Northern Catholic History

No. 42 2001

North East Catholic History Society

NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

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

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

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NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

Some thirty members attended the annual Mass for deceased members at St Andrew's on 6th September, beginning the 2000-2001 Season, and the subsequent AGM, at which Fr Milburn, chairman, reviewed the events of the previous year and thanked the officers for their devoted work and members for their loyal support. The present officers were re-elected, and Mr and Mrs P Hardie added to the Committee.

The outings to York on 13th May, to Hesleyside and Bellingham on 17th June, and to Callaly Castle and Biddlestone Chapel on 16th September are described in this issue. The two pre-Christmas lectures, by Dr Margaret Harvey on One Thousand Years of Christianity in October and by Dr Sheridan Gilley on Bishop William Hogarth in November, were both well attended. The usual December meeting was replaced by one in January, at which Mrs Mary Woodman spoke on Newcastle's Anglican and Catholic cathedrals. The lectures by the Revd. Michael Jackson in February on The Building of Durham Cathedral and in March by Dr Jan Rhodes on The Symbolism of Medieval Churches attracted appreciatve audiences.

The Society is indebted to several regular contributors for articles in this edition. George Thornton, our vice-chairman, enlarges our knowledge of the origins of the Northumbrian Church. Although this journal seeks to cover the history of the Church in the North East from the earliest Christian times, once again no article on the Church in the Middle Ages has been forthcoming. Canon Fee reminds us of six lesser known local martyrs of penal times. Two articles span the centuries from the 16th century. Fr David Milburn traces Church government before the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850, while Sr Michael follows the fortunes of the Poor Clares from St Omer in 1581 to St Clare's Abbey in Darlington today. During the 18th century the Vicars Apostolic of the Northern District were sometime based in York and Fr Dominique Minskip seeks to locate their residence near the Minster. Dr Sheridan Gilley provides a masterly review of published and unpublished histories of the Church in the North East in the 18th and 19th centuries, which should stimulate much needed further research. In the context of genealogical research Godfrey Duffy describes the sources for a major aspect of 19th century history, the influx of Irish during the Famine years. Research demands good access to the basic sources and these are happily becoming more readily available, not least with the consolidation of the diocesan archives following the return of the early records faithfully preserved for many years in the Northumberland Record Office, and the deposit in the four local record offices within the diocese of the records and registers of the older parishes.

All contributors are warmly thanked, but the annual appeal for articles for next year's edition, including hopefully one on the medieval church, is renewed. Finally, thanks are recorded to the Northumberland Record Office for its care for the older diocesan archives, to the Irish Centre for allowing the Society to meet there, and to the sisters of Darlington Carmel for their palaeographic as well as for their printing expertise.

Robin Gard, Editor

March 2001

THE IRISH MISSION TO NORTHUMBRIA

George Thornton

It is mid-summer day and the last evening of our parish pilgrimage to Iona to celebrate the year of the millennium. I have scrambled up Dun I, 'the great hill fort', at 100 metres, the highest point on the island. The panoramic view takes in many of the Hebridean islands and is quite breathtaking; the Cuillins of Skye and Staffa, 'Isle of Pillars', stand out boldly to the north; to the south lie Islay and Jura; eastwards darkness descends gently over the mountains of Mull and Argyle while to the west across the waters of the Minch the low outlines of Tiree and Coll are silhouetted against the setting sun. As on another hill-top, it is good to be here. Adamnan[1] tells us that Columba often came here to pray; this was just over 1400 years ago but when I recall that the rocks forming Dun I are the oldest in Britain, Lewisian gneiss laid down some 2000 million years ago, the time perspective changes and Columba seems almost my companion. My reflections only become clouded when I realize how little I know about the origins and nature of the Irish mission from this island to my own native Northumbria in the 7th century.

My search for enlightenment began on the A69, the old Roman Stanegate, some 20 miles west of Newcastle, where a wooden cross[2] marks the site of the battle of Heavenfield AD 634. Oswald had just regained the Bernician throne after 17 years exile on Iona, where he had been baptised, but on the field behind the cross he now faced the large army of the invading Cadwallon, a Welsh apostate. Later apologists likened it to a David and Goliath contest. Asleep in his tent on the eve of battle, Oswald had a vision of Columba who promised 'Behold I will be with you.[3] Be strong and act manfully... you shall be victorious, your foes put to flight.' On the morrow, Oswald's army triumphed and accepted baptism. Bernicia and Deira were united as the new Kingdom of Northumbria and Oswald became the Bretwalda, the Saxon overlord, most powerful in the land. Here was a new role for Columba, not merely a founder of monasteries and sainted abbot but a prophet and giver of victory in battle more powerful than the pagan Celtic war gods of Lugh and Coccidius. Any lingering doubts[4] were dispelled. Oswald forthwith sent to Iona 'for a bishop by whose ministry the English people over whom he ruled might receive the blessings of the Christian faith and the sacraments... for the whole of England was

shadowed by the darkness of paganism and ignorance'. This letter was as much a royal command as an invitation. There had been earlier contacts between Northumbria and Iona for even before Oswald with his Bernician household were driven into exile there, the fierce pagan Northumbrian king Aethelfrith 'powerful and eager for glory' (Bede likened him to Saul) had defeated King Aedan of the Scottii in the battle of Degastan (place unidentified) in 603 and exacted annual tribute from the people of Dal Riada where the Irish Scottii had colonised on the west coast of Scotland.

Bede describes the first bishop sent from Iona as 'austerior', 'of a harsher disposition'. He soon returned as he found the Northumbrians 'stubborn and of a barbarous temperament'. Let us not be too harsh in our strictures of bishop 'Austerior' for this may well have been the first missionary effort out of Iona, except perhaps among the Dal Riadic Scots. Bede calls Columba 'an apostle to the Picts' rather as Patrick was to the Irish, David to the Welsh and Ninian and Mungo (Kentigern) to the North Britons, but there is no evidence for this. Adamnan describes only one journey into Pictland to the fort of King Bridei' near present Inverness, probably to gain rights for monks in Orkney and to impress his druids rather than to convert him.[6]

Abbot Ségène ruled Iona for 29 years from 623. He was a strong upholder of the Columban tradition and overseer of the mission to Northumbria in its first crucial years. His choice of Aidan as 'Austerior's successor was inspired, for he appears a most attractive figure; it is only a pity we know so little about him. No-one wrote a 'Life of Aidan'. Bede devotes only three chapters to him in his 'History' – Cuthbert merited six chapters and a 'Life' – but, though critical of his dates for Easter observances, is otherwise full of praise; 'he cultivated peace and love, purity and humility, despised pride and conceit', he set himself to keep and teach the laws of God.[7] Bede describes Aidan travelling around the countryside 'preaching at all the king's country seats' and 'giving the King's gift of a fine horse to the first beggar he met on the journey'; 'he was most compassionate, a father to the poor and wretched'. Oswald, fluent in Irish and his native Old English, served as his interpreter. Tradition has it that Aidan died on 31 August, 651 in the parish church at Bamburgh leaning against a pillar twice miraculously preserved in a fire and still there today. He was esteemed by men as far away as Felix of East Anglia and Honorius of Canterbury and was a role model for Cuthbert. Though he lives on in the shadow of Cuthbert yet this thoroughly Irish monk from Iona is rightly regarded as the founding father of Christianity in Northumbria.

One key to Aidan's success was his close working relationship with Oswald and his successor Oswiu. Bishop and King needed each other. Any missionary bishop required a patron and protector to provide land and resources and access to influential thegns and aeldormen. For the King, a powerful bishop or abbot could be a valuable ally at court whose preaching of the Gospel message would ideally bring social and moral discipline to society, obedience to lawful authority and therefore political stability. Diverse Celtic or Germanic gods split tribal loyalties: one Christian god unified. Furthermore, that God promised 'a messianic banquet with His tribe and eternal joy', an invitation open to all, even bondsmen and slaves. Politics and religion were inextricably linked and served to further imperial and missionary expansion. Sadly, the deep friendship between Aidan and Oswald lasted only seven years for the King fell in battle near Oswestry (Oswald's tree) fighting the heathen Mercians in 642. He became Northumbria's first royal saint and martyr.[8] Keeping company with kings and banqueting at the royal table when 'revelries ran high and the troops flushed with wine' must have been difficult for ascetic monks vowed to poverty but Aidan and Cuthbert coped well.

Oswald's choice of Lindisfarne[9] as a base for the Ionan mission was as wise as Ségène's choice of Aidan as leader. The island was within signalling distance of the royal fortress on Bamburgh rock only 5 miles to the south, so help was at hand in time of crisis. The ebb and flow of the tide gave both easy access to the mainland across the wet sands and a measure of protection by the encircling sea twice a day. The island was well placed geographically to communicate with both Bernicia to the north and Deira to the south and had a fine natural harbour in an age when much travel was by sea. With its windy, offshore position, its coastline of rocky headlands and sandy bays, and its abundant wildlife – even the seals and puffins were there – Lindisfarne so closely resembled Iona that the newly arrived monks must quickly have felt at home.

Bede tells us that 'from then on many arrived in Britain day by day from the country of the Scottii and proclaimed the word of God... in all the provinces of the English under Oswald's rule.' A recent study[10] explores the likely routes. Even today it is a full day's journey from Northumbria to Iona involving two bus rides and two ferry trips; in early medieval times it must have been a long and hazardous journey on foot or horseback across difficult terrain and disputed borders. The map shows the most probable route; by sea and overland to Strathclyde where Columba's earlier friendship

with Rhydderch, King of the Dumbarton Britons, possibly a Christian, may have helped safe passage, across east to the Firth of Forth perhaps resting on Inchcolm (Columba's Isle), then south ascending the Lammermuir Hills near the present Cistercian abbey of Sancta Maria at Nunraw, down the valley of the Whiteadder River (the line of the B6355 road) to Abbey St Bathan's, named in honour of Iona's second abbot, Columba's cousin, Baíthéne. From here it is a short journey to Tweedmouth from where Lindisfarne is clearly visible only eight miles to the south.

Aidan's monks brought with them scholarship and skills born of a rich inheritance. The Irish refer to the 'Early Middle Ages' not the 'Dark Ages'. Ireland had never been occupied by the Romans nor been subject to successive waves of invading Angles, Saxons and Jutes so that even allowing for a tribal society with fighting and cattle raiding endemic Celtic culture flourished. There hangs over Celtic mythology 'beautiful dignity... a spiritual loveliness close to our ideal spiritual existence' for the pagan Celts were animists whose world was spirit-filled, who sacrificed to many gods and who, unlike the Romans, believed in life after death in the Other World. They dreamed of Tir-na-og, the island of Eternal Youth, far out in the Western Ocean, the goal of the whimsical, allegorical 'Voyage of Brendan'. Happily, the new Christians cherished their pagan post. Some pagan deities like the goddesses of war, Morrigan, Macha and Badb were triads, so the concept of the trinity was not so difficult. The 'wee folk' became angels. Again, unlike the Romans, the Celts had long known a professional priesthood in their druids whose death knell was soon sounded by the rise of a literate clergy versed in Latin. The old heroes in battle were replaced by the new heroes who fought against the devil, the world and the flesh as hermits or in enclosed communities in remote places like Skellig Michael, where they sought to find 'the place of their own resurrection' 'as white martyrs,[12] exiles for Christ'. When pagan Celtic tribesman met Christian missionary it was more an embrace than a confrontation.

In the scattered, tribal and hierarchical society of rural Ireland where first loyalty had always been to the local king or chieftain rather than to an ideal, family groups gathered into loose monastic communities, 'paruchia', under the abbot who was usually succeeded by a kinsman. Columba's Iona illustrates this point well; his founding community included twelve uncles and two cousins and, of the first nine abbots, all except Fergna, were of the Ui Neill royal household. At Clonard, Bangor, Clonmacnoise, Armagh, at Leinster and Moville where Columba studied, religion and learning flour-

ished under scholars like Finnian, Ciaran, Brendan and Columba himself. Here were the libraries and universities of Ireland producing Europe's oldest written language north of the Alps and the most advanced medical schools[13] in Western Europe. Thus was the Irish Renaissance born to keep alive the classical learning of Greece and Rome at a time when the continent was being ravaged by barbarian hordes out of Asia. Columba was a man of his time, a product of this renaissance.

It is a popular myth that Columba or Columcille sailed into a distant self-imposed permanent exile in order to convert the pagan Picts. In fact, Iona is an easy day's sail from Ireland whence he returned several times; nor was he a missionary except perhaps to the Dal Riadic Scots whose King Aedán he crowned in what may well have been the first ever Christian coronation and illustrating the intimate links between religion and politics. However, Columba was most certainly a scholar, a pilgrim, a prophet, a renowned miracle worker and an outstanding founding abbot of a monastery destined to be a hub of communications in an extensive monastic empire and a centre celebrated for the excellence of its learning and spiritual life. This was where Aidan learned his profession.

From Aidan's foundation of Lindisfarne in 635 until the Synod of Whitby in 664 the Northumbrian church was virtually an extension of the church in Ireland and Dal Riada. What then were the distinctive features of the Celtic spirituality of the incoming Irish monks? A few quotations from contemporary writings are revealing for they show a power, a vibrancy and an imagination far removed from the popular image of a dark brooding melancholic people on the western fringes of the British Isles living in Yeat's 'Celtic Twilight'.[14] A spirit of adventure took some Irish monks as far east as Kiev in the Ukraine, south to Italy to Taranto and as far north as Iceland and the Faroes and involved a leap of faith summed up by the intrepid traveller Brendan the Navigator[15]:-

'Shall I turn my back on my native land,
My face towards the sea
Shall I take my tiny coracle across the wide sparkling ocean?
O, Christ, will you help me on the wild waves?'

A love of Ireland was ever-present in exile; Columba on Iona writes:-

'I love my beautiful Derry
For its quietness and purity
For heaven's angels that come and go
Under every leaf of the oaks.'

A deeply felt sense of the abiding enveloping presence of Christ and of his angels is very evident:-

'The path I walk, Christ walks it
Bright angels walk with me – dear presence – in every dealing.'

One can stand on the Hill of Angels overlooking the machair on Iona's Atlantic coastline where Columba had several visitations. St Ide expresses a typical feeling of intimate relationship with Christ:-

'It is Jesus noble and angelic, son of the Jewess
Who is nursed by me in my little cell
He is in His place on high though as little Jesus
He is on my breast.'

The hermit alone on his rocky island shows a characteristic love of wild life and wild nature :-

'That I might hear the voice of the wondrous birds, a joyful tune
That I might see its splendid flock of birds over the full watered ocean
That I might see its mighty whales, greatest of wonders.'

Taking as models the Egyptian Desert Fathers like Antony, penance and prayer were at the heart of the spiritual life:-

'Alone in my little hut, alone I came into the world, alone I shall go from it
Hear my wail as I lament all alone, 0 God.'

With 'fervent showers of tears', meagre meals of dry bread and water, 'singing psalms every hour', the ascetic eremite seeks forgiveness, for sin was taken very seriously, yet there was much joy in experiencing the loving forgiveness of a merciful God. The abbot-bishop of Clonard, Finnian, advises, 'Do penance, do not despair for the mercy of God is great.' A Welsh poet extols the beauties of Nature, May blossom, cuckoos and nightingales, wild maned horses, long summer days, then concludes:-

'Beautiful too when God saves me
Beautiful too doing penance for sin
Most beautiful of all is honour and covenant
With God on the Day of Judgement'.[16]

Love of the solitary life often went hand in hand with zeal for souls, the contemplative became the active, the Mary the Martha: many saints from Antony in Egypt through Martin of Tours, Columba, his disciple Columbanus, Fursey, Guthlac, to Aidan and Cuthbert on Inner Farne showed this remarkable ability.

We may be sure that these were some of the qualities that Aidan and his successors Tuda, Finan and Colman and their fellow Irish monks brought to both their personal and communal life on Lindisfarne. From 635 to 664 abbots were appointed directly from the mother house on Iona and in that time Lindisfarne became the leading ecclesiastical centre in Britain. Under Aidan twelve daughter houses were founded on grants from King Oswiu, each on ten hides of land, most notably at Abercorn, Norham, Gilling, and Old Melrose as well as double houses at Coldingham, Gateshead, Hartlepool and Whitby. Interestingly, the double houses were always ruled by abbesses as in Gaul, usually ladies of royal blood who had taken the veil, such as Ebba, Ethelreda, Audrey and the celebrated Hilda of Whitby. As in Ireland, the Northumbrian church was monastic with no parish or diocesan structure and with the bishop as an 'episcopus vagans' subject to the local abbot. This system suited well a scattered rural society whose people shunned the old Roman towns.

The Synod of Whitby in 664 and the appointment of Theodore as archbishop of Canterbury, four years later, were watershed events. King Oswiu's decision in favour of the Roman cause at Whitby was an option for Europeanism over insularity; the church now faced outwards south to Gaul and Italy not inwards north west to Iona whose influence consequently diminished, effectively ending Irish domination of the Northumbrian church. It was all too much for Colman who quit Lindisfarne with a party of some forty monks, including Saxons, and Cuthbert as the newly appointed prior was left to reconcile the divided community. Ironically, the last three decades of the 7th century saw a strengthening of the ties between Northumbria and Ireland as 'many English nobles left their land to pursue religious studies... some devoted themselves to the monastic life, others preferred to travel, studying under various teachers. The Scots welcomed them all kindly and, without asking for payment, provided daily food, books and instruction.[17] At this time Northumbria and Ireland can fairly be called one province, intellectually and culturally. The route was direct, west along the still intact Stanegate to Carlisle, thence to Ninian's Whithorn or a port on the Cumbrian coast for a short sea passage to Ulster, to Larne or Strangford Lough. Though critical of the Irish dating of Easter, Bede is fulsome in his praise of the Irish contribution to the burgconing renaissance of learning already under way before Benedict Biscop's founding of St. Peter's, Monkwearmouth in 673.

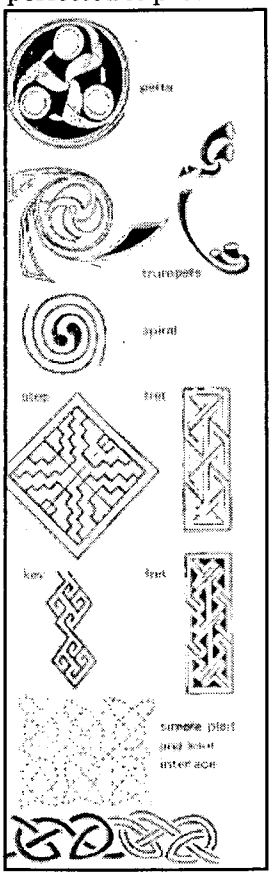
The scholarly and powerful Aldfrith, probably our first literate king, who ruled Northumbria from 685-703, exemplifies many of the defining characteristics of this period. His firm rule brought peace to the region and safe travel so that learning could flourish in the new monastic schools. The epic poem 'Beowulf' may well have originated in his royal court. He had close ties with Ireland for his mother was an Irish princess, Fina of Ui Neill house, and his father Oswiu had been a fellow-exile on Iona with Oswald. He studied at Bangor, County Down, became fluent in Irish and published poems in praise of Ireland under his Irish name, Fland Fina. When Adamnan visited Jarrow c. 688, he brought with him our first ever printed account of the Holy Places in Palestine, 'De Locis Sanctis'[18] as a gift for the king who made copies for distribution throughout his kingdom. Aldfrith is an understated figure in Northumbria's early history and thoroughly deserves the title of 'rex sapientissimus'.

