, the whole of the Spitsbergen population of Brent Geese, some 3,000 birds, is over-wintering on Lindisfarne, as is a flock of whooper swans from Iceland.
19. See D.O'Sullivan and R. Young, *Lindisfarne, English Heritage* (Batsford), 1995.
20. V.P., 17, p.215, Colgrave.
21. Job, 12.7.
22. The gift of being able to foresee the time of their own death was common about the saints; in 593 Columba prophesied his death four years later.
23. R.Cramp, 'The Background to St Cuthbert's Life' (lecture).
24. See C.F. Battiscombe, *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, (Oxford), 1956.
25. D.H. Farmer, ed., *Benedict's Disciples*, (Fowler Wright), 1980.
26. A myth perpetuated by Walter Scott in a note in *Marmion*: 'He (Cuthbert) certainly hated the whole female sex'.
27. G. Bonner, *The Holy Spirit within St Cuthbert as a Western Orthodox Saint*, Sobernost, Vol. I, No. 1, 1979.
28. Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, (Penguin), 1968 edition. Introduction by Leo Sherley-Price, p. 30.

Other valuable reference books are:

D.Rollason, ed., *Cuthbert, Saint and Patron*, (Durham), 1987.

G. Bonner, and others, *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community*, (Boydell), 1989.

G.Bonner, ed., *Famulus Christi*, (SPCK), 1976.

H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, (Batsford), 1972.

C. Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain* (O.U.P.), 1971.

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APPENDIX

ANALYSIS OF MIRACLES WROUGHT, BY OR FOR CUTHBERT AS RECORDED IN V.A. AND V.P.

Miracles	*V.A.*	*V.P.*
A. *Nature*		
Seas, birds, animals serve him	II, 3,5; 111,4.	10, 12
Divine provision of bread or meat	I, 6; II, 2,4, 5.	5, 7 11, 12
Makes water taste like wine		35
Prays and a spring breaks out	III, 3	18
Moves impossibly heavy stone	III, 2	17
Prays and the wind shifts to help sailors or deflect flames		3
B. *Prophesies*		
King's death, royal succession	III, 6	24
Own death	IV, 9, 11	28, 36
C. *Visions*		
Of souls borne by angels to Heaven	I, 5.7; IV, 10	4, 34
D. *Powers of Perception*		
Sees through devils' illusory fire	II, 6	13
Knows outcome of distant battle	IV, 8	27
Man falling to death from a tree	IV, 10	34
E. *Healing*		
Cure of ill or dying person	I, 2; II, 8; IV, 3-7, 12	2, 15, 23, 29-34

This analysis is based partly on C. Stancliffe, *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community*, pp.43, 44.

CATHOLIC CLERGY IN THE DIOCESE OF DURHAM, 1563

Constance Fraser

To be a martyr is a very special vocation. Others may have seen their prime calling as the pastoral care of their flock. The following paper is an attempt to examine the careers of some of the Durham clergy officiating in the middle of the sixteenth century, based on a return made by them in 1563 in response to an order of Privy Council to return the number of households in each parish and chapelry. In many cases, particularly in Northumberland, the number was left blank, but the name of the incumbent was almost invariably noted by Bishop Pilkington or whichever officer was responsible for the return, which is now in the British Library (Harleian MS 495).

The installation dates of 91 of these clergymen can be traced from bishops' registers, ten dating from before 1537. To the extent that another thirteen were installed before the death of Henry VIII, whose anti-Catholicism was centred mainly on papal opposition to his marriage vaguaries, and another thirty were installed during the reign of Queen Mary, one needs very positive evidence of Protestant leanings to assert that the local clergy were not Catholic in training and svmpathy.

The earliest to be noted was William Whitheade, who was presented to the rectory of Heighington by the prior and convent of Durham in 1529. He had graduated BA at Oxford in 1526, proceeding to MA in 1530, during which time he was presented to the vicarage of Pittington, which he resigned in 1530. In 1531 he was presented to the provostship of Hemingbrough on the Humber, also in the gift of the convent, and it is hard to disbelieve he was a near relative of the prior, Hugh Whitehead. He had a moment of protest in 1559, when with the accession of Queen Elizabeth, he refused to subscribe to the 39 Articles of Faith for the new Church of England, and had his benefices sequestered, but he must have made his peace subsequently, for his name to appear in Pilkington's return. He died in 1577.[1]

In 1531 James Orpyn was presented to Middleton St George. He seems to have stayed there until his death in 1580. John Chair was presented to Ingram rectory in 1533, where he remained until he was deprived in 1571. John Dacre was presented to Morpeth rectory the same year, dying there in 1567. One wonders about his degree of relationship to the Dacre lords of the manor.[2]

Meanwhile in 1532 William Norton was presented to Ovingham by Hexham priory, where he was possibly a canon. Ovingham was a dependent cell of that priory. He died there in 1567. Henry Spragayn, presented by Blanchland abbey to its vicarage of Bywell St Andrews, was also possibly one of its canons. He died in 1564. John Tunstall, kinsman of Bishop Tunstall, acquired the valuable rectory of Haughton-le-Skerne in 1534 by exchange of his canonry at St Paul's, London. Previous to this he was Principal of New Inn Hall, Oxford, between 1527 and 1534 and rector of Basildon and of St Olave's, Southwark. In 1546 he was collated to a portion in the church of Norton. He was an executor of Bishop Tunstall on his death in 1560, and died himself in 1577.[3]

Nicholas Hertbourn was presented to the rectory of Simonburn by the King in 1535, where he died in 1567. John Sayer was instituted as parson of Elton in 1536, where he died in 1565. Thomas Sparke had been prior of Holy Island. He professed as a monk at Durham priory about 1520, and graduated at Oxford University as BD in 1528/9 and as DD in 1535. While there he acted as chamberlain of Durham College between 1530 and 1533, and again in 1540. With the dissolution of the priory of Holy Island he was created by Henry VIII as the suffragan bishop of Berwick-upon-Tweed in 1537. When Durham itself was dissolved and reconstituted as a cathedral chapter he was collated to the third prebend. He obtained the mastership of Greatham Hospital in 1541, and was collated to the rectory of Wolsingham in 1547. At his death in 1572 he was still rector of Holy Island and Wolsingham, and master of Greatham. His will survives.[4]

By 1564 these men were all in their fifties or more.

After the dissolution of the monasteries the dispersed inmates looked for an alternative occupation, and several seem to have found parishes to serve. Cuthbert Watson, who was instituted at Ellingham in 1538, had received his priestly orders from Bishop Tunstall on a title from Alnwick abbey in 1531. He died there in 1578. Similarly Oliver Selby was ordained deacon on a title from Alnwick abbey in 1531, was promised in 1534 the vicarage of Tynemouth, where he was instituted in 1540, and obtained Branxton in addition shortly afterwards. He died in 1574. As he was one of those failing to make a return for either parish in 1563 one wonders if he were doubly non-resident. William Hall, instituted at Elsdon in 1543, and collated to Elishaw hospital in 1545, had been ordained deacon in 1534 on a title from Alnwick abbey. His will is dated December 1580.[5]

Robert Selby was almost certainly a member of the Selby family of Twizel, which had close links with the garrison-town of Berwick-upon-Tweed. He had been presented to Norham vicarage by the prior of Durham in 1537, followed by the rectory of Berwick, now in the patronage of the dean and chapter of Durham, in 1541. He continued to hold both livings until his death in 1565. He too failed to make any returns.[6]

Another appointee in 1537 was Ralph Todd. He was an LLB, and was instituted at Hart in 1537. He became vicar of Woodhorn in 1546, and occurs as vicar of Hartburn in 1554. In 1558 he was Bishop Tunstall's commissary in the archdeaconry of Northumberland. He died in 1569.[7]

John Rudd was another graduate, occurring as a scholar of Clare College, Cambridge, in 1 515. He was ordained in 1521. Subsequently he was a fellow of St John's College, and BD, 1530/1. In 1540 he was presented to the vicarage at Norton. Under Edward VI he prospered, receiving prebends at Durham (1550-3) and Winchester (1551-3), and married. With the accession of Queen Mary he was deprived of his clerical offices, but recanted and was presented to the vicarage of Dewsbury (1554-70) and Riston. In 1569 he was rector of Romaldkirk and had a prebend at Beverley. By now he had remarried, and at his death in 1578 he mentioned in his will a wife and two sons.[8]

Less controversial, Cuthbert Hopen was instituted at Warkworth on the presentation of the bishop of Carlisle in 1538, and died in that office in 1572. Richard Marshall was instituted at Stainton-le-Street by Hartlepool in 1538 on the presentation of the abbot of St Mary's, York. He had been ordained in 1533. He was instituted at Corbridge in 1544 on the presentation of the dean and chapter of Carlisle. He served as a commissioner to exercise the office of archdeacon in Durham during the vacancy after the death of Bishop Tunstall. His will is dated February 1588. Henry Plomber was collated to the vicarage of Coniscliffe in 1541 and died there in 1570. Thomas Bron, who had been a canon of Blanchland, was instituted at Whitfield in 1546 and later at Bywell St Andrew in 1564. He died in 1571. William Heryson, who may have been a canon of Alnwick, was instituted as parson of Bothal in 1546. He was subsequently deprived in 1554 on the grounds of marriage. He may possibly be identified with the vicar of Chatton of the same name, who was instituted in 1561.[9]

Clergy who may have been previously canons occur during the reign of Edward VI. They include Geoffrey Glenton, instituted at Heddon-on-the-

Wall in 1548 but ordained in 1533 on a title from Egglestone abbey: Roland Prat, ordained in 1532 on a title from Coverham abbey, collated to Wooler in 1549, promised Washington the following year, and eventually collated there in 1558. He died in 1565. [10]

William Reseley had been ordained a deacon in 1531 on a title from Brinkburn priory. He was collated at Kirkwhelpington in 1557 and died in 1565. Thomas Thompson had been ordained priest in 1534 on a title from Alnwick abbey, and was instituted at Longhoughton in 1551. John Graye and John Hall were both ordained on a title from Alnwick abbey, although Professr Hay would identify Graye as an Austin friar from Newcastle. Graye was instituted at Chillingham in 1554, and died in 1586. Hall was instituted at Kirknewton on Crown presentation in 1554, and later at Wooler in 1561. He was apparently deprived of his living(s) in 1564, but was still vicar of Wooler in 1578. William Hardinge was ordained on a title from Egglestone abbey. He was installed at Hart in 1554 and presented to Heighington in 1577. His will is dated May 1584. According to this, he owned a copy of St Augustine's *De Civitate Dei.* John Foster had been a monk of Durham in 1529 and a minor canon there between 1541 nd 1557. He was instituted as parson of Edmundbyers in 1557 and died in 1571. George Cliffe, similarly, had professed as a monk at Durham about 1535. He occurs at Christ Church, Oxford, the same year, incepting as BD in 1539, and was senior fellow of Durham College between 1540 and 1541. He then disappears from view until 1554, when he was presented by the dean and chapter of Durham first to Elwick in 1554 and later to Billingham in 1560. Between 1558 and 1559 he held the twelfth prebend at the cathedral. His livings were briefly sequestered on his refusal to accept royal supremacy over the Church, but in 1561 he was appointed as a bishop's commissary, and between 1571 and 1584 he was rector of Brancepeth. Bartholomew Barkley was ordained deacon in 1534 on a title from Alnwick abbey and instituted as parson of Whalton on Crown presentation in 1556. Arthur Shafto, who had been ordained subdeacon on a title from Newminster abbey in 1533, was instituted on Crown presentation to Stamfordham in 1547, and on the same presentation to Chollerton in 1556. In the Chancellor's visitation of 1578 there was a reference to him as vicar of Stamfordham and 'in prison'. He died in 1582. Robert Lighton, identified by Professor Hay as a monk of Tynemouth. was instituted as vicar of Longhorsley in 1557. He died in 1584. Henry Yates, who was ordained on a title from Hexham priory, was instituted vicar of Alston in 1558. Finally, Thomas Middleton

was ordained a subdeacon on a title from Alnwick abbey in 1533. He was instituted vicar of Bishop Middleham in 1558. In his will, dated July 1584, he made provision for a funeral feast to cost 29s 8d.[11]

Apart from some of the above, new entrants during the reign of Queen Mary include Nicholas Crawhall at Haltwhistle, collated in 1554 and himself deprived in 1564; Thomas Ogle, instituted on the deprivation of Alexander Bron as parson of Sheepwash, and later instituted at Shilbottle in 1561; and Richard Kitchyn, who was instituted vicar of Whittingham on the presentation of the dean and chapter of Carlisle in 1556. He died in 1574. George Kynge was presented to the vicarage of Edlingham by the dean and chapter of Durham in 1556, and died in 1570. Claudius Rent, who may be identified with a prebendary of Chester-le-Street in 1535 and a chantry priest at Farnacres in 1538, was collated to Long Newton in 1556 and to Whickham in 1558. Henry Skathlock was instituted as vicar of Staindrop in 1556 on the presentation of the earl of Westmorland. Thomas Bowton was presented as vicar of Bywell St Peter in 1557 and died in 1568. Giles Robynson, instituted as vicar of Newburn in 1557 on the presentation of the bishop of Carlisle, had been deprived of his living by 1572 on the grounds of non-residence. William Watson was instituted vicar of Bedlington in 1557. By 1578 he was vicar of Heddon-on-the-Wall. John Oliver was instituted vicar of Warden on Crown presentation in 1558, and died in 1574. Robert Richardson, ordained priest in the diocese of Carlisle, was collated to Redmarshall in 1558. Robert Tesdaill was instituted parson of Knaresdale on Crown presentation in 1558. Christopher Thornbye was collated vicar of Stannington in 1558. George Wynter was instituted vicar of Greatham in 1558. He was chaplain and executor of Dr Thomas Sparke, master of the hospital and bishop of Berwick.[12]

This leaves for more detailed consideration two formidable clerics, William Benet, DD, and Bernard Gilpyn. Benet had been a monk at Durham in 1520. By 1525 he was studying at Magdalen College, Oxford, and graduated BA in 1526 and DD in 1535. He was the last prior of Finchale, and when Durham itself was dissolved he became a canon of the cathedral, holding the fourth prebend from 1541 almost until his death in 1583. He was collated as vicar of Kelloe in 1548 and as vicar of Aycliffe in 1555.[13] Gilpyn was a protégé of Bishop Tunstall. A fellow of The Queen's College, Oxford, in 1542, he incepted as BD in 1549. He had disputed against John Hooper and Peter Martyr, and denounced the spoliation of

church property in a sermon before Edward VI in 1552. He was presented in 1556 by Tunstall to the rectory of Easington, which carried with it the archdeacomy of Durham. He was subsequently transferred to Houghton-le-Spring. In 1559 he was offered the bishopric of Carlisle, following the deprivation of Bishop Oglethorpe, but refused it, as he also refused the provostship of The Queen's College, Oxford, preferring his own ministry of preaching to the inhabitants of the more remote parts of Northumberland. He founded the Kepier Grammar School at Houghton-le-Spring, endowed with the gilly-tithes of Kepier Hospital, which he coaxed from the lay impropriators. He supported scholars from his school in study at Oxford, and in his will made provision for the poor of his parish from a 'common stock'. He is said to have interceded for rebels captured after the collapse of the Rising of the North in 1569/70.[14] He has passed into local folklore as the 'Apostle of the North' and as such is depicted in one of the panels of Northumberland history at Wallington Hall, painted by William Bell Scott. To some he was a blatant time-server, but would it not be more charitable to regard him as a Christian who saw his calling as a preacher to those with few normal opportunities to participate in organised church worship?