From its beginnings as simply an area of land of perhaps ten acres surrounded by an earth rampart and ditch and containing a primitive church of hewn oak, thatched with reed, a refectory, bee-hive stone cells, Lindisfarne had grown, like Iona, into a flourishing and rich monastery with its own colony of daughter houses and a fine school for training Anglian students. Cuthbert preferred to enter Melrose, a daughter house, to study; Wilfrid was a boy at Lindisfarne and became the leading spokesman for the Roman cause at Whitby. Of the four priest brothers who studied here Chad, a disciple of Aidan, became a bishop with his see at Lichfield, in order to evangelise among the pagan Mercians, and Cedd as bishop of the East Saxons founded monasteries at Lastingham, Tilbury and Bradwell on Sea and preached among Mercians and Middle Angles aided by Adda, Betti and Diuma, all alumni of Lindisfarne. The new zeal for Christianity found early expression, especially under Finan, in converting the pagan peoples of the English midlands where Bede records no discord between Irish-trained and Roman missionaries working in the same areas.

From the earlier monasteries of Irish origin like Lindisfarne and Whitby and the later Roman houses of Jarrow, Monkwearmouth and Hexham there issued a stream of illuminated books, Lives of Saints, sculpture, jewellery and metalwork of unparalleled excellence. Germanic, Mediterranean and Byzantine influences fused with Celtic to produce a distinctive Insular art form in which the Irish elements are readily identifiable in the insular script, the carpet pages, decor of intricate

interlace, spirals and curvi-linear patterns and in the panels of sculpture on the Ruthwell Cross portraying Paul and Antony sharing bread in the desert and Mary Magdalene washing the feet of Jesus. The various openings of St. Cuthbert's coffin have revealed a number of personal items, vestments, portable altar, pectoral cross, St John's Gospel, a comb of ivory from an African elephant; old Celtic customs lived on.

Priceless objects reveal the skill of pagan Celtic Iron-age craftsmen perfected to produce the Ardagh Chalice, the Clonmacnoise crozier, and St Cuthbert's pectoral cross from the Lindisfarne monastic workshops. Artists, scribes, calligraphers, hagiographers, metal workers and sculptors competed with each other to achieve new standards of excellence in a ferment of intellectual activity. John, the Archcantor of Rome, introduced the Gregorian chant; glaziers from Gaul taught the English the skill of making coloured stained glass for the windows of the new stone churches; hagiographers wrote in praise of their subjects, Adamnan on Columba,[19] Eddius on Wilfrid, the Anonymous and later Bede on Cuthbert. Oswiu's decision at Whitby was well and truly vindicated as the vibrant church in Northumbria became renowned throughout Western Europe.

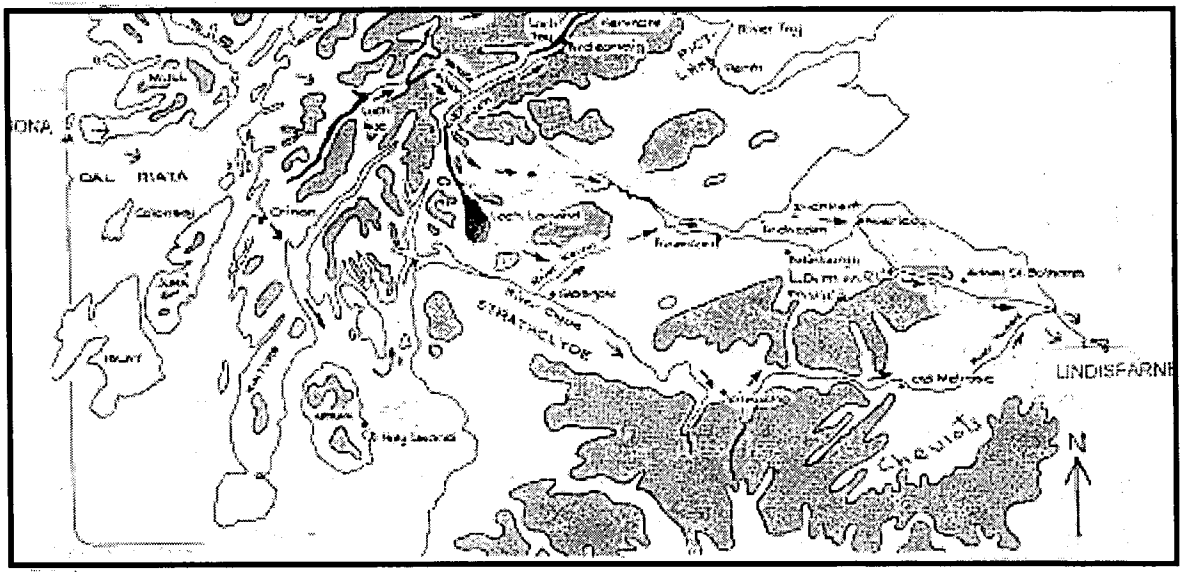


Pagan Celtic motifs much used in decorated pages of Lindisfarne Gospels

Though much was lost as Celtic Christianity and culture declined even more was gained. The loveliness of the hard and holy lives of Columba, Aidan, Chad, Cuthbert and their disciples captures our imagination and wins our admiration as they successfully break new ground and convert pagans to Christianity in Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex. However much our heart is with the learned and saintly Celtic monks in their intrepid journeys over land and sea as 'exiles for Christ' our head must concede that, in order to become firmly established, the Church needed a diocesan structure under bishops backed by monks with the more regular, stable and disciplined ways of the Rule of St Benedict, one of Rome's most enduring legacies to posterity.[20]

My quest has been frustrating yet fascinating. Archaeological evidence is thin on the ground; literary sources like the 'Lives' are helpful, especially when we read between the lines, but so many intriguing questions remain unanswered. Just why did Columba sail from Ireland in 563, did he settle first on Hinba and was there already a monastic foundation from Comgall of Bangor on Iona? What was Aidan's family history? Why did Adamnan in his 'Life of Columba' omit any mention of Lindisfarne and the Irish mission to Northumbria? We should love to know more of the daily lives of the monks on Iona and Lindisfarne but we have no Rule Book of Columban monks to tell us. The 'Amra' says that Columba was the protector of a hundred churches but where are they?[21] No writings of any of the early Northumbrian saints are extant; we rely on Bede's 'History' for much of our limited knowledge.

And yet, despite the gaps, the myths and the legends, an exciting picture emerges of austere, learned, pioneering monks converting pagan peoples to Christianity. If figures like Columba, Aidan, Cuthbert and others so impress us 1400 years later, how much more must they have impressed the native Northumbrians who heard them preach and witnessed their miracles.[22] Celtic monks rejoiced in the glory of Creation, sensing in the beauty and rhythms of Nature a closeness with God and a manifestation of his power and majesty. Nature was a book in which we read of God. They felt deeply that they were living on the edge of the world: the Hebrides were remote islands, even Bede in Jarrow said he lived on 'the misty edge of civilisation' so far from Rome, Constantinople Alexandria and Jerusalem. Wherever a Celtic monk found himself at any time in his 'peregrinatio'he was not there by chance but placed there by Providence for a definite purpose. This sense of belonging was deep and personal. Adamnan, for example, was of a distinctive Irish culture and community, a son and disciple of Columba, and a member of Christ's universal family united in baptism with fellow-Christians in places as far distant as Egypt and Palestine. Journeying in coracles at the mercy of wind and waves or overland to Lindisfarne or Kiev they knew they were indeed living on the fringe of time and eternity but, in an age of faith, they believed their earthly pilgrimage would end in a 'heavenly Jerusalem'. Like Paul, they thought the End was nigh but that end would not be 'the deep sleep of oblivion' as the Roman poet Lucretius believed, but consummation, resurrection and glory.[23]



Routes from Iona to Lindisfarne

One of the many pleasures of researching this exciting period in history is that you find yourself in wild and beautiful places, little changed over the centuries. If, in the future, I find myself on Iona on top of Dun I or, indeed, more likely walking on the shores of Lindisfarne, I shall endeavour to view the scene through the eyes of the early Irish monks and so gain fresh insights and a greater appreciation of their remarkable achievement in laying the firm foundations for the conversion of 'an obstinate people of a barbarous temperament' from the 'darkness of heathenism' to the light of the Gospel in only three decades. Perhaps too I may, even fleetingly, experience 'the joy of the stillness of divine contemplation' that Cuthbert sought on Inner Farne. One lives in hope.

NOTES

1. Adamnan (Little Adam) of Iona *Life of St Columba (Penguin* Classics, 1995), Written c. 698, our best account of an early Irish monastery at work and prayer. Iona, a mis-spelling of medieval Ioua probably 'Island of the yew tree', Bede uses Hi or Hy. Iona is Hebrew for 'dove'. Irish Columcille = 'dove of the church'.
2. Bede *A History of the English Church and People* (Penguin, 1968). All quotations from Bede are from his 'History'. Chapter 2 of Book 3 describes this battle: 'no emblem of the Christian Faith, no church, no altar in the whole of Bernicia until Oswald set up this 'standard of the holy cross', the site of many miracles.
3. Joshua 1:9. For a vivid account of the visions see Adamnan p. I 11.
4. An alternative source for help was Canterbury whence Bishop Paulinus had fled with Queen Ethelberga to escape the persecutions of Penda and Cadwallon after King Edwin's death in battle in 633. 'James the Deacon was left to care for the church of York'. Bede p. 144.
5. Idem.
6. Adamnan, p. 184.
7. Bede, Chapter 5.
8. Oswald's right hand specially blessed by Aidan became a precious relic miraculously preserved and kept in a silver casket in a shrine in Bamburgh church.
9. Originally Inis Medcaut (Isle of Winds), later, from 12th century, 'Insula Sacra', Holy Island.
10. Simon Taylor in *Spes Scotorum* (Edinburgh, 1999).
11. The Celts Nora Chadwick, (Penguin, 1997) p. 186. See also Celtic Britain. (Charles Thomas, 1997)
12. Ireland had no 'red martyrs' until in 617 St Donnan and 150 of his monks were massacred on Eigg; in 806, 68 Columban monks were killed by Viking raiders on Iona on the sands of Martyrs Bay.
13. As early as the 5th century AD there are records of Caesarian operations, amputations and brain surgery in the medical schools in Cavan.
14. *A Celtic Miscellany* KH. Jackson (Penguin 1977); Preface. The source of most quotations.

15. Read the delightful 'Voyage of Brendan' in *The Age of Bede* (Penguin, 1983). In their travels the monks encountered icebergs, volcanoes (Iceland?) psalm - singing birds and Jaconius the whale.

16. See Article *The Joys of Penance,* Gilbert Markus OP.

17. Bede, p. 195.

18. Bede produced his own edited version of this publication.

19. Adamnan's 'Columba' was produced about the same time as the anonymous 'Life of Cuthbert' and was probably meant to restore the status of Columba and Iona in the face of the growing prestige of Cuthbert and Lindisfarne. All the 'Lives' were to some extent propaganda statements on behalf of their subject's cult and community.

20. Bede's History. Introduction, L. Sherley-Price.

21. We do know that Columba's monastic empire included daughter houses on the mysterious islands of Hinba and Elen, at Campus Lunge on Tiree and at Cell Diuni on the shores of Loch Awe on the mainland. He also founded the important house of Durrow in Ireland and travelled to Skye and Eigg.

22. For a detailed analysis of the miracles of Cuthbert see 'St Cuthbert Revisited', GB. Thornton, *Northern Catholic History, No. 38, 1997*

23. *Journeys on the Edges,* T. O'Loughlin (Longmans 2000).

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Herbert, M.	*Iona, Kells and Derry* (Clarendon, 1988)
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THE FORGOTTEN SIX

The Very Rev. Canon Wilfrid Fee

During the years of religious persecution here in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries England, Catholics who remained faithful to the practice of their Faith had to pay a great price; it meant imprisonment, fines, confiscation of property, torture, exile and often a cruel death. Of those who did suffer, the Church has officially accepted 316 of them as true Martyrs. Of these, 28 have been termed MARTYRS OF THE NORTH in so far as they were born in the North, laboured here, suffered or died here. The lives of most of them have been written about in past editions of the North East Catholic History Society magazine. Somehow or other six of them have been overlooked. This article is an attempt to supply for that deficiency and to pay tribute to their heroism.

BLESSED HUGH TAYLOR

He was a native of Durham. He entered Douai College on 2nd May 1582 and was ordained a priest in 1584 and sent to England in the same year. He ministered in Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire. His apostolate only lasted two years. He was arrested in the house of a non-Catholic gentleman, Marmaduke Bowes, whose sympathies were with Catholics. Mr Bowes was not at home when the arrest took place. He hastened to York prison, and there protested violently at this interference with his private life. On being asked if he himself was a Catholic, he abjured his heretical beliefs and then boldly professed the Catholic Faith. Whereupon he was condemned to death along with Fr. Taylor. Father Taylor was executed for his priesthood at York on 26th of November 1584. The following day Marmaduke Bowes was beheaded at York for 'harbouring a priest' which in those days was a treasonable offence.

BLESSED EDWARD BURDON

Described as a native of the Bishopric of Durham, he was ordained a priest at Rheims in 1585 and was sent onto the English mission the following year. In the midst of his dangerous work he became very ill. During his convalescence he was arrested on suspicion of being a priest and was committed as a prisoner to York castle. When the time came for his hearing he was again very ill but was forced to rise and stand trial. He was condemned to death as a traitor. Apparently he was able to say Mass in his

prison cell on the morning of his execution. He wanted to speak to the people from the gallows but was shouted down. 'Despatch him' cried the executioner, 'for he is able to do much harm'. He was hanged, drawn and quartered at York on October 31st or November 29th 1588.

BLESSED CHRISTOPHER BALES

Born at Coniscliffe, Darlington, he was brought up as a Protestant but he became a Catholic in his teens. He went to the English college in Rome when only nineteen years of age, but left there because of ill health. He continued his studies at Rheims where he was ordained a priest in 1587 and was sent to England on 2nd of November of the following year. He arrived in England with three other priests, the famous Jesuit, Father John Gerard, Father Edward Oldcorne, S.J., and Father George Beesly. The two last were also to win the crown of martyrdom. Before long Father Bales was arrested and tortured. One of our canonised English Martyrs, St Robert Southwell, wrote an account of that torture... 'Among others who were taken lately was Christopher Bales of the county of Durham, a scholar priest of the Roman college, then of Rheims. For twenty four hours he was suspended by his hands, just touching the ground with the tip of his toes. He was wearied by vexed questions to all of which he gave this one answer that he was a Catholic priest and had come to recall sinners to Christ's fold and for no other purpose'. He was executed on Ash Wednesday, 4th of March, 1590 in Fleet Street, London.

BLESSED WILLIAM PATENSON

Bishop Challoner in his famous book *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* gives us the following account the life of this martyr. 'William Patenson was a native of the bishopric of Durham, an alumnus and priest of Douai College during its residence at Rheims. He was ordained in 1587 and sent upon the English mission in 1589. Falling into the hands of the persecutors, he was prosecuted and condemned to die. This holy man, the night before his execution, was put down into the condemned hole with seven malefactors who were to suffer on the next day. Being more concerned for their eternal salvation than for his own temporal life, he so movingly preached to them repentance for their sins and a sincere conversion to God, that six of them were reconciled to God and His Church and the next morning professed themselves determined to die in the Catholic Faith, as they did with great marks of repentance for their past crimes, and a willingness to

suffer that ignominious death in satisfaction for them. The persecutors were so enraged at this, that they treated Mr. Patenson with more than ordinary cruelty, causing him to be cut down immediately and butchered while still alive and in his perfect senses'. He suffered at Tyburn on January 22nd 1592.

BLESSED GEORGE GERVASE O.S.B.

He was left an orphan at the age of twelve. Shortly afterwards he was kidnapped by a pirate and carried away to the Indies where he was to remain for twelve years. He managed to escape. During his captivity he had lost his Faith but, meeting his brother, he was reconciled to the Church. He crossed over to Douai and after eight years was ordained a priest. He was sent on to the English mission in August 1604. He laboured here in the north for some two years. He was arrested because of his priesthood, tried at Durham assizes and condemned to perpetual banishment in 1606. He was one of some thirty priests so condemned. Then he went on pilgrimage to Rome and here he sought admission into the Society of Jesus but was not accepted. His brother tried to persuade him to stay in France where he might live in peace. He refused; his heart was in England. Return he did but it was not long before he was arrested and this time condemned to death. Secretly while in prison he asked to be received into the Benedictine Order. He made his vows privately in prison and was executed at Tyburn on 11th of April 1608 in the 37th year of his age.

BLESSED JOHN FENWICK

He was born of Protestant parents in the bishopric of Durham and, on becoming a Catholic, he was expelled from his home and repudiated by his family. He went abroad, studied at the Jesuit college at St Omer and, after ten years made his profession in the Society of Jesus. After his ordination he was sent into the English mission in 1656 and resided in London. In 1678 Catholics were unjustly accused of being implicated in the infamous Titus Oates 'Plot' allegedly to kill King Charles II. Father Fenwick and a colleague were arrested one midnight. Along with four other priests they were all accused of complicity in the Plot. On 24th of January 1679 Fr Ireland and his devoted assistant, Blessed John Groves, were put to death at Tyburn; the others, including Fr Fenwick, were to die also at Tyburn on 20th of June of the same year. They stood, awaiting death at the scaffold, when a dispatch rider on horseback arrived, crying 'A pardon, a pardon',

The king was willing to grant a reprieve if the priests would confess their involvement in the Plot. Each of them refused to save their lives at the cost of a lie and so courageously won the Martyr's crown.

CONCLUSION

As we recall the heroism of these SIX MARTYRS, we ask them and the other twenty-two Martyrs of the North to strengthen our Faith so that we may be able to appreciate it as they did... as a PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE

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Martyrs of Durham and the North East. Fr J. Myerscough S.J.

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HOW MANY HOUSES ? A LOP LANE MYSTERY, YORK

Rev. Dominique Minskip

The church of St Wilfrid in York was built between 1862 and 1864 in 'Duncombe Place'. It stood on exactly the same site as the previous Catholic chapel, built in 1802, even though that chapel had 'Little Blake Street' as its address. 'Little Blake Street' had become 'Duncombe Place' after a widening of the street between 1860 and 1862 in an effort to provide a more impressive approach to the west end of York Minster. To add further confusion, 'Little Blake Street' was also known as 'Lop Lane': according to the R.C.H.M.E., the two names were used interchangeably.[1] On the south side of Lop Lane – the side on which properties were demolished for the widening – had stood the buildings associated with the secular mission in York prior to 1802. It is these buildings which provide our subject.

When Hugh Aveling compiled his monograph on *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York, 1558-1791,* he acknowledged that 'the eighteenth century history of the secular priest mission has to be pieced together Maigret-wise from odd clues'.[2] The first connection with Lop Lane seems to have come in 1691 or '92 when Robert Winter, a priest sent to York by Bishop Smith, was lodging in the house of Robert Niesome, a very substantial recusant merchant-tailor. Niesome had a daughter surnamed Winter and his family may well have been linked with the priest's in this way. Robert Winter conducted a marriage in Niesome's house in April 1692: the groom was later prosecuted for this clandestine act.

Winter died in 1701, but Lop Lane remained the focus of the secular mission as a house was bought there for £200, sometime before 1710. Mrs Kennet and Mr Gilpin paid for the purchase and subsequent endowments came from Lady Fairfax of Gilling and Lady Radcliffe (all of them country gentry). The house was known as 'the York House' in the secular clergy accounts but to outside scrutiny was the property of Mrs Oldforth and Mrs Bulkeley, its first two housekeepers. Aveling identifies three priests who lived there at different times before 1730 – Gilbert Haydock, Edward Perkinson and Robert Carnaby – and Bishop Williams held Confirmation for 400 people there in 1728. Bryan Tunstall was appointed to the mission in 1734, or thereabouts, and when he was appointed Grand Vicar (VicarGeneral) for Yorkshire in 1741 the York mission perhaps took on an added significance.[3]

Thomas Daniel had joined Tunstall in the York House in 1740 and, on the latter's death in 1742, succeeded him both as missioner and as Grand Vicar. He succeeded him also in one other function – that of agent to the Yorkshire clergy (the 'Yorkshire Brethren') and procurator of their funds.

Aveling estimates that, at this period, the secular mission was catering for the spiritual needs of more than two hundred Catholics, and yet their chapel was almost certainly nothing more than a room within the York House.[4] According to J.O. Payne, it was Thomas Daniel who remedied this situation by building a chapel distinct from the house in 1760.[5] Aveling concurs, suggesting that an annexe was built from the back of the house into the garden to conceal it from view and that this new chapel was certainly in operation by 1764, in which year its existence was noted by the Anglican church wardens and its congregation numbered 170.

After this Aveling notices several clerical comings and goings at the York House: Bishop William Walton came to live there in 1770, the year of Thomas Daniel's death, and remained until 1776; John Lonsdale (1771-75), John Douglas (1775-90), John Jones (1791) and John Gillow (1791-1802) all occupied it as missioners; and Bishop William Gibson also chose it as his residence from 1790 to 1798 (though this is not noted by Aveling). It fell to John Jones to register the chapel in 1791 as 'behind' the priest's dwelling house and to John Gillow to build a new free-standing chapel and presbytery on the other side of Lop Lane in 1802. The York House was then sold in 1806 to the York Union Lodge of Freemasons for £425.[6]

So far, thanks to Aveling, we seem to have had a very clear picture of the property owned by the York secular mission in Lop Lane: a house bought sometime between 1701 and 1710 referred to as 'the York House', which had an annexe added in 1760, or thereabouts, to serve as an enlarged chapel and which then remained unaltered until the whole was replaced and sold off at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

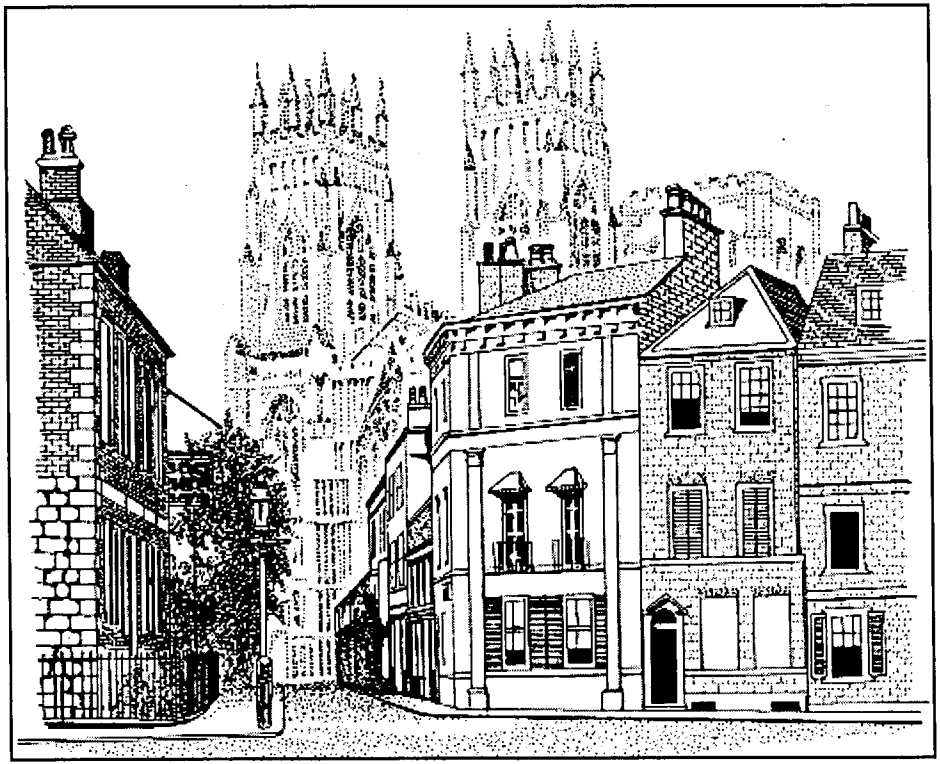
However, the mystery is just about to begin.

In the Middlesbrough Diocesan Archives[7] there is a typescript document sent in 1967 by Monsignor Edward Wilcock of the Leeds diocese to the then Bishop's Secretary in Middlesbrough. Monsignor Wilcock's covering letter states that he is enclosing 'some early correspondence relating to foundation Masses and the records [sic] of diocesan funds which was drawn up, I should say about 1850'. He then continues 'I made a transcript of the history of the common stock which includes references to the property in

Lop Lane'. Because of his mention of the 'records drawn up about 1850', it is tempting to identify the source of Wilcock's transcript as the Hogarth Mss in the Leeds Diocesan Archives – an account, compiled in 1842-3, of the Yorkshire Brethren's Fund from its inception in the late seventeenth century and based on as many original documents as had survived into the nineteenth century (though these have since been lost).[8] I am not fully persuaded, however, that I can identify 'Common Stock' with 'Brethren Fund', especially since Aveling, who certainly used the Hogarth Mss, seems ignorant of the information provided by the Wilcock document. Then again, there are hints which we will find in later evidence of at least blurred boundaries between different funds and those controlling them. For the time being , it is probably enough to concentrate on the evidence that the Wilcock document provides.[9]

The first new piece of information is that on September 28, 1742, a second house in Lop Lane was bought, presumably by Thomas Daniel, for £54.9.6. It was the house 'adjacent' to the York House then in the occupation of John Craven, cobbler, and hence called the Cobbler's House. The purchase money did not initially come from Common Stock, but there must have been a transfer of ownership in 1748 as in May of that year the rent began to be placed to the credit of Common Stock. It continued that way up until 1771 when an agreement was made with the tenants to pull down and rebuild the house, allowing them to return at an annual rent of 5% of the cost of rebuilding. It seems that the cost of rebuilding was £512.7.8, part of which (£130.18.8.) had to be borrowed from Bishop William Walton and was repaid in 1773.

Various tenants then paid rent until 1802, when matters became more complicated. In that year a Mr Scruton began paying interest to Common Stock on mortgage on two houses in Lop Lane of £800. One of the houses was that rebuilt by Common Stock in 1771 - i.e. Mr Scruton was allowed to 'purchase' by owing a sum on mortgage. The other house was not identified, other than that one Abraham Dutton was living in it. [10] Even though Mr Scruton was paying interest on the whole £800 to Common Stock, £300 of that sum had actually been lent by the York mission. This £300 seems to have been paid back in 1804, leaving the £500 provided by Common Stock. In 1810 , Mr Scruton paid off the portion of the mortgage which remained on the house which had been Common Stock's. The remaining mortgage on the house occupied by Abraham Dutton continued



Lop Lane (Little Blake Street), York, 1845
Line drawing by Brian Allen from an original photograph by Fox Talbot.

in existence until 1850 when its final repayment benefited St Mary's, Bradford, and the chapel at Halifax.

We now know of two houses on the south side of Lop Lane belonging to the Catholic community :the York House owned by the secular Mission and the Cobbler's House owned by Common Stock. Additionally, Common Stock received the interest from a mortgage on a third house from 1802 to 1850.

But there is evidence, even, for more than this. In 1860 , the York – born Robert Tate, missioner at Hazlewood, wrote to his friend Thomas Augustine Slater as follows:-

> They have begun to take down the South Side of Lop Lane [for the street widening]. Render has got a good price for the house on that side – £600 I heard. Formerly a house in Lop Lane belong to the brethren of the Yorkshire Fund. How was it alienated I wonder.[11]

'Render' was Joseph Render, – the priest in charge of the York secular mission. The first implication of Tate's words, therefore, is that the secular mission still owned property on the south side of Lop Lane in 1860. When had it come into its possession? Tate assumes that Slater (who lived all his missionary life at Hutton Henry) would be familiar with the house and perhaps this suggests some age of ownership or some significance of purpose.

The thought becomes more tantalising when we bring into consideration the brief assembling in York in December 1793 of a number of the seminary students exiled from Douai. All we know of this event is what is recorded in a letter of Robert Bannister to Henry Rutter (both priests) dated 19 December 1793:-

> Our Bishop first ordered our young refugees to Old Hall Green: presently after he countermanded them to York: he has now assembled in a house contiguous to Mr Gillow's Messieurs John Woodcock, James Worswick, John Lancaster, Thomas Gillow, Thomas Penswick, George Haydock...perhaps Bell and Rickaby. Mr Gillow is their Master...Whensoever the rest can escape, the Masters and professors now at Doullens on the confines of Picardy, may resume their functions in Little Blake Street.[12]

'Mr Gillow' is, of course, John Gillow, priest of the York mission, and therefore resident in York House. We already know that the house owned by Common Stock is 'adjacent' to the York House and now we find that the house occupied by the eight seminarians is 'contiguous' to it. Are the Douai

exiles living in the Common Stock house, or are they living in a third house (the one mentioned by Tate) located on the other side of the York House?

We know from the Wilcock transcript that the tenants of the Common Stock house who signed the agreement in 1771 were Mrs Anne Leach and Mrs Margaret Leach. Both were still in residence in 1793, but Anne ceased to pay rent after August of that year and the document suggests that she died. Part of the agreement in 1771 was for a bond of £100 repayable to the surviving Mrs Leach when the other one died. This, however, was not paid to Margaret until 1796. At the same time, we are told that a new tenant was in the house by about the middle of 1795. Did Margaret Leach stay in the house after Anne's seeming demise in late 1793? Did she stay on until 1795? Or did, in fact, Anne not die until 1796, but both of them simply vacate the house at the end of 1793?

There seems at least a possibility that this latter was the case and that the seminarians were brought to York because the Common Stock house had become available. They did not remain in York for long, however. Within a few months they had moved on to Tudhoe Academy. Various reasons may account for this[13], but perhaps one was simply that the accommodation in York was not sufficient. Several nineteenth century photographs (the earliest taken in 1845) show Lop Lane before the south side was demolished. At that date most of the houses would appear to be two storied with only a couple reaching to three .[14] With eight seminarians already in residence and others still to come, the situation may simply have been impractical.

There is a second question hanging over from Tate's letter to Slater. When he talks of the house which 'formerly ..... belonged to the brethren of the Yorkshire fund' is this to be identified as the Common Stock house or is it yet another separate property, making four in all? The answer, of course, depends on how closely we can relate the Yorkshire Brethren Fund and Common Stock. Reason suggests that there must be a close correlation, even if not exact. (Others, one hopes, may be able to solve the issue better than I).

Our conclusions so far, then, are that there were three houses of significance to us in the south side of Lop Lane :the York House, owned by the secular mission and containing its priest's residence and chapel, which was bought before 1710 and sold in 1806; the Common Stock house, bought in 1742 and put out to rent, probably used to accommodate the Douai exiles in 1793-4, and finally sold via a mortgage arrangement in 1802; a third

house, acquired at some point before 1860 and sold in that year by the secular mission priest for £600.

Surely there can be no more puzzles about the Lop Lane property ? Amazingly, one more remains.

In the early 1990's there emerged from the dust of the attics of St Wilfrid's presbytery an account book for (roughly) the period 1750 to 1780.[15] The book is mainly in the hand of Thomas Daniel, who, it will be remembered, was agent and procurator for the Yorkshire Brethren as well as Grand Vicar and missioner at York. The accounts record all Daniel's transactions with every secular priest on the mission in Yorkshire and with some layfolk. It seems clear that Daniel had charge of the endowment capital of some missions and was acting almost as a general banker for both clergy and gentry. Significantly for our earlier debates, Daniel entered everything in the same book without much differentiation.[16] However, it is not from Daniel's period of making entries that we receive a jolt, but from the year 1773 when a new account is begun under the simple heading 'Building'.

Whilst there are two stray references in the Wilcock document to money (£250 in all) taken out of Common Stock in 1773 'to build the house in Lop Lane', this seems almost certainly to have been a final settling of accounts on the rebuilding of Cobbler's House begun in 1771. What we have in the account book is quite different. It is a series of subscription lists and payments on account, clearly referring to a chapel. Those who subscribed included all the leading yorkshire gentry (Tempest, Tunstall, Crathorne, Strickland, Langdale, Stapleton, Constable, Fairfax, Lawson and others, including the Duke of Norfolk) and monies collected between 1773 and 1777 came to roughly £600. Further sums were borrowed to cover the final cost of £796. The first stone of the chapel was laid on June 10, 1773. Mr Atkinson (Thomas Atkinson of York) was its architect and Mr Robinson its builder.[17]

The compiler of the account was John Lonsdale, successor to Thomas Daniel as the missioner at Lop Lane and as procurator to the Yorkshire Brethren. He was in York and he titled the account 'Building', with no other reference whatsoever. The conclusion reached by those who have examined the account is that this chapel can only have been at Lop Lane.[18] Certainly, there are no other obvious candidates. Thomas Atkinson, the architect, had completed his chapel at the Bar Convent in York by 1769, and only the York

secular mission would seem likely to have had enough significance to attract donations from so many of the Yorkshire gentry.

But how are we to account for such a chapel when Aveling has convinced us that Daniel had already built the annexe chapel at the York House before 1764? Is he simply wrong, in which case we still have to account for the Anglican churchwardens' comments? Or is this chapel of 1773 a 'bigger and better' replacement for the annexe chapel?

The latter seems the most likely explanation, especially given that John Jones described the Lop Lane chapel at its registration in 1791 as 'behind' the priest's dwelling. Nevertheless, we are entitled to be left wondering why a chapel built in 1760 was replaced in 1773 and then replaced again, across the road, in 1802. There seems nothing in the figures for the Catholic population of the city through these years which would necessitate such rapid expansion. Accelerated growth came, in fact, only after the 1802 chapel had been built.[19]

If much that is mysterious remains, we can at least mark down Lop Lane as a veritable hive of Catholic activity in spiritual, building and financial terms. The building of St Wilfrid's church in 1862-4 as the pro-Cathedral of the Beverley diocese was, perhaps, a fitting climax to the industry of the previous one hundred and fifty years.

NOTES

1. R.C.H.M.E.: *Historical Monuments in the City of York*, Vol V, pp. 129-30.
2. J.C.H. *Aveling: Catholic Recusancy in the City of York 1558 - 1791* (Catholic Record Society, Monograph Series, No 2), p.153. pages 152-155 and 385-387 provide the summation of Aveling's findings and his sources.
3. Dom Hilary Willson, in his introduction to the published registers of the mission from 1771 to 1838 (C.R.S. Vol. 35), suggests that it only became formally established from this point or, indeed, with the advent of Tunstall's successor. His reasons for asserting this are not clear, except perhaps that the missioner at York also served Linton-on-Ouse and that from this time the precedence of the two places was reversed?
4. Aveling: op. cit., p.154.
5. J.O.Payne: *Old English Catholic Missions* (London, Burns and Oates, 1889), p79.
6. Aveling suggests the sale was in 1802, but W. Hargrove: *History and Description of the Ancient City of York*, Vol II, (1818), p.475, gives 1806 as the date. Hargrove states that the house was bought in sixteen shares of £25 each (ie. £400), but an acount book kept by provost Render at St Wilfrid's in the 1850s/60s gives the price as £425 and records that it had been invested in various stocks down to his day, when he had switched it to shares in the York Water Works Company. (p. 453 of Render's book in 'The St Wilfrid's, York, Collection', Middlesbrough Diocesan Archives).

7. St Wilfrid' s, York, file.

8. D Kirkwood: *A History of the Society of Yorkshire Brethren* (Leeds Diocesan Archives, Occasional publication, No.2. [no date] pp17 & 34).

9. What does seem definite is that Monsignor Wilcock's document very helpfully traces funds and stocks which shift from one account or place to another in the original. A referencing system of a single letter plus numbers is used for each individual transaction which he has extracted. Given time and opportunity this referencing would, almost certainly, identify his source.

10. It cannot, of course, have been the York House since this was not disposed of until 1806, nor do the figures appear to fit (See note 6).

11. Tate-Slater correspondence, Ushaw College Archives, T.S. [1860].

12. Leo Gooch: *The Revival of English Catholicism: The Bannister – Rutter Correspondence, 1777-1807* (N.W.C.H.S, Wigan, 1995), pp207-8.

13. See David Milburn: 'Journey to the promised Land – From Douai to Durham' – *Ushaw Magazine*, Final Edition, 1993-4, pp 12 to 26 (esp 19).

14. See Hugh Murray: Photographs and Photographers of York: The Early Years 1844-1879 (Yorkshire Architectural & York Archaeological Society, 1986), passim.

15. The account book was microfilmed for the N.Y.C.R.O. in Northallerton and an edited and annotated version by Leo Gooch was published under the title *Paid at Sundry Times: Yorkshire Clergy Finances in the Eighteenth Century* (Saint Laurence Papers, X, Ampleforth Abbey, 1997). The original is now on permanent loan to the Leeds Diocesan Archives

16. Leo Gooch goes into further details on Daniel's modus operandi in his introduction to *Paid at Sundry Times,* (pp. 7-9).

17. See Gooch: *Paid* ....pp. 17-18 (account no.9).

18. *Ibid*, p.17

19. Cf. Aveling: op. cit.; Edward Royle :*Nonconformity in Nineteenth Century York* (Borthwick Paper No. 68, York, 1985), p.3; and W. & J. Hargrove: *The New Guide for Strangers and Residents in the City of York* (1838), p. 117.

REVIVAL , RESTORATION, REFLECTION; CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE

The Rev. David Milburn, D.S.H.

INTRODUCTION

Last September, Bishop Ambrose Griffiths OSB presided at a special Mass in his cathedral church of St Mary in Newcastle to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the re-establishment of a Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales and the creation of the diocese of Hexham (the name Newcastle was added later). On that occasion the bishop aptly pointed out that in 1850 'the Catholics were an oppressed minority mainly drawn from the poorest classes... Today... the Catholic community has become integrated into political, civic, ecclesiastical and social life. The days of antagonism and competition are long since past and we rejoice and thank God for the understanding and friendship established between all the Christian Churches and their leaders.' In 150 years the changes have been radical.