We must not forget that Northumberland in particular was woefully short of clergy in the sixteenth century. Stipends were meagre, leading to plurality of livings, which in turn increased the likelihood of absenteeism. 'Scottish' priests and curates were noted at Lucker, Ellingham (2), Tughall, South Charlton, Morpeth, Bothal, Bellingham, Jarrow, Medomsley, Satley, Trimdon, and Stockton. These were not Calvinists but in 1563 were more likely to be Catholic priests, expelled during the initial turmoil as the Lords of the Articles took control of the government of Scotland in 1560 before the return of the widowed Mary, Queen of Scots, to her native kingdom. Bishop Pilkington, himself a staunch Calvinist, was unhappy about the possibly pernicious influence of such foreigners.

Some would stand up and be counted when the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland raised the banner of revolt in 1569 to release Mary, Queen of Scots, from her captivity in England and restore the Old Religion. When the time of reckoning came in the aftermath of the Rising fourteen of the clergy were made to answer for their repudiation of the Anglican liturgy and joyful acceptance of the Roman use. Oliver Eshe, curate at St Giles, Durham, in 1563, was later charged with administering the Easter

communion in 1570 'according to illegal rites', as had Thomas Pentland at St Oswald's. Pentland was identified by Hay as a former Franciscan friar from Newcastle, and had been instituted as vicar of St Oswald's in 1562.[15] Thomas Wright, vicar of Seaham, had said the matins of the Blessed Virgin in his chamber in the presence of George Wynter and others. (In 1563 Wright had been a curate at Embleton, a chapelry of Sedgefield.) Mr William Whithed had allowed his curate to read the psalms in Latin at Heighington.[16] Robert Crawfurthe, curate of Whitworth, had consecrated the elements by unlawful rites. Although his institution as parson of Kimblesworth had been as recent as 1561 he had apparently been ordained in 1535 on a title from Egglestone abbey. He was deprived of his living in 1572, and died in 1583. Richard Milner, a curate of Lanchester, had publicly declared the Anglican litany to be abolished. He too had been ordained deacon in 1533, when a canon of Alnwick. He was curate in 1563. In 1575 he was described as 'a melancholy man, frequenting the local alehouse for company, occasionally drunk'. Both Crawfurthe and Milner were committed to prison for their offences. [17] Roger Venis of Mitford, collated as vicar of Mitford in 1561, was charged in 1570 with abandoning his cure. It was testified that he had joined the rebels in November 1569).[18]

Most of the Durham clergy, however, kept their heads firmly below the parapet: but by staying at their posts they may have hoped to preserve Christianity in an otherwise Godless part of the North.

NOTES

1. *Registers of Bishops Tunstall and Pilkington* (Surtees Soc 161, 1952), 178; Foster, *Reg of Alumni of Oxford University* iv, 1619: *Fasti Dunelmenses* (Surtees Soc 139, 1926), 140; *Royal Visitation of 1559* (Surtees Soc 187. 1975), 23.
2. *Fasti*, 97, 117; *Reg*, 12-13, 43, 165, 173.
3. *Fasti*, 131; *Reg* 40, 49-50, 62, 87, 146, 167.
4. *Reg*, 52, 65, 70, 77, 93, 165, 167, 171-2; Foster iv, 1394; S.L. Greenslade, 'Last Monks of Durham Cathedral' (*Durham University Journal* XLI, 1948/9), 110; *Wills and Inventories* I, (Surtees Soc 2, 1833), 379-82.
5. *Fasti* ,137; *Reg*, 57, 63, 71, 75, 81, 85, 126, 175.
6. *Reg*, 70, 77-8, 148, 164.
7. *Reg*, 70, 87, 168; J. Hodgson, *History of Northumberland* II, i (1827), 296.
8. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigiensis* iii, 496; *Reg*, 75, 95, 104.
9. *Reg*, 72, 77, 86, 87, 146, 168, 170, 171; D. Hay, 'The dissolution of the monasteries in the diocese of Durham' (*Archaeologia Aeliana* XV, 1938), 103, 104.

10. *Reg,* 42, 44, 93, 95, 102, 116, 164; *Wills* I, 226-7.

11. *Reg,* 44, 47, 54, 57, 64, 66, 81, 85, 94, 101, 104, 105, 107, 111, 114, 116, 117, 119, 126, 127, 133, 140-1, 148, 165, 170, 178; *Ecclesiastical Proceedings of Bishop Barnes* (Surtees Soc 22, 1850), cxv-vii, cxxii-ix, 30-1, 35, 136-7; Greenslade, 111, 112; Hay, 105; Foster i, 290; *Northumberland County History XIV* (1935), 321-2.

12. *Reg,* 72, 88, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 114, 115, 120, 121, 138, 147, 157, 168, 171, 172, 174-5, 179; *Barnes* cxxix-xxx, 30, 34, 44, 54 and note, 217-8; *Fasti,* 106; *NCH VI, 113; Wills* I, 391-2; Venn iv, 439.

13. *Reg,* 94, 105; Greenslade, 110; *Barnes* cxviii-xxii, 48, 61; *Fasti,* 13.

14. *Dictionary of National Biography XXI* (1893), 378-80.

15. *Depositions and Ecclesiastical Proceedings* (Surtees Soc 21, 1848), 137-8; *Reg,* 145, 175; Hay, 106.

16. *Reg,* 165, 169, 171; *Depositions,* 199.

17. *Reg,* 65, 133, 171; *Depositions,* 199, 286-92.

18. *Reg,* 121, 140, 169; *Depositions,* 200-1.

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL WORDS

Institution: the act of installing a cleric in a living after his presentation by the patron.

Presentation: the patron of a benefice, following a vacancy, had the right to nominate the next incumbent, subject to the approval of the bishop of the diocese.

Collation: the admittance and institution of a clerk by a bishop to a benefice in the bishop's own gift.

Title: the right to ownership of property. Clerks ordained on 'title' from a religious house were sponsored by that house.

Deprivation: forfeiture of a living on the grounds of misconduct, secular or ecclesiastical.

Patron: the person or institution entitled to present to a benefice. The right frequently originated in land ownership in the eleventh century, but subsequently derived from gift or purchase.

Rector: the 'parson' of a parish, in receipt of its greater tithes of corn, livestock, wool, etc.

Vicar: the cleric who was responsible for the care of a parish whose greater tithes had been appropriated to a monastery or other ecclesiastical authority.

Impropriator: a lay rector. After the dissolution of the monasteries their rights over appropriated parish Churches, including presentation of vicars and collection of tithes, were sold by the Crown,

THE TRADITION OF CATHOLICISM IN STELLA DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: IS IT FACT OR FICTION? THE STORY OF THE TEMPESTS, 1600-1700.

Alan Rounding

For a long time it has been axiomatic that there was an unbroken preservation of the Catholic faith at Stella during the whole of the seventeenth century, a belief fostered by Surtees with his memorable and often quoted phrase, 'the Tempests . . . resided there in catholic splendour and loyalty, during the reigns of the four Stuart kings.'[1]

Formidable support was given to this tradition by two considerable authorities, James and Bossy. James, in his pioneering social study of 1974, talked of a Catholic chapel at Stella and of the Tempests providing recruits for the priesthood. But the Tempest priests all belonged to the attainted main line of Holmeside and, as we shall see, the existence of a Catholic chapel at Stella before the last quarter of the seventeenth century is open to serious doubt. And Bossy stated that 'at Stella-on-Tyne, where the pits belonged in succession to the Tempests and the Widdringtons, there was always a congregation of Catholics and in 1780 this was one of the largest in the North-East.' While there is no doubt that by 1780 the Catholic community at Stella was indeed the largest in county Durham,[2] the same cannot be said for the period from 1600 to 1675.

Surtees seems to have based his opinion on two facts. Firstly, when in 1569 the Earls of Westmorland and Northumberland rose in rebellion against Elizabeth I, the head of the Tempest family in Durham Robert of Holmeside and his son were among the earliest and stoutest supporters of the earls in their attempt to return the country to Catholicism. Secondly, the wife of *Sir Nicholas Tempest* (1553-1625), knight and baronet, the first of the family to live at Stella, was a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ecclesiastical authorities between 1590 and 1620, because of her persistent recusancy.[3] But was Surtees justified in this judgement?

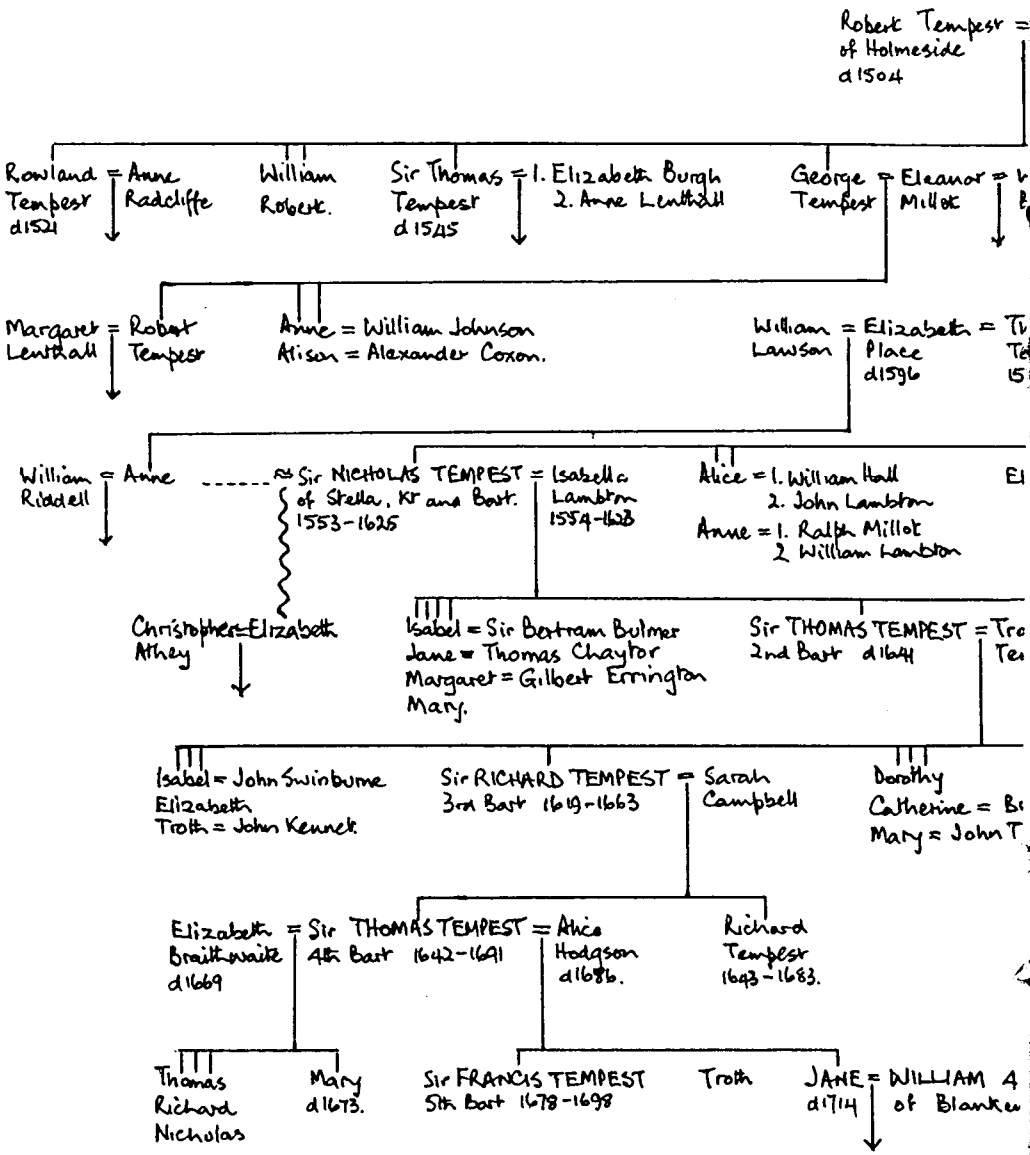
Robert Tempest's cousin, Thomas of Stanley, ancestor of the Stella family, had died in July 1568 and, when the rebellion erupted the following year, his eldest son Nicholas was but sixteen years old and played no part in it. Thomas Tempest's children seem to have been made wards of Robert Lambton, who arranged marriages between them and his own children; Nicholas married Isabella Lambton, his brother John married Isabella's

sister Margery, while his youngest sister Eleanor was married to Lambton's son and heir Ralph. Although the Lambton family was one of the first in Durham to take up the new religion,[4] this new faith was not accepted by all since Robert Lambton's five daughters and his second son were recusants; the fourth son William at first conformed but later converted.