HISTORICAL REVISIONISM

Our understanding of the past has itself undergone radical change, with historians at every turn deconstructing the official story of English christianity from which the 'winners' at the time of the Reformation carefully 'airbrushed' its Catholic past out of the nation's collective memory.[1] As for the history of the English Catholic community itself since. the time of the Reformation , for long enough it was not deigned worthy of consideration by respectable (i.e. Protestant) historians. John Henry Newman, who preached his famous 'Second Spring' sermon at the first official meeting of the new bishops in 1852 says it all: 'The English Church was, and the English Church was not, and the English Church is once again.' Only with the opening of local archives in the mid-20th century came the opportunity for historians like Hugh Aveling to substitute for the assumed continuous decline of English Catholicism until the 19th century a now well documented picture of its survival in Elizabethan days , to be followed by a slow yet remarkable recovery, to which every generation contributed.[2]

In English Catholic perception (a view shared by a growing number of historians) it was for mainly political reasons that the statesmen of 16th century England destroyed the 'late medieval Catholicism [which] exerted an enormously strong, diverse and vigorous hold over the imagination and loyalty of the people right up to the very moment of Reformation.'[3] In 1559, after years of religious turmoil Elizabeth I and her government with the backing of parliament re-instated the monarch as head of this realm of England, in matters temporal and spiritual. During the Tudor period the English bishops had on the whole been more civil servants than spiritual leaders, preferring to obey the king rather than their consciences. On the face of it, then, it was rather surprising that the Catholic bishops of Elizabeth's reign put up a fight against the proposed religious changes. The bishops of 1559 were, however, of a different breed, moulded by the underestimated reforms of Cardinal Reginald Pole during Mary Tudor's short reign. With one exception they had already declined to assist at Elizabeth's coronation,[4] and when Elizabeth's measures were put before the Lords the nine bishops present unanimously voted against them. Later in the year all sixteen bishops (ten sees were vacant, including Canterbury) were deposed for refusing to uphold Elizabeth's claim to supremacy over the Church in England. Their fate has always been a subject for speculation. One of them, Kitchin of Llandaff, may have been offered some kind of compromise. Of the others two, Watson of Lincoln and Bonner of London had a hard time of it, being kept in close confinement until they died a score of years later. A few including Thirlby of Ely, were well treated. The last of them, Goldwell of St Asaph died abroad in exile in 1585.[5]

Suddenly deprived of its spiritual leaders, the nation witnessed a gradual collapse of the whole pre-Reformation edifice which had offered it the means of practising its Catholic Faith. Used to the see-saw of Tudor politics, most of the population probably hedged their bets and joined in the new form of parish worship, perhaps expecting the day soon to arrive when the Protestant monarch would again be replaced by a Catholic. Confronted with ever increasing restrictions, some resolutely declared their faith and suffered the penalties of nonconformity. In the absence of legitimate ecclesiastical authority they stood their ground, usually out of reach of central government, clustering around other natural leaders, the nobility and gentry whose houses and lands gave them a measure of protection. At

first they were ministered to by a surprisingly high number of priests from Mary's reign who preferred to be deprived of their benefices rather than conduct the new services in their churches. Later, they were joined by and eventually replaced by the priests educated in the new English colleges founded on the continent of Europe. Jesuits and other religious also followed in due course to help the underground church to survive.[6] For obvious reasons it is difficult to give estimates of the size of the Catholic population at this time. An earlier suggestion of 300 or more priests at work in 1603, the year Elizabeth died, with 8,500 committed Catholics, with maybe double that number who outwardly conformed may be compared to John Bossy's total of about 40,000 (including children and sympathisers) and 400 priests in a population of something like 2,500,000.[7]

THE STUART ERA

Though the small Catholic community survived the immediate crisis, without effective leadership it could not expect to make a lasting recovery. In fact, with its constant internal feuding it was in danger of tearing itself apart, and it urgently needed the re-introduction of ecclesiastical oversight at the earliest opportunity. In order to 'hold on to the few Catholics who were left' (the words of Pope Benedict XIV), Cardinal William Allen was appointed a prefect of the Mission, but he lived abroad, and died in 1594. With no other model known to them, some of the secular clergy clamoured for a return to diocesan structures. Roman bureaucrats baulked at the idea. In their eyes England had lost the Faith. From now on it was to be filed under the heading of missionary territory. Such thinking would continue for a long time. When the churchmen rebelled against an impractical system of archpriests (prefects apostolic} they were offered in 1623 a single bishop, the first since the deposition of the old Catholic hierarchy. He also had in his care the Catholics of Scotland. This bishop and his successors were essentially roving prelates, without fixed sees, limited faculties, and above all answerable directly to the Roman Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. Nevertheless the first of them (actually surnamed Bishop) shared to some degree the current nostalgic ideal of a God-given hierarchy with all its medieval trappings. He established a number of Districts, each under an archdeacon, and over each county he placed a rural dean. He also created a chapter of canons, which in the absence of a bishop became for some years the the sole (and arguably illegal) Catholic ecclesiastical authority in England.

Though this severely limited form of episcopal authority satisfied the secular priests in the sense that they treated it as the prelude to full scale hierarchical authority, in no way did it please the leading laity or the priests who belonged to religious orders: both these groups felt that the independence they had enjoyed in the absence of bishops to be threatened by the return of a 'priestly aristocracy'. Despite several appeals by the seculars during the course of the 17th century for a return to diocesan government, Rome continued to turn a deaf ear, even when in its closing years the Catholic convert brother of Charles II professed himself in favour. In the very year of his accession to the throne as James II (1685) he was obliged to accept the appointment of a single vicar apostolic for the whole of England. A bishop-vicar by definition governed mission territory with limited powers and was directly accountable to Rome. The number at work in England was increased to four in 1688, their Districts being London, the Midlands, Wales and the North.

All of these four vicars apostolic survived the Revolution which overthrew the Stuarts, though for a time they went in fear of their lives, and one was imprisoned several times over. Renewed persecution, political rather than religious, at the beginning of the new century led some of their successors into lives of privation and insecurity. One of them has left us an indication of his style of life '... One poor garret is palace, cathedral, table of audience, dining room, bedchamber, and often kitchen too'.[8] This system of vicars apostolic continued until 1850.

18th-19th CENTURIES

Despite the lack of a hierarchy, undoubted progress was made by the Catholic community during this time. The lifting of many restrictions against dissenters at the end of the 18th century followed by the restoration in 1829 of their full rights as citizens greatly helped to consolidate the status of Catholics in the country at large and to restore their confidence, despite a persistent bigotry which easily erupted into violence. Some facts and figures may help to indicate the growth of the community at this time. In 1830 the number of Catholics in the five counties covered by the Northern District was estimated at 180,000, served by 172 missions, nearly half of which were in Lancashire, and the same number of priests, of whom 57 belonged to the religious orders. Durham had 12 mission centres and Northumberland 18. In 1839 the vicar apostolic of the District claimed to head a population of 243,000, with 190 missions served by over

200 priests, including religious. Durham had 13 missions, Northumberland 16. These 'cold' statistics hide the fact that a great number of the priests died prematurely as a result of their ministry to the sick and dying during the successive outbreaks of cholera during these years: 26 in the space of 18 months during the years 1837-8 with 10 in Liverpool and 5 in Leeds in 1847. That same year and in the same circumstances died William Riddell within months of his succession to Bishop Mostyn as vicar apostolic of the Northern District.[9]

A similar increase in the Catholic population was reported all over the country as industrialisation dramatically changed the face of its landscape. By 1850 the number of Catholics in England appears to have been between 650,000 and 800,000, close to 4% of the total population. Some achievement for a non-Church.[10]

FROM VICARS TO BISHOPS

'It is my opinion', wrote the priest Joseph Berington in 1793, 'that we always had a *church*, incomplete, it is true, since the death of the last bishop, but ever remaining a society of true believers... holding communion with the centre of unity, the Roman see. The word *mission*, then, and *missionaries* have been improperly applied to us, which always designate a society recently converted to Christianity...[11] Most of the secular clergy would have agreed with him. It was therefore to be expected that agitation for a return to diocesan organisation would increase in the years after the penal restrictions had in the main been lifted. In 1837 the clergy of the Northern District, well known to Rome as trouble-makers[12] produced a plan which the four vicars apostolic discussed at their annual meeting. (On this occasion they took a decision to meet in future during Low Week, a custom which has been followed ever since). This pressure led the Roman authorities to consider granting a restoration of the hierarchy in all but name. Misunderstandings abounded, however, the vicars apostolic complaining how their views were constantly being undermined by private individuals who seemed to have ready access to high-placed officials. The religious orders also intervened, maintaining a right to have some bishops (if not the whole bench) chosen from their ranks. In addition to all this, a newcomer to the curia, Mgr. (later Cardinal) Acton, expressed his hostility to the proposal. 'The English throughout their history had been factious and opposed to authority, and were not to be entrusted with more and more independent power.'[13] Sufficiently aware of the need for more bishops, but

seeking a safer alternative to a full scale restoration, he proposed the creation of another four vicariates, which came into being in 1840. The former Northern District was divided into three, Lancashire, Yorkshire and a new Northern District comprising the remaining northern counties; an Eastern District cut out of the existing Midland (henceforth called the Central) District, and Wales out of the Western District and the Welsh part of the Midland District.[14]

In the light of all this one could argue that when at last the restoration came, it was at least ten years late, hindered by the Roman Curia's distrust, shared by Gregory XVI himself, of the four vicars apostolic, as well Rome's fear of an unfavourable reception by the British people. When Gregory died in 1846, and Acton at the age of forty-four the following year, the internal negotiations proceeded more quickly, but external circumstances in the shape of political upheaval in the Papal States and the flight of the new pope Pius IX to Gaeta now combined to prevent the implementation of the plan to restore a diocesan organisation to Catholic England.

UNFAVOURABLE REACTION

On 29 September 1850, the apostolic letter of the new pope, *Universalis Ecclesiae*, at last announced the restoration of the English and Welsh hierarchy. It took much of the credit for bringing this about, in flat contradiction to the Roman curia's historic attitude, but that is by the way. The timing of the announcement was deliberate. The Whigs (who had shown themselves sympathetic to the idea) had returned to power, and parliament was in recess. Rome had also made sure not to claim any existing Anglican titles for the new sees. which would certainly have immediately aroused the wrath of the Established Church. All this echoed the view of senior Catholic clergy in England that the changes should be introduced as unobtrusively as possible. Imagine their horror, then, when the new cardinal archbishop of Westminster, Nicholas Wiseman, proceeded to write to his flock a pastoral letter couched in extravagant, expansive and provocative language, trumpeting that the 'greatest blessing' had been bestowed on this country 'by the restoration of its true catholic hierarchical government in communion with the See of Peter'. Quickly realising his mistake, he issued a genuinely humble appeal to the whole English nation begging the people of England to understand that his ministry in Westminster would be directed to the 'concealed labyrinths of lanes and courts... in which swarms a huge and almost countless population,

in great measure, nominally, at least, Catholic: haunts of filth, which no sewage committee can reach- dark corners which no lighting-board can brighten.' To little effect. With consummate skill the bitterly anti-Catholic *Times* had already spearheaded a national outcry against 'one of the grossest acts of folly and impertinence the Court of Rome has ventured to commit since the Crown and people of England threw off its yoke.' Here in the north the *Newcastle Journal* for Saturday 26 October, after soberly reporting the pope's intention to re-introduce dioceses to the Romish Church in England (culled from *L'Univers*_the leading French Catholic newspaper), on the very same page it declared itself to be committed to the *Times* campaign to 'resist the reconstruction of those engines which it is the glory of our forefathers to have expelled and overthrown.' Thereafter, week by week (it was published on Saturdays) the paper's language became more violent, exhorting all true Englishmen to react against their country 'being parcelled out among a tribe of monks, much in the same way as William the Norman distributed this broad [land] among his freebooters eight centuries ago.'[15] Every edition of the *Journal* up to the end of the year contained reports of meetings and petitions organised locally to remonstrate against this attempt at 'papal usurpation.' The archdeaconaries of Durham, Northumberland and Lindisfarne sent memorials to their bishop in Durham, individual parishes in Sunderland, Edmundbyers, Hetton le Hole added their protests. Gateshead sent a memorial to the Queen. Newcastle endured the mayhem of a disorderly meeting chaired by the mayor in the Guildhall which was eventually brought to a conclusion with three cheers for the Queen and three groans for the pope. The graphic report of the meeting covers five close- printed columns.[16] Came December and the editor of the paper wrote that the year would be remembered particularly for the aggressive act of Rome. 'Little did the mole-eyed ecclesiastics who burrow in the metropolis and other large towns dream of the strength of feeling which they have since witnessed with such dismay.' ...Romanism stands now... as a restless, self-seeking, intriguing, foul, abominable system which aims at universal supremacy.'[17] Obviously the *Journal* disliked all dissenters, not just Catholics, for it scarcely mentions the petitions and rallies organised by a great many of the dissenting Protestants. The popular anti-Catholic prejudice stirred up by this kind of scurrilous writing eventually forced the government to promise to pass legislation making territorial titles for Catholic bishops illegal, but when it appeared the bill was innocuous enough, and it was repealed twenty

years later. By July 1852 sufficient calm had been restored to allow the new bishops to meet in synod at Oscott without fear of reprisal.

The question has recently been asked how far this whole disgusting episode sapped Catholic morale. It has been suggested that, having briefly appeared on the public platform, the restored Catholic Church took fright and stepped out of the limelight to concentrate on 'looking after its own.'[18] Interestingly enough, as late as 1950 the comment was made that though a great deal had been achieved during the past 100 years, Catholics in England, now counted in millions, on the whole had not pulled their weight in public life.[19] Perhaps the trauma suffered in 1850 lasted longer than has been thought.

THE GROWTH OF THE DIOCESE OF HEXHAM

What has aptly been described as the 'dull pastoral work' of building up a diocese now became the hard lot of the bishops often faced with meagre or even non-existent resources. Our diocese was privileged to be headed by Bishop William Hogarth, a man of great energy, who had already been working in the northern counties as vicar apostolic. Like all the new bishops he had to establish a cathedral. Some dioceses had already anticipated the need, and churches were built to become cathedrals, like St Chad's in Birmingham and St George's in Southwark. Not so here. St Mary's had been established in the 1840s simply to meet the needs of the rapidly growing number of Catholics in the town, some of them in the more tolerant atmosphere that prevailed already having achieved high office, with a mayor as early as 1842. Newcastle had become very prosperous, the centre of a thriving commercial and industrial community. The developer-builder Grainger and architects like Dobson and the Greens were at work transforming it. The Catholics had purchased a derelict site which was shortly to become very valuable, with Dobson's grand central station opposite. They were even more fortunate to acquire the services of Augustus Welby Pugin, an architect of national repute who had already done work locally at Stockton and Ushaw College. Despite enormous difficulties the work struggled to a completion, and the church opened in 1844 (minus the clerestory and spire). Nine bishops took part in the ceremony, at which rightly presided the young William Riddell, latterly assistant to the venerable James Worswick at St Andrew's and his successor in the planning and execution of the new church, who had recently become vicar apostolic of the District.[20] Despite its importance, Bishop Hogarth

passsionately disliked Newcastle, and having previously persuaded the authorities in Rome to confer the ancient title of Hexham on the new diocese, he apparently considered building his cathedral there too. In the end commonsense prevailed, and he formally installed his new chapter of canons here at St Mary's in 1852.

SINCE THE RESTORATION

Did the return to diocesan structures make any noticeable difference? John William Bewick, later to be a short-lived bishop of the diocese, certainly thought so, to judge by a report which he compiled in 1876.[21] In 1850 the Catholics in four northern counties had numbered about 70,000 in a general population of just short of 1,000,000. By 1875 they had increased to something like 121,000 in a total of 1,500,00, an increase of 70%. At the earlier date, 55 priests (of whom 12 were religious) served 47 missions. By 1875 there were 108 (including religious) who served 83 missions. Two religious houses for women had come into existence before 1850, the Carmel at Darlington (1830) and at Sunderland the Sisters of Mercy (1843). By 1875 there were houses of five different orders and congregations, with seven mother houses and nine branch houses.

Nearly all the convents were involved in educational work, for the aim of the diocesan authorities was to provide schooling for all Catholic children, which, given such an increase in numbers, was an almost impossible task. In the worst of times Catholic children had been taught in small (illegal) schools directed by priests and layfolk. Now there was need to develop elementary schools as part of a well planned missionary strategy. Most missions appear to have tried to open a school. Many built the school first, after which they set themselves to providing the church. As the bishops (it was a national policy) wished to retain control over their schools, they had to find the money for the building and running of them. Even with an increasing number of religious lending a hand the number of schools remained woefully insufficient. During the educational crisis of 1870-2 the diocese paid out £23,000 for 41 additional schoolrooms and 41 classrooms, which brought an additional 9,000 children into the system. At the end of the period (1875) throughout the diocese there were 77 schools, 174 teachers and a further 148 pupil teachers. The average attendance of pupils in these elementary schools amounted to 12,353 out of 21,473 on the registers. These years also saw the beginning of secondary education, provided mainly for boys from families which were relatively well off. In

Newcastle what later became St Cuthbert's Grammar school was actually not the first in the diocese but it prospered and was supplied with priest-teachers, who also supervised a part-time seminary within its grounds. Some convents provided further education for girls. Poor Law Schools and orphanages also feature in the report. It concludes: 'Along with this marvellous increase in material aids and appliances, it is admitted that, with the blessing of God, there has also been a corresponding increase of religion, of Catholic feeling and devotion. The services of the Church have been improved and multiplied. Forms and practices of devotion hitherto unknown in the Diocese have been introduced. Confraternities have been established. Missions, previously little known and rarely given, have been preached in almost every Church, and in many, many times. Confessions and Communions are now much more frequent. The resources of the Priests have been added to and funds for various ecclesiastical and charitable purposes have been enlarged and multiplied. The Churches and Chapels are more becomingly adorned and more devotional. Bishops and Priests are better known and more influential with their fellow-townsmen and neighhours. *Thus, unquestionably, in the last quarter of a century, under a re-established Hierarchy, great things have been done.*' (my italics).

The point of having a diocesan structure is to allow bishops to keep in constant touch with their priests and people. By 1924 the diocese had become far too unwieldy, so the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland were taken from it to form the new diocese of Lancaster, which also included the section of Lancashire north of the Ribble. The *Northern Catholic Calendar* for 1926 summarises the situation on the eve of separation: 177 public churches and chapels, with another 30 chapels belonging to communities and institutions. Priests numbered 270 (secular 226, religious 44). The Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Charity had established many more convents since 1875, and the Little Sisters of the Poor had opened another refuge for the elderly at Sunderland. Newcomers since 1875 included the Good Shepherd Sisters, the Dominican Sisters, Faithful Companions, Religious of the Sacred Heart, Ursulines of Jesus, Sisters of Marie Reparatrice, daughters of Wisdom (La Sagesse), and Sisters of Nazareth. In all (this figure refers to the four counties) there were now 17 orders or congregations of nuns most of which were engaged in educational work. This continued to have top priority and by 1924 there were 113 Catholic elementary schools within the diocese. The report ends on a hopeful note, at the same time warning that much still needed to be

done in both Northumberland and Durham if the work of the Church was to give effective witness.[22]

The hope of further advance during the period up to 1950 was amply fulfilled. 'In many ways, the inter-war period was a golden age in English Catholicism,' writes Dr Leo Gooch.[23] It continued into the fifties and this diocese shared the glory. Churches were full to overflowing. Pilgrimages, pageants, rallies to support Church teaching, all attracted thousands. Each of two rallies at Ushaw College (itself bursting at the seams) in seven years attracted over 40,000 people. More schools and churches, the extension of social services and, charitable work, the foundation of university chaplaincies at Durham and Newcastle, the opening of retreat houses, missions, the list goes on. Fierce loyalty characterised parish life- the cathedral was, in the eyes of most Catholics, just another church. Most people were not yet aware of the broader implications of belonging to a diocese. But one was proud to be a Catholic. In fact most were instantly recognised by the insignia they wore – medals, sodality and sacred heart badges. 'Proper' Catholics refused (politely) to give alms to the Salvation Army, or visit 'Protestant' churches. 'Real' Catholic men unabashedly saluted their churches as they passed by on foot, in trams (or more rarely) in cars. The remarkable fervour and the excitement of the time is breathlessly re-captured in the pages of *Down Your Aisles*, a history of the diocese published to mark the millenium jubilee year and this 150th anniversary. In 1950 the Catholic Church in England was riding high. In confident mood we trumpeted to the nation the startling revolution that had taken place during the previous century. Without a doubt the 'second spring' had given way to high summer.[24]

At this point *pietas* demands that we should record the names of the bishops who have governed the diocese since its inception in 1850. After all, they have had the ultimate responsibility of furthering the Catholic Church's mission in these parts. There have been eleven of them, all making their distinctive contribution, with the exception of Henry O'Callaghan, a southerner who stayed only a few months: William Hogarth (1850-1866); James Chadwick (1866-1882); John William Bewick (1882-1886); Henry O'Callaghan (1888-89); Thomas Wilkinson (1889-1909); Richard Collins (1909-1924); Joseph Thorman (1925-1936); Joseph McCormack (1937-1958); James Cunningham (1958-1974); Hugh Lindsay (1974-1992), Ambrose Griffiths OSB (1992-). The dates are of consecration

or installation and death (except in the case of Bishops O'Callaghan and Lindsay who retired).

A LIMITED RESTORATION

Whether the astonishing progress that had been made during the century was all directly the outcome of the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850 is a moot point. Church structures must meet the needs of the people. If the eight English vicariates were thought too large for efficient government, that was a good reason to increase the number of bishops, for these were still the years before a proper railway network had come into operation. But did they need to be diocesan bishops? It has been argued that the vicars apostolic had far more freedom of movement. In practice the vicars apostolic enjoyed the same faculties. Though technically independent, they had learned to meet and work together just like diocesan bishops. Their grand vicars were just as effective as any diocesan vicars general. They were not shackled by the kind of established rights and vested interests which the parish system tended to spawn. So why was there so much insistence on the restoration of a diocesan system of government? I think it has been made sufficiently clear that the pressure for it came largely from the secular clergy, who, sadly, were often more interested in securing their privileges, including the right to elect their own bishops, than in any pastoral value it might have had. Perhaps it was for this very reason that in 1850 Rome judged it too early to bring Catholic England under the common law of the Church. For the time being the country remained subject to the jurisdiction of the Congregation of Propaganda , though one concession allowed some priests (named missionary rectors) a measure of security in their tenure of office. The jurisdiction of Propaganda came to an end in 1908 during the pontificate of Pius X, when Rome felt that the Church had reached maturity.[25] It is an interesting possibility that Cardinal Merry del Val, his secretary of state, who knew England well (he had received part of his education at Ushaw), had a hand in the matter. Evidently this question of the impact that the restoration of the hierarchy had on the future of the Catholic Church in England came up in in 1950, at the time of the centenary celebrations. One writer (and preacher) expressed the view that the restoration of 1850 had been a 'gesture', and that Manning without his title would have been no less influential, and Hinsley without the scarlet just as widely loved.[26] Another author described the restoration as a polite fiction, arguing that the English hierarchy had been re-founded, not restored, because continuity had been

lost. A nice legal point.[27] What is certainly true is that most of the perceived benefits of the restoration were never realised. The clergy expected parishes to be established, together with their rights and privileges. As we have seen, they had sixty or more years to wait. They expected to be able to elect their own bishops, but the increasing centralisation of the Church under Pius IX and his successors very quickly robbed them of their right. Bishops, too, had their wings clipped. Those who had been vicars apostolic were now forced to form common policy, and jointly solve a host of problems, chiefly the government of the seminaries and the distribution of funds and trusts. The increasing encroachment of papal power also affected them: they were gradually stripped of powers granted by the common law of the Church, a familiar tale of local government being usurped by central authority.

RELAPSE

The summer fulfilled 'its promise of plenty', but had 'too short a lease.' The first signs of autumn appeared in the middle sixties, symbolised for the writer in the building of a new east wing at Ushaw which proved to be useful but, following a shortfall in students for the priesthood, somewhat unnecessary. We were aware of a certain malaise in the Church, what we now see to have been the beginning of the fundamental changes which during the last fifty years have cumulatively affected every sphere of life, de-stabilising not just religion, but all our traditional structures. Surrounded as we are at the present time by a such an army of intractable problems, to reflect on the way in which the post-Reformation English Catholic community overcame the greatest difficulties to reach a state where it was able at last to become fully integrated into the political, civic, ecclesiastical and social life of the nation should encourage us to take the view that few problems are intractable. We should not yield to the temptation to pull up the drawbridge until better times arrive, but rather determine to seek a way forward by looking for and embracing all that is good in modern society.

One huge encouragement must be the knowledge that we are not alone. We have a new- found relationship with those whom Mgr Ronald Knox in the fifties called our next door neighbours, the members of the other Christian Churches. For long enough they were the neighhours we did not talk to. During the past thirty or forty years years we have learned not merely to be on speaking terms, but to be friends and more than friends.

Despite the tone of recent Vatican directives, they remain, as Pope John Paul II has consistently pointed out, our brothers and sisters in Christ. Therefore we need to work even more closely with them in the years ahead to ensure that the sweet voice of the Lord continues to be heard in our land.

The 150th anniversary celebration in the cathedral church of St Mary included representatives of its parishes and organisations. They were the special guests, for they symbolised the lay leadership on which we shall depend in the future. If the 17th century was the age of the gentry, the 18th of the vicars apostolic, the 19th-20th centuries the time of the clergy (bishops and priests), it seems to be clear enough that the 21st century (and beyond) is to be the age of the people. Fifty years ago at the time of the centenary of the restoration of the hierarchy this was still a dream (and a bad one for many 'priestly aristocrats'). Its realisation was a direct result of the work of the Second Vatican Council, opening up a whole new world of Church organisation. Will present church structures need to be re-shaped in the light of all the changes taking place outside and inside the Church? And what about the much vaunted option for the poor? That alone, if taken seriously, would necessitate a revolution. There is talk in some circles of the need for a Third Vatican Council to help us follow a surer path for the future but even without it we shall need leaders at a local level who can readily read the 'signs of the times' and take appropriate action. A short time ago and quite by accident I stumbled across the text of the address which Cardinal Vaughan delivered at Ushaw in October 1894 on the occasion of the first centenary of Crook Hall. It was quite extraordinary how he managed to test the temperature of the century ahead. Clearly he had the gift of prophecy. But how often has the Church listened to prophets?

NOTES

1. Clifford Longley in the *Tablet* 14 August 1999, p.1094.
2. J. Bossy uses this research in his *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850.* On p. 4 he puts forward the thesis that the community's history has been 'a cumulative process which every generation, every decade, has had its part to contribute'
3. This is the much quoted conclusion of Eamon Duffy in his *Stripping of the Altars* (1992).
4. But a reforming priest celebrated the Mass.
5. The Ushaw professor George Phillips' *Extinction of the Ancient Hierarchy* (1905) is reputed to have been the first to challenge the view that these bishops went into 'honorable retirement'. So it is somewhat surprising that the *Tablet* review of David Starkey's *Elizabeth* (1999) refers to the Old English Catholic hierarchy's being left virtually untouched.

6. Michael A Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland, 1558-1829* (1998) provides an excellent survey.
7. E.I. Watkin, *Roman Catholicism in England* (1957), p. 59 and Bossy, *English Catholic Community* chaps. 8 and 10, (graph on p.422.)
8. B. Hemphill, *The Early Vicars Apostolic of England 1685-1750*, quoted Watkin pp. 106-7.
9. Figures from my *History of Ushaw College*, p.150.
10. The figure arrived at by P. Hughes in A. Beck (Ed.), *The English Catholics 1850-1950*, p. 42f.
11. Bossy, p. 9, introduction to Part One.
12. B. Ward, *The Sequel to Catholic Emancipation* I, p. 122 discusses the state of unrest in 1837.
13. Ward, p. 158.
14. For the protracted negotiations see Ward I, p. 122£
15. *Newcastle Journal* Sat. 2 Nov. p. 6.
16. The *Journal* 30 Nov. p. 5.
17. The *Journal* 23 Nov. p. 4. and 21 December.
18. C. Longley in *The Tablet* 6 May 2000, p. 594.
19. A. Beck in *The English Catholics*, p. 602.
20. For this and what follows see the articles by P. McGuinness in *Northern Catholic History* issues 5, 6 and 28. Also V. Bartley, *St Mary's Cathedral: a History and Guide.*
21. Reprinted in *Northern Catholic History* issue 30, p.29 with two extra appendices.
22. Reprinted as 'A Note on the Growth of the Diocese trom 1850 to 1925', in the same Journal issue 38, p. 6.
23. In *Down your Aisles* p. 31.
24. G.A. Beck (ed.) *The English Catholics 1850-1950: Centenary Essays to Commemorate the Restoration of the Hierarchy of England and Wales*, (1950)
25. Much of this is taken from on Morgan Sweeney's essay on 'Diocesan Organisation and Administration' in *The English Catholics*, p. 116 f. After the cathedral service on 30 September 2000 one serving missioner on leave from Africa told me that it was generally accepted that a lack of proper diocesan structures greatly hampered the Church's work there, but Rome was unwilling to relinquish direct control.
26. R.A. Knox, *Occasional Sermons*, ed. P. Caraman, p. 296.
27. M. Sweeney, p.116

HISTORY OF THE POOR CLARE MONASTERY, DARLINGTON

Sr M. Michael

Under the guidance of St Francis, St Clare of Assisi founded in 1212 an Order of Contemplative Sisters, whose lives lived within the enclosure would draw down from God many graces and blessings for the whole world. A Poor Clare sister takes everyone into her prayer, all humanity and its needs and problems. The first Poor Clare monastery in England was founded in 1286 in Newcastle upon Tyne, thus within our diocese. At the Reformation during the reign of Henry VIIIth, all monasteries were dissolved and religious life in England proscribed. Henceforward, those wishing to enter religious life or the priesthood had to do so abroad, in a Catholic country or environment.

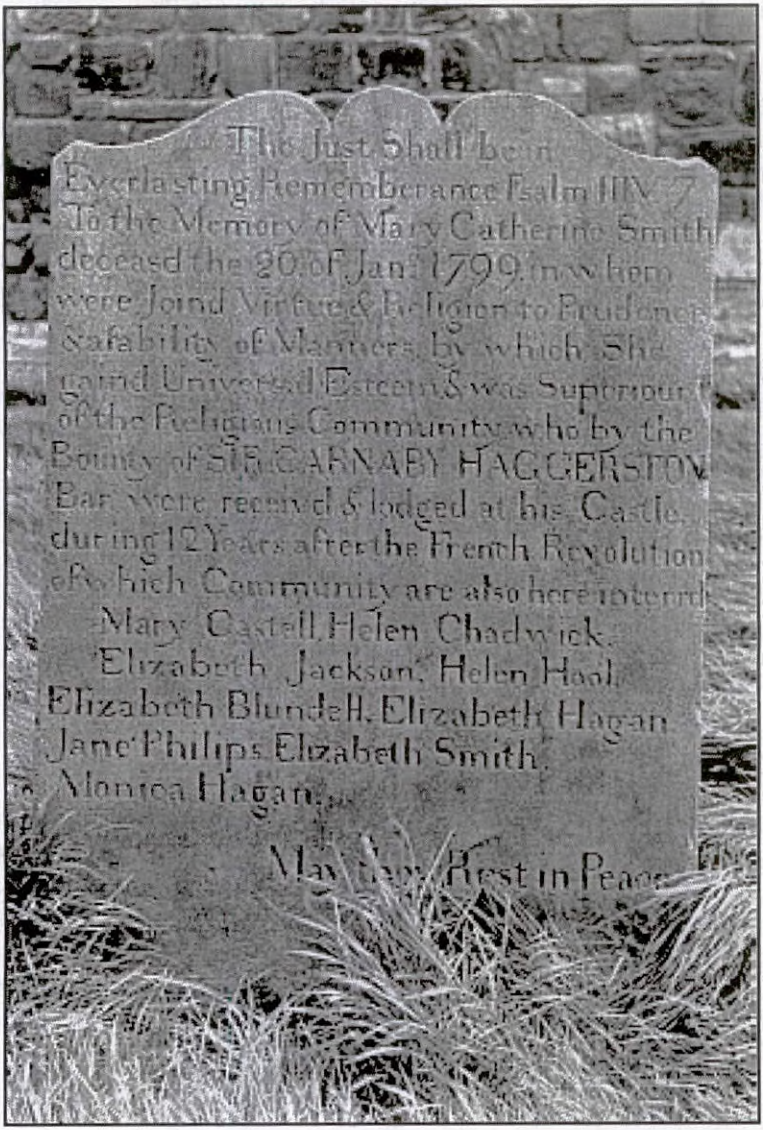
In 1455, a Poor Clare convent had been founded in Antwerp, whence in 1472 a small colony of these nuns established a new community in the little town of Veere, in Holland. The community prospered until they were driven out by the Calvinists in 1572. They then returned to the mother house at Antwerp, until in 1581, when all the Poor Clares had to leave the town when the Geux seized it. The sisters then went to St Omer, where they settled and flourished. It was in this community that there lived for a short time, as an extern sister, a young English gentlewoman from North Yorkshire named Mary Ward. She saw the need for, and established, a community for English women in Gravelines, then in Belgium, now in northern France. Through a benefactor, she procured some land, and a monastery was built. Although Mary Ward came to realize that her vocation lay elsewhere, she was the effective foundress of Gravelines. Mary Ward later became the foundress of The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (I.B.V.M.).

In 1609, some of the English nuns left St Omer for Gravelines, and the community increased and prospered. So much so, that within a short time, several new foundations were made. The first was in Aire, in Artois,in 1629, then at Rouen, in Normandy, in 1644, and also at Dunkirk in 1652. The Darlington sisters are the direct continuation of the Rouen community, and also, since 1807, representative of all the foundations from Gravelines. For almost 150 years the Rouen sisters faithfully lived out their Poor Clare vocation until, in 1789, the first rumblings of the French Revolution were heard.

The Revolutionary government began to impose many hardships as time went on, and, in 1793, the monastery was confiscated and the nuns imprisoned for sixteen months, together with several other communities, including the Benedictine nuns of Dunkirk. Their courage and ingenuity in coping with this situation were inspiring, as they did not have enough food or fuel, and lived in daily fear of execution. With the fall of Robespierre, the main architect of the Terror, in 1794, things improved a little, but as religious, they were still in constant danger. In January 1795, the sisters at last were given their liberty, but soon realized that it was impossible to continue their religious life in France, and friends and benefactors alike urged then to return to England.

Thus, in July and August 1795, the sisters, 41 in all, came to England, travelling in small numbers and at different times in order to avoid suspicion. In one group was an intrepid lay sister. She sat on the deck of the ship with a large bundle on her knee, and an old cooking pot tied on the outside. When the customs officer approached and asked 'What have you got there?', she replied bravely, 'Can't you see, kitchen utensils', and promptly pretended to be seasick,. whereupon the official moved away quickly. In reality, the bundle contained the sacred altar vessels from Rouen. The sisters lived for about four months in a rented house in Manchester Square, in London, while looking for something more permanent. They wore secular dress and tried to support themselves by making apple jelly from their own recipe.

Soon they heard of more permanent accommodation, Sir Carnaby Haggerston offering them a wing in his castle in Northumberland. This they gratefully accepted, they travelled north by public coach, six sisters each day. Passing through York, they were given hospitality at the Bar Convent, the I.B.V.M. sisters being very kind to them. The community was re-united, after many trials, in their new home at Haggerston Castle, on Christmas Eve, 1795. As soon as they could, they opened a school for young girls. Since the early foundation days in Rouen, the community, though strictly enclosed and following the First Rule of St Clare, always had a school for young ladies. This helped the sisters to be self-supporting. At this time, the nuns were not allowed to wear their religious habit but all dressed alike in plain black frocks and muslin caps. During the years at Haggerston Castle, ten of the nuns died and were buried in the graveyard of Ancroft parish church, where there is a memorial stone with an inscription bearing their names.



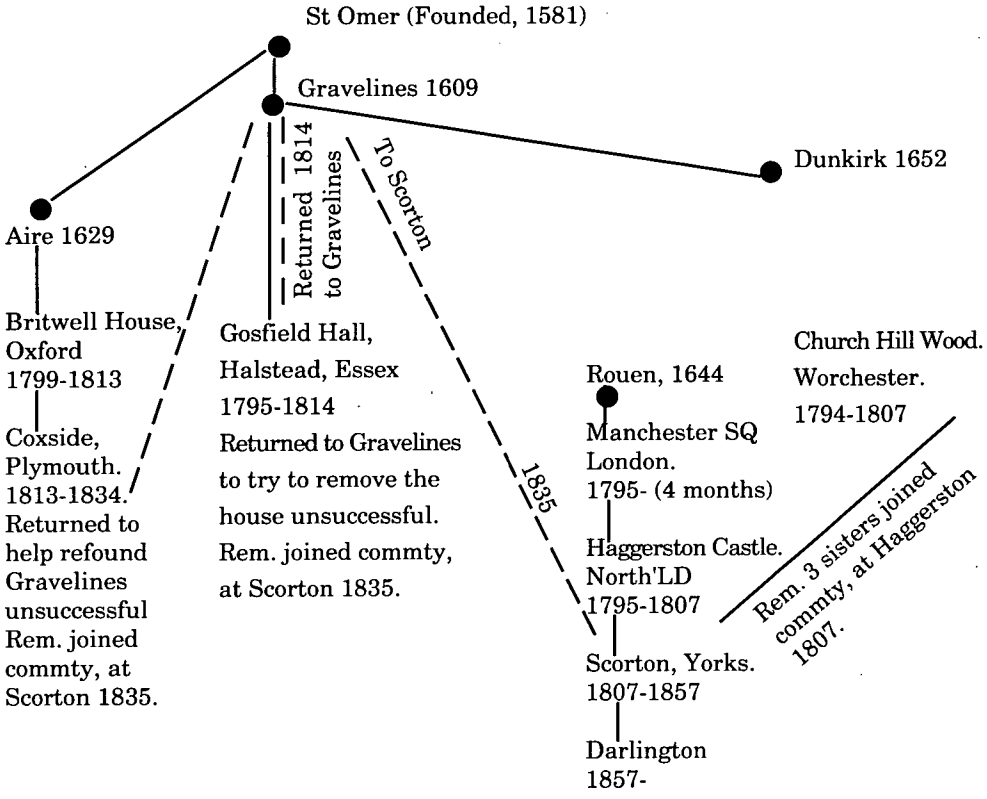
Headstone to Poor Clare Nuns in Ancroft churchyard

The most notable feature of the Abbey is its simplicity of style. It is often taken to have been designed by Pugin but the architect was, in fact, Joseph Hansom, the architect of many churches in the diocese, and a contemporary of Pugin. In the church alone, the centre of the life of a nun, do we find a departure from the overall simple design. Its altarpiece and pillars were quarried and sculptured from local stone, and the east window, over the altar is a very beautiful creation in stained glass.