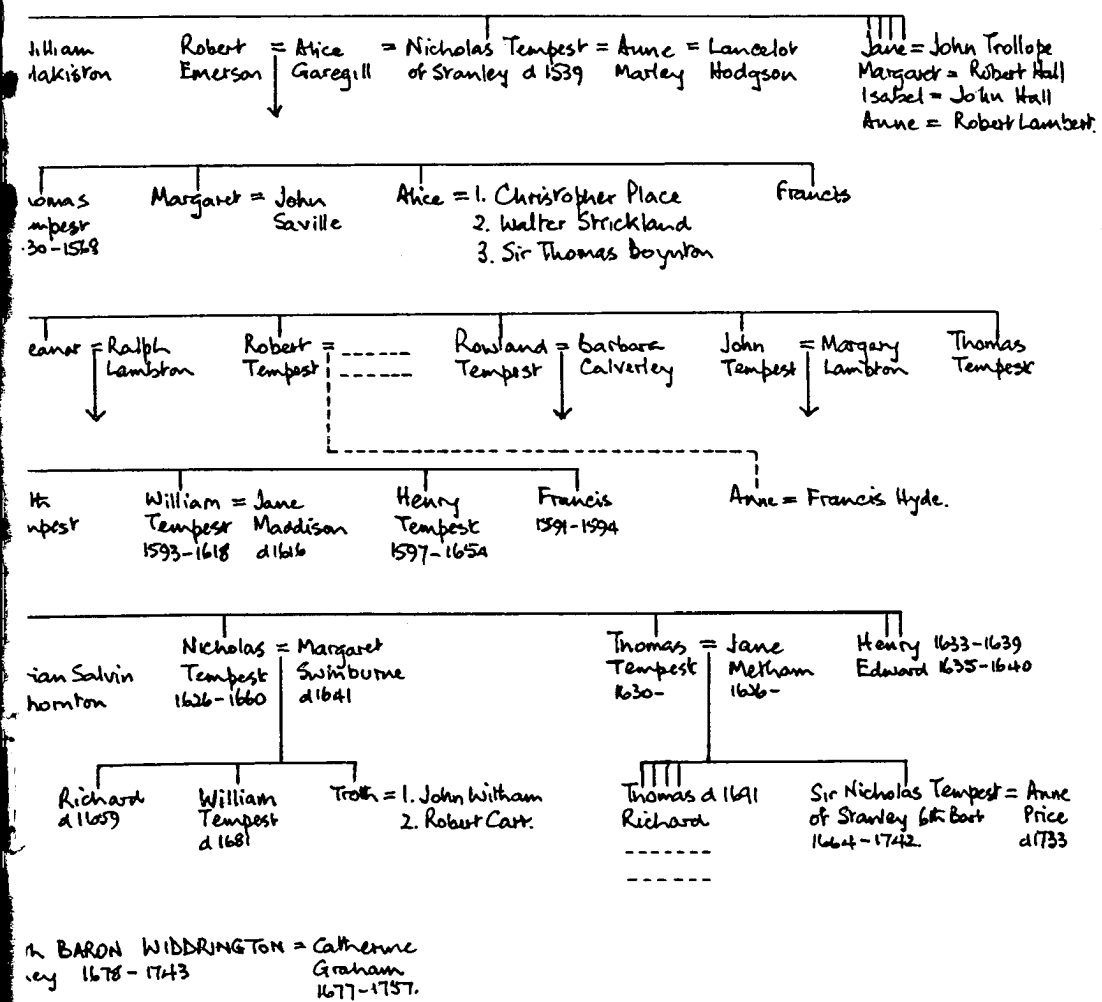
Although Nicholas Tempest's brother John and his wife were Catholics, it would seem that he himself accepted the Protestant faith, despite the example set by his wife. Before we deal with that question however, we should first consider the views of his brothers and sisters. Rowland the second brother, ancestor of the Old Durham family and of the Marquesses of Londonderry, was a Protestant married to a daughter of the Temporal Chancellor of the bishopric. The names of neither of the two remaining brothers Robert and Thomas are to be found in any of the recusant rolls, so both are likely to have been Protestant. Of Nicholas's sisters, Eleanor and her husband Ralph Lambton again do not figure in any of the recusant lists, Alice the wife of William Hall of Greencroft was conformable on the undeniable testimony of the Bishop of Durham himself, while Anne married the Catholic Ralph Millot of Whitehill, and seems herself to have been Catholic. Both Alice and Anne married as their second husbands members of the Lambton family.[5] Anne was convicted of recusancy in 1616, and her husband William Lambton, conforming then, had converted by 1629.

But Nicholas also had a half-sister Anne, his mother Elizabeth Place having been previously married to a Newcastle merchant William Lawson. Anne Lawson, married to the conforming William Riddell of Gateshead, was charged with profaning the Sabbath, an accusation levelled not against Catholics but at Dissenters.[6] Anne's mother too is likely to have been Protestant, with Calvinistic sympathies.

In matters of religion Nicholas seems to have followed his mother and not his wife for in 1599, when the latter was committed to Durham gaol for recusancy, he was described by Lord Eure, his wife's uncle and a member of the Council of the North, as a truly religious man who communicated and educated his children in his own religion. Bishop Matthew of Durham however described him as 'as much of a church papist as any in England,' but when in 1597 it was proposed to make Nicholas sheriff of Newcastle the more charitable Archbishop of York confirmed him as dutiful in matters of religion and careful for the education of his young children. In spite of the


Robert Tempest =
of Holmeside
d 1504
Rowland = Anne
Tempest Radcliffe
d 1521
William
Robert.
Sir Thomas = 1. Elizabeth Burgh
Tempest 2. Anne Lenthall
d 1545
George = Eleanor =
Tempest Millot
Margaret = Robert
Lenthall Tempest
Anne = William Johnson
Alison = Alexander Coxon.
William = Elizabeth =
Lawson Place
d 1596
William = Anne
Riddell
Sir NICHOLAS TEMPEST = Isabella
of Stella, Kt and Bart. Lambton
1553-1625 1554-1628
Alice = 1. William Hall
2. John Lambton
Anne = 1. Ralph Millot
2 William Lambton
Christopher = Elizabeth
Athey
Isabel = Sir Bertram Bulmer
Jane = Thomas Claytor
Margaret = Gilbert Errington
Mary.
Sir THOMAS TEMPEST =
2nd Bart d 1641
Isabel = John Swinburne
Elizabeth
Troth = John Kennet
Sir RICHARD TEMPEST = Sarah
3rd Bart 1619-1663 Campbell
Dorothy
Catherine =
Mary = John T
Elizabeth = Sir THOMAS TEMPEST = Alice
Braithwaite 4th Bart 1642-1691 Hodgson
d 1669 d 1686.
Richard
Tempest
1643-1683.
Thomas
Richard
Nicholas
Mary
d 1673.
Sir FRANCIS TEMPEST
5th Bart 1678-1698
Troth
JANE = WILLIAM 4
d 1714 of Blanke

Anne Lambton.



archbishop's support, the appointment was refused by the Council of the North which said that the town council should not make choice of any whose wife was a recusant. The religion of Tempest himself was not questioned, and it would appear to have been Bishop Matthew's opposition that kept him from a seat on the Durham bench, rather than a latent recusancy as suggested by Dr Fraser. The bishop, who could not be called unbiased, seems never to have got over his defeat at the hands of Lord Eure, when he had attempted to prosecute Tempest's wife and had been thwarted by 'affinity and consanguinity.'[7]

At this stage, although we cannot accept James's premise that Nicholas Tempest was the leading Durham recusant, it might be possible to agree with Bishop Matthew that he was indeed a church papist. But when we come to consider the upbringing of his children even this view must be rejected. For there is no doubt that, as both Lord Eure and the archbishop had declared, the boys were brought up as regular members of the Anglican Church. The hostility of the bishops towards Sir Nicholas persisted until his death in 1625, and it was only when his son Thomas convinced the scarcely more amenable Bishop Neile of his Protestant credentials that he could take his place on the bench and become Master of the Muster for the ward of Chester-le-Street. Sir Thomas's Protestantism was confirmed by the ecclesiastical commissioners in 1630 when he and his brother Henry were affirmed no recusants when they compounded on behalf of Dionisia Bulmer on her conviction.[8]

Henry Tempest remained a bachelor, but both his elder brothers married Protestant wives, the second brother William going so far as to ally himself with the Puritan faction in Newcastle by marrying a daughter of Henry Maddison. Thomas's wife was a distant relative Troth, daughter of Sir Richard Tempest of Bracewell and Bolling in Yorkshire, one of the ecclesiastical commissioners for the province of York for many years, during which time many Yorkshire recusants were charged before him.[9] Of their three surviving sisters Isabel married Sir Bertram Bulmer of Tursdale, a church papist whose children were overt Catholics; Jane married the Protestant Thomas Chaytor of Butterby, whose daughters but not his sons were brought up as Catholics, while Margaret married the Catholic Gilbert Errington of Ponteland.

From this we must surely accept that Sir Nicholas was a true Anglican and that the Tempests had reached an amicable compromise by

bringing up their children in the faith of the respective parent.

All the children of the second baronet *Sir Thomas Tempest* (c1581-1641) were baptised in the parish church at Ryton. But more importantly as an indication of his Protestantism the eldest boy Richard went up to Oxford University where, of course, he would have had to take the oath of supremacy. Of Sir Thomas's six daughters two, Elizabeth and Dorothy, died in infancy. Two married Catholic husbands, Isabel being married to John Swinburne of Capheaton and Mary to John Thornton of Netherwitton. The other two married Anglicans, Troth being married to John Kennet of Coxhoe, who took the protestation oath at Ryton in 1642, and Catherine to Brian Salvin of Croxdale who, at the end of the Civil War, was charged with delinquency but not recusancy. Both men however had Catholic mothers and should be thought of as church papists since their children were brought up as Catholics. So, even though they themselves must have been brought up as Protestants by their conforming parents, Sir Thomas's daughters were not averse to following the example set by their aunts in marrying Catholics. His two younger sons also married Catholics; Nicholas's wife was Margaret Swinburne and Thomas's Jane Metham. Sir Thomas, influenced by his recusant mother, must have been very tolerant of Catholic views in his family, and his orthodoxy seems to have owed more to pragmatism than to conviction.

When we come to consider the third baronet *Sir Richard Tempest* (1619-1663), we find him to have been loyal certainly, but Catholic not at all. After university he continued his studies at Lincoln's Inn, and while in London met his future wife Sarah, daughter of the late Thomas Campbell, third son of the lord mayor of London of that name. The marriage took place at Sevenoaks on 9 October 1641, and the settlement was drawn up a fortnight later on 25 October. The family of a Campbell lord mayor of London could only have been Protestant.[10]

The next event of significance was the taking of the protestation oath at Ryton in February 1641/2. The only Tempests involved were George of Winlaton (d.1658), who agreed 'to defend the Protestant religion against all Popery', and William of Thornley (d.1652) who refused; these two were distant relations of the Stella family. Sir Richard was not at home at the time, nor was he with his in-laws at Sevenoaks, but was probably in London. Unfortunately, the rolls for the city have been lost, and his name is not included in the returns for Middlesex.[11]

621 of the adult males of Ryton took the oath, and only 20 declined. In the county, this latter figure was equalled at Brancepeth (21), and exceeded at Tanfield (25), Kelloe (36), the city of Durham (51) and Lanchester (67), the latter by far the largest concentration of recusants in the county. Most of those in Ryton parish came from Blaydon and Winlaton where, some of them recent incomers, they were presumably employed by the Selbys and Hodgsons, and to a lesser degree Blackhall Mill, where they must have worked for the Rutherfords, the leading Catholic gentry families in the parish. At Stella the Catholics were represented only by the Atheys, descendants of Sir Thomas Tempest's (probably illegitimate half) sister Elizabeth.[12]

During the Civil War, Sir Richard played a major role as a colonel in the king's army, his estates suffering sequestration as a result. Although Surtees claimed that he was one of the Catholic officers in the army, the sequestration records, albeit incomplete, refer only to delinquency and never to recusancy. The sequestration was discharged in 1652 when the estates were conveyed to his uncle Henry Tempest and his heirs in satisfaction of his claim to several rent charges out of them, further proof of Henry's Protestantism. Since Henry was unmarried, in due time the estates would revert to either Sir Richard or his heirs.[13]

Sir Richard was buried at St Giles's church Durham on 5 February 1662/3. Shortly after this the new baronet *Sir Thomas Tempest* (1642-1691) married Elizabeth daughter of George Braithwaite of Warcop in Westmorland, the marriage (unknown to Surtees) being recorded in the visitation pedigree of the Braithwaites taken on 23 March 1664. Oddly, however, when the heralds were visiting Durham in August 1666 and Sir Thomas went there to register his own pedigree, he did not mention his marriage. This was particularly strange since, as we shall see, the couple had several children.

The marriage is not recorded in the registers of either Warcop or Ambleside, where the Braithwaites owned property, nor at either Ryton or Lanchester. There were at least four children and Lady Elizabeth died in 1669, so we may presume a date for the marriage of at least 1663. Her death was entered in the Warcop register: 'Elizabeth Tempest dyed at Standley in Bppwick the 31th Aug: 69 and left 3 sons: Tho: Richard: & Nicholas dyed in ye 32 yeare of her age.' The Mrs Mary daughter of Sir Thomas Tempest buried in the choir of Ryton church on 16 November 1676 must also have

been the child of Sir Thomas and Lady Elizabeth, since his second marriage probably took place the following year. All the children died young.

The Braithwaites, in the main line, were an outwardly conforming family, but Lady Elizabeth's great-uncle Richard Braithwaite of Burneshead was a recusant, married to Frances Lawson of Neasham. Their son Thomas was married to Ursula Metham, sister of Sir Thomas Tempest's aunt Jane, wife of his uncle Thomas, and it must have been this connection which resulted in Sir Thomas's own marriage. This makes his omission of that marriage the more incomprehensible. The question may also be raised whether Elizabeth herself might not have been a Catholic, offering a reason why her marriage and the baptisms of her children have not been traced.