The community settled down quickly and happily in its new home. The school was given up in 1887, as the sisters wished to be free to concentrate on their contemplative vocation. In this, they surely anticipated the wishes of the Second Vatican Council: 'Contemplatives give themselves to God alone, in solitude and silence, through constant prayer and willing penance.' The sisters continue this life today, in 2001, earning their living by the making and selling of altar breads. They have no extern sisters, but have a resident housekeeper. They observe the First Rule of Saint Clare.

NOTE

After the restoration of the hierarchy, Scorton was in the diocese of Beverley and is now in Middlesbrough diocese. The original convent building in Scorton is still in existence. Until recently, it was the monastic home of the Brothers of St John of God, who staffed the nearby hospital.

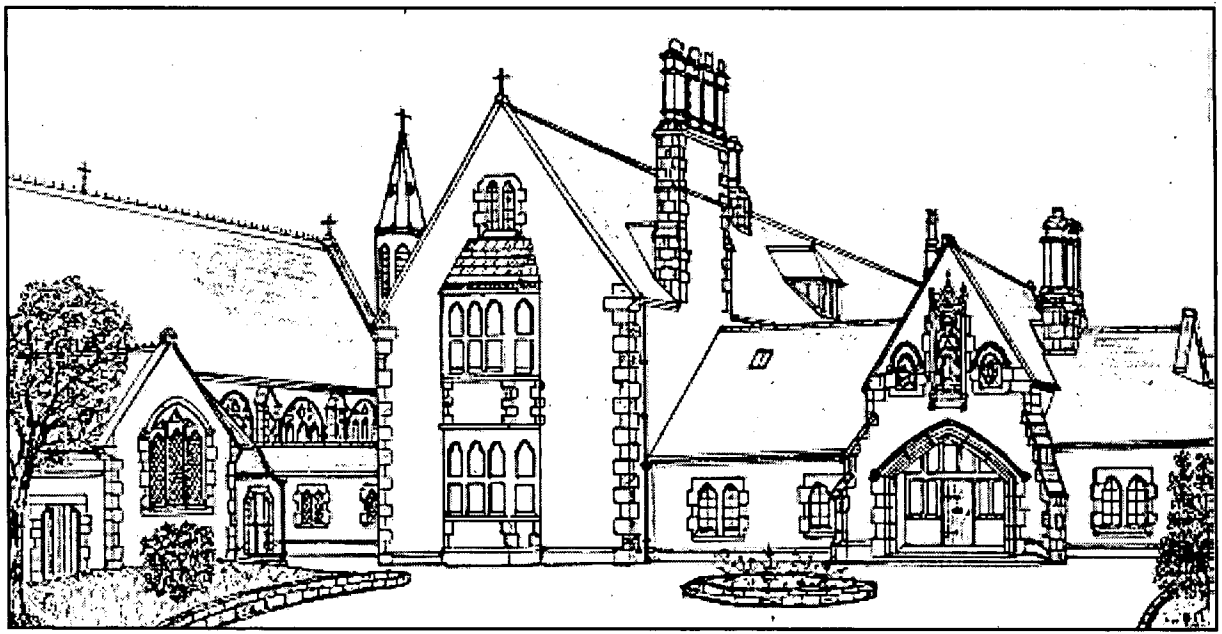


Descent of the Community of the Poor Clares of Darlington

By 1805, Haggerston Castle was in need of repair, so, once again, the nuns found themselves on the move. On the advice of Sir John Lawson of Brough Hall, near Catterick, Yorkshire, they decided to purchase Scorton Hall in Scorton, Yorkshire. The nuns, now numbering twenty-nine, arrived in Scorton in 1807, and after suitable alterations had been made, they opened a school in 1809. The community prospered during these years, many new sisters being professed, some of whom had been pupils in the school. They were truly treasures, as the Chronicles state, for, not only did they teach in the school, fulfil their religious duties, and help in the house, but they also helped to care for the sick and infirm members of the community as well.

One of the benefactors who helped the sisters at this time was Lady Mary Stanley, daughter of Sir Carnaby Haggerston. It is interesting to note, as one looks through the records, the consistent kindness of these Catholic familes of means to refugee religious communities. The Rouen sisters were helped by Sir Carnaby, whose mother was Mary Silvertop, daughter of George Silvertop of Minsteracres. The Aire community was given assistance from the Witham and Weld families, one of the nuns, Sr M. Euphrasia, being the sister of Thomas Weld of Britwell House, Oxfordshire, where they were offered shelter. The Dunkirk community also met with great kindness and were given a small house on the estate of Mr Berkeley of Spetchley Park, near Worcester. It would seem that the Providence of God watched over His little flock in their need.

In 1850, the Scorton sisters were looking for a site for a new monastery. Three sites were suggested, but deemed unsuitable. In 1851, on the occasion of the annual visitation by Bishop Briggs, Fr J. Brown, chaplain to the nuns at Carmel House, Darlington, and Bishop Hogarth of Hexham made known to Mother Abbess that the Carmelite community, which had been established in Darlington since 1830, was prepared to offer the Poor Clares some of their land as a site for the proposed new monastery. The Scorton community was very grateful to their Carmelite sisters, but Bishop Briggs was reluctant to allow the nuns to leave his diocese. However, after the lapse of a year, he consented. Plans were drawn up, the site prepared, and in September 1855, the foundation stone of the new Abbey Church was laid, and by the end of 1857 the community and its pupils took possession of their new home.



St Clare's Abbey Carmel Road Darlington

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES IN THE NORTH EAST

Sheridan Gilley

The recent publication of *Down Your Aisles,* containing both a history of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle between 1850 and 2000 by Leo Gooch and a large number of parish histories by Michael Morris, casts a welcome light upon our modern local Catholic past[1]. So, too, do the forty-one issues *of Northern Catholic History,* published since 1975. This, therefore, might seem to be an odd time, and this publication an odd place, in which to complain about a dearth of writing about the modern (post-1800) Roman Catholic Church in north-eastern England. The Morris-Gooch volume, however, is a pioneering work, and by no means covers all our Catholic parishes, omitting those in Durham City altogether, while *Northern Catholic History* tries to embrace the whole of Catholic history from the early Christian centuries until recent times, though it lacks articles on the Middle Ages, and, while intended for a popular readership, maintains a high standard of scholarship. Indeed local Catholic historical writing, at least for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has been a largely internal Catholic thing, for publication in the old *Ushaw Magazine*[2] or the *Northern Catholic Calendar* of former days, which both contain much of value[3], rather than in the *Bulletin* of the Durham County Local History Society[4] or *Northern History.*[5] This means, however, a lack of outside interest in the subject among non-Catholics, and gives it a very denominational feeling and atmosphere.

Nor has this local research figured much in the national Catholic story. North-eastern England has been a much less prominent a part of the history of the Catholic Church than other areas of the country, as can be seen from a brief survey of the main centres for modern Catholic historical study in England. First, of course, there is London, which under the title of Westminster, became the metropolitan see for all England and Wales in the English Catholic hierarchy restored in 1850. London has been the seat of a succession of great Cardinal Archbishops since, each one known to every Catholic in his day, Wiseman, Manning, Vaughan, Bourne, Hinsley, Godfrey, Griffin, Heenan and Hume. London Catholicism has the insularity of locality, but it also shares in the significance of London in the nation's life. All history is local history, but local history sometimes masquerades

as something else, as the history of London or Paris pretends to be the history of England or France, or a history of the papacy affects to be a history of the Catholic Church. Hence the metropolitan pre-eminence in the history of the English Catholic Church. The greatest of the bishops who were called Vicars Apostolic in the penal era, Richard Challoner, ministered in London for half a century, and it is easy enough to write about English Catholicism as a history of the English Cardinals who symbolise in their persons the history of the Church as a whole. London was the only place in recusant times where before 1778 illegal Catholic worship could take place in full public gaze and with proper splendour, in the chapels of the Stuart Queens and of the Catholic embassies. London was also the place of settlement of the largest single body of Irish Catholic immigrants into Britain in the nineteenth century, and it was these Irish immigrants who were the principal cause for the expansion of the Victorian Catholic Church.[6] London was the only English city important enough to Catholics to be divided into two dioceses at the restoration of the hierarchy of 1850, the sees of Westminster and Southwark; and from the 1850s, London was the centre of the movement of fashionable conversions to the faith, so that great churches like the Brompton Oratory[7] and later Westminster Cathedral[8] achieved a place in the national Catholic consciousness. It is remarkable how much of Bernard Ward's seven-volume history of English Catholicism between 1780 and 1850[9] is devoted to the capital, and that is obviously true of our Cardinal-Archbishops since, who at least up to Hume, have all had some sort of biographical memorial.

After London comes Lancashire, where English Catholics were a higher proportion of the population than anywhere else, and where in the nineteenth century, there was an influx of Irish Catholic immigrants second only in size to that of London.[10] Lancashire was the only county to be divided into two Catholic dioceses in the new hierarchy in 1850, Liverpool and Salford, to be joined by Lancaster in this century. Liverpool, indeed, with its huge immigrant population, was as much an Irish city as an English one, and mirrored Belfast in the fierceness of its sectarian passions, breaking into public rioting in 1909 over a Catholic street altar and procession. The Catholic communities of both Liverpool and Manchester also have distinguished historians in Frank Neal,[11] Gerard Connolly[12] and Steven Fielding[13], while Peter Doyle has written a fine study, which might serve for other English Catholic episcopal biographies, of the second Bishop of Liverpool, Alexander Goss,[14] that remarkable neo-Gallican who

set out for the First Vatican Council in 1869 and decided instead to winter for his health on the Riviera.

After Lancashire and Liverpool come Birmingham and the Midlands, which in the early and mid-Victorian era might be fairly described as the centre and capital of the Catholic revival, with the rebuilding of Oscott College in 1838 by the genius of the Gothic revival, Augustus Pugin; the Oscott presidency of Bishop Wiseman from 1840; the coming to the Midlands of the Italian Passionists[15] and Rosminians;[16] the great church building activities of the sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury and the convert squire Ambrose Phillipps de Lisle;[17] the first permanent Cistercian religious house in Mount St Bernard's; the distinguished episcopate of the greatest of the Old Catholic Bishops, William Bernard Ullathorne, the subject of an excellent biography by one of the very finest of English Catholic historians, Dom Cuthbert Butler;[18] and last but not least, the first wave of Oxford converts, pre-eminent among them John Henry Newman, who finally settled at Edgbaston. Birmingham Catholicism has also found an excellent historian in Judith Champ,[19] as has Yorkshire in Jennifer Supple-Green.[20] In all these respects, the history of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Midlands Catholicism is an inescapable part of our national story, quite as much as that of the Catholicism of the great metropolis, and if the north east has lost out, it is partly because it does not figure quite as prominently in the national picture, for want of striking personalities and for want of Catholic numbers.

There is, then, a neglect of north-eastern Catholic history. In my twenty-two years in Durham I have supervised about forty successful research students, half of whom have completed doctorates, on a range of subjects, but only one of them, Dr Leo Gooch, has written a thesis on our local Catholic story.[21] Dr Gooch, of course, is an army in himself, but he has had to make up in quality what he lacks in number. Again, I have only examined four theses in this area: the excellent pioneering study of nineteenth-century Irish Catholic immigrants to the region by Roger Cooter,[22] who also wrote a fine essay on Lady Londonderry's intolerance of the Catholics of Seaham;[23] Dr Gooch's University of York MA on Durham Catholic families and Weber's argument, that there was some sort of opposition between Catholicism and industrialisation – Dr Gooch showed that in our northern industrial heartland, there was no such contradiction;[24] then a Belfast doctorate by Dr Stephen Doherty on English and Irish

Catholics in Northumberland, with a wealth of statistical material;[25] and only in 1999, Caroline Scott's comparative survey of the nineteenth century Irish Catholic populations of Newcastle, Manchester and Liverpool.[26] Neither of the first two volumes of essays on the Irish in Britain which I edited with Roger Swift have a north-eastern chapter, though Frank Neal has contributed both an essay on Catholic immigrants in the north east to the third volume in the series, published in 1999[27] and a paper on the Irish in Newcastle-upon-Tyne to the recent collection on Irish immigration edited by Donald MacRaild[28], and provided the subject with a useful bibliography.[29] The problem here may be in part that nineteenth-century north-eastern Catholicism was so largely of Irish origin, and the Irish communities in England have not generally produced their own historians. What work has been done on the Irish in modern England has often been done in part by outsiders and even foreigners, like the Americans Lynn Lees and Alan O'Day.

There is a further dimension suggested by the prominence to Catholic historiography of Bernard Ward, already noted. Ward was the son of a convert, and he and his brother Wilfrid, who wrote the long-standard biographies of their father W.G. Ward and of the Cardinals Wiseman and Newman[30], could be said to have created a critical English Catholic historiography between them. But the north east had few such eminent convert families – the sons of Elizabeth Bowden, one of most notable Northumbrian converts, became London Oratorians, – so that the particular impulse to historical writing which was inspired by a convert ancestry was lacking in the north.

The writers on the north east suggest other reasons for the low profile of local Catholics. Dr Gooch has demonstrated how well integrated the gentry families like the Salvins were into regional life, even if not all the Catholic clergy can be described like the Jesuit missioner in Durham as the thirteenth prebend of the cathedral.[31] Again, there were sectarian politics in Newcastle, which had the biggest regional Victorian Irish settlement, but then Newcastle politics were predominantly Whig and Liberal, which put Catholics, even Irish Catholics, on the winning side. Dr Gooch has described the heated religious and political battles of the first half of the century, in which the aristocratic and gentry elite were clearly divided over the Catholic question, and I have written a footnote to the matter in a sketch of the prolific anti-Catholic apocalyptic of George Stanley Faber,

Master of Sherburn Hospital near Durham,[32] but Dr Scott suggests that in Newcastle at least, religion had ceased to matter much politically by 1868.

One of the reasons for this was the local weakness of the great rallying point for No Popery sentiment, the Church of England; in our only national census of religion, in 1851, the diocese of Durham, then embracing Northumberland, had 'the lowest figures for Anglican [church] accommodation in all the English dioceses, worse even than Manchester,'[33] and had among the lowest rates of Anglican church attendance in the country, as the largest number of worshippers in the north of the see were Presbyterian, the Methodists were the biggest body in the south, and the partly secularised city of Newcastle was in the middle. Because the Church of England was weak, No Popery was weak, certainly compared with Liverpool, or even when compared with Cumbria, which was then part of the northern Catholic Vicariate and later of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, and is the theme of a recent book by Donald MacRaild.[34] But again, what attracts historians is controversy, and as controversy has been weaker in the north east than elsewhere, so the history of our local Catholic Church has been a hidden one, which has yet to see the light of day.

There are, of course, some decent parish histories, of which the best that I have encountered is Father Tweedy's *Popish Elvet*[35], the eccentric but fascinating study by Anthony Archer, based upon St Dominic's parish in Newcastle,[36] and a few excellent monographs on local Catholic themes, of which the finest is David Milburn's history of St Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, the best history of a Catholic seminary in England that we possess, though Milburn suggests another reason for the historical neglect of our subject, that the north played almost no part in the great internal controversies of Victorian Catholicism.[37] Thus there is very little published about William Hogarth, the last Bishop of the Northern District and then the first Bishop of Hexham and then of Hexham and Newcastle, whose local episcopate lasted from 1848 to 1866.[38] Yet Hogarth is not unusual in this neglect: so little have Catholics regarded their Fathers in God, that apart from the Archbishops of Westminster, very few of the ninety English bishops who ruled the Church between 1850 and 1950 have found biographers.[39]

My impression is that the archives of the diocese, so ably described by the diocesan archivist, Robin Gard, in *Catholic Archives*[40] as well as those of Ushaw College, so richly exploited already for our national Catholic

story, though not for local detail, are full of matter of local interest awaiting further local historians, who wish like Dr Gooch to study them in an academic manner. It is to be hoped that there will be more academics around to take an interest in them. There is at least a national Catholic historiography in which the local story should figure as a significant part.

NOTES

1. Michael Morris and Leo Gooch, *Down Your Aisles: The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, 1850-2000* (Northern Cross, Hartlepool, 2000).
2. Published from 1891 to 1993-4.
3. See Leo Gooch, A *bibliography of periodical literature relating to the post-Reformation Roman Catholic history of north-east England* (1977).
4. Though see P. Norris, 'The Irish in Tow Law, Co Durham, 1851-1871', the *Bulletin* of the Durham County Local History Society, no 33 (December, 1984), pp. 41-70.
5. A notable exception is J.H. Treble's 'The Attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards Roman Catholicism in the North of England, 1833-42', *Northern History,* vol. V (1970), pp. 93-113. Treble has also written such excellent articles on the Irish in northern England as 'Irish Navies in the North of England, 1833-42', *Transport History,* vol. 6 (1973), pp. 93-113, and 'O'Connor, O'Connell and the Attitudes of Irish Immigrants towards Chartism in the North of England, 1838-1848', in J. Butt and I.F. Clarke (eds), *The Victorians and Social Protest* (David and Charles, Newton Abbot; Archon, Hamden, Conn., 1973). What there is otherwise of Catholic interest after 1800 in *Northern History* comes through an Irish interest. See, for example, E.D. Steele, 'The Irish Presence in the North of England, 1850-1914', *Northern History,* vol. XII (1976), pp. 220-41. See also below, under Jennifer Supple.
6. Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester University Press, 1977).
7. See Michael Napier and Alistair Laing (eds), *The London Oratory: Centenary 1884-1984* (Trefoil, London, no date).
8. John Browne and Timothy Dean (eds), *Westminster Cathedral: Building of Faith* (Booth-Clibborn Publications, London, 1995); Peter Doyle, *Westminster Cathedral 1895-1995* (Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1995).
9. Bernard Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival in England 1781-1803,* 2 vols (Longmans, Green and Co, 1909); *The Eve of Catholic Emancipation 1803-1829,* 3 vols (1911-12); *The Sequel to Catholic Emancipation 1830-1850,* 2 vols (1915).
10. See J.A. Hilton, *Catholic Lancashire: From Reformation to Renewal 1559-1991* (Philimore & Co., Chichester, 1994).
11. Frank Neal, *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An aspect of Anglo-Irish history* (Manchester University Press, 1988).
12. Gerard Connolly, *Catholicism in Manchester and Salford* (University of Manchester PhD thesis, 1980); 'Irish and Catholic: Myth or Reality? Another Sort of Irish and the Renewal of the Clerical Profession among Catholics in England, 1791-1918', in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in the Victorian City* (Croom Helm, London, 1985), pp. 225-54; for a list of his other articles, see *ibid.*, p. 305.

13. Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1993). In spite of its title, this has a strong Mancunian emphasis, deriving from his thesis *The Irish Catholics of Manchester and Salford: Aspects of their Religious and Political History 1890-1939* (University of Warwick PhD thesis, 1988).
14. Peter Hugh Doyle, *The Episcopate of Alexander Goss of Liverpool, 1856-1872: Diocesan reorganization and control after the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy* (University of London PhD thesis, 1981). See also his 'Bishop Goss of Liverpool (1856-1872) and the importance of being English', in Stuart Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity, Studies in Church History,* vol 18 (Blackwell, Oxford, 1982), pp. 433-47.
15. See Alfred Wilson, *Blessed Dominic Barberi Supernaturalized Briton* (Sands & Co, London, 1967).
16. See Claude Leetham, *Luigi Gentili: A Sower for the Second Spring* (Burns & Oates, London, 1965).
17. See Margaret Pawley, *Faith and Family: The Life and Circle of Ambrose Phillipps de Lisle* (The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1993).
18. Dom Cuthbert Butler, *The Life & Times of Bishop Ullathorne 1806-1889,* 2 vols (Burns, Oates and Washboume, London, 1926).
19. J.F. Champ, *Assimilation and Separation: the Catholic Revival in Birmingham c. 1650-1850* (University of Birmingham PhD thesis, 1984). See also her *Oscott* (Archdiocese of Birmingham Historical Commission, 1987).
20. J.F. Supple-Green, *The Catholic Revival in Yorkshire 1850-1900* (The Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society Ltd, Leeds, 1990). See also, under her maiden name of Supple, 'The Catholic Clergy of Yorkshire, 1850-1900', *Northern History,* vol. XXI (1985), pp. 212-35; and 'The Political Attitudes and Activities of Yorkshire Catholics, 1850-1900', *Northern History,* vol. XXII (1986), pp. 231-49.
21. Leopold Gooch, *From Jacobite to Radical: the Catholics of North East England, 1688-1850* (University of Durham PhD thesis, 1989).
22. Roger Cooter, *The Irish in Durham and Northumberland, 1840-1880* (University of Durham MA thesis, 1973).
23. Roger Cooter, 'Lady Londonderry and the Irish Catholics of Seaham Harbour: No Popery out of context', *Recusant History,* vol. 13, no 3 (1976), pp. 288-97.
24. *The Durham Catholics and Industrial Development 1560-1850* (University of York MA thesis, 1984).
25. Stephen Doherty, *English and Irish Catholics in Northumberland, c. 1745-c. 1760* (The Queen's University of Belfast PhD thesis, 1987).
26. C.L. Scott, *A Comparative Re-examination of Anglo-Irish Relations in Nineteenth-Century Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (University of Durham PhD thesis, 1998).
27. Frank Neal, 'Irish settlement in the north-east and north-west of England in the mid-nineteenth century', in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1999), pp. 75-100, with an extensive bibliography.

28. Frank Neal, 'The Foundations of the Irish Settlement in Newcastle upon Tyne: The Evidence in the 1851 Census', in Donald MacRaild (ed.), *The Great Famine and Beyond: Irish Migrants in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Irish Academic Press, 2000), pp. 71-93.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

30. *William George Ward and the Oxford Movement* (Macmillan, London, 1889); *William George Ward and the Catholic Revival* (Macmillan, London, 1893); *The Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman,* 2 vols (Longmans, Green & Co, London, 1897); *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman,* 2 vols (Longmans, Green & Co, London, 1912).

31. Leo Gooch, 'Lingard v. Barrington et al: Ecclesiastical Politics in Durham 1805-1829', *Durham University Journal* (January, 1993), pp. 7-26.

32. 'George Stanley Faber: No Popery and Prophecy', in Peter J. Harland and Robert Hayward (eds), *New Heaven and New Earth: Prophecy and the Millennium: Essays in Honour of Anthony Gelston* (Brill, Leiden, 1999), pp. 287-304.

33. G.E. Milburn, 'Church-going in Northumberland just prior to the Formation of the Diocese', in W. S .F. Pickering (ed.), *A Social History of the Diocese of Newcastle 1882-1982* (Oriel Press, Boston and London, 1981), p. 83.

34. Donald M. MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration: The Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool, 1998).

35. J.M. Tweedy, *Popish Elvet: The History of St Cuthbert's, Durham,* 2 parts (1981-83).

36. Anthony Archer, *The two Catholic Churches: a Study in Oppression* (SCM Press, London, 1986).

37. David Milburn, *A History of Ushaw College* (The Ushaw Bookshop, Ushaw College, 1964), p.257: 'One would very much wish to be able to devote a few pages to the effect that the more speculative of these current questions had on Catholics in the north. Truth to tell, one can scarcely begin to say anything, for these problems the northerners left others to resolve.'

38. There is of course an entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and a valuable sketch in Joseph Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History, or Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics,* 5 vols, vol. III (1887), pp. 321-3. I found little else of much use besides Milburn in writing my paper, 'The Legacy of William Hogarth, 1786-1866', in *Under the Fisherman's Ring: Essays commemorating the English and Welsh Hierarchy, 1850, Recusant History,* vol. 25, no 2 (October 2000), pp. 249-62, which prompted these reflections in the first place.

39. G.A. Beck (ed.), *The English Catholics 1850-1950* (Burns Oates, London, 1950), p. 188. To Beck's four one can now add Peter Amigo of Southwark, by Michael Clifton.

40. R. Gard, 'The Archives of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle', *Catholic Archives,* No 19 (1999), pp. 24-42.

THE FAMINE IRISH CATHOLICS IN NEWCASTLE AND COUNTY DURHAM: SOURCES FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Godfrey Duffy

INTRODUCTION

Essentially, I began tracing my ancestry in 1985 when my father had just taken early retirement and was doing all those things he had not had time to do before. One of those things was family history in which he never tired of trying to interest me. His sole archive was a large envelope containing a couple of baptism and marriage certificates, suffering because of being folded and unfolded. He had also regaled me with dubious tales concerning my ancestors, such as those who had emigrated to Salt Lake City, and that his own father had visited Dundalk relations before the Great War. My dad remembered his mother singing *Kevin Barry* around the house and seeing De Valera speak in Co. Durham. My dad had also visited western Ireland as a young man and claimed to have seen women in shawls smoking clay pipes. Apart from this I had nothing. Only that my ancestors were Irish on both my mother's and father's side.

After fifteen years' research, I have traced all my Irish ancestors back to their places of origin in Ireland. Utilising documentary evidence and investigating the oral traditions in Britain, Ireland and America, I have filled many gaps, but my research continues. I am especially heartened by the growing amount of Irish genealogy books, research facilities and services that have become available since I started. I am especially delighted by the increasing numbers of local people I have met who want to discover their Irish ancestry and are proud to claim it. The whole experience has been enriched through contact with fellow researchers. The use of the Internet for genealogical purposes is already proving useful and I look forward to seeing more web sites concerning Irish genealogy.

THE JOURNEY FROM IRELAND

Irish seasonal harvesters had been coming to northern England throughout the nineteenth century and the introduction of regular steamships between Ireland and England in the 1820s increased this prospect.[1] The two peak periods of travel were just before and just after the British grain harvest and during these times the ships' decks would be full of harvesters, the majority making the journey to earn money to pay their rents back in Ireland. During the Irish Famine the decks became full all

year round. It was claimed in 1847 that 250,000 people left Ireland and continued to leave in those numbers for the next four years. Some commentators described the Irish as being mostly paupers and up to 100,000 Irish were said to have been 'wandering, begging and destitute about the streets of Liverpool and other towns in the north of England.'[2] In 1849 it was calculated that 296,000 passengers arrived at Liverpool during 1848 and of those 130,000 intended to emigrate to America.

Sometimes inclement weather had necessitated cramming the passengers into confined steerage where Captain Denham described 'passengers and cattle were... mixed together... in the midst of filth and mire.[3] An infamous case was that of the steamship *Londonderry* which was sailing from Sligo to Liverpool in December 1848. In the stormy weather the deck passengers were locked in steerage, where in stifling conditions they were unable to reach drinking water. Seventy-two passengers were dead by the time the ship docked at Derry. Captain Denham described in 1849 how the police at Liverpool needed to carry passengers suffering from exhaustion, hunger and sickness ashore.[4] These people, if they survived, within a short time would be applying for poor relief from the various British parishes in which they found themselves. This pattern would be repeated in other ports, such as Bristol, Glasgow, London and Whitehaven.[5]

The Irish who eventually settled in north-east England would have taken ships from Belfast, Derry, Donaghadee, Dublin, Dundalk, Portrush and Sligo.[6] Belfast had the most sailings going to Ardrossan, Carlisle, Fleetwood, Glasgow, Greenock, Liverpool, London, Stranraer and Whitehaven. Derry sailings served Ardrossan, Fleetwood, Glasgow and Liverpool. There were seven sailings to Ardrossan and three to Liverpool each week but only one to Whitehaven.[7] However, these were official passenger sailings and one story told was that people were able to travel to Whitehaven on returning coalships that needed ballast. In the majority of cases the Irish would have walked to the nearest Irish port to get a ship to Britain. During the Famine clearly many died along the way of hunger and typhus (also known as *road fever*).

Some Irish settled in the ports where they arrived whilst others moved on after a time. It is evident that the Irish continued to arrive in Britain for many years after the Famine, contributing to the idea of chain migration.[8] Continuing emigration would have been caused by poverty and unemployment in Ireland; demand for labour and varied employment

prospects in Britain; established pre- and post-famine communities in Britain ensuring an information network of where to live and work; and availability of poor relief.[9] The actual experience of the famine was a factor that outweighed all others. The horror of starvation, disease and devastated communities was now indelibly etched in the Irish psyche.

EARLY SETTLEMENT IN NEWCASTLE

There is evidence that the Irish had settled in Newcastle in substantial numbers in the 1820/30s.[10] They had also applied for poor relief before the mass influx due to the Famine.[11] The Irish who arrived in Newcastle during the Famine became concentrated in the Sandgate area where decaying property and insanitary conditions mitigated against a people already traumatised through starvation and disease.[12] In Sandgate cholera was endemic and typhus spread through overcrowded housing.[13] The Catholic priests of St Andrew's chapel, Fathers Riddell, Standen and Cullen administered to their latest flock in the most appalling conditions, resulting in the death of Fr Riddell from typhus in 1847.[14] Their Sandgate report makes grim reading: *Soap Entry, behind Rose and Crown pub kept by Mr. Latty, lives Patrick Henry with family of 8 children, 6 with fever.*[15] Concerning the same family: *Patrick Henry, wife and 7 children of Co. Antrim ordered into the House.*[16] (Patrick Henry died in 1848 and was the author's great-great-great grandfather.)

The Newcastle Workhouse and Fever Hospital continued to fill with Irish and as late as 1851 the Poor Law Union Guardians stated: *Great many Irish in the Workhouse to be removed.* [17] Access to poor relief was dependent on a person being resident in the parish for five years. Otherwise, removal back to the parish of origin was a distinct possibility, and there is evidence that they were sent back.[18] The Irish who did apply were listed in the *examination of outdoor relief* lists.[19] These lists included the applicant's name, age, address, years in the parish, and if they were Irish.

MARRIAGE REGISTERS

Bishop Ambrose Griffiths, the present bishop of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, has been encouraging in his attitude towards genuine family historians. Since 1994 the majority of the records of the older parishes in the diocese have been deposited, and also microfilmed, in the county record offices of Durham, Northumberland, Teesside, and Tyne and Wear. This has ensured both their preservation and their accessibility for consultation in a secure and suitable environment. The area of the diocese

encompasses Tyneside, the counties of Durham and Northumberland, and that part of Teesside north of the Tees. The diocesan records as a whole represent a substantial and valuable Catholic archive, of which the parish registers are the most useful to genealogical researchers.

For a local person researching their Irish Catholic ancestry the marriage registers of the Famine and the post-Famine period offer a rich vein of genealogical information. They include the names and residences of the married couple and witnesses but, more significantly, the names and residences of the married couple's parents, who in the majority of cases were still in ireland. In some cases the married couple's parents had also come to north-east England from Ireland and this can be confirmed by consulting the relevant census returns for the local areas. Others settled outside the region in such places as Berwick, Bradford, Bury, Dumfries and Liverpool. This information provides useful clues as to the route the family had taken once they arrived in Britain. It is clear that some adult children had decided to move to north-east England with or without their parents. In my research I have found that some marriage registers listed both Irish county and parish. Some even listed the townland within the parish. Irish families were associated with particular townlands for generations before the upheaval of the Famine.

I have examined and transcribed the marriage registers for the County Durham Catholic chapels of St Wilfrid (Bishop Auckland),[20] St Michael (Houghton le Spring),[21] and Our Blessed Lady & St Joseph (Brooms),[22] for the Famine and the post-Famine period. These chapels were located in areas of substantial Irish settlement during the nineteenth century.[23] Within these areas the Irish were both concentrated in various townships and dispersed over a wide area. Their mobility and flexibility enabled them to move on to wherever workers were needed, irrespective of the social and industrial conditions. The marriage register information for all three chapels indicated that the Irish had come from nearly all of the thirty-two counties of Ireland. In the St Michael's marriage register the majority of Irish came from the famine affected counties of Clare, Leitrim, Mayo and Sligo. In the period 1848-1855, ninety-three marriages were recorded and eighty-seven of these were Irish only couples or with one partner Irish. In the marriage registers for St Wilfrid for the same period, 181 marriages were recorded and of these 171 were Irish only couples or with one partner Irish. In Our Blessed Lady and St Joseph's marriage

registers for 1842-1855 there were 239 marriages recorded and 112 of these were Irish couples only or with one partner Irish. The majority of Irish couples whose marriages were recorded in St Wilfrid's and Our Blessed Lady & St Joseph's marriage registers came from Co. Monaghan.[24] Why this should be so merits further research.

To ascertain the number of Irish who settled in the area we must add to the marriage register figures the newly arrived Irish couples who were already married with children and continued to have more children in the north-east of England. An examination of the baptism registers would therefore be necessary. It is important to remember that although the Irish Catholics might not have registered the birth of all their children they certainly would have had them all baptised. From the marriage register information I was able to confirm the Irish counties of origin of four sets of my great-great grandparents. They had all arrived just before or just after the 1851 census.[25]

THE 1851 CENSUS

The 1851 census was the first to record a person's exact place of birth and the date coincides with the end of the Famine. However, the majority of Irish only had their birthplaces recorded merely as 'Ireland'. This was the situation for the Irish who settled in the areas covered by the Brooms chapel, namely Berryedge, Blackhill, Leadgate and Ivestone. *The Brooms chapel marriage registers then are the only source of identifying not only the Irish counties but also the parishes of origin of the Irish who settled in the area.* The vast majority of Irish came from Co. Monaghan, followed by Tyrone, Louth, Armagh and Down. In the Bishop Auckland area the 1851 census did record the Irish counties of birth of some of the Irish and this information correlated to the St Wilfrid's marriage register information. The majority of these Irish came from Co. Monaghan, followed by Sligo, Cavan and Mayo. Did the Irish who settled elsewhere in north-east England also come from these counties? A study of the percentage of the Irish in Durham city on the 1851 census whose counties of birth were recorded indicated that the majority came from Counties Roscommon, followed by Tyrone, Mayo and Sligo.[26]

The southern counties affected by famine, such as Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford, were rarely recorded either on the 1851 census or in the Catholic chapel registers in north-east England. This would suggest the Irish from these counties were travelling to England

from the southern ports of Cork and Waterford and arriving at Bristol, Liverpool and London. However, it does not explain why the majority of Irish who came to north-east England were from the northern Irish counties. It would have been conceivably just as easy to travel south-east as north-east from the ports of entry. It is known that pre-Famine communities of Irish from the southern counties were established in Wales, as well as those from the northern counties in Scotland. Once again, research in this area merits investigation.

An examination of the 1851 census for Newcastle in which the Irish had their counties of birth recorded indicated that the majority, representing 44% came from Galway, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo. The next group, representing 27%,came from Antrim, Derry, Donegal, Down and Fermanagh. However, of the 7,152 Irishborn in 1851 census for Newcastle, only 1,001 had their counties of birth recorded. So, can this random sample be representative of the majority of Irish-born in Newcastle in 1851? Neal argues that as a random sample these percentages could be applied to all the Irish in Newcastle in the 1851 census.[27]If the Irish counties recorded in the 1851 census correlate to the Irish counties recorded in the Catholic chapels' marriage registers, then this would reinforce Neal's proposition. Since the marriage registers cover numerous years, unlike the one census year, they should be a more accurate indicator of the origin of the Irish settled in an area. They also could be used in a study of chain migration.

NOTES

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23. F.Neal, *op. cit.*
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EDITORIAL NOTE

Mr Duffy has been running a 10-week course in *Irish Genealogy for Beginners* at the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Newcastle upon Tyne University. His articles of genealogy have been published in both England Ireland, where he has also given a series of lectures. His book, *Tracing Your Donegal Ancestors*, was published in 1996 by Flyleaf Press, 4 Spencer Villas, Glenageary, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

EXCURSIONS DURING THE MILLENIUM YEAR
SIMONBURN, HESLEYSIDE, BELLINGHAM, 13 MAY

SIMONBURN

Fine weather is always a bonus on an outing, and the Jubilee year did not disappoint us in that regard. On all three occasions we were blessed with it in abundance. An added bonus on this first excursion was a visit to Simonburn, prompted by our vice chairman. We made this the first call of the day. Situated in North Tynedale, Simonburn takes its name from the Simon Earl of Northumberland who built castles here in the 12th century to defend the region against invasion by the Scots (here burn = burgh), though it took Edward I to gain effective control. Here for many centuries lay the largest parish (260 square miles of it) in England. Not until 1811 was it first divided. Local tradition dates the church back to St Mungo or Kentigern (d. 601) to whom it is dedicated. His main missionary activity seems to have been in NW Scotland. Essentially the present church is 13th century (its first rector appointed in 1229 by the King of Scotland), but actually little medieval fabric survives and is mainly at the west end. Extensive alterations were carried out in the 18th and 19th centuries. One highly unusual feature is that the floor slopes from west to east following the lie of the ground. The rectory has a classical frontage of 1725, with an earlier north wing, the moulded doorway of which bears the inscription *non tam sibi, quam successoribus hac aedificium extruxit Major Allgood anno mirabili 1666. nunc mea, mox hujus sed postea nescio hujus* (Not so much for himself as for his successors Major Allgood erected this building in the marvellous year 1666, now mine, soon his, but afterwards I know not whose.) The row of lime trees, the badge of the House of Orange, was planted 1689/1691. For much interesting information relating to the church and the village we have to thank Mr D.W. Smith of Sunderland, who came forward to act as our guide. His grandparents are buried in the churchyard. For readers who do not know the village, Simonburn really is a treasure, with its 18th and early 19th cottages unspoiled by development.

From Simonburn we intended to retrace our steps to Hexham for lunch, but because that historic town was hosting the races, we were strongly advised to move on to Bellingham. In the event, we had that place virtually to ourselves. In the early afternoon we drove the two miles to Hesleyside, the home of the Charlton family, where we received a very warm welcome from Major and Mrs Charlton and their son-in-law Peter.