Although Sir Thomas was said to have had a strict Protestant upbringing, it was claimed that most of those involved in his affairs were Catholics. Following his second marriage he became overtly Catholic and, together with his wife, was charged before the Archdeacon of Durham with absenting himself from his parish church.[14] Several of his religious books, which had formerly belonged to the priory of Durham and have been autographed by him, are now to be found at Ushaw College.

Sir Thomas's second wife was Alice sister and co-heir of Sir Francis Hodgson of Winlaton. She and her elder sister Mary were still under age when their parents and later their brother died, when their maternal uncle Sir Thomas Haggerston was appointed guardian, entrusting their care to his sister Ellen Selby of Biddlestone. The marriage seems to have taken place in 1677, by the rites of the old faith, for Ann wife of Alice's cousin Thomas Selby, whose own marriage probably occurred in 1673, claimed to have known Alice for four years when she married Sir Thomas. The Tempests had three children, only one of whom, their son Francis was baptised at Ryton, presumably to facilitate his inheritance. There were two younger daughters Jane and Troth, whose baptisms have not been traced, presumably because they were christened by a Catholic priest.

It is from this time, and this time only, that we hear of a priest at Stella. The first to be traced was Fr John Bennet Wilson OSB, born at Satley between Wolsingham and Lanchester. He received his education at Douai, being ordained priest at St Gregory's there on 15 October 1678, and made sub-prior in 1686. In 1688 however he was sent on the English mission and may have come directly to Stella, where he most probably was in 1693, and is known to have been in 1706.

After the death of Sir Thomas in 1691, Sir Thomas Haggerston once more took over the guardianship of the children, and young *Sir Francis Tempest* (1678-1698) was sent abroad 'for his better education,' probably to the Jesuit College of St Louis le Grand in Paris. Sadly, the young man died at Montpellier in the following year.[16]

The baronetcy passed to his father's cousin Nicholas, but the estates were inherited by his sole surviving sister Jane. She married his old friend *William 4th Baron Widdrington* in 1700, the marriage resulting in eight children. On 11 August 1714, a month before she died, Lady Widdrington made provision for her children, the deed also providing for her heirs to appoint a priest at Stella, with a salary of £40 a year, who was to say a weekly mass for the repose of her soul.[17] The continuance of the faith at Stella was now secured, although in 1715, at the time of the Jacobite uprising in which Lord Widdrington was so deeply involved, Fr Wilson was arrested and carried off to Durham gaol, from which he was released the following year.

The Stella estates were forfeit and Lord Widdrington's life interest was sold to Protestant Whigs, Fr Wilson being forced to leave Stella. But he did not desert his flock, taking up residence in Blaydon where he remained until his death in June 1725. Following this, there was a series of Benedictine priests in the area, none of whom stayed for long, probably finding it difficult to cope with the bitter Whig opposition. However, in the years between 1727 and 1731 Widdrington managed to re-acquire the estates and, in 1732, appointed a secular priest Fr Luke Wilson as chaplain. There were to be no further interruptions in the steady progress of the faith at Stella.

It is difficult not to accept that this successful establishment of the faith at Stella, and its survival through great tribulations, owes everything to the Tempest/Hodgson and the Widdrington/Tempest marriages and little, if anything, to the earlier Tempests. Although Tempest daughters and younger sons were to be allowed the luxury of marriages to Catholics, the eldest son was invariably indoctrinated in the Protestant religion, but it is not easy to be certain how much this was due to conviction and how much to pragmatism.

We must, I think, agree that Surtees's romantic and evocative conjecture is not justified. The credit for establishing the Catholic faith at Stella must be given to the fourth baronet Sir Thomas and his wife, and

most especially to their daughter Jane Lady Widdrington. The seeds sown by them managed to survive the drought created after 1715, and to flourish unrestrainedly in the sunshine which followed the Widdrington recovery of the estates.

ABBREVIATIONS AND GENERAL SOURCES

NCH *Northern Catholic History*.

SD Surtees R. (1.816-40) *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham.* 4 volumes.

SS Publications of the Surtees Society.

Genealogical information derived from SD and Visitation Pedigrees:

Forster, J. (1887), *Durham Visitation Pediqrees.*

Forster, J. (1891), *Pediqrees Recorded at the Heralds' Visitation of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, 1615 and 1666.*

Evidence for religious beliefs derived from Dr E Clavering's List of Recusants. The history of the Church in Stella derived from *Northern Catholic Calendar* (1915).

NOTES

1. SD II 276.
2. James. M. (1974), *Family, Lineaqe and Civil Society.* 141-2; Anstruther G, (.1967) *The Seminary Priests.* Vol I 348-9; Bossy, J. *The Enqlish Catholic Community, 1570-1850.* 88; NCH 27 7ff.
3. Sharp, C. (1840), *Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569.* passim; SD II 322; and see note 7.
4. SD II 170.
5. SD II 322; Tempest MSS (in private hands).
6. NCH 3 10.
7. Welford R. (1884-7), *The History of Newcastle and Gateshead,* Vol III, 87,113; *Royal Commission on Historic Manuscripts: Salisbury,* VI 63, 72; *Calendar of State Papers (Domestic),* 1595-7 370; NCH 33 8.
8. *James,* op cit 104; Publications of the Durham County Local History Society 22, 28; Catholic Record Society 53, 356, 371.
9. *Bradford Antiquary* (New series) I 508.
10. Forster J., (1892-), *Alumni Oxoniensis.* 1465; Beavan, A.B. (1908-13.) *The Aldermen of the City of London.* Vol II 47; G.B. Cokayne, (1900-9), *The Complete Baronetage.* Vol I, 217; Tempest MSS.
11. SS cxxxv 35ff; House of Lords Record Office: Protestation Oath Rolls.
12. The monumental inscription in Ryton church states that Sir Nicholas and Dame Isabella Tempest had four sons and just as many daughters. Two daughters are named, Isabella Bulmer and Jane Chaytor; the others were Margaret Errington and Mary (died unm). The visitation pedigree also mentions Elizabeth, married to Christopher

Athey at Chester-le-Street in 1586, when her father was but thirty-three years old and his wife, at most, thirty-two. Because of the respective ages and the definite statement of the monumental inscription, Elizabeth would seem to have been illegitimate, although a well recognised member of the family.

13. SD Ic; Howell, R. Jr. (1969), *Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution*. 160-4; Proc Soc Antiq Newcastle upon Tyne (3) ii 22; SS cxi 356.
14. Ex info Dr E Clavering; SS xivii 238.
15. SS cixxx passim; *Northumberland County History*, Vol. XIII 424; Public Record Office C6 295/47.
16. SS cixxx passim; NCH 22, 24.
17. Ex info Dr T Yellowley.

HULL, BURTON CONSTABLE AND THE GORDON RIOTS

J. Anthony Williams

The young William Wilberforce, shortly before entering Parliament as member for Hull, added as a postscript to a letter from Beverley: 'we were alarm'd last night at Hull by a mob which burnt the Catholic chapel and attempted to pull down a private house'. The letter, headed 'Monday evening', is undated but must have been written on 12 June 1780, the day after the wrecking of the recently established chapel, and on the Tuesday John Raines, the long-serving estate steward at Burton Constable reported: 'The Phrenzy of the times has extended to Hull. The mob there have destroyed the Roman Catholic chapel'.[1]

The Gordon Riots in London, which had died down a few days earlier, had for almost a week reduced parts of the capital to near-anarchy; they arose, as is well known, from a campaign spearheaded by the unstable Lord George Gordon and the Protestant Association aimed at repeal of the very modest measure of relief granted to Catholics in June 1778 – just how modest was spelled-out in a printed handbill beginning 'Many well-disposed Protestants have been taught to believe that all the Laws which have been made against the Papists have been repealed by the late Act of Parliament which is now used as a Ground for so much Clamour' and outlining the many penal laws still on the statute book. But there was widespread acceptance of the bizarre belief that the ministry and the much-maligned George III (who took very seriously the royal governorship of the Church of England) were intent on 'bringing in popery'; allegations coarsely cartooned and copiously expressed in print and, among numerous other such effusions, in a scrawled note proclaiming 'Lord George Gordon forever. No Popery. Down with it. George the 3d is a Roman Catholick. Dethrone him or he will massacre you all', while demands for the release of those arrested during the Riots carried similar accusations.[2]

The ministry, in its devotion to Whig principles of liberty of conscience, earlier asserted in opposition to Walpole's 1723 levy of £100,000 on papists and nonjurors, and remarked-on at the time by the Catholic Bishop Stonor,[3] had far outpaced a public opinion still imbued with a longstanding and deep-seated anti-Catholicism which, heightened by the recent partnership of France and Spain against an England hard-pressed in the War of American Independence and an invasion scare in the summer of 1779,

could readily envisage the Pope setting foot in this country — a phobia illustrated by the story of a man who was alleged to be the Pope 'because he lodged on St James's Parade' (close to Bath's burning Catholic chapel) 'and had a nightgown with gold flowers on it'.[4]

In Hull another gold-clad figure, the recently gilded equestrian statue of William III, 'Our Great Deliverer', symbolised the powerful protestant leanings of the second of the two provincial cities whose new chapels were so badly damaged that they had to be abandoned and whence anti-Catholic zealots, according to a local priest, Dom John Fisher, O.S.B., had planned to combine with 'associates' from Leeds in a descent on York after 'demolishing everything appertaining to Popery in the East Riding'; hence, no doubt, the remark, in another letter from that area: 'You are certainly safer in London than here'.[5] Regional ramifications are awkward to trace in detail because of the speedy destruction of its headquarters' records by the Protestant Association's secretary, but the allusion to Yorkshire 'associates' and the inscription of a book published at York in 1780 to 'the Protestant Associators in North and South Britain' point to something more extensive than a movement traditionally identified with Scotland and London and more in keeping with the stated aims of the Association's lengthy *Appeal . . . to the People of Great Britain*, which envisaged a network of local branches, with nationwide petitioning against the Relief Act,[6] and Dr Colin Haydon's important *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth Century England* has recently revealed the locations of many such bodies and the existence of autonomous local groups with related aims and has uncovered evidence of such anti-Catholic activism in the north-east, not only at Leeds and Hull but also at Newcastle, Helmsley and Bridlington.

During the London riots Hull readers could have been regaled - and some of them perhaps inspired - by reports in their nearest newspapers of the onset and escalation of the violence from which an early sufferer was the Archbishop of York, and further intelligence could have been communicated *via* road and ferry, inland waterway and coastal carrier, as well as by correspondence such as the letter received locally from the capital mentioning 'A Roman Catholick Gent, whose house (as the phrase is) they have threatened to do over'.[7] The chapel premises targetted by the Hull rioters appear to have been obtained in April 1778: a site in Posterngate formerly occupied by a joiner's workshop, acquired in the name of a prominent but well disposed protestant, Josiah Prickett, the solicitor who

was later to act strenuously for the priest, Father Charles Howard, in his claim for restitution.[8]

Father Howard was stationed near Burton Constable at Marton in Holderness, an ancient, far-reaching and populous mission said by one of his successors, Canon Robert Hogarth, to have had a Catholic chapel 'even in the worst days of the Protestant Persecution'.[9] As household chaplains to members of the Constable family (Viscounts Dunbar from 1620 to 1718) at Halsham and Burton Constable and as missioners subsidised by them, Catholic clergy could be found not only at the three places mentioned but also ministering to the faithful of Nuthill and Hedon, closer to Hull than was Marton, and among the addresses of a leading secular priest known to have had responsibility for Hull were the Beckwiths' at Marton and a 'Mrs Headon' - a locative surname with recusant associations. He was Father Richard Frank(s), capitular Archdeacon of Yorkshire, who was instrumental in setting up the Yorkshire Brethren Fund and who was in the Holderness region from the 1650s to the 1690s, overlapping initially with the martyr Nicholas Postgate, who later recalled serving 'the old Lady Dunbar' (who died in 1659).[10] Father Frank may have been one of the 'abundance of priests' seized at Hull by Williamite supporters who 'fell on the Mass-house and all the houses of Papists in the Town',[11] but these words, written at a time when numerous East Riding Catholics and their priests had taken refuge in the city (a garrison-town with a Catholic governor, Lord Langdale), convey a misleading impression of Father Frank's normal duties, for in the previous reign Hull had been shown by the Compton Census of 1676 to contain only three popish recusants, a figure repeated in the papist-return of 1706.[12] Nor did the situation improve; the nationwide registration and enrolment of papists' estates ordered in 1715 revealed only one such property within the city, yielding rent to an owner elsewhere,[13] and twenty years later the Hull Catholics reported at Archbishop Blackburn's visitation numbered but four: a widow with a young daughter, the wife of a protestant mariner and a spinster. Clearly there was little promise here for the future and in the early 1740s the city was twice stated to contain no Catholics at all.[14]

However, in its healthily Catholic hinterland priests continued to operate at the centres already mentioned and, briefly, at Wyton Hall, a short distance from Burton Constable (Dom Maurus Westbrooke, O.S.B., later, as a recusant, to have a brush with the authorities which left him, in old age, 'in constant terror and fear of being apprehended and sent to

prison')[15] and both from the Nuthill-Hedon mission and more especially from Marton pastoral care was forthcoming for a Hull Catholicism which by the 1760s was experiencing something of a revival, the papist-return of 1767 estimating its adherents in and close to the city (at Marfleet and Sculcoates) at forty-odd, ranging from a 68-year old labourer to six young people 'under 18', with no-one resident before 1745.[16] Here was the nucleus of a Catholic community, perhaps then assisted by a priest from the Burton Constable-Marton area, Father James Taylor, who is known to have died at Hull in 1774.[17]

After Father Taylor's death and before Father Howard's appointment Father Thomas Ferby, then at Hedon, ministered to the Catholics of Hull. Both priests began new registers which reflect this connection – temporary in Father Ferby's case; more lasting in that of Father Howard[18] who set out to record 'all the children baptised in the congregation of Marton . . . and the adjacent towns and villages . . . and also . . . those born in the town of Kingston-upon-Hull from the 15h of Aug. 1774'. Father Howard, who had earlier been a riding-missioner based at York with an allowance for keeping a horse and responsibility for a number of out-of-town Mass-centres, was described by one acquaintance as 'very learned, agreeable, pleasant and dignified', though another, after dining with him at Harrogate in 1788, was 'surprised to find the Parisian Doctor rusticated into the farmer and the learning of the Sorbonne laid aside for that of the plough',[19] and decidedly relaxed attitudes are glimpsed in his mission-register which contains loose entries on the backs of sermon-notes and of a Hull draper's bill, a book-list (sixteen volumes of English poets: Milton, Butler's *Hudibras*, Dryden, Prior, Pope and Gay) and specimens of childish penmanship: a copperplate copy of the register's title-page and, repeatedly, the incomplete line 'The Angels did Rejoice with . . . ', written by a master Jonathan Youle. Father Howard rode over to Hull every month or so to say Mass and doubtless to hear confessions and perhaps to catechise the children (an activity possibly hinted-at by the juvenile handiwork in his register), as well as paying occasional visits to carry out christenings.