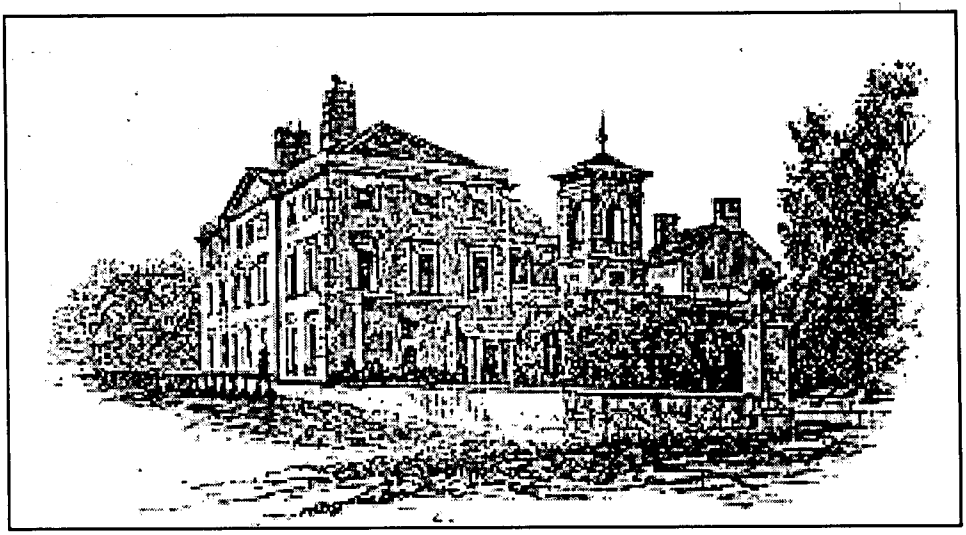
HESLEYSIDE

The Catholic Charltons have owned lands here since the reign of Richard I. To have a secure home against the marauding Scots they constructed at an early stage of their history the customary pele tower, which disappeared during later alterations. By the 16th century the family occupied a respected place in Northumbrian society, which did not preclude some of them being well known reivers. When the 'Charlton Spur' appeared on the platter served up by the lady of the house it was meant as an invitation to the menfolk to help themselves to their neighhours' cattle. After the union of the crowns the more peaceful times allowed the family to extend their tower house by the addition of two storeyed east and west wings. Reconstruction a hundred years later added a third floor, re-faced the south front and provided a passage into the courtyard. During these alterations a priest's hiding hole was found in a chimney breast. Though active in the 16th century, the Charltons played no part in the Jacobite rebellions, which saved them from losing their lands and/or their heads. During the Georgian period a stone clock tower was built and the gardens laid out by Capability Brown, a new east wing built and the pele tower demolished, while inside the house a graceful double cantilever staircase was built by Ignatius Bonomi, a distant relative. During the 19th century improvements continued, but they were minor when compared with the work of the family in benefiting the village of Bellingham.

The family acted as our guides during a visit lasting over an hour, their contributions happily adding to the view of Pevsner's *Northumberland* that this mainly 18th century property is of considerable interest by a fund of incidents describing the difficulties that this old Catholic family had in surviving, even to the extent of having to close the house down for a number of years, at almost the same time that Callaly suffered that fate. Was it for the same reason, over spending on improvements?

BELLINGHAM

Already during the lunch break we had individually gone exploring places of interest in Bellingham like the parish church. For long enough this was technically a chapel of ease dependent on Simonburn. Low and without a west tower, its chancel belongs to the 13th century. The people of North Tynedale were regarded as particularly lawless. The State Papers of Henry VIII record an incident in Holy Week 1523 when some of the rievers – possibly having been denied Communion – seized the Blessed



Hesleyside
Engraving from *The Tyne and its Tributaries*, by W. J. Palmer, 1882

Sacrament from the sepulchre (altar of repose) on Good Friday, returning it the next day when a Scottish friar offered them Communion. Such was the violence that the church was seldom used and by 1609 it was a roofless ruin. Remodelled later in the century its aisles were demolished and a new south door inserted. The nave windows may well be original, re-used from the aisles. Without doubt its most remarkable feature is the 17th century roof with its alternate strips of vertical single and double thickness stone slabs laid on ribs.

Our purpose in returning to Bellingham was to conclude the day's outing with a celebration of Mass in the Catholic church of St Oswald. The Charltons preserved the Faith in the area by keeping a priest at Hesleyside, though the first recorded belongs to 1741. The house chapel of 1760 was replaced by another in 1850. By this time Bellingham had its own church. In 1793 two or three houses had been bought to create an independent mission, its upkeep guaranteed by the Charltons. For some unknown reason the mission was transferred back to Hesleyside after 1808 until the present church (enlarged in 1869) was built in 1839 to the designs of Ignatius Bonomi. The head of the family donated the land for church and presbytery , and various other members contributed towards its cost. Ten years later another member of the family also paid for the building of a school which after its closure fifty years ago became a useful parish centre. Here the ladies of the parish very kindly plied us with tea, sandwiches and cakes to sustain us on the journey home. Naturally enough they received our thanks, as did Fr Robinson for his attention to the needs of the group, but it would be ungracious not to record our thanks here again, not only to our friends at Bellingham, but also to the Charlton family and everyone who helped to make the day successful.

YORK, 17 JUNE

The travel arrangements tor this day's outing were somewhat complicated, Coaches, except those transporting the disabled, are not allowed in the centre of York. Geriatrics some of the group may have been, but not disabled, and as we wished to visit both the Minster and the Bar Convent, it was thought advisable to arrive in one coach park and leave from another. A scenario which must send a shiver down the spine of anyone who has regularly conducted coach outings.

YORK MINSTER

We sometimes forget that the present cathedral built between the 13th and the 15th centuries is the fourth, if not the fifth, church on the site. Its predecessors were[1] the wooden church built by King Edwin in 627;[2] the stone church begun by him, finished by Oswald, repaired at the beginning of the 8th century by Wilfrid and destroyed (probably by fire) in 741;[3] that built by Archbishop Albert a generation later;[4] the church constructed under Archbishop Thomas after the Conquest, to which was added a rebuilt choir by Archbishop Roger. This Romanesque church was the one gradually demolished to be replaced[5] by the present imposing Gothic structure. In addition to the transport difficulty already mentioned, we encountered restrictions within the Minster itself, due to the rehearsals taking place for the forthcoming performances of the York Mystery Plays. Entering by the south transept we found ourselves confined mainly to that newly restored area and the choir. However, as a result we were better able to appreciate details which would have been overlooked in a general, hurried visit. As it was, our tour lasted an hour and a half, and we learned much from our pre-arranged knowledgeable guide, Miss Edith Stayman, who lives in York and is a very involved member of the Minster congregation. We have her to thank for a very informative tour.

THE BAR CONVENT

The visit to the Minster ended at 1.00p.m which allowed us an hour and a half's break for refreshments before proceeding by the railway station to Blossom Street for a most interesting visit to the buildings belonging to the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The time spent there gave us a salutary reminder of the fate of English Catholics who refused to accept the religious changes imposed during the reign of Elizabeth I. The story of' Mary Ward, the Institute's founder (a title she was denied during her lifetime), is one of cheerful heroism as she battled against ill health and clerical bureaucracy to fulfil an obvious calling from God to introduce (better, re-introduce) an active element into the contemplative life demanded by canon law for religious women of the time. Having set her mind on becoming a nun this Yorkshire girl then only fifteen years of age joined the most rigorous of the women's orders, the Poor Clares at St Omer. After a short time, she left to found her own house for English ladies. (At the outbreak of the French Revolution it left Flanders and eventually settled in Darlington, one of only two convents in the diocese before 1850).) In the course of time she came to see that her real vocation lay in providing

Catholic schooling for girls. Meeting as it did a genuine urgent need her enterprise spread rapidly throughout the Catholic countries of Europe. But when she sought papal recognition for her Institute she found herself rebuffed at every turn by church officials in Rome, whose opposition to her on the grounds that she was breaching the regulations of canon law requiring enclosure was hardened by their acceptance of the English secular clergy's accusation that she was a 'Jesuitess'. A lonely, prophetic figure, she suffered the trauma of the condemnation of her Institute as well as her imprisonment in the Poor Clare convent in Munich for rebellion and heresy. Eventually she returned to England, settling just outside of York, where she died in 1645. Happily, her educational work went on.

With her in her last moments was her companion Frances Bedingfield to whom was given in 1686 £450 by Sir Thomas Gascoigne with which to buy a house and land in York at Micklegate Bar for religious and educational purposes. The nuns there lived discreetly, for they were acting against the law not only in practising their their Catholic faith but in teaching it, too. But in the more liberal atmosphere of the 18th century the school flourished to such a degree that the nuns were able to afford new accommodation for the community and school built round an open courtyard. Work on the buildings designed by the York architect Thomas Atkinson began in 1766 with an elegant chapel in the neo-classical style complete with a cupola (though for security it was hidden behind the roof line) and terminated with a Georgian facade in 1787. For extra security a priest's hiding hole was constructed in the chapel then forgotten about until about fifty years ago. Further building took place in the 19th century when a rather heavy looking extension surmounted by a large cross was added by G.T. Andrews of York. The 20th century developments have been radical, owing to the changes demanded by state re-organisation of education. The Georgian and Victorian buildings fronting Blossom Street which have such important historical associations have been retained by the Institute as a museum and tourist accommodation. The rest were sold to the diocese of Middlesbrough to help form All Saints Comprehensive school.

The museum took us over an hour to visit. It purports to tell the history of Christianity in the north of England from Roman times, but its main thrust is the portrayal of Catholic life during the difficult penal days, much of it rightly centering on the life of Mary Ward and the work of her

Institute. After our guided tour we enjoyed a cup of tea in the reception area, before returning after a suitable interval to the chapel for Mass celebrated by Fr Milburn. The whole afternoon could not have been better organised, with the Sisters and staff ready to help us at every turn. The visit, all were agreed, had been very worthwhile. At about half past-five we left in good spirits to seek the coach, only to have them dampened by the realisation that one of the flock had gone astray. Some of the men in the party having kindly volunteered to mount a search which proved fruitless, the decision was taken (rather reluctantly) to set off back to Newcastle. As it turned out, the missing lamb returned there almost as soon as we did. How that came about is another (and now amusing) story. Suffice it to say here by way of conclusion that much to our relief, there had been no mishap. Regretfully, this episode tended to cloud the close of a beautiful day.

CALLALY AND BIDDLESTONE, 16 SEPTEMBER

CALLALY

Callaly, I have to admit, was an after-thought, but for all that very worthwhile. The Committee had planned the autumn half-day excursion with Biddlestone in mind, and it was only because of the need to contact Dr Anthony Henfrey at Callaly about access to Biddlestone that we were kindly invited by him to visit Callaly beforehand. Apparently there used to be two castles at Callaly, one on the hill overlooking the vale of Whittingham, which apart from a mention in 1415 is otherwise unknown, the other lower down the valley in a most spectacular landscape, as we were soon to find out. The Henfreys occupy its east wing, the site of the original chapel pulled down to make way for a ballroom when the mission was transferred to Whittingham in the early 1880s. Callaly is according to Pevsner's *Northumberland* 'one of the most interesting and varied houses in Northumberland.' Alas, not usually open to the public. We saw it at its best in the late summer sun of a gentle afternoon. Essentially classical in style (c1675-1890) with earlier traces, it was the seat of the Catholic Clavering family from medieval times until 1877 when it was bought by the Brownes. During the war of 1939-45 it was taken over (as I think it was in 1914-18) as a military hospital. Some of the ladies in our group had worked there and knew it well. Structurally they saw little change, for when it was converted into apartments in 1987 everything was done with the greatest respect and senstivity. We all felt that it was still essentially a large house, not small units.

During the Reformation period the Claverings remained staunchly Catholic, as did many of his immediate neighbours. John Bossy's 'Four Northumberland Congregations' describes it as an almost perfect example of a seigneurial congregation in the extended sense of including not only the landlord's servants and immediate economic dependants but virtually all his tenants as well, augmented by the remnants of the Eslington mission after the debacle of 1715 when that estate passed into the hands of the Protestant Liddells. (p.97) By the end of the 18th century Callaly as a Catholic centre (in contrast to Thropton) had declined, mainly as a result of the economic crisis brought about by the extravagance of Ralph Clavering from the 1750s onwards. His priest brother Nicholas took charge of the property in 1788 and initiated a programme of retrenchment, which led to a further loss of population. In the 1830s the family returned to Callaly and resumed the work of improving the house, in the process driving even more of the small population away when they demolished houses in the village to create a stately approach to the castle. The south range of the buildings seems to keep the pattern of a 3 bay medieval house. Certainly it is the oldest part, the south-west wing in essence a re-faced (c1740) medieval tower with three of its walls six and a half feet thick. Here in this south range we have the *pièce de resistance* of the castle 'a showpiece of exuberant plaster work' (Pevsner) in what was originally the drawing-room of the house. Already oppressive, it will look even more so when the present American owners of the apartment make good their promise to re-decorate. The central section of the castle was rebuilt or re-modelled in 1676 in the time of Ralph and Mary Clavering (cf. the inscription RMC). The west front also has two projecting wings and contains a doorway dated 1727. Before its conversion the main entrance of the house was located on the east front. The east and north wings were tastefully remodelled and enlarged by Major Browne from 1890 onwards. After thanking Dr Henfrey for sacrificing an hour of his time to guide us through the house, we made our way via Thropton and Rothbury (a short stop) to . . .

BIDDLESTONE

Here on the edge of the wild Cheviot HiIls, in this bleak corner of Northumberland, Biddlestone chapel evokes a score of Catholic memories. Not that it itself is so very, old: it was built in the early 19th century on the subtstantial remains of a pele tower, the date or which is disputed. A brief history of the property published prior to its being taken into the ownership of the Historic Chapels Trust identifies it as typical of the 13th century

Borders towers built to withstand the ravages of the Scots, but the HCT itself quotes Peter Ryder's opinion that it is late 14th century when it was probably a solitary defensive position. For almost eight centuries Biddlestone was the home of the powerful Selby family, whose lands almost co-terminous with the boundaries of the medieval parish of Alwinton with Holystone were granted by the English king in 1272. (HCT) The original tower was later extended to include a T shaped west wing, with a small courtyard and ornate southern gateway, doubling as the model for Scott's Osbaldistone Hall. After a disastrous fire the whole structure with the exception of the ground floor of the original pole was replaced in 1796 by a new house. When this in turn was being altered about 1820 (by Dobson?) they repaired the remains of the tower and constructed a chapel over its undercroft. Thus the visiter is led to believe that it is considerably older than it really is. The house was demolished in the 1950s with the exception of that part of its west wall which adjoined the chapel. In the wall are two blocked up windows of the 16th or 17th century. (Pevsner).

In his *English Catholic Community 1570-1850* John Bossy says that between the 16th and 18th centuries the people who lived in certain sectors of the northern landscape were particularly susceptible to a persistence of Catholic feelings, an odd way of saying they clung to their Catholicism, but it is his way of pointing out that they made no great distinction between their religion and their politics, somewhat like many people today in Northern Ireland on both sides of the divide. It is a feature of religion easily to become a cultural matter, a question of identity. In northern England religious and political reasons together sparked off successive rebellions. Like the Catholic Irish, who became more Catholic the more they were oppressed, so did these northerners in England. After the Reformation the first recorded priest at Biddlestone, so far as I can ascertain, was Thomas Durham, alias Collingwood. He was buried on 6 July 1725 at Alwinton. A 1738 report notes that '18 papists meet at Biddleston, at Mr Selby's. Robert Widdrington, priest.' Other priests are known to have lived here as chaplains to the Selbys – among them Jesuits and Benedictines. In fact, it is clear that here Catholicism survived the upheaval of the Reformation, and slowly began to re-establish itself almost entirely owing to the Selby's insistence on having Catholics to maintain their house and immediate estate. (J. Bossy, 'Four Catholic Congregations in rural Northumberland', *Recusant History* 1967, p.93). As it happens. Callaly was an even better

Biddlestone Hall and Chapel
Sketch by Peter F. Anson, 1934

example of a segneurial congregation, for the Claverings insisted on the tenants of his entire estate being Catholic. (Bossy, p.97). In 1767 Biddlestone mission had a congregation of 150: in 1780, 136 and gradually tailed down (1851 c. 120) to zero. The main reason for this can probably be traced to the gradual decline of the Selby's fortunes and the dispersal of the population. Another factor may have been the temptation of priests to desert the houses of the gentry where they were often badly treated for the independent missions then being established in the new urban areas. Father Francis Hutchinson was the last of the priests at Biddlestone. He left for Wolsingham in 1944. Thereafter the mission was served from Thropton until the diocese decided in the 1990s to relinquish its tenancy of the chapel. To save it from closure an action group of local 'Friends' worked hard to raise the funds necessary for this listed Grade 2* building to be taken into the ownership of the Historic Chapels Trust, the long negotiations being completed only in 1998. The survival of the chapel is thus assured for the foreseeable future, the Trust now guaranteeing major structural repairs, maintenance and insurance and its Friends bearing the responsibility, for minor repairs, cleaning and arrangements for access. To join this small enthusiastic group, contact Dr Henfrey at Callaly Castle, 01665 574 420 (fax 574 021) e-mail: hencalluk@aol.com

The unusual setting of this chapel greatly impressed those of us who were newcomers to the site. Clearly the Friends have done a great deal of work tidying up its approach and so tastefully renovating the interior of the chapel, making it a worthy sanctuary for the Mass we celebrated there just as the autumn light was fading. The chapel is available for a variety of uses. Any parish group of no more than about fifty, that wishes to have Mass there should contact Dr Henfrey at the above telephone number. Apart from candles they will need to take everything with them, including water. They must also provide their own priest. If arrival is to be by coach, be sure to park it on the roadside. Our coach was directed up the drive, but when trying to reverse it the driver ran on to marsh land. Like a stubborn donkey the coach seemed to enjoy settling down for the night in such delectable surroundings, a fate which we managed to avoid sharing thanks to the local farmer who brought his tractor to force the reluctant beast to get moving again.

PROGRAMME 2000 — 2001

The meeting on the 6th September will be held at St Andrew's, Worswick Street, Newcastle upon Tyne (Mass at 7.00 p.m, A.C.M. at 7.30 p.m.). All other meetings will be held on Wednesdays at the Tyneside Irish Centre, 43 Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, and will commence at 7.15 p.m. The Society welcomes non-members at its lectures (fee, 50p.)

6th Sept.2000	Mass 7.00 p.m. followed by A.C.M. 7.30 p.m.
4th Oct.2000	Dr Margaret Harvey: *One Thousand Years of Christianity in the North East*
8th Nov.2000	Dr Sheridan Gilley: *'Bishop Billy': William Hogarth, First Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle*
10th Jan.2001	Mrs Mary Woodman: *Our Two Newcastle Cathedrals*
7th Feb. 2001	Rev. Michael Jackson: *The Building of Durham Cathedral*
7th Mar. 2001	Dr Jan Rhodes: *The Symbolism of Medieval Churches*

Coach Excursions

16th Sept.2000	Callaly Castle, Biddlestone Chapel (Mass)
19th May 2001	Rievaulx, Bylands, Lastingham
16th June 2001	Vindolanda Christian Chapel

(2001 dates are subject to change)

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