Since his Postergate chapel was not established before 1778 it may be supposed that Father Howard had previously followed the practice traditional to eighteenth-century urban Catholicism of adapting a private room (often, appropriateletely enough, an upper room) for the celebration of Mass and one wonders whether some kind of co-operation had been forthcoming

from Reginald Williams, a Hull apothecary and evidently a leading Catholic (with an eminent priest-uncle and a son who entered the historic missionary college at Lisbon),[20] whose property, as will be seen, was singled out for attack in 1780. Meanwhile, on 3 July 1778, Father Howard was one of seventy-three Catholics who gathered in Hull to take the oath prescribed by the Relief Act; many can be traced to East Riding parishes, but Reginald Williams and Thomas Fawcett, a schoolmaster, were fathers of children baptised at Hull by Fathers Ferby and Howard between 1774 and 1777. By this time, judging by the local returns to the nationwide 'census' of papists complied in 1780, the number of Catholics in and near the city, and therefore Father Howard's flock, was in the region of eighty, and a similar doubling since 1767 (from 7 to 15 papists) had occurred in the extensive parish of Sutton, stretching across the route from Marton to Hull.[21]

That city's new and short-lived chapel (too short-lived to feature in any near-contemporary plan of Hull), described at the time as 'a small Mass-house, 'newly fitted up', and later as 'a small apartment with a coved ceiling', was destroyed by an anti-Catholic mob on Sunday 11 June 1780 and they also assailed the premises of Reginald Williams, endangering his wife and family. One account plays down this attack, merely mentioning broken windows and blaming an irresolute magistracy (as in London), but another tells of 'great damage . . . Mrs Williams' life was saved by the interposition of the magistrates and she and family were escorted out of the town by a guard in a coach'. Wilberforce's words, quoted earlier, perhaps suggest that the rioters may have been checked somewhat short of their 'attempted' design, whereas the chapel was later described as 'completely wrecked '.[22]

The mob, liable to melt away among the darkening side-streets and alleys of the Old Town (which then *was* Hull), reassembled on the Monday, not dispersing until about ten o'clock that night; they had proved quite beyond the control of the local constables who had had to be reinforced by militia from Suffolk, soldiers from the Citadel and others, all subsequently rewarded by a grateful Bench. The magistrates, 'strongly express'd to be apprehensive' of renewed violence, had stayed up all night and additional troops were in readiness to march from Newcastle. Even allowing for an appreciable degree of local over-reaction, perhaps not unconnected with reports of the recent havoc in London, these responses appear to reflect foreboding prompted by what was termed at the time 'an Insurrection of

the Populace'[23] with possible implications, as in the capital, not confined to the persons and property of Catholics. Nor was Monday evening the rioters' last fling for, lending colour to Father Fisher's apprehensions, they turned their attention elsewhere, following the example of anti-Catholic activists in other areas who had menaced the country mansions, incorporating chapels, of such well-known Catholics as Lord Arundell of Wardour in Wiltshire and Lord Petre in Essex. The devoted steward at Burton Constable wrote 'The Mob have threatened us a visit at Burton' and in the case of another East Riding house with Catholic associations, the Langdales' seat at Houghton Hall, threats became action and a party set out from Hull to attack it; however, reported the ex-Jesuit chaplain, Edward Holme (*alias* Howard), they were intercepted before they could reach it.[24]

It is understandable that Burton Constable Hall, not only long linked with recusancy but an opulent and richly refurbished mansion upon which Hull craftsmen had been employed, should have become a target of no-popery rioters, not inclined to discern fine distinctions among Catholics and those considered sympathetic to them. Its then owner was the remarkable and lively-minded William Constable, then in his sixtieth year and an avid collector, connoisseur and traveller (he made three Grand Tours) but scarcely a model Catholic. Educated at Douay and accounted at least a 'reputed papist' in 1767, he had earlier lost, at the last moment, a Catholic bride unimpressed by his level of religious observance. Embittered by this experience and increasingly under the spell of the intellectual ferment of the time (reflected in numerous books added to his library) he drifted away from a Catholic commitment and towards deism; he posed for his portrait attired *à la* Rousseau, was acquainted with many leading intellectuals and gave financial support to Joseph Priestley, and the two worlds he inhabited are perhaps epitomised in visits he paid while on the continent in 1770: first receiving a blessing for himself and his family and friends from the new Pope, Clement XIV - of whom he reported approvingly, 'nothing about him of Kniffy-knaffery or scrupulousness' - and then being much gratified by a first meeting with Rousseau: 'Old Rousseau. . . the best writer of the age', he wrote to his erudite and affectionate half-brother, Marmaduke Tunstall.[25] Like the latter, he became a Fellow of the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries and he drew a tribute from George Poulson, the historian of Holderness. He appears to have been a benignly seigneurial employer, displayed a wider local concern by promoting the regeneration of Hedon as a port and, for the benefit of his Catholic dependants and

tenants, he engaged the York convert architect, Thomas Atkinson, who had worked for him at Burton Constable, to erect a new chapel nearby at Marton (to which he added a Latin inscription susceptible of a deist interpretation) two years before a second Relief Act permitted such buildings – scant redress, opined one of his descendants, for the scandal of his own unbelief, expressed shortly afterwards to Father Howard, who considered him 'a complete Deist, if not an Atheist', in some such words as 'for myself, I believe in nothing.'[26]

Earlier, however, to no-popery zealots learning of his involvement in events surrounding the hated Relief Act of 1778, he could well have appeared an arch-papist; as 'Mr Constable of Burton' he was one of the Catholic gentlemen then in London invited to meet, with no clergy present, at the Thatched House tavern prior to the presentation to George III of the *Humble Address of the Roman Catholic Peers and Commoners of Great Britain* and his was one of the names appended to the *Address* and given publicity in *The London Gazette* of 2 May 1778 (nor, unlike certain others there named, did he ever conform to the Established Church), while he subsequently took, in London, the oath required of Catholics by the ensuing Relief Act.[27]

William Constable was away from Burton Constable at the time of the Hull disturbances and was advised not to return, and it fell to his faithful steward, John Raines, to organise the protection of the Hall, which he did in consultation with the family solicitor and, unofficially, with Richard Beatniffe, Recorder of Hull. The detailed defence-plans survive[28] and suggest not only that the rioters' threat was taken very seriously but that it may have been thought to portend something more ominous than the ransacking of a small domestic chapel high up in the south tower. Raines stationed a servant at Hull to send warning to him and to the militia and to apply for help from the city fathers, whose co-operation he acknowledged. The plate and linen had already been removed from the house; a *posse* raised by the local constables and armed with sticks and pitchforks was to reinforce the estate-labourers at the front of the building and men with loaded firearms were to be posted at the ground-floor windows (if any of the mob did break in they might be fired on as 'the last extremity'). As afterthoughts Raines added that a line of stout wagons should be formed for further protection and that mounted grooms should be prepared to advance at a trot to disperse the marauders. Mr Beatniffe's opinion was that such use of force, even if it resulted in injury or loss of life among the

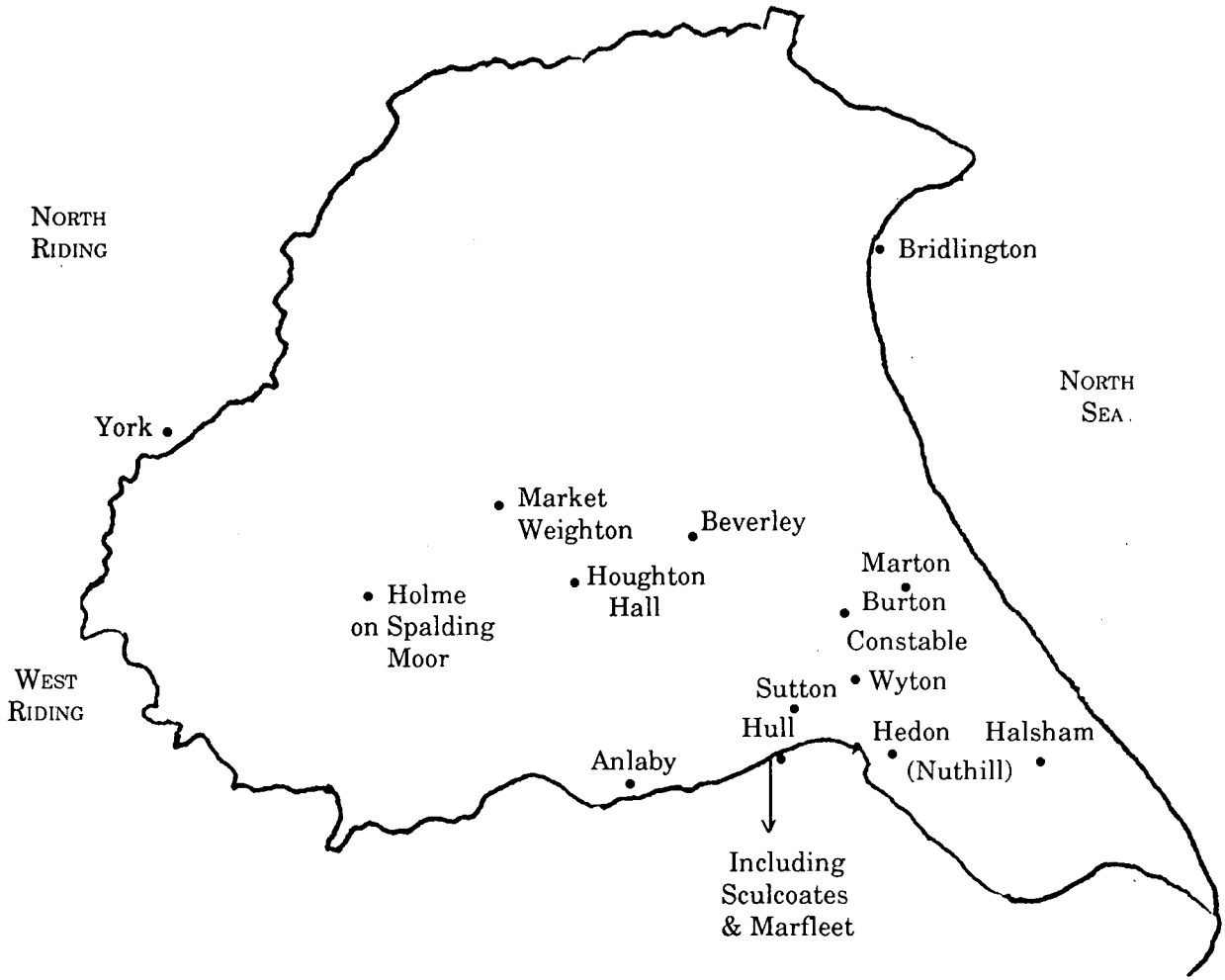
rioters, was justifiable. Possibly the intending invaders got wind of these proposals and were deterred, though Beatniffe had urged secrecy in case they found such measures provocative. In the event, Burton Constable was spared and some of the rioters, as has been noted, turned their attention in the opposite direction, to Houghton Hall, possibly as a second-choice 'soft target'.

Just along the road from Burton Constable, at Marton, Father Howard had two immediate concerns: to obtain compensation for the loss of his Hull chapel[29] and to secure accommodation for some kind of replacement. In July 1780, after the House of Commons had resolved *nem con* that particulars of lossses and damage sustained in 'the late rebellious Insurrection' should be presented to it at the opening of the next session, the Treasury instructed the Board of Works to make such enquiries; a large number of claims did come in but early in October the Board placed an advertisement in *The London Gazette* inviting further applicants to come forward between the 12th and 19th of that month. By the latter date Father Howard's claim had been submitted (as had one by the Bath priest, Dom Bede Brewer, O.S.B.) and from this point the Board of Works' own record is amplified by that of the Corporation of Hull and by a detailed statement drawn up by Father Howard's solicitor, Josiah Prickett – a prominent citizen who later took a leading role in the celebrations marking the centenary of the 1688 Revolution. Father Howard's application to the Board of Works was backed by affidavits from two witnesses to the gutting of the chapel, after which the Board requested a more detailed account of the damage; then, following scrutiny of numerous claims, the Board ruled that before any grant could be made claimants should (as a very civil letter advised Father Brewer) 'apply besides for legal remedies where the same could be obtained', *i.e.* from their local authorities. This procedure, also required of Father Howard, accorded with section six of the Riot Act of 1714 which had been much misunderstood and which magistrates had been hesitant to invoke to quell the June disturbances.

Father Howard first approached the Corporation of Hull by petition; then, in consultation with a leading northern circuit counsel, Alan Chambre, followed a law-suit against the mayor and two aldermen, who the city resolved to indemnify while informing Father Howard that his original petition was 'a matter this Corporation has no concern with'. The legal proceedings launched by Prickett, in concert with Chambre, went ahead during the Easter and Trinity terms of 1781, but it was not until a year

later, after repeated calls by Prickett's London agent upon the Board of Works and the Treasury, who were liaising with each other, that Father Howard's losses, put at £78. 11s. and 'not estimated by our clerks, but seems exceedingly well attested', were made good by the Board's surveyor in August 1782 at that figure. Josiah Prickett's fees for his protracted involvement came to £21. 11s. 4d., apart from 'attendance during the course of this brief for which no particular charge is made' and on 16 August the matter was eventually settled, leaving Father Howard with a balance of £56 19s. 8d. It is perhaps noteworthy not only that this claim escaped close official scrutiny but that the Board of Works' ledger-entry of its settlement reads: 'Howard, Charles Esq., for damage to a building' ('chapel' is crossed-out) 'in Kingston upon Hull', for while registered nonconformist meeting-houses had enjoyed the protection of the law since the Toleration Act of 1689, Catholic chapels were not yet on the same footing, unless they belonged to foreign ambassadors whose redress, following outrages against their property by the London mob, was a sensitive issue on which the House of Commons had decided a month before it turned to the more complex question of compensating British citizens.

Finally, having abandoned the Posterngate premises, Father Howard opened a chapel in a private house interestingly close to Holy Trinity church; this was succeeded by another apartment nearby which was being used in 1788 and was followed by a third such makeshift place of worship (on a fourth floor and 'but thinly attended'), registered as such in 1795, in accordance with the second Relief Act of two years earlier, with Father Howard as its 'minister',[30] and destined to last for the rest of his Hull apostolate. It was replaced in 1799 by his successor, the energetic and generous refugee Abbé Pierre François Foucher, who provided a new public chapel on the rapidly developing northern outskirts of the city; this endured for thirty years until, in the year of Catholic Emancipation (1829), it was superseded by the more central church of St Charles Borromeo, still Hull's principal Catholic church, though with its appearance much altered.



EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE: PLACES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful for permission to use the Chichester-Constable papers deposited in the East Riding of Yorkshire Archives at Beverley and for access to other documents there and in the record repositories mentioned below.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.U.H.	Archives Department, University of Hull (Brynmor Jones Library).
B.I.H.R.	Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York.
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
C.J.	*Journal of the House of Commons.*
C.R.S.	Catholic Record Society (Record Series cited by volume-number).
E.Y.A.	East Riding of Yorkshire Archives and Record Service, Beverley.
H.C.R.O.	Hull City Record Office.
Kirk.	J.Kirk, *Biographies of English Catholics, 1700-1800* (1909).
Ollard & Walker:	*Archbishop Herring's Visitation, 1743* (5 parts, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, vols. 71, 72, 75, 77, 79).
P.R.O.	Public Record Office (an asterisk denotes E.Y.A. microfilm).
V.C.H.	*Victoria History of the Counties of England.*

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THE MIDDLESBROUGH TROUBLES OF 1871

The Rev. Dominique Minskip

The central character in what I have called the 'Middlesbrough troubles of 1871' was Fr Andrew Burns. Born in Lancashire in 1822, trained at Ushaw and ordained in 1849, Burns was briefly a curate at Little Blake Street in York before becoming missioner at St Mary's in Middlesbrough in 1853. In his days at York, Burns was 'a restive sort of genius' - thus Robert Tate, reporting in a letter of December 1851 that Burns had been dismissed from York but later reinstated when his replacement, an ex-Rosminian named Fraser, proved even less suitable. Eighteen months later Burns nominated Tate his representative when an enquiry was launched into a long-standing feud between Burns and the senior York curate William Fisher. Details of the feud are lacking, but it was said to be giving great scandal to the people. The enquiry found Burns to be at fault and he left York for Middlesbrough shortly after the judgement.[1]

It may be worth noting that while Burns was in York he would have witnessed the serious disturbance which took place among the Irish in Bedern in 1852. It concerned Ribbonmen and their forming themselves into clubs which exercised summary justice within the community and violence against those unwilling to join their cause.[2] How much of a memory did this remain for Burns ?

At Middlesbrough, he was faced with a rapidly growing mission, needing resources but with few wealthy souls to provide them. Indeed, the Middlesbrough mission was formed very largely of Irish labourers brought in to work the iron foundaries springing up along the banks of the Tees. Given the poverty of his congregation, Burns' achievement in twice enlarging the modest chapel at Middlesbrough and in establishing a school there must be duly acknowledged. So, too, must the charity which he showed in times of industrial distress. In 1858, the *Tablet* noted the 'crowd of half-starved men, women and children' being fed outside his chapel at 6pm each day; and again, in 1866, the local newspaper recorded his efforts to provide relief to the needy. But perhaps more revealing for our purpose is Burns' own comment on this latter occasion when he told the paper that there were 'many cases of ingratitude, especially among the Irish, and that it required great discrimination to avoid being imposed on'.[3]

From as early as 1857 Burns had been complaining to episcopal authority of 'no small amount of annoyances and difficulties' which required 'no small amount of forebearance'.[4] He does not specify what the annoyances were and they may have been very mundane. But we do also know that, in 1857, Burns wrote to Bishop Briggs on the subject of one John Gribbin, an Irishman working as a lawyer and, therefore, one of the few Catholics among the middle-classes of the town:

> You would receive a letter from Mr Gribbin here a few weeks ago, in which he promises to subscribe £1 per annum to the Diocesan Poor School and Ecclesiastical Education Funds respectively because otherwise I refused him absolution. His bad example has always had such a withering effect upon the poor men here that I deemed myself bound to have recourse to that measure after two warnings. . . If he should quit in his promise now I shall have your lordship as a witness against him. He is such a deep man that I thought the case against him could not be made too plain.[5]

The bad blood between Burns and Gribbin was evidenced again in 1865. In that year, John Gribbin married Miss M. Middleton. But he did so at Stockton. Burns publicly spoke out against the marriage on the grounds that no banns of marriage had been published in the chapel at Middlesbrough and that the couple had not been dispensed from this obligation. Letters of complaint were sent against Burns' conduct and he defended his actions. We know this only from a summary and judgement of the case issuing from the Provost and Vicar General of the Beverley diocese, Joseph Render, in June 1865. The judgement acknowledged that Burns was correct in law, but asked him of his charity to state publicly to his congregation that the marriage was nevertheless a true and valid one - this obligation being incumbent upon him, since he had himself first brought the matter into the public domain'.[6]

Were these two instances of conflict between Burns and Gribbin simply the result of the pastor zealously pursuing his duties, or did they indicate something deeper about his temperament and behaviour ?

Across the river from Middlesbrough, in Port Clarence, was Fr Michael Bourke. He was born in Co. Mayo in 1838, trained at the English College, Bruges, and was ordained in 1863. He seems to have exhibited a certain eccentricity in his priestly life - not least when he put the parish of St Joseph, West Hartlepool, into liquidation, in 1883-4, by selling the mission furniture at public auction and leaving the people to buy it back. (This, at least, is the charge).[7] The most significant facet of his character

from our point of view, however, was his seeming support for Irish nationalism, for it is this which embroiled him with affairs at Middlesbrough and with Andrew Burns.

On February 27, 1870, Burns read to his congregation Pope Pius IX's decree condemning Fenianism, issued from Rome the previous month. The decree was also printed up with the following appended comment:

> From this it may be learned how dangerous it is to have anything to do with 'party work', directly or indirectly. Not only are the joined and sworn members of Fenianism cut off from the Church of God, but also all favourers and abettors of the accursed sect. Catholics must be on their guard against Fenianism under its different guises. It one time assumes the garb of 'nationalism', at another time that of 'patriotism', and its abettors are going round the country as 'hawkers', lecturers, Irish concert singers, and givers of Irish entertainments. The poison of infidelity is infused under the cloak of a pretended love of country, but the true and Catholic Irishman who alone honestly loves his country, because he obeys his Church, must sever all connection with these unfortunate wretches who, now that their dark veil is taken off them, are seen in their hideous form as 'the stricken of God'.[8]

It seems probable that these appended words are Burns' own.[9] The strength of feeling in them may suggest painful memories of the past — that is, of the Ribbonmen. Equally, it may suggest that Burns had identified signs of Fenianism within his congregation and was trying to forestall any further growth.

In February 1871 Fr Adrian van Meerendonk recently arrived as Burns' assistant, wrote to Bishop Cornthwaite. After testifying to his own wellbeing, van Meerendonk continues:

> As to the difficulties your Lordship mentioned to me, I did not meet any serious ones as yet; it is true I am often attacked by some half-Fenians about Fr Burns' behaviour towards them, but as soon as they see that I do not share their opinion they do not trouble me again. Of 'our friend across the water' I heard many an old tale, but very few recent ones. I think he is losing ground here, and more than one who has been taken in by him, are now disentangling themselves from his snares.

From this it would seem that the previous year's dire warnings against Fenianism or anything approaching it had not had the desired effect. Clearly Irish nationalism, bordering on Fenianism, was an issue in the Middlesbrough congregation and was dividing some of the flock from their pastor. 'Our friend across the water' almost certainly meant Fr

Bourke (as will appear subsequently) and van Meerendonk's letter suggests that Bourke had been interfering in affairs at Middlesbrough.

The letter continues:

> What the newly established Irish Literary Association will produce is still a mystery; we have good hope that it will either destroy itself or slowly die away. Fr Burns opened the eyes of the most influential people of the town to the tendency, and deprived it by that means from many subscriptions; for the rest he means to kill it by silence.[10]

Not everyone, however, shared van Meerendonk's confidence about the general situation. Fr John Carlile, the priest at St Mary's, Stockton, had been engaged by Bishop Cornthwaite to look for a site for a school-chapel in 'South Stockton', or Thornaby. In March 1871 he replied to a further request from Cornthwaite to become confessor to the nuns at Middlesbrough: 'I will go to Middlesbro' .pro hac vice and will write to Mr Burns to inform the Sisters - but entre nous Dr Chadwick does not care about my going there for fear of getting embroiled in any way with Mr B[urns]'.[11] In June he withdrew from the arrangement: 'There are other reasons besides what I mentioned in my last' (a letter now seemingly lost). 'I will go this time, however'.[12] Though Burns was in dispute with the Sisters of Mercy teaching in his schools, Fr Carlile's comments clearly reflect more generally on the situation at Middlesbrough: his bishop, Dr Chadwick, did not want him to get involved.

Burns himself had found it necessary to write to Bishop Cornthwaite in April of 1871, to explain the cause of allegations made against him. He had refused Communion to one William Hopson, a man 'publicly.and notoriously connected with Fenian movements'. But William Hopson was in reality only the pupil of James McNamee and Patrick Walsh. These latter had been instrumental in setting up the Irish Literary Association in Middlesbrough and were close friends of Mr Bourke, their names featuring prominently in Bourke's papers against Burns. (This would seem to indicate some form of public criticism, probably letters in the newspapers, which Burns attributed to Bourke). McNamee and Walsh had frequented lectures by Mrs O'Donovan Rossa and one Meaney, an ex-Fenian convict, and had sent scurilous postcards to Burns. Together with five others they had pointedly and publicly refused to venerate the picture of the Sacred Heart on 'Sacred Heart Sunday'. For their flouting of the anti-Fenian decree, Burns had made it clear that he would refuse them

Communion should they present themselves and had indeed done so, though chiefly they avoided his Masses. Hopson, who had briefly been a lay brother at the Carmelite monastery at Merthyr Tydfil and equally briefly a soldier in the Papal army in Rome but had never convinced Burns of his suitability for either role, had been thoroughly tutored by Walsh and McNamee and, according to eyewitness accounts made to Burns, had attended Fenian meetings. On the Friday prior to Burns' refusing him Communion, Hopson had been 'mixed up with' a concert given for St Patrick's evening at which the Fenian song 'God save Ireland', composed in memory of the three so-called 'Manchester Martyrs' had been sung. Burns does not give the location of the concert, but notes that at the same time Benediction was being given and a sermon preached in the church. Hence, the following Sunday, Burns refused Hopson Communion at the altar rails - discreetly, so he insists - and asked to see him afterwards. Hopson left the church immediately Mass had ended, but returned the same afternoon 'from the direction to Port Clarence' accompanied by McNamee. Burns charged him with attending the Fenian concert and refused to argue the point. In Burns' estimation Hopson was merely a 'weak, obstinate and vain man... a tool in the hands of these cunning men'. The priest clearly means McNamee and Walsh in this last remark; but in the next sentence he also mentions Mr Bourke, to whom he was sure Hopson had gone on the Sunday morning 'and had been instructed by him what to say and how to act'.

The letter closes with a general estimation of McNamee, Walsh, Hopson and their associates in the Irish Literary Association: 'They will lie & prevaricate to any amount; they will deny to your face they are Fenians & use the set phrase "I know nothing at all about it" and the next day they are seen attending Fenian meetings or are sending letters to the papers, or to me, boasting of their Fenianism & defying all the world.' Significantly perhaps, Burns also notes that in begging around the iron works for donations to the Association their only success was with 'a Mr Williams, the head of the League party in this town, (who) gave them six guineas because they were going to act independent of their priest and set at defiance ecclesiastical authority'. It would seem reasonable to believe that, for Burns, the issue of the challenge to authority was sufficient in itself, almost without regard for the Fenian tendencies involved.

Further complexity was added to the situation at Middlesbrough by

the perennial problem of money. Burns had responsibility not only for Middlesbrough but also for the new and burgeoning communities along the south bank of the Tees in the direction of the river mouth, many of them attracting large numbers of Irish migrants to work in the smelting and blast furnaces of the Iron industry. We have seen that Fr Carlile was Bishop Cornthwaite's agent to the west, in South Stockton, but Burns was under considerable pressure (particularly after the Forster Act of 1870) to provide schools and places of worship in South Bank (otherwise 'Tees Tilery'), Redcar, Marske and elsewhere. In August 1870, Burns informed Cornthwaite that some money had been collected at 'Eston' (meaning South Bank, since, in fact, only Methodists lived at Eston) and that land was available at Redcar. But he also lamented of the latter place, 'How few think of giving money towards the undertaking. How can they say they practice their religion when they don't attempt to defray the expenses?'.[14]

The two issues of Fenianism and money came together in June 1871 to force Burns, once again, to defend himself in correspondence to the bishop. Letters seeking to discredit Burns with the ironmasters had appeared in the press. He was clear who was responsible: Mr Bourke, James McNamee, and the lawyer John Gribbin, whose marriage Burns had spoken against in 1865.

> The occasion of the letters you refer to was this. About 3 weeks ago two men at a place called the Tees Iron Works volunteered to begin collections for the schools but asked me to give their names out from the pulpit. I accordingly did because they said (as I knew) many of the men were opposed to me from what others had said to them. They asked me to read out the names of those who gave to the first fortnightly collections because many of these ill-disposed men had ideas that the money was not given in & so forth. On both occasions I expressed my pleasure and said for a long time a cloud had been hanging over the Tees Iron Works and Cochranes (adjoining) because certain evil minded men had been leading the men astray. It has been well known that Mr Bourke's agents have been very active at both works putting all kinds of mischievous notions into their heads to prevent them paying to any of our collections. The most notorious of these is James McNamee whose name has often been given to you by me as Mr Bourke's confidant who is always scribbling to Fenian newspapers about me who is Secretary of the Irish Literary Association and the writer (or copyist) of the Evening Gazette, signed Da Garda. He copies out Gribbin's letters, for all that know the latter [meaning McNamee] are well aware he could not write them himself.'

Da Garda's latest letter, Burns goes on to say, had twisted a remark made in a sermon to turn it into a seeming criticism of the ironmasters. However, all the exaggerations, misrepresentations and falsehoods of his opponents 'can do me no harm in the eye of all the regular members of the Congregation and the Protestants of the town. They are a party too much in bad odour and I have never thought it worth while to write a line in reply'.[15] This does indeed seem to have been Burns policy, to respond to the public attacks of his opponents only via the pulpit and the exercise of Church discipline and hope otherwise to let them atrophy.

The following day Burns wrote to the bishop again, explaining that it was not bad feeling between himself and the editor of the Middlesbrough paper that led to the publication of his opponents' views in that vehicle. Rather it was that the Irish Literary Association had solved a problem for him by renting two sets of rooms from him in fairly expensive buildings. (Where did they get the money, one wonders?). A second reason, too, was that his sub-editor had recently published an anonymous letter naming two public houses as meeting places for Fenians, one in Middlesbrough and one in Port Clarence, the latter run by one Quinn, 'a great supporter of Fr Bourke'. Those named had threatened a libel suit and the editor's publication of the letters against Burns was a means of appeasement. Burns also suspected that as a member of the Education league the editor sympathised with the Fenian nationalist party 'seeing they profess to educate the people and take it out of the hands of priests'.

This charge of undermining the priest's authority was becoming a familiar theme with Burns. Middlesbrough was, at this period, something of a 'frontier town' noted for the degree of its casual violence, perhaps as a consequence of the disproportionate number of male immigrants. In such circumstances, authority, including that of the priest, was obviously an issue. Of the Irish Literary Association, Burns wrote:

> The leaders are thoroughly infidel, instructed by infidel leaders again how to destroy the influence of the priests with the people... There are no more than five ringleaders properly so called... [and] they have put forth Gribbin as a cloak to themselves. His letters don't express or explain any of the things I have really said in my sermons from time to time but are intended... to give quite a different impression... Three letters have appeared in reply to them. The last letter intimated that their author should be dipped in a horse pond.[16]

Fr Burns could perhaps be forgiven for enjoying this attack on his enemies. He may also have felt vindicated by divine authority when Fr

Bourke's foundation-stone laying at Port Clarence on Whit Monday proved a financial failure: 'The Bishop of Hexham was not there and very few others. I think Mr B[ourke] has blamed myself and Mr Meerendonk a good deal for it.'[17]

In general, however, matters seem to have been worsening rather than improving for Burns and his opponents were becoming ever bolder. On June 22, John Gribbin wrote to Cornthwaite seeking a meeting between a representative group of Middlesbrough Catholics and the bishop. Gribbin had evidently written previously and had expected that Cornthwaite would have formed a committee to press ahead with a new church at Middlesbrough - something Burns refused to do - and to resolve the bad feeling between the priest and his congregation. Instead, matters had been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that 'a great number of Catholics have given up all hopes of redress from your Lordship and contemplate taking public steps in bringing him [Burns] to an account which is certain to result in a scandle [sic] and already we have had plenty of that'.[18]

Later events would suggest that Cornthwaite did not grant Gribbin the meeting he was seeking. He did, however, send the letter to Burns who again professed himself unperturbed, knowing that the majority of the congregation were still behind him and that his opponents were acting in desperation. True, on Whit Tuesday there had been a well attended lecture given by an Irish Nationalist and an entertainment at which the Stockton Catholic band had played the 'Fenian March', but most were there for merely patriotic reasons and 'not one decent Catholic of the congregation was at the lecture'.[19]

Whether from desperation, as Burns suggests, or from heightened frustration, Gribbin and his associates (since one assumes it to have been they) took the extreme measure of sending a petition to Archbishop Manning. It claimed to come from 'The Catholics of Middlesbrough' and alleged that 'the conduct of the Revd Father Burns, priest of the said town of Middlesbrough, has for the last five years tended not merely to discredit but also to scandalize the people committed to his charge'. The principal cause of offence was that Burns regularly refused Holy Communion to members of his congregation 'for reasons known only to himself'. Because of this, public demonstrations, were being threatened against him. Further charges were that Burns' conduct outside the church was 'most unpriestly'; that his want of attention to the sick and dying had become proverbial; that

he had no interest in the education of the poor, so that Catholic parents were forced to send their children to heretical schools; and that 'simony and avarice' were prominent features in Burns' character. Bishop Cornthwaite, too, came under criticism for having failed to do anything about the scandalous situation though he had been informed of it at least two years since.

Whether any substance attached to the more personal of the charges made against Burns is impossible to judge. The allegation regarding education of the poor probably related to the lack of progress in building schools to the east of Middlesbrough, but we have already seen that Burns felt unable to build for lack of money. What is perhaps most interesting is the length of time which the petition claims has elapsed since the problems with Fr Burns first began - a full five years. 1866, we may remember was the year in which Burns had complained of the ingratitude of the Irish who came to him for charity; 1867 was the year of the failed Fenian rising in Ireland ; and 1865 had been the year in which Burns publicly rebuked Gribbin over his marriage.

The copy of the petition which Burns himself received was sent to him on July 11 from Tees Tilery (South Bank) by Elizabeth Johnson, the school mistress there (the school presumably being very rudimentary since it can only have occupied temporary premises at this stage). She had received it the same morning from 'Ward the Grocer'. [20] The following day Burns also received a letter from John Fraser of the Clay Lane Iron Works informing him that two men, W. Ward (Ward the grocer?) and J. Maloney, were getting illiterate people to sign or have their names added to the petition by telling them that it requested Archbishop Manning to secure them a priest for Tees Tilery itself and to make it independent of the Middlesbrough mission. Burns reported the deception to Cornthwaite together with the fact that Ward was one of Mr Bourke's men and that the style of the petition was undoubtedly Mr Bourke's: 'the attempt to work on the Archbishop's fears by "a public demonstration against the priest" is just like him. The charge of *simony* etc is to pay me off for putting my finger on the tender point of his conduct. The ebullition of spiteful malice has been brewing for a year as a number of anonymous letters I got would show. When once Mr Bourke is exculpated from a charge of which he is really guilty, he does not stop there but takes the offensive'.[21]

Whoever its originator may have been, the petition to Manning did, at last, bring action from Cornthwaite. On July 21, he wrote to Burns

suggesting that he consider leaving Middlesbrough and taking another mission It is a somewhat double edged letter, in which Cornthwaite concedes that even to seem to fail to support Burns against his opponents would be damaging to the authority of both priest and bishop, but at the same time concludes that, for the good of souls, it may be necessary for Burns to abandon his position and appear to give the triumph to the enemy. He had, in short, become too much of a liability:

> 'Facts and alleged facts and the coming fact of the departure of the sisters' - the Sisters of Mercy left Middlesbrough in 1871 dissatisfied, but were quickly replaced by the F.C.J.s - 'all are operating against and largely destroying your usefulness. Priest after priest has been with you and gone away leaving nearly all a legagy of complaints: the worth of which I will know but the public does not. You not infrequently say and do hardy [sic for foolhardy ?] things in public and it is doubtless at times with saying what you did not. Your first community of nuns leave you full of complaints. . . I am not reproaching you with these things, I am recording events which have happened or are soon to happen, and which unfortunately all tell against your influence for good. . . I am quite sensible of the justice of your case. . . but I cannot with safety to my own soul and its responsibilities for a moment think of maintaining you at all costs'.[22]

Burns replied by return of post agreeing to move whenever that could be arranged and proposing to take a holiday in the meantime. In the event, he postponed the holiday in favour of putting the mission accounts in order and of observing the progress of a libel action which he had initiated against John Gribbin.[24]

Cornthwaite, meanwhile, was explaining the whole affair candidly to Manning:

> You ask if Mr Burns has been prudent. By no means: his patience has been tried beyond human endurance and no wonder he has not been prudent. . . He has given just offence to the national and Fenian party. . . by what he thought it his duty to do. . . and they are paying him off: this has made him irritable and suspicious. Every little thing makes him see a snare beneath it. Unfortunately he does not easily lose a distrust that has once got hold of him. Further they play off against him his neighbouring priest over the river & in the next Diocese: and in that mission they do things, which if not Fenian or national demonstrations, Mr Burns from the people engaged in them thinks so.

Cornthwaite goes on to mention that Burns has 'acquired certain angularities of character that render him not prepossessing'. 'He is hard to

others as well as himself'. Three out of five curates sent to Burns had left making their grumbles public. In his defence, however, he was the only priest to have managed the 'suddenly gathered together flock, from every town of England & Ireland' that was the Middlesbrough congregation. Equally, he had agreed to give up the mission even though his status as Missionary Rector (granted, significantly, by Cornthwaite, in 1869) could have guaranteed him stability. In the final analysis, Cornthwaite's hand had been forced and it had been impossible for him to act with justice and judgement in Burns' regard.[25]

At this stage, Cornthwaite's decision to move Burns was known only to the bishop and his confidants. The troubles between Burns and his opponents not only rumbled on, but flared openly at South Bank over the purchase of land from Messrs Bolckow & Vaughan as a site for school and church. Burns was in negotiation with them and with one Major Stapylton. Ward, McNamee, Walsh, Gribbin and others formed a committee independent of Burns and conducted their own negotiations! They held a public meeting on September 7 and resolved that a deputation should go to Burns to demand that he hand over monies previously collected in South Bank and district. Burns naturally refused and refused also to celebrate Mass at South Bank with Ward present. Cornthwaite formally and publicly condemned the committee for acting without sanction. They replied with an equally public defence of their action, again laying the blame at Burns' door and repeating the charges made against him in the petition to Manning. At a second public meeting on September 21 they went so far as to pass a motion that Mr Robinson, solicitor, be instructed to take proceedings to compel Burns to restore the sum of £900 to the South Bank mission. Various speakers detailed Burns' 'tyranny' and 'oppression' and one John Walsh claimed that of 2,500 Catholic children in Middlesbrough (in a Catholic population of 14,000) only 70-100 had the opportunity of attending Catholic schools. Burns noted that this was the first time John Walsh, as opposed to Patrick, had spoken publicly. The same John Walsh, however, would go on to be a significant figure in the Irish Home Rule movement.[26]

In the midst of the South Bank dispute Burns had told Cornthwaite that 'At Stockton North the Fenians hammer those that don't pay to the priest as they term it, at South Stockton (Thornaby) a Fenian would not be allowed to live... The Hibernians abound in South Stockton and are deadly

enemies of the Fenians'.[27] But his assessment would seem problematic when it is taken into account that the Catholics of South Stockton had worshipped together with those of Stockton itself until the late Summer of 1871. The priest then appointed to South Stockton to form a new mission was William Breitbach, a German who had trained for the English mission at the Bruges seminary. Almost immediately, he was drawn into the problems at Middlesbrough and wrote exasperatedly to Bishop Cornthwaite:

> The Middlesbrough people give me more trouble and care than N. & S. Stockton put together, since every week parthies [sic] come with complaints and demands. Some of them are really desperate and deceive you with lies, bringing you for instance a baby to be baptised with the assurance that they belong to Stockton & afterwards you hear from the housekeeper that they are from Middlesbrough. Could you not tell Fr Burns to keep his own flock & not to bother his neighbours first with stray-people and afterwards with his blames and complaints? I do not know him, have never seen him, & mean to keep at a distance following Fr Carlile's advise [sic], who is a good & earnest and zealous priest, and who told me he shall shortly speak himself with you largely about this delicate matter.[28]

As we know, Cornthwaite had already decided on the necessary course of action to take and in September he informed Burns that his curate, Adrian van Meerendonk, would be his temporary successor. Burns thought the appointment a good one as 'Mr meerendonk will agree very well with the housekeeper'! He also commended van Meerendonk as the most loyal and deferential coadjutor he had experienced, though he was concerned that he did not enjoy good health.[29] Certainly van Meerendonk supported Burns against his opponents (including Fr Bourke) and seems to have taken an equally tough line with them.[30]

Burns had yet more indignities to face, however, before van Meerendonk relieved him of his burden. A very public demonstration against the devotion to the Sacred Heart took place on the last Sunday of September when 150 people left the church before the devotion began. James McNamee told the local press that the veneration of the image seemed to many Catholics 'a ridiculous form of devotion, and the pennies required to be thrown at the foot of the picture a dubious means of raising money'. [31] The walk-out was repeated in October[32], clearly as a gesture against Burns. Jennifer Supple notes Burns' comment in his letter of June 22, 1871, that 'the devotion to the Sacred Heart every 4th Sunday of the month vexes the Irish Literary Association party very much'. Perhaps they

also resented the large sum of £60 that Burns had paid for the image in 1868.[33]

Burns' departure from Middlesbrough was not announced until January 1872 when, following the death of Mr Ripley, he was given the mission at Selby. Cornthwaite, in his letter informing Fr van Meerendonk of the change and of his own promotion, spoke of relieving Burns of 'the unworthy persecution he has suffered so long' and of showing his own 'confidence, respect, and regard' for him by giving him such an appointment.[34] Prior to these events Burns had embarked on his long delayed holiday and writing from Bonn on November 23 he expressed no disappointment in leaving Middlesbrough where the work had been hard and the collections 'proportionately very small' due to begging priests from Ireland and to Fenianism. Burns professed to have used his own income for much of the work that had been done. His only remaining concern with Middlesbrough now was to carry through the prosecution of Gribbin for libel.[35]

That was not strictly true, however, for two reasons. Firstly, in late June of 1872, van Meerendonk led a trip to Selby consisting, so he claimed, of one thousand people who wished to give their thanks to Fr Burns for his years of service at Middlesbrough. Secondly, as late as November 1872, Burns was still advising Cornthwaite about land at Middlesbrough.[36]

Van Meerendonk's health had not been good when he led the trip from Middlesbrough in June 1872 and he was replaced shortly afterwards by Fr Richard Lacy. Lacy was himself an Irishman, born at Navan, but trained at Ushaw and at the English College, Rome. His nationality gave him an evident advantage in dealing with the Middlesbrough congregation and he very quickly succeeded in quietening the controversies of the previous years. The Irish Literary Association disappeared to be replaced by a Home Rule Association. Lacy kept his distance from the trouble makers, but managed also to win their trust and loyalty and to restore the authority of the priest.[37]

Poor Burns could not tolerate Lacy's success: 'You will very likely find that he has McNamee and Mr Bourke as counsellors' he told Cornthwaite, from Selby, in April 1873.[38] Very possibly, but by now it was no longer Burns' concern. He lived out his life and his ministry at Selby, much respected, dying in 1907. Lacy went on to build churches at Middlesbrough, North Ormesby and South Bank, and to become a bishop at the age of

thirty-eight. Van Meerendonk put himself beyond the pale while chaplain at the Poor Clare convent in York in 1884 and died a pauper in the York Poor House.

NOTES

1. Tate Correspondence, Ushaw College Archives, T.S. 26/12/(1851), 27/05/(1853), 18/05/(1853).
2. J.F.Supple-Green, following the *Yorkshire Gazette* 03/07/1852, in *The Catholic Revival In Yorkshire, 1850-1900* (Leeds Phil. & Lit. Soc., Oct. 1990).
3. *Tablet* 23/01/1858 & *Middlesbrough Weekly News* 09/11/1866. Quoted by Supple-Green in 'The Catholic Church and the Yorkshire Poor, 1850-1900' pp45-54 in G.T. Bradley (ed.): *Yorkshire Catholics* (Leeds Diocesan Archives, Occasional Publications, No. 1, 1985).
4. Burns to Briggs 29/01/1857 - Middlesbrough Diocesan Archives, Old Cathedral file (hereafter, M.D.A., O.C.)
5. Burns to Briggs 28/12/1857 -M.D..A., O.C.
6. Render's judgement is in M.D.A.,O.C.
7. Bernard Sharratt : *The Catholic Church in Hartlepool and West Hartlepool, 1834-1964* (Ushaw, 1965), p.30.
8. Decree against Fenianism, 'To the Catholics of Middlesbrough', 1870 M.D.A.,O.C.
9. The other possibility is that they came from Bishop Cornthwaite.
10. Van Meerendonk to Cornthwaite 13/02/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
11. Burns to Cornthwaite 22/05/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
12. Carlile to Cornthwaite 07/03/1871 & June 1871 - M.D.A., St Patrick's, Thornaby, file.
13. Burns to Cornthwaite 30/04/1871- M.D.A.,O.C.
14. Burns to Cornthwaite 12/08/1870 - M.D.A.,O.C.
15. Burns to Cornthwaite 21/06/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
16. Burns to Cornthwaite 22/06/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
17. Ibid.
18. Gribbin to Cornthwaite 22/06/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
19. Burns to Cornthwaite 27/06/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
20. This is the copy in the M.D.A.
21. Burns to Cornthwaite 13/07/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
22. Cornthwaite to Burns (draft) 21/07/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
23. Burns to Cornthwaite 22/07/1871 -M.D.A.,O.C.
24. Burns to Cornthwaite 25/07/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
25. Cornthwaite to Manning (copy) - 03/08/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
26. The conflict over the South Bank land is catalogued in letters from Burns to Cornthwaite dated 2nd, 9th, 15th, 18th, 21st, 23rd, 27th, 29th & 30th September 1871; in two public notices issued by the South Bank Committee on 14th & 19th September; and in reports

of the public meetings in the Gazette newspapers of 9th & 22nd September - all in M.D.A.,O.C. (For John Walsh see : F. Lavery (ed.), *Irish Heroes of the Great War*; D.Thornley, *Issac Butt and Home Rule*; and Tom Corfe, *The Phoenix Park Murders*).

27. Burns to Cornthwaite 23/09/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
28. Breitbach to Cornthwaite 02/09/1871 - M.D.A., St Patrick's, Thornaby, file.
29. Burns to Cornthwaite 18/09/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
30. See letter from van Meerendonk to Cornthwaite 22/01/1872 - M.D.A.,O.C.
31. Middlesbrough Gazette, 2nd October 1871, quoted in J.F. Supple-Green, 'Ultramontanism in Yorkshire, 1850-1900' in *Recusant History*, vol 17, p.280.
32. Van Meerendonk to Cornthwaite 03/11/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
33. Supple-Green, 'Ultramontanism. . . ', p.278 and 'The Role of the Catholic Laity in Yorkshire, 1850-1900', p.311, in *Recusant History*, vol 18.
34. Cornthwaite to van Meerendonk 16/01/1872 - M.D.A.,O.C.
35. Burns to Cornthwaite 23/11/1871 - M.D.A.,O.C.
36. Van Meerendonk to Cornthwaite 02/07/1872 & Burns to Cornthwaite 06/11/1872 - M.D.A.,O.C.
37. Supple-Green, 'The Political Attitude and Activities of Yorkshire Catholics, 1850-1900', pp234-235, in *Northern History*, vol XXII.
38. Burns to Cornthwaite 21/04/1873 - M.D.A.,O.C.

A NOTE ON THE GROWTH OF THE DIOCESE FROM 1850 TO 1925[1]

When the Hierarchy was re-established seventy-five years ago the Diocese of Hexham was erected. In May I861, the title was changed to that of Hexham and Newcastle, though the area, viz., Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, remained the same. At the end of 1924 the Diocese was divided, and now comprises Northumberland and Durham. Cumberland and Westmoreland, together with that portion of Lancashire north of the Ribble form the new Diocese of Lancaster.

This event, which is one of great importance in the history of the Catholic Church in England, together withthe 75th anniversary of the re-establishing of the Hierarchy, affords one an opportunity of giving a few statistics of the growth of the Diocese from 1850 till its division last year.

Catholic Population.— As far as can be gathered the Catholic population in 1850 was estimated at 70,000; 1875, 121,000; l900, 171,883; 1924, 239,826.

Meanwhile the general population has increased as follows: - 1850, 968,934; 1870, 1,357,254; 1900, 2,129, 051; 1920, 2,563,421.

Priests – In 1850 there were in the Diocese 67 Priests, viz.: Secular Clergy, 55; Regular, Benedictines 11, Jesuit[2] 1 - 12. Total, 67.

ln 1875 the number had increased to: Secular Clergy, 106; Regular, Benedictines 18, Dominicans 6–24. Total 130.

ln 1900 we find Seculars 155 and Regulars 36, total 191. At thc end of 1924 the returns show Seculars 226, Regulars 44, making a total of 270.

Religious Women. – The only Convents or Houses for Religious Women in 1850 were those of Carmel House, Darlington, and the Sisters of Mercy in Sunderland. Twenty-five years later, we have the following additional Convents, viz.: The Poor Clares, Darlington; The Little Sisters of the Poor, Newcastle; The Sisters of Mercy, Newcastle, with a branch house at North Shields; branch houses from Sunderland at Hexham, Bishop Auckland, and Tow Law. There are also the Sisters of Charity of St Paul at Kendal, Blackhill, Crook, Stockton, Whitehaven, and Maryport.

Fifty years later, *i.e.*, in 1924, the above list is increased by the addition of Benedictines, Warwick Bridge; Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, Darlington, Newcastle, Gainford, Tudhoe, Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Gosforth; Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Carlisle; Dominican Sisters, Newcastle; Faithful Companions, West Hartlepool; Religious of the Sacred Heart, Newcastle; Ursulines, Berwick; Sisters of Marie Reparatrice; Daughters of Wisdom and Sisters of Nazareth, Newcastle.

The Sisters of Mercy had now in addition Convents at Durham, Ryhope, Wolsingham, Seaham Harbour, Oaklea, Sunderland, Alnwick and Crook; while the Sisters of Charity of St Paul include Newcastle, Brooms, Darlington, Esh, Lanchester and Dipton, and Workingon. The Little Sisters of the Poor have erected 2 new houses at Sunderland and Carlisle.

In all there are now Houses of 17 different Orders or Congregations, most of which are engaged in the work of Education.

Churches and Chapels. – There were in 1850 47 public Churches with resident priests, 1 Collegiate Chapel, and 2 Stations. In 1875 the number had increased to 83 public Churches, 10 Stations without resident priests, 2 Collegiate and 2 Conventual Chapels with resident priests. In 1900 there were 121 Public Churches and Chapels; and in 1924, 177, together with 30 Chapels of Communities and Institutions,

Schools. – As no reliable record of Elementary Schools existing in 1850 is at hand it is impossible to give an accurate statement of the numbers. During the 'Educational crisis' (1870-2) additional school acommodation was provided for about 9,000 children by the erection of 41 extra school rooms and 32 class rooms at a cost of £23,000. In 1875 there were 77 Schools, with an average attendance of 12,353 children. This number was increased to 97 Schools in 1900, with an average attendance of 29,353. The number of Elementary Schools in 1924 was 113, with an attendance of 40,000.

It will be seem from this summary that much has been accomplished during the past seventy-five years. And although the Diocese has now been divided, much yet remains to be done not only in consolidating and perfecting what has been completed, but in providing instruction for Advanced Classes in the Schools, and also in breaking fresh ground and in planting new Parishes and Schools up and down Northumberland and Durham. More Priests have to be educated and supported. New Churches have to be built. More Schools are yet called for. It behoves all with one heart and one mind to throw themselves into the good work, and each in his own way and to the utmost of his abilities and means which God has lent

to him to do all he can. Thus, it may be hoped that at the end of the next 25 years, when the Centenary of the re-establishing of the Hierarchy shall have arrived, it will bear witness to still further progress, and see God duly honoured and worshipped, and the Kingdom of His Church extended throughout the length and breadth of the North-East of England.

NOTES

1. This summary of the growth of the Diocese was published in *The Northern Catholic Calendar* for 1926. The statistics refer to the Diocese prior to its division in December 1924. For a more detailed account of the Diocese between 1850 and 1875, see *Northern Catholic History*. No.30, Autumn 1989, and *The Northern Catholic Calendar* for 1876.
2. In 1854 the Jesuits withdrew from the Diocese and handed over the charge of Alnwick, their last Mission, to the Bishop. In 1860 and 1900 the Dominicans and the Redemptorists were introduced and established respectively in Newcastle and Monkwearmouth.

BIDDLESTONE - A SECURE FUTURE AT LAST ?

Anthony W. Henfrey

A secure permanent future for Biddlestone Chapel, for many years a matter of great concern to those who know and love this historic and romantic building, is in prospect. The Chapel, built as a first floor wing on top of an old 13th Century Pele Tower, is all that now remains of Biddlestone Hall, sadly demolished in the 1950's. For almost 8 centuries until its sale in 1914, Biddlestone Hall was the seat of the Selbys, one of the great Recusant Catholic families of the area. Small wonder that the Hall was the unmistakable model for Sir Walter Scott's 'Osbaldestone' in 'Rob Roy'. The Selby family burial ground still remains in the old park as do the fine Victorian stained glass family memorials that form the East and West windows of the Chapel. The former grounds of the Hall are also rich in fine outbuildings - an underground ice house, kennels, farm cottages and, of course, the home farm.

Following acquisition of the surrounding woodland by a sympathetic owner in the summer of 1996, the way is at long last clear for The Historic Chapels Trust to complete the acquisition of the Chapel and the site of the old Hall during 1997 after three years of frustrating negotiations. After repair work is completed, it is intended that the Chapel will once more be used for occasional worship and as avenue for sympathetic cultural activities. Public access at reasonable times will again become possible under the proposed ownership and access arrangements. The furnishings of the Chapel remain in place and are the property of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

The Historic Chapels Trust was established in 1993 to take into its ownership redundant chapels and other places of worship in England which are of outstanding architectural and historic interest. Its object is to secure, for the benefit of the public generally, the preservation, repair and maintenance of redundant buildings of Non-Conformist, Roman Catholic, Jewish and other religious bodies, together with their contents, burial grounds and curtilages. The Trust is helping to foster greater understanding of its buildings by means of research, publications and publicity.

An appeal has been launched by the local 'Friends of Biddlestone' in conjunction with the Historic Chapels Trust to raise £25,000. To date the bulk of this sum has been raised in part from the J. Paul Getty Jr.

Biddlestone Chapel

Charitable Trust and the Northumberland National Park as well as from a small but enthusiastic group of local 'Friends'. However, further funding will be required to complete the acquisition and make necessary internal repairs as well as clean and redecorate the Chapel. Any and all help which will ensure the Chapel's permanent future would be greatly welcomed by the Friends. All enquiries should be made to:

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Anyone who would like to see Biddlestone is welcome to do so by calling Dr Henfrey and arranging a mutually convenient time.

PROGRAMME 1996 — 1997

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

4 September 1996	Mass followed by AGM.
2 October 1996	Prof. Michael Lynch: *The 'Triumph' of Mary, Queen of Scots: the Ceremonial Baptism of Mary's Son in 1566.*
6 November 1996	Rev. Dominique Minskip: *The Middlesbrough Troubles of 1871-1872.*
4 December 1996	Dr. Sheridan Gilley: *The Wilton Diptych: Sacral Kinship and the Virgin's Dowry.* (with slides)
5 February 1997	Rev. David Milburn, D.S.H.: *Augustine of Canterbury: Dutiful Servant or Zealous Apostle.* (with slides)
5 March 1997	George Thornton, Esq: *The Holy Isle of Lindisfarne.* (with slides)

Coach Excursions

14 September 1996	Bede's World (half day).
17 May 1997	Raby Castle, Auckland Castle.
21 June 1997	Lanercost Priory, Hermitage Castle.

